Ep2-Narrative-Edited\_D3

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**SPEAKERS**

Mariana

00:00

This year the review of journalism turns 40 Welcome to reviewed Welcome to reviewed Welcome to reviewed where we go through the past 40 years of the review of journalism to understand if the stories are still relevant and impactful today.

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Join us as we ask, are the issues too relevant? Is the reporting controversial? How has journalism changed over the years? After four decades on assignment,

**Mariana** 00:24

it's time for the review to be reviewed.

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Welcome to the second episode of reviewed, I'm one of your hosts today, Lydia, right Jen.

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And I'm Sahana Rhonda nothin. In today's episode of reviewed we're talking language and reporting on Israel and Palestine.

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Israel is retaliated with airstrikes on Hamas targets in Gaza, where there are also heavy casualties tonight. Our coverage begins with cdvs Kevin Gallagher and a warning his report contains graphic video.

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Hamas rockets light up the night sky targeting Israeli cities. After this morning's wave of armed fighters streamed across the border into Israel, sent by the Palestinian militant group that governs the Gaza Strip is having a terrific

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impact on Israeli civilians, civilians was never be the target of attack,

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a show of support a message of deterrence, the US sending warships closer to Israel in the eastern Mediterranean. Its fighter plane squadrons in the region will be getting a boost to

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Hamas is going to further complicate this by being amongst the civilian population and not identifying themselves as you know, militants until the last second so they'll ambush and they'll use whatever devious things they can do include countermanding the laws of war to be able to kill the Israeli Defense Forces.

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The truth is clear. Some mass wages war from hospital wages terror from hospitals,

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Hamas has denied that allegation and has said it took hostages to the hospital for medical treatment.

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You just heard some segments from CBC, the national and CTV that aired from October 7 to November 19 of this year.

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On October 7, Hamas launched an attack on military outposts and communities in southern Israel, killing 1400 Israelis.

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They also took more than 200 hostages back to Gaza. The same day, Israel launched a bombardment on Gaza. Over the past few months, Gazans have injured devastating airstrikes, mass civilian casualties, and lost access to fuel, water and food.

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This has led to the killing and mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and what many are calling the second Nakba.

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Nakba refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians.

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By November 16. United Nations experts said that the violations committed by Israel against Palestinians under occupation following October 7, is a genocide in the making. Critics have challenged the lack of balanced reporting and Canadian media when it comes to reporting on Palestine and Israel for decades.

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The reporting around Israel and Palestine has come with inconsistent use of language. Some outlets refer to what is happening as a war or conflict, while others use phrases like Israel Hamas conflict or the situation in Gaza, the difference between some of these words might seem inconsequential. But as journalists, editors and producers, there's an active choice behind the words we use.

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My name is percent Matata, and I am a journalist, producer and writer who's worked in radio, TV print, and beyond. I mean, language is very powerful. And it signals things to us very subtly, and not so subtly. And an example that I'll pull from recently that's playing out right now is just in this release of, of, of hostages and Palestinian prisoners, you know, Israeli children are, are talked about as children are talked about as women and children. But Palestinians, there were so many headlines and decks that said, minors or people under 18. So Palestinians are not children. They are minors and people under 18, but Israelis are children. And there's something very clinical about calling someone a minor or someone under 18. But when you hear the word child, you know, the automatic association we all make is these are innocent people worthy of protection, that these are young, vulnerable people. And so we hear about Israeli children in these releases, but what you often hear instead on the Palestinian side is that these are just people who are people who just happen to be on You're 18 and miners.

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So when we talk about language, we're talking about how are we going to relay a reality on the ground to audiences, languages is, is going to be how people are going to make sense of the issues that are happening far away from them. And unfortunately, media in Canada is, is not doing a good job of relaying that reality that lived experience of Palestinians, to Canadian audiences, because much of the language that is used is is shaped by state discourse is rarely state discourse and Canadian state discourse. And states are not always interested in revealing reality. So to simply use the language of state discourse to describe the reality on the ground, is not giving audiences an objective or honest picture of what is actually happening. There has been an ongoing erasure of Palestine, the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands for decades. That

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was Mohammed IOSH, professor of sociology at Mount Royal University.

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I was born and raised in Silwan, which is part of Jerusalem and emigrated to Canada when I was 14 back in 1993. He explains

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that the language media chooses significantly impacts framing, for example, referring to the bombardment of Gaza as an Israel Hamas war overlooks the fact that this struggle has been going on long before Hamas. It dates back to the end of the First World War, and later on the Nakba of 1948, where more than 700,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes by Zionist militia.

