

MEDIA RELEASE

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



New academic will pass on insights to aspiring journalists

The personal experiences and insights about reporting from war zones from journalist John Martinkus will come to the University of Tasmania this year.

Former SBS journalist and author, Mr Martinkus, has joined the UTAS School of Journalism, Media and Communications as a lecturer in television and convergent journalism.

Mr Martinkus, who was once kidnapped while reporting in Iraq by insurgents, has written three non-fiction books and worked predominantly outside of Australia in wire service, newspaper and magazine journalism.

For the last four years Mr Martinkus has worked for SBS Dateline, filming and reporting stories mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan, where conditions are very difficult for journalists. He also has a degree in international relations from La Trobe University in Melbourne.

Mr Martinkus said that after 10 years of working internationally the prospect of passing on some of his skills to UTAS students was a great opportunity.

“I have been fortunate enough to work on some of the biggest international stories in the media and with some of the finest journalists now working in the business,” he said.

“The lessons of those experiences are among the skills that I hope I will be able to impart to journalism students here at UTAS.

“The Journalism School here allows students to choose between many of the different strands of journalism and as someone who has jumped between print and television I think that is essential.”

Journalism, Media and Communications Coordinator Dr Libby Lester said Mr Martinkus represents one of the future pathways for journalism - one based on enterprise, conviction and the ability to embrace new technologies and changing media landscapes.

“John’s work in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan has shown how an individual, highly mobile journalist armed with little more than a laptop and video camera is able to investigate and tell stories that matter and, in the end, make a difference,” Dr Lester said.

“He is a perfect fit for the University's Journalism, Media and Communications program in that we are committed to the traditional values of news and journalistic story telling, but also to transporting those values into a new digital future.”

Mr Martinkus said he will never forget how in 2004 he came to Tasmania on a break between trips to Iraq and found it refreshingly peaceful.

“Now that I have a young family I couldn’t think of a better place to bring them up than Tasmania,” he said.

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