

Harleen Kaur

CEO, Ground News

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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 from Waterloo, Canada by Harleen Kaur, co-founder and chief executive of Ground News, the world's first News Comparison Platform which has become a vital tool in combating disinformation. A former NASA engineer, Harleen launched Ground News in 2020, as a platform letting users compare how news sources across the political spectrum cover major stories. The site quickly won acclaim for its role in shattering people's news filter bubbles. An Aerospace engineering graduate with a masters in Space studies, Harleen has previously been a vice-president of Rolls-Royce and co-founded 'You See I See,' a mobile app that lets you see anywhere in the world in real-time. Harleen, thank you for joining me.

Thanks for having me Paul. It's my honour to be on here.

The honour is ours. Thank you. I'm so grateful. I mean, frankly, you're the first NASA engineer we've ever had on the podcast. Tell us about that. Did you have childhood dreams of reaching the stars?

I actually did. I think most kids do, it's like when you get asked what do you want to grow up to be? It's firefighter or astronaut and I think I fell in the astronaut category. I just followed my dream, much longer than I think most kids do.

You were working on satellites and that led to your first startup business in Berlin.

That's right. So yeah NASA was my first job, which is kind of every space engineer's dream come true. But very early on in my career, I realised that very big organisations, especially government organizations, just take very long to make a project a reality. So I went over to Berlin and joined this startup where we were, I think, one of the first fully commercially funded space projects to build and launch satellites.

I mean, that's incredible. So you've gone from the big corporate life where getting anything done is like 'wading through treacle' someone once said to me to the massive agility, but obviously the shoestring budgets of a startup. Was that a bit of a culture shock for you?

It was a good culture shock. So, the startup life was very different obviously, as you can imagine. The thing I really liked was it was really small and agile and I was the first engineer they hired. There were literally three people, the CEO, CFO, who were graduates of my university. And we just sat in one room and discussed everything and everything moved really fast. So you got to try out different things. And whereas NASA was very hierarchical, a very chain of command kind of place where you just can speak to your superior. And I respect that because when you're a big organisation, otherwise it will be very chaotic. But personally, my preference was a small organisation where I could get stuck in different things. Learn, sit directly next to the CEO and find out what's going on. So yeah, I absolutely loved it. And that's why I think startups I've been very close to my heart.

You took a top MBA program in France, then worked for Rolls Royce at their jet engine business, including a spelling Darby.

Yes. I lived in Nottingham and worked in Darby, so I got to experience British life and I think what a way to do it.

Sorry for that!

No, I loved it!

We're a miserable bunch, it's the weather! Then you'll be miserable as well!

Yes. So, I absolutely loved it because I think Rolls Royce was such an interesting place. It's a hundred and something years old, British excellence company. You really understand the culture and what Britain manufacturing really stood for. And yeah it was very interesting and I learned a lot from that stint.

Now I'm a massive science cosmology, space nut which probably my listeners don't really know about. So I could actually talk about all the space stuff for the whole podcast, but it is Media Masters. So let's move on to the media stuff if we may, I mean, you gravitated to the culture of media and tech startups with this app, You See I See, the app connects use of live images with events including the Syrian conflict. Could you tell our listeners about that please?

Yeah, so the app was a pretty simple idea and this was the time in 2016, 17 where apps like Periscope or even Instagram were kind of pretty new. And the idea was pretty simple instead of the person taking the photos and videos deciding what the other person should be seeing or I'm going to take a picture of my coffee or my food

or whatever. How about you take a world map, think of it as Google maps. And you can just ask anybody in a different country, a different city what's going on and can you please show me what's happening around you? And we grew that to about a half a billion users around the world. And the most interesting use case was of course, citizen journalism. At that time, it was the height of the Syrian conflict. So people could ask for those who were in Syria, unfortunately what's happening on ground. And we got photos and videos, and we developed an IP around to be able to verify if photos and videos were taken live at that point in time. We also got to other parts of the world, for example, the Eastern Ukraine conflict, which was a bit earlier than that. So all to say that a lot of times what's been covered in mainstream media is very different from what people are experiencing on ground. And to be honest, that's where the name comes from. And citizen journalism, part of it being so powerful, the reason we didn't quite make it a success is it's a very difficult challenge to be able to have users all over the world. And it's a bit of an empty bar problem. How do we create value when we have not as many users? So we can't grow it. So it's something that's very dear to my heart and perhaps we will bring it back someday if we get enough readers on ground and we can turn on the citizen journalism feature.

