

DOMO

Journalists under pressure.

witch-hunt

Independence went out the window

Wherever you go you encounter ill use and corruption.

In Russia, there is a price: They have to pretend to be blind.

If you want to stay alive you often have to shut up.

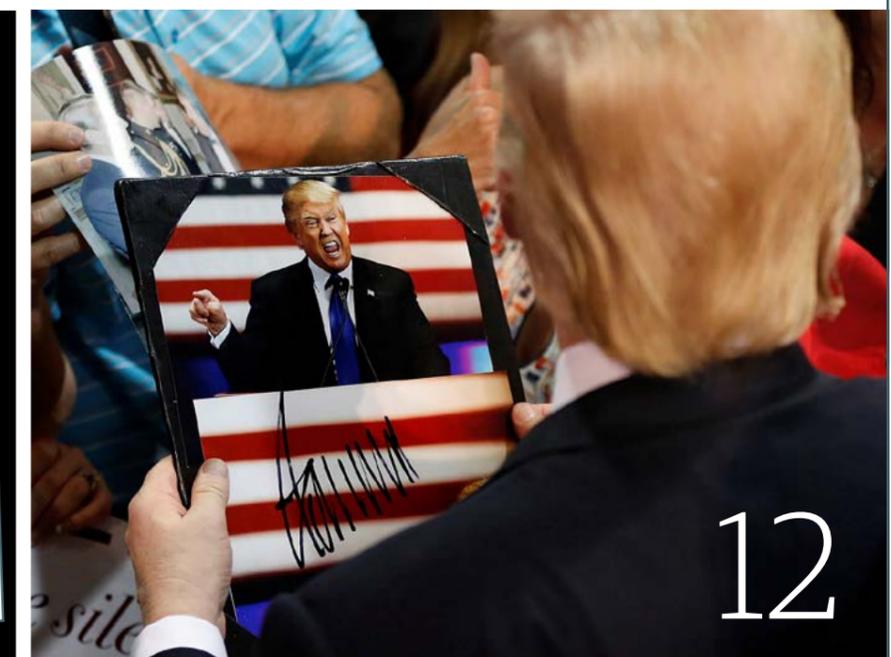
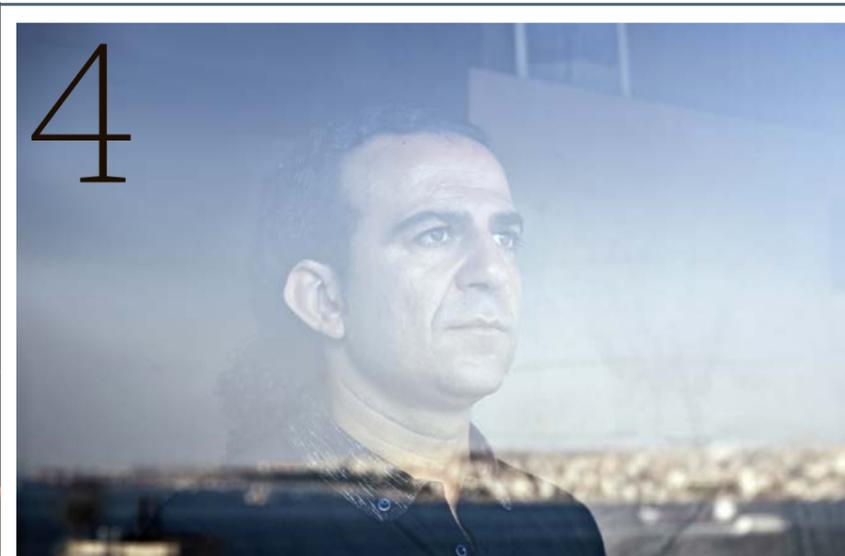
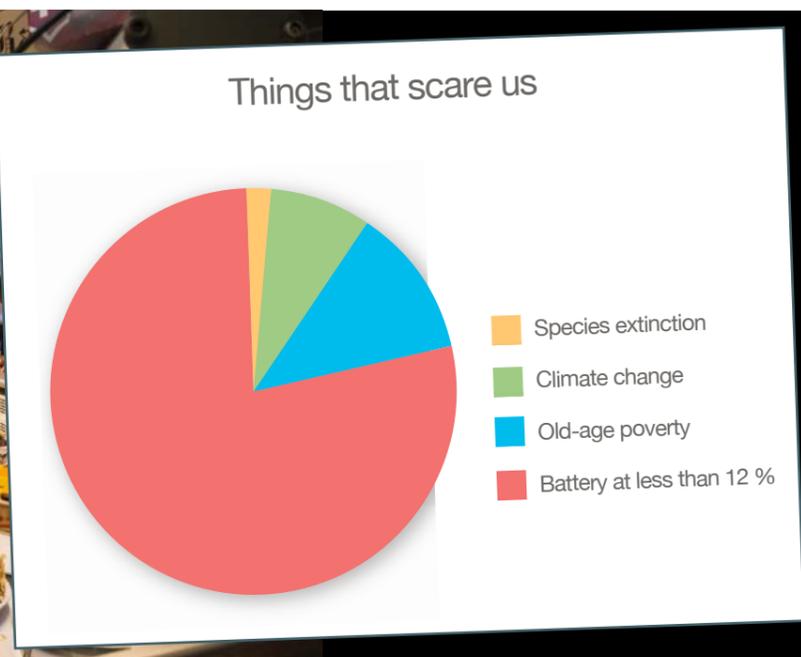
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# Threatened. Persecuted. Beaten.

Bülent Mumay, Ahmed Al-Basheer and Mikhail Zygar are journalists. As such, they are supposed to be protected by laws. Instead, they are branded as opponents of the regime, rebels and terrorists by their governments. The three journalists report on the conditions under which they are working in Turkey, Jordan and Russia.

# Erdogan's Witch Hunt

**Osman G.:** Son of a bitch! Traitor, bastard!

**Burak L.:** You have no honor. Are you a traitor, man?

You deserve to get your ass kicked ...

**Fuat T.:** You'll get the starch beaten out of you!

**Ömer K.:** Son of a bitch, remember, we're gonna get you!

Text: Bülent Mumay / Istanbul Photos: Emin Özmen

Sounds like the creative insults teenagers having an argument might hurl at each other, doesn't it? Or maybe it's what soccer fans shout during a match? None of the above.

It is a small sample of the hate comments that a journalist known for his critical attitude throughout the 19 years of his professional life (i.e. yours truly, pleased to meet you)

garnered on his Facebook account following his arrest. I'll spare you the messages from those people who would like to have sex with my mother - or the corresponding fantasies they have spelled out concerning my own person.

The abovementioned comments came in while I was in police custody. I was accused of having supported

the attempted coup of July 15. Ten days had gone by since the coup, and the wave of arrests had begun to reach journalists. One by one, everybody who worked for media companies close to the preacher Fethullah Gulen was arrested, because it gradually emerged that Gulen had instigated the attempt to overthrow the government on that bloody night -

one of the most terrible that Turkey has ever experienced. Newspapers, TV stations and websites supporting Gulen, who lives in the United States, were shut down.

Up until a few years ago the AKP, the ruling party in Turkey for the past fourteen years, had given the Gulen movement crucial support and paved the way for its followers to penetrate institutions such as the police and the justice system. After the attempted coup, however, Gulenists were denounced as terrorists, and that included the journalists working in their ranks. The tensions between Erdogan and Gulen that had begun after the break-up of their undeclared coalition escalated to a witch-hunt following the attempted overthrow. Day after day new lists were published, with names of individuals who were then arrested one after another. As with any witch-hunt these lists also included names of people who had nothing to do with the coup or with the Gulenists: members of the political opposition!

Using the coup as a pretext and citing spurious allegations of crimes, the government incarcerated individuals it had already targeted prior to July 15. With incredible brazenness amplified by the state of emergency imposed after the attempted coup, individuals known for their opposition to the government as well as to Gulen were placed on the «lists of supporters of the coup». On the evening of July 26 it was my turn. How did I find out? I saw my own face printed as a mug shot on the front page of a pro-government newspaper, under the headline: «WANTED!»

In the days of the AKP-Gulen alliance I had protested against the bullying of the media and marched in support of imprisoned fellow journalists. Now they were knocking on my door, too. At 10.30 p.m. I was arrested «for aiding and abetting the coup and the «Gulenist terror organisation»». It was the biggest surprise of my life. Anyone

working as a journalist in this country will inevitably wind up in a police station or jail at one time or another. However, there used to be certain predictable stereotypical charges: If you had written a critical piece on the Kurdish situation you would be incarcerated for «separatism»; if you



Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan enjoying the acclaim of his followers.

had criticized leading politicians you were thrown in jail for «defamation of heads of state».

