

British and Australian Journalists' Experiences of War Trauma

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Introduction

Journalism, or more specifically, 'serious' journalism such as news reporting, has historically been a masculine profession,² with female reporters originally the rare exception rather than the rule. Throughout their careers many journalists have adopted a combative approach to their work, and this approach is conceived in, and constructed by, the dynamics of the newsroom and the demands of the deadline. It is also largely supported by the ideology borne in Britain of the Fourth Estate, which Australian journalism also embraces, where journalists are acknowledged to be an informal 'power' in a functioning democracy.³ Producing work in this cultural environment can breed aggressive and hostile tendencies in dealing with colleagues, the wider public, as well as subject matter.⁴ It can also lead to the suppression of emotions and experiences of trauma when covering news stories. The myth of the unrelenting, cynical journalist (called here the 'myth of the hard-bitten journalist') is pervasive within news organisations in Britain and Australia, and elsewhere. However, upholding this myth can exacerbate psychological disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in reporters covering conflict and trauma. The persistent influence of hyper-masculinity in British and Australian newsrooms thus creates and maintains a persona for those entering and working in journalism, and this persona subsequently compounds a journalist's capacity to cope with trauma.

The 'myth of the hard-bitten journalist' presupposes that news reporters can adequately cope with trauma in conflict or confronting situations. Many journalists, particularly news reporters, are at some time in their career – often frequently so – called to deal with disturbing scenes of violence, death and suffering. At times, these situations can also involve risk to their personal safety. Journalists can therefore have misguided notions

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² Marjan de Bruin, 'Gender, Organizational and Professional Identities in Journalism,' *Journalism Review* 1, 2 (2000), pp.217-238.

³ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (Gutenberg Project, 2008), accessed May 27, 2012, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1091/1091-h/1091-h.htm>. The Fourth Estate is the great British press tradition, which also extends to other media platforms. The phrase originates from the writings of Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle who in his book *Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (originally published in 1841) noted the observations of British parliamentarian Edmund Burke: 'Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a *Fourth Estate* more important far than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact, — very momentous to us in these times.'

⁴ Gretchen Dworznik, 'Factors Contributing to PTSD and Compassion Fatigue in Television News Workers,' *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology* 1, 1 (2007), pp.22-32.

that may prevent them from acknowledging symptoms of PTSD, which they are often unconsciously suffering.

Furthermore, the image of a 'quality' journalist has been glamorised both by journalists themselves and, more broadly, in culture through film and other media. Journalists are often depicted as hard-drinking, risk-taking, cynical, disobedient or experimental. This stereotype is personified in Hunter S. Thompson,⁵ who has become a cult figure – complete with an industry built around his myth. While many of these characteristics have been historically embraced by journalists, during trauma situations a failure to acknowledge their frailties and weaknesses can cause affected journalists to experience significant emotional, psychological and even physical harm. The pursuit of objectivity, an ideal enshrined in journalists' codes of ethics in Britain and Australia, can exacerbate this position. Journalists are required to professionally separate themselves from the story, yet this often results in them denying their own human response to the story. Additionally, there can be a prevailing feeling that an individual journalist is not 'worthy' to have PTSD, and this perspective lies in the belief that because the stories they are covering are not their own personal stories, that is, the event does not happen to them, and they are merely covering it, they should not 'make it their story' by suffering any effects from it.⁶ A journalist's often-ingrained denial of their humanity is undoubtedly a useful tool for getting a job done to deadline. However, the psychological aftermath highlights the extent to which this denial is highly counter-productive within the journalist's own professional and personal lives.

This paper explores the hypothesis that British and Australian journalists are endangering their psychological and physical health by rejecting a more balanced perspective in both their approach to their work and to their emotional health, resulting in a false expectation of their coping ability and a skewed assessment of their psychological responses to stress and trauma. The study was prompted by the increasing glamorisation

