

Curriculum Vitae : Afua Hirsch

afuahirsch@hotmail.com

+44 (0)7977278363

Date of birth 12.06.81

Professor

Wallis Annenberg Chair of Journalism, Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California 2018 to 2020

Author

Equal to Everything (Legal Action Group, 2019), Children's book exploring themes of social justice, feminism and race equality in the judiciary.

Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging (Vintage, 2018). Winner of *Royal Society of Literature Jerwood Prize* for first work of non-fiction, 2016 - a prize awarded to a first-time author of non-fiction whose work has been commissioned but not yet published. A Sunday Times bestseller.

Contributing Author

Pretty Bitches, (Seal, 2020), collaboration with NYT writer Lizzie Skurnick on the weaponisation of words used against women in public discourse

Goodbye Europe: Writers and Artists Say Farewell (contributor) (Orion, 2017)

Can We All Be Feminists?: Sixteen women on Intersectionality, Identity, and Finding the Right Way Forward for Feminism (contributor) (Little, Brown 2018 - forthcoming)

Education and Awards

BA (Hons), Politics, Philosophy and Economics; Oxford University, 1999 – June 2002. Domus scholar.

Bar Vocational Course (BVC), Inns of Court School of Law, 2005-6, Called to the Bar of England and Wales October 2006. Lincoln's Inn Denning scholar.

Broadcast Journalism:

Epix / BBC

Co-host with Samuel L Jackson of six part series on the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, transmission date August 2020

BBC

Host of landmark three part series on African Art "African Renaissance", transmission date August 2020

2008 to present - regular guest on *BBC News*, *Question Time* and *The Today Programme*

2018 - Presenter of forthcoming landmark four part series on International Justice, *BBC World Service*

2008 to present - Regular contributor to BBC Radio 4 programmes: *The Today Programme*, *Women's Hour*, *The World Tonight*, *The Moral Maze* and *Archive on 4*

Channel 4

Co-Executive Producer of series of shorts following death of George Floyd, "Take Your Knee Off My Neck"

Host of documentary about statues and narratives of history - *The Battle for Britain's Heroes*, 2018 and June 2020

Sky News

2016 to 2020 - Regular host on weekly flagship current affairs debate show *The Pledge*

2015 to 2016 - News anchor

2014 to 2016 - Social Affairs Editor - senior reporter and investigative journalist, primarily covering inequality, social welfare, immigration, trafficking, child protection, radicalisation, race and gender discrimination.

Ground-breaking coverage of the impact of gender reassignment treatment on children received an award from the Royal Television Society.

Print Journalism

Columnist and Feature Writer

2017 to present - Freelance contributor to *Vogue*, *Time*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Telegraph*, *the Evening Standard Magazine*, *The Observer*, *National Geographic*, *Prospect*, *Vogue*, *The Royal Academy magazine*.

The Guardian

2017 to present - Columnist and Feature Writer

Columns on issues of race, identity, equality, social justice, politics, human rights and the constitution.

2011 to 2014 - West Africa Correspondent.

Established first Guardian bureau in West Africa and led exclusive coverage of the war in Mali, the death penalty, abuse of girls in education, and corrupt resource deals in Liberia and Guinea. Documentary on illegal Chinese gold mining in Ghana ("The Price of Gold: Chinese mining in Ghana" (23.04.13) - the first to reveal the true scale of the practice - has been credited as triggering the expulsion just weeks later of 12,000 illegal Chinese gold miners from the country and helping make the issue a political priority for successive governments. It has so far had more than 2 million *YouTube* views.

Reports include:

"Mali's army suspected of abuses and unlawful killings as war rages," 19.01.13

"Mali conflict: France has opened gates of hell," 14.01.13

"Nairobi mall siege continues as tributes pour in for victims," 24.09.13

"Nigeria braces for escalation in terrorist attacks, 25.09.12

"The tycoon, the dictator's wife and the \$2.5bn," 30.07.13

2008 to 2014 - Legal Affairs Correspondent

Exclusive stories as a senior specialist correspondent included the growth of secrecy in the courts, the victimisation of rape complainants, the legality of the war in Iraq, the human rights implications of counter-terrorism measures, miscarriages of Justice and the future of human rights legislation. Established and managed innovative Guardian Law website.