Those were allegations that journalists in Turkey risked at any time and considered «normal» if they were slapped with them. That I, who had based almost my entire journalistic career on my opposition to coups and to the Gulen movement, should be tarred with the same brush as those journalists who had actually supported the coup, was patently absurd.

Three horrid nights in a tiny cell of 50 square feet. And I had no inkling of what new surprises awaited me when I was arraigned in court on the fourth day. First I was questioned by the prosecutor. I had planned to ask him all the questions that had gone through my head during those three nights in custody: «How can they think that I have any connection to the Gulenists? Aiding the coup? What gave them that idea? Where is their proof?»

When I was brought into the prosecutor's chambers the answer to these questions threw me for a loop: Right on top of his file was a printout of my LinkedIn profile! For a second I imagined I was there for a job interview. As if it weren't a prosecutor

## Day after day new lists are published, with names of individuals who are then arrested.

**Bülent Mumey**

sitting across from me but a personnel manager. As if a prosecutor hadn't demanded that I be arrested like a terrorist and detained in a cell for three nights! He kept rifling through the «evidence» in his file. A few pieces I had written years ago, a handful of irrelevant tweets about

Bülent Mumay, 39, is an independent journalist. Until the end of 2015 he was editor-in-chief of «Hürriyet Online» and responsible for the entire digital presence of the Dogan Media Group. He was sacked due to political pressure. Germany's «Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung» regularly publishes his «Letters from Istanbul». In 2013 the Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation honored Bülent Mumay with a Human Rights Award for his coverage of the Gezi protests.

the coup or about the Gulenists that I had posted on Twitter, that was all. Obviously they meant to use what they had come across to turn me into a «terrorist» when they'd googled their man.

So much for my personal experience of post-coup repression: After three nights in custody and one day in court I was a free man. Obviously the whole thing was intended as an intimidating shot across my bows. Not everyone who was arrested on the basis of the same list was as lucky.. Most of the people working for newspapers of the Gulen movement were detained, because after the break-up of the coalition with Erdogan they were now being accused of having pulled the wool over the authorities' eyes and thus declared terrorists. Compared to what other members of the Turkish press have been subjected to in the past and what many are now facing after the attempted coup, my own tribulations seem trivial.

Freedom of the press in Turkey has been under threat at all times. Usurpers taking power as well as governments thwarting coups would always take it out on journalists. The aftermath of the bloody attempt of enemies of the state to overthrow the government on July 15 was no exception. It is hard to take stock as the numbers keep rising, day after day. Dozens of radio and television stations, newspapers and websites were banned. Hundreds of journalists were detained.

What lies at the bottom of all this? In the year 2001 a group had seceded from an Islamist party and founded the AKP, staking a claim to greater liberality. The following year the new party managed to win the parliamentary elections and to form a single government not based on a coalition. However, having learned from earlier coups and crises that the ground may always shift beneath the feet of a government, the party decided to take measures to cement its power. That is why it entered into an alliance with one of Turkey's largest religious sects, which had been tacitly tolerated and at times even supported as a bulwark against the rise of the left following the military coup of September 12, 1980.

In order to consolidate its power under Erdogan's leadership the AKP, which defined itself as Islamic-democratic, reached out to Fetullah Gulen, who was living in the U.S. This ▶

+++ Turkey: Ranked 151 out of 180 in the Press Freedom Index +++ Journalists and publishers are subject to severe harassment +++ Systematic shutdowns of media companies +++ Targeted attacks against journalists rarely meet with prosecution +++ (Source: Reporters Without Borders)

► step was also intended to forestall any possible attacks against the AKP on behalf of Gulenists, who had already stealthily infiltrated government positions and set up what is now called a «parallel government». Gulen followers who had already established themselves in various areas, from security forces to finance and from the media to soccer associations, now began forming their own teams within the AKP bureaucracy. This covert coalition imposed fiscal penalties on newspapers to the tune of millions of euros, thereby striking a blow against freedom of the press. From time to time they also detained hundreds of Kemalist generals through trumped-up trials to weaken the military.

As with any liaison it was a matter of time before it hit the rocks. Roughly three years ago the coalition, whose joint rise to power had been a success, began to squabble about who was the greatest. There is no evidence that any singular event caused this strife, but the same people who had called each other brother now accuse each other of terrorism. In addition, people like myself having spoken out critically against this coalition have become targets and are taken to court for supporting the coup.

Turkey is currently experiencing one of the greatest upheavals in its recent history. These kinds of sea changes may also represent hope for a given country. Will we be able to achieve a better state of democracy and to find a way that will bring more freedom of the press, for we journalists as well? Right now there is unfortunately little cause for optimism. Our hopelessness, on the other hand, is well-founded: At no time in history has the clash between two Islamist leaders led to an improved democracy. ☹

Original translation by Sabine Adatepe



# Comedy in Times of War

On his TV show Ahmed Al-Basheer makes fun of everything that is wrong with his country, Iraq. Millions of viewers in Arab countries are thrilled. His personal history is fraught with violence: His father and brother were murdered; he himself survived a bombing and a kidnapping when he was working as a journalist. Now he uses satire to combat chaos.

Interview Alejandro Velert

Photo: Ramzi Alkafsi/Horizon Light for TV production/Handout

**Every two weeks, on your Albasheer Show, you comment on the current situation in Iraq while ruthlessly poking fun at corrupt officials, politicians, jihadists and ISIS fighters.**

These people are the cancer that's eating our country. And humor is hardly the worst remedy. On our show we appeal to the same age group as the Islamic State, and of course that's no coincidence. People should think about things before supporting extremist groups or voting for corrupt politicians.

**In your sketches people are tortured with waterboarding or electric shocks, for example.**

Humor knows no limits. And we're not making anything up. We represent real ills in an exaggerated way, and that hits home. Our viewers realize that these things are really happening.

**You yourself have experienced a lot of violence. Your brother and father were murdered; you personally survived a bloody suicide attack and a hostage situation. Is that a normal life for an Iraqi?**

It's not exactly normal, but every

other Iraqi will suffer at least one of these misfortunes.

**Now you're a comedian and respond to all that violence with humor.**

The more traditional Iraqi approach would be to get a gun and engage in a vendetta. Which would of course lead to the family of the next victim having to exact revenge in turn. I don't find that particularly clever. We can't change what's happened in the past. So we'd better take care of the future.

**Are there times when you're not in the mood for comedy?**

Yes, all too many, unfortunately. In July an ISIS attack killed more than 320 people in Baghdad. Normally we like to make fun of the incompetence of the security agencies and do so frequently. But on days like that we just can't do it.

**Four million people usually watch your show. Until recently it was only a million.**

That's because for a long time no channel dared to broadcast our show. Our only option was YouTube, and that way we reached at least a million people. Now, though, people can see us on Deutsche Welle Arabia and NRT, and we are gaining additional viewers from Morocco to Saudi Arabia.

**How has the show changed over the past two years?**

When we started out we were amateurs who were doing this for fun. Now we're on TV, so all this fun needs to be professional. Having produced 47 shows we know a lot more about how to convey our messages and what elements are appropriate to which situation. Sometimes it's a sketch, sometimes a little joke will do.

**You too have changed: you now sport a hip haircut and a cool beard. To be honest, you definitely look better than you did two years ago.**

It was really necessary! On the first few shows my colleagues liked to make fun of my bushy eyebrows; they said I'd lose my balance if somebody were to trim them.

**People now call you the Arab Jon Stewart.**

That is rather too great an honor. Jon Stewart with his legendary «Daily Show» and the late George Carlin are my idols. They bravely blazed the trail. The way they combined news on current affairs with satire and comedy was unique.

**Is it true that you produce the show in different apartments in Amman, Jordan?**

We tape the show in a small office that we call our studio. This office corre-

Ahmed Al-Basheer, 32, was born in the Iraqi city of Ramadi, 60 miles west of Baghdad. Before he fled to Jordan in 2012 he had been working as a TV and radio reporter. His father was killed by Al-Qaeda, his brother by Shiite militias. Al-Basheer himself has been shot, held hostage for 40 days, and survived a suicide bombing in his hometown in February 2011 which left 12 people dead. In the Jordanian capital of Amman he and his team of 25 collaborators produce the Albasheer Show, which is broadcast every two weeks. It reaches an average of four million viewers and is considered the most radical comedy show in the Arab world.

sponds to our financial possibilities and is hardly the extent of our dreams. Next year we would like to move into real studio where we'll perform in front of a real audience.

