

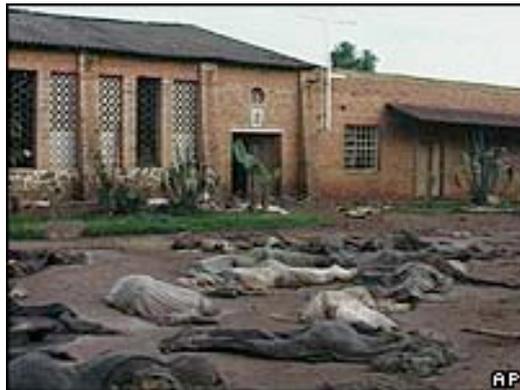
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Reflections on Rwanda: Has the media learnt from its deathly mistakes?

Reported by Alexandra Cousins



Some people in the world believe that our governments will inevitably create peace and harmony for all. They naively hold an inherent confidence that no matter what is going on, all citizens will be informed with truthful, objective and accurate information. All the world’s problems will be addressed and properly resolved. In my opinion, this trust is simply becoming obsolete.

On the 14th of April, the village of Nyarubuye in Rwanda endure another horrific day of what later would be declared as cultural genocide.¹ Those who

¹ There are many different definitions and aspects of the genocide theory. The three important definitions I have gathered are, firstly, “genocide is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or

survived the attacks at Nyarubuye have described the desert air as smelling like the eucalyptus from the surrounding trees mixed



with the stench of decomposing bodies. Nothing had been done to stop the killings of the Tutsis by their neighbours and friends the Hutus. All that remained in this village was a river filled with lily like objects, mangled and bloated, choking on the Lake Victoria's muddy water. This carnage was left behind as the result of a troubled and historically divided nation.

No one in the Western world knew about the massacres taking place between April and July 1994. Yet ironically, even if they were informed, most people would have simply kept on eating their dinners after watching the atrocities across their television. Why? The Western media and its political pyramids had no reason to benefit from entering an impoverished 'black' African country's war.²

Although some 80 percent of the Rwandan population was being exterminated by extraordinary efficient tactics of modern genocide, nothing was done to stop it.³ The massacre occurred because the majority Hutu population had encouraged an exodus, fearful revenge towards the Tutsi army – the Rwandan Patriotic Front – who

other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator." Kurt Jonassohn, 'What is genocide?' in Fein, H. 'Genocide Watch,' Mapel-Vail Book Manufacturing Group, New York, 1992. pp 18-19; Also, Andreopoulos devises a very generic definition which I have interpreted. Genocide is a very broad theory which can be defined as the massacres of mass people in an attempt to eradicate an entire culture or race. It is the well established criminal act to kill peoples knowingly and willingly. This includes those who help to design the weapons of destruction and those who comply to the act of killing. Genocide also can be referred to as the destruction of the ecosystem resulting in the death of countless humans. This can be conducted through nuclear radiation or haphazard indifference as a strategy of war. See, Andreopoulos, G. 'Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions,' University of Pennsylvania Press, USA, 1994. The definition of genocide is also dictated in Article II of the United Nations' Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) and can be applied to the case of Rwanda. Chalk, F. 'Radio Propaganda and Genocide,' MIGS Occasional Paper, 1999

² Interview with Anthony Ashbolt, Lecture in politics, Woolongong University, Australia

³ Chalk, F. 'Radio Propaganda and Genocide,' MIGS Occasional Paper, 1999

were in the process of liberating a small section of Rwanda across the border.⁴ The Hutu people were afraid that the Tutsi minority would gain political control over Rwanda again.⁵ They set out to kill all those who supported or had sympathy for the Tutsis.



