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Media Masters – November 15, 2018

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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 by Adrian Monck, managing director of the World Economic Forum. The Forum's annual conference in Davos brings international political leaders together with top entrepreneurs, economists, celebrities and journalists to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world. Before joining the organisation, he had an award-winning broadcast career. He's reported for CBS News, ITN and Sky, covering world-changing events from the fall of the Berlin Wall to conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 1997, he was the launch editor of 5 News, and his reporting of Dunblane and Bosnia earned him two Royal Television Society awards. After bidding farewell to television news in 2005, he headed up the department of journalism at City University London and has co-written two books on the media.

Adrian, thank you for joining me.

Pleasure, Paul. Pleasure.

Adrian, the Forum's Davos Summit has become such a fixture for global leaders. Talk us through what that week must be like for you. Do you get any sleep at all?

That week starts on the weekend before, and about 200 of us head up the mountain by train to kind of prepare Davos for the incoming assault, which is around 10,000 people coming to Davos itself. Something like 30,000 support folks, and this is in an alpine... it's not a village, it is actually designated as a city, it's the highest city in Europe, but it's a city of 12,000 people, 13,000 people, so its population absolutely balloons during the week of Davos, which is normally the third or fourth week in January. And yes, we turn up and we transform the town into a conference centre for the most important people in the world, which is something of a logistical operation, and it has never ceased to amaze me that we managed to somehow pull it off. But every year we seem to, and despite the hitches, and the snafus, and the various ways in which that whole process of bringing together 2,500 people who will tell you that they're the most important person in the world, it somehow works.

And it must be an incredible logistical feat to pull off, as you just said. I mean, just in terms of the security last year, you had President Trump there and the rest.

We're very lucky. I mean, it's a fantastic place to actually hold an event, because it really teaches you how to deal with everyone from regular folks to the kind of governmental level. The actual system in Switzerland is such that, when you hold a meeting in Davos, you have to have the support of the townspeople, and the mayor, and all the folks who live there, in order to carry it off. If you come to London and hold a conference, you don't need to get permission from the parish council in Westminster. In Davos, because of the way Swiss democracy works, you have to actually convince people they want to have this meeting, that they want to have this imposition on their lives for a week – and then you have to go to Graubünden Council, which is the next level up, and then you have to go to the federal government and talk to them. So it's an incredible jigsaw of political movement required to actually hold the event, but it's kind of a good thing because it means that you have to take into account the feelings of every single human being whose life is touched by this incredible inconvenience that's thrust upon them, and get them on side. And that's one of the great things about doing this event in Davos – it really is something that needs everyone to get behind. Without their help, we wouldn't be able to do it.

And it's developed to near-mythical levels of importance in modern parlance and modern circles. Talk us through what actually goes on during the week. I mean, obviously there's the logistics, but what goes on front of house, and I imagine there's lots of interesting stuff that goes on behind the scenes too.

There's a massive amount of panels organised. First of all, the meeting takes place around a theme, and people will say to you, "Well, hang on a second, this is one of those feel-good, vague themes that doesn't mean anything. What are you bringing people together for?" And actually, when it comes to convening everyone, from people from China, to Argentina, to the US, to parts of Africa, you're really trying to give them something to get their head around, and so you need a theme that allows people to lock in and have a conversation. The first thing is, if it sounds something that's all-embracing in general, well, that's because you have to have something all-embracing in general to get the people that you get in Davos to come along. Secondly, those conversations have to be choreographed. They have to be organised, they have to be produced, if you like. And so, producing them is again another incredible kind of Rubik's Cube of making sure that different people are in the same place at the same time, that they understand what they're going to be talking about. Behind the scenes you've got a whole ton of other events, because those people are around, that they'll organise individually. So they'll typically organise hundreds, if not thousands, of bilateral meetings during the time they're in Davos. And you get for this one moment in January, all of the world's principal actors, because these are all people who occupy positions of responsibility. One of the key things about coming to Davos is you have to be in a position of authority. You have to be a political leader. You have to be heading an IO. You have to be heading a business. There's no place for people who have retired or stepped down or moved aside; the people who are there are all in the thick of it. And so, when it

comes to actually meeting and discussing and taking the temperature, you come away from Davos with a sense of what is top of mind for people, and where are they in terms of the big issues of the day, and the biggest issue of the year, I suppose, which is why Davos kind of occupies this space that it does. It's one time when people who would normally be in transmit mode go into receive mode – and that's quite a powerful thing for those people to do for three or four days of the year in a small Swiss town.

What have been some of the more memorable moments for you so far?

You ask me that, but my brain is like a toilet – it flushes every time I do something. In terms of what I recall from Davos's past, there's been so many different moments of seeing things and hearing things that change the way you think about problems, about the world. I guess the most recent one, I was in China four weeks ago for a meeting. We do meetings around the world, not just in Davos. I was in China for our annual meeting of the New Champions, which gets something like 2,500 people, took place in Shenzhen in China. Shenzhen, by the way, is a small town of 15 million people with a GDP per capita that's probably as high as anywhere in the UK, outside London and the southeast.

Even saying “a small town of 15 million people” just re-frames our world view, doesn't it?