⁵ Alex Gibney, *Gonzo: the Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson*, documentary film (USA: Magnolia Pictures, 2008); Arik Hesseldahl, 'Going, Going, Gonzo,' *Oregon Quarterly*, Summer Edition (2005), pp.40-44. US journalist Hunter S. Thompson, the father of 'gonzo' journalism (a narrative style of journalism that does not aim for the usual journalistic ideal of objectivity), advocated that journalists become more involved in, even part of, the stories they covered. His experimental approach to journalism extended to his private life, in which his bouts of heavy drinking, drug-taking and risky reporting assignments, such as his 1960s coverage of the Hell's Angels bikie gang, became renowned. His earliest forays into journalism were marked by periods of anti-establishment and anti-authoritarianism, and his working attitude was labelled 'insubordinate' by an early employer, who consequently sacked him. His career is characterised by many different forms of writing, much of which was published in then-counterculture magazine, *Rolling Stone*. While his work questions the value of objectivity, it still upholds the ideology of both the Fourth Estate and the myth of the hard-bitten journalist.

⁶ Jo Anne Killeen, 'Journalists and PTSD: Below the Fold' (MA thesis, University of Missouri, 2011), accessed December 5, 2011, <http://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/11180/Research.pdf?sequence=3>.

and acceptance, by both journalists and the wider public, of stoicism and indifference as part of a journalist's work persona, a situation exacerbated by the demands involved in producing quality reporting in a highly competitive industry. It has also been prompted by research which indicates that the ideology of the Fourth Estate, while rooted in Britain, has spread throughout the globe, well beyond the old borders of the British Empire.

I use a case study approach to examine the correlating ideologies of three reporters, and the effect of these ideologies on the recognition and treatment of stress and trauma in reporters: British journalist Kate Adie, and Australian journalists Michael Ware and Peter Lloyd. In doing so, it contextualises the approach of 'quality' British and Australian journalists, and identifies key elements within this culture of journalism that impact on their work practice. All three reporters have covered stories of global conflict, and each has also identified as having been exposed to events of significant trauma. In addition, each has continually and publicly indicated their strong identification with the ideology of the Fourth Estate within their work practice, and has also indicated that identification as an *essential characteristic* of a quality reporter, not merely a tenet which they personally seek to uphold.

Kate Adie

Adie has covered some of the most violent conflicts in recent decades, including those in Bosnia and Libya, and the story she broke to the world, the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre in China.⁷ During these news events she continually displayed hyper-masculine traits in her search for, and coverage of, the story. Her steadfast refusal to take into account her personal safety is best exemplified in her reporting at Tiananmen Square. Adie was the only Western journalist in the midst of the conflict and was at the front line as Chinese troops opened fire on protestors.⁸ Importantly, she has also poured scorn on those journalists who avoided areas of direct conflict in order to preserve their safety.⁹ Adie's reporting of the Tiananmen Massacre put her directly in the line of live fire. In her reports she noted protestors immediately around her being shot dead, and she stumbled across bodies as she attempted to cover the unfolding event.¹⁰

Adie's display of hyper-masculine traits such as boldness and defiance of even dictatorial authority is typified in a biographical article on Adie published by the British news publication *The Guardian*. It stated:

⁷ Maggie Allison, 'Roles in Conflict: The Woman War Reporter,' *Miranda* (ejournal) 1[2] (2010), accessed January 13, 2012, http://www.miranda-ejournal.fr/1/miranda/article.xsp?numero=2&id_article=article_07-586.

⁸ Kate Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2002), p.362.

⁹ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, p.362; Allison, 'Roles in Conflict,' 2010.

¹⁰ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, p.365.

Nine years ago, upon Adie's return to Libya, Colonel Gaddafi's foreign information director wrote to the BBC complaining that it was 'as if we have nothing to do except Kate Adie'. He protested wanly about the 'irresponsible and incomprehensible behaviour of your correspondent, with whom we suffer a lot. *She insists on imposing her own rules and dictates orders and instructions*'.¹¹

Adie typifies the myth and her reflections on her practice demonstrate both self-awareness and pride in her embodiment of the myth. According to Summerskill:¹²

And she (Adie) is, incidentally, famously litigious - she reportedly won £125,000 from the *Mail on Sunday* after it foolishly suggested that her reputation as a fearless reporter was a myth.