All the warning signs were there for the media and the United Nations.⁶ The rate of butchery was five times faster than that of the German Nazis. Even still, all volunteers and personnel were ordered by the UN to leave Rwanda as they were not willing to intervene in what the media

reported as a simple ‘African civil war.’⁷ Fergal Keane, a BBC reporter, commented in his documentary ‘The Killers’ in 1994 that “thousands were dying, but the world did nothing.”⁸

⁴ The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was trying to get back into power in Rwanda. The Hutu people were afraid if they gained total control, that they would again be suppressed by the minority Tutsi. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1288230.stm>. In addition, the death of the Hutu president sparked campaigns which rallied against the Tutsi people, claiming that they killed the president in order to gain control of Rwanda again. The Tutsi powered RPF never denied claims of killing the president Juvenal Habyarimana as he flew into Rwanda which helped to foster the hatred.

⁵ When Belgian colonists arrived in 1916 they declared that the Tutsi minority were superior to the majority Hutu, as they looked slightly more European than the shorter and stockier Hutu. Tutsi people were able to have a good education and obtain well paying jobs. Resentment by the Hutu people forced a series of riots in 1959 where more than 20,000 tutsis were killed and many fled to bordering countries. The Hutu population were afraid that if the Tutsis gained control over the nation again, then they would be suppressed like in colonial times. See, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1288230.stm>.

⁶ The historical past of Rwanda should have alerted authorities about the prospect for a serious genocide. President Habaryiman was seen to be expendable in the eyes of his associates and family. He had previously encouraged the dissemination of anti tutsi propaganda and death riots. This should have been a sign to the UN and the International media. See, Chalk, F. ‘Radio Propaganda and Genocide,’ MIGS Occasional Paper, 1999

⁷ Volunteer ambulances had been stopped and all UN personnel had been asked to leave after 10 of the soldiers had been killed. At this stage in the genocide the rate of killing was five times faster than that of the German Nazis. The UN nevertheless withdrew all but 250 troops who were to cover the entire country. These peace keepers were not allowed to hold weapons or fight back against the Hutu militia.

⁸ Kean, F. ‘The Killers,’ BBC London, Panorama Video, 1994, First Broadcast 5 April 2004

The deathly images of ethnic cleansing never emerged to haunt the outside world.⁹ Only a few pictures



today provide a glimpse at the carnage left behind.¹⁰ Hundreds of bodies lay scattered along roads and backyards, skulls split in half by fearless machete blades. Pictures of severed arms, legs and many de-gloved backs should have proved that this tragedy was simply inhumane.

There ongoing debates as to why the superpowers of the Western world did not intervene. American president Bill Clinton stated that he did not want to be sucked into an African quagmire.¹¹ Professor Anthony Ashbolt, of the University of Woolongong, affirms this with his opinion that Western nations had no political gain in helping to sort out the conflict in Rwanda.¹² This leaves us wondering whether political objectives have dictated the type of media coverage, or lack there of, in places such as Sudan and Kosovo today.¹³

⁹ Ethnic Cleansing is an element of the Genocide theory. Ethnic cleansing is the forced expulsion of an ‘undesirable’ population of people from a region or territory on the basis of religion, ethnic discrimination, political reasons, or ideological considerations (or a combination.) Ethnic cleansing is the forced expulsion of an undesirable population from any given territory due to religious or ethnic discrimination, strategic or ideological considerations, political, or a combination of these. Many politicians avoid the use of the term, as it has negative political connotations – ‘Cleansing’ against the morally objectionable act of ‘forced population movement brought through violence.’ This definition is often confused with the ‘deportation,’ which is the expelling of someone from a country or region. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_cleansing

¹⁰ Time Magazines Dated from May –November 1994 are examples of how the media did not acknowledge the genocide, and used pictures of the refugee camps instead of mass graves. See Appendix 1.

¹¹ Politicians and journalists accused of avoiding or helping in the process of genocide are currently being trialled in the United Nation’s Arusha Courts. Jacobson, M. ‘The Arusha Tapes,’ Internews Network, Washington, English Version, 2001; Also, Appendix2, interview with Anthony Ashbolt. He believes that the Western governments had no real political reason to dive into Rwanda’s problems. There was no oil or any economical gain for them.

