



Nina Burleigh - Class of 1978 is National Politics Correspondent at Newsweek Magazine. She is an award-winning journalist and the author of five books. Her last book, *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, was a widely praised New York Times bestseller. In the last several years, she has covered an array of subjects, from American politics to the Arab Spring. She has written for numerous publications including *Rolling Stone*, *Businessweek*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *New York* and *The New York Times*. She has lectured around the U.S. and in Italy, France and Mexico, and has appeared on Good Morning America,

Nightline, The Today Show, 48 Hours, MSNBC, CNN and C-Span, on NPR and numerous radio programs.

Nina was born and educated in the Midwest, has traveled extensively in the Middle East and lived in Italy and France. She covered the Clinton White House for *Time* and reported and wrote human interest stories at *People Magazine* from New York.

She is an adjunct professor at Columbia Graduate School of Journalism and has lectured around the United States, in Italy, and in Mexico. Her book, *Mirage*, published in 2008 by Harper Collins, was selected by *The New York Times* as an editors' choice and won the Society of Women Educators' Award in 2008.

Early life

Her father is author Robert Burleigh, and was a University of Chicago professor. Burleigh's family moved to the Haight-Ashbury area of San Francisco when she was seven. After a few months in San Francisco, they moved to Baghdad to live with Burleigh's maternal grandmother. Six months later the family moved to an Amish area of Michigan. They always celebrated Christmas with Santa and a tree, Burleigh stated that her family had "rejected institutional religion" by the time she grew up in the 1970s. "No baptism, no family Bible recording the births, deaths and marriages. My grandfather actively despised churches."

Her first publication was for the Gail Borden Library in Elgin, Illinois, when she was in sixth grade.

Career

As of January 2015 she is the National Politics Correspondent for Newsweek. "In college I thought I might go into fiction writing, but a professor of mine... suggested I could get paid as a journalism intern at the Illinois Statehouse, through a program called the Public Affairs Reporting Program. I got an internship at the Associated Press, and learned a lot about government and writing journalism there". Burleigh covered the White House and Congress for People and Time in the 1990s.

She was a staff writer at People magazine in New York, covering human interest stories nationally in the 2000s (decade). She is an adjunct professor of journalism at Columbia University, wrote "The Bombshell" column for the New York Observer, and was a contributing editor to Elle. She is an occasional blogger at The Huffington Post. She has contributed to numerous magazines and newspapers, including Time magazine, The New York Times, The New Yorker, and The Washington Post, as well as many websites such as Slate.com, TomPaine.com, AlterNet, Powell's and Salon.com.

Controversy

In a 1998 essay for Mirabella, Burleigh described an occasion aboard Air Force One when she noticed President Bill Clinton apparently looking at her legs, the piece led to her being described as "the Ally McBeal of former White House reporters" by columnist Ellen Goodman. Approached by a Washington Post media reporter to discuss the Mirabella article, Burleigh made on-the-record-remarks commending Clinton's policy on abortion rights that were widely considered the most sexually explicit ever made by a premier

journalist. Referring to the comment in a 2007 piece for The Huffington Post, Burleigh wrote, “I said it (back in 1998, but a good quote has eternal life) because I thought it was high time for someone to tweak the white, middle-aged beltway gang taking Clinton to task for sexual harassment. These men had neither the personal experience nor the credentials to know sexual harassment when they saw it, nor to give a good goddamn about it if they did. The insidious use of sexual harassment laws to bring down a president for his pro-female politics was the context in which I spoke.”

Women’s issues

Burleigh has written extensively on feminism, issues of human trafficking, domestic violence, and double standards for violence against women, American women and power and politics. She coined the term “Baby Palins” to refer to the young right wing women who decry feminism while benefiting from its gains. She has written that “misogyny is the last allowable taboo in our PC world”. She has also written on women and health care and reproductive law as well as the issues and complications of adoption.

Middle East

Burleigh has written about her visits to Iraq, her mother’s country of birth, both as a child and later in life as a journalist. She worked in the Middle East for many years, including covering the politics of the Israeli settlements for Time Magazine, the emerging effect of Islamists on women in the wake of the Arab Spring for Slate and Time, and the politics and science of Biblical archaeology in Israel for her book *Unholy Business* and for the Los Angeles Times.

Biblical archaeology

Burleigh spent several years working on a book about Biblical archaeology and forgery in Israel. The Wall Street Journal said, “Burleigh uses the story of the James Ossuary to trace the eccentric and sometimes dodgy characters who buy, trade and deal in antiquities. But it is also a springboard for her larger meditation on the field of biblical archaeology. In the 19th century, when the discipline emerged, practitioners saw themselves as both religious pilgrims and serious scholars, perceiving no potential for conflict in their desire to prove the historicity of the Bible. It has only been in recent decades that biblical archaeology truly widened its scope and began to focus not only on the Bible but on the larger world in which biblical events unfolded.”

She has written and lectured on the subject of Biblical archaeology both in her book and elsewhere, speaking on the topic at the Center for Inquiry, in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and New York, as well as at the Oriental Institute in Chicago and at Duke University's Seminar on Biblical archaeology and the media.

Amanda Knox case and Italy

In June 2009 Burleigh and her family moved to the Italian city of Perugia, where Knox was being tried on a murder charge, to write a book. Burleigh initially intended the story to be an exploration of young women's experiences and media portrayal in the modern world. Within a month Burleigh concluded that much of what was commonly believed about Knox was without foundation, and began to question whether she was in any way involved in the killing. The book strongly advocated the case for the by-then-convicted Knox's innocence, and became a NYT bestseller. Burleigh said she was in some ways uncomfortable with the degree of media concentration on the case, as there were miscarriages of justice affecting all communities.

Burleigh has written extensively about many other aspects of travel and life in Italy, including Chinese immigration, mafia slave labor, gelato school, expatriates and the Gothic.

Personal life

In 1999 she married Erik Freeland, a freelance photojournalist. They and their two children live in New York City. When her son was a toddler, Burleigh thought it might be a good idea to expose her child to church. She picked out the most picturesque one she could find in her town and visited. She discovered that the inside was very beautiful with stained glass windows, but the programs she picked up changed her mind, they were "urging parishioners to contact their lawmakers about fetal rights, gay marriage and other favorite fundamentalist issues. The hair on the back of my neck stood up. I gathered up the toddler, who was fascinated by the place and didn't want to leave, and scurried back into daylight."