**My double life: Kalashnikovs and cupcakes (23 Jan 2005, Sunday Times)**

*Christina Lamb was terrified that having a child would ruin her career but now thinks motherhood makes her a better war reporter*

When I returned to my son’s incubator later, the nurses asked where I had been. When I told them they looked horrified. But I was 22 when I became a war correspondent and 12 years on I was determined that having a child would not change my life. I had cried when I found out that I was pregnant because it meant missing the war in Yugoslavia.

And perhaps, if I had to admit it, it was more scary watching a baby the size of my palm connected to an array of tubes and machines than doing what I know best.

Last Sunday the BBC screened On the Front Line, a documentary by Jeremy Bowen, a veteran BBC reporter, about being a war correspondent. To watch reporters like Fergal Keane talk candidly about resorting to drink or Jon Steele, a former ITN cameraman, on wandering round Heathrow babbling, was not comfortable for any of us who cover conflict for a living.

But apart from Christiane Amanpour of CNN they were all men. As a mother who keeps a terrible secret in her wardrobe — a flak jacket — and whose child’s first words were “bye-bye”, it was decidedly guilt making.

For some time after Lourenço was born I thought about giving up foreign reporting. On September 9, 2001 we moved to Portugal, where my husband had been brought up, for me to start writing a book. Two days later I got a telephone call and switched on the television to see the World Trade Center in New York in flames and studio analysts talking about Osama Bin Laden and Afghanistan.

Afghanistan was where I had first started back in 1987. I had walked into the American Club in Peshawar and a group of whisky-drinking middle-aged men with blood-stained army jackets swivelled round on their stools to look me up and down.

Soon I was crossing back and forth along the Khyber Pass on donkeys or by foot, face darkened and dressed as a mujaheddin or disguised in a burqa. “Going inside” we called it and we spent all our time trying to do it, then most of the time inside trying to get out. When I won young journalist of the year in 1988 it seemed an irritating distraction to go to London for the ceremony. The Afghan jihad was an adventure, it was like my first love affair, and when September 11 happened I knew that I had to go back even though Lourenço was just two.

When I finally returned home months later, his nursery manager asked me what I did. She said Lourenço kept telling everyone, “My mummy lives on a plane.”

Of course it is difficult being apart. By luck I was there when he took his first steps. But I have yet to make a parents’ evening and usually when I am away he refuses to speak to me. It may take hours to get through on the satellite phone from some mountain top in the Hindu Kush, only for him to say, “I’m busy, Mummy.”

I think having a stable home life, a loving husband and child helps me to deal better with the horrors of being a war correspondent. It feels as though I have two separate lives. But sometimes those two worlds collide.

Two weeks ago a contact from Pakistan intelligence, who is close to some of the world’s most wanted terrorists, was in town just for an afternoon. It was Lourenço’s class “bake sale” and I had arranged to pick up him up from school. When I explained this, begging my contact to squeeze me in later, he said no problem, he would come too. He bought £10 of cupcakes. Last week we received the school newsletter congratulating Swan Class on a record total.

**A Woman’s Work by Francesca Borri, Columbia Journalism Review July 2013**

***Francesca Borri is an Italian freelance journalist covering the war Syria, here she explain the challenges of her role***

He finally wrote to me. After more than a year of freelancing for him, during which I contracted typhoid fever and was shot in the knee, my editor watched the news and thought I was among the Italian journalists [who’d been kidnapped](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/04/13/uk-syria-crisis-italy-kidnap-idUKBRE93C07220130413), so he sent me an email that said: “Should you get a connection, could you tweet your detention?”

That same day, I returned in the evening to a rebel base where I was staying in the middle of the hell that is Aleppo, and amid the dust and the hunger and the fear, I hoped to find a friend, a kind word, a hug. Instead, I found only another email from my friend Clara, who’s spending her holidays at my home in Italy. She’s already sent me eight “Urgent!” messages. Today she’s looking for my spa badge, so she can enter for free. The rest of the messages in my inbox were like this one: “Brilliant piece today; brilliant like your book on Iraq.” Unfortunately, my book wasn’t on Iraq, but on Kosovo.

People have this romantic image of the freelancer as a journalist who’s exchanged the certainty of a regular salary for the freedom to cover the stories she is most fascinated by. But we aren’t free at all; it’s just the opposite. The truth is that the only job opportunity I have today is staying in Syria, where nobody else wants to stay. And it’s not even Aleppo, to be precise; it’s the frontline. Because the editors back in Italy only ask us for the blood, the bang-bang. I write about the Islamists and their network of social services, the roots of their power—a piece that is definitely more complex to build than a frontline piece. I strive to explain, not just to move, to touch, and I am answered with: “What’s this? Six thousand words and nobody died?”

Reporting war is a bloody business. And then, of course, I am a woman. One recent evening there was shelling everywhere, and I was sitting in a corner, wearing the only expression you could have when death might come at any second, and another reporter comes over, looks me up and down, and says: “This isn’t a place for women.” What can you say to such a guy? Idiot, this isn’t a place for anyone. If I’m scared, it’s because I’m sane. Because Aleppo is all gunpowder and testosterone, and everyone is traumatized: Henri, who speaks only of war; Ryan, tanked up on amphetamines. And yet, at every torn-apart child we see, they come only to me, a “fragile” female, and want to know how I am. And I am tempted to reply: I am as you are. And those evenings when I wear a hurt expression, actually, are the evenings I protect myself, chasing out all emotion and feeling; they are the evenings I save myself.

But we’re war reporters, after all, aren’t we? A band of brothers (and sisters). We risk our lives to give voice to the voiceless. We have seen things most people will never see. We are a wealth of stories at the dinner table, the cool guests who everyone wants to invite. Because really the only story to tell in war is how to live without fear. It all could be over in an instant. If I knew that, then I wouldn’t have been so afraid to love, to dare, in my life; instead of being here, now, hugging myself in this dark, rancid corner, desperately regretting all I didn’t do, all I didn’t say. You who tomorrow are still alive, what are you waiting for? Why don’t you love enough? You who have everything, why you are so afraid?

**Question 7 is about Text 1 and Text 2. Answer both parts of the question. Refer to both texts in your answer.**

**7(a)** The two texts show different views about being a female war journalist. What similarities are there in the views about female roles? Use evidence from both texts to support your answer. (6 marks)

**7(b)** Compare how the writers of Text 1 and Text 2 present their ideas and perspectives about war journalism. Support your answer with detailed reference to the text. (14 marks)