

Murrow Mixdown 3 mp3

Sat, 4/23 7:00PM 27:58

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

murrow, national press club, casey, reporting, marvin, ukraine, reporters, ed murrow, people, kimberly, mike, london, hear, broadcasts, broadcast, russia, stories, putin regime, coverage, journalists

SPEAKERS

Marvin Kalb, Kimberly Adams, Sam Litzinger, Gil Klein, Mike Freedman, Edward R Murrow, Intro, Outro, Mark Hamrick, Casey Murrow



Intro 00:10

This is Update-1, the podcast of the National Press Club in Washington DC. Update-1 provides a forum for listeners to learn about national and international stories focusing on journalism and communication issues news and politics. Now the latest edition of Update-1.



Mike Freedman 00:36

Good evening and welcome to our Zoom gathering of the National Press Club Broadcast Podcast, and History and Heritage teams and welcome to all of our club members and other guests who have registered and logged in. It's very nice to have you all with us this evening. The best reporting from war torn Ukraine has drawn comparisons to that and broadcast legend Edward R. Murrow, who established the standards in modern broadcast journalism during World War Two. We will all join in a conversation about Murrow, about his life and legacy, his influence on contemporary reporting. And as the current situation in Iraq continues to unfold, where we go from here. I'm Mike Freedman, the 2020 National Press Club president, former general manager of CBS Radio Network, and proudly executive producer of the Kalb Report public broadcasting series, which calls its home the National Press Club. Our co hosts tonight are Gil Klein and Mark Hamrick. Gil is the current president of the National Press Club Journalism Institute, chair of the History and Heritage team and resident director of the University of Oklahoma's Washington journalism program. Mark Hamrick is senior economic analyst and Washington bureau chief for Bankrate.com. He chairs the Broadcast Podcast team at the club, and was president of the National Press Club in 2011. We're also joined by Kimberly Adams, chair of the Board of Governors of the National Press Club, and host and senior Washington correspondent for Marketplace. And we are all honored to welcome as our featured guest, Casey Murrow, director of Synergy Learning, a nonprofit organization based in Vermont, specializes in science and math programs for schools and teachers. Casey is also of course the son of Edward R. Murrow and an honorary lifetime member of the National Press Club. Joining Casey as a special guest in our conversation tonight is our dear friend and colleague Marvin Kalb, the last correspondent personally hired by Edward R. Murrow at CBS News, the CBS News Moscow bureau chief and chief diplomatic correspondent, anchor of Meet The Press and a

Harvard scholar in Russian studies, who has been closely monitoring and offering analysis on the Russia Ukraine crisis. Kimberly Adams, we wanted to offer you an opportunity first to welcome our members and guests on behalf of this year's National Press Club leadership. And I will say that this conversation is near and dear to Kimberly from a unique perspective, since she worked with legendary CBS News correspondent Daniel Shore, an Ed Murrow disciple, during their time together at National Public Radio. Kimberly, thank you and welcome.

K

Kimberly Adams 03:30

Thank you so much, Mike. And thank you to everyone for joining this event tonight and a warm welcome and greetings on behalf of the National Press Club Board of Governors as well as our president Jen Jedson. You know, like Mike mentioned I worked with Daniel Shore. It was a huge honor. Dan told me lots of great stories about his time at CBS, how proud he was to be one of Murrow's boys. And you know, that made me pretty proud myself when he told me that I had a nose for news. Edward R. Murrow was known for covering conflict, witnessing terrible atrocities that no one should have to see, much less experience. And since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, many journalists today out in the field are also putting their lives on the line to bring us those stories and to do what reporters have always done, which is to bear witness. That is what freelance journalist Austin Tice was doing in Syria in August of 2012 when he was abducted. Austin has been held captive in Syria for 3522 days, and the National Press Club and Austin's family urge the Syrian and American governments to bring Austin home. It's yet another example of the risks of covering conflict, which Edward R Murrow and many journalists today can relate to. With that I want to thank everyone once again to our members and to our guests for attending this virtual event at the National Press Club, the world's leading professional organization for journalists. Mike, back to you.

M

Mike Freedman 05:06

Thank you Kimberly. I'd like to share an extraordinary two-and-a-half-minute video produced by former CBS News colleague and club members Sam Litzinger, who is with us tonight. I see Sam in one of the boxes. And we're gonna bring it up and here we go.

E

Edward R Murrow 05:23

This is Trafalgar Square. The noise that you hear the moment is the sound of the air raid siren.

S

Sam Litzinger 05:37

Edward R Murrow and the reporters he hired to cover World War Two, who came to be known as the Murrow boys, although one was a woman, helped to create broadcast journalism.

