

ooo Ringier

DOMO



“You can kill a
journalist but not
the story.”

Five years ago, Ringier journalist Ján Kuciak was murdered for his investigative work. In our interview, his colleague Pavla Holcová explains how she was able to finish Kuciak's investigation despite her grief.

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«I had to go through this murder again and again.»

Czech journalist Pavla Holcová finished the investigation begun by Ján Kuciak, who was murdered in 2018. A conversation about the situation in Slovakia five years after the murder of her colleague, about occupational hazards and dedication.

Julian Teicke

In an interview with DOMO, the Wefox founder tells us why, as a Berliner, he likes to meditate in the countryside, why Hollywood star Ashton Kutcher invests in his company, and what links him to Ringier – apart from DeinDeal.ch.

Social commitment at Ringier

Four exemplary initiatives from Slovakia, Hungary and Estonia: IT workshops for women, in-house healthcare, job placement for people with disabilities and job ads with salary information for more equal pay.

The good man

The Blick Group has recently started using ethical hackers. They look for security flaws online and are paid for spotting such errors. One of them is Andreas Hauser. A short interview about a special profession.

A blind eye

In his column, publisher Michael Ringier reminds us that the media need to examine all sides of an issue and says in no uncertain terms what he thinks of them when they fail to do so.

Recommended Reading

«Die Herzlichkeit der Vernunft» (The Cordiality of Reason) is one of my favorite books, I own several copies of the same edition – in case I ever misplace one. The dialogue between the writers Ferdinand von Schirach and Alexander Kluge about Socrates (or the happiness of modesty), Voltaire (or freedom through tolerance) and Kleist (or the knowledge of man) is more relevant than ever and inspires us to rethink and to change our way of thinking.

Axel Konjack

Head Global Market-places and Member of the Ringier Group Executive Board



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In these globally challenging times, companies ought to be creative, flexible, nimble and innovative. Ringier Serbia is bold and agile, which is why the launch of **Blic TV** in October was a logical step for us. The TV channel preserves Blic's DNA: quick, clear, timely and accurate news and, in addition, its own entertainment formats. Let a new era begin: Blic TV.

”

Jelena Drakulic

CEO Ringier Serbia

10 years

Jobberman Ghana

Impressive figures for the anniversary:

Within ten years, the job platform has registered 630,000 job seekers on its portal and collaborated with 22,000 employers. In the past twelve months, it achieved 1,000,000 sessions, i.e. visits to the website.

Did you know?

Not everything was better in the past. Today's media professionals are spoiled: With handy computers, cell phones and the internet, we text, e-mail, photograph and talk whenever and wherever it suits us, even as avatars in the metaverse. Total communication! – at least as long as we have power and a good signal...

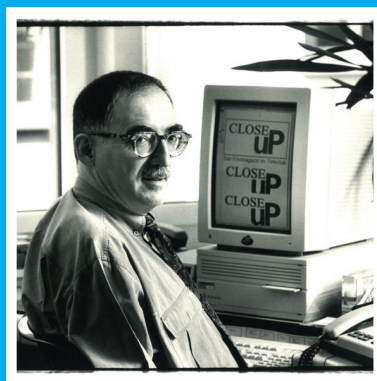
Let's go back 40 years and look at working conditions in the 1980s, an eventful decade in the history of communications. This is what things looked like back then: The standard equipment for work in Ringier's editorial offices was the pale green Hermes 2000 portable typewriter and, for reporters, the Hermes Baby. The journalists' manuscripts had to be keyed in again in the composing rooms, set in columns and the prints pasted together to form complete pages. Executive secretaries in the Pressehaus rejoiced at the first models of the IBM ballpoint typewriter with correction mode for one line in a display and elegant Olivetti models with monochrome screens and memory disks. If necessary, correcting with Tipp-Ex made for a clean manuscript, while copies were created by means of thermal or carbon paper.

Formula 1 legend Roger Benoit (73) told me how, in the 1980s, he would painstakingly have to dictate his reports from all the world's race tracks to a secretary over the phone and spell them out («Regazzoni with two Z's as in Zurich»).

To transmit journalistic articles and correspondence, one normally used fax and telex. Telex? «Teletype», an electric writing keyboard that could be used to print and send texts on a roll of paper via a special telephone line. These so-called «tickers» stood in every editorial office and were used primarily to receive reports from agencies like SDA and UPI. At sports and other events, they were part of the inventory of the press centers, and at most post offices they were available for use in booths. It was not

until 2020 that Swisscom discontinued the telex service.

Mobile telephony was still in its infancy: PTT offered 12-kilo suitcase models as «Natel» (short for «national car phone») for reporters and construction site workers, and from 1987, a clunky cell-phone model. As head of the communications department, I was one of its first users at Ringier. Retail price: 7,500 Swiss francs.



Hans Jürg «Fibo» Deutsch in front of a Mac with a portrait-format screen in 1998.

Innovations had a tough time: Hans-Ueli Indermaur (now 83), editor-in-chief of the TV program guide «Tele», learned that the hard way when he brought the new personal computer named «Macintosh» from a company called «Apple» to the editorial office at his own expense in 1984. The «Mac» was supposed to facilitate entering and designing text. Ringier CEO Heinrich Oswald immediately received a scathing message from headquarters in Zofingen. The head of the IT department demanded that he reprimand and punish Indermaur: The culprit had illicitly smuggled foreign «consumer electronics» into the Ringier system. As a result, the security of the IBM-based central data storage with thousands of subscriber data was endangered, the economic risk was immeasurable. Seeing as how Apple products have utterly triumphed at Ringier in the meantime, that warning obviously did not bear fruit.

Other in-house pioneers were less successful: In the eighties, Ringier relied on a novel information service called «Videotex». With special telephone equipment, including an integrated keyboard and screen, Switzerland's national postal, telephone and telegraph service PTT offered an electronic telephone directory, chat platforms, e-mail, online shopping at the Jelmoli department store and a basic telebanking service. Although devoid of visual capabilities, this range of services was in many respects a forerunner of the forthcoming Internet.

In 1994, Ringier founded the VTX agency «1818». It won the Golden Monitor prize twice at the Basel Videotex fair with custom programs for Jelmoli and Reuters. To no avail: Faced with the increasing worldwide success of the Internet, Videotex was doomed. On September 30, 2000, Videotex, which had actually been years ahead of its time, officially shut down its operations.

Today, the conveniences of the Internet have become a matter of course. How would communication and its products have developed if in 1886 the South Tyrolean carpenter (!) Peter Mitterhofer, who moonlighted as a musician and a ventriloquist, had not invented the typewriter? His notion of the keyboard was later a building block and a prerequisite for calculators and computers. ■ **Fibo Deutsch**



Excursion tip: The ENTER Museum in Solothurn displays a collection that is unique in Switzerland – from the first radio transmitter to present-day computers. enter.ch

World «Rhaecord»



World record: A 6,266-foot train travels through the autumnal Albula valley.