The uncompromising language Adie uses to describe her reporting assignments can be considered confrontational, provocative and aggressive. In addition, she appears to wear her 'close shaves' as a badge of honour, in true hyper-masculine style. This is reflected in the following recollection by Adie:¹³

Few would get out of bed very willingly if the day's work appeared to involve facing real danger – the sort that puts your heart right in your mouth and poses the question: why are (sic) on earth am I doing this? I will admit that at times in my working life I have found myself caught in crossfire, or stunned by a grenade, or trying to ask directions from a corpse during a gun battle, and the first response of this reporter has been 'Why am I doing this?' rather than 'What's going on?'

Deuze¹⁴ would point out that the answer to this question is steeped in the journalist's sense of their role as a member of the Fourth Estate, and for journalists, Adie's words could highlight all they admire about the profession.¹⁵ Yet it is this same hyper-masculinity that Keats¹⁶ acknowledges as a potential hindrance to the identification and treatment of trauma-related conditions among people who have single episodes or sustained exposure to traumatic situations, a scenario common to hard-bitten journalists. Despite her continual exposure to high-risk reporting and trauma, Adie does not publicly identify as having PTSD, which stands in direct contrast to the many journalists in her field of specialisation.

¹¹ Ben Summerskill, 'Ice Maiden Under Fire', *The Guardian Online*, October 14, 2001, accessed January 16, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/oct/14/afghanistan.television>. Emphasis added by author.

¹² Summerskill, 'Ice Maiden.'

¹³ Kate Adie, *Into Danger* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2008), p.iii.

¹⁴ Mark Deuze, 'What is Journalism? Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists Reconsidered,' *Journalism Review* 6, 4 (2005), pp.442-464.

¹⁵ Jim Willis, *The Human Journalist: Reporters, Perspectives and Emotions* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

¹⁶ Patrice A. Keats, 'Soldiers Working Internationally: Impacts of Masculinity, Military Culture, and Operational Stress on Cross-Cultural Adaptation,' *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 32, 4 (2010):290-303, accessed October 30, 2011. doi: 10.1007/s10447-010-9107-z.

Unlike Ware and Lloyd, who have, after long periods of denial, acknowledged their PTSD, Adie does not identify as having suffered from PTSD. However, Adie does exhibit some of the traits of an individual who has been traumatised, namely the desire to control, which is evident in her pedantry about the process and structure of writing her story, and encapsulated in her search for the perfect word to use in her reporting:

I'm prissy about individual words, and I'll hunt through a mental list until I light upon the right one, even though a deadline approached ... Not everyone understands how hard we try to get the words right. Especially if those words do not please them, or do not fit their view of the world, or perhaps indicate that they are in the wrong.¹⁷

Adie's perfectionism is an expression of her hyper-masculinity, in which she indicates an overriding intention to assert control:¹⁸ her perfectionism is both a prism through which to evaluate the reporting style of her peers, whom she often deems as less-focused on quality journalism and more interested in entertainment (or, as she describes it, 'performance');¹⁹ and a point of focus in her work which this paper contends could indicate its use as a coping mechanism.

Michael Ware

Australian veteran reporter Michael Ware has also spent a considerable part of his career covering violence, conflict and war, and the traumas inflicted on people (especially civilians) in the course of these conflicts for global news corporations CNN and Time.²⁰ He was embedded with the US military in 2005, during which he covered the deadly September US assault of Tal Afar.²¹ He was also embedded with insurgents in Iraq, has worked independently in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and was kidnapped by al Qaeda insurgents and threatened with execution.²² Ware has also worked extensively on other highly dangerous

¹⁷ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, pp.329-330.

¹⁸ Donald L. Mosher and Mark Sirkin, 'Measuring a Macho Personality Constellation,' *Journal of Research in Personality* 18 (1984), pp.150-163.

¹⁹ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, p.415.

²⁰ Greg Veis, 'CNN's Prisoner of War,' *Men's Journal*, December 11, 2008, accessed January 12, 2012, <http://www.mensjournal.com/cnns-prisoner-of-war>.