¹² Appendix2 - interview with Anthony Ashbolt. He believes that the Western governments had no real political reason to dive into Rwanda’s problems. There was no oil or any economical gain for them.

¹³ Sudan in particular is still not widely publicised even though tens of thousands have been killed and millions have been displaced since the genocide began in 2003. It can even be questioned whether Iraq has been a victim of genocide and that this is being hidden from the international community. See, www.un.org/genocide; See also, Appendix2 – interview with Professor Anthony Ashbolt.

It seems that the problem is knowledge. Many people are not aware of the troubles in African nations. This includes the few Western correspondents reporting on African politics. One journalist could not possibly have astute knowledge of every nation's historical and cultural contexts.¹⁴ Thus, mistaking genocide for simply civil war has become a common problem. The UN and the media need to workable policy to prevent this type of massacre occurring again.¹⁵ Journalists do need to look deeper and learn about the politics of African nations. However, it seems that journalists reporting African politics are used to help promote the political war aims of one side or another.¹⁶ It seems clear that many correspondents knew that genocide was taking place, however, simply brushed it off to the world as 'ethnic violence.'¹⁷

So can we determine who is responsible? Is the UN at fault for not creating an intervention, or the media for not presenting the footage? The media seems very quick

¹⁴ Brannon, S. 'Story of a Photojournalist in Conflict,' Friday September 09, 2005. See also, <http://www.rwanda.net/english/News/2005/092005/news09302005b.htm>; Finley, A. 'The medias involvement in Rewanda,' Now the Details Radio Program, March 24 1996; http://archives.cbc.ca/IDCC-1-71-1686-11635/conflict_war/romeo_dallaire/ This radio report discusses the difficulty that many media sources have in presenting the information. Journalists do not have the required resources and knowledge to report in depth every African political event. There are not many western reporters in Africa, therefore they discuss events on a very superficial level. It is impossible for them to completely understand every culture and their history. All journalists should be trained in the politics of different African nations if they are to report there; See also, Appendix2, Interview with Professor Anthony Ashbolt.

¹⁵ The head of the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda during 1994, General Romeo Dallaire, tried to warn the UN and the media three months before the massacre. He turned to the international media for help, however, was not successful. Even for those who chose to remain in the country as journalists, their efforts could not spark international debate.

¹⁶ Peace journalists are often used for the political agenda of one group. However, journalists today need to remain objective and make sure that they are looking only for reconciliation and not fighting simply for one political agenda. The Nelson Mandela Election was covered rather than the Rwandan Genocide.

¹⁷ Rwanda had been involved in a low level civil war between 1990 and 1993. Their government controlled by the Hutu majority was fighting against the rebel force Tutsi. On April 11, London Times were deliberating as to whether they make any international calls for ceasefire, however, they did not know, 'which parties would be asked to cease fire against whom?' See, Kuperman, A. 'How the Media Missed Rwandan Genocide,' [International Press Institute](http://www.internationalpressinstitute.org), report no. 1, 2000

to blame the UN for not assisting them to report the atrocities.¹⁸ Ironically, even though the media received warnings on April 12th that the fall of the capital Kigali was imminent, The London Times, Le Monde and The New York Times chose to report that the fighting was no longer as intense. The media corporations would not intervene, regardless of UN support.

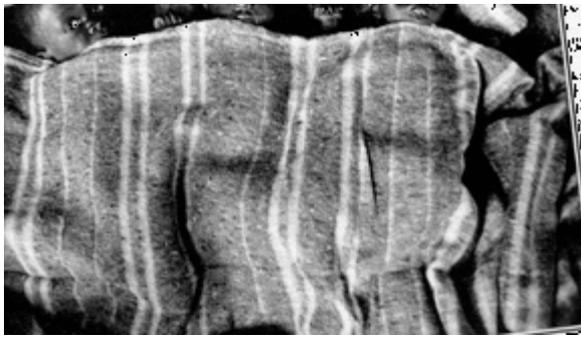
The most accurate footage was never aired and viewers were not to be traumatised by such horrific carnage.¹⁹ The images of black bodies whitened by treacherous deaths, some merely babies, should have taunted all humanity into doing something. Instead, these images simply burn endlessly in the minds of those who could not stop the genocide.²⁰ Once the UN had removed all its aid from within the country, the dangers and the hazards for committed journalists were too great. The only images which emerged were the few shot bravely by the fleeing press corps in the first few days.²¹