E

Edward R Murrow 05:46

Now you'll hear two bursts in the air in a moment. (bursts). There they are. The hard stony sound.

S

Sam Litzinger 05:57

The tools of their new trade were a pen or a pencil a notepad a typewriter, sometimes a cumbersome usually uncooperative wire recorder and a necessity for these radio news pioneers -- a microphone. Most mics aren't all that interesting. This one is exceptional.

E

Edward R Murrow 06:14

This is London calling Columbia New York.

S

Sam Litzinger 06:15

It's the microphone Merle used regularly when broadcasting from BBC studio B-4, which he did often during the war and in the process creating the template for today's broadcast news. The BBC thought he might like to take it with him when he left England to return to the States (bells). Of course he would.

S

Sam Litzinger 06:34

It was an old friend that had bathed in Murrow's, endless clouds of cigarette smoke, had heard him say "This is London" in report after report. Had given him a way to tell Americans about Churchill and the Blitz in London is mourning their dead but somehow standing undefeated

E

Edward R Murrow 06:50

I sat in the House of Commons this afternoon and heard Winston Churchill, Britain's tired old man of the sea, sum up the recent operations. He told him for 335,000 British and French brought back from Dunkirk. If the morning communique doesn't say that London was the main objective of German bombers tonight, I shall be surprised. They came over shortly after blackout time, and opened the attack with a veritable shower of flares and in sundries.

S

Sam Litzinger 07:15

This microphone became an extension of man. It's been in the Murrow family since 1946, and has belonged to us by Ed's son Casey, It's here now in public as a reminder, Murrow still matters. With luck and diligence, he always will.

E

Edward R Murrow 07:32

The best in radio reporting, is yet to be.

S Sam Litzinger 07:36
For the National Press Club. I'm Sam Litzinger.

M Mike Freedman 07:38
Gil, the floor is yours.

G Gil Klein 07:40
OK. Yeah, Casey, that was quite a recording. As we listened to your father's voice coming back at us from 80 years ago, what does it stir in you about his legacy and your relationship with him.

C Casey Murrow 07:55
I had a wonderful relationship with him as parent to son. And he was remarkably cooperative in supporting my own interests and desires, I guess, as to what it brings up for me, I guess, the most dramatic part of it is simply thinking about him, and thinking about him and the circumstances that he found himself in at that moment. And that, of course, was not easy at all.

M Mark Hamrick 08:29
Casey, thanks so much for joining us. And, you know, we feel very honored to have your presence and it feels particularly timely. And Marvin, of course, is going to talk about his own experiences with your father, as well as his observations about the world we live in these days. Casey, what do you see that is evocative of your father's work? In current reporting, and particularly in conflict reporting, or the war? And do you have a sense of what might be absent or what and perhaps even to broaden it out or be more specific at the same time, what do you think his senses of that would be? So both your reflection as well as perhaps those of your father?

C Casey Murrow 09:12
Well, I think that most amazing really, if we look at the reporting from Bucha, or Bucha, is the kind of reporting that he did from Buchenwald when he was talking about prisoner of war camps. And, of course, the folks today are talking much more about immediate circumstances that they see on the ground. I do come to to thinking of his Buchenwald peace as an important example of the kind of reporting that's possible for people.

M Mark Hamrick 09:48
What would his assessment of the current situation be? And I'm talking really about the state of journalism and perhaps even the coverage of this conflict?

C Casey Murrow 09:57

He would, I'm sure wish that that it could be even more aggressive in a in a BBC kind of style. Honestly, Mark, I shy away from those questions because I don't, I don't really know how he would have assessed the kinds of things that are going on today. I'm sure he would have been fascinated with the degree to which modern communication can support reporting. And that alone is absolutely fascinating. Where that goes in the future none of us know, do we?

M Mike Freedman 10:35

My question is to Marvin. Marvin, I wonder if you could offer your thoughts to as you heard some of that audio coming back from from World War Two and its influence on you and, and your family and perhaps all of America at that time?