Yes. And I was sitting in there listening to a bunch of Chinese economists speaking in Chinese, simultaneous translation, talking about how their economic problems need to be addressed. Really, really interesting conversation, hearing people talking about their priorities. You know, should China be investing globally in what they call the 'belt and road initiative' or should they be spending money back home? It's still an economy with something like 40% of people in agriculture, and there's a big argument going on within China which you won't hear too much about between people in the highest levels of the administration there, wondering whether or not they need to turn their attention internally rather than externally. So there is this question mark even in China about what they do with their money, where they should be going. It's not just Brexit, it's not just the US pulling out, maybe of international trade agreements. China, too, is wondering where it should be spending its money, should it be spending his money globally or should it be spending its money at home?

And those that have that come to Davos, so they're looking to connect with people like that, to influence those decisions? Because in order to be on receive mode, some of the attendees there, there's obviously got to be some people on transmit mode.

Sure. I mean, I got one of my favourite stories about Davos itself, and people being in receive rather than transmit, is when Nelson Mandela came in the 1990s. And he had just taken office with the ANC, and he had a plan to basically institute a kind of communist-style managed economy in South Africa. And during Davos, he was seated next to the Chinese premier, a guy called Li Peng. And the Chinese premier convinced him to abandon that plan and actually privatise the South African

economy. So his initial idea to run it as an East German system was actually talked out of him by a communist prime minister, which is kind of extraordinary. And again, it shows you some of the power that you can have when powerful people meet and talk to another. And it would be lovely if each of us could have the same influence. If any normal economist or any normal individual could sit down for two minutes with Nelson Mandela and say, "Look, you've got to think again." But sometimes it does require people at a certain level who can cut through and get through to somebody to actually be heard and be listened to. And that, I think, is a factor of human life and human existence, and it's frustrating, but it's also true. And so that's something we contend with in Davos, but also something that works a little bit to our advantage, we hope, in making people concerned about issues like climate, issues like global inequality, those kinds of things. So we try and make it work for issues that count.

To state the obvious in a sense, your job is incredible. You must feel incredibly privileged to do such an important job. I mean, the influence and all of the things that you must be able to take part in is incredible.

I think everyone who works for the Forum feels it's a great privilege. I mean, it's an incredible institution. It was started 50 years ago by a Swiss German professor called Klaus Schwab, and he still runs it today. I mean, he's an extraordinary, energetic guy. He's in his early 80s and he's got no signs of stopping or slowing down. And yes, I think everyone who works there – and when I started there were some 300 of us, now there's now this thing like 800 people working for the Forum – I think everyone feels it is an extraordinary privilege because you'd get access to ideas, access to organisations, access to people that's really unparalleled. And also opportunity in the Forum's work, which is really global, to see it first-hand, you know, change in Argentina, change in Brazil, change in Rwanda, change in Burma. These are countries and economies that are changing by... sometimes almost by the hour in Asia. And so it is a great privilege, and you can't take it for granted. Speaking of someone who grew up in a council house in Great Yarmouth, I certainly don't take it for granted.

We'll talk about your personal journey shortly, but I wanted to talk about the way that you communicate Davos, because it's changed dramatically over the last five years. You're using social media to connect with people far beyond the attendees now.

When I arrived at the Forum, one of the things that people said about it was that it was spooky and secretive. It was a little bit distant from people's lives. People weren't sure what went on there. And so, not being sure what went on, people speculated about the things that happen behind closed doors.

The Illuminati, and all that.

All that stuff, the tinfoil hats and everything else. And so when I arrived, there were a couple of things that struck me about the Forum. One was that the change in social and digital media meant that there was an opportunity for organisations to tell their own story. And the other was that the Forum could be one of the leading proponents of this kind of approach. So coming out of a university where I'd had a chance to see

it first hand, this incredible wave breaking over media, you know, destroying brands and wreaking havoc, to the Forum where, with no real investment, you can put on a Facebook page or you can start a Twitter feed, and you can get content flowing in direct to an audience and build it from scratch. That was a phenomenal opportunity, I thought. And so, with the team that we've assembled in the course of the past few years, what we've done is build out our social presence. We're not selling advertising, we're not selling subscriptions. So all of the problems that befall folks who are in that position, and I certainly feel for them, I know a lot of them, we don't find those problems. We love being on Facebook. We have something like 10 million people following us, not just in the English language but in French and Spanish and a bunch of other different ways. We have something like five million now on Twitter on a couple of different accounts. We're heading for a million on LinkedIn, heading upwards towards three quarters of a million on Instagram. So we found these platforms phenomenal in terms of communicating not just what the Forum does, but with a Forum thinks about. They're a new sort of way of touching an audience. When you talk about the things that are going to shape the lives of people's children, what they need to be educated in, what they need to be caring about in the next 10 to 20 years, this is a very powerful message. People like that. You know, people share that. People want to hear that. And that cuts through a lot of the news cycle, comes through a lot of the other noise that's going on out there and it really resonates. And that's the stuff that we've used to build up our presence on social media, using some of the Forum's content and re-versioning it, making it more popular, making it less polysyllabic and abstract and turning it into something people want to consume – especially, of course, video, which for all the talk of the pivot to video that people moan and complain about, frankly, is the driver of so much attention these days on every single platform you can imagine. People say to me, "Well, sorry, Facebook is not a platform that's interesting." Facebook's a platform where people's partners, their kids, their family, their friends, share things. CEOs have families, friends, partners, you know? This stuff gets to them as well. And I think that it's very, very hubristic, if you like, to think that there are platforms that do not get into people's heads. You know, that Facebook is somehow separate or Instagram is somehow separate. You would be amazed at the conversations I've had with people who've said, "My kids told me about this report," or, "A friend of mine drew this to my attention in a Facebook post." This is how people learn about stuff in the modern age. It happened with the CEO of Nestle who saw one of our pieces, and came through to him on Facebook; not through his comms team, no other route, just direct that way.