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So when you frame it as Israel, Hamas, you're saying that the Palestinians deserve everything they got, or that they're getting, because they're just blind terrorists who killed for the sake of killing who commit terror for the sake of terror, who have no political grievance is just the battle between the forces of the good and the forces of evil. All of that kind of discourse, keeps us away from examining the root causes of the issue, and keeps us away from properly understanding what is happening, and most importantly, keeps us away from real solutions. If people buy into the message that this is a war between civilization and barbarism, then most people go well, the only solution is to eliminate barbarism. So it's just drives this ongoing genocide against the Palestinian it justifies it. So it's, it's quite reckless journalism to call it that.

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The breach and independent media outlet producing critical journalism has done work analyzing whether the reporting has been balanced. They analyze CTVs coverage on Gaza from October 7 to November 7. Their research found that CTV featured 62% More Israeli voices than Palestinian voices. They failed to identify 41% of Palestinian speakers by name, but identified a majority of Israeli speakers by name and the personal connections the violence they've experienced. The breach reported that employees at CTV received an email on October 10, telling them not to use the word Palestine.

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The way that objectivity is, I think, often employed by the industry, as far as I've been a journalist, is I think it's actually been fundamentally misapplied. Tom Rosenstiel, who co wrote one of the books that is used in in journalism programs around the world, Tom Rosenstiel, he was quick to point out and 2020 when there was a big conversation about objectivity, that objectivity was never supposed to be a personal value, but rather a method by which we do journalism. So supposed to be about objectivity of method and how we approach stories rather than about being objective ourselves as people because I think there's this perception that certain people are objective, and certain people are just not, but think about going to see like a Raptors game. If you're sitting courtside next to Drake, the view that you have of that game is going to be fundamentally different than if you're sitting in the nosebleeds and the 300 section going to be so different,

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lacking accurate language and a critical lens and Canadian media can lead to a sort of ambivalence around crises. It develops a sense that Canada is doing their job as a global power.

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There is this fundamental foundational belief in Canadian media and the Canadian public in general, that Canada is a good actor on the world stage. Why would Canadian governments want to support a genocide? That's not who we are, right? So there's this fundamental belief in this quote unquote, goodness of Canada, and the goodness of the West. That message is not shared by the majority of the world's population. that has experienced the colonial project of the quote unquote Western world.

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This idea of inherent goodness and Canadian media is not new. It's a story we've seen play out before. In 1992, Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic back to the Bosnian Serb army and allowed for the systematic ethnic cleansing of non Serbs from Bosnia. Over 100,000 people were killed in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995, and over 2.2 million, mostly Bosniaks were displaced, the most violent conflict Europe had seen since the Holocaust. My parents along with my two year old sister fled what was then Yugoslavia to come to Canada in 1991. Much of their family stayed behind, some fled to Croatia. Some stayed in Bosnia until the end, and some never made it out alive. My family and I travelled to create or in Bosnia last summer, we drove along one of the main streets, eventually turning onto my mom's old street. The names changed since the war, it used to be named after a Croatian poet. All the street names have changed. The building still have bullet holes, and everyone looks 10 years older than their age suggests. My mother's memory of her home is tainted with the knowledge that her relatives are debt, and her sister and parents were forced out, lead away from the only home they ever knew, with guns surrounding them, officers and civilians yelling profanities at them, and the promise to be killed if they stayed pretty either feels empty to me, that emptiness lingers in the air, in the trees in the people themselves. And I wonder if it will ever go away. Western intellectuals, journalists and the media took on an ambivalent approach to the atrocities in Bosnia, suggesting that all sides were equally guilty. The language used was uncritical Western media called it the war in former Yugoslavia, or the Balkan War. While in fact, not a single hour of war ever took place in Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria or any of the other regions of the Balkan. The wars in question were fought exclusively on the sovereign territories of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia Herzegovina. This framing by Western media can inaccurately suggest a civil dispute among equal parties, as opposed to an unequal and violent exercise of power upon an oppressed group. I

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ash explains that this same kind of framing is what we can also see in Canada's coverage of Palestine, both in the past and present, scholars

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of genocide and other mass atrocities have always said this mystery, there are a few elements that need to happen for mass atrocities like this to take place. But two very important ones is a you have this the capacities to carry them out, which the Israeli state does, but B, you can seal that the mass atrocity, you call it something other than what it is, which that concealment allows you to keep doing it. So that concealment is precisely the role that mainstream media and Canada is today playing whether they know it or not completely irrelevant to me what the intentions of these journalists in these institutions are entirely irrelevant. It's only about the effects of your discourse. That's the only thing that is important. Your if you're a conscientious person, that is doing your job as an honest pursuit of knowledge. If you're not looking at the effects of your discourse as concealing a genocidal operation and allowing it to happen, and then having some critical thinking about it yourself with yourself and changing how you're talking about this, then then I'm sorry, you're no journalist to me.