²¹ Lara Logan, 'Tal Afar: Al Qaeda's Town,' *60 Minutes*, March 12, 2006, accessed December 12, 2011, <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=1390048n&tag=contentBody;storyMediaBox>; David R. McCone, Wilbur J. Scott and George R. Mastroianni, 'The 3rd ACR in Tal' Afar: Challenges and Adaptations,' *Of Interest*, (Strategic Studies Institute, United States Airforce Academy, 2008). Tal Afar is a north-western Iraqi city located in the vicinity of Kirkuk and Mosul near the Iraq-Syria border. Control of the city was initially held by al Qaeda operatives who, according to Ware and US reporter Lara Logan, used it as a base to 'train insurgents and launch attacks around Iraq'. After the US gained control of the city in 2005, it was used as a 'staging point' for successive incursions into Iraq, and has been the scene of continuing conflict between US-led forces and Iraqi insurgents, with thousands of civilians caught in the crossfire.

²² Madonna King, 'Interview with Michael Ware,' *Mornings on 612 ABC Brisbane*, May 31, 2010, accessed December 21, 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2010/05/31/2914053.htm>.

assignments such as the coverage of the Mexican drug cartel wars, with a particular focus on the hyper-violent paramilitary arm of the powerful Los Zetas drug cartel²³ in Veracruz.²⁴ As a direct result of his sustained reporting in conflict zones, and his continual exposure to trauma, Ware lives with both PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).²⁵

Ware's experience in reporting on war and violence is well-documented, not just by the reporter himself, but by many of his colleagues and his family. Veis notes that Ware was inspired by the work of another hard-bitten journalist, Australian Neil Davis,²⁶ who gained fame due to his reporting of the Vietnam War and was later killed while reporting. Ware's explanation of what it takes to get a story, that is, what constitutes quality journalism, is firmly ensconced in the professional practice of Davis. The reporting experiences of Davis urged Ware to buy into the myth of the hard-bitten journalist, where the story must be gained at almost any cost, sometimes even the reporter's life.

In total, Ware spent just over nine years on the front line without respite, reporting on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁷ Ware identifies a single event as his turning point,²⁸ whereby he seriously began to question his ability to function. This event was the death of an Iraqi insurgent who had been shot in the head. Ware was plagued by the trauma of witnessing the prolonged, agonising and graphic death of the insurgent and he became obsessed with what he regarded as his own inaction in easing the insurgent's suffering. For the twenty minutes the man lay dying, Ware was completely focused on reporting the job at hand and he fussed over the lighting in order to get the best shot.²⁹ His acknowledgement of his PTSD came only after years of reporting in conflict zones. His kidnapping by an Iraqi al Qaeda group, where he became the only Westerner to ever escape execution by that particular group,³⁰ was one of the other touchstone events that led to his increasing awareness of the personal impacts of the trauma he has witnessed. Ware has suffered significant effects of PTSD including, but not limited to, chronic insomnia, heavy drinking,

²³ CNN, 'Los Zetas Called Mexico's Most Dangerous Drug Cartel,' *CNN International News*, August 6, 2009, accessed January 13, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/08/06/mexico.drug.cartels/#cnnSTCVideo>. Ware reports that the Los Zetas is the most highly organised and powerful drug cartel in North America and is responsible for the greatest number of drug-related homicides in Mexico. Its paramilitary arm is highly sophisticated, highly trained, well-armed, and is responsible for some of the most brutal attacks on civilians, police and politicians, as well as rival drug cartel members.

²⁴ CNN, 'Los Zetas.'

²⁵ ABC, 'Prisoner of War,' Parts 1-3, *Australian Story*, screened September 12, 2010.

²⁶ Veis, 'CNN's Prisoner of War.'

²⁷ ABC, 'Prisoner of War.'

²⁸ Veis, 'CNN's Prisoner of War.'

²⁹ Veis, 'CNN's Prisoner of War.'

³⁰ King, 'Michael Ware.'

heavy smoking,³¹ and transient personal and intimate relationships.³² Yet despite the effects he has suffered as a direct result of his reporting, Ware's perspective on his role as a journalist has changed very little, except in relation to the acknowledgment that he is now 'damaged'.³³

Peter Lloyd

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television reporter Peter Lloyd also identifies his reporting of conflict and trauma as significant in the formation of his PTSD. Lloyd, a foreign correspondent in South-East Asia,³⁴ covered the Boxing Day tsunami, bombings in Bali and Jakarta, the war in Afghanistan, and the suicide bombing attempt on the life of Pakistan's then-Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, in Karachi.³⁵ Like Ware, Lloyd's full awareness of his PTSD came at a critical breaking point in his life, when he was arrested in Singapore in 2008 on drugs charges.

