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Hadas Gold
CNN Correspondent

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Welcome to Media Masters, a series of one-to-one interviews with people at the top of the media game. Today, I'm joined down the line by Hadas Gold, CNNs media, tech and politics correspondent based in London. Named one of the "most influential media reporters" by Mediaite. Hadas has reported on topics ranging from coronavirus to Brexit since moving to Europe. Before focusing on the intersection between politics, media, and global business at CNN, Hadas spent more than five years at Politico as a media reporter. She was awarded a fellowship with the Pulitzer Centre on Crisis Reporting. And has won awards from the society of professional journalists. Born in Israel, Hadas grew up in Scottsdale Arizona, where she developed a passion for journalism and the belief that accurate reporting can trump hate. Hadas, thank you for joining me.

Great to be with you.

When you've got the CNN London beat, you could never have imagined that you'd be posted in a city in lockdown, how have you coped?

There have been many things that have happened since coming to London that I don't think I would have imagined. For example, when we first moved here, I thought that Brexit was going to be happening within six months or so, and that we would be moving on to other stories, that clearly didn't happen. Then of course, a pandemic. Lockdown has been really interesting, even more so because I am pregnant with our first child. So it's been really, I think a bit of a different experience for me. Luckily, I've been able to work from home. We have a whole setup. I can go live on air from home. I have a little corner that I created into my own little live studio. We've got lights, we've got microphones, we've got the whole setup. I've made packages from home. I've definitely learned to be both the camera

person and the producer and the reporter sort of all in one, obviously with support from everybody at CNN, but you're kind of more juggling everything at the same time. So it's busier on that hand. But on the other hand it's also so much different because it's kind of been one story this whole time that's changed in the last few weeks where I feel like other stories have started to make their way in, but they're all seemingly connected to coronavirus. I think one of the first times I've covered something that so directly impacted all of us. There was nobody who wasn't impacted by this. Sometimes when you cover a conflict, you cover a story. It clearly is impacting a certain group of people, but it might not be impacting literally every single person you know, and this was, I think the first time for all of us where this story and being in lockdown was literally affecting every single person you knew pretty much around the globe and it's just been fascinating and scary at the same time to be in on it. But I feel very lucky to be where I am to be working at CNN, to just have a job and also to be at a place that has been so flexible and so mindful of trying to cover the story responsibly, both in terms of how we cover the story and in what we're putting out there, but also responsibility for employees and how they're handling that.

So as an American here in Britain, you must have quite a unique perspective on how the American government and the UK government have handled the COVID problem. What are your key sort of takeaways in terms of the contrasting approach?

The key takeaways for me is how kind of centrally run the system is in the United Kingdom. In the U.S. we don't have a nationalized healthcare system. The States kind of do their own thing. As we saw the States were pretty much left to their own devices when it came to things like lockdowns, when it came to things like testing, even the hospital systems in the U.S. they are not necessarily all connected. And so it's a much different experience here with NHS, where it is pretty clearly all centralized into one place. So it's been a bit more, I guess, more clear where the instructions are coming from, how things will be followed, because if the NHS says this is how we're doing things now, then pretty much all the hospitals have to follow it. And many private hospitals also will follow NHS guidelines in that sense. I think that's been quite a big difference. I mean, there's also culturally some differences between how the UK versus the U.S. has reacted to lockdown. I do think it all comes down to just, this US very big. It has many different States that all take very different approaches. We've seen that a little bit in the UK with the different nations, Scotland versus England, but not to nearly the same extent. I also think that Boris Johnson getting sick himself and going to the ICU with coronavirus made a huge impact on how the country here and how the people here reacted to lockdown and reacted to the restrictions. I think that it really did cause people to realize how serious this was and how it could really affect

anybody. And that was a really intense and scary time because not only was somebody sick with coronavirus, but it was the prime minister and kind of what would that mean for how the country was run going forward.

I think the other thing that really mattered in the psyche of British people was when the prime minister's advisor, Dominic Cummings, seemingly flouted the rules and went to drop his wife and child off 200 miles away and then went to test his eyesight. It felt to many that, party politics aside, that he drafted the rules and then just flouted them. And a lot of people then just thought, well, they don't apply to me either. It seemed to be a significant step back.

Yeah. And I do wonder how society would have reacted had that not happened, if that would have changed anything, I'd be fascinated to look at some psychological studies on how groups react when things like that happen. But I think inevitably something would have happened somewhere that would have caused people to say, "Well, if they're not doing it, I don't need to do it either." I mean, that's what you see in the U.S. with people not wearing masks or not social distancing. It's really hard to get a lot of people to follow along. I do think that there have been waves here. I can tell you that in central London, I feel like I see more people with masks now, since the government has announced it will be mandatory within shops, even though it hasn't come into effect yet that you just see it, see more people with masks than I think you did before. But listen, it's really difficult to get absolutely everybody in a society to follow along with something that really, really directly impacts their lives when everybody seems to have their own approach to what's okay and what's not okay.

