

SCRIPT:

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May, 2019

Aladin, War and Camera!

Lead-In

This audio documentary aims to show the journey of an Egyptian man who was a photojournalist for Reuters for 20 years of his life. Join Aladin Abdelnaby through his days as a photojournalist covering more than 5 wars and other significant events.

We always see him walking in the American University in Cairo Plaza, he has his t-shirt tucked in, usually walking in his crocs and has his headphones on. Yeah, that's Aladin Abdelnaby, the photojournalism professor at the American University in Cairo.

MUSIC - Honky Tonk Woman by The Rolling Stones - 7 seconds

I managed to find out what he is listening to, The Rolling Stones, Aladin's favorite band. Aladin is fun and witty and he has a lifetime of experiences that will put you in awe. The stories of his life are embedded with tales from his time as a photojournalist for Reuters. Aladin's photojournalism career all started when he was assigned a coverage in Sudan.

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** the floods in Khartoum which practically swept all the South of Sudan and the Khartoum all the south area of Khartoum. Villages there were drowned in water and stuff like this (14 Seconds).*

The floods in Khartoum took place in 1988 where they were caused heavy rains destroying 10,000 houses in Khartoum and surrounding areas. However the flood in Sudan was only the start of Aladin's career

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** First Gulf War I. I didn't participate in the war. However I did cover a few for a week in Hafar Al Batin the build up of the of the American forces and then '92 the earthquake in Egypt (12 Seconds).*

And his work from that natural disaster was published in newspapers such as Akhbar and Ahram and could still be found online.

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** And then I went to Iran. That was not a conflict but it was the first Western or first foreign news photographer allowed in for the elections of Khamenei. That was 92 93 and 94 something like this (19 Seconds).*

Specifically, it was April 1992.

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** And then I think 94 95. The Yemen war the civil war in Yemen (7 Seconds).*

It's understandable that he may not have the dates accurate when you've traveled as much as Aladin so actually it was May to July 1994 and that was the first Yemeni civil war .

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** And then I went to Chad a bit as coverage of rebels and stuff like this. Actually I went to Chad twice once was coverage of the rebels the Civil War and then when Gaddafi went and he led a Friday prayer. Okay. And then Somalia. That was 93 94 I was going to Eritrea but I didn't. I went to South of Sudan with John Garang at the time he was a rebel, he wasn't yet a president (36 Seconds).*

Even when photojournalists return from war zones physically unharmed, their experiences can continue to burden their psyches. They might suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD anguish over their roles in witnessing human tragedy. In fact, a survey conducted in 2012 found,

that more than 30 % of war correspondents struggle with PTSD. It could not be that easy getting to see people die around them. Aladin on the other hand,

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** I mean that's the nature of the job, I mean ok they're colleagues I didn't, they weren't really friends. There are two that died recently not in wars, they were retired but I got to know of their death, they both died in the same month. It affected me more than the people I lost during conflicts (23 Seconds).*

Aladin's time in the Yemeni war was really memorable, he tells about the time during the civil war which between South and North where he was covering the war from the Northern side, Sana' who was actually losing at the time. As they were still digital at the time he explains the 12 hours trip from Sana' to go develop the films, print pictures, write captions, send pictures and then rest for half a day then go back to take more pictures.

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** In one of those trips with an american colleague we were walking near the camp where we were, on top of the small cliff, between the both of us I heard a .. and I looked at Santiago and said "Mosquito?" he looked back at me and said "No, sniper." we ran, we hid till it got dark and we knew that the Southerners didn't have night vision and we knew the sniper couldn't see us in the dark," (45 Seconds).*

And since he loved reporting during such events we're all so curious to find out what could have made him stop

***Aladin Abdelnaby (AA):** When I came back in 2005 I came back mid August from Iraq and I was supposed to rest for 2 weeks and maybe go back again and in the 1st of september, I got blood clots in my leg, quite a few, I got 4 and apparently they spread into 7 clots in the right lung and 1 in the left lung, I was hospitalized, and that's when I decided it was enough I mean ok its fine but had I gotten these clots in Iraq I would have died because there was no medical facility. The only medical facility there is the US army hospital and if I were not near it, they don't have ambulances (46 Seconds).*

Aladin has decided to take all what he's been through and his experience through his 20 years at Reuters, and pass it on to the upcoming generations.... One of the many ways he does so is by staging situations to teach his students how to deal with them as photojournalist.

He cares for his students and wants to bring up photojournalists who know how to deal with real life situations.

This audio feature was produced by Alia Mahran for the Audio Production course at The American University in Cairo, taught by Professor Kim Fox in the Spring semester of 2019.

Special thanks to Aladin Abdelnaby for the interview. Music used in this feature is from Bensound. Nat sounds are collected in the American University in Cairo.