¹⁸ The American nation and its media denied the 'g-word' and was unwilling to take action in Rwanda. The military could have created safe havens for the Tutsi and the moderate Hutus. However, this option was never considered by the US military. 'Genocide' was denied by the western nations as it did not suit their political objectives. The term genocide did not compel Clinton's government to intervene. However, in saying this, it had enough impact on the country to ensure that they did not use when discussing Rwanda. See, Frey, R. 'The genocidal Temptation – Aschwits, Hiroshima, Rwanda, and Beyond,' University Press of America, Inc, Oxford, 2004 pp 110 – 111

¹⁹ The footage was gathered at great risk by some journalists and was to be shown when the war was at its greatest. Yet the media chose not to air the footage.

²⁰ UN diplomats and media officials were not aloud to stay in Rwanda. Many, such as BBC reporter Fergal Kean, in the BBC film, 'the Killers,' 1994, tried to awaken the world after the massacre to the types of atrocities which took place and the need to put policies down which stop this from happening. See, Kean, F. 'The Killers,' BBC London, Panorama Video, 1994, First Broadcast 5 April 2004

²¹ The evidence found in 'Time' magazine articles from May 1994 to November 1994 illustrate how there was a lack of media covering the 'real genocide.' 'Time' magazine did not mention once in the articles during the war (May – July 1994) that genocide was taking place. They told the world that the UN was in helping. This was assisted by photographs of aid camps and refugees with food. The American government had denied that genocide was taking place, so the media therefore never referred to the killings in this period as 'genocide.' Nor would they give a true estimated figure of the amount of people killed. See Appendix 1 – 'Time' magazine articles



One of the world's worst crimes did not make the TV news bulletins.²² It was six weeks after the atrocities had been

committed that the media finally broadcasted the mass church killings and the remains of ghostly towns. Even still, the footage was censored and re-edited.²³ Many people were very quick to only condemn the inaction of the UN, however, those who tried to cover up the massacre as it unveiled are just as guilty.²⁴

The media and the UN failed to learn from its past mistakes and have since declared that they would intervene if ethnic cleansing was happening. However, is this declaration simply a sign of apathy? 'Saying actions, not words, would be the measure of success or failure.'²⁵ Many people have been left disillusioned as to how

²²See Giles, Tom. 'Media's failure over Rwandan Genocide,' BBC productions, 1994
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/3599423.stm>

²³ Viewers in London did not see all the dead bodies, skeletons or wounded children. Instead they simply viewed the refugee camps. All of the important footage was broadcasted much too late for any prevention.

²⁴ The Rwandan Media also contributed to inciting genocide. This powerful medium broadcasted hatred by the Hutu's towards the Tutsi "cockroaches" across the country. Throughout the twentieth century the perpetrators of genocide have used the radio to provide propaganda and encourage acquiescence in their motives and mass participation. The Hutu's used the radio Libre des Mille Collines as 'weapon of war' to break through the solidarity of the people. This technique was previously used by the Nazis as a way mobilize millions into believing that their neighbours were not worthy of life. The media in the country acted opposite to the western media in that it was used to help promote genocide. Instead of stopping the genocide, the media fuelled it. See BBC, 'Ex-Rwandan media executive pleads not guilty to genocide charges before UN court' BBC Monitoring Newsfile, UN regional information network IRIN, 30 September, <http://www.rwanda.net/english/News/2005/092005/news09302005b.htm>; In addition, the radio officers in Rwanda on the 30th September 2005 were required to appear before a UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to be charged for killing 937,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus during the 1994 genocide. Joseph Serugendo, 52, was the technical chief for the radio program and a member of the national committee of a Hutu militia the Interahamwe. He helped to disseminate anti-Tutsi messages to throughout Rwanda. Wax, E. 'Journalists Sentenced In Rwanda Genocide. Prosecutor Said 'Hate Media' Urged Killings,' Washington Post Foreign Service, 4 December 2003, p 20; 'The Arusha Tapes' Jacobson, M. 'The Arusha Tapes,' Internews Network, Washington, English Version, 2001