Lloyd states his coverage of the incident in Pakistan, and the aftermath of the Boxing Day tsunami, contain the embryo of his PTSD, and his failure to cope became more apparent in the recurring, graphic nightmares he continually experienced.³⁶ These nightmares, which featured grotesque scenes of gore, also had physical manifestations. Lloyd would thrash and 'run' during sleep, something he indicates he was unaware of until it was caught on CCTV while he was being held for drug possession in Singapore.³⁷ In addition, he started to think about committing suicide.³⁸ Until that time, Lloyd followed a typical pattern of the hard-bitten journalist, applying the myth as a manifesto. However, Lloyd differs from Ware in that he seemingly rejects Ware's notion of absorption in the role, and instead states his job demanded he be a mere conduit of information. According to Lloyd:³⁹

I am a true believer in that sense about our job. I think we're nothing more than a medium – correspondents anywhere, but overseas in particular – we're just a medium; we're there because they (the public) can't be there.

³¹ Veis, 'CNN's Prisoner of War.'

³² ABC, 'Prisoner of War.'

³³ ABC, 'Prisoner of War.'

³⁴ David Marr, 'When Journalist Becomes Story: An Interview with Peter Lloyd,' *Big Ideas*, accessed December 21, 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/bigideas/stories/2010/11/02/3052373.htm>.

³⁵ Peter Lloyd, *Inside Story: From ABC Foreign Correspondent to Singapore Prisoner 12988* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2010).

³⁶ Marr, 'Peter Lloyd.'

³⁷ Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

³⁸ Marr, 'Peter Lloyd.'

³⁹ Marr, 'Peter Lloyd.'

After his arrest, Lloyd was sentenced to 10 months in prison (he was released after six months), and was sacked from his job (he was later re-employed by the ABC upon his release).⁴⁰ He admits his experience in the Singaporean legal system could have been much worse, considering the maximum penalty for drug-related offences in that country is execution, and his original arrest included a charge of trafficking.⁴¹ For Lloyd, there is no doubt that his PTSD and his arrest for substance abuse are directly linked to his inability to cope with the demands of reporting, and the time he spent in areas of conflict and trauma acting as a conduit of information to the general public.⁴²

Coping with and defending ‘the myth’

It is inevitable that journalists reporting on war, conflict and disaster areas will at some stage be exposed to traumatic situations. Pre-reportage training and post-incident/reportage debriefings are important strategies in reducing risks to journalists. However, such a formalised approach to risk can be problematic and this is evident in the diversity in the reporters’ histories and experiences with PTSD. While some journalists experience many smaller episodes of trauma and discomfort, others may experience more extreme episodes of trauma and discomfort and they may identify a specific incident as a defining moment in their awareness of their PTSD.

It is possible to hypothesise that reporters who identify with the myth are made vulnerable because of overconfidence in the capacity to cope, in much the same way people with addictions can overestimate their capacity to cope in the early stages of identification and treatment.⁴³ Feinstein points out the addictive nature of covering conflict and war,⁴⁴ and a journalist’s overconfidence in dealing with the trauma associated with this type of reporting would therefore actually place the journalist in greater psychological danger, because they would lose the ability to assess risk. This becomes, then, a form of denial. However, it is also important to note that denial of *risk* does not equate to ignorance of fear. Adie points out that she became so acquainted with her fear response in situations, she was able to formulate her own ‘fear scale’ in what seems to become a rather robotic exercise.⁴⁵ But it is a journalist’s requirement to *deny risk by ignoring fear* that has its roots in the

⁴⁰ Marr, ‘Peter Lloyd.’

⁴¹ Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

⁴² Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

⁴³ Hélène Simoneau, and Jacques Bergeron, ‘Factors Affecting Motivation During the First Six Weeks of Treatment,’ *Addictive Behaviours* 28, 7 (2002), pp.1219–1241.

⁴⁴ Anthony Feinstein, *Journalists under Fire The Psychological Hazards of Covering War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006).