I mean, we've seen how it's going to change society in the medium to long-term in terms of working practices and whether people work all from home. How has it changed the news gathering process? I mean, for example, you're on lockdown at the moment. You're at home, you've already said you've innovated really, and sort of managed to put packages together and report from home, but how will it work when lockdown ends, will it still be acceptable for most people to sort of Skype in from their living rooms? Or do you think that will go back to the way things were?

I do think that we will see people be more accepting of remote working and perhaps of Skype interviews. I mean, we would occasionally do video call or Skype interviews before this. Obviously we preferred regular on camera. I think that everybody will try to go back to that as much as possible. In terms of how it's affected the reporting process, I mean first of all, is obviously directly affected if you cannot travel to a certain place to cover a certain story, obviously that's number one. Number two is in person

interviews are much different than over the phone or over Skype interviews. You get different feelings out of it. You get a different interview out of it. For some things, people prefer over the phone, for other things people prefer face to face interviews, obviously for TV, face to face interviews are much preferable because so much of an interview has to do with body language, with reading the other person's expressions and sort of interacting off of that. For the actual reporting process though, it's very much affected it because a lot of great sourcing comes from the by chance meetups that happen at events, you'll be at some talk, some panel, run into somebody, they say, "Oh, did you hear this?" Or, "Oh, Hey, let me introduce you to this person." And that can spark a new connection. That can spark a new conversation that we are missing right now. You don't have as many of those by chance meetings. So I feel like my sourcing has changed dramatically. I am still trying to reach out to people, do cold calls, things like that, but it's a much different experience than what we are used to. I mean, a typical week would often include at least one event, if not more. At least one or two or even more in-person coffees or lunches or something like that, that changes the dynamic drastically, in terms of the sourcing.

And a consistent theme of your recent reporting has been the rising tensions between the Western China and in particular China's use of misinformation to advance its aims?

Yeah. That is something we've seen. I'm always seeing countries using misinformation or to push out propaganda for some time now, that's not new, but around the coronavirus has been really interesting to see. It's been really interesting to see it come from China, come from Russia. Often they're not necessarily pushing crazy, what we might think is the kind of the crazy misinformation theories about, Oh, you've got to drink bleach and that's going to cure you of coronavirus. It's often not as obvious. They might question the Western countries response to coronavirus to make it seem as the China's doing better. They might question theories about the origins of the coronavirus. We even saw Chinese officials suggesting that the U.S. military may have brought coronavirus purposely to China. It's just a new level that we have not really seen before from China, and China's become much more aggressive. Chinese experts tell me there's been sort of a shift in the last five to 10 years from China just to become much more aggressive when it comes to diplomacy, when it comes to speaking out. What I find really fascinating is that they do so much of this on platforms that are actually banned within China itself. So for example, the accusation that somehow the U.S. military brought the coronavirus to China was made on Twitter, which Chinese people do not have access to Twitter. Obviously the relationship between China and the West is already dominating and will continue to dominate foreign diplomacy and also tech honestly, going forward. Because one thing that you hear from a lot of tech experts is this

fear of sort of the balkanization of the internet that we're already approaching. Like I said, you don't have Twitter in China, you have it elsewhere, all this argument, for example, over TikTok. TikTok doesn't actually exist in China. They have their own version of TikTok. There are different worlds when it comes to the internet. And I think people always imagine the internet as this mass democratizing force, and everybody is the same on the internet, but that's not actually true. The internet you access in different countries can be very, very vastly different, which leads to vastly different types of information that people are getting, which can lead to vastly different types of societies and types of governance and all of that.

And how do you think globalization will be impacted by this ultimately? Because as you've said, that individual nation states have different rules on what's legal, what to censor, but what ultimately is it that over the coming years, five, 10, 20 years, that it's going to be a democratizing force, that in a sense it's unstoppable, or do you think even 10, 15 years from now, China will still be banning Twitter?

Oh, it's so hard to predict the future. And I'm definitely not as much of a Chinese expert as some others are. So I don't know what China will do with Twitter in the next 10 to 15 years, but I do worry about how all these different approaches and rules to the internet are going to affect us. Just to look at something that a lot of people in the West might think is a good thing. For example, the hate speech law in Germany for me is a really intense hate speech law. You have to remove things on platforms that in the U.S. would likely be allowed to stay up. This stems from other laws in Germany that we don't have in the West. But what that leads to is, like I said, a different online experience from other people have, but these companies are worldwide companies. Facebook, sure it's based in the U.S., but it's a worldwide company. Will Facebook look different in all of these different countries? How will they manage to police their platforms in all of these different countries? Now, of course, VPNs exist and people in China can access Twitter or all these other sites if they have a VPN, but not everybody does. And I do think that we will see a direct line between how the internet is censored and monitored in different places, and that I think will have a direct line to the types of governments and the types of societies that these places have. And I think that we are going further along the line of the balkanization of the internet. Then it will one day somehow everybody will have the same sort of internet.

It's difficult, isn't it? Because if you compare and contrast, say Germany, as you said, and America, denial of the Holocaust is a criminal offense in Germany. But if you were to deny the Holocaust at the UK and U.S., whilst obviously that’s abhorrent and would mark you out to be a disgusting human being, there will be many people

that would fight strongly for your right to say that, even though it's grossly offensive, particularly with the free speech advocates in the U.S. They seem to be coming at it from completely different sides. It seems almost irreconcilable.