On October 30, Blick TV broadcast a four-hour program devoted to the world record attempt of the Rhaetian Railway: A train with 100 carriages was to travel the 25-kilometer Albula line, which is a Unesco World Heritage Site. The entry in the Guinness Book of Records was achieved, and the biggest production in Blick TV's history generated sensational ratings:

Around 660,000 live views were recorded in the player. At times, 51,000 users were watching the world record attempt live at the same time. 1.02 million VoD views were counted on Blick.ch on the record day – in addition, the ticker for the world record attempt alone got 500,000 clicks.

Why BrighterMonday Kenia makes young people fit for the agricultural sector



BrighterMonday trains young Kenyan job seekers in soft skills.

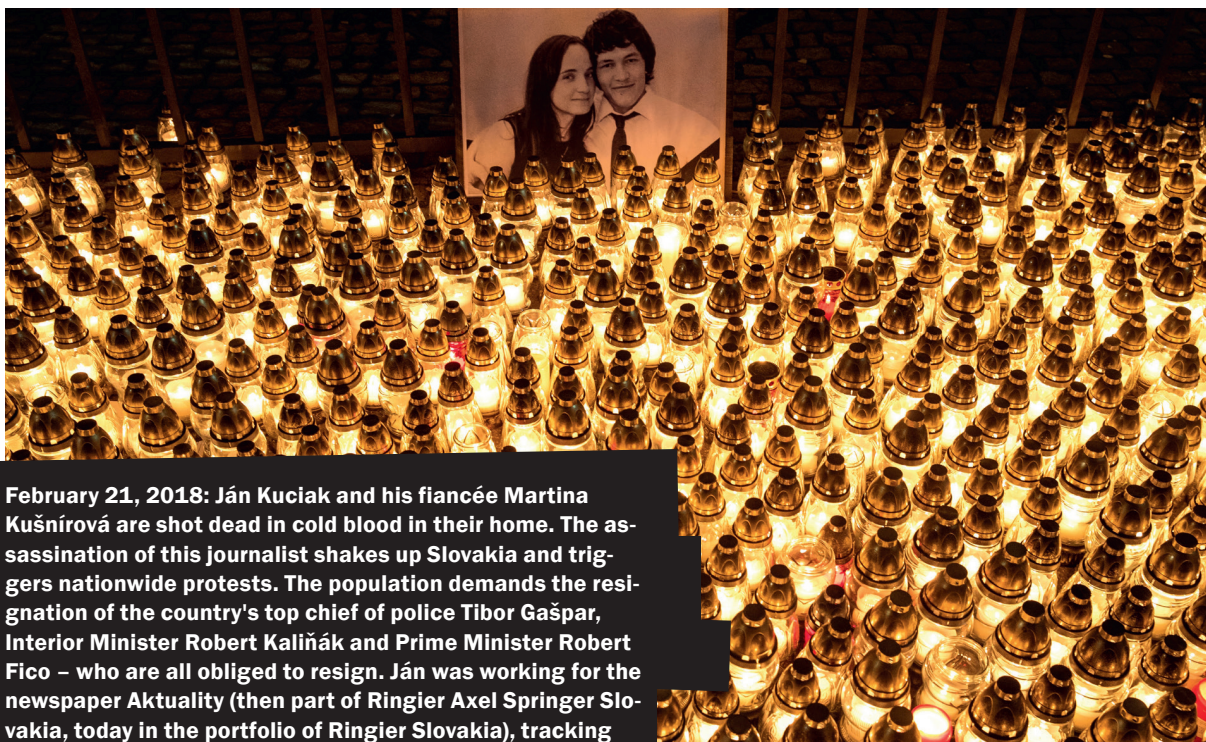
In March 2022, the job platform BrighterMonday, which is part of The African Talent Company (TATC), launched the «Agri-Jobs 4 Youth» initiative in collaboration with the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ). The agri-food sector is so important in Kenya because it provides a livelihood for more than half of the population and as much as 70 percent in rural areas. At 22.4 percent, agriculture also contributes significantly to the country's GDP. BrighterMonday conducted a skills-gap survey of young job seekers, which revealed that job seekers in the agri-food sector lack soft skills. The project now aims to train young people between 18 and 35 in these skills and provide employment opportunities in the agricultural sector. More than 7,000 young people have registered since spring, some of whom have already been placed in internships, apprenticeships or jobs.



“ I had to go
through this
murder again
and again. ”

Interview: Nina Huber | Photography: David Konecny

Pavla Holcová (41), an independent investigative journalist from the Czech Republic, finished the story of Ján Kuciak (1990-2018), who was killed for his enquiry. What drives her, what gnaws at her and how she assesses the situation in Slovakia five years after the murder.



February 21, 2018: Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová are shot dead in cold blood in their home. The assassination of this journalist shakes up Slovakia and triggers nationwide protests. The population demands the resignation of the country's top chief of police Tibor Gašpar, Interior Minister Robert Kaliňák and Prime Minister Robert Fico – who are all obliged to resign. Ján was working for the newspaper Aktuality (then part of Ringier Axel Springer Slovakia, today in the portfolio of Ringier Slovakia), tracking down the dubious machinations of the oligarchs. The film «The Killing of a Journalist» meticulously reconstructs the case. It shows how a corrupt system works and how important and powerful journalism can be. Pavla Holcová features prominently in the documentary.

The young couple's murder triggered a surge of solidarity and protest in Slovakia.

Pavla Holcová, you worked closely with Ján Kuciak. What was going through your mind when you learned of his death?

I learned of it on a Monday morning as I was going to work. I got a call. At first, I could not believe it. It was only when I reached my office that the message penetrated from my ear to my brain. Shortly after, colleagues from Aktuality called me and told me I should immediately apply for police protection, which I subsequently did.

You could not move freely after that?

Only accompanied by police officers. They gave me two days to finish the story I had been working on with Ján. The idea was to show the direct link between the most powerful Italian mafia organization, the 'Ndrangheta, and Prime Minister Robert Fico. That is why the first suspicion was that someone from the 'Ndrangheta had murdered Ján Kuciak, which was later proven to be wrong, and so, they assumed that I was also in danger. They understood that the story had to be published as soon as possible. After that, they took me to a safe, secluded place in the middle of the forest, and I had to leave my laptop and cell phone behind.

In the film "The Killing of a Journalist" you say that you and Ján laughed at an open threat by the alleged contract killer and businessman Marian Kočner. Why did you not believe that

it had to be taken seriously?

Because it had never happened before in Slovakia that a journalist was murdered because of his investigations. We journalists are constantly threatened or experience smear campaigns against us, but that does not mean we are actually attacked.

Do you blame yourself for Ján's death?

Of course, I do. We all blame ourselves for not protecting him better.

With all this sadness and anger, how did you find the energy to continue Ján's investigation?

