

# COSMOPOLITAN

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WHAT'S  
THE  
CRAZIEST  
THING YOU'VE  
DONE FOR  
LOVE?

## ACTING EDITOR

**Brooke Sever**

*Sat through many, many (many) football matches. In team colours.*

## FASHION AND BEAUTY DIRECTOR Chee Smith

*Joined a gym to keep up with my fitness-freak husband.*

## ART DIRECTOR Donna Williams

*Attempted to watch a horror movie - I hate anything scary!*

## GROUP PICTURE EDITOR Emma Verlander

*I've done lots of stupid things for what I thought was love!*

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## GET HER LOOK

ON THE COVER: Jacket, skirt, Moschino. Top, Moschino Cheap and Chic. Bracelet, Shaun Leane. Rings (on left hand), Dionea Orcini Fine Jewelry; (on right hand) Delfina Delettrez. Photographed by Matthias Vriendt-Mcgrath. Hair by Chris McMillan for Living Proof at Solo Artists. Make-Up by Kathy Jeung at The Magnet Agency using Rimmel London. Nails by Kimmie Kyees using Red Carpet Manicure for Celestine Agency. Prop Stylist: Abraham Latham for ArtMix Beauty. Producer: Mary Jean Ribas for First Shot Productions. Fashion Director: Aya Kanai



Bracelet  
Dhs75,  
Accessorize

Dress  
Dhs640,  
bebe

YSL  
Rouge Pur  
Couture  
The Mats  
in No.209,  
Dhs186

Ring  
Dhs45,  
New Look

Rimmel  
Wonder Full  
Mascara,  
Dhs49

Jacket  
Dhs495,  
Topshop

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# Fun, Fearless - AND ON THE FRONT- LINE

At 22 she willingly went to work in a warzone. Here, Rosie Garthwaite shares her story of survival



First impressions can be deceiving, but that probably works in Rosie Garthwaite's favour. You'd never guess this humble, laid-back and natural beauty is also a tough-as-nails war reporter, former soldier, author and documentary filmmaker.

At 34, Rosie has already risked her life on numerous occasions in her career and has lived to tell the tale – literally. She's the author of *How To Avoid Being Killed in a War Zone*, a survival guide she penned after reporting in Iraq for the Baghdad Bulletin, Reuters and Al Jazeera English. Now she heads her own award-winning production company, Mediadante, in Doha, Qatar.

Rosie's success can be attributed to the usual suspects: hard work, smarts and grit. But perhaps her best attribute is she's never been afraid to show she can hold her own in tough situations.

Born and raised in London, Rosie says she first got the chance to at 18 when she enlisted

in the British army for her gap year before university. She joined a one-year course in which recruits can become special commission officers immediately if they score well on the entry exam.

"It normally takes a year, but I became an officer in three weeks. I had 45-year-olds saluting to me after I had barely learned how to tie my shoe laces," she says.

Rosie was put in charge of a troop of 30 men, who treated her well, she says. But the older officers were not impressed. "Quite rightly they didn't respect me. I knew zero about life and the military," she says. To put her in her place, they named Rosie the Regimental Porn Officer. "Every Saturday I was put in charge of taking a trunk full of dirty pictures and archiving them!"

She finally won them over during Operation Lung Buster, a surprise military exercise in which troops run a marathon and complete rescue tasks, all the while carrying

35 kilos on their backs. Her troop won.

"I was the only girl to finish. After that, everyone began to respect me," she explains.

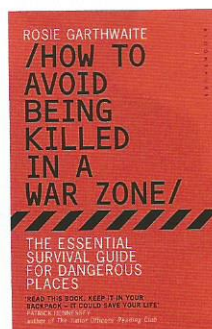
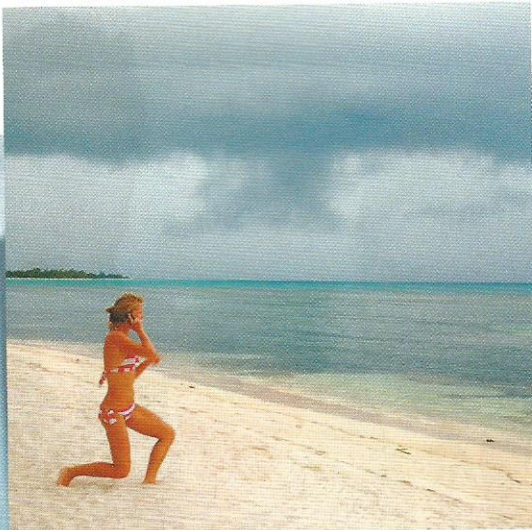
## Adventure Abroad

After her gap year, Rosie focused on Ancient and Modern History at Oxford. She spent summer months travelling the world trying to freelance for magazines and newspapers. But her army experience stayed with her. In fact, she credits it for driving her "to become a journalist for real."