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For context, Article Two of the Genocide Convention defines genocide as any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national ethnical racial or religious group. This includes killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent birds within the group, and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

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Journalists have an immense responsibility. And I think the stakes for doing journalism that is, you know, humane and contextualized. And consistent and courageous has huge, huge, huge impact. So of course, we have a responsibility. But what happens a lot in in these major institutions especially is you don't have a lot of agency as a single person, have specifically racialized journalists who are often the ones that are kind of pushing back against some of this language and wanting to do better. It's just hard to sometimes get those changes made or make those changes because you You're obviously not the one with the most editorial power, at least in my case. And I couldn't make these decisions unilaterally. And so you're up against a big machine. So of course, of course, you have an individual responsibility. But it's very hard to actually take it on as an individual when you are in an institution where you often might be kind of fighting an uphill battle. And by fighting that uphill battle, you're actually just marking yourself as a bit of a troublemaker. And so it's a losing battle. So the responsibilities there but to actually fulfill that responsibility is not a singular job. I actually

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explains that in the case of Palestine, we see colonial dehumanization at work. This operates on the idea where people are turned into evil objects and must be eradicated. The language of dehumanization has played out in real time. Some Israeli government officials have described Palestinians as human animals. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the bombardment of Gaza as the struggle between the children of the light and the children of darkness between humanity and the Law of the Jungle Palestinians

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have been dehumanized to such an extent where we can have this ongoing genocide at this moment. And the media is is completely quiet about it. Because they don't view ultimately they don't view Palestinians as human beings. In terms of coverage. Just look at how much you know how much I'll ask you, how much humanization Are you seeing of the Palestinian victims, you just see crying babies, you might see violent images. But it's more or less presented as some kind of disaster had befell these people. And it was of their own making, because ultimately, Hamas is to blame for all of that is happening to them. And they should deserve our pity and sympathy because we don't like to see suffering. I

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ash says what's missing from the coverage is how Palestinians themselves are understanding why they are suffering. That is part of their dehumanization. So

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there's very little coverage of these the The life stories of these of the Palestinians and of how Palestinians themselves understand why it is that they are suffering, and most critically, what are their aspirations that is completely cut out of the conversation in mainstream media coverage. And that's, that's how they remain dehumanized. They're viewed as beings that are incapable of understanding their plight, and are as incapable of planning their future and aspiring for a better future. The moment you take that away from people, they're no longer fully human. So So, the Canadian media absolutely participates in the dehumanization of Palestinians by just that alone.

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The review of journalism published a piece called CBCs Palestine exception, the piece critiqued CBCs coverage of Israel and Palestine. It was written by Raha for Ravi.

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Her peace came out in June 2022. The year before in May 2021, Israeli forces launched an 11 day bombardment of Gaza. According to the health ministry in Gaza, 260 Palestinians died 67 of them were children, and 1900 were wounded. During the same time 12 Israelis died, two of them were children.

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On May 14 to 2021, an open letter signed by more than 2000 people accused newsrooms of downplaying the violence directed at Palestinians. 500 of them were journalists and media staff. The letter called for more equal treatment in covering Palestine and Israel.

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For obvious peace looks at the specific ways in which CBC has suppressed Palestinian perspectives and the consequences faced by journalists who pushed back percent mother was interviewed for this piece. She also spoke about an experience at the CBC in the walrus.