Let's fast forward then if we may to Ground News, tell us about the genesis of it and how was it going?

It's going very well. The genesis of it is very, very simple and it kind of came from my own news consumption practice every day. So if, as we are aware, there's several different reasons why news outlets have kind of decided to occupy a kind of a spot or a speaking agenda. So a normal consumer like me, a normal newsreader like me, when they're trying to wrap their heads around what's really going on in the world or what's going on in my own backyard. Then I have to end up reading several different new sources to be able to say, this is what's happening. I really understand what's going on in the world. So being a typical engineer, I tried to make a tech solution which ended up being Ground News. And the idea is pretty simple that we take a breaking news story using our tech, we cluster and keep adding new sources who covered that news story. So say it's something in the US we will pick up whoever has the breaking news story, and then we'll keep adding all the different perspectives. And then it's very, very interesting when you compare that coverage to how the talking points and bias of the media just plays into how a news story gets covered. We can see it along the bias spectrum very easily. So let's pick CNN versus Fox, how they would cover a new story. The facts remain the same. It's just the portrayal of the news story or the words that they choose to cover the news story is very, very different. And Ground News makes it very easy for you so you can just switch across the different news sources and see the diverse perspective. And the reason we put it right next to each other is even if the news sources are not your go-to news source, given it's so readily available, you end up clicking. And we have actually proven this scientifically based on data of people using Ground News, that we diversify your new styles. So you can be aware of more news perspectives. And apart from bias, the other interesting lesson that has emerged about how coverage can be very different is the geopolitical agenda. So let's say there is a news like Hong Kong, something happening in Hong Kong, Hong Kong protests, how it gets covered by, let's say South China Morning Post, Hong Kong Free Press is very different than, of course

the Chinese news where there might be lack of coverage, how it gets covered by Russia, how it gets covered by media in UK. And again, just being a normal news consumer, you can see those different outlets. And then again, understand why a country would have a bias as well because of the geopolitical relations with, let's say this case, China. Again, the intent is just to give our readers as many simple tools as possible, so they can do the most important thing, which is critical thinking and understand what's really happening behind the news story.

Is there a problem that in a sense, you've got people who want to want to do this. Are people quite actually relaxed and comfortable in their filter bubbles?

Yeah. That is true. So that is one of the challenges of course, but as we see there is a growing minority of people who are actively seeking for multi-source news, such as Ground News providers. There is a heightened awareness of media bias and more importantly, the manipulative social algorithms. So one of the interesting problems we as a generation are now experiencing is that we don't have access to the same information. So your newsfeed, especially if you consume it on social media will look very different from the news feed that I would have. So people have been blindsided in events like, if I may say, Brexit or 2016 US elections, and they realised that the only way they can understand news is not just being trapped in the filter bubble or news bubble and reading a diverse set of sources. So yeah, there is a small subset of people, but of course our intent is to inform everybody. So we are trying to make people aware of the dangers of being in that filter bubble, however comfortable it might be, because the thing is in real life, you are going to be confronted with opinions that you might not agree with. There's going to be family members, there's going to be coworkers, or there's going to be events that happen. That's going to be out of your understanding if you're keeping trapped in that filter bubble. But the only way you can protect yourself is understanding what's coming, understanding there are people who have different opinions than you. So might as well do it in the comfort and safety of your own smartphone or your computer rather than being confronted in real life. So that's why I think just reading the news sources you might not agree with and seeing how they're covering the news stories is very, very important for you to do.