Best way. It's got past the gatekeepers.

Absolutely. And you see the same thing on Twitter, when you share things on Twitter, people can react and interact with it immediately. And we have relationships now with governments, which we never had in the past, where ministers see stuff come out, they like it, they'll share it, fantastic for us and also great, we hope, for them. It's a chance for them to learn about some of the work that we do, see it and share it. I mean, this multi-pronged approach I think is crucial for communications in this day and age. And it's not going away, despite people's reservations about social media, and that's... there are issues around it. We've been on the other end of the troll and bot attacks ourselves, so I know that's something you have to take seriously, but I think if you miss out on the opportunity of talking to that audience

directly and understanding from them what they want, what interests them, I think you're really missing out on a massive part of today's communications landscape.

But it doesn't merely seem to have turbo-charged your reach as it was an organisation. It also seems to me to have been quite transformative generally of the whole way that you've become even more globally relevant.

I'd like to think that what it's done is, it's opened people up to a lot of content and discussion that might not have seen before. I think that's what's important. I think we've been doing the Global Competitiveness Report now for something like a quarter of a century, but only really in the last sort of five to 10 years when we've had an ability to share it with people in the way we can. We've been doing the Gender Gap Report for the last 11 years, and this is a report that looks at the role of women globally and compares deposition vis-a-vis, men in a whole bunch of different ways from politics through to economics through to social standing and education. And that report has just gone phenomenally viral in terms of its impact on power because our ability to put that online and also our ability to understand that it's what appeals to people, has been transformative for us. Before it was one report amongst, you know, we produce something like 150 reports a year. Now, of those reports, we knew the Competitiveness Report got the most attention because that was a fixture, a landmark report. But it was only when we looked at the response that we saw that this, the Gender Gap Report was an absolute sleeper hit for us and could be used and leveraged in a whole bunch of different ways to really make an important point about women's empowerment and women's rights, which is a crucial issue in today's economies as well as being a basic moral issue. And it's just taken off in an incredible way. Saadia Zahidi is our chief economist, a brilliant young Pakistani woman, and she has worked on that report over 11 years. And every year that it comes out, it's the gift that keeps on giving. People want to see if they've moved up, if they've moved down, where is their country in terms of the global rankings, women in the Middle East put their country report on the door at their offices to show people who come in where they've gone up or where they've gone down. It's a campaign tool, it's an activist tool. It's just a fantastic thing. And so I think for us, understanding where the audience relates to our material is really important. And that's just one example I suppose. But there are other things we do which are much more niche, and where you're not going to get a massive pickup if you're doing a report on the impact of cryptocurrency or something on the blockchain, it's not going to go absolutely 100% viral because the audience for that remains a niche audience and a smaller audience. But without understanding who's interested in it and where they're interested in it, you can't really understand where to put your content and how to treat it.

How do you decide what to focus on? You mentioned that every year Davos has a theme. You've put global inequality at the top of the political agenda, but there are so many things that you could focus on and you don't want to focus on everything, because then you focus on nothing, so what's the process to decide, given that there's so many competing things wrong with the world frankly, that need to be addressed?

Sure. Look, we're a small organisation. I mean, 800 people can only make a scratch on the global agenda in some respects. What we do as an organisation is we triage a whole bunch of different businesses, corporations, governments and IOs, and we, because of our contact with them, have a sense of where they can come to some kind of consensus or agreement. What we do is, we try and produce action around things that we know will work. That's both really interesting and also really frustrating, because there's a bunch of things in the world that you think, "My God, if you can only just bang some heads together and make it happen we can change these things fundamentally." Yet, if you move at the speed of some of the slowest actors, you have to edge things along incrementally. Some of the things we worked on, for example, as an institution, have been the ocean's plastics, and trying to move the barrier on getting governments to understand that this is an issue of global commons. This is something that no single government can actually deal with; the oceans are not managed by the US or by the UK or by China. They're managed internationally, or unmanaged internationally. So we've tried to get action on that, because we've seen that people are beginning to understand just how disastrous it is and the impact it's having on all of us, the plastics getting into almost everything that we touch, everything we drink. Another area we concentrate on is climate. If you look at some of the biggest drivers of climate change – beef production, palm oil production, paper pulp production – how can you move the dial on all of those things? Funnily enough big corporations are very good at managing their supply chains. If you worked with some of those corporations and some of the governments for example, the government in Indonesia, you can actually get very big corporations to track back, look at what they're doing on the ground and take action. That's what we've done with a bunch of businesses and a bunch of governments to try and achieve some changes that are built in to the way we do business. That change is both real, and also works. And it happens a level which is practical. This is something where you see governments increasingly moving. Because in the old days we used to look at governments and say, "Governments need to legislate for this, we need an international treaty on something. That's what changes the world and that's what makes things happen."

