

# Saleyha Ahsan

Flat 1 Priarie Building  
45 Liberty Bridge Road  
London E15 1FU

M +44 7947 932268

saleyhaahsan@yahoo.co.uk

@saleyhaahsan



## PROFILE

I am an NCTJ trained multimedia medical journalist with over 20 years of experience working across a range of print and broadcast media. From the frontlines in Syria, Libya and the NHS I have created content for a range of media outlets. My work has impact beyond the screen. In 2018 my BBC One Show report about a fake cancer cure helped MHRA secure a prosecution, resulting in a custodial sentence. I am medically trained and spent 14 years working part-time within the NHS whilst successfully simultaneously working as a freelance journalist. I am the current on-screen doctor the Channel 4 award winning series SAS Who Dares Wins. I am also the current Women in Global Health UK Media and Podcast lead. In recognition of my career in medical journalism and broadcasting I was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Dundee in 2018.

## EMPLOYMENT

2000- present: freelance multimedia medical journalist

2010 - current: Broadcaster/Presenter BBC (presenter for series Trust Me I'm A Doctor, One Show, Newsnight, Panorama, Horizon) Channel 4 News, ITV On Assignment, Guardian Bear Grylls Celebrity Island on-screen participant/C4 (2018). On Screen doctor for Channel 4 SAS Who Dares Wins.

2016-2021: Part time Emergency Medicine Doctor, Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor, North Wales

2012: Journalist, Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Secret Evidence in British Courts

2010-2016: Part time emergency medicine doctor, London

1996-2000: British Army officer with operational service in Bosnia - first British Muslim woman to be commissioned from Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

1995-1996: BBC Wiltshire Sound Reporter

## PRINT

I am a freelance writer and I have published articles widely. My bylines are in the following media (print and online)

The Guardian, BBC Science in Focus, The Lancet, BMJ, BMA News, The Daily Mail, The New Statesman, New York Times, The World Today (Chatham House), The Independent, BBC News Online, Channel 4 News online.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

I have worked as an onscreen reporter for a number of news and current affairs programs across channels. ( 2012 to present)

**Channel 4 Dispatches : Condition Critical: One doctor's story. March 2021.** Filmed, reported, produced and directed. Commissioning editor Louisa Compton. ITN Productions. Exec producers George Waldrum and Ian Rumsey.

**Channel 4 Documentary: What Happens When You Get Covid19 - April 2020**

Reporter and script.

**Channel 4 News - April 2020** Reporter/producer - 4 month contract covering COVID-19.

**Channel 4 Dispatches - Coronavirus: Can Our NHS Cope? - March 2020**

30mins Reporter. Commissioning editor Louisa Compton. ITN Productions. Exec producers George Waldrum and Ian Rumsey.

**BBC 1 One Show 2015 - present**

Reporter. In 2018 my report about a fake cancer cure helped MHRA secure a prosecution which has resulted in a custodial sentence.

Working across various departments (science, art, consumer current affairs). Health consumer investigative strand, highlighting topical issues and uncovering scams.

**BBC 2, Groundbreakers - Anne Acheson: The Art of Medicine - 2018**

Telling the story of the trailblazing Ulster Scot artist whose work during WW1 changed the face of modern medicine.

**Newsnight, BBC 2 - HOSPEX 2014**

Looking at medical simulation used by British Army for training medics prior to deployment to Afghanistan. Securing exclusive access from the MOD, script and pitch. BBC Science for Newsnight.

**BBC 1 Panorama Special - Saving Syria's Children**

Development and access for 45 min film with Emmy award winners Ian Pannell and directed by Darren Conway. After setting up the film, I was followed working as a doctor in Syria during the war. I then wrote content for the Guardian, New Statesman and made a BBC From Our Own Correspondent.

## RADIO

In 2020, I was invited to present three BBC Inside Health episodes for Radio 4.

Nov 2020 - BBC Inside Health, *Inside Bangor ITU during Covid 19 - the second wave.*

11 March - BBC Inside Health : *Coronavirus Special* - I obtained exclusive access to Bangor hospital to record PPE preparation. I was the first broadcast journalist to get access inside a hospital during COVID19. Program was Editor's Pick of the Week.

18 March - BBC Inside Health : *Covid 19 Intensive Care Beds, Ibuprofen, Laser and Glaucoma, Faecal Incontinence.*

Made films and worked in Syria (2013,2012), Libya, Pakistan, Palestine, DR Congo, Tunisia, Kashmir, Bosnia, Algeria. Extensive experience working in austere and hostile settings, negotiating access into areas both for filmmaking purposes and research. Considerable frontline experience, working with various state and non-state actors for filmmaking, research and humanitarian work.

## MULTIMEDIA

**Filmmaker/reporter Channel 4 News - A view from the A&E shop floor - 2018**

Series of 5 x 6 min films on C4 News depicting different roles and perspectives in A&E. Was part of C4 News output to mark NHS 70. Online and on air distribution accompanied with blog piece. Development, access, script and co-shoot/dir.

**Filmmaker/reporter Guardian Films**

I have worked with former Guardian online multimedia editor Michael Tait on a number of films, which were accompanied by written pieces. I worked with the Guardian during the special NHS project in 2016. I also made a film series about people affected by the use of

secret evidence under house arrest and set up an explanation session about secret evidence use.