What type of feedback have you had so far from the users and also what type of feedback have you had from the news organisations from whom you partner with, for example, you might describe a newspaper left or right of center and they might take umbrage with that.

Very interesting. We did think that was going to be the case, Paul, but actually the newspapers have comfortably and proudly kind of occupied the spot in most cases. And let's talk about what's led to the bias and news media for a few minutes. And that is again, going after an audience and trying to get revenue through ads or through subscriptions, you develop a speaking point and agenda that you cannot upset your user. So you keep writing in that respect. And most of the news sources that I've dealt with, including quite a few in the UK and quite a few brand names, they're very happy being on Ground News. And they're very happy having audiences and readers

who normally wouldn't go to that news source. So, let's say somebody who never reads Telegraph, given it's available just right next to the normal news sources they would be reading, we are giving them audiences and readers they wouldn't have normally gotten. So they are quite happy with that. And we haven't had many complaints about how we have categorised them on the bias spectrum, mainly because we have been on an arms-length so we do not pass judgment. We are using third-party rating agencies. So think of it as a kind of S and P 500 ratings and an average of quite a few ratings. So we've been at arms-length. And what we tell our consumers, what the feedback from consumers has been is most of the time they have been very happy to be exposed to different viewpoints. And they are happy to be challenged that they were thinking a different way and Ground News really helped me to open up to a whole different way of thinking on a certain political issue or that I wouldn't have thought otherwise. But there are a few people who cannot see beyond the labels. So the only one star reviews we do get, unfortunately, are like, why did you say CNN are far left or far right. So what I urge my readers all the time is like, hey, the only reason we provide a scale is to provide you perspective. So we need to have some kind of reference point on how you can compare, but the value doesn't lie in if CNN is rated as left or far left, the value lies in comparing CNN's news coverage with all the other 30, 40,000 sources that we are providing you. And for you to be able to say what's really happening in this new story.

I mean, it fascinates me that you've got to create a sustainable business from an economic point of view, but also you're trying to make the world a better place as well. You're trying to make change. Aren't you? I mean, people with different political beliefs no longer seem to share the same reality as we've become further envelopes in filter bubbles.

You said it perfectly, I think we don't have a shared reality anymore which is the problem, right? And that's why when we discuss these things in real life, or even on the internet, and you're like, I don't even understand where this person is coming from. Why are they thinking a certain way? I would never think that way. And we just start thinking not great things of the other person, whereas it's simply dependent on what news side you have. It's a very difficult challenge to change people's minds and create a sustainable business. But I think both of them have to go hand in hand. If we are successful and it seems that we are doing well, the only way we can create a change is if we have enough readers and subscribers paying for our product who see the value in it so that we can bring about this change in the world.

How is it going then in terms of the feedback from actual users?

Yeah, it's going very well. We have on all our platforms, including the apps, the website, we have browser extension, which is very interesting. If you haven't tried, I would love for you to try. And we have the ratings that consumers give us, like over 10,000 ratings across these different platforms to be four and a half stars or thereabouts. Of course, there is a subset of people who are annoyed with what we are doing. But yeah, overall people are happy. And I think one of the things why people feel that Ground News is a good place to consume news is because we are

very inclusive regardless of where you're coming from, what your thought process is. We will have the new sources that you end up consuming, regardless of if you're far left on the spectrum or far right on the spectrum. And I think that's one of the problems with some of the other news platforms or news aggregators, that they ignore certain news sources. And that's where people don't feel that their opinions are being represented. And they get singled out. And whereas Ground News, we include news sources, like for example, BrownBot or Epoch Times, I do get asked why do we do that? Or on the left Mother Jones or similar sources. And the reason we do that is again to show you how the worst, how exaggerated or equivocated a piece of news coverage can be. And there are out there reading those sources and those people who do read those news sources, we do want to welcome them to Ground News and have their news sources on there. And plus give them the opportunity to be able to see what other opinions might exist. So, yeah, we are pretty happy with how it's going.