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In 2017, I was I was still working at the CDC. I had been there for eight years. At that point, I had pitched having asthma to have a dean on to talk about what it was like to cover the protests at the Al Aqsa Mosque. And the reason that I had even thought to pitch this story is because on a Monday morning, on the week that I have started working at this show, I saw that Akhmatova Dean had tweeted a video of him being kind of stopped, questioned, kind of jostled around by Israeli security forces in the context of his reporting, and he tweeted this video. And I thought, well, there's protests happening at Alexa but I'm so I want to talk about that. But I also want to talk about what is it like to cover this as himself who's a Palestinian American journalist, whose own work as a reporter is being impeded because of his Palestinian identity? So I pitched it on a Monday morning, I was told that they really wanted the story. And all week, basically, I was under immense pressure to land this interview. You know, for anyone who's a journalist, this, this is not us. But for those people who don't know, our process and our journalistic kind of editorial process, when you pitch a story, it has to be approved. And then if you're doing an interview, you write questions that are then vetted or approved by a senior producer. After the questions are vetted and approved, you sit down with the senior producer and the host, you go through all the questions, we agree, we're all on the same page. And then we go into the recording. And so we did that I went into the recording, I should mention that obviously, as Mitch had been seen in his interview, was critical of the Israeli military and Israeli security forces, a further response to the protests, but B for their role in kind of questioning him and jostling him around and getting in the way of his reporting. So doing my due diligence, as a journalist, I had reached out to the Israeli Defense Force The IDF to get response comments on this to include in the story, I had just finished editing the interview, went on a little celebratory walk had sent out my request to the IDF to make sure that we include comment from them in the piece. And that's when things fall apart, I can tell you that in the 10 years that I spent at CDC, this is the one interview of mine of 1000s that I have produced, that never saw the light of day, I come back to my desk and was told by a senior producer that this interview was not going to air, they didn't have time to explain it to me. And that if I wanted to find out more, I should take it up with a senior manager. I had no idea. There was any issue with this interview. It didn't come up during the interview. No one told me anything afterwards. And yet here I was being confronted with the reality that the story that I pitched, produced, got approved, vetted, recorded was unceremoniously going to be yanked without explanation. And it was such an egregious violation of our journalistic process, our editorial processes that we rely on every day. And the fact that I was shut out of this conversation as the producer on it was unprecedented. And as an industry, we talk a lot about freedom of the press and freedom of expression. And yet here was a complete violation of those principles. That day that that happened, I was, I literally thought about quitting my job on the spot, for

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obvious piece explains that some journalists who signed the Open Letter faced consequences, a few people were reprimanded or taken off coverage of the region entirely.

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And it seemed to be that the the major issue that they had with this letter is that the letter said, we should using words about to describe what's happening in Israel and Palestine, that groups like the UN and Amnesty International, and Israeli human rights groups, so words like occupation, like ethnic cleansing. And this was an issue for CVC management, who said that that is then taking a stance, and therefore if you're taking a stance on this, that you can't cover it. And I just thought, what a frustrating response to a letter that was essentially a cry for a conversation about how can we do coverage on this better in a way that is, again, once again, rooted in not just objectivity, but in truthfulness, and in centering the expertise of groups that have been studying this forever, and that we go to for stories all the time. So it's the pressure and the response of trying to kind of push back whether you do it quietly and internally, or in an open letter, the risk of punishment is very high.

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This year Psara all across a global news journalist was fired from her job, and an Instagram post She explains that she was fired for speaking out about Palestine on her social media.

24:03

Yara Jamal, a CTV journalist says that she was fired from speaking out about Palestine. In an Instagram post Jamal statement said that CTV News fired me after speaking up for Palestine. as disappointed as I am. I'm not shocked.

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Jackson Frank, a sports reporter who worked on Philly voice.com was fired after expressing solidarity with the Palestinian cause on X, formerly known as Twitter. Hamilton MPP Sarah JAMA, was kicked out of the NDP caucus after she called for an immediate ceasefire on October 10.

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We value this word neutrality you should stay neutral on things. But if you see that a politician or a group is consistently lying, or perhaps corrupt, our job as journalists is to use words like lying or corrupt or misrepresenting. But then, you know, kind of traditional journalism wisdom would say you can't actually say so and so as a liar because that's not neutral. But, you know, calling someone a liar. If this is a verifiable track record of somebody lying. That's not being a neutral that's actually telling the truth. But I think in the name of staying neutral and not wanting to show people, that we have an opinion on something, we stay neutral and avoid actually using very clear terms out of this fear of like upsetting people, or making it look like we've taken a stand when really what we're saying is reportable fact, which flies in the face of this kind of guise of neutrality.

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In 2022, Amnesty International released a report concluding that Israel created and maintains a system of apartheid. Earlier this year, a report from UN experts called for the dismantling of Israel's carceral regime. In 2022, the United Nations independent international commission of inquiry found that the Israeli occupation of Palestine is unlawful. On November 17, un experts said the bombardment and siege of Gaza is a genocide in the making. I'll remember that the next time I read an article that calls it an Israel Hamas war.

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The Palestinian struggle excites the revolutionary spirit in people across the world, because they see the problems with this euro American Imperial project. And they they want to participate in its dismantling, so that we can build about a better world. I'm talking about people here, who are also yearning for a different future who don't want to be part of a colonial or an imperial project anymore, who want to to build a different world. The censorship and silencing around Palestine is really for me none other than the silencing and censorship of all voices who are yearning for a new world and a truly decolonized world.

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Thanks for listening to connect with us or suggest a story you can find us on tick tock and acts at the review of during

**Mariana** 27:18

this episode of reviewed is hosted, edited and produced by Sahana. Ranganathan, Mariana Schwitzer and Lydia region.

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Special thanks to Angela Glover and Daniela Alario. For technical support