But what's interesting is to see some of these platforms take things into their own hands. For example, I do not think that denial of the Holocaust on the social media platforms is necessarily against the rules, but dehumanizing somebody or race of people is against the rules on some of these platforms. If you can go in the United States to your town square, and like you said, talk about denying the Holocaust existed, you can refer to certain types of races or religions in a dehumanizing way, that would be fine in a public square, but on some of these social media platforms, that's not okay. They are creating their own laws. Online, about what's allowed and what's not allowed. They are a private platform. It's the same as if you were to walk into a theatre and start screaming things. The theatre can have their own rules and say, "That's not allowed here. We are a private company, private property. You need to leave." This goes back to the whole argument about whether and what parts of the internet should be considered public square, should be considered public utility. That's a debate that's been going on for a very long time, especially in the US. But like I said, what we're seeing, is like Germany might have this law, are we going to see then everything already, on these platforms, just create their own rules and say, "This is just not allowed on our platform."? And at what point do you have governments or society say, 'All right, this platform is such a huge part of our lives that it's now a public utility, and it should not be allowed to make its own rules just however it sees fit."?

Does it disturb you that CNN itself has been targeted as the enemy by President Trump with his fake news accusations? How has the broadcaster dealt, in terms of how it looks after its staff and its journalists with being attacked by the president of the United States for simply doing their job, holding him to account?

Well, it's definitely not pleasant. He can try to prevent us from doing certain things. He's tried to prevent us from entering the White House, but it doesn't prevent us from reporting and continuing to be journalists in the way that we will always be journalists. And I think what's the most worrying aspect of it, is not so much what he or his administration might do, which is obviously frightening. And we want to be able to still have access to government to be able to report from important places like the White House. But I think what's more worrying, is how it affects other governments around the world and how it gives a green light to other leaders to do even worse things than just say, "Fake news." Down to, we've seen arresting journalists, even violence against journalists, that they somehow justified, because some government

official might cry fake news. And that might happen in countries where they don't have the protections of first amendment or free speech that we have in the West, where they don't really have a fallback option. And aside from that, it's also just what I see sometimes just in the street on a day-to-day basis, where everyday people will suddenly sneer at you. I was covering a story, a Brexit story in Dover. And we were going into a fish and chips shop. We had permission from the shop to go and interview its customers and just ... I would never force somebody to speak on camera if they don't want to. We are very respectful. Went up to a young guy and said, "Hey, we're with CNN. We want to hear your thoughts on Brexit." Very normal thing. And he went off, fake news, CNN. And I asked him, "Have you ever watched CNN?" And he hadn't, or maybe he'd seen it once. But because that's what he had heard over and over again, then that's just what he was spouting out. And I think that's very dangerous. It's just like somebody spouting out against a group of people because of their profession, or their religion, or their race. They might not know anybody from that group of people, but because that's what they've heard, that's how they're going to react to them. And I just don't think that's healthy at all. And I think that's a really dangerous thing. I have to be aware less so here, but in the US you have to be aware of wearing something that says CNN, and what that might do. And I think just as somebody who wears something that says Fox News might be wary of wearing it in places. And I think that's a really, really sad and unfortunate development.

How did you feel when you saw Omar Jimenez, doing his lawful job as a CNN correspondent, reporting from the protest in Minneapolis, arrested live on screen? That just blew me away. For me, it felt like a sea change, that it already gone too far, but that was just beyond the pale.

It was very breath-taking, and Omar is one of the best. He's just such a wonderful, wonderful person and such an incredible professional journalist. And I think, obviously it was an awful situation, but if you wanted a perfect example of how to stay calm and be a professional in a situation like that, I think Omar and his team were the best examples of that in that moment. Just continue reporting, continue being calm. I think that he was just incredible in that moment. But it was absolutely breath-taking. I think that all reporters are always prepared, especially involved how situations like that for something to happen. And we get training for it. We get what's called Hostile Environment Training, which can be anything from a war zone to a protest like that. And you have to be ready for it. But I do think what was most breath-taking about it, was that it happened live on air, and that somehow seeing these reporters just reporting on a street corner, and seeing Omar saying, "What do you want me to do? I'll move. Just tell me what you want me to do." That somehow didn't solve it. And the first thing

that it made me think of was, obviously I was worried for his safety and for the crew's safety, but I knew that thankfully he had a ginormous organization behind him that had all the resources to do whatever it needed to do to make sure he was okay, and get him and the crew released as soon as possible, which we knew was happening immediately. But what happens to the local reporter who is not on camera, who's a print reporter? What happens to the photographer? What happens to the freelancer? Often when you're a print reporter, you go by yourself, you don't have a camera crew with you. You don't have a camera running live on air, broadcasting to millions of people around the world. And I think, what does that mean to the things we don't see on camera? What happens there? There are people who have been arrested in other places. There was a British journalist from The Independent. The Independent put it on the front page, not too long ago, who was arrested, I think in Seattle or Portland. And didn't have a camera crew with him. He had a state department ID, and still got detained and arrested. And I think that's one of the first things that my mind thought to after of course, is Omar safe, is everybody going to be okay? And I think that, like I said, he handled himself very well. He said afterwards that the entire experience while unpleasant, was fine and cordial, and he then just did what he was supposed to do. And right after that, he just went right back out, literally walked out of the police station and just kept reporting. And I think that's the best thing that we can do in situations like that. Aside from obviously fight unjust detentions.