You are right about these so-called blind spots. I mean, I self-censor, I'm not interested in football or soccer. So I click that minus sign on the homepage of the Guardian and the Telegraph to deliberately absent myself from those types of stories. One of the things that's very fascinating about your app is there's literally a button on the bottom that says blind spots. I mean, can you tell us about how the concept of tackling blind spots work? As tells you who's talking about the story and who's completely ignoring it.

Yeah, thanks for bringing that up Paul. It has become our calling card and probably one of the most valuable features that readers see on Ground News. So to be honest, it came about as a bit of a surprise and accident to us. So we set about exposing the news bias by being able to show different coverages and say how different news sources might cover that story. So let's say the climate change conference that's happening right now, we will say, who is covering it, how differently they're covering it. But the thing that shocked us was it's actually not how the coverage is, but the lack of coverage. And that's where we stumbled upon that is a much more representative of a bias in media than how diverse the coverage can be. So what we do is we simply overlay on a bias chart, all the different news sources who are covering that story. And a lot of times the left or the right, and they're both equally to blame in this, just don't cover that new story. So if you were reading that news source that is not covering this news story, or even in this set of news sources that are not covering the news sources, you would simply not be aware that the news is happening in this world. And that I think is more dangerous than even having a different spin on the news story. So that's what we are trying to do in blind spots. There is simply news out there that you need to make yourself aware of that the news media on the left or right are not covering. And we make it very easier by having that tab that you talked about, Paul, just a blind spot tab and you can see what left is not covering what right is not covering. Let me give a cliché example, for example, climate change. I just talked about how the right media don't end up covering it because it doesn't quite often overlap with their interests. But at the same time the left might not cover for example, immigrant crime or immigration issues that might be happening. So the only way you can inform yourself of everything that's

happening in the world is by reading a news source, like Ground News that exposes both left blind spots and right blind spots.

As a regular user of the app, I just think it's absolutely fascinating. And the blue, white, and red graphics on the Ground News app are very distinctive. I suppose the million dollar question is how do readers trust that they are filtered through your own bias. What about your own blind spots?

Yeah. Very good questions. So, we have taken a lot of measures to make sure that our own bias is not reflected in the app. And we are doing that simply by showing you every single news source. Of course, they have to be trustworthy and covering real news, which is a separate issue, who is covering that new story will show up on Ground. As I said, they are more far-flung news sources, which normal users might not consider credible news sources. We still include them. And the red, white and blue bar is simply the proportion of how much of red, how much of the right, the left or the center is covering that news source. And we keep adding news sources. So to begin with there are fewer red sources of your rights sources, but that might not be the case in four hours or eight hours if there are stories coming out. So it keeps expanding. And that's why you see some of our stories end up having hundreds of news sources. And so we don't discriminate at all between which are the new sources, or we don't filter them out. We simply represent them. And again, as I said, the hardest job in this case is for the reader. We do the tech heavy lifting and show you the new sources, but very much critical thinking lies upon you. And for you to be able to understand and make up your own mind how this news has been powered. And why it is being covered in a certain way.

I suppose, it's very difficult to say whether you're aware of your blind spots, because by virtue of the fact they're blind spots, I remember there was an episode of Star Trek The Next Generation Picard says to Data "could someone be controlling you without your knowledge?" And he said, "well, logically Captain I'd be unable to answer that question." And I've always thought that was really quite profound actually.

That is very profound. And I think I should use that one. Yeah, it's very, very difficult to understand. Which brings me to actually a new feature we have just launched and it's called 'My News Bias.' Which is simply a bit of a nutritional approach to news. And we share with you your own charts of news consumption, how do they change over time? How much left news, right news you end up consuming if that's changed, is it balanced? Which are the news sources you end up reading the most? Which are the new sources you never read? Are you reading more local news, international news? So you can be very, very aware of your own news consumption and this feature has been received very, very well. We just launched it kind of silently. We didn't even do a big PR push. And I'm delighted to say that in this age that we live in, where people are very interested in self measurement and self-reflection, why this hasn't been done for news so far. In this case, Paul, if you were to just look at that feature and given you've been using Ground News, these are the topics. And in this case, soccer will not be there because you don't end up reading that news, but these