The old status way of doing things.

Yes, and we increasingly know that that's not what works. What you need is a whole bunch of different stakeholders to be engaged. You need people to understand that they need a stake in this, you need corporations to understand that they need to do something about it. You need independent organisations to buy into this so the activists can also relate to the action that's being undertaken.

Well, many global corporations now have annual turnover and valuations bigger than many countries' GDPs; they're huge actors on the global stage.

Sure and it's important that when it comes to international agreements that you're not just encouraging businesses to shop around for regulatory arbitrage to look at someplace where they can get a better deal, if you like, in terms of climate agreements or something like that. You've got to bring them into the fold in terms of these big issues. So where we've seen that happen, and where we see the opportunity for that to happen, we can achieve quite a lot by bringing people together

in a very focused way and moving the bar in a direction that delivers progress with a small p. When it comes to the kind of radical change in the world, we're an incrementalist organisation. We're an evolutionary organisation, not a revolutionary one. Maybe there are some things in the world that need revolutions and not evolution. Having been a war correspondent in my previous life, I'm a big believer in, that talking about things is a better way to solve problems than fighting over them.

To that end, do you ever make an assessment of the people that visit Davos and come to speak, because in a sense you're being judged by the type of person that they are? I mean, obviously Donald Trump came recently, but he's the President of the United States. Do you take the view that it's better to have them there and have some influence? I know John McDonnell used his debut appearance to tell global business leaders that they were held in contempt by ordinary voters. He was there though, there's still an opportunity to influence him.

Sure. I mean, I think the important thing is that people come prepared to have a dialogue. I think that's key. In terms of actually who we have in the room, we have to deal with governments of every single stamp and every single shade. The moment you start excluding people, your list of people who can attend shrinks. And if I was to put together a Davos list of people I like, it probably would be a very small party that I can hold in a fondue hut somewhere in the middle of town. So you have to have a lot of people there. You have to have people who are powerful and you have to have people who are running things. That gives you a certain kind of person. For example, in global government, 15% of ministers are women. If you bring together a lot of cabinet ministers...

They're going to be men.

Yes – 85% of them are going to men. If you look at CEOs, Fortune 500 CEOs, a tiny, tiny percentage of them are women. Someone did a survey a year or so ago I think that said there are more CEO's called Dave or more CEOs called John than there are women CEOs at those top companies. These are all things that skew the folks who come to Davos.

You have to deal with the world as it is, not how you want it to be.

That's part of it. Also, making them understand that that's not good enough. There are some changes you can put on, you can undertake. For example, we asked some of the big businesses who come to make sure they have a senior C-suite woman as part of their delegation, because without that, it's a little lever we can apply to them when they come to Davos. We can't do that with governments, we can't turn around to a government and demand that they send a woman prime minister or a woman foreign secretary, but it's becoming more and more obvious I think, as we progress, that this incredible imbalance in gender representation at all levels in society is something that we need to deal with urgently. My hope is certainly that something like Davos shines a light on that and we can move faster and quicker in the direction of making sure that half of those CEOs are women within the next 10-20 years, and just get over this incredible divide at the moment.

Is there ever a risk that Davos itself overshadows the other valuable work that the World Economic Forum does? I mean, Davos came on to my radar seven or eight years ago and I actually thought, naively at the time, that the Forum was just the vehicle that produced Davos. It was only a year or two into my curiosity that I learned that you do all this other stuff as well.

It's a problem of success. Davos is an extraordinarily successful event. It captures global attention for a week of the year. Friends of mine sort of wonder if I have three or four days in the Alps and then I go home and retire for 51 weeks.

Fifty weeks relaxing.

It's not quite as easy at that. We do events on almost every single continent apart from Antarctica, and those events are all year round. We have something like nine or ten major events every year. We're also producing as I said like 150 different reports on a whole range of different topics. We're a machine for producing what we like to think of as impact. That machine keeps rolling 365 days a year, 24/7. The social media operation that we run, runs 24/7. We keep on moving on. The impact that Davos has in terms of measurable impact, you can see a huge spike in terms of media activity and presence every year around January. Actually, increasingly, the rest of the year for us, because we've become this 24/7, 365 operation, is beginning to get more and more important. What we've learned is, if we just treat ourselves as an event organisation and we just show up once a month somewhere different, then you don't have that engagement with the audience. You have to show up all the time. You have to be present all the time. I think that's another lesson that this media environment offers to communicators, which is to say you've got to be always on. I think a lot of people are very scared about that because, when I started, the Forum was very nervous about going into the editorial space, because the risk of upsetting one of our stakeholders, the risk of saying something that was inappropriate or wrong, traditionally we operate in a space where everything gets signed off by a whole bunch of people. But if you're talking to an oil company, if you're talking to Greenpeace, if you're talking to a government, all of those different actors need to have a say on something before you can release it into the wild. The Forum is very cautious about the way it operates in that respect. For it to become a broadcaster, there's a big, big change for the organisation. We've had to develop some pretty tough processes to put in behind that, to make sure that we don't embarrass the organisation, that we don't get into trouble, that we don't end up running around breaking things. Most of those processes are just good old-fashioned editorial processes that would be familiar to anyone who works at a newspaper or website or a broadcast news operation. Just old fashioned checks, balances and systems that means that our content gets looked at more than once, probably more than twice, by people who know what they're doing.