So what's it like being in the middle of a Twitter storm? You've had several of these throughout your career. They can't be pleasant.

No, they're not pleasant. And I think when you often have a platform, anything that can happen to you can become magnified, and sometimes little things can become huge things. And sometimes things that are really personal can become huge events. For example, during the 2016 election, I don't even know who it was, but I was targeted with a lot of antisemitic attacks, to the point where they were Photoshopping my face onto pictures of Holocaust victims, saying they were going to come get me. I had posted it short of privately onto my Facebook page, which was not public, and a friend posted it publicly on Twitter. And it just went crazy. And it was Trump supporter targets journalist in antisemitic attacks. And it's not pleasant. And every journalist has had moments where maybe something like that happens and it blows up, or they make a mistake that in other times you'd issue a correction and life would go on, but it turns into a bigger moment. And it's so hard to predict one of those moments would become huge. For example, with the antisemitic attacks, when my friend posted it, she was trying to express support, but I don't think she had any idea that it would turn into multiple articles in the biggest newspapers in the country, invitations to go on TV, to do interviews about it. It was something I was

dealing with, and my employer at the time, Politico, was dealing with, with me, filing police reports, all that. I wasn't making it public. And it was made public without me really knowing about it. And it turned into this gigantic story. And again, I was very lucky that I had support with me. I had an employer who was supporting me, not just in terms of dealing with police, but also in terms of dealing with the onslaught of the publicity. And what I find amazing, it's so hard to know what a certain tweet, or what a certain post, or a certain story is going to blow up. You just never really know. And sometimes you're reporting on somebody, and you go back through their post history, and you're like, that tweet just flew under the radar. Nobody noticed that. And then other times one thing will just absolutely blow up. And we've seen that happen everywhere. We're seeing it happen now, it's this people digging into people's history and things like that. It's just so hard to predict. And I do think that what I've learned from all of it is to be much more careful on social media, much more careful about what I share. Obviously we always try to be as accurate as possible, and to be as direct with people as possible. I want to share what I'm going through supporting, whether that's an antisemitic attack or something like that. Or I want to share when I make a mistake. And I think we all should do that. And I think we should all have, maybe a little bit more understanding that the internet moves at a very fast pace. Things can change very quickly, and things can really affect people's lives. Some of my colleagues have done some amazing reporting on when innocent people become the targets by accident of a conspiracy theory, or something like that. And just to recognize that it can really affect people's daily lives.

Well, there have been attacks on paediatricians in the UK, because people haven't worked the difference out between what a paediatrician is, a children's doctor and a paedophile. So that people's houses are getting set alight. It's crazy. So I agree with you. And that actually brings me to the next point, which is about the online mob as it were, because in a non-media job, if you were a landscape gardener, or a dental hygienist, or something, a non-media job. If someone said some of the things to you on Twitter, you've rightly be appalled and you'd complain. All of us become immune to this, where we have a lower standard of the coarseness of at the debate. I sometimes get horrendous attacks on Twitter. And if someone did that in a pub, I'd go to the police. I'll go to the security. But because it's on Twitter, you think that's okay. You tend to say, "Well, only if they threaten actual violence, will I report them." It does seem to be a coarsening of the debate, that you're being attacked by the president, but you've also got members of the public that says CNN fake news, you're getting attacks online. It seems to be an incredibly tough job, simply just reporting the truth.

Yeah. And I do think a lot of it has to do with the idea of how easy it is to be anonymous online. A lot of these attacks might come from anonymous people, and people feel more free to write things than to say them to somebody's face, it's much different. You still get people saying things to your face, but it's much different online than it is in person. But I do think that people are realizing that their online lives and their real lives are intertwined, and that it can have direct consequences for what you do. But at a certain point, it sounds sad, but at a certain point you just become numb to it, and you stop checking your notifications as much. I did notice that when I moved to the United Kingdom, the vitriol in my notification tabs went down. And I think it's because I wasn't covering the White House as much, I wasn't covering politics as much. I still cover it. It still happens. And I know that UK reporters who cover Number 10, who cover Brexit and politics, they get a lot of it. Sometimes I see them reacting. I do feel for them because I've been there, and it can be hard, because we are doing our jobs with the best we can. And for a lot of people, they don't see it as enough or they think we're doing it wrong. And sometimes I just want to go to them, and I just want to show them how we do our jobs. Because I think sometimes that's the best way when I explain to people, they say, "CNN, fake news, blah, blah, blah." And I say, "Let me just explain to you how my work comes to be. What I do. Here are the people that I talked to, here's all the reporting, here are my pages and pages of notes and interviews I've done. And then here's what the editing process is like. It goes through at least two different editors. And then it goes through a whole other standards process that often people have no idea about, that, that's how it goes through it before something gets on air or online." And I think if people realize that, and I think a lot of times people think, we just say whatever the heck we want, we can write whatever the heck we want. It doesn't have to be checked. Doesn't have to be verified. Anything like that. When being a real journalist, not somebody who's just commenting on Twitter, or on a blog, or something like that, which unfortunately, some of those people have become, almost celebrities with hundreds of thousands, if not millions of followers online, real reporting is a lot of work. It's a lot of grunt work. It's not always glamorous, but it's important. And there's a reason that it takes a professional to it. Now that doesn't mean that your average citizen can't be a great citizen journalists. It's just, I think people, if they understood how much work goes into it. The same way that if people understood, they might say that about lawyers and say lawyers awful. And sure, I'm sure there's some bad lawyers out there, but if they realize how much work goes into building a case and taking it to trial, or something like that, then I think people would have a better view of it and understand it better.