M Marvin Kalb 10:49

Thank you, Mike, for the opportunity of being with with all of you and Casey. It was an exceptionally important moment, every night in the Kalb household, to listen to Murrow on the radio from London. And even after London when he got back to New York. Murrow was very much part of our education. What we learned about the war, I don't want to say totally from Murrow, that would be an exaggeration, but he influenced all of us very much. Certainly my brother Bernard, who then went into journalism himself working at the New York Times, but he met Murrow when they were both covering Burma, and that to left an enormous impression of Bernie. And with me, from the first time that I met Murrow, I knew that I was in the presence of someone very special. I had learned so much from him. I would add one thing to what Casey said about Murrow's coverage of Buchenwald. I could be wrong about this. But what I remember was that he did not do that broadcast immediately after visiting the camp at Buchenwald. He needed the day or two to think about what it is that he had just seen. What it is that he had experienced. Until one of the things he mentioned to a group of us afterward, many years later, was that it was hard for him to come up immediately with the words that would convey honestly, the power, the emotional impact, of what it is that he had seen. Today, reporters are put in a very difficult position of seeing comparable things perhaps, if there is something comparable to book in vogue and yet, find the words to explain it and describe it immediately live. And that to me is a phenomenal new responsibility that reporters have today. And that we see from a lot of the reporting from Ukraine. Mike, one other point about Murrow especially, and that is that I was honored to be able to have chats with him along the way. And to be impressed by the impact that Germany had on him in the 1930s. He had gone there, not as a reporter but as a kind of radio producer for CBS. Going from one place to another to try to do concerts and art shows. And one story he told me is relevant to what is going on today. He met a German family in 1936 I believe, got to know them quite well. Whenever Murrow was in that city, they would have dinner together, perhaps go to a concert together. And they became rather good friends. When Murrow returned several times thereafter that kind of good relationship continued, but it was during a period of time when Hitler's grip on Germany tightened very dramatically. When Murrow went back in 1938 he found a totally different man. His German friend was then in uniform and was echoing what it is that the Nazi leadership of Germany proclaimed to the German people and to the rest of the world. And Murrow was stunned at one of the things he mentioned many years later was his surprise at how quickly

people and nations can change in certain circumstances. That always stuck in my brain whenever I'm thinking about changes in American democracy, for example, over the last several years have been, in my judgment, anyway, very dramatic changes. And so it can happen. What happened in Germany can happen here, and can happen and is happening in a place like Ukraine.

M

Mike Freedman 15:37

It's a natural follow up, Marvin, as long as we've turned toward Ukraine, and what's happening now. If we can get your take on the reporting from Ukraine, and its impact around the world. We seem to see that social media is making a difference currently in penetrating Russia, that it appears to be harder for Vladimir Putin to keep the propaganda campaign up, since social media and some fairly dramatic reporting from correspondents at different networks here and newspapers around the world, seem to be infiltrating into Russia. Your thoughts on that.

M

Marvin Kalb 16:22

Well, I would hope, Mike, that much of it could get through into Russia, it's very difficult by the way. The Russians have, the Putin regime has total control at this point. Not over everything that comes into Russia, but over many things, perhaps even most things. And the Russian people get most of what they know about the world, it's an extraordinary figure, something like 92% of what they know about the rest of the world, from Russian television. Russian television is totally controlled by the Putin regime. The upshot of that is that whatever the regime wants the people to know, is what it is that they know. And because they don't have enough other information coming in, and many of the young people, very skilled with the use of the new technology, have already left Russia. More than a 100,000 primarily young Russians have left. They have fled because they cannot tolerate living in Russia at this point. One of the amazing things to me is the exceptional coverage that we are all getting from Ukraine. There is some extraordinary heart rending coverage that we find from small villages around the capital of Kyiv and from other cities in Ukraine, Mariupol, for example, even Lviv has been hit, and Kharkiv has been utterly demolished. And there was a couple of pieces on the News Hour in the last few nights by a reporter who is right in the middle of it, not hiding from it at all. And he gives his heart and soul in conveying what it is that people are experiencing in Kharkiv today. I find that exceptional that the courage that is being displayed, and the professionalism that is being displayed. I'm not saying every single one of them by all means, but enough of them are producing brilliant coverage, that I think Murrow would look back in admiration of that kind of reporting today and in fact add an inspiration, which I suspect he did for many of them.

M

Mark Hamrick 19:03

We're gonna call on some folks who have kindly offered their questions. Next to Kimberly Adams.

K

Kimberly Adams 19:09

Thank you. And this is probably a question for Casey, but perhaps also, Marvin. You know, we've talked several times this evening about just sort of the horrors of war and and witnessing

we've talked several times this evening about just sort of the horrors of war and and witnessing awful things in conflict journalism. And part of the conversation nowadays is about the trauma and PTSD that may affect journalists who cover these issues. And Casey, I'm wondering what you saw of sort of the lasting emotional or mental health effects in your dad of the stories that he covered and what lessons that may have for journalists in the field today or, or even the people for whom they're filing to in terms of how they relate to them. And Marvin, perhaps you have something to add on this as well.