Presumably your background in broadcast journalism is one of the reasons that you were hired. In terms of the experience that you can bring to the role is hugely beneficial.

I wish I knew why I was hired actually...

I was actually thinking maybe the question itself sounds rude but we'll go with it.

Yes, I do wonder sometimes why I was hired. I think it was because they didn't want someone who's PR person.

That would be me, I can't be your successor then. Because I think you've got the best job there is!

I was running the City University journalism department at the time, and I think it was because I had this little dream of producing a news organisation within another organisation, and to see if that could work and if that could actually produce some results. I think that was what got them interested in me particularly. Yes, it seems to have worked to a certain extent. I've always been slightly bemused by the fact that other people don't seem to have dived into that world as quickly as we have. We were an early starter I guess, and we used that early start to build up a position that's now I think pretty strong in terms of our ability to get content and push it out. But yes, I'm always amazed and amused that more people aren't diving into this space and making it their own.

You have a mission to make sure the voice of young people and social entrepreneurs are prominent in the Forum's work.

Yes, part of my brief is I look after what we call our communities, global shapers, so people in their 20s, young global leaders...

I'm already too old for those people.

You don't look too old. I'm sure you could shuffle under the deck at 29! And social entrepreneurs, people who are filling an incredible gap in societies everywhere from Latin America to Africa to Asia, also in Europe and the US. Giving those people a say is an important part of where the Forum is right now. Because traditionally, the Forum looked to stakeholders in quite an old fashioned way. When we were founded back in the 1970s, the idea was the stakeholders... I should explain the Forum was founded by Professor Klaus Schwab back in 1971. He was then a young business school professor, and he'd written a book saying that business was more than just a shareholder value – it was about stakeholders. So it was about labour unions. It was about the people you supplied. It was about your customers. It was about the community in which you operated. It was about everything that business could touch.

Trailblazing. I mean, now there's talk of double bottom line, triple bottom line and so on and so forth, but this was truly ground-breaking at the time.

Yes, it was a very different conception of capitalism than the sort of red and tooth and claw approach of the 1970s, people like Milton Friedman. It was built, if you like, on Germany's reconstruction in the 1950s, Klaus grew up between Germany and Switzerland, he was born in 1938, still remembered the war, and he saw both the destructive effects of nationalism within Europe itself, but also the way in which every

single element of German society had to be mobilised to rebuild it. Germany suffered in a way that is very hard for us here in the UK to understand, you know, whole cities destroyed and levelled, and reduced to really just a map on the ground in terms of structure. So you can't just rely on the private sector to reconstruct a city. You can't just rely on government to reconstruct cities and bring life back to a society. You've got to have everyone lending a hand and putting their bit in. So Klaus's conception I think was built around that. One of the missing pieces for him I think he came to understand in the last 15 years or so, on the back of travelling globally and seeing some very dynamic social change, was that the missing piece in this was the voice, the generational voice, that we were missing out the generational stakeholders. If you're getting a bunch of 50-year-old people to discuss the problems of the world, they have a 15- to 20-year time horizon. They don't bring that kind of half a century, 75-year lens that somebody born in 2000 can bring to a discussion. So getting stakeholders from their 20s, their 30s, involved in these conversations was super important to him. One of the ways we've done that is through a global shapers movement, which is now six years old and has representation in something like 400 different cities around the world. I was in Kenya this year in the summer and we've just set up a hub in a refugee camp in Kakuma in northern Kenya which is our first hub inside a refugee camp.

Incredible.

And we'll be bringing the curator of that hub to Davos in 2019, in January, when we can get the visa issues worked out and get him safe and sound out of Kenya and then into Switzerland. So it's been an incredibly transformative thing for us because it's connected us into real people and real places, which is something that previously we haven't been plugged into. And it's allowed us to bring powerful people into those places too. So one of the reasons we were there in Kenya was we took a group of young global leaders, people in their 30s, and we took them into a refugee camp for a week. Now, this group consisted of Paraguay's housing minister; a former education minister from France, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, a very successful young woman with a French Arab background; we had a guy who's Ugandan who was responsible for peace building there, he was a massive campaigner against child soldiers, his brother was sold into sort of child soldiery, and he's led the campaign against that; we had a young Senegalese woman who was trafficked, who became a computer coder who now teaches young women around the world to code computers – incredible group of young people, brought them all to this refugee camp, working with the UNHCR, who are fantastic hosts, and really allowing us to see every aspect of the camp's organisation and where we can make a difference. And building that into the education, if you like, the civic education of global leaders, I think is another really important role the Forum has to play. We do have an opportunity to say to people, "Look, this is not just an academic topic. This is not just something you had to read in policy papers. When we talk about refugee issues, if you haven't had a chance to go and see that up close, not just to one of these visits where you fly in, you whip into a Land Cruiser and have a photo opportunity and go back, where you've actually lived there for a week and spent time with these people, that is a real difference that's really important." That education is, I think, key to helping people understand and make the case because that's not something all of us can do. We can't all go and spend a week in a refugee camp. But when it comes to, for example, the refugee issue in Europe, when you hear the talk about 44 refugees,