It was clear to me that we had to finish his story. Otherwise, the others would have won. This way, we could show that you can kill the journalist, but not the story. For my psychological well-being, it was the worst possible idea, because I was forced to go through the murder over and over again.

Did you get psychological help?

No, at that time I thought I could handle it. We wanted to understand exactly how the murder had happened. And we didn't trust the police. Then I lost all my emotions for about a year and a half. Only then did I get help. One day I was planting fresh flowers on my balcony, and that's when I suddenly felt my feelings coming back. And I realized that something had been terribly wrong in the last months.



Ján Kuciak's parents would have liked him to write about sports.

The applause at Zurich's Corso movie theater lasts for a long time. The Zurich Film Festival is presenting the documentary "The Killing of a Journalist" on a rainy Tuesday evening in September. One of the great achievements of this film by director Matt Sarnecki is that it clearly shows how deep the mafia entanglements were in Slovakia, the erstwhile paragon among the newer EU member countries. But you also feel close to the people, to editor-in-chief Peter Bárty, who still struggles with tears when he talks about Ján, or to his father who recalls, "We would have had a wedding in May, but instead we had a funeral."



An absurd scene: Prime Minister Robert Fico promises one million euros for leads in the Ján Kuciak murder case.

A turning point in the investigation occurred in October 2019, when a source leaked the secret police files to you. Instead of breaking the big story on your own, you built a team of media professionals. Why?

I knew that we would achieve our goal better that way. After all, we were dealing with 70 terabytes of data! For comparison: The famous Panama Papers comprised about 4 terabytes. This data first had to be cleaned up and made usable, because you can't get anywhere if you need to write queries in the command line to get to the information. The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) provided us with technical support. It took them two months to clean the data. We then stored it on a server in undisclosed location abroad and set up a secret room in Bratislava with computers that could access this data. My colleague Árpád Soltész, co-founder of the Investigative Center of Ján Kuciak (ICJK) in Slovakia, and I decided we won't publish any stories not to create the pressure and feeling of competition on other media in the project but to enhance collaboration with all other media involved.

What your investigation revealed was monstrous: The whole system was corrupt, all the way up to the top levels of government, the police and he judiciary. Were you ever afraid that you or someone else might also be assassinated?

No, because something happened after Ján and Martina were killed: People took to the streets. They stood up for us journalists and they stood up for independent journalism. If it hadn't been for that support, I don't think I would have had the strength to go on.

When Marian Kočner, and his accomplice Alena Zsuzsová were acquitted of the contract killing, how did you feel?

I am one hundred percent sure that Marian Kočner commissioned the murder. After the verdict was announced, there was a huge shitstorm against the judges. That's when I felt I had to defend the judges, because there simply wasn't enough evidence.

Has there been a lasting improvement in the situation in Slovakia?

The situation in the country is not good. I was there in February and conducted 13 interviews to find out how the country has changed in the four years since the murder. The hope for a better Slovakia seems to have disappeared. The current government makes wrong decisions and is incompetent. If things continue like this, the chances are very high for the opposition party SMER-SD – led by former Prime Minister Robert Fico – to return to power.

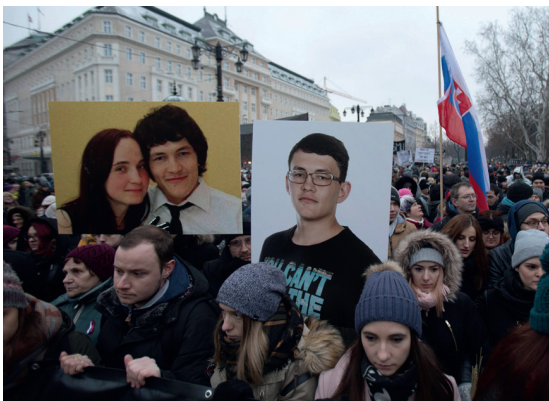
The film "The Killing of a Journalist" ends with Marian Kočner being jailed for tax fraud but found innocent of the contract killing. In the meantime, Kočner has been charged with three other counts of attempted murder, and certain patterns have emerged that resemble the approach taken in the Ján Kuciak case. The odds are now better that Kočner will be convicted of Kuciak's murder retroactively.



June 2021: Slovakia's Supreme Court overturns Kočner's acquittal. The defense lawyer for Kuciak's family hugs Pavla Holcová, as Aktuality editor-in-chief Peter Bárty looks on.

“I'm not willing to live in fear and lock myself in the cellar.”

Pavla Holcová, journalist



After the murder of journalist Ján Kuciak, crowds of people take to the streets to call for the government's resignation.

The next elections are scheduled to take place in 2024. According to polls, the SMER-SD party would win right now. What would that mean for the country?

The media would probably have to fear reprisals and expect censorship measures.

In the film, you come across as a fighter, for Ján and his family but also for the truth and a better state of the country. How do you see your own role? It is definitely not a fight. My job is to make information available to people so they can make good decisions.

Have you become more suspicious since Ján's murder?

Yes, a little. But I'm not willing to live in fear and lock myself in the cellar. It's simply a risk that comes with the job.

Do you ever wish you had chosen a different profession?

Yes, every Friday! You hardly ever get any rest in this job. But my work makes sense. Besides, I love that special moment when a story starts to come together and you understand what happened.

How do you usually find your stories?

I have a large, international network. Often, colleagues come to me with a story where something doesn't add up. We then dig until we find out why it doesn't fit.

You once posed as a prostitute and infiltrated a prison in Peru to conduct an interview with the leader of a U.S.-Serbian drug ring. What drives you?

I want to understand how the world works. I'm quite curious by nature. And I have great people around me, family, friends, colleagues, and we are all crazy about stories.

Are you, despite everything, an optimistic person?

Yes, I am.

That came quickly. What makes you think the world is getting better?

For my part, I can only try to do my best. And I see two aspects to that: Firstly, we have to do what we can, so people know what they have to do to make the world a better place. Secondly, if we have done our job informing people, at least no one can say they didn't know.

JULIAN TEICKE



His Swiss-German insurance company Wefox is considered a big fish in the start-up scene. Even Hollywood star Ashton Kutcher is on board as an investor. Here, co-founder Julian Teicke reveals how a moment of vicarious embarrassment inspired him to create the company – and what silence and country air have to do with success.

**Interview: René Haenig
Photography: Christian Krininger,
Thomas Buchwalder**

Julian Teicke, when was the last time you were in the country?

Two weeks ago, on business for a day in Liechtenstein, which is very rural for me, as I live in Berlin. I spent several days in the country at my in-laws with my family two months ago; they live on a farm in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

I ask because you supposedly go to the country every month with a personal coach to talk about your goals.

That's true! Most recently, I was in the country with my coach for a three-day meditation retreat.

And what did you talk about?

We did not talk. It was a silent meditation.

That didn't do you any good then.