are the topics you cover. This is the distribution of left-right news sources you end up reading. And even factuality, you end up reading more factual news sources or less factual news sources. So we have a few charts. So think of it as I don't know my fitness pal or a fitness tracker approach to it. And we wanted to do that because it's simply that every single news product you've ever used, especially the ones with algorithms are measuring it. What we are doing is simply exposing it to you and giving you the opportunity to be able to be in control and say, I do want to consume more balanced news, or I do want to consume more local news because I don't end up reading local news. And yeah that is something I think is a very novel approach that we have taken to understand your own personal bias and your own personal news consumption.

I obviously present a media podcast. I'm fascinated by my blind spots. I'm fascinated by this app. And I think it's absolutely fantastic. I'm a paying customer. I paid for a year upfront, as you know, and I'm keen to see you succeed. Tell us if you don't mind sharing with our listeners, could you tell us about the business as it is today? You know, how many users do you have? Do you have any sort of targets? Are you launching a funding round?

Sure. So we have around 250,000 users right now. But the more interesting stats is that more than 10% of our consumers pay us, which gives me confidence that we can turn into a successful business. I believe that we are the only news product that, without creating content, is able to charge consumers of their subscriptions. And people are happy to pay for our features and platform and analysis itself. And that I think is going to be our key to success. I came in with a mindset of comparing ourselves to something like a music streaming service or video streaming service. There's a reason for example, how Netflix broke from the herd and became the leader or Spotify broke from the herd and became the leader in that space. And that I believe is how the content is presented. What features are there, like on Spotify, you can make a playlist and you can share with friends and family. And that's exactly why the approach we took to Ground News is what are the news consumption features and analysis that a consumer would be looking for? What can we build that's going to make Ground News stand apart from the crowd. And we have, of course, big tech news apps as well. And then it's a pretty tall order to be able to build a product that stands tall against them and consumers choose not just to use it, but to pay for it. So yeah, we are happy that people, as you said, you paid up front for a year. 70% of our people pay us on day one and 70% of them pay for a year which is very telling. And they go for the highest price point we have. So there is a lot of willingness to pay. And the US and UK are the two markets that are doing very well for us. Of course, we want it to be an international product. But I think the media bias unfortunately is a problem that is more, either exaggerated or more evident in these two countries. So, we just want to grow the business and become the news destination that people come to and to be able to understand the full picture of news.

It doesn't surprise me that people like me, when hearing about it, want to give you a year's money upfront because we want to see you succeed. We're not just merely customers. We're actually sort of getting behind what you're trying to do.

I appreciate that. And I think you're right. That is absolutely one of the reasons why people support us. And I'm very thankful for that.

I want to ask where you are going to take the site editorially over the next few years? You're expanding Ground News by looking at not just the bias of news organizations, but the bias of each journalist and the corporate parent. Tell us about that.

That is correct. So as you would know, and your listeners would know that the bias of a news organisation is not the same as the bias of a journalist. So we are very much requested by our readers, can you please show our label the bias of the journalists and not just a journalist, but article by article, how it might vary. So we've been working on technology to be able to say that this article covered a certain issue positively or negatively. And again, look at the data and trends. And corporate bias is also something that keeps coming up and we have it ready. And we are going to be introducing this shortly within the next month to be able to say that the reason that certain use outlets have an agenda is because of the corporate parent. So I've been picking on CNN on this, I'll pick on them again. So CNN is very left, they're liberal, but at the same time, why don't they talk much about, let's say net neutrality because they're owned by a telecom company TNT or why do Wall Street Journal and Fox Business sound the same because they are all owned by News Corp. So just exposing who is owning the news media. And especially if you are reading the news sources that might be owned by the same owners, even if you think you'll have diversity, you are going to be consuming the same points over and over again. So we're very much exposed to you who is the corporate parent. We're actually launching a tool on November 17th and you can drop in your Twitter handle or somebody else's Twitter handle and it'll show you the distribution of the ownership of news sources that you end up consuming. So if wealthy individuals own your news sources, do private equity own your new sources that you end up consuming. So yeah, all in the service of making the reader and the consumer aware of what they are reading and why it might sound a certain way.