I think we've dealt with the challenges and the negative aspects of the job, the unpleasant aspects. I think what I'd like to ask you now is, what's the flip side to that coin? What are the good bits of your job?

What are the best bits that you enjoy? You wake up on a morning, your alarm clock goes off. What are the things that excite you about the day ahead about your job?

I got into journalism because, first of all, I always loved reading and writing, and I didn't quite know what I wanted to do in journalism. To me, it seemed like the best opportunity to get to taste a bit of so many different aspects of the world, and I do find that true to this day, even though I have a beat, it's that every day is completely different. You never know what the day is going to end like. Before lockdown, you might be sent to cover a story in a different place, in a different country, in a different part of the city. You just have no idea what source might call you up and say, "Hey, I just heard this," or, "This is going to happen." That turns into a huge story. I think that's the most exciting aspect of it. I also find it really meaningful and how much of an impact we can have on people's lives, that if we cover a certain issue, if we cover a story, then it can really change things. If there's some injustice somewhere and you cover it, that it can change things, especially catching a politician doing something dirty; that can change things. So, it is sometimes both awe-inspiring and very frightening to hold so much power in your hand and to hold so much responsibility in your hands, and I think that's a really meaningful aspect of what we do. Then there's also just the plain fun parts of being a reporter. It is really incredible, when we were traveling, to be able to travel to places you wouldn't necessarily go to maybe on holiday or something like that, and to get to talk to people. I did a story up in T side, to do a Freeport story, and just to get to talk to some of the local people there. We interviewed this amazing man who runs a boxing gym, works with a lot of refugees up there. He needs to be character in a movie. I would have never met this person and talked to them and got to spend time with them without being a journalist. I would have never gotten that opportunity to tell his story, and I think that's one of the best aspects of it. And sometimes, just the situations you find yourself in as a reporter. I go uncover in Davos, and before you know it, it's just a very insane experience and I have a lot of issues with Davos. But, you end up at a party with some major mega star singing for all of these CEOs and politicians, and then the party gets shut down because of a noise complaint from somewhere else, and you have all these very important people basically-

I think I was there. Was that Zara Larsson? I was at the CloudFlare Party at Davos this year. And I think that got shut down, because of noise complaints.

Yeah, it was Jason Derulo. Jason Derulo was singing and I don't really know who Jason Derulo is. And then, suddenly it got shut down.

I didn't know who Zara Larsson was. I tweeted out that someone

called Zara Larsson is singing and I got ridiculed because people said, "She's one of the biggest stars on the planet, has about 10 million followers on Instagram." I was like, "Okay, I'm old." I'm 45.

I'm also very bad when it comes to celebrities. And I have many funny stories of running into them having no idea who they are and just chatting with them. But, it's just one of those, again, it's a job that you can go from, like I said, interviewing a boxing coach in a part of the UK that probably a lot of people have never been to and would never think to go to, about how difficult it might be to live there and what a Freeport could do for them and the work that they do in their community. And then, two weeks later be in Davos watching a major music star, even if you don't necessarily know who they are, singing and getting shut down by the CIS police and a bunch of important CEOs and politicians being disappointed by it. So, that's just sort of the incredible nature of the job. And I feel very, very, very, very lucky to have managed to get to where I am and to have the job that I have. And I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Now, all superheroes have an origin story. Tell us about your upbringing. You were born in Tel Aviv, but your family moved to Arizona when you were three and you discovered a love for TV news at a very early age. Did you always want to be a journalist? And how did you set about the beginning of the journey?

So, my parents were really big into consuming news. They always listened to NPR, they always watched. I just remember very clearly them watching a news magazine show called 20/20. It would appear on Friday nights in the US. It's still around, but it's not the same. It was much more like a 60 minutes than I think what it is today. But, I just distinctly remember watching Diane Sawyer on 20/20. They would watch morning news. I think part of it is because of our family back in Israel, to keep up with what was happening around the world. And I just assumed and distinctly remember, I don't know if I was necessarily hiding. I can't remember if I was supposed to go to bed, but if I sat on the stairs, you could see the television and my parents' backs would be to me because they were sitting on the couch. So, you could kind of quietly watch without them knowing that you were there. And I was a huge, huge reader, liked to write growing up. And then, when I was in middle school, I think is when I decided that I wanted to be a journalist. But, I somehow decided that I did not want to do TV journalism, which is ironic now. And as soon as I could in high school, I joined the school paper. I remember being very disappointed you weren't allowed to join the school paper in your first year in high school, but then I immediately joined and just kind of went from there. Applied for journalism schools and ended up going to George Washington University in Washington D.C. I chose it partly because of the amazing opportunities you had by being in the middle of