**The laughter we now hear ...**

... is partly canned. However, our crew, which currently numbers 25 people, tends to laugh along quite energetically. As I said, we enjoy what we're doing.

**How do you finance your broadcasts?**

We sell our shows to Deutsche Welle and NRT Arabia. That covers most of our expenses. And if it doesn't we pitch in ourselves. We're not really getting rich from this. So if you happen to have a spare Lamborghini standing around that you're not using ...

**How do you prevent the conflicts within your country from affecting your team?**

Our Team is something like a little United Iraq. We are Sunni, Kurds, Christians, Shiites, women and men, everything. But our common denominator is our country. Religion, background or gender - what does that matter? That's also what we're trying to get across to our audience.

**You worked as a reporter in Iraq until 2012, when you fled to Jordan. What are the working conditions for journalists like in Iraq?**

A disaster! Wherever you go you encounter ill use and corruption. But if you want to stay alive you often have to grin and bear it. In my time the militias weren't quite as powerful as they are now; they are brutal. Then again, Al-Qaeda was stronger, and they actually hunted journalists.

**How free are you today in Amman?**

Jordan is something like a little island in the Middle East, with a parliament and free elections. That makes it a lot easier, freedom of expression is very much accepted. And we're very grateful for that.

**You make a lot of enemies and are regularly subject to threats. How much do you and your team need to fear for your lives?**

We're relatively safe here; terrorist organizations have not taken hold in Jordan. But there's no way of controlling lone wolves. So we don't go out much, we mostly stay in our office working on our show.

**Are you dreaming of returning to Iraq?**

Are you kidding? They'd slice me up, throw me onto the nearest grill and ask people: «Who wants the first piece of the funnyman Al-Basheer?» (laughs) ☹

# Money or freedom



Unwritten laws, illicit influence and repression: In the world according to Putin, Russia's mass media tow the Kremlin line. But out on the Web resistance is growing, says Moscow journalist and bestselling author Mikhail Zygar.

Text: Mikhail Zygar, Moskau Photo: Yuri Kozyrev/NOOR/laif

On September 19th Russia held parliamentary elections. These, however, were special; they were the first post-Soviet era elections where independent mass media could no longer influence the outcome of the electoral campaign or the country's politics.

In Russia, mass media can be either successful or independent. If they want to yield their owners a profit, earn their employees a salary, be circulated throughout the country and get access to headline stories,

there is a price: They have to pretend to be blind. These media need to keep guessing at what they may and what they must not write about. Their editors are obliged to immediately react to calls from the Kremlin or official authorities and to follow the incoming instructions to the letter.

The other option is independence: ignoring the calls, eschewing no taboo subjects, enjoying utter recklessness. Only, the media that go down this road lead miserable lives. Their journalists are never granted inter-

views with government decision makers and there is no income from advertising.

Unwritten laws rule in Russia. And they have not emerged overnight. At first Vladimir Putin did not set out to fight the independent press. All he wanted was to eliminate the TV channels of those oligarchs who were hostile to him - Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Gusinsky in particular. This was related to me by members of Putin's inner circle whom I interviewed for my book «All

the Kremlin's Men». It was only over the course of time that hearing less and less criticism was something Putin came to enjoy.

The pressure on journalists and media companies was steadily increased. Between 2000 and 2005, all TV stations were brought under government control. Then it was the newspapers' turn. Almost all of them saw a change of ownership. After 2010 a number of websites suffered the same fate. This process was not based on some elaborate strategy. Everything unfolded quasi spontaneously and slowly but steadily. The appetite came with eating.

When the 21st century was in its infancy, I was working for the newspaper «Kommersant» (Businessman), at the time one of Russia's best newspapers in terms of quality. The paper belonged to Boris Berezovsky, who had ensured the publication's independence by emigrating to London. When one of our texts elicited an annoyed reaction from the Kremlin, our editor-in-chief would reply: «I cannot change anything or the owner will fire me.» When Berezovsky was angry with the editor-in-chief, the latter would say: «We cannot implement your suggestions or we'll be shut down by the Kremlin.»

Independence went out the window when Berezovsky sold the newspaper to Alisher Usmanov, a metal and mining tycoon and partner of Gazprom. Some articles that had already been written were never published. Crucial paragraphs were removed from the stories. The bosses explained that it had to be done so as not to spoil relationships with the opinion leaders, as they would «no longer grant any interviews otherwise.» They maintained that you could not ignore the recommendations from the President's press office if you wanted to tag along on his next trip. You were supposed to be cautious - «I'm sure you'll understand.»

I left «Kommersant» in 2009. Several of my colleagues followed suit. Last year, during a lecture on journalism, students asked me in astonishment: «How could you work for «Kommersant» at all?» They could not imagine that it had once been a high-quality, independent newspaper.

Photo: Sergei Ilnitsky/Pool/Reuters

I subsequently worked as deputy editor-in-chief at the magazine «Russkij Newsweek», the best weekly in the country. We carried out important journalistic investigations, writing about corruption within the government and involving government appointments. In a nutshell: we pointed the finger where it hurts.

The magazine was not very profitable - high-quality newspapers seldom yield huge returns -, but it enjoyed an excellent reputation. Its German owners, Axel Springer SE, however, found themselves increasingly faced with bureaucratic resistance. It proved impossible, for example, for Axel Springer to go through with the acquisition of the magazine «GEO» as well as several other insignificant publications. In autumn 2010, «Russkij Newsweek» was finally shut down, on the initiative of its German owners - for «economic reasons», as we journalists were told. The truth was our independent work interfered with the media conglomerate's further development. Shutting down our news magazine only helped Axel Springer for a short while, however. In 2014, the government banned all foreign owners from publishing mass media. Axel Springer was forced to sell their company holding and get out of that market.

In 2010, I co-founded the TV station Dozhd (rain), the only independent news channel. The less-than-friendly colleagues from the government channels took every opportunity to predict the imminent shutdown of our station. But the Kremlin did not credit Dozhd with

## In Russia you can either be independent or successful

Mikhail Zygar

notable importance, until early 2014.

By then we had twenty million viewers nationwide and were soon able to earn big money through advertising, as well as becoming a serious independent mass medium. But as I have already said, in Russia you can either be independent or successful, never both.

No, Dozhd was not shut down. Instead, the propaganda machine was set in motion: The TV stations and newspapers loyal to the govern-



Powerful and confident: Russian President Vladimir Putin.

ment accused us of treason. Within a month all the cable and satellite carriers terminated their contracts. Almost all of our advertising clients severed their relationships with us.

But Dozhd survived. Thanks to our viewers we collected two million dollars through crowd-funding within a week. And we introduced a subscription system. Reception of our station costs 50 euro annually. That's not a lot. Still, it puts off a large number of people who are used to watching television free of charge. Day by day they receive the propaganda channels with their hugely expensive entertainment shows and aggressive news. Instead of 20 million viewers Dozhd currently has 65,000 subscribers. They pay for the journalistic work, the investigative work and the recording of controversial political talk shows.

But despite all that, there have been some positive developments. Admittedly, there are fewer mass media, but that does not mean there is less good journalism. Practically no other country has as many citizen journalists and bloggers as Russia. You can come across really good journalism in the social media realm. Because there is a lack of independent mass media, citizens are beginning to assume the role of the fourth power the government does not intend them to have. Often enough, citizen journalism actually proves more effective than professional journalism.

The number of critical citizens is growing, but - admittedly - slowly. A vast majority of people in Russia has lost faith in politics, elections or any democratic institutions and thus, in change. These people prefer to remain small and invisible. After all, they know: In Russia today you can either be independent or successful, but never both. 🌐

Personal: Mikhail Zygar, 35, is one of Russia's most famous journalists. His book «All the Kremlin's Men - Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin» (PublicAffairs) topped Russia's bestseller list for months and has been translated into 13 languages. In 2014, Zygar received the «International Press Freedom Award». Most recently, he was editor-in-chief of the Russian TV station Dozhd he helped found in 2011.



Photo: Thomas Dvorzak/ Magnum Photos

# What now?

Donald Trump's election as the next President of the U.S.A. has thrown the media into an identity crisis. The question of how to deal with populists and demagogues in a post-factual era will preoccupy them for a long time to come.

By Adrian Meyer

There was a time when intellectual Internet pioneers were thrilled by the new possibilities of the Web 2.0, by blogs and social media: At last the media would be democratized. Each citizen would be given a voice. A golden age of debate and self-expression would ensue.