Clearly you're on a progressive mission and I think we've discussed sort of what you're trying to achieve, but I want you to talk about the nuts and bolts of how you do that. Does it take an engineer's touch to make this happen? Does your background in NASA and all of these various things that you've been involved with actually help you do your job?

I think so. I think the approach we took was technology solving this problem that technology has created to be honest. As we know the internet has made quote unquote "news quite worse" because of various reasons, as we talked about, there might be business reasons or the way it's distributed or how anybody in this world can start publishing what they call news. So I wanted to take a tech approach to be able to solve that. As I said, there's a lot of tech involved behind the scene, but not in the manipulative algorithms which we give you to consume. But it is involved in when, for example, in real time understanding how we've plastered the news. How do

we decide that this is the same piece of news that Fox was talking about, CNN is talking about, Telegraph is talking about, Independent is talking about, and then cluster them in real time and then present to you in the seamless manner that with a click of a button you can go back and forth between the new sources and compare them. How do we do that for hundreds of news sources? Because the language is very difficult in technology to be able to parse and say Breitbart, although they sound very angry are actually talking about the same news story or Mother Jones, although they sound very condescending are talking about the same news sources. So yeah, taking the technical approach I think has absolutely helped us. We live in this world where there is still so much technology available to us. And of course it's a cause of a lot of problems, but it can also be a solution to a lot of these problems that were created. And that is very much the approach I've taken and the team has taken.

I don't know whether I've read too much Machiavelli, but do you have any enemies? You are challenging the status quo. Are people's jobs in the traditional media threatened by this, or is this something that you've thought about as you get bigger that people, like the CNNs or the Fox News are actually going to resist being categorised by you in a certain way and try to bring you down?

I don't think so at all, because in any way that was never our intent to replace the news media. We are not going to do it. We are not going to create content because we believe there are amazing journalists and news organisations out there who are doing their job. Our job is just to be able to represent it in a fashion that it's easy for a newsreader and news consumer to consume that news. So we are not set out to replace any news organisation or journalists. They are doing their job. We are not going to create any news content. All we are trying to do is be this layer between the news media and the consumer. So think of us being a utility where we tell you if the water coming out of the tap is hot or cold, or it is poisoned with lead, that's all we are trying to do. So I don't think we should have enemies, if anything, we are trying to support the newsrooms, especially the local newsroom. So one of the things that has become very evident to me being an outsider is that local news is especially struggling. And they are the ones which can add so much value by the same reporters covering the same beat over years. We always highlight the news sources that are local to that story. Again, giving them the clicks and hopefully the revenue that they need to be able to continue doing their job. And we do the same for the big organisations and the smaller organisations and the international organisations. Say a newsroom in Afghanistan right now, we put them up front because we want to show you the local Afghan perspective or something happening in Kabul, why just read only BBC or CNN's perspective. So, at least our intent is not to be at odds or undo the great work that the journalists in news organisations are doing.

What's the biggest challenge you're facing at the moment? Are there any roadblocks? What's keeping you up at night?

Growth. And that is a very entrepreneurial challenge. So as I talked about, and as you have done as a consumer for Ground News, when people do become aware of

Ground News, they end up using it, loving it, paying for it. It's just a very small organisation, out of a small town in Canada. How do I make the world aware that this product exists? And again, thanks to being on this podcast, these are the kinds of things that are helping us just getting the word out. Because the marketing budget for us is obviously not huge. We are not going to be able to compete with some of the big news platforms that exist, who have parents with a lot of money. And how do we compete with that? Although we have a product that we believe is great and people love when they do get to use it. But yeah, that's what's keeping me up at night, that we have made something that's special. How do we make sure that it gets enhanced and more people?

