

Reporting Europe in an Age of Fear

Alan Little



7.30 p.m. 30th October, 2013

Biography

*I was born and raised in Galloway, went to Edinburgh University, started work at the BBC in Glasgow in 1983. I went south in 1985. I started doing foreign news in 1989, then for BBC radio. I went to television in 1992. I reported the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and in the subsequent Gulf War of 1991 I reported from Baghdad. Later that year I went to former Yugoslavia for two weeks and ended up staying for four years. I co-authored a book called *The Death of Yugoslavia*. IN 1995 I moved to Johannesburg to become the BBC's Africa correspondent, having, the previous year, taken time out from the war in Bosnia to report the aftermath of the Rwanda genocide. I moved to Russia in 1997, and to Paris in 2003. Since 2005 I have been based in London as a Special Correspondent for BBC News. I have presented *Newsnight* on BBC2 and *Today* on Radio 4.*

Abstract

My lecture will consider the ways in which reporting the world has changed in the twenty five years or so since I became a foreign correspondent. Much of that change is technologically driven – the ability, which didn't exist in the 1980s, to put yourself on the air live from almost anywhere in the world, the advent of real time television, the 24 hour news culture and the pressure it puts both on the journalism and on the business of formulating public policy – the increasing public demand for instant appraisal and instant response and, often, action that headlines generate. My focus will be on conflict reporting, since this is where much of my experience lies – from the bloody collapse of Communism in Romania, through two Iraq wars, the collapse of Yugoslavia, the genocide in Rwanda, the invasion of Afghanistan, and the wars in Congo, Sierra Leone and elsewhere.