The power of traditional media would be broken. They would have to get off their high horses and enter into a dialog with their readers. «The people formerly known as the audience are simply the public,» said Jay Rosen, professor of journalism at New York University. «Made realer, less fictional, more able, less predictable.» That was ten years ago.

That dream has turned into a nightmare.

Citizens may now have more sources to access information at their disposal, but all too often they only read those that confirm their own view of the world.

In the course of the US elections traditional media was brutally shown the limits of its influence. Everyone believed Hillary Clinton would win the White House. All the evidence appeared to suggest this, the polls, the news reporting, the money trail. But it was Donald Trump who was elected President, a racist, sexist, perpetually lying demagogue. The Chief Internet Troll, who knew how to exploit the new media reality in his favor. And what's more, the constant media barrage, all the scandals that were revealed and all of his blatant lies did not harm him in the least.

After the shock came the identity crisis. American journalist Mathew Ingram trenchantly described the despair on Twitter: «So all the fact-checking of Trump's lies, all the investigative journalism about his failures, even the tapes - none of it meant anything.»

Where did the media go wrong? Did the entire media system fail? In the days following Trump's election these were the questions preoccupying journalists. Many having spent months denying the possibility that Trump might actually be elected, went right on to segue to explaining why Trump had won. The shock had not yet even been absorbed, but the pundits were already providing

answers and blaming culprits.

**Here's a small sample:**

- Fake news
- Bots
- Algorithms
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Polls
- The Internet in general (sic!)
- Withdrawal into medial filter bubbles and parallel worlds
- Information overload
- Self-censorship
- Journalistic arrogance
- Overestimating one's own media power
- Atomizing of news
- Triumph of right-wing online platforms
- Focusing on bits of scandal rather than background and analysis
- Perpetual outrage in the media
- Uncritical reporting
- Clickbait
- Newsrooms lacking diversity and plurality of opinions
- Lack of resources
- Lack of readiness to engage in dialog
- Lack of transparency
- Loss of trust
- Loss of credibility

The list is long but only hints at the extent to which the media landscape is now changing, and we are only beginning to understand how quickly this change is happening.

«It is easier to call for solutions than it is to solve problems,» Swiss comedienne Hazel Brugger quipped after the election. That does not only go for Trump, who knew to take advantage of that fact by offering simplified proposals («Build that wall»). It is also true of the media. Instead of jumping to conclusions and offering premature answers it would be appropriate to first ask questions.

How can the media's loss of credibility be reversed? How do we get readers to enter into a constructive dialog with us? How do we find narratives that convince our readers without imposing our worldview on them? Could this be a task that the media cannot accomplish by themselves? Does media literacy have to be learned, maybe even in school?

Finding answers to these questions will take time. However, in the next few weeks we will see elections



The night after the election Trump voters and Clinton supporters got into heated arguments outside the White House in Washington D.C.

in Austria, the Netherlands, France, Italy and Germany, where populists like Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders or Frauke Petry are striving for power. How are we supposed to deal with these politicians?

It might be a start to take them seriously. But, that does not necessarily entail providing them with a soapbox. Donald Trump was omnipresent in the media. He got free airtime valued at two billion dollars. His Twitter account was catnip to the media. Each of his statements, no matter how bizarre, was exploited for airtime and clicks. Whatever Trump said, the media picked up. They became his mouthpiece.

«The press takes him literally but not seriously; his supporters take him seriously but not literally,» the American magazine «The Atlantic»

Photos: Udi Goren/Polaris/Laif, Dirk Waem/Beigo/Keystone, Peter Macdiarmid, Pascal Le Segretain und Thomas Lohnes für Getty Images

wrote in September. A similar point was made by Internet pioneer Clay Shirky after the Republican Convention in July: «We've brought fact-checkers to a culture war.»

Trump supporters didn't give a damn about facts. It was their identity that mattered. They voted for Trump not despite but because of his scandalous statements.

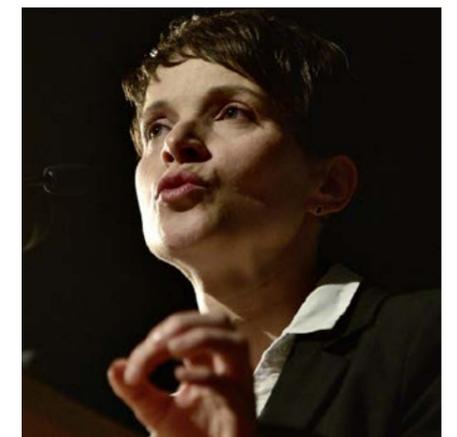
One commonplace, indeed a mantra from the early days of the World Wide Web, was «Don't feed the trolls.» Ignore them and they'll starve. That principle no longer holds in the era of social media. The top troll is now President-elect of the United States.

By not disagreeing with trolls, however, we effectively cede the battlefield to them; they feel that they are the majority. And by ignor-

ing them, confronting them with hate and sarcasm and arrogance, we only make them stronger. The same is true of downplaying their relevance.

What the media need is better narratives to get through to these people without jamming our ideas down their throats. This will, however, require more empathy. You have to approach these people as they are, not as you would like them to be.

It is uncomfortable to stand up to those with different ideologies. You have to work out your arguments again and again as well as challenge your own assumptions and certainties. Believing in the better argument may sound naive in times like these, but how else can we reach people, if not by talking? 🗣️



After the Brexit and Trump's election, several countries in Western Europe will hold important elections in which right-wing populists seek to seize power. From top to bottom: Geert Wilders (53), founder of the «Party for Freedom» in the Netherlands; former UKIP leader Nigel Farage (52), a key figure in the Brexit movement; Marine Le Pen (48), French candidate for president and leader of the Front National; Frauke Petry (41), leader of the German party AfD.

# Ringier's best photos of the last quarter

Six photographs and their stories: screaming narcissists, pacifist paratroopers and burning flags. By the way: red is dead.

**BAARD LUNDE** Photographer  
**HELEN POMBO** Editor



«Lucky lips are never blue.» Cliff Richard sang once upon a time in his worldwide chart-topper. And right he was. But neither are they red. What might appear as red to an untrained eye in this photograph by Norwegian

beauty photographer Baard Lunde is actually a clever combination of several colors, and red is not one of them. What the woman in the picture is in fact wearing on her lips is Cosmic Metals Fuchsia Fusion, Solar Energy and Gold Standard, colors that are very hard to write songs about, or even photograph. That was why Australian make-up artist Damian Garozzo was hired to work alongside Baard Lunde at the Paris shooting of the beauty supplement for **Style** and **Bolero**. Both men enjoy an excellent reputation when it comes to beauty photography. And they know that red isn't always just red.

**HANNA JARAY & VANESSA BACHMANN** Photography  
**HANNA JARAY** Editor



A narcissistic generation of children is growing up. «An increasing number of children are cheeky, lazy and spoiled,» according to an

article in the Swiss weekly **Beobachter** magazine entitled «Generation Pain in the Neck». Photographers Hanna Jaray and Vanessa Bachmann immediately decided to do the photo shoot for this story with their own children. «Not that they match the description! But our children have a lot of acting talent,» says Hanna Jaray, laughing. The job admittedly was not an easy one. The little ones needed to take a lot of breaks, and one's own children tend to be less well-behaved. That is why Hanna Jaray photographed her colleague Vanessa Bachmann's four-year-old girl Matilda, while Vanessa was working with Hanna Jaray's five-year-old Mio. A successful strategy. The children enjoyed the work and look really bratty and annoying in the photo.

**FABIENNE BÜHLER** Photography  
**ULLI GLANTZ** Editor



Ace skiers like Patrick Küng, Beat Feuz and Carlo Janka are used to dodging the flags marking gates, albeit not when they're burning. The

authorities of Saas-Fee in the Canton Valais were less cool about the concept that photographer Fabienne Bühler and editor Ulli Glantz had come up with for their picture. They were both summoned to the local fire station on the day before the shoot to prove that their photo project was harmless to the whole fire brigade - who were waiting in full gear with their fire hoses at the ready. «The preparations for the shoot took several days,» says Bühler. This involved the construction of life-size flammable slalom flags and determining a suitable location at the perfect time of day. «Even then the entire undertaking could easily have been ruined by rain, fog or wind.» But the weather played along. And so, at 8,400 ft. above sea level, they shot the hottest picture of the ski season for **SI Sport**.