no one knowing where they can go, people asking about schooling, the resources that's needed to help these people – but Kenya's dealing with 200,000 people just in one camp, moving from South Sudan, moving from Uganda, moving from Burundi, from all over Africa. So the scale of the issue they're facing is a massive, massive issue compared to the situation that we scratch our heads over in Europe over a few hundred people struggling to find their way to a better life here.

Do you think in terms of television news and the international coverage, do you think it's getting better from when you were at ITN? We had Rageh Omaar in the chair a couple of weeks ago. He was saying because of the advent of satellite phones and the internet, the ability to just get to air is easier now.

It is easier. When I started in television news, the war in Afghanistan was going on with the Mujahideen, not the war we're all familiar with now, but one where Osama bin Laden was on the good side, and we were all fans of people fighting the USSR. And teams would go in there and disappear for three weeks. They would literally leave a note and say, "We'll be in touch in three weeks' time, good luck, good bye." And off you'd go, and then you wouldn't hear from them after three weeks, maybe a couple of days would go by, and then finally a Telex would pop through from some hotel somewhere, saying, "We've landed, we've got our stuff back, we'll be out in a day or so." And you think now, if you haven't heard from someone in 45 minutes, you know, "My God, are they all right, what's going on, what's happened?" So some of the freedom that people had to go off and report and to find stories and to do things, some of that's disappeared. But on the other hand the incredible facility that phones as cameras and video recorders bring has changed our world in astonishing way. It's different. I don't know if it's better. The money has certainly leeches out of television news, and I think that is a terrible shame for people who love the medium of TV news and who love broadcast news itself. I'm one of those people.

It means fewer resources immediately, doesn't it? You don't need to be brain of Britain to know that, sadly.

It means fewer resources. It also means a smaller audience. It also means, in a sense, a change in the people who were doing that job. When I joined television news, Alastair Burnet had been the editor of the Economist. Television news was a fantastic mechanism for very clever people to translate their worldview into something televisual and popular. And there wasn't a sense that that involved necessarily dumbing everything down. There wasn't a sense that that involved going to the basement in order to get your audience. And I think some of that in the world of television news has been lost. I think what's opened up is an incredible landscape of opportunity where you can now, for example, hear from experts in different areas on blogs, you can hear from them in podcasts, you can hear from them sometimes in their own videocasts that they do. And so, there's a plethora of voices now that you wouldn't possibly have heard of 25 years ago. But I do think to some extent, for me, as a kid, television and radio educated me. Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy*, which was written in the 1950s about you know, scholarship boy growing up. And for me, that still resonated in the 1970s when I was a kid.

It was John Craven's Newsround for me.

Yes. I mean, I felt like they brought me up. They gave me a worldview sitting in my little kitchen, listening to the radio, it kind of brought me this world outside of my experience. And so, I've got a huge sentimental feeling about broadcast media. There are probably a lot of people who just listen to it or consume it accidentally don't have. But yes, for me it was part of my education and part of what made me who I am.

And when you were growing up there watching that television, did you want to be part of it? Did you always want to be a journalist even in those early years?

Yes. I mean, I basically, like a lot of people, I wanted to escape. And so, you look at people on television who were in wars or in dangerous places, and if you grew up in Great Yarmouth, I mean, it is dangerous on a Friday night...

It is. Especially the Wetherspoons.

But it's not a place enormous with excitement. And for me, I just wanted to see the world. The drive to London was like four and a half hours when I was a kid, so...

That there London.

Yes, so the idea that you were going anywhere was an idea that was wrapped up in this little box in the corner of the room. As a kid I'm having the radio on at night, listening to all sort of things. You could listen to Radio Moscow. You could get the World Service. You could get all these things that were different to Radio 4 and the other normal stuff you got online. And yes, that was part of my education, and it was hugely exciting, the idea of this big, big world out there that you could listen to and see and maybe one day dream of being part of.

You wrote a great book Can You Trust the Media? And that was before the rise of social media, which almost prophesised the rise of fake news.

I think when I wrote Can You Trust the Media, I was really profoundly struck by the way that people in mainstream media looked at trust polls as a means of endorsing credibility. For anyone who's been in journalism, credibility comes from one thing. It comes from your methodology, from your working practice. I know from years of experience, and I'm sure you know too, there are some journalists who always get the story. There are some people whose work is too good to be true. And those people are not playing by the rules that the rest of us play by.

You can only cut corners for so long.

Yes. It's getting harder now, I think. But you saw it with Jason Blair in the New York Times, you saw it with a whole bunch of people coming through.