Yes, it did! It gave me mental clarity about professional and personal priorities so I can become more successful and happier. Basically, this coaching helps me to have a space where I can categorize impressions I gather during the course of a day and make sure the conclusions I draw from them are well-considered and that I don't act based on tunnel vision according to automatisms and make mistakes in my everyday life.

You used to want nothing to do with insurance. Why?

My father worked in this industry, and when I was a child, he would occasionally take me to company events where people were called up on stage and given a watch or incentive trips. That always made me feel embarrassed for them, and I didn't exactly have a positive attitude toward anything to do with insurance.

And yet, you co-founded the insurance company Wefox in 2015.

That was not intentional, it was destiny. After the sale of DeinDeal.ch to Ringier, I was faced with the question of what to do in the future. My co-founder said at the time that the insurance sector was an interesting market, but my first reaction was: I don't want to have anything to do with that!

What happened then?

He said, «Julian, all I need is half an hour's brainstorming with you.» We then talked to a potential funder about technology and insurance, and at first I didn't really get what it was about. And suddenly, Dario (editor's note: Wefox co-founder Dario Fazlic) said I would get ten percent for 300,000 francs and shook my hand on it. I sat there, befuddled, and asked myself: What's going on here? We don't have an idea or a team or anything. That's how it started. Then, I called my father to ask him how he would approach the insurance business as a young man. That was really exciting; he gave me some tips that helped me build Wefox.

How profitable is the company today – after seven years?

We have a turnover of around 600 million euros this year, and we aim to exceed one billion and achieve profitability in 2023.



In 2015, Julian Teicke sold DeinDeal.ch to Ringier, and he has been friends with Marc Walder ever since.

And how many paying customers does Wefox currently have?

We have over two million.

But you're aiming for a much higher number.

Yes, for us it's about overtaking what we call the dinosaurs of the industry in the next ten years, in terms of revenue, profitability and number of customers. Our role models here are Allianz or Axa – so, we are talking about hundreds of millions of customers. I always say: We are on the first mile of a marathon. We are already in a good position, but the biggest stretch still lies ahead of us.

There appears to be a worldwide trend towards devaluation of young companies. Wefox seems to be able to buck it. How do you explain that?

I think it has to do with the fact that we are so close to profitability. In recent years, many companies proclaimed they would grow no matter what because they would always get money. That's not the case. We manage our funds better, by only doing things that make sense. We also want to grow considerably, but not at any price. That's why we've had a healthier valuation of our company from the very beginning.

You even want to take advantage of the currently tense global situation to grow more aggressively than planned. How can you do that?

We see the current crisis as an opportunity. One of the most important points of the internationalization we have planned is that we always work with local partners. As prices have fallen sharply, we have the opportunity of making acquisitions at favorable conditions and thereby accelerating our expansion.

In its most recent funding round last summer, Wefox raised another \$400 million in

equity and outside capital. How do you manage to pull money out of investors' pockets?

Investors invest with us because they are firmly convinced they will achieve high returns, they know our company is undervalued in terms of future potential, and they believe strongly in us. So, we aren't pulling money out of anyone's pockets, but we make sure that our investors earn really big money.

Wefox is now valued at \$4.5 billion. Are you okay with that, or could it be higher?

It is a healthy valuation, although I am sure there is still room for improvement. Especially when I look at comparable companies with their growth rates.

Rumor has it you even convinced Hollywood star Ashton Kutcher to invest in Wefox. Is that correct?

Yes, he joined us when our company was valued at 400 million euros.

How did you manage that?

This came about through one of our investors, who met Ashton at a Formula 1 race in Bucharest and, on his initiative, set up a meeting with me. Ashton and I then met at Soho House in Berlin, where he was with his wife and children, and had a very good chat for an hour and a half – about Wefox, but also about me and my convictions as an entrepreneur. I guess we hit it off, and he soon went on to join us as an investor.

Wefox is active in Germany, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, and Italy. Can you tell us how strong you are in each of these countries?

The strongest markets are Germany, Switzerland and Italy, way ahead of Austria and Poland – and we will shortly launch in the Netherlands.



Teicke's insurtech startup Wefox is turning the traditional insurance industry upside down.



Julian Teicke and wife Elisabeth von Stackelberg-Teicke at an event of the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

This is Julian Teicke

The 36-year-old was born and raised in Berlin, attended the John F. Kennedy School there and also spent half a school year in the USA. His father Hartmut is an «old Berliner», his mother has U.S. roots. Julian is the eldest of three children. His siblings are also start-up entrepreneurs: His brother Nicklas is in the health-tech business, his sister Mavi runs a co-living and co-working company. Teicke is married – to Lisi, whom the Wefox founder met 18 years ago at school. «I was 17 at the time!» The couple has a two-year-old daughter and lives in Berlin near Kurfürstendamm. Teicke, who describes himself as a «very emotional person», is an early riser. He gets up at 6 a.m. to meditate, and three or four times a week, a personal trainer will subsequently ring his doorbell. «That way, I have no excuse.» In his free time, he likes to watch soccer, and he follows Union Berlin's games live at the «An der alten Försterei» stadium. «The atmosphere's always great there.» He goes skiing («Unfortunately I don't get to do it enough») in Kitzbühel because his wife's grandmother lives there. He visits Switzerland at least twice a month. As the founder of Wefox, he currently owns eight insurance policies, for which he pays 1300 euros a month.

How many employees does Wefox now have?

We have 1,340 employees. At the end of 2014, there were two of us.

Does this growth sometimes cause you sleepless nights?

I have a strong sense of responsibility. In the mornings, I often think about how many people are working for Wefox right now, earning their livelihood and that of their family. This thought is humbling, and it helps me bear in mind how important it is to make the right choices. As an entrepreneur, I set out to provide others with an opportunity for growth in their personal lives. That's what motivates me most of all, and that's why employees matter so much to me. To come back to your question: This responsibility doesn't give me sleepless nights, but it's always in the back of my mind.

Is this one of the reasons why you invest a seven-digit sum in the training of your employees every year?

Yes, every executive at our company has his or her own personal coach – all other employees also have access to coaching, therapies and further training.

And what do your investors have to say about that?

Investors who join us need to understand that an investment in employees is an investment in the company. There is a direct link between the personal development of an employee and the output this person creates for the company.

In 2015, you sold DeinDeal.ch to Ringier.

Is there anything that continues to connect you to this media company?

Yes, a real friendship with Marc Walder – and deep gratitude. With DeinDeal.ch, I took my first steps as an entrepreneur, I was also allowed to make mistakes in a fast-growing business model in the middle of a manageable market. That was the basis for developing the self-confidence that was and is necessary to build Wefox.●

How many job platforms does the Ringier Group operate?

We operate **14** platforms in **11** countries.

How many people work in Digital Jobs Marketplaces at Ringier?

About **1000**.