**THE DOCTORS WHO SAVE THE SICKEST BABIES - 2016**

5 min special access film set within the paediatric intensive care unit in the Evalina Children's Hospital, London. Followed paediatric doctor and television celebrity Dr Ranj Singh on a shift. This is the only time he has agreed to be filmed in his clinical role and I secured this without fee payment. Dir/Prod/Script Exec Mike Tait

**CONFESSIONS FROM A&E - 2016**

A ten part series where doctors from around the UK share unexpected personal experiences from their work in A&E. This included a special episode about surgery on the frontline Syria delivered by eminent war surgeon David Nott. Dir/prod and casting. Exec Mike Tait

**INSIDE BRITAIN'S BUSIEST A&E - 2014**

3 part series with exclusive access inside Queen's A&E in Romford and Taunton Infirmary in Somerset. This included filming with the Royal College of Emergency Medicine's President Dr Cliff Mann - the only clinical filming he agreed to do during his presidency. Access, shooting dir/prod/script. Exec producers Mike Tait/Jacqui Timberlake

**COMMONWEALTH BROADCAST TRUST/GUARDIAN - LIBYA MULTIMEDIA PROJECT 2011**

Secured £10k from multimedia award to film in Libya over 7 month period of the 2011 war. Filmed with medics working on the frontline - solo shoot. Film, written and audio content produced for online new platform Latitude News (founder/editor Maria Balinska - former BBC editor), BBC From Our Own Correspondent, Guardian online.

**GUARDIAN FILMS SLOW TORTURE 2009**

Series of 5 monologues based on men living under house arrest in the UK subject to control orders and secret evidence use in their legal cases. I gained access to the men to get their testimonies. Writer and co-produced with Mustafa Khalili, exec producer Mike Tait.

**BBC WW1 Uncut series. Dir Andy Abrahams, Ballista Media - 2014**

War medicine

Drawing on my own experiences of being a doctor and former army officer, a report about medicine during WW1.

**WOMEN MEDICS**

Reporter for a film telling the story of the pioneering Scottish Women's Hospital Movement.

**BBC ONLINE IWONDER**

Reporter - film that looks at what lesson's today's battlefield medics learned from WW1. Editors Choice on BBC Online

FILMOGRAPHY

I have made a number of films for television - directing/producing.

**Channel 4 News - A Deaf Refugee Child's journey to the UK - 2016**

5 min film. Dir/Prod.

**ITV - On Assignment - Crossing the Gobi - 2015**

5 Min film following the first ever Afghan women's tea, completing an ultra-marathon challenge in the Gob desert. Camera/dir/prod.

**Bridging the Gap Scheme - My Mother's Daughter 2007**

Best International Film Parvaneh Etsami Festival, Tehran

Best European Film Pangea Day TED Film Festival, Los Angeles.

11 min independent film about the relationship between journalist Yvonne Ridley and her mother. Yvonne was detained by the Taliban in Afghanistan and following her release converted to Islam. Wide festival screening including Seattle, HotDocs and Edinburgh. Writer/Dir. Screened on Christiane Amanpour Show 2010.

**Channel 4 News 'Pilots on Speed - 2003**

6 min film. Looking at amphetamine use of US Airforce pilots.

EDUCATION

University of Cambridge, Magdalene College - PhD, Social Sciences part time - 2020

University of Essex - LLM in International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law -2012

University of Dundee - Medicine, MBChB - 2001-2006

Royal Military Academy - Officer Commissioning Course, British Army - 1996

University of Salford - BSc Chemistry 2.1 1990-1994

SPEAKER/CHAIR

Panel chair for IED conference (Action on Armed Violence), Chatham House, 2019

Chair of high level event in Westminster - APPG on IEDs, 2017

Keep Her Safe - Foreign Office high level event, speaker

Keynote speaker for NHS Employers Annual dinner 2017

BOARDS

APPG on IEDs - board member

Board member for Internews Europe

Board member Action on Armed Violence

Former Elected board member for Frontline Freelance Register, 2016-2019

SKILLS

Self-shooting producer director. Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a team. Work to deadlines. An extensive contacts book that spans health, NHS, global health, social affairs and politics.

CITATIONS

Ian Rumsey - Managing Director of Television, ITN Productions

*I have worked with Sal on a number of documentary projects and I remain in awe of her tireless tenacity, her selfless dedication and her unwavering desire to reveal truths and hold power to account. She is, simply, a remarkable person.*

George Waldrum - Exec Producer ITN Productions (For Sama, Oscar nominee)

*I've worked with Saleyha in my role as executive producer on Dispatches - Channel 4's flagship current affairs series. She is an exceptional and passionate journalist who is always looking to genuinely connect with the people at the heart of the story. Her life experience and professional career to date gives her unique insight and she has a nose for a good story. She is lovely person to work with too and a real team player.*

William Law, Editor The Arab Digest

*I have known and worked with Saleyha Ahsan over the better part of twenty-five years. She is a committed and compassionate journalist with a formidable work ethic. Saleyha has a comprehensive and deeply impressive record of reporting on medical and health issues here in the UK and abroad, where she has worked in several conflict zones. Her journalism, which she delivers to an exceptionally high standard, is original, compelling and courageous.*

## REFERENCES

Dorothy Byrne

Former head of Channel 4 News and Current Affairs

dorothybyrne10@gmail.com

Ian Rumsey

Managing Director of Television, ITN Productions

ian.rumsey@itnproductions.com

Louisa Compton

Head of Channel 4 News and Current Affairs

lcompton@channel4.co.uk

George Waldrum

Executive Producer, ITN Productions

george.waldrum@itnproductions.com

William Law

Editor, the Arab Digest

bill.law@thegulfmatters.com