

I found out about Russia's full-scale invasion from Telegram chats. When the headlines confirmed the panic in personal chats, I knew the worst predictions became reality. As friends' days began with explosions at 5 a.m., constant live feed updates from Ukrainian and Western media outlets fueled my sleepless night 5,000 miles away.

Four months later, I maintained the nocturnal schedule. This time, I stayed up to write the live feeds for The Kyiv Independent, one of Ukraine's largest English-language newspapers. For hours, I would look at news feeds to stay up to date. Religious scrolling soon revealed a distinction: local Ukrainian-language outlets showed the war's realities through personal stories, often missed by English-language publications because of the complex local context or overwhelming amount of battlefield updates. I began writing enterprise articles for The Kyiv Independent to find a space to share these untold stories with an international audience.

The Pacific time zone, which I saw as a disadvantage, became beneficial for a 30-person newsroom striving for the 24/7 coverage for its audience of two million. The distance and requirement to pitch all of my stories pushed me to get creative. Through Zoom, I saw the striking difference between diaspora's and native's approach to preserving Ukrainian culture. Interviews with different generations of Ukrainian Americans allowed me to go past the easily-perceived picture of unity and explain why some pieces of their culture appear frozen in the 1950s, while Ukraine is pushing for modernization.

As I was writing about the cultural distinctions, Western outlets covered Ukrainian high school graduation. The early July spotlight didn't touch on my demographic — university students. So, my next piece explored how students studying through war view their future. After witnessing uncertainty among American peers after pandemic, my Ukrainian interviewees surprised me with calmness and resilience. Some spent the luxury of Internet connection in occupation on talking with classmates to maintain communities that provided more support than home friends. Others bundled together in shelters to finish up work on last-minute deadlines during air raids. In addition to learning that war doesn't stop procrastination, I saw the resilience of hope as many plan to use their degrees to continue rebuilding home.

Daniel Pearl also knew to look past the big headlines for the untold stories. Through letting readers in on a basement pop-music recording session, he showed the world the nuance of the Iranian authoritarianism. In interviews with displaced Serbs, Pearl pointed to the consequences of ethnic cleansing through renamed streets and future generations staying abroad. In some of the darkest moments of the region's history, he made people feel seen. I aspire to do the same in looking for stories everywhere, from Telegram chats to the omissions in the day's biggest headlines.