Jobs.ch has an eye-catching new campaign: «Stop working. Love what you do.» What is behind it?

Only **40** percent of all employees in Switzerland love their job. Helping employees to be happy in their work and enabling them to find their dream job is the purpose of jobs.ch's new campaign.

How many job ads disclose the salary and what are the advantages?

In Switzerland, it is less than 5 percent, in Romania 15 percent, at CV Keskus in Estonia it is now around

34 percent.

Job postings with information about wages get 40 percent more visits, and this information increases the odds of receiving suitable applications.

12

Questions for Michaela Choudury

How many jobs were advertised on the Ringier job platforms in all of 2021?

In 2021, we placed over

1,000,000

paid job postings onto our platforms. And we will substantially increase this number in 2022.

What is the number of unique users?

Each year, our job platforms record over

300,000,000

sessions, distributed among more than

8,000,000

unique users.

Jobberman, part of The African Talent Company (TATC), supports young people in Nigeria. What has the platform achieved?

Since 2020, we have been able to provide over **650,000** young talents in Africa with targeted training to prepare them for entering the workforce and we have helped nearly **200,000** talented individuals find a job.

With the Mastercard Foundation as its partner, Jobberman Nigeria hopes to train

1,000,000 young people by 2025.



How long did you study?

5

years at the University of Mannheim for my Master's degree, followed by 4 years of doctoral studies at the University of St. Gallen/Stanford. I also worked during most of that time to gain practical experience.

You co-wrote the book «The Business Model Navigator». How many copies of it have been sold?

A few years ago, the book had cracked the

100,000 mark, after that I stopped tracking it. But it has now been translated into

12

languages.

Michaela Choudury has been working as Head of Jobs at Ringier since June 2020. That means keeping track of more than 1 million paid job postings on 14 platforms and in 11 countries. In this interview, she also reveals why she owns more than 30 tennis rackets.

Do you have a hobby?

I own more than

30

tennis rackets – leftovers from my days as a competitive athlete.

How often are you on the tennis court these days?

I spend most of my free time with my 4-year-old son and my husband. I also like to travel and I've already visited

48

countries all over the world.

How many countries have you lived in?

5

In **5**: I was born in Slovakia, grew up in Germany, spent half a year each in Asia (Hong Kong) and the USA, and have lived in Switzerland since 2009.

More humanity thanks to exemplary initiatives

Four examples of social commitment in the Ringier Group: IT workshops for women and girls at Ringier Slovakia, free health-care at Ringier Hungary, a campaign for disability inclusion in the workplace at Profession Hungary, and an initiative for more equal pay at CV Keskus in Estonia.

«You Too in IT», Ringier Slovakia

Since 2017, Ringier Slovakia has been supporting the project «Aj Ty v IT» (You too in IT) as a media partner, offering workshops for women and girls on Ringier's premises. This is happening in the area of Zilina, where the renowned university registers many students in the field of technology and where numerous tech hubs and IT companies have sprung up as a result. «Once a year at Ringier, we open our doors and invite a group of female high school students to show them who we are and how we work, and also to let them see that IT is not a men-only domain,» explains Tomáš Doubrava, Head of HR at Ringier Slovakia. In the course of four hours, they create an imaginary Web with the female students, from the first idea to the final prototype. «After this day, the female students have a pretty good idea of what we re-

quire to create a new product, how the Web works, and what's behind each development process.» The goal here is to attract more women to the company. Because, as Tomáš Doubrava sums up his insights: «Since we've had more women working in our IT team, not only has the atmosphere improved, but we have also become more innovative because we can benefit from different opinions and approaches to solutions.»

IT workshops for female high school students are held annually at Ringier Slovakia.



In-house healthcare at Ringier Hungary

Ringier Hungary's headquarter in Budapest offers something that very few companies can claim for themselves: For more than twenty years, employees have had their own occupational medical care team at their disposal. This means that not only is there a permanent medical assistant on site, but there are also medical consultations twice a week. In addition to first aid, employees receive a free annual medical checkup, as well as additional services such as occupational health screenings, Covid tests, ECG screenings, blood glucose monitoring and vaccinations. Twice a week, therapeutic massages are of-

fered, which can be booked on request and at a reduced price. This benefits not only colleagues at Ringier Hungary Media but also the staff of the job platform profession.hu.

«It's not easy to combine medical examinations with other daily tasks – work, household management, children, sports. When do you find time for the doctor? We help relieve our staff of this burden by offering in-house healthcare services. In doing so, we contribute not only to an optimal work-life balance, but also to the physical well-being of our employees. Their health is our top priority.»

Zsuzsanna Lévai, Head of HR, Ringier Hungary



Above: Dr. Réka Fehér treats an employee.

Right: Dr. Réka Fehér (left), specialist in occupational medicine, general practitioner and physiotherapist, and Marianna Fekés-háziné Balog, a qualified medical assistant, specialist in occupational medicine and pneumology-allergology as well as a massage therapist, have been caring for the health of employees for 14 years.



The Human Side – Providing work for people with disabilities, Profession Hungary

When 116,000 people lost their jobs in Hungary alone after the first wave of Corona, the job placement platform [profession.hu](#), which is part of Ringier Hungary, reacted immediately: The «Lifebelt» campaign, which targets unskilled workers, was launched at the end of March 2020. This was supplemented in June by an interactive job search guide, which helped more than 60,000 job seekers find a new job that often did not match their original qualifications and experience. This gave rise to the first project, called «Az emberi oldal», which means both «the human side» and «the human website» in Hungarian. The idea was to create a tool for job seekers that

would summarize the most important information about career changes and help people take the right steps.

In 2022, "The Human Side" will focus on people with disabilities. According to the Central Statistical Office, there are 460,000 people with disabilities living in Hungary. The timing of the new campaign is ideal because there is a shortage of skilled workers in almost all segments of the Hungarian labor market, and tax breaks encourage the integration of employees with disabilities. Together with the KézenFogva («Hand in Hand») Foundation, which has been working since 1993 to promote a tolerant society in which people with disabilities can live in dignity, [profession.hu](#) aims to facilitate the connection between employers on the open labor market and the unemployed disabled. Balázs Varga, the marketing director in charge of the project at [profession.hu](#), explains how this works in concrete terms: «Starting in February, we gave companies the opportunity to publish all job ads for people with disabilities on [profession.hu](#) at a price of 1 HUF.» One Hungarian forint is the equivalent of approximately 0.2 cents.



Above: Vali works as a tattoo artist – with a disabled arm.

Below: Gyula is blind and works as a customer consultant.

Initiative for Equal Rights of Job Seekers, at CV Keskus, Estonia

The goal of this initiative by the Estonian recruitment technology company CV Keskus is to increase equal opportunities in salary negotiations for job seekers by publishing advertised jobs including the associated salary. In Estonia, one in every four job ads includes a salary offer. In comparison, less than five percent of ads in Switzerland feature information on the salary.