**THOMAS SENF** Photography  
**NICOLE SPIESS** Editor



Three, two, one - go! That's the starting signal for base jumpers at Lauterbrunnen, in Canton Bern. At 110 mph the wingsuit flyers swoop

down into the valley; their glide takes thirty seconds. For three days, photographer Thomas Senf and journalist Natascha Knecht joined the base-jumper community on assignment for **Schweizer Illustrierte**. To shoot the crucial picture, Thomas Senf, himself an experienced mountaineer, abseiled 50 ft. to wait below the jumping-off point. «This was exactly the kind of picture I had in mind and it worked out at the first try.» Deadly accidents often occur at Lauterbrunnen. But the two base jumpers he photographed were sensible guys, says Senf. «That was my condition for this job. Russian roulette is not my thing. I don't fancy taking somebody's last picture.»

**GIAN MARCO CASTELBERG** Photography  
**REMO LÖTSCHER** Editor



«We are responsible for dreams.» These words, spelled out in big letters, are the writing on the wall at Partner Group in Zug,

Switzerland. Dreams mean money when it comes to this asset management company. The place where such dreams are hatched is the firm's impressive command center. Red chairs, a V-shaped table with the boss seated at the apex, and on the screen - joining the conference - outposts like Denver, Singapore or Sydney. Discussions at the weekly investment committee meetings are about which companies or projects Partner Group should fund. «It is a sworn community of financial specialists. There is an atmosphere of something like tense reverence in the room,» says Erik Nolmans. For **Bilanz** Nolmans and photographer Gian Marco Castelberg were able to catch a rare glimpse behind the scenes of a company whose stock-market value of 13 billion is half that of Credit Suisse.

**OLIVER BUNIC** Photography  
**SLOBODAN PIKULA** Editor



Oliver Bunic has been standing in the rain for four hours. He is on assignment to photograph the military maneuvers dubbed «Slavic Brotherhood» for the Serbian daily **Blic**. But the joint drills of the Russian, Belarusian and Serbian troops at Kovin near Belgrade keep getting postponed due to bad weather. «When they finally began, a minute before the Russian paratroopers jumped, a huge rainbow appeared in the sky,» says Bunic. To get the rendering of the colors right while preserving the contrast, he says he deliberately underexposed, setting the exposure compensation at -2. «The photographers relying on automatic exposure were unlucky. The rainbow was invisible on their pictures,» says Bunic. The symbol of the peace movement and Russian paratroopers in the same photograph - that is almost an optical illusion.





# All the world's a pie

She comes up with the zaniest graphics for the German weekly «Die Zeit»: Katja Berlin lives in Berlin; her real name is Katja Dittrich. Week by week she explains our sometimes-complicated world with simple, funny pie charts.

Interview: René Haenig Photos: Geri Born

**Ms. Dittrich, do you enjoy scarfing pie?**

Katja Dittrich: I do, actually; but I rarely indulge. I prefer to enjoy things in moderation.

**What kind of pie is your favorite?**  
I can't resist chocolate.

**Is it your love of chocolate pie that gave you the idea to explain the world with pie charts?**

No! It is rather because this kind of witty use of infographics has been around for a long time in the English-speaking world, especially in the U.S.A.

**Have you lived in the English-speaking world?**

No, it's more that I've been living in the World Wide Web. In 2010 an old friend asked me if I felt like running a blog with him. He also liked that kind of humor and he felt that we

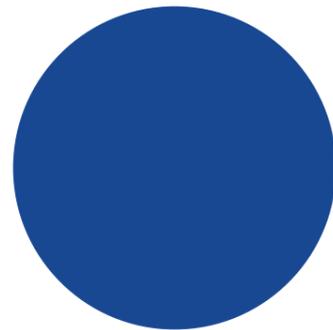
should bring it to Germany. So we started packaging office humor in infographics on graphitti-blog.de. We started out with jokes about everyday life rather than political humor.

**You originally studied media consulting and political sciences. Were you already drawing pie charts during lectures?**

No! In those days my sense of humor was much more verbal. The graphics only came later. The pie charts are mostly about the short punchline, which is why I spent a lot of time on Twitter beforehand. That's a good way to learn to boil down a topic to 140 characters - while being as funny as possible. In this respect it resembles the conciseness of my graphics.

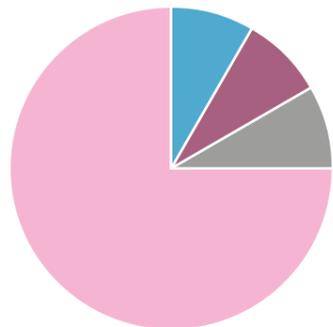
**Is it hard? Do you sometimes spend ▶**

The real agents of terror in Europe



■ Women in burqas ■ Men in pants

What the Greek crisis has taught us



- The criteria for stability need to be made more stringent
- The EU needs more powers of control
- Tougher sanctions need to be an option
- Whether there are ten or eleven zeros at the end of a figure kinda doesn't matter, does it!?



► **hours poring over your pie chart?**

Yes, indeed! It's a matter of work and concentration, not some spontaneous brainwave at the supermarket or such. It calls for diligence, so I sit at the desk...

...and proceed how exactly?

First I have to find the right subject. «Die Zeit» is published five days after I hand in my work, so my subject has to be as topical when I work on it as it will be five days later when «Die Zeit» appears. I also have to pick up on what's in the air.

That sounds pretty demanding. Sometimes it comes to me more easily, but it depends on what kinds of issues are currently the talk of the town. It can be really difficult.

**Do the editors of «Die Zeit» ever tell you what topics to work on?**

No, I choose them myself. I really have free rein in that respect.

**Thinking in a pie chart - how would you slice up your job into the segments research, reflection and committing the idea to paper?**

The last bit would be the smallest piece of the pie. Finding the right subject and working up a punchline - I guess that makes up about 40 to 60 percent. Finding a gimmick is the most difficult part. The longer I do this, the more I tend to get the feeling that I've done it all before. But so far it has worked out all the same.

**Are there moments when you despair?**

Yes, but at the same time I have to say: the deadline is my best friend. I think many creative people are familiar with this. When you really need to do it, it'll work out. I'm convinced that I would achieve less without a deadline. A little pressure does help.

**Before your «career in pies» you worked as a PR consultant. Was that too boring for you?**

(Laughs) Yes, indeed.

**And that is why you started your graphitti blog?**

You could say that. My colleague, who is writing under the pen name Peter Grünlich (Peter Greenish), and I will be publishing our seventh jointly produced book next week.

**How many «pies of truth» have you come up with so far?**

Phew, that's a good question. It must be about 800 graphics.

**And where do you get your ideas from?**

My work for «Die Zeit» often deals with political and socio-political topics, so I read readers' comments online. That is quite hard to some

extent, but you pick up on vibes and trends that you yourself might never have thought of. And I follow the news in order to put things in perspective. That is all part of my research.

**Do you only read «Die Zeit» in order to do this?**

No. I read everything from the leftist Berlin daily «taz» to the monthly culture and current affairs magazine «Cicero» - the entire political gamut, plus the dailies «Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung», «Süddeutsche Zeitung» and «Die Welt». I have to see all the facets of my topic to be able to carve out the essence. But I must admit, the readers' comments do my head in.

**In what way?**

Many comments are very nasty in part. It's a world of its own. It's predominantly men who proclaim their opinions in those forums and message boards. According to certain studies, the more right-wing people are in the political spectrum, the more likely they are to post comments, and to post mean-spirited comments in particular. Once I have handed in my pie chart, I usually take a two-day timeout from online news and readers' comments.

**Don't you ever feel like answering with a counter-comment?**

No, not at all! Nor have I registered

**Are there pies that meet with less acceptance?**

(Laughs) Sure, from time to time I can be a bit dull. I can't claim to be one hundred percent happy with what I hand in week by week. I think it's part of my job to live with the fact that I may say: It's okay, but I have done better graphics.

**Very self-critical of you.**

Yes! Still, I'm frequently surprised by the positive response of many readers.

**Are there any taboo subjects?**

Not subjects as such but rather my approach to things. What I define as humor for myself is something other than ridicule or schadenfreude. There was a time when political humor in Germany always consisted of elderly men with toupees cracking jokes about Merkel, about her dialect or whatever. I don't find that at all funny. I don't want to attack people on a personal level with my humor. I'd rather point out structures or systematics.

**Do you remember what your first pie chart was about?**

I only remember that one of my first ones was about the degree of ripeness of avocados.