²⁵ The failure of Rwandan reporting has brought about a flip turn and now media exaggerates the atrocities which occur. Yet has this gone too far? Are we now presented with simply a staged interpretation of war? The press does not want to get blamed again for missing issues, so they reports on genocide even when they can not confirm it. BBC, 'Ex-Rwandan media executive pleads not guilty to genocide charges before UN court' BBC Monitoring Newsfile, UN regional information network IRIN, 30 September <http://www.rwanda.net/english/News/2005/092005/news09302005b.htm>.

the world could let this atrocity happen. Others simply wonder whether this could happen again, right under our noses. Its frightening that there is so much hatred in the world, but what is more frightening is that nothing is being done to prevent it.

Letters to the Editor

The western media failed to respond to the Rwandan genocide effectively. I am myself a strong advocate for human rights. Western nations need to redefine their “vital interests” to include genocide. American policy means that intervention is only possible if American economic wellbeing or security is threatened. The failure of the US government to intervene in the genocide was a signal for other governments to stay out. America may as well have invited in the perpetrators of genocide. Policy needs to be set in place to help prevent a repeat of this massacre in such places as Sudan.

Samantha, New York²⁶

It is hard for the media today to ensure that they report on every issue. Although the genocide should not have been ignored, journalists are still working a job. Most would not want to get themselves killed for the sake of justice – justice which would probably have never been seen anyway. I believe that the UN and the media are on equal terms, each one has a responsibility. Hatred happens and as much as we try to point the blame, there is not always a solution.

Edward, England²⁷

²⁶ Samantha is an advocate only of peace. She believes that the media and the UN are responsible for not acting on the atrocities playing out in front of them. As an American, she believes that her media is run by political objectives which prevent the story of genocide being broadcast and intervention being made.

²⁷ Edward puts the issues of the genocide theory and the media's involvement into context. She understands that it is an important political issue, however, recognises the wider implications and problems involved in taking journalists into the country. She also recognises the complexity of a world wide intervention when the world is not sure of the underlying contexts of the war.

It seems that the media is being blamed yet again. The implications and control of genocide is out of the hands of many Western nations. Cultural war and ethnic cleansing are hard to detect. Why should our hard working journalists risk their lives to save another? The media and the United Nations are tightly structured bodies of people who efficiently and appropriately act according to knowledge and safety. You should be glad that they are not trying to kill their own.

Meike, Belgium ²⁸

[Text of letters, 269 words]

²⁸ Meike very much pro media and the United Nations. As a citizen of the Belgium (Rwanda is Belgium territory) he understands the efforts placed by his nation to help stop the genocide. Many Belgians assisted in helping Rwandan Tutsis leave the country and most of the UN personnel were from Belgium. He understands journalistic ethics and the troubles that journalists had in getting past the Hutu road blocks.

Dialogue

This dialogue is between the two co-researchers of this project, and a mutual friend - a fellow university student – who knew only the basics of the Rwandan genocide and its historical context. The name of the mutual friend has been changed for privacy reasons.

Chanel - What made you decide to investigate the media's involvement in the Rwandan Genocide?²⁹

Adam - It was all Alex's idea!! I really wasn't sure about doing it because I thought that there were better examples of violence in the media. And we thought that peace is barely even covered. It's sad but there is simply more media coverage of violence than there is of peace!