⁴⁵ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, p.228.

ideology of the Fourth Estate, and therefore is a compulsion that can place a reporter at significant risk of being involved in traumatic situations. Adie required of herself to ignore her own fears and run those risks in her reporting *for the good of the story*, even putting herself in the way of live fire and, ultimately, being injured. This is therefore the myth at work, and it is fed directly by the ideology of the Fourth Estate.

Like Ware, Lloyd's experiences with trauma fall within the range of both immediate, symptomatic reaction and longer-term physical and psychological responses to trauma.⁴⁶ McLellan's research, which in part examined the effects of reporting and trauma on a journalist's sources, was published just 19 years after PTSD was formally recognised as a condition. Given the greater understanding we have of PTSD and its effects, it is evident that these responses to trauma can also be experienced by the journalist themselves, and this seems to be supported by the number of 'boxes' Lloyd checks off from McLellan's list of responses. He identifies that he has experienced increased heart rate, palpitations, cold sweats, flashbacks, disturbing dreams, substance abuse, and suicide ideation.⁴⁷

Substance abuse is something that strongly links Lloyd and Ware. They document a period of heavy reliance on drugs⁴⁸ or alcohol⁴⁹ to get through periods of their lives. In this respect, both reporters become directly associated with the afore-mentioned Thompson,⁵⁰ the journalist who is considered an icon in his field, who also noted a reliance on alcohol and experimentation with drugs. While Lloyd took issue with his illicit drug use being categorised as abuse, instead claiming he was a 'user' and relegating it to recreational use, this could be seen as a form of denial, with Lloyd underestimating his reliance on substances as a coping mechanism.⁵¹ At the very least, this behaviour is extremely reckless; at most, it is the self-destructive behaviour Deuze asserts⁵² is typical of the journalist who buys into what is identified here as the myth.

Superficially, Adie appears to have 'escaped' being diagnosed with PTSD whilst it is Ware and Lloyd who have fallen victim to fallout from the myth. However, Adie's exhibition of a distinct lack of any emotion in her reporting, a continual lack of personal disclosure in her writings about herself, and her ongoing perfectionism may indeed indicate

⁴⁶ Trina McLellan, 'Fair Game or Fair Go? Impact of News Reporting on Victims and Survivors of Traumatic Events,' *Asia Pacific Media Educator* 7 (1999), pp.53-73.

⁴⁷ Lloyd, *Inside Story*; Marr, 'Peter Lloyd.'

⁴⁸ Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

⁴⁹ ABC, 'Prisoner of War.'

⁵⁰ Gibney, *Gonzo*; Hesseldahl, 'Going, Going, Gonzo.'

⁵¹ Nick E. Goeders, 'Stress, Motivation and Drug Addiction,' *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 13, 1 (2004), pp.33-25.

⁵² Deuze, 'What is Journalism?', pp.442-464.

that Adie is not as resilient as she first appears, and may not have yet identified symptoms of PTSD.

The pressures of reporting are aspects all three journalists indicate as a major factor in their denial, or their lack of acknowledgement, of their response to trauma. Adie's concern was that an admission of her inability to cope would be to the detriment of her own career, and those of her female colleagues, because it could indicate she (and therefore all female reporters) was not as prepared for the rigours of reporting as men.⁵³ In explaining the struggle to establish her career, she stated:

I had no rules to go by. Any fuss would rebound, and anyway, these were days when women were breaking new ground everywhere, grabbing opportunities, being given such wonderful chances – why wreck them? It would only have been seen as 'not being able to hack it'.

Adie's use of the phrase 'being given such wonderful chances' is an acknowledgement of hyper-masculine newsroom culture: that a female reporter was (and still can be) at the mercy of the paternalism of a chief of staff or editor who was prepared to offer a 'chance', rather than identify that female journalist as having an equal place in the newsroom. This supports the idea that female journalists are required to take on hyper-masculine traits in order to support and sustain a work approach that will provide them with an even playing field.⁵⁴ It is Adie's quest for validation in the newsroom that lays the groundwork of her single-minded focus on the story and her perfectionism, which in turn become her standard professional practice and a bellwether in journalism.