DC, the fact that your professors were working journalists, they would teach you in the morning and go to their jobs for the day. And you could often intern with them without having to take any time off from school. So, you could arrange your schedule, so you're interning on Tuesday, Wednesday, and have classes Monday, Wednesday, Friday. So, I had some really incredible internships and experiences while at GW. I was on the school paper and I still got to have the college experience with being in a sorority and all of that. And then, I ended up doing a master's program at GW. They had a program where you can go directly from your bachelor's into a master's. And this was... I was in school during the 2008 crash when a lot of media as we knew it was completely decimated. I remember being the last intern for the Washington correspondent for the Palm Beach Post in Florida. And just how heart-wrenching it was to see these institutions torn apart by just the economics of what's happening. Back in the day, regional newspapers, it was not a question at all. They would have a Washington correspondent, the Palm Beach Post would have its own Washington correspondent in Washington D.C, because who else would chase around your specific member of Congress, your specific Senator, who would know the stories that matter to you and follow them up in the halls of Congress and where all the power was coming from? That has sadly really gone away and I got to see sort of the end of that and what that was like. So it was a little frightening also because trying to get a job. I graduated undergrad in 2010, so a lot of my friends were trying to find jobs in journalism at the time, which was difficult. I ended up not joining the workforce until 2012 when I finished my master's degree and I was very lucky to end up at Politico. And I remember actually, I also had a job offer from a different organization. And I got very good advice from somebody who I consider a lifelong mentor of mine, his name is Frank Sesno. He was the head of the journalism school. Sesno is a former, actually, CNN White House correspondent and Washington Bureau chief. And he advised me to make sure I got in at the right place that I wanted to be, even if it wasn't the right job; it didn't matter what I was doing as long as I was in the right place. And so, I took a job that wasn't what I wanted to do. I was a web producer, which meant we would get the raw stories from the journalist or from the editors, and we would package them to put on the internet. So, we give them a good image, we put in links, we prep the social media around them. But, it was a great introduction to what different people in the newsroom did and how the newsroom worked, how the work process was. And also on the side, you could write. You were allowed to write on the side if you had time and if you wanted to. And then from there, I got promoted to be a general assignment reporter, which meant that I had to start work at 5:00 AM because part of my job was to watch all of the major news morning shows, and if a politician said something important to very quickly write it up. And then, throughout the rest of the day, you would just catch whatever general thing was coming through that maybe the beat Reporters didn't

have time for, but needed to be covered. That was what we did. And that was again, just a wonderful initiation into how to write fast, how to write clean, how to recognize what's an important story, what's not. My editor there was Gregg Birnbaum, who was a legend in New York and DC politics world. He's still an editor now. If you look at the people that he has shaped, they're some of the bigger names in journalism. I think he should be very proud of his alumni. And then from there, I would bother a reporter named Dylan Byers, who is now at NBC, who was the media reporter at the time. And I would just try to help and say, "Hey, I saw this," "Hey, can I help you with anything?" And that turned into Dylan asking editors if I could join him on the media beat. And they said that was okay, and I became a media reporter. It wasn't really something I intended to do. I always kind of thought I would end up doing state department or diplomacy reporting, something like that, Pentagon reporting. And this is how it ended up happening. I think it worked because my master's was in media studies and communication strategies. So, I understood that. But, it wasn't a path that I necessarily thought I was going to take, but it was, I think, the perfect path, because first of all, it was a smaller pond; not as many media reporters. And it's a really exciting beat that a lot of people care about and Dylan always reminded me that all the people that I was interviewing could at one point hire me, at some point. I don't know if that's necessarily what happened when I went to CNN, but you got to know all the major power players and it was really crazy. Media reporting has changed drastically. When I started, it was a very industry-reporting job, where it was, "Oh, this editor is on his way out," or, "here's what happened with this project at this company and why it failed." And then, obviously with the 2016 election, it shifted very drastically to being a much bigger story that affected everything. The tension between the media and politics really, really changed. The beat completely changed. And then, I ended up at CNN. I was recruited by an executive at the time named Ed O'Keeffe, and offered me this really exciting opportunity to move to London and become a reporter in London covering the intersection of media and politics and tech, which obviously is very important out here. Before I moved though, I spent a year in Washington in the Washington Bureau, which was really important to me to get to know everybody there. I also covered the merger trial of when AT&T bought CNN's parent company Time Warner, and the Trump administration tried to stop it on antitrust grounds. It turned into this huge trial. I was able to cover that trial every single day, which, let me tell you, it's rather stressful to cover a trial of who's going to be your next boss, and knowing that your next bosses-

I can imagine.

Are going to be watching you. And actually after the trial ended, I had a few opportunities to meet the executives and to actually meet. At one point, I

did get to meet the CEO of AT&T and he recognized me. He said, "Oh, you're Hadas. I used to watch you all the time during the trial." It just blows your mind. You're just like, "Thank goodness you mostly seemed okay with what I was saying on air, because I still have a job." And then, yeah. So, then I moved to London in August of 2018. And here we are.