Alex – Yeah. But I thought that the Rwandan genocide was a really confronting and controversial issue which not many people seem to know about and does not seem to be well researched.³⁰ As I expected it turned out to be very challenging and required extensive archival and investigative research.

Chanel – So what archives did you use, because the library at uni is fairly limited in its resources?

Adam – Yeah I know! We decided to use the Fisher library at Sydney Uni because it has a much broader archival catalogue. Alex spent a few weekends at my place so that

²⁹ The opinion piece discusses the Genocide theory and relates it back to the case study of Rwanda. The genocide theory is very complex as it has many different definitions. It is often very difficult for people to define whether genocide is occurring because the different definitions, such as mass murder, ethnic cleansing, how many people need to be killed to call it genocide, and whether it is civil war rather than genocide. These definitions all needed to be considered when researching. See, Andreopoulos, G. 'Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions,' University of Pennsylvania Press, USA, 1994

³⁰ There are not many in depth reports which criticise the involvement of the media and the United Nations in the Rwandan genocide. Most media sources which were found were simply pushing that the media was not wrongly involved and that the UN was completely to blame. It was very interesting then to look at the media's articles, especially 'Time' magazine, who never really confronted the issue of genocide in their articles. They were all edited and censored for the audience. Also, although there is extensive information available, there is nothing really which accurately criticises or explains what happened in 1994.

we could spend as much time thoroughly investigating what media source was the best.

Alex – The first time we did a lot of research on the net, just getting background information, found a few documentaries about it and even watched the film “Hotel Rwanda” that just came out.³¹ It really helped us to understand the genocide, because it was a true story, and the real life main character actually worked as a consultant on the film. It was really good to see a factual, personal account of what happened.

Adam – It was especially interesting since the main character was a Hutu and his wife a Tutsi. We were able to see not only the interaction between the two groups, but also the fact that not all Hutus were involved in or agreed with the killings, despite the fact that the media was over-generalizing and presenting it that way.

Chanel – Did you watch any other films?

Adam - Yeah, we got two from the library. The first one we saw was the ‘Arusha Tapes’ which looked into the current United Nations Trials of the people responsible for the genocide. And the other doc was called ‘The Killers’ which was a BBC production about what happened.³²

Alex – This was really interesting because it was shot by a journalist who tried to get into Rwanda during the genocide. Unfortunately the BBC wouldn’t let him show his footage, so he compiled a film after the genocide with lots of the confronting footage he had taken. What also is really interesting is how it was only in 2001 that this film was released to the public! I’m sure that this must have had something to do with media corporations and their political agendas.

Chanel –Yeah, the media is too mixed up in politics. They often withhold information so as not to go against the Government.

³¹ ‘Hotel Rwanda’ is a Hollywood blockbuster which is based on the true story of Paul, a five star hotel manager, who takes in hundreds of Tutsi refugees to protect them from the Hutu Milita. Paul is a moderate Hutu and his wife is a Tutsi. It documents very accurately the genocide and how it unfolded.

³² See, Jacobson, M. ‘The Arusha Tapes,’ Internews Network, Washington, English Version, 2001. See also, Kean, F. ‘The Killers,’ BBC London, Panorama Video, 1994, First Broadcast 5 April 2004

Adam – Exactly. At the time of the genocide, Bill Clinton was President, and he said he didn't want to get involved in “an African quagmire”, so obviously the media largely stuck to this as well.

Alex – Although the films gave us some great background information, but we needed to gather more information to properly analyze it. We especially wanted a print medium so we could look through the archives and see how it was documented over time.

Adam - We agreed that the “Time” magazine archives would be best. It is a well known source and it is considered a reliable and respected form of media. ³³

Alex – It was so great. We looked up where the archives were and discovered there were wall to wall archives that dated back to the 18th Century. All of the Time magazines were set out in years so we grabbed all of 1994 and some of early 1995 and spent hours sifting through. This really let us see how the media introduced the genocide and then mapped it out for people.