**What do you answer when you are asked about your profession?**

That's difficult. By now quite a few people know my graphics. That helps, so I don't have to explain very much. Apart from that, I think there is nothing worse than re-telling my graphics

**«For my pie charts I always read the readers' comments. They really do my head in.»**

**Katja Berlin aka Katja Dittrich**

as a user anywhere in order to argue against something.

**Where - apart from «Die Zeit» - can we find your pies?**

In the «Handelsblatt Magazin» and the business magazine «brand eins», on a regular basis. I recently did a couple of funny graphics for a union campaign; but otherwise I write books first and foremost.

**Are there pie charts that go down particularly well?**

Well, I produce graphics on completely diverse topics. If we look at «Die Zeit», for example, where the topics are mainly political, I would say that readers are particularly keen on socio-political questions about fairly soft subjects.

**Can you give us an example?**

Minority rights or social politics in general.

jokes. Mostly I just say I am a humor writer.

**Are you afraid you might run out of ideas?**

Constantly! But when you have been doing this for a long time you develop strategies and tricks of the trade, so I keep coming up with new stuff. By now I have so much experience that I know how a punchline works. So to some extent it's become a matter of craftsmanship and no longer one hundred percent inspiration.

**Can you live on your pies?**

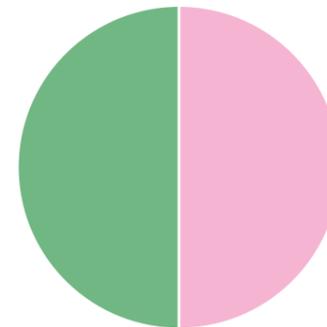
(Laughs) Yes, of course! I also published four books this year.

**My last question; why are your pie charts signed Katja Berlin when your name is Katja Dittrich?**

That's my pen name. When I started out I needed an alias because I was still employed full-time. 🌐

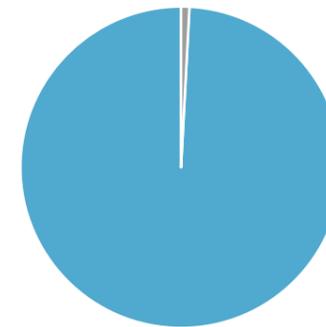
Katja Berlin - the nom-de-plume of Katja Dittrich, 36 - is a humor writer. Her recently published tenth book bears the title «Torten der Wahrheit - Die Welt ist kompliziert genug!» (Pies of truth - The world is complicated enough!). Dittrich grew up in Berlin, studied media consulting and political sciences at the TU university Berlin, worked as a PR consultant and is now running graphitti-blog.de. Her funny pie charts have been published for two years in «Die Zeit» and «Handelsblatt Magazin». Several of her books are bestsellers. Info: [www.katjadittrich.de](http://www.katjadittrich.de)

**The best ways to reconcile your job and your family in Germany**



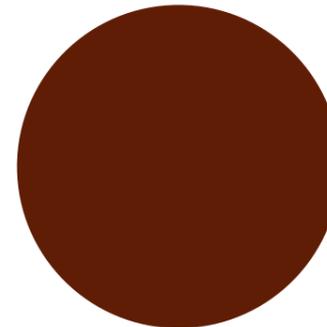
- When you don't have a family
- When you don't have a job

**What follows upon «You don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to ... »**



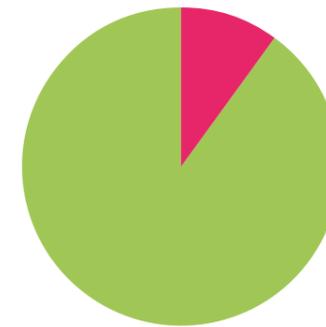
- Not a conspiracy theory
- A conspiracy theory

**The causes of right-wing acts of violence**



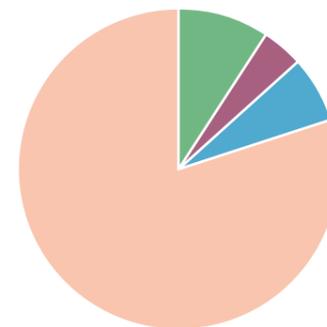
- Merkel's refugee policy
- Do-gooders
- Germany's "welcoming culture"
- The EU
- Right-wing perpetrators of violence

**What I do when I open a greeting card from grandma**



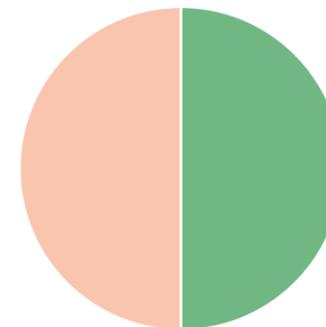
- Read the greetings
- Look for money

**Facebook**



- Posting holiday pics
- Looking at baby photos
- Stalking your ex
- Insulting strangers without even getting off the couch

**What mothers in Germany can do wrong**



- Go out to work
- Not go out to work

# The digital dawn's gleaming

«The digital revolution is standing everything on its head. That is a great opportunity for us women,» says Xiaoqun Clever in a recent essay published in the book «Die LEAN BACK Perspektive» («The Lean-Back Perspective»). DOMO presents an abridged version of her article.

Xiaoqun Clever Photo: Gian Marco Castelberg/13Photo

Wherever we turn, the digital world is standing proven principles on their head. Basic premises that have always seemed valid and dependable, that entire industries have used to build their business models on, suddenly no longer apply. The environment is mutating from a static context that can be organized and most of all controlled into something much more chaotic. That is change on an entirely new level, and it is deeply unsettling.

Long-term planning and methodology no longer apply. Even controlling and management lose their effectiveness, as the market environment, including the customer, are changing so quickly. Product development used to be driven by internal experts; CEOs or Chief Product Owners would set the course. Today the situation is reversed! That is why Big Data has become so important and why every enterprise needs to engage in a direct dialogue with its end consumer. The rejection of internal expertise in favor of reliance on outside feedback also entails radical change in terms of the skills that will be required in future. Knowledge itself no longer counts; what matters is how it is acquired. Company affiliation and years of experience are no longer of crucial importance.

Whether an enterprise is only



Xiaoqun Clever was appointed Chief Technology and Data Officer of the Ringier Group on January 1st 2016. «I am fascinated by how radically the digital revolution is changing the media industry. I want to take part in shaping this process.»

claiming to be a learning organization or whether it truly is one, is easy to distinguish. All you need to look at is the way it handles strategy and product development. Does the company follow a strategy along the lines of «Double the revenue» or «Raise margins by X percent» or does it have a real learning strategy? To what extent is joined-up thinking actually practiced in this company? When it comes to major initiatives it is clear that these do not only concern the management, as they also impact all the systems and processes below. Does this also extend to smaller projects? Are decisions regarding products based on data or egos? Can people handle uncertainty or does every last detail rely on number crunching? The fact is more and more projects are such that the question regarding the prospective return on investment can only be answered by stating: «I can't say - but I do know that we'll definitely go under if we don't do this.»

## Women will shape the management style of the future

What is becoming more and more relevant these days are interdisciplinary skills. In organizations that were governed by processes, the human manager was exchangeable. This is no longer the case. Now, who

is in charge matters. The game criteria are changing and providing a unique opportunity for women. So far they have been operating within male-oriented systems that were built by men for the advancement of men. These systems are now hitting a wall. They are not suited to successfully coping with digital change.

Dealing with diversity (not just that which is related to gender) and fostering its positive aspects requires a distinctly more mature breed of executive. Handling difference is tough. As human beings we find it much easier to manage what is like ourselves. Enterprises will generally have to work much harder with their executives if they want to become learning organizations.

Women, especially, tend to have the skill sets that will be relevant to the management style of the future. Of course, many men also possess these skills. It is more than mere chance, however, that women frequently excel in the following respects.

1. Women tend to be highly solution-oriented and more concerned with pushing an issue while involving everyone else. They achieve this by means of networked communication. Joined-up thinking is also a predominantly female trait.

2. Women bring emotion and empathy into play. The digital shift affects everyone; the dynamism and the extreme pace of the changes - which defies control - instill fear. Women tend to empathize more with others. As a result, they are more likely to notice when employees cannot cope with new demands and are able to encourage and empower them to do so.

3. Women tend to have less of an ego and are more likely to establish what is called «servant leadership»: This involves supporting employees and having their back, fostering them while challenging them.

## Successful leadership in the digital world

If executives fail to empower their employees and to enable them to make reasoned and reliable decisions on their own, it will be impossible to achieve the kind of agility that is crucial to the survival of the enter-

prise. Trust also goes hand in hand with an open structure of communication, where everyone can talk to anyone, a board member can enter into a direct dialogue with employees of someone else's division. This is not about decisions so much as the flow of information in general. If this flow bogs down in sovereign territories and hierarchies, there is no way to make holistic and high-quality decisions.