It should be noted that this aspect of the myth, the expectation that journalists forgo their humanity and cope under difficult or traumatic circumstances, is also felt by male journalists. Arguably however, female reporters may experience this pressure in an exacerbated manner. Feinstein states that a journalist's willingness to accommodate the expectations of their employers, and their feeling that their approach is justified,⁵⁵ is entrenched in what this author would recognise as the myth of the hard-bitten journalist. The myth demands reporters put aside their own reactions to trauma and horror in order to file the story and, ultimately, it places journalists in unjustifiable danger.

This high-pressure approach is steadfastly held by Adie, who views the modern media's leanings towards emotional reporting as a step towards low-quality reporting:⁵⁶

⁵³ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, p.109.

⁵⁴ Catherine Strong and Grant Hannis, 'The Visibility of Female Journalists at Australian and New Zealand Newspapers: The Good News and the Bad News', *Australian Journalism Review* 29, 1 (2007), pp.115-125.

⁵⁵ Feinstein, *Journalists under Fire*.

⁵⁶ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, p.169.

It's a step towards the 'infotainment' world, where the pill of fact has to be sugared by a performance. Reporting – in particular on television – always has had a narcissistic element, but now it's been encouraged to flower.

Adie has been repeatedly criticised from within and outside the industry for her unemotional reporting⁵⁷ which is encapsulated in her coverage of the Dunblane school massacre in Scotland in 1996. This author would argue that this particular aspect of the myth could also provide a significant coping mechanism for trauma-affected reporters.

Lloyd identifies with Adie's embrace of the myth, but now recognises his PTSD and refers to it in physical terms, stating that it was a direct by-product of reporting on traumatic events, and that the adrenaline he experienced in rushes while on the job acted as a toxic agent in his body, effectively poisoning him.⁵⁸ The demands of reporting, the efforts and stresses of establishing and keeping a career, and the myth of the hard-bitten journalist are inter-related aspects that Lloyd believes created his illness:⁵⁹

This is 'the job', and then when you get there it makes you sick. The last thing you're going to do is turn around and start complaining about it, saying *this thing that I want so much, it's killing me*. It's clearly not something you're going to say, and *that is part of the mosaic of why we get sick, and why we don't speak up*.

The extent to which Lloyd processes the demands of his work through the prism of the myth is obvious and inarguable when his recollection of his work in the aftermath of the Boxing Day tsunami is considered. Lloyd became angry with himself⁶⁰ for not getting to the worst-hit area in Khao Lak sooner, and indicated he saw this as a failing in his journalism. Consequently, this caused him to ignore his growing need for professional assistance and extra resources because of a 'deadline focus'.⁶¹ Lloyd also castigates and insults himself for not being able to cope. He explains: 'I tell myself to get over it. I tell myself to shut up and stop being such a wimp.'⁶²

This lack of insight, together with Lloyd's comparison of the quality of his journalism in relation to other journalists' work and, importantly, the terminology he uses to describe himself, clearly demonstrate hyper-masculinity working with the myth. For Lloyd, to acknowledge his trauma and PTSD is 'weak', instead he 'needs' to deny his

⁵⁷ Summerskill, 'Ice Maiden.'

⁵⁸ Marr, 'Peter Lloyd.'

⁵⁹ Marr, 'Peter Lloyd.'

⁶⁰ Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

⁶¹ Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

⁶² Lloyd, *Inside Story*, p.46.

humanity and ‘toughen up’ in order to fulfil his obligations as a member of the Fourth Estate.

Real coping comes through talking and acknowledging illness. Each journalist expressed a need to connect with trusted people, even if the conversation did not revolve around the journalists’ exposure to trauma, but focuses instead on the job. Dwzornik⁶³ identifies this as an essential component of debriefing. In this way, Adie, Ware, and Lloyd all unwittingly engaged in a type of therapy. Adie rationalises her lack of emotion by concentrating on the process of reporting, including the hunt for the perfect word;⁶⁴ Ware talked to his sister on the phone for hours at a time about his romantic life;⁶⁵ and Lloyd found comfort in his personal relationships.⁶⁶ Ware further acknowledged he sought out friends who had a same, shared experience, and shunned those who could not relate to the horrors he had witnessed, even if they were an intimate partner.⁶⁷