What's next for you, if that's not too personal a question? Are there any other beats that you might consider? Would you move into sort of a pharma , or transport? Do you think that you'll climb the ladder, but on the same ladder as it were, that you'll cover that intersection between media and tech and so on?

Well, the beat is a fascinating beat, and one that I think that I could spend the rest of my career in if I wanted to, but as I've approached, I think everything in my career so far is I never have a set path that I think I need to be on, that I have to do X, Y, Z in order to reach this goal. I have vague ideas of where I'd like to be 10, 15, 20 years from now, but I also know that life will hand you many different opportunities and you need to take the ones that seem right at the time and go with it. And so far, that's worked really, really well for me, and I plan to continue on that. In the immediate future, my next task will be to give birth to a baby boy within the next five weeks or so.

Congratulations.

Thank you. So, maybe by the time people listen to this, I will have a screaming infant on my hands. So, that is my immediate task in front of me. I'm actually sitting right now in what will end up being his nursery, and it's quite a mess right now. We'll get it organized. So that's my immediate task, is to become a mother and I'm very apprehensive, but also excited to be coming back to work at some point, and becoming a working mother. And thankfully I have a lot of great examples of that, both at CNN and around me elsewhere, that you can do it. There's lots and lots of working moms at CNN who have already reached out to me and offered their support and advice. So I'm, of course, worried about what it's going to be like, but I'm also very excited and very happy to know that I'm at a place that appreciates and recognizes the importance of being able to have a family at the same time as being a reporter, because it's not an easy job to do both, Paul. Really, it's not because of the unpredictability of the job and the nature of it. But, I am very excited for the next adventure of my career, whatever that might be. And of course first for the next adventure of having a child.

Congratulations. That's amazing. We had Jon Sopel on the podcast recently. He's the BBC's man in Washington. He's a Brit working over

in America. And he was comparing and contrasting just, what day to day life is like. As someone who spent most of their life in America now here in Britain, will we get to keep you? Have you fallen in love with the country? Do you want to renounce America now and pledge allegiance to her majesty? A kind of reverse Hamilton, maybe?

Well, I do love Jon Sopel and he was such a sweetheart. When I got the job, he actually invited me and my husband over to his house in Washington to have dinner with him and his wife, and talk about what life was going to be like in London, which was a huge help. So he's a wonderful guy. And I don't know. So ironically, my husband actually did both his masters and his PhD here in the UK. So we do actually have quite a few connections to the United Kingdom and I would not be surprised if we spend more time in the UK or if we leave and come back. As of right now, I cannot tell you, I don't know if we'll be here forever, but I do really love living here. London is an incredible city, even in lockdown it's an incredible city. There's amazing people here. It's so international and just absolutely anything you want, whether it's a type of food or type of theatre, everything from Hamilton down to... We saw a show that was set during The Troubles, but it involved Wolverines. We saw a very small show in a theatre above a pub. And I think that's the type of thing you can really only do in London and also, just because of its location, it's the gateway to all these different places. Europe, even after Brexit, it will still do that. And so I do really love living here. It's a different media world, it's a different media and politics climate, but it's just been so much fun and so fascinating, to be both an observer and a participant in it.

They say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, but in the Netflix Ryan Murphy series, The Politician, Bette Midler plays a fierce and political operative called her Hadassah Gold. Now, is that a coincidence? Did you get some kind of kickback? Are you the inspiration for the character? Did they adapt your name somehow? And I can't be the only person who's put that to you very gently and very politely.

Actually, the first time that was pointed out to me was only a few weeks ago. And I actually have no idea how they got that. So I do have to say Joseph Lieberman's wife is named Hadassah as well, so perhaps there was some combination there. Who knows? I mean, maybe somebody saw me once on air and thought that was a good name to have. I do have a fourth degree of connection to Ryan Murphy. So, who knows how that name ended up there? But it is pretty unusual. There are more, I know I'm not the only Hadas Gold in the world and there are other ones, but I was very surprised to see that as well, but I actually should probably watch the show, because I haven't yet. I can get on that, maybe during maternity leave, I'll

get a chance to watch it.

Hey, I mean, I can think of worse things than being played by Bette Midler on television. I mean, she's amazing.

Oh yeah, she is amazing. So that's totally fine with me.

Absolutely. Now doing the research on you before this podcast, I mean, there's obviously a litany of things that you've got to be proud of, but I wanted to talk about the fellowship that you were awarded with a Pulitzer Centre on Crisis Reporting, because traveling Buenos Aires, you reported on the people who dig through the city's trash for recyclables to sell. I mean, that was an incredibly moving experience, was it not?