Empowering and trust also mean less room for ego. Given today's complexities and the need for enterprises to listen more closely to prosumer culture and therefore operate in a more data-driven manner, this can only work if, at the end of the day, objective facts are not overruled by subjective power. Ego creates an orientation and a habit of delegating decisions towards the top, leading to a bottleneck on the highest echelon of decision-making. As a result, the people at the top not only make bad decisions, they also make them far too slowly.

The executives of the future need to be able to reflect, to question themselves and to be aware of the fact that they will have to keep on learning all their lives. This means that listening is one of the most important new key skills. Empowering employees is also a crucial skill, on the one hand in order to attain the required swiftness and on the other to keep the best people when competing for talent in an environment geared towards learning and development.

## Power and what it means to women

Women have many of these qualifications. To me this entails that women should figure out what power and shaping mean to them. Power means having options for shaping things, and it is precisely in these shaping roles that we need more women. If we look at the English terminology of power we find that there are two types of wielding it: power over people and power with people.

Women tend to reject the first, more commonly used interpretation but without automatically taking the next step: to connote power and shaping positively for themselves. Speaking for myself, I have always been driven and motivated by the possibility of shaping. Whenever the opportunity of shaping things is

taken away from me it is time to look for a different environment.

I am also motivated by the act of involving people and bringing them along on a journey, providing them with a broader vision and thereby motivating them in turn. Especially when changes happen the overall mood often takes a downturn with people saying: «We can't do this.» To me nothing is impossible. It is just a matter of properly shaping the journey and breaking down the task.

It would be nice if women were more open to risk and showed more courage, courage to make decisions amidst uncertainty. And, if they took the risk of getting something wrong and showing a weakness once in a while. I find that women are often driven by the desire to avoid any possible mistake so no one can say: well, it was obvious she wouldn't be able to hack it.

When something really does go wrong women are prone to hanging their heads and giving up. Men, on the other hand, do their damndest to save their necks. They will use every argument they can muster to prove that external factors were to blame for their failure. If you repeat that kind of thing often enough you will not just make others believe it but also come to believe it yourself. This will not only boost your career but also your self-esteem. However, it is detrimental to your learning abilities.

Consequently, women are more likely to drop out while men bounce back. For the enterprise this means that they precisely lose that potential for reflection-driven learning while preserving external attribution.

I'm hoping women will develop a lot more independence and self-appreciation. Only when I have that can I believe in myself and deliberately take risks. And if something should go wrong it will not affect the core of my being, and I can use the mistake as an opportunity to learn. If you fail to appreciate yourself, you will never project confidence or authority. Thus, you will inevitably fall when the next storm breaks.

Just as women can make the most of their opportunities to change the system, men too, will have to adapt. It is only by working together that they will be able to create a new system that can make the digital transformation a success. 🌐

In the new book «Die LEAN BACK Perspektive» forty successful women tell their own stories. Xiaoqun Clever does this in her essay «The digital dawn's gleaming». In this piece she lays out her views on leadership in the digital age and points out the ways in which women can play a major part in this field.

# No Mercy

One fall day in New York, DOMO writer Peter Hossli posed next to three men previously unknown to him. They are mega super uber-stars. This is the bizarre encounter between the crusty Metallica rock musicians and a reporter who is clueless about metal rock.

Text: Peter Hossli

Suddenly three elderly men are standing next to me. Two have hair, one is hiding his bald pate under a cap. We all smile into a camera. The big guy puts a hand on my right shoulder. The flash pops. Once, twice, three times. Done. They hold their warm hands out to me. «Cool, man,» says the shortest member of the trio in English. He has a Nordic accent.

They push me further to the left. An Italian reporter is already lined up. Again, the big guy forms the group into a quartet. The flash pops. Once, twice, three times. «Cool, man.» - with a Nordic accent.

Until right before that meeting I had no idea who these men were, what their names were, what they looked like. I was thinking: Why on earth would they want to have their picture taken with me?

It's because they are mega super uber-stars.

They are the members of the American trash-metal band Metallica with a new album out which is supposed to become a worldwide event. They once played in Moscow to almost two million fans, my colleague at the next desk over tells me. He appears to be jealous that I would meet them, these hard - surely the hardest - rock musicians in America.

It was quite literally out of this world. In September I'd reported on the US election campaign and attended the first TV debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. This took place in New York, which is where, the following day, Metallica welcomed the press to listen to their music. As I was in New York anyway and Ringier wanted to save itself unnecessary travel expenses, the Metallica expert on our editorial team sent me to this «listening». This was set up not just anywhere but at the legendary Electric Lady Studios in Manhattan, where Jimi Hendrix (†27) once used to rock.

It is lunchtime. Maybe fifty music journalists from Europe are standing in front of the entrance. Some are wearing Metallica t-shirts. Are they fans or journalists? Or are the boundaries blurred? I definitely stand



Photo with unfamiliar men in New York: Metallica founder and drummer Lars Ulrich, writer Peter Hossli, lead singer James Hetfield, guitarist Kirk Hammett (from left).

out in my suit jacket and white shirt.

A narrow hallway leads down to the studio. Everybody is nice. «You are being filmed; it's for promotional use,» a sign says. Journalists writing about music are used as extras in a commercial promoting that same music.

## Fans, extras and potential thieves

At the entrance we all obediently exchange our electronic gadgets for notepads and pens. No one is supposed to record and distribute the Metallica album. So it boils down to: journalists are fans, extras for commercials - and they are considered potential thieves.

To make up for this there is free beer, four different varieties, and water, but no food. Suddenly there is applause, closely followed by a Nordic accent. «Nice to have you here,» says Lars Ulrich (52), the Danish guy. The founding father of Metallica is said to be to be the hardest drummer in the world. He is holding a can of Perrier water; a toothpick dangles from the corner of his mouth. He asks everyone where they're from. Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, Spain. A Danish guy speaks Danish to him.

Ulrich doesn't say a lot. Still, I take down every word, as I will have to write a piece. «The album was finished a fortnight ago. It's totally fresh. You are the first to hear it. I changed the sequence of the songs at the last minute. We recorded them in San Francisco.» That's it. How about some questions? Reporters - whose very business is asking questions - are not given that opportunity on this occasion.

What am I supposed to write? I experience a quick panic attack until loud music blows any nasty thoughts out of my head. Ulrich has shoved the CD into the sound system. Immediately, the loudspeakers pound, howl and lash out. The music is raw, heavy and hard, it is like being dragged across cobblestones.

They hammer on about death and revenge and the end of the world, about moths going up in flames. No mercy, anywhere. But honestly: I don't understand a word, not just because I'm tired after ten days of touring through the USA and reporting. It is because the lyrics are belabored rather than sung. And yet I find that listening to this I am enjoying myself. The loud, raw, breathless sound is oddly soothing.

After some eighty minutes the last riff fades. Drummer Ulrich, lead singer James Hetfield (53) and lead guitarist Kirk Hammett (53) enter the room to mingle with the journalists, docilely drinking mineral water, posing. Metallica hired the photographer. The next day, each reporter receives a Dropbox link allowing them to download the pictures.

For the time being, I was sworn to silence. Until November 1st there was an embargo regarding «Hardwired ... to Self-Destruct» - the title of the band's tenth studio album, the first in eight years according to Wikipedia. My story was «a bit thin,» complains my editor who wanted to save expenses by sending me. He's right. But that simply was all I got.

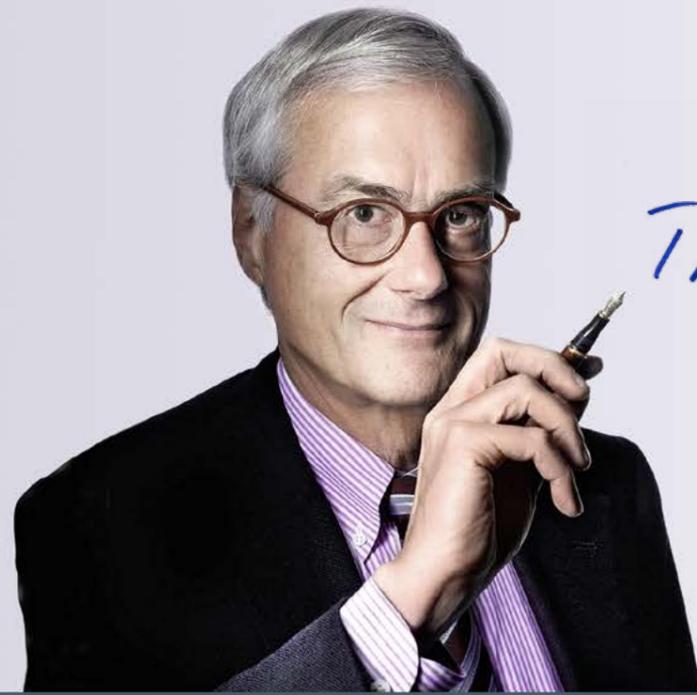
«Wow! You met Metallica!» a lay-outer crows. «I'm gonna buy the album!» Mission accomplished. 🍀



Metallica - tough guys on stage: lead singer James Hetfield, drummer Lars Ulrich, lead guitarist Kirk Hammett, bass guitarist Robert Trujillo.