"Watching the Iraq War as I was doing my finals, I was incredibly frustrated because I knew from my army friends that [Britain] had already been inside Baghdad months before the war was declared," she says. "So I knew watching the news unfold that the whole thing was a lie, and I was incredibly upset with the way the media worked on the subject."

So at 22, a week after she received her





**Clockwise from left**  
Rosie, during her down-time in Doha; mixing work and fun; her book, which she wrote to impart the knowledge she picked up while on assignment; and on location.



**“SOME PEOPLE CAME TO KIDNAP ME, BUT THEY KIDNAPPED MY HOUSEBOY INSTEAD.”**

exam results, Rosie flew to Iraq to report for *The Baghdad Bulletin*. The paper had few resources, and it dissolved within a few months due to security issues. But Rosie, who was by then the Basra correspondent in southern Iraq, stayed on to freelance for Reuters, the BBC and *The Times*.

She then broke the story of the death of Iraqi civilian Baha Musa, who had been tortured by the British army.

“I saw his body - there were 91 injuries across his body, with his skin peeled back, and I met all the other people who were tortured at same time,” she says.

Rosie eventually left Iraq after getting wind she was being traced.

“The last time I got into a taxi I said, ‘I want to go...’ and the driver cut me off and said, ‘It’s okay, we all know where you live.’ Shortly after that I fled. After I left, some people came around to kidnap me, but they kidnapped my houseboy instead and took all the money I gave him.”

## Tough Lessons

Back in London, Rosie went on to work for BBC Current Affairs on programmes like *Panorama*. She then joined Al Jazeera English as a producer in Doha, helping to start the channel’s Baghdad bureau as well. But it was those early months freelancing in Basra that inspired her to write her book.

“I didn’t know anything when I went into Iraq, but I knew a little bit more when I left. And that little bit more is enough to maybe make it a bit safer for me. But what happens if I could find a way to give that little bit of knowledge and maybe expand on it to other people? I mean, I almost got us killed so many times when I first got to Iraq just making huge blunders.”

One big lesson she learned: avoid riots. Once, when she was travelling for an interview, she came across a crossroads surrounded by people burning tires.

“My driver, who was the head of a family of eight, said he had a bad feeling. But I

insisted the interview was important. So he pulled up 20 metres before a crossroad, and he turned to a guy and to ask if it was safe to go. And the guy, with crazed eyes, comes over to us and he sees me. And he puts his hand on the door, with two grenades in his hand, and yells, “English!”

Luckily, they escaped. But in hindsight, Rosie says she realises she made a bad call that day.

“Of course, it was so not important. Why should you risk people’s lives, especially the breadwinner of a family of eight people! But I was young, an idiot...”

## A New Normal

Running her production company in Doha, Rosie isn’t reporting on the front lines anymore. But she values her experience and questions why more women don’t follow that path.

“One thing I discovered through writing my book is that there are almost no women with children who are reporting in war zones. But there are loads of men with children who go to war zones. I don’t know if it’s a character thing - that mothers rightly don’t want to take those risks when they have kids at home - or what you have to give up to reach that level, but it’s sad because that’s not fair for the women. There should be something that allows them to do both, and obviously there is something holding them back.”

She is putting the skills she learned in the army and in Basra to good use. That includes her ability to maneuver traditionally patriarchal societies.

“All the top journalists in the Mideast women are women, because they have the extra access to that important 50 per cent of the population,” she says. “Still, the Middle East is a male-dominated world in general, and you have to be able to navigate that.”

Her goal with her company Mediadante is to work to enlighten the West about the region.

“There are two storylines the Western world is interested in about the Middle East - is it about oppression or is it about destruction? The everyday life of people is very rare to find in storytelling about this region,” she says. “My being based here is to try to understand better and have the access a bit better, and then give that understanding to the rest of the world.” ■