To implement the initiative, CV Keskus joined forces with Kantar Emor, a leading global data and consulting firm. They went on to conduct tests using nudging techniques designed to change behavior. On the one hand, they sent automated emails to employers, in which well-known Estonian recruiting experts explained the benefits of salary information. For example, that it can lead the number of job applications to increase by 66 percent on average. On the other hand, they pointed out what a company can miss out on if salary information is not published in the job advertisement: If interesting candidates only find

out about the salary level once they have begun negotiations, there is a risk that they will withdraw their application. «In recent months, we have been able to increase the rate of advertisements with salary information to 34 percent. But we still have a long way to go,» says Henry Auväärt, Head of Marketing at CV Keskus and in charge of the initiative.

A flyer illustrates the benefits of salary disclosures.



Outperform competing job ads by revealing your salary offer!

- + Increases applications by an average of 66%.
- + Reduces the risk that the candidate will turn down the job.
- + Saves your valuable time while recruiting.

CVKESKUS.ee

CVKeskus.ee is Estonia's leading recruitment technology company and the most valued job site. Feel free to ask our

Ringier Group

A selection of images



Schweizer Illustrierte Photography: Nicolas Righetti, photo editor: Nicole Spiess
Editor Silvana Degonda had to wait two years before getting an appointment with Fabiola Gianotti.
The Italian physicist has been head of Cern in Meyrin near Geneva since 2016. It boasts the world's most powerful particle accelerator and – like so many companies – faces challenges such as rising electricity rates, higher costs for primary materials and supply chain problems.



Interview by Ringier Photography: Régis Golay, Federal Studio, producer: Susanne Märki
Top athlete meets top politician: Roman Josi plays ice hockey for the Nashville Predators and is considered the best defenseman in the world. One of his big fans is Federal Councilor Guy Parmelin. The two meet at the SCB stadium, where the Bernese player's hockey career began.

Bolero Photography: James Robjant, producer:
Susanne Märki, photo editor: Miriam Dembach
The fashion spread for the October issue was shot
in central London. Here, the model is wearing a
dress and coat by Max Mara while standing in
front of the Bank of England.





Bilanz Photography: Oliver Nanzig, art direction: Wernie Baumeler, producer: Cara Anne Specker
The annual Luxury Portfolio appeared in the financial monthly Bilanz at the end of October.
The series consists of seven different luxury objects staged against colored backgrounds of mouth-blown glass.



Blick Photography: Ștefan Borer, photo editing: Blick Photo Editorial Office, editor: Anastasia Mamonova
The summer of 2022 was exceptionally hot and dry. Near Bad Ragaz, Lake Giessen dwindled to a puddle, while, a few meters away, the golf course lawn remained lush and green thanks to irrigation.



Libertatea Photography: Vlad Chirea, photo editors: Mihaela Radu and Ion Mates
A little girl washes herself at a public fountain in the Roma neighborhood of Șumuleu Ciuc. She is one of the protégées of Csata Orsola, who took in the youngest victims after a devastating fire. She teaches them, takes them to sports practice and would like to foster them «as far as university», as she told reporter Diana Mesesan.



LandLiebe Photography: Catherine Gailloud, photo editor: Martin Müller
This stately bedchamber belongs to an estate on a small island in Lake Geneva. It was created in 1880, when an engineer had the idea of raising an embankment around a stony elevation in the lake with all the material from the excavations for a new railroad line. Twenty years later, a house was built on the islet, and it is still inhabited and accessible only by boat.

Andreas Hauser, you are an ethical hacker. Is that a real profession?

For a long time, I didn't even know you could legally make money by hacking. When I read about it, it was no-brainer. Since 1999 I had worked as a computer scientist and system engineer and done a lot of programming myself. My interest in hacking was always there, even when I was a child.

Can you make a living from hacking?

In the meantime, yes. Once you have achieved a certain status as a professional hacker, you are directly approached by companies. There are public tenders in which everyone can participate and private ones in which only certain hackers are selected.

That means you are searching for bugs at the same time as other «hunters»?

Exactly. There's a certain amount of competition among them, but above all it's a race against time – in order to win the bounty, you have to be the first to find the bug.

On average, how long do you search before you find a bug?

That varies a lot. Sometimes I find something major within half an hour. Then again, I might work for a week without spotting anything. It takes a bit of intuition to work out where the search might be worthwhile.

Have you already found something at Blick?

Yes. It involved cross-site scripting, which means a hacker could perform certain actions on behalf of a user.

Are you proud of being a hacker?

More of being able to make it on my own. This year, I was invited to a live hacking event in Paris, which lasted for 30 hours. Big screens would display who had found something. There was a cool atmosphere, it felt like being in a movie.

How likely do you think it is that cyber-terror will cripple the world?

That is quite realistic. I see the greatest risk in phishing. You should be appropriately alert when receiving e-mails. •

The good guy

Andreas Hauser, 39, is an ethical hacker and does this for a living. He is deployed by the Swiss IT company Bug Bounty Switzerland, which has recently also started working for the Blick Group. If he finds a bug in a company's IT system and reports the security flaw, he wins a bounty.

Interview: Nina Huber | Photo: Stefan Bohrer



He appreciates working independently at home.

«Websites are one of the most important means by which we communicate with our customers and a prime target for hackers. By working with trusted bug bounty specialists to identify security flaws in our websites, we can ensure that these breaches are fixed before real hackers try to exploit them.»

Tyrell Sassen

Group Chief Information Security Officer
at Ringier AG

Three lines of defense against **cyber attacks**

In addition to its bug bounty programs, Ringier takes a number of other security precautions to protect itself from cyber attacks, including the following three measures:

- 1.** The security tool «CrowdStrike». It detects malicious software based on its behavior and blocks it.
- 2.** The «Okta» login solution. Employees access Ringier and the cloud services with a single user name and password. Thanks to multi-factor authentication, a hacker cannot penetrate the system even if they know the password.
- 3.** E-learning and phishing simulations. In video training sessions, employees learn how to protect themselves from cyber criminals. In addition, fake phishing e-mails are sent out regularly to raise awareness and train users in recognizing phishing.



The networker

Blick TV's Co-director of Programming Daniel Egli (34) helped set up the channel. But some people also know him as the speaker of Zurich's soccer club FCZ.

Text: Fabienne Kinzelmann

Photos: Thomas Meier, Fabienne Kinzelmann

Daniel Egli is in charge of Blick TV's programming.

Sunday, matchday at Zurich's Letzigrund stadium. Daniel Egli – sporting dark sunglasses and a bur-lap tote bag – walks past the queue at the Baslerstrasse entrance and straight into the control room. On his way there, he shakes a lot of hands. «Are you okay?» security guard Roberto asks. «Are you stressed?» a colleague from marketing. «I never get stressed,» says Daniel, grinning. Only the week before, he gave a radio workshop at the Zurich schools' sports holiday camp in Fiesch («I always take the week off for that!»), and he has just come from brunch at his brand-new conference and event location, the Limmattelier («Really great, the Zurich Cantonal Council's parliamentary group leaders are having their Christmas party at our location!»). Nevertheless, his mind is already on the soccer pitch.