Adam – Yeah it was interesting that only in hindsight did they refer to it as “genocide.”³⁴ Rather than using the G-word, they talked about it as mass killings and civil war, and early on, it was even described as “tribal conflict”. How primitive does that sound?! Also, most of the pictures were of UN peace camps and refugee groups outside of the country; there was very little footage of the genocide or the victims.

Chanel – And you're saying that's a bad thing?! I don't want to see really graphic footage of dead bodies!

³³ ‘Time’ Magazine issues May to July 1994. See, Appendix 1.

³⁴ The media and the American government never referred to Rwanda as having ‘genocide’ taking place. Academics have referred to this as the government avoiding the “G-word.”

Adam – Yeah but that’s your *choice*. The thing is the media didn’t really provide a choice of whether you could see those images or not, they just basically censored it for you!³⁵

Alex – I think this was one reason as to why no one knew about the genocide. The media has such an influential power over its audiences. If they had published the information and footage that they received in the first few days of the genocide, then I think that the western nations would have been shamed into doing something.

Chanel – So who is to blame then?

Alex – Well that’s a really tough one!! I think that all the people who knew about the genocide - the UN, the Western governments and the media all share in the blame. The UN blames the media for not being there, but Western governments and the media blame the UN for not protecting its journalists and personnel. I don’t think we will ever come to a conclusion about who is responsible.

Chanel – That sounds really complicated!

Alex – Yeah it is! When we interviewed Anthony Ashbolt here at uni, he basically said the same thing!³⁶ He said it was a very complicated and politicized issue, with no one really acknowledging their own part in not preventing the genocide.

Adam – Everyone seems content to blame each other it seems! There were a few journalists who acknowledged there wasn’t enough media coverage of the events in Rwanda, such as the BBC guy who did “The Killers”, but they were few and far between.

³⁵ The media conglomerates, in particular the BBC, did not want to show to the public the graphic images shot by the fleeing press corp. They were deemed too graphic and would disturb their audiences too much. Instead, the audience only received edited versions of what was happening, and often these were only of the UN refugee camps rather than of the massacres themselves.

³⁶ Anthony Ashbolt is a professor in Politics at the University of Wollongong. He specializes in the politics of the media. Anthony provided for us a academic view of what he believed to be reasons behind the media’s and the UN’s lack of involvement in the genocide. He bared reference to the fact that the media was bound by political ties with Western governments and that Western governments had no real gain from assisting in the Rwandan genocide. Refer to Apendix2, The transcript of Anthony’s interview.

Chanel – Who did you say this guy is that you interviewed here at uni?

Adam – Dr Anthony Ashbolt. He is a professor in politics and the media. He was really good to interview, gave us a lot more material than we thought he would, and he even gave us a few other media websites and magazines that covered the genocide!

Chanel – Oh ok. Isn't there a lecturer that specializes in the Rwandan genocide, or even genocide in general that you could have interviewed?

Alex – Yeah, Adam found out that a lecturer at Sydney Uni specializes in it. She has actually just come back from a research trip to Rwanda. Also, it was kind of disappointing for us because when I looked on her website, it showed that she had just conducted a major seminar on the Rwandan genocide with a few other people who specialize in it. It was held on the 12th of September and we found out only a few days later!!!³⁷

Chanel – She would have been perfect! Ok so you missed the seminar, but how come you didn't interview her instead? She might even have been able to give you transcripts of the seminar or something!

Adam – Oh we tried! She has a few messages on her answering machine and in her email that she never responded to! We even went into her office during her stated consultation hours to see her but she wasn't there! It was a real shame; we were both bitterly disappointed about that! At the very least if she wasn't interested or didn't really have the time, she could have let us know! I mean we even tried sending her just a couple of key questions so she could see we weren't trying to take up a huge amount of time, but we didn't hear anything back!

Alex – This seemed to be a pattern with all of the people that we tried to contact. I emailed people from the UN and a whole bunch of other organizations with only a few simple questions, and only one of them replied. Although it was nice to receive

³⁷ Appendix3 – list of people that I contacted for research purposes.

that reply, it only sent me a link to another web page!! This was really disappointing as we just needed a few different opinions from experts dealing with genocide and Rwanda.