Photos: Gonzales Photo und Christian Hjorth/The Hell Gate/Corbis via Getty Images (4), Melinda Oswaldel



*True lies*

«If the press didn't exist, it should not be invented.» No, this is not a quote from Donald Trump, as it is too cautiously worded. Honoré de Balzac, one of the great novelists of the 19th century, coined the quip. In the recent German translation of some of his writings, «Von Edelfedern, Phrasendreschern und Schmierfinken» (in German only), you can find many more of Balzac's opinions which apply perfectly to the reality of today's media. For example: As soon as the subject is politics, the novelist asserts, journalists and readers corroborate each other's expectations. In Balzac's view there is a certain type of subscriber who is delighted when he is served his own thoughts for breakfast.

The novelist complained about a phenomenon, which has been honed to perfection in the digital world, especially on Facebook. In Balzac's time at least they were journalists who liked endorsing and confirming their readers' opinions; in Donald Trump's case - according to one of Switzerland's daily newspapers, «Tages Anzeiger» - Macedonian teenagers, among others, were eagerly writing and producing a lot of news about Trump and Hillary Clinton - all of it completely fabricated. A growing number of people appear to feel that whether or not news is true is irrelevant, as long as it reflects their opinions.

But even «fake news» is not a new concept. For almost thirty years the American supermarket tabloid «Weekly World News» came up with headlines that were the envy of any competitor. Readers loved to read stories like «Blind man can see again, leaves ugly wife», or «Plane missing since 1939 lands with pilot's skeleton still in the seat», but no one really believed them. The headline «Alien endorses Bush for President» also didn't make it into the serious media. The Macedonian scribblers were rather more successful: Their line «Pope forbids Catholics from voting for Hillary» was taken at face value by many readers.

Ten years ago, when circulation of «Weekly World News» had fallen from one million to 80,000 copies, publication was discontinued. The same is not expected to happen any time soon with Facebook.

*Michael Ringier*



Raluca Hagiú is the editor-in-chief of Unica Magazine and its eponymous website, unica.ro, one of the top media brands dedicated to women in Romania.

**MONDAY**  
**GALA unica**

My to do list is as long as my arm. My number one priority is «Gala Unica» at Bragadiru Palace, one of the most beautiful buildings in Bucharest. I call the nominees to congratulate them, inviting them to share their joy on social media and tag our Facebook page UnicaOnline.

**TUESDAY** Today, it's time to finish the cover of our December issue. We are turning 19. This is our anniversary issue and we get quite emotional working on it. We have an exclusive cover - one of the most popular couples in Romania and their little boy Alexandru in a special photo shoot. I'm proud and happy to have them on the cover of our magazine. Adding an exclusive story meant to increase our circulation and traffic on our website, unica.ro.



**WEDNESDAY** My team and I are always watching for topics to increase our website traffic. We focus on video productions and today we've just finished the first episode of our production «What men think?». It's super fun! We've already filmed 30 episodes and I'm sure some of them will go viral on the Internet. I'm very excited about this project!

**THURSDAY** It's time for virtual reality! I'm heading to a photo shoot with Andreea Raicu, an inspirational Romanian celebrity. What are we up to? Photos for the magazine, filmed interviews for unica.ro and virtual reality created with our 360-degree camera. We are filming in her fashion showroom. Virtual reality is cool and is happening right now.



**FRIDAY** I have to plan our creative workshop «Atelierele de idei Unica» dedicated to our readers. The formula goes like this: one discussion topic, 4 speakers and 150 readers. For our 15th edition, we'll talk about boosting self-confidence to enhance both your personal and professional life. The format is so successful we already have sponsors on a waiting list for next year.



**WEEKEND** I use weekends to relax, drink white wine, meet up with friends... I like going to the movies, watching Netflix, reading books and going to the beauty salon (it's my secret vice :-)). Or, I go to self-development courses. And at some point during the weekend, I like to have a quiet moment looking over holiday pics and planning my next escape in this beautiful world.

# The Language Police

Dot your i's and cross your t's – a piece of text can only go to the printers once Regula Osman has pronounced it error-free. For her, proofreading is not just a job but a vocation. She loves the harmony of languages – and playing baroque music on the harpsichord.

Photos: Geri Born, private

She does her job diligently but quietly. She is someone who works in the background: At the Ringier Media House in Zurich Regula Osman, 49, makes sure that when the Blick journalists' texts make their way into the paper, they are flawless. Unlike the reporters' names hers never appears under any article. And yet, she saves many a writer from certain humiliation. Regula Osman not only corrects punctuation and spelling mistakes, she also double-checks names, ages and other details. Essentially, she is a one-woman language and fact police.

Now famous for her trademark laugh, she grew up on a farm in the vicinity of Zurich. As a teenager she first learned French at school and realized that she had a gift for languages: «I really had fun with it.» When English and Italian came on top she continued to enjoy herself. Physics, math and chemistry, however, were not her thing. «Those classes were a nightmare.» She had originally planned to go to Lausanne after her graduation, to attend the hotel-management school, but after an internship with a four-star hotel she lost her appetite for it. She decided to train as a translator and subsequently worked for a corporate lawyer, «where I learned a lot.»

With the advent of the Internet in the late 1990s, Regula Osman decided to further her education. She ended up in Ringier's documentation department doing topical fact-checking for journalists. She had come across the archivist's job while looking for a job for a friend in the classifieds. «It required language skills, which I had.» It was exactly the type of knowledge and experience that would allow her to work for Ringier until today. In fact, her original job as an archivist no longer exists; languages are her «insurance» for staying on at Ringier. To unwind Regula plays the harpsichord and the spinet. Unlike the piano, these historic instruments have strings that are plucked, not struck. «Pure harmony», she rhapsodizes. Traumatized by piano lessons as a child she refused to touch an instrument for thirty years, but now she once again loves to tickle the ivories. **RH**



Regula Osman (above) at her proofreading workplace on the 5th floor of the Ringier Media House in Zurich – and 15 years ago at the research desk (left), where she received fact-checking assignments from journalists. In her spare time, she enjoys baroque music, playing the spinet among other instruments.

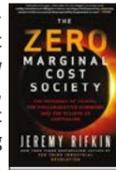


**Editor's Choice**  
by Marc Walder

Ringier CEO Marc Walder tells you which books he's reading and why they fascinate him.

Jeremy Rifkin  
**THE ZERO MARGINAL COST SOCIETY**

The end of capitalism will not come tomorrow but it will come, inevitably – at least according to Jeremy Rifkin, an American economist, sociologist, government advisor and bestselling author. His theory: In a free market, production keeps increasing while prices decrease until they cease to yield a profit. At the end of this process the marginal costs, the costs for each additionally produced unit, are almost zero. Rifkin's book is a ripping read and a fascinating journey into the world of the day after tomorrow. In more than 500 pages he describes how our society, shaped by industrial production, will change and grow into a global society leaning towards the collective. In this new world sharing has more value than owning, citizens are politically active across borders, and the pursuit of a higher quality of life outranks striving for wealth. Publisher: Macmillan USA



Bernd W. Wirtz  
**MANUAL OF MEDIA AND MULTIMEDIA MANAGEMENT**

Media and multimedia management is characterized by a significant dynamic and increasing complexity. In his manual, Dr. Bernd Wirtz, a tenured professor of information and communications management, lays out the associated challenges and sheds light on them from various angles. Sixty-three top-notch scientists and practitioners devote themselves to current issues regarding media and multimedia management in 43 articles. This book, the first basic textbook of its kind, is particularly valuable because not only does it present insight from a scientific standpoint, it also includes business concepts and practical know-how. Publisher: Springer (in German only)



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