C Casey Murrow 19:59

That's a fascinating question, and I and I not sure I have a clear answer, Kimberly. I think that Murrow was deeply troubled by all that he saw, and would stew about it extensively. And however, I don't feel that impacted his his work, necessarily, and I don't think it impacted him as a parent. So that's, that's a very intriguing question. Marvin, you might have a thought on that.

M Marvin Kalb 20:38

No, only to pick up one of your points, Casey. And that was in my experience with the father. I never noticed in his reporting, and in his broadcasts that he would ever choke up on a story would ever be so emotionally absorbed in it, that he could not produce a really first grade report. That is not to say, and you've also touched on this, that he was not moved by what it is that he saw. I mean, when McCarthy came along as a challenge to this country, he took it very, very seriously. And had his entire unit work on two broadcasts in March of 1954 that had as much to do with undercutting the strength of Senator McCarthy as, as any other bit of reporting. No, I thought Murrow was marvelous in his capacity to absorb horror, but in his presentation of information, he could do it rather coolly.

M Mike Freedman 21:51

Casey, before we wrap up, I wanted to ask of a more personal question about your relationship with your dad, because in this 24/7 news environment, and for many years, those of us who have spent the lion's share of our professional careers in newsrooms, we know how long and hard people work. I've always found it quite remarkable that you had such a close relationship with your dad that he actually took time off, and that he spent time with family. And perhaps you can, you can talk about that personal relationship for a moment, because I think there's a good lesson there for every journalist today.

C Casey Murrow 22:34

Sure, Mike. We went, we went hunting and fishing on a regular basis. And we would, we would even fish in, in our own lake, which was probably a little bit silly. But, but it was fun to do. We traveled across the country twice together, and and really had a lovely time. It's it's also true that Ed certainly struggled with issues during that time. One of our trips was, was when I was 16. When we drove across the country, and he he made notes for President Kennedy. He actually wrote a paper for President Kennedy on the mood of the people as he imagined it to be.

M

Mike Freedman 23:35

Casey as, as we bring the program to a close, we'd like to get some final thoughts from you, as well as from Marvin Kalb about Ed Murrow. The last surviving member of the original Murrow boys team for World War Two was was Richard C. Hottelet who most fortunately was with us until just a few years ago. He passed away at age 97 in 2014. Dick and I did some terrific work together at CBS News along with our friend, Sam Litzinger who is on the on the program with us tonight. He also spoke to a number of journalism classes over the years and I always ask Dick Hottelet to share his thoughts about Murrow. He wrote them down for us so that we have these beautiful words for all time and let me share with everybody what Dick Hottelet said about your dad. "Even now many years later, I think of Ed Murrow in superlatives. A skilled tenacious reporter and a brave man, a fine human being. As a boss, Murrow laid down no rules, made no suggestions as to style or content. He demanded only a clear and where appropriate, colorful presentation of fact. He was scrupulously fair and his colleagues accepted his choices without complaint. He led by example, not command. Murrow's usually furrowed brow expressed a pessimistic side, perhaps to guard against indulging a nationwide audience that wanted good news. Yet when he smiled, it was like a sunrise. He knew his own worth, but was not arrogant or overbearing. He had a sense of theater, as in his stress on 'This is London,' as well as in a Churchillian sonority that often marked his speech. Murrow's physical bravery was matched by moral courage that rang out in his television documentaries. His style was serious, long experience at the microphone did not make him casual. He saw his broadcast as a service to the American people." Casey are an accurate description of your dad?

C

Casey Murrow 26:02

Well, I think so. I think that that Dick Hottelet was was a pro at describing people and, and it's a pleasure to hear those words. Absolutely.

M

Mike Freedman 26:20

Marvin, your thoughts about that beautifully eloquent piece from from Dick Hottelet, and your thoughts on Murrow.

M


Marvin Kalb 26:26


Dick said it better than anyone could have. He said it with eloquence, honesty. Marvelous description of of Ed Murrow. Can't be better.

M

Mike Freedman 26:41

Those of us in broadcasting know, when it's time to hit the post, you hit the post. So our thanks to Casey Murrow, and also to Marvin Kalb. Gentlemen, it's been a a memorable and meaningful evening. Let us give you a round of applause.

 Casey Murrow 26:59
Thank you very much.

 Mike Freedman 27:02
On behalf of Mark Hamrick, Gil Klein, Kimberly Adams, and all of us at the National Press Club, thank you all for joining us. We hope you enjoyed the evening and let us close with Ed Murrow's famous words. Good night and good luck.

 Outro 27:32
Update-1 is the production of the National Press Club's Broadcast Podcast Committee. You can comment on this podcast or any episode of Update-1 by sending an email to Update-1 podcast. That's Update, the number 1, podcast@gmail.com Thanks for listening to Update-1.