When Zurich's club FCZ takes on Bern's Young Boys an hour later, Daniel will greet the teams, read out the players' names and announce goals. He has been the speaker for his home team for seven years, stepping into the control room once or twice a month. «If I didn't do this, I'd be sitting over there in the fan sector with a beer,» he says. Isn't it all too much on top of his full-time job at TV? «My real time drain is the job.» That statement is typical for Daniel.

Routine is boring to this Swiss citizen who was born in Honduras and grew up in Guatemala until he was eleven. After graduating from high school, he juggled his time between a stint at the regional newspaper «Limmattaler Zeitung» and freelancing at Zurich's



On Sundays, he is on duty at the Letzigrund stadium as the soccer club FCZ's speaker.

local station Radio 1. While studying audiovisual media at the Zurich University of the Arts, ZHdK, he also worked at Winterthur's local station Radio Top, where he met his current Co-director of Programming, Sandra Fröhlich. On her recommendation, Jonas Projer, who was setting up the project Blick TV, later brought him in from Radio 24 as managing editor. «But I worked in programming right off the bat, and Blick TV itself has, after all, changed completely.» He helped

integrate the new TV team into the skeptical Blick newsroom, connected his video staffers with the editorial team, conceived Blick TV's now long-established program «Abstimmungs-Kampf» (referendum battle) before Sundays on which Switzerland votes, and planned numerous special broadcasts, such as the one on Queen Elizabeth's death.

His highlight? «The assault on the US Capitol. That was special, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.» That evening, long after its workday had ended, the team was back in the studio within the hour. «In retrospect, the idea of going live within three minutes was nuts, of course,» Daniel says bluntly about Blick TV's initial ambition. «But producing a broadcast on a breaking news situation is actually not that difficult. You need pictures and a person who talks.» By the time the recent missile attacks on Kiev occurred, the team had long been perfectly coordinated. «Within thirty minutes, everything we needed was in place. That made me damn proud.»

Now that everything is up and running, however, he's not afraid of boredom. His next project is just around the corner: In December, Daniel will become a daddy for the first time. ●

The reader is female

Stéphane Benoit-Godet, Editor-in-Chief of L'illustré, advocates for more diversity and greater visibility of women.

Interview: Barbara Halter



«When I joined L'illustré, I was the youngest man among a majority of men.»

Stéphane Benoit-Godet, Editor-in-Chief of L'illustré



Stéphane Benoit-Godet, Ringier's EqualVoice initiative is now also underway at L'illustré.
How far have you come?

This initiative is brand new for us, but the topic is not. When I joined L'illustré as Editor-in-Chief in December 2020, I was the youngest man among a majority of men. I found that a bit strange, since sixty percent of the magazine's readers are women. I had the opportunity of hiring new, young female staff, which is crucial to the mix of the magazine. Wherever you go today – whether it is the theater, the cinema or a library – women predominate. In French, we say: Le lecteur est une lectrice – The reader is female.

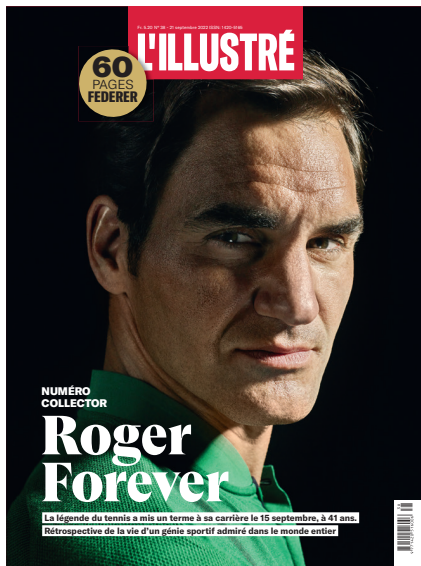
What are the discussions in the editorial office with regard to EqualVoice?

We talk a lot about diversity, not only about the visibility of women. The makeup of society in French-speaking Switzerland has changed. Many

journalist, it's your job to expand your network and not automatically call the contacts you already know. I'm very proud of our podcast «Cash ma queen» about women and how they handle money. Far too many women still leave the matter to their partners. This podcast has been very well received, and Vaudoise Insurance has come in as a sponsor.

So, equality is a win-win?

Absolutely. The heart of journalism is curiosity. The young women in our team are highly sensitized to this issue. For me as editor-in-chief, it's cool to have critical voices telling me, «Stop, you can't do it like that!» For example, I wanted to restage the well-known 1992 «Vanity Fair» cover with Demi Moore, where she poses nude but in body painting, with a well-known Swiss woman. I then had to realize that such a photo is no longer appropriate today.



people – be they migrants or people who are second- or third-generation Swiss residents – don't read L'illustré, because the magazine is not on their radar. We have to do something about that.

How do you make women more visible?

Women should be represented in at least fifty percent of the magazine. When doing research, we make sure to consult female experts. As a

How much debate is there in French-speaking Switzerland about writing gender-consciously?

The debate about «écriture inclusive» is huge. At times, I also find it difficult. On the one hand, it's clear that women need to be represented more through language as well. On the other hand, it makes texts less intelligible. Which in turn is a problem for the 15 to 20 percent of the population who have trouble reading. In November, our editorial team took a course dealing with precisely this issue.●

Teamwork

How colleagues in the Global Media Unit are winning hearts, and what the «Senate» is all about.

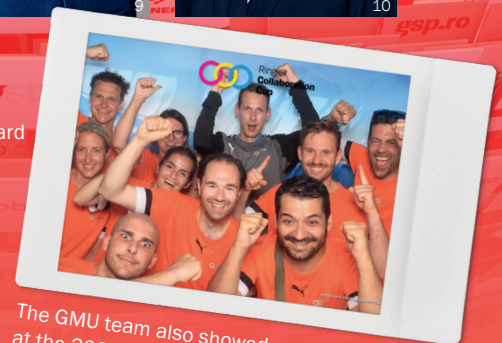
Photos: Paul Seewer



- 1 **Ladina Heimgartner**, Head GMU and member of the Ringier Group Executive Board
- 2 **Patrick Rademacher**, COO GMU
- 3 **Bernd Volf**, CTO & CPO GMU
- 4 **Peter Chabreck**, Head Strategy & Business Development GMU
- 5 **Nina Siegrist**, Head New Content GMU
- 6 **Rui de Freitas**, Head Advertising, in an advisory role
- 7 **Laura Crimmons**, Deputy Head of Audience Development
- 8 **Aferdita Behluli**, Strategy & Business Development
- 9 **Corsin Heinzmann**, Strategy & Business Development
- 10 **Rianne Roggema**, Senior Manager International Markets GMU

Not pictured:

Jesse Gage, Project Manager Operations & BI GMU



The GMU team also showed great commitment at the 2022 Ringier Collaboration Cup.