I think that I found out about your app because Apple's App Store had made you app of the week or app of the day or something. That was exciting, tell us how that came about.

Yeah, Apple has actually been very kind to us. The App Store has been amazing to us. Again, being a very small app, we are not the TikTok or Facebook of this world. They have recognised what we are doing is very different and they keep featuring us. I even had the opportunity and honor to speak with Tim Cook earlier this year. And I was delighted.

What was that like?

It was amazing. And talking to this person who is obviously very intelligent and running this company and I was very encouraged, and happy to know that misinformation of course is on his mind as well, like most of us. And they want to do their bit to be able to be part of the solution. So I'm very thankful to Apple for just promoting us. And it's the kind of, again, publicity that we cannot afford to pay in dollars and pounds.

What does a typical week look like for you? What does your job involve at the moment? One of my favorite questions is, if you imagine a typical week as a pie chart, what are the segments and how big are they in relation to each other?

The funny thing is, Paul, no two weeks, no two days are the same. But I enjoy that. You set out in the morning thinking that I'm going to do X, Y and Z, and it's A, B and C. Whatever kind of comes in, you have to address it. And a lot of it is reactive at this stage being a small company, a lot of your firefighting and problem solving. Other times you are also opportunistic that hey, I didn't plan to do this, but this has come along so I'm going to take this opportunity and just do it. This week, I'm flying to Boston to do an interview for a documentary that just approached us last week. It's actually a very interesting story. One of our users who downloaded the app and started using and paid for it got inspired by the app so much that she is a wealthy woman. She's making a documentary to address the misinformation issue and featuring us, which is obviously amazing, quite a story. So I'm flying out and doing

that interview, which was not on my calendar at all, or doing this amazing interview, getting the opportunity. What I would like the week to be is very much focused on maybe 30, 40% products, making sure that we keep improving the product 30, 40% based on growth. Very much as I said with if not 50 of what's going on and the rest is just spending the time with the team, because I truly believe that my job is to surround myself as very intelligent, hard working people and let them do their job and just listen to them and if I can remove any roadblocks for them, that's my only role as a manager.

Well, you obviously like to associate with intelligent people, and I'm very glad that you made an exception to come on this podcast!

Well, this is the British humour you were talking about!

Indeed it is! I suppose the answer to this question is obvious really because of what you're doing, but are you an optimist? Where do you see the next four or five years? I mean, the Capitol riots showed how conspiracy theories fuel mass delusion. Do you see this as part of the issue?

Absolutely I do. And as you said I have to be an optimist. And in some ways I think this naive optimism is what helped us to create and now grow Ground News. When I meet people who have been in the media for the last 10/15/20 years, they have got a lot of scars, and I think that's making them skeptics and thinking that things cannot be improved. But I think maybe just being an industry outsider and not having those scars has given me this naive sense of optimism, that a simple solution by Ground News can absolutely be, if not the solution, be a part of the solution of improving things. Yes, things like Capitol riots are very disheartening, but I'll share with you, January 6th was the Capitol riots and insurrection. But January 7th was the biggest growth day for Ground News. We had tens of thousands of people come into Ground News and use it because I think it's events like this that just heighten the awareness of the problem as well. So I have to be an optimist and be able to say that people are becoming aware of the problem. And they realise that if you don't take proactive steps, you are going to be shoved down a rabbit hole because it's much easier for some of the platforms out there to make money off you that way. And yeah, you are going to seek a solution like Ground News that stands out from the crowd and is trying to do something different to show you things that you actually don't agree with at the expense of making you angrier or leaving a platform. But we hope you don't.

Harleen, could you share with our listeners your website address so that those listening who want to find out more can do so?

Absolutely. So you can go to ground.news to go to our website and on our website, you have links to all the other various ways that Ground News can add value to you, which is through apps, through browser extension, through newsletters. So yeah, the easiest way to find out is just going to that website, ground.news.

Harleen, that was a hugely interesting conversation. Thank you ever so much for your time and the very, very best of luck.

Thank you so much, Paul. I really appreciate you having me on.