

Across the Soviet Union, as you may know, faxes were sent, telephone calls to Western journalists, and to radio and television news programmes were made, home video was shot and sent to Western television networks. The dramatic footage of the demonstrators in front of the Russian Parliament building at night, throwing Molotov cocktails at tanks was shot by an amateur photographer and sent by courier to our bureau. He came in, he was extremely nervous and he asked our bureau chief if we would be interested in showing this footage. We allowed as how we were very interested. I was told that CNN was a great magnet during those days following the coup and I asked if it was because we were such daring and forthright journalists and I was told no, it was because we had free food.

Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin told our people that they were grateful for the CNN service during the coup and the times of uncertainty that followed. And when they agreed to be interviewed by us as the story was unfolding, we learned the decision was based in part on our ability to set up and produce the programmes quickly. We also know that Gorbachev was most anxious to have the interview broadcast in the Soviet Union, thus we asked that he consider having a Soviet journalist join us. That seemed to be the single element that did the trick for us in what, as I'm sure you know, is a very competitive situation, with the networks of the world over there and the newspapers and wire services trying to get him.

As has been mentioned, the title for this talk given to me by our big thinking host was "The Power and the Glory." Let me assure you that fame is fleeting and even after the most cataclysmic of events someone still has to make the lunch and so that is what we are doing here tonight, and sometimes I think after listening to this panel today, it was feeding on its own.

If you would like to know what it's like, to be in a global television news operation during the middle of a crisis, to illustrate: we were getting many, many crank phone calls. At the height of the looniness, our foreign editor took a call from a person identifying himself as Moammar Gadhafi who wanted to be interviewed. And the foreign editor did as I would have done, "Yeah, sure" and hung up. So after the fourth phone call, sure enough it was Moammar Gadhafi. Like any good journalist we put him on and no, he