Johann Hari.

Yes, Johann Hari. Exactly. And that corner cutting didn't used to be called out. And also in the world of media too, shamefully I think, journalists covered up for each other. And so there were plenty of stories about journalists faking stuff, not doing stuff right, that were discussed in pubs, but never made it outside of that environment. And so people didn't know. That, I think, is what concerns me about journalism, is how you do it. And I think if you think about the sort of trust stuff, what the BBC would churn out was, "We're the most trusted source of news," or, "You've got to trust us." And I was just rebelling against the idea as a way of looking at journalism and looking at reporting, because when I look back on trust and where we get the idea of trust from, if it's not from what we do, where does it come from? And actually it comes from a very funny place, which is it comes from a guy who used to work for L'Oréal who ended up running the American Newspaper Association. And he saw that newspaper circulation in the 1960s was starting to decline. And so, he wanted, in the face of television advertising, to say that there was something special and something different about advertising a newspaper. So, he came up with this idea of polling on trust. The newspaper advertisements that readers trusted newspapers more than they trusted television, so therefore you could command a premium in your advertising in newspapers. And so, that built this infrastructure around trust. And the other thing was that Gallup had started polling people about trust in institutions. And this whole infrastructure, if you like, was built around this concept of trust that no one ever wrote down, no one ever explained, but became a part of the polling history and the marketing history of television, radio and newspapers as part of the advertising infrastructure. And this was the story behind why trust became so important. And it struck me as being a story that needed to be told a little bit. Because people didn't understand why there were suddenly being asked if they trusted things. Do you trust the football results in the newspaper? No one asks you that. Do you trust the stock prices in the Financial Times when it prints those out? No one asks you that.

So, even the very asking of the question can undermine trust?

Well, even asking the question is almost the framing of it. It's a bizarre and rather daft framing, because it doesn't...

When did you stop beating your wife, type of...?

Exactly. It doesn't go away. Trust doesn't go away. Because if someone asks you. "Do you trust the White House? or "Do you trust newspapers?" What actually are they asking you? And is it a useful or a worthwhile question to even stop and consider? And I think if you think about it in terms of advertising, which is where it comes from, then you can start to see that actually it's a kind of premium, it's an attempt to premium brand a certain media. A certain medium, if you like. And that is where trust enters into the whole dialogue about television, radio and newspapers. And now, people are still obsessing over trust. There's still trust reports out, every year there's famous PR companies that produce them. And the debate has not taken us anywhere. We haven't learned anything about what produces trust and what makes things trustworthy. In fact, we know that the most sceptical and least trusting people, the more educated people are, people learning critical thinking at universities, those people are amongst the least trusting, and yet they're some of the

heaviest media users there are in existence. So, this whole idea is based on something of a fallacy of authority, which is what you want is acquiescence. You want people to sit there and nod and go along with what you're saying. Actually, what we need more people with the skills that journalists have which is critical thinking, scepticism, healthy scepticism. Not corrosive cynicism, but a kind of, a wanting to test things. I mean, that's the society that we want. We want people with those sort of skills. Not a society where you take everything at face value, where you just go along with it because it's trusted. And that was what I was trying to get across in Can You Trust the Media. And I think, to be honest, what we're seeing now is some of that coming to the fore. You look at some of the journalism of people like Bellingcat, which is this incredible website, which people who haven't heard of it should go and check out, which does a lot of fact-checking. Started by a guy in the midlands, who was interested in finding out where some of the bombs and weapons in Syria were coming from, and ended up doing his research online and proving that a lot of the stories that were coming out about these attacks were rubbish. And so, he's built an incredible infrastructure out of that. There's a bunch of other people, Snopes in the States and many more fact-checking sites who set up to actually push journalism on and challenge some of the existing authorities out there. That's the thing that's exciting to me, and I think it's great in terms of that professional scepticism, in terms of that not taking stuff on trust. And it's put journalism on its mettle really, because a lot of journalists don't bring that rigour to the work. And they've been called out.

And it's good that journalists are held to account for their work and collectively raising their game. But do you not feel disheartened that there seems to be a breakdown in trust more generally? So, you've got people like the supporters of Donald Trump, rabid Brexiteers, who almost, it's a 'scorched earth' type thing that they just completely are against it in an emotional sense, so much that they almost can't be reasoned with.

I think what you've seen with social media is the creation of communities in a very new and interesting way. And we're only just beginning to understand the dynamic of that, if you like. It's that, what's the great line people used to say about some politicians? He says what you're thinking? And that kind of sense that you've had to self-sensor or keep your thoughts to yourself, that you couldn't even say them in the pub, that's gone away now. And for some people, by the way, it's been incredibly liberating. You look at the groups online where people have thought they were by themselves, and especially if you look at sort of sufferer support groups, people who had diseases where they didn't know where to go for help, and suddenly they're able to connect with a community of other people suffering the same way who can share notes on experiences, on what drugs work, on what's going on with them, what kind of therapies are helpful. That's a fantastic benefit that this technology has given us. But also, it's been an incredible vehicle for hate. People who were, if you were the only Nazi in the village, guess what? At this scale, there's a whole bunch of you out there that you can work with. And this double-edged sword of social media, this connectivity and creation of new communities, has also given us a bunch of communities that we have tried to keep out of mainstream society. And it's empowered and enabled them. And we're only just coming to a sense of understanding whether to not we want to do something about regulating that. This is something that we've got to confront, and it's just, I think, starting to happen now

where people are becoming aware that the rules and regulations that we expect people to abide by in everyday life in the kind of communities that we live in, are also going to have to apply to the communities we inhabit when we go onto our devices, mobile or desktop or otherwise.