Bernd Volf, CTO & CPO Global Media Unit, came close to doing his colleagues' laundry. But more on that later.

The Global Media Unit (GMU) was relaunched in late 2020 by Ladina Heimgartner (Head Global Media) and Patrick Rademacher (COO GMU). The purpose of this unit is to exchange knowledge between the approximately 120 media titles of the Ringier Group across 12 countries, to intensify cooperation by means of central, group-wide initiatives, and to roll out selected technologies within the Ringier media ecosystem. This

market, meets regularly to discuss trends, exchange ideas and push cross-market projects – and to agree on binding guidelines. The senates were introduced – in analogy to the GMU set-up – in all the important sectors along the media production value chain: Technology, Product, Audience Development, Advertising, Digital User Market, Editorial and, most recently, Business Development.

Another important project concerns first-party data: This helps media companies improve the user experience by responding better to users'

sion. In addition to a «Monthly Meeting» and the biannual «Executive Lab» via video conference, some GMU members participated in the Ringier Collaboration Cup soccer tournament in Zurich on the longest day of the year, June 21, 2022. «GMU formed a team together with GRYPs, Procurement and OneLog – that was real collaboration!» says Patrick Rademacher. How did the team do? «Let's put it this way: other teams won the prizes, we won the audience's hearts... or at least we gained experience.» Now, let's get back to that laundry mentioned at the beginning.



Summer retreat at the LandLiebe editorial office, with Jesse Gage waving on the screen.

strengthens Ringier's media brands and drives digital transformation and growth initiatives. The core team currently consists of eleven members, all of whom have additional operational responsibilities within the company and some of whom only devote a small part of their time to working for the GMU.

The team is also exploring new ways to make better use of synergies, for example with the novel concept of «senates»: a small but permanent group of executives from each sector, usually one per company or country/

needs and delivering more relevant editorial content and advertising. This group-wide initiative is divided into three business sectors: Technology, Product and Monetization. These workgroups are leading the topical discussions with their counterparts in the respective countries. The project is a truly international collaboration with 45 participants working across 11 companies in 12 markets.

Real «Collaboration»

Of course, regular meetings and joint events are crucial to the team's cohe-

That's another story and it has nothing to do with soccer. On a business trip in mid-June, Ladina, Nina, Bernd, Patrick and Peter were stuck at the airport in Vienna when the entire air traffic was down at the Zurich airport due to a disturbance at Skyguide. Bernd, who lives in Vienna, offered his colleagues to spend the night at his place, including doing their laundry in his washing machine. Fortunately, they were able to catch another flight to Basel – and jointly doing laundry as a teambuilding event has probably been deferred to another day. • NH

A blind eye

Swiss Television's cultural program «Kulturplatz» did a report on provenance research that was itself based on extensive research and quite clear in its analysis. Be it Nazi-looted art or human skeletons from the Congo or thousands of works of art from Benin, everything needs to be thoroughly researched and, as a rule, also returned. In the case of Nigeria, the historical justification was provided straight away. «In an unprecedented campaign of pillaging, the Kingdom of Benin, located in what is now Nigeria, was looted and burned by the British in 1897. For nearly a hundred years, Nigeria has been demanding the restitution of its art treasures.» Given this trenchant analysis, any discussion about the return of the looted artworks seems hardly permissible, if only for moral reasons.

The only way to make museums attractive to young people, the program further argued, was complete transparency. For «they demand transparency, dialog and a say in the matter,» the presenter maintained. Transparency? Well, in that case, the program ought to have mentioned that the kings of Benin were actually quite nasty fellows who lived off the slave trade, made lots of human sacrifices, tended to behead the people they invaded and terrorized their own count-

rymen. And that the reasons for that British campaign were anything but robbery, because they had no idea what kind of works of art they would come across. And that this is why there are serious experts who are highly critical of restitution to Nigeria.

When the French writer Annie Ernaux was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature a few weeks ago, the Swiss-German press was full of praise. «Finally, one of the truly greats receives the Nobel Prize,» the Neue Zürcher Zeitung gushed, and the Tages-Anzeiger spoke of a «wonderful choice». Ernaux's possible anti-Semitism was not mentioned, except by Swiss TV. The discussion in the German media, on the other hand, was quite different. They not only discussed the greatness of her work but also reflected on accusations of anti-Semitism – even the tabloid «Bild».

Anyone who, like Ernaux, signs letters demanding the release of a Lebanese terrorist, calls for a boycott of the Eurovision Song Contest in Tel Aviv or publicly accuses Israel of being an apartheid state, must allow questions about the attitude underlying such actions. At least the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, most likely alarmed by the debate in the German media, eventually reacted – but there was deafening silence from all the other media.

When the very media that can never mention the right-wing National Councilor Roger Köppel without explicitly adding that he is a «Putin empathizer» either take almost a week to respond to the serious accusations against Ernaux or fail to do so at all, this sort of journalism makes me uneasy.

Why is it so important to know all the facts? Because knowledge changes perception. Because I look at the paintings of Germany's great painter Emil Nolde differently when I know that he was an anti-Semite and a racist. And because I view the work of the important Swiss architect Le Corbusier differently when I know that he maintained very close relations with the fascist Vichy regime and also harbored sympathies for Hitler and Mussolini.

Literary scholar Jürgen Ritte put it in a nutshell on Swiss Television: «In the case of Annie Ernaux, we may have to face the fact that a smart author is not necessarily a smart citizen.»

Can I separate a work from the convictions of the author? Of course, it is up to each of us to decide how they deal with this. But when the media conceal important facts or circumstances, that's not just poor craftsmanship. That is when journalists suddenly become akin to activists. ●



Michael Müller



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Untitled, 2014 | © Jana Euler, Photo by Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich

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Jana Euler, born 1982. Martin Sturzenegger, born 1982. Jana is alive. She painted this picture. Martin died in August, of cancer. The two did not know each other. But they were born the same year. That upsets me. Martin and I climbed Iran's highest mountain together. 18,400 feet of sweat and happiness. He wrote about it, so did I. His piece appeared in the daily «Tages-Anzeiger», mine in the TV weekly «TELE». I look at Jana's painting. Can you see the shark, the woman, the swallow? The solution lies in the mountains. Martin sensed that. He would often retreat there. Can you spot the frolicking animals? Look at the meadow. It is a reflection of our life: it glows and blossoms, but there are also gaping abysses. We all know that. And yet, we forget about them. Martin didn't. He was reminded of them every day. Now, I am too. Thanks to Jana.

”

Sonja Hüsler, travel journalist at Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland, shares her thoughts on this work from the Ringier collection, currently on display at Medienpark in Zurich.