Adam – One good email we did get back was from the UNHCR who sent some information on genocide. It provided some information from the UN's point of view and had a different perspective than the media sources.

Chanel – But you did get that interview with Anthony. Did that make up for all the rejection?

Alex – Yes! Definitely! He was fantastic to interview. Although he was not an expert in the Rwandan genocide, he had extensive knowledge and opinions surrounding the UN and the Media and their treatment of genocide. It was also good because we got an academic opinion and he definitely wasn't afraid to voice his thoughts on the matter. This was fantastic because it provided another dimension to our research.

Adam – Especially because you can't find any media comments in the media itself, and also reliable academic opinions. But although it was suggested in class that we send copies of our opinion pieces to the person we interviewed to gauge their reactions to it, we decided not to send ours to Anthony since he is an academic at uni. We didn't want it to look like we were cheating or getting interference from another lecturer.

Chanel - Yeah that's a good point. Well I read them, and I really liked both your opinion pieces. I noticed that you both wrote the piece from the present time. Is there a reason why you didn't do it from the time of the genocide or straight after?

Adam – Yes, actually. How very perceptive of you! We both decided early on that writing it in 1994 from the time of the genocide would have been really difficult, for two reasons. Firstly, the fact that the media didn't refer to it as genocide at the time, it wasn't until later in the year after the killings had taken place. But more importantly there really wasn't enough knowledge and information available at the time.

Especially since last year there has been an influx of media coverage about what happened.

Alex – Yeah the benefit of hindsight is so great, especially in this case. So we didn't want to shoot ourselves in the foot by disregarding all this information that has come out since.

Chanel – Did you leave stuff out that you had wanted to put in? Because the word limit you used was pretty restrictive!

Alex – Yeah we really struggled with word limit, especially with the opinion pieces. We had so much brilliant information and had a really hard time not leaving things out. I personally had to simply footnote the information about the hate radio within Rwanda even though I really wanted to say more about it.³⁸ This constraint meant that some really important and heavily researched information had to be left out, which was really disappointing. The topic of the media in relation to Rwanda is so huge – and it is difficult to create a solid argument on the impact of the media outside, whilst also bringing in the media on the inside.

Adam – I also had trouble with the word limit. The letters to the editor weren't too hard, but the limit on the opinion piece was quite difficult to stick to. We just had so much good information that it was hard to decide what to use, what footnote and what to leave out altogether. I really didn't have enough space to use a lot of Anthony's comments, which was a pity 'cos he made some really good points. I mean I did make a couple of references, but not as many as I would have liked. It's hard to make a persuasive argument in such a short amount of words!

³⁸ Hate radio was disseminated throughout Rwanda to invoke hatred for the Tutsi people. They were referred to by the Hutu's as 'cockroaches.' This hate radio produced propaganda which also produced instructions on how to kill the Tutsis, and where the killings were taking place. See, Mann, M. 'The dark side of Democracy,' Cambridge University Press, London, 2005; Chalk, F. 'Radio Propaganda and Genocide,' MIGS Occasional Paper, 1999; Giles, Tom. 'Media's failure over Rwandan Genocide,' BBC productions, 1994 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/3599423.stm>; BBC website, 'Rwanda: How the Genocide Happened,' <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1288230.stm>

Alex – But overall we've really enjoyed doing it. We've spent so much time together, I think Adam's flat mate must be sick of the sight of me! But seriously, this topic has been really interesting to learn about. I have learnt so much and have developed a real opinion on something which I previously did not know much about. I am now very conscious about how the media approaches such issues as genocide and the fact that we really don't realize a lot about what is going on in the world of 'war and peace.'

Adam - Yeah, the media has such a significant amount of power and influence, it's easy to forget! I think we've really learned that the media can get it wrong, that it can make mistakes and that things going on in various parts of the world are often given less coverage than others.

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