Ware’s sense of his journalistic place in trauma is complex yet reflects many journalists’ perspectives of their work, such as those of Adie and Lloyd. It also reflects the myth. He is simultaneously a victim of conflict,⁶⁸ an observer of history,⁶⁹ and a seeker of truth.⁷⁰ His attraction to, and sustained involvement in, war and conflict directly corresponds with what Deuze would identify as classic hyper-masculine behaviour and the five ‘ideal-typical’ traits of journalism; public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics. Denton notes Ware’s image, even among colleagues, is as ‘the Steve Irwin of Baghdad’,⁷¹ which Ware supports when he talked about the attraction of living in war zones.⁷² This is a demonstration of Mosher and Sirkin’s theory of hyper-masculinity,⁷³ where risk-taking and extreme violence are but two elements an individual seeks out. Ware’s agreement with Denton’s observations echoes the myth at work through a sense of public duty and the principles of the Fourth Estate, as is Lloyd’s opinion that journalists should stop self-censoring when gathering their content, in order to show a fuller reality of

⁶³ Dworznik, ‘Factors Contributing to PTSD and Compassion Fatigue,’ pp.22-32.

⁶⁴ Adie, *Kindness of Strangers*, p.329.

⁶⁵ ABC, ‘Prisoner of War.’

⁶⁶ Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

⁶⁷ Veis, ‘CNN’s Prisoner of War.’; ABC, ‘Prisoner of War.’

⁶⁸ Veis, ‘CNN’s Prisoner of War.’; ABC, ‘Prisoner of War.’

⁶⁹ King, ‘Michael Ware.’

⁷⁰ ABC, ‘Prisoner of War.’

⁷¹ Andrew Denton, ‘Michael Ware,’ *Enough Rope: Episode 52*, aired July 26, 2004, accessed December 21, 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/enoughrope/transcripts/s1162781.htm>. Emphasis added by author.

⁷² Denton, ‘Michael Ware.’

⁷³ Mosher and Sirkin, ‘Measuring a Macho Personality Constellation,’ pp.150-163.

violence, trauma and conflict to an audience.⁷⁴ In an echo of Adie's perspective, Ware also states:

...Sometimes I get the feeling that not many of us journalists can really do it. *There's only a few of us prepared to go that extra mile.* Among that few I feel there's an even greater responsibility. So I feel a kind of a sense *of wanting to be noble and wanky, a sense of duty*, to some degree.⁷⁵

All three journalists have carried this same dialogue throughout their careers. Denton states that (like Adie) Ware has deliberately sought out the riskiest areas of conflict, preferring to shun green zones (safe areas) in favour of red zones (hotspots of conflict),⁷⁶ living behind 'enemy lines' and justifying these choices with the rationale that quality journalism depends on it. However, risk-taking is an element that can present as a symptomatic response to trauma.

Conclusion

In examining the experiences of Adie, Ware, and Lloyd, it is clearly evident that the myth of the hard-bitten journalist, and the hyper-masculinity associated with the myth, can impact significantly on the mental health, and consequently, the physical health of journalists. The journalists in the case studies examined in this paper use the myth as a tool of navigation, to help them traverse the demands of their work, and as a tool of comprehension, to help them make sense of their role in reporting on traumatic events. The effects of exposure to trauma, while individual to each journalist, still exhibit commonalities (including fear responses, drug and alcohol abuse, nightmares, insomnia, not emotionally involving themselves in the story and the need to control one's surroundings) with regard to the manifestation of both physical and psychological responses. The common threads between Ware and Lloyd are linked by a shared ideology that stems from icons of journalism such as Adie, but more so, Hunter S. Thompson. Where Adie stands poles apart from Thompson in her opinion of the reporter's role in the story, and rejects his practice of becoming personally involved in the story, she still embraces Thompson's risk-taking philosophy and the idea of getting the story, regardless of the cost. Therefore, while the practice of Adie and Thompson are not comparable, the outcome of their journalism is: that is, steadfastly upholding the ideology of the Fourth Estate. These connections demonstrate not only how the myth is regenerated, but how all-encompassing the scope of the myth actually is.

⁷⁴ Lloyd, *Inside Story*.

⁷⁵ Denton, 'Michael Ware.'

⁷⁶ Denton, 'Michael Ware.'