**John Terrett**

Al Jazeera

Caroline Hoffman

Guest Bio:

John Terrett is a New York based correspondent and reporter for *Al Jazeera America.* Before this, Terrett worked for a local BBC radio station in the English county of Surrey. In the 1990’s, he hosted a morning show during the weekdays for a handful of years. In the early 2000’s he became a reporter for BBC’s main news channel, where most of his coverage followed business and commerce. He became a U.S. correspondent for *Al Jazeera* around 2011, but he was originally based in Washington D.C. Terrett has covered many large domestic events, including September 11th, the recent Baltimore riots, and natural disasters.

Employer Background:

Al Jazeera is a satellite channel that began in November 1996, and it was owned by the Al Jazeera Media Network which is largely funded by a royal family in Qatar. Al Jazeera literally means “The Peninsula,” referring to the Arabian Peninsula that contains several countries including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The channel’s original purpose was to report Arabic current affairs, and it gained attention around the beginning of the war in Afghanistan because of its live coverage. The channel has been accused of supporting Islamist views and being “pro-Sunni,” but the network attempts to present news and viewpoints from all sides. Since 1996, the channel has greatly expanded into several branches, including the Internet. In 2003, Al Jazeera created its first English language website, and an English language channel was launched two years after, appropriately named Al Jazeera English. This channel became popular among English speaking countries, because it was an easy way to hear Middle Eastern news read by local voices. Simultaneously, an Al Jazeera America channel was also created, which is currently carried by Time Warner Cable. The channel is headquartered in the Manhattan Center in New York City, but several correspondents work in branches located in Washington D.C., Detroit, Seattle, Los Angeles, and many other places around the world. The channel creates coverage and content on domestic affairs and international news. Al Jazeera America’s largest competitors are CNN, MSNBC, and FOX News.

Recent News:

* *The New York Times* published a piece in May 2015 about Al Jazeera English’s failure to capture more viewers since its launch n 2013. Many employees blame a lack in progress on the chief executive, Ehab Al Shihabi, due to poor management skills and fear installation. A number of workers have left the network, and morale is very low among many employees. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/06/business/media/al-jazeera-network-in-turmoil-is-now-the-news.html?_r=0>
* Exactly one day after the above article was published, this article announced that the chief executive would be replaced. Before this announcement, three top officials left the network, and a former employee was suing for “wrongful termination.” After the article hit stands a day before, Al Shihabi e-mailed his employees stating that he would remain CEO, but interestingly enough, he was replaced later that day. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/07/business/media/al-jazeera-america-chief-is-ousted-after-turmoil.html>
* In August 2015, three journalists from Al Jazeera English were sentenced to three years in prison in Egypt. They were accused of reporting false news about Egypt and for plotting with the Muslim Brotherhood to create these broadcasts. However, there is no sufficient evidence of these collaborations, and many are outraged about the verdict. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/30/world/middleeast/al-jazeera-journalists-sentenced-to-3-years-in-prison-in-egypt.html>

Recent Samples by Terrett:

* Last year, Terrett reported about the opening of the 9/11 memorial museum, including some civilian concerns. Unidentified human remains are stored a few floors below the museum, and many New Yorkers find this wrongful and unsettling. Furthermore, a film that plays in the museum, *The Rise of al-Qaeda*, seems to connect the Islam religion with terrorism. This is an interesting article to read prior to visiting the museum! <http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/americas/911-museum-met-mixed-feelings>
* Terrett covers violence in Baltimore during the aftermath of protests against police due to the death of Freddie Gray. Although shootings and crimes had increased, arrests had actually decreased, mainly because of a shaken police force. Baltimore’s law enforcement is now forced to create new strategies before turmoil consumes the city. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/7/24/baltimore-violence-spikes-aftermath-riots.html>
* Terrett announces that California passed a bill which allows doctors to help terminally ill patients commit suicide. The patient must ingest drugs on their own and they must be mentally competent. This is the fifth state to pass this legislation, which occurred this October. <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/morning-news/2015/10/california-to-adopt-right-to-die-law.html>

Questions:

* I have noticed that you are quite hard to find on the Internet: no Facebook, sporadic Tweets, and no biographies. Any reason why you stay away from these social media sites?
* What made you want to leave BBC and join Al Jazeera? Have you found a distinct difference between Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera America?
* What was it like transitioning from BBC radio onto television reporting and news?
* So you worked as a correspondent in Washington D.C. for awhile before coming to New York: how has the change in location impacted your career, stories, or content?
* Back in 2001, you were preparing to do your normal job for the BBC News Show, but caught off guard by the sudden plane crash into the World Trade Center. How were you able to handle such a tragedy while on the air?
* In one of your articles posted before the arrival of Hurricane Sandy, I found it quite humorous that you compared American’s terror and hasty “stock-up” trends to Berlin after the Wall came down. Do you find that the media’s panic-inducing habits are only found within American behavior?
* In response to the article published by *The New York Times,* do you feel like morale and management has improved for the channel since the previous CEO is no longer in his position?
* Journalists working for Al Jazeera were sentenced to three years in prison in Egypt for allegedly creating false broadcasts, and they were even told that they did not qualify as “real journalists.” Do you have any thoughts on this?
* What do you think needs to happen in order for the channel to attain more viewers and possibly outdo competitors like MSNBC and Fox News?
* With so much in the news and papers this year, it seems like this was a tumultuous year for the network. Do you think that the work atmosphere has been tense, or has the media attempted to exaggerate conditions?

Sources:

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