It was, and it was also an incredible teaching experience, because I did it all on my own. And looking back now, I can't believe how naive I was in some of what I was doing. I was in grad school. I got this incredible opportunity, this incredible fellowship from the Pulitzer Centre, which Pulitzer Centre, this Centre on Crisis Reporting has evolved even further and it's even a bigger deal now. And it was just amazing. You just pitched a story to them and they just give you money, they say, "Go do it." Which was incredible. And so I had studied abroad in Argentina and I pitched the story of, there are these people called cartoneros in Argentina. And when the sun goes down, they go through the city streets and they pick out the recyclables to sell. And many of them live in these slums on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. And they've become almost semi-official. Some of them have organized into, you could call them unions, where they provide childcare for the people while they're out working, they provide healthcare, they lobby the government. And so at the time, some of these unions were lobbying the government for official recognition to help them get more benefits, because they were doing, they said, essentially a job that the government, the city government or the national government should be doing or would be doing themselves if it wasn't for them. And so I spent time with them and it was just... I mean, look, I would connect with them. I spent an evening with them following them around. I literally met them at their homes and then you got to meet their families. And listen, they don't live in a way that I think you or I would ever recognize as a proper house to live in. And then just the work that they do. And then I went to some of their meetings and it was a really incredible experience, not only in just the reporting process and putting myself out there and in sometimes uncomfortable situations and understanding when to check myself, like if this is okay or this isn't okay. But also how to approach sensitive situations. There were times when they didn't want me to film inside their homes, or they didn't want me to film a certain meeting. They didn't want me to film them when they were getting

free food handouts and to be very respectful of that. And then also how to tell a story that will translate around the world, that would translate to an American audience who might not even understand that there could be a people who had picked through the trash. Why would they pick through the trash? How would they sell it? Where does it end up? And then also just the logistics and the technicalities of editing something. And so I had great support from GW and people there, who helped me. How do you pace a piece? I did a mini documentary it and some articles and some photo essays. How do you pace a piece? How do you tell the story? You want to get across the emotion of it, but also the politics of it at the same time. Really, really incredible experience. And I encourage anybody who is a student or anybody. They also have grants for people who are no longer students to apply for these grants, because it's an incredible opportunity. And having the Pulitzer name attached to you is very, very helpful in opening up doors as well.

What advice would you give to someone starting out on their media career now, listening to this, inspired by the work that you've done? They may be at college and they're looking at next steps. What would you advise them to do? And what would you advise them to not do?

Obviously , important to have a goal, but never think that there's a set way that I have to get to that goal. Maybe you want to be the top political presenter for the BBC. There is not a set way to get there and you should be open to any and all opportunities and you might... And you should also be open to a goal that will look a little different from that, but it could still get you to where you to a job that is what you want to do and that you should be okay when your desires and wants and goals change over time. The other thing that I think is very helpful as a way to stand out in the media world right now, is to have either, I don't want to say, it's almost like a shtick, have a shtick or have an expertise. And when people think both internally at an organization and externally, "Oh, we need an expert on Chinese American relations. Who would that be?" That you want to be the name that pops up in their head. Or let's say, they say, "We need somebody who can present, who can be our face on TikTok. Who could be our face on TikTok, that knows news, but also knows social media and has that bubbly personality? Who is that person?" And I think if you can carve out a place for yourself, A, that can be really great in terms of deepening and broadening your beat and becoming an expert on that. And then for sourcing, that can be really important, but also for just the plain reality of getting a job, because people will reach out to you, they'll say, "Hey, we're looking for a foreign affairs reporter and we've seen your stuff on China. Do you want to come interview with us?" Versus just... Being a generalist is very important. But if you're going to be a journalist, have a shtick, maybe your shtick is that you're really good on Twitter, you're really good on social

media, you're really creative in how you're presenting things, or you do great explainers on general news that's happening. But find a way to mark out your own territory. It doesn't have to be necessarily on a subject. It can be on a way that you present the news or the way that you present journalism or data or something like that, but find a way to differentiate yourself from others.

Have you been given any pieces of advice by colleagues, by fellow reporters that you still carry with you to this day?

There are several that I still use to this day. One comes to mind, from Jake Sherman, who is the author of Politico's Playbook, who I actually went to college with. And at one point was the editor of the college paper when I was a reporter there. He always told me that, if you disagreed with something in a piece, whether it was the headline or the photo, or if it's a package for television, some video, that you always need to speak up, because ultimately it was your name and your face. That you shouldn't be afraid to stand up to even a high up editor. That if you did not agree with something, with how something was being presented, you needed to speak up, because it is your name and your face on it and not their name, not their face, even if they owned the publication, ultimately it is your name, your face. And so I have taken that to heart and sometimes it can be hard to stand up to people. Sometimes you're standing up to multiple people. I had a situation once where I was reporting on somebody who was a victim of alleged domestic violence, and I did not want to name the victim. And I was working with people who said, "This person's going to be named anyway. It's very obvious who they are just based off of the situation." And I said, "I know, but my name is not going to be on the piece, that names that victim." And I stuck to it. I was very, very proud of myself and happy that I did stick to it. Did that person's name get out? Yes, it did. But it was not in our piece. And I think that is something people need to remember, because it's ultimately your reputation and your work that's at stake.

Hadas, that was an incredibly interesting conversation. I've enjoyed every moment of it. Thank you ever so much for your time and the very, very best of luck for your forthcoming motherhood. Congratulations.

Thank you. Thanks so much for having me.