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Intermediating Africa

In July, *Vanity Fair*, based in New York, did a unique special edition. Editor Graydon Carter explained how it came about: "Earlier this year, Mark Dowley, a marketing polymath at the Endeavour talent agency who has been involved with Bono's (Red) campaign from the start, called to inquire if I would be interested in having him guest edit an issue of the magazine. Interested? I'll say!" And the subject chosen? Africa.

The resulting 172 glossy-page sweep of our continent had Annie Leibowitz produce 20 different cover photographs for the magazine, Brad Pitt interview Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bill Clinton reminisce about his good friend Nelson Mandela, Tom Freston, CEO of Viacom, go to Mali to report on the Festival of the Desert, Youssou N'Dour talk about West African music, Christopher Hitchens examine the aftermath of Al

Qaeda attacks in Tunis, and a host of donors, do-gooders and philanthropists (Bono, Oprah, the Gates', Jeffrey Sachs) speak about their efforts to save the poor, the sick and the Aids-ridden.

It's not that it wasn't a fascinating read or that some really important issues weren't surfaced. They were. (And if you take a look at the website edition you see some strong attempts to get away from treating the entire continent as one country and links that will "help you dig deeper".)

But I still found it galling to have Condoleezza Rice (left) staring up at me from the front cover when I took

my copy out of the postbox. And I wonder why a magazine with such mighty resources has to marshal a phalanx of intermediaries (almost all of them celebrities – see the selection we've reprinted from the story VF ran about their 20 covers) to interpret Africa to their readers. Why not go directly to source and let people here speak for themselves?

Turn to this *Review's* special section on Angola. The intention: source the journalists actually working in the country, let them speak about their own experiences and talk to our readers about the things that bother and inspire them. Let them speak in Portuguese.

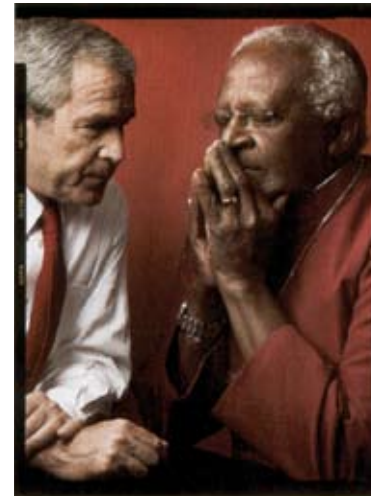
It was immensely difficult. Knowing who to find took a lot of questioning, figuring out how to find them took a lot of international phone calls (I've since given up the false idea that email is magical and fast and sure), and dealing with my own lack of Portuguese was very frustrating. At points I despaired that the pages NiZA had sponsored would see publication.

But they have. Those dedicated people you'll encounter in the pages (44-49), and some invisible ones like the translators and photographers, helped source and translate and pull strings to get stories and pictures that give a sense of just how determined journalists in Angola are to craft strong, healthy, free media.

Also in this edition

We bring you reports from the World Newspapers' Association/ World Editors' Forum Congress in Cape Town, the World Journalism Education Conference in Singapore and the World Summit on Children and Media in Johannesburg; the furious debate on user-generated content, global warming as interpreted by African photographers, six pages on education and training, and research into the SABC "blacklist" controversy. We visit Western Sahara, Rwanda and Zimbabwe, revisit the copyright issue, bring back an old friend (Mario Garcia) and talk about correcting our mistakes gracefully.

Anthea Garman, Editor.



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