Reports include:

"Government plans to keep DNA samples of innocent", 27.02.09

"Brown's adviser: Labour's rights record dismal", 11.12.08

"Papers prove Trafigura ship dumped toxic waste in Ivory Coast", 14.05.09.

The Voice Newspaper

1995 to 2001

Wrote weekly feature length articles for Britain's oldest, national black newspaper from issues affecting Black youths in Britain, such as drug abuse and school exclusion, to interviews with prominent international recording artists.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sample of Guest Lectures and Keynote Speeches

June 2020 - Keynote speaker for Facebook Juneteenth commemoration, "Why Diversity is Not Enough"

April 2020 - Christopher Hitchens keynote lecture, Hay Festival, "The Future of Journalism"

October 2019 - Google Black History Month, keynote speaker

October 2017 - BBC Annual Nelson Mandel Lecture 2017, "Vision, Action and political change"

March 2017 - The Changing Media Summit, "Gender discrimination and bias in the British Media"

June 2017 - University of Liberia, Monrovia, "African and Diasporan Identities"

May 2017 - Royal Academy, "On Art and the national crisis of Identity"

April 2017 - Private Equality in Africa, "Investment and the Role of Narrative"

April 2017 - The Convention on Brexit, "Brexit and the Political Crash"

June 2016 - University of Oxford, "Brexit Seminar"

August 2015 - World Bank conference in Cape Town, "Africa: The Role of Law"

May 2013 - Oslo Freedom Forum, "Women in Al Qaeda occupied Mali"

Teaching

2007 to 2009 - BPP Law School, UK

Taught weekly classes on human rights and constitutional law to around 150 graduate students

Lawyer

2006 to 2008 - Doughty Street Chambers

Barrister at a leading Human Rights Chambers in London, defending criminal cases and representing vulnerable claimants in judicial reviews of public decision-making. Advised on international criminal trials in Sierra Leone and The Hague.

Contributor to Geoffrey Robertson's 'Media Law' (5th ed. 2007).

2004 - Cabinet Mitchell-Heggs, Paris, France

Legal assistant to British lawyer based in Paris, assisted at international and national tribunal hearings, particularly relating to cases involving Eastern and Southern African countries, part of team acting for the Government of Zanzibar and EU Commission, the claimants in an ICC international arbitration against a construction firm, at proceedings in Paris and in Zanzibar.

Edited the English language version of "French Business Law", by Mitchell-Heggs, 2004

International Development

2006 to 2012 - Advocates for International Development ("A4ID")

Trained 50 senior journalists and editors in West Africa on how to report the Charles Taylor trial, covering the sensitive nature of legal proceedings as well as media practices and ethics; designed the project, managed its implementation and obtained funding whilst a practising barrister in London.

2002 – 2004, Open Society Initiative for West Africa' (OSIWA), Dakar, Senegal

Special Projects Coordinator at Dakar-based Open Society Foundation covering 18 West African countries. Developed and managed around 100 projects in Chad, Mauritania, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana and Mali, focusing on corruption and human rights abuses in oil and natural resource exploitation, strengthening press freedom, criminal justice reform and the rights of women in Islamic societies.

2001, International League for Human Rights, UN Headquarters, New York

Internship at NGO with permanent advisory status at the United Nations. Contributed to negotiations in UN conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. Wrote funding proposals for projects in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Conducted research for establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Committee and Special Court as part of peace process in Sierra Leone.

References

- Alan Rusbridger, former Editor-in-Chief, the *Guardian*, acrusbridger@gmail.com
- Hugh Levinson, head of Current Affairs, *BBC* hugh.levison@bbc.co.uk