But it has society-changing ramifications. Because if you look at someone like Tommy Robinson, obviously a horrible guy, hateful character, is he a journalist? He's certainly got a huge following. And if he is a journalist, he's certainly being held rightly to the legal standards that journalists should be – i.e. you can't film defendants walking into a court saying they're rapists when they're currently on trial for rape. That is contempt of court. A journalist would know that because they've been trained in that, that they couldn't say that. They could report what was happening on the trial, but they certainly couldn't presume guilt. And yet you've got all of these people that have self-empowered in a sense, and they've got huge audiences.

And I think if you go back and look at the history of popular culture, 500 years ago, who were the people making noise? It was people who were preachers, people going around gathering audiences together, firebrands, people like, you know, on the one hand Martin Luther, but also people who could go and whip up a crowd into a frenzy. There are countless accounts in history of people winding up mobs. The Gordon Riots in London at the end of the 18th century famously started by a kind of mad lord who stood up and rallied and got the London mob going. I mean, there's wonderful examples in history where this happens. What you hope is that we move forward and progressed beyond that in to a more cultured, into a more educated, into a more liberal society, if you like. And I think what people like Tommy Robinson are a reminder of, and probably Katie Hopkins too, is that progress hasn't come as fast as we might perhaps like. And I think if you go back into the history of, for example, radio, you find people on US radio in 1930s and 40s doing exactly the same kind of thing that you see those folks doing today, which is winding people up, which is using hate, fear and loathing as emotional engagement tools. I mean, we know pretty much that what works in terms of grabbing attention is making people angry. Hunter S Thompson called his books Fear and Loathing. I think the Daily Mail works on the principle that it has to make someone angry every morning, or at least it used to until very recently. And that kind of emotion, you know, that you're an ulcer that needs to be prodded, that's been a big part of the media landscape for as long as I can remember. And one of the great lessons I've learned in doing my job is that it doesn't have to be like that. We get audiences for our material telling you about stuff in an informative, colloquial, but fact-based way, and we don't have to make people angry or bitter. We don't have to engage in ad hominem attacks calling people out. We don't go around shaming people. And there is a role for shaming people, I'm sure, but I mean, as most people know in their own lives, being made to feel ashamed is not a great motivator for changing behaviour. So, if we actually want to achieve change, looking at the long haul, educating people, education is a process. It's not going to deliver instant change. Anger is fantastic. It's like lighting a match. You suddenly boil up. You suddenly have a feeling about something that you want to do something about. You're suddenly very, very angry about something. And that instantaneousness and that wonderful feedback mechanism that comes out of angry journalism is something a lot of journalists are addicted to or think is the only way to get people to pay attention. The more informative education approach is longer term,

and the payback is slower and maybe harder to measure. But that's the return, I think, we need to be moving towards. And it's the return that I see being reflected in readers around the world when they come to what we're talking about, and they are interested in educating themselves and educating their kids and bettering themselves, and understanding more about the world which they inhabit. And I think that, to me, gives me a great deal of optimism about where we're going, because we are becoming a more educated society. We, globally, we're becoming more educated. And the biggest single factor in raising people out of poverty and in combating global inequality in the past quarter of a century has been global primary school education. Everywhere in the world now. You can see it when you go to Africa, you can see it when you go to small villages in rural China. The provision of primary school education has lifted people out. It gives them that grounding that they can build on and do something with their lives.

Show me the boy and I'll show you the man.

Or show me the girl and I'll show you the woman. I mean, this is, if I look at, for example, one of the women was talking about, Marianne Jamme, who runs IAMTHECODE. Marianne taught herself English when she was 16, taught herself to read and write at 16, taught herself to code at 17. The transformative powers of education are fantastic. And for me, from my experience of being a professor for five years, I think we're on the cusp of a real educational revolution, because I think people are coming to understand now a lot of education is warehousing, a lot of it is credentialing. And when you actually give people the tools to understand some of the things that are being taught in beautiful old buildings with lovely wood-panelled interiors, actually they can out compete the Oxforas, the Cambridges, the ivy league colleges, and do better for themselves. And that revolution is going to be fundamental. There's a lot of people who've invested thousands and thousands of pounds, tens of thousands of pounds in their children's education. You're going to see kids coming out who have studied stuff online, who are hungry, and who are going to gobble up the opportunities that they hope their kids would have. And I'm speaking as a father who shelled out for my own kids to go to university and college. But yes, it's a revolution that's coming, and I think probably long overdue.

Adrian, that's been a hugely enjoyable conversation, I've learned a huge amount. Thank you ever so much for your time.

Thank you very much.