

3rd Degree: a decade of 'blood-on-the-floor' journalism

3rd Degree, e.tv's cutting-edge and fearless investigative programme, today, Tuesday, 11 May 2010, is celebrating its 10th anniversary by taking a look at the route travelled since inception and considering the way forward. Speaking this morning at the Sandton Sun Hotel in Johannesburg, 3rd Degree presenter Debora Patta urged journalists not to be afraid to ask the right questions and practice journalism with full responsibility.

 Bylssa Sikiti da Silva 11 May 2010



“It was not only about telling the story. We also wanted to give ordinary citizens a voice, people who because of the injustice suffered, have become voiceless and powerless,” Patta told well-wishers.

Change the world

Patta, who said she became a journalist to change the world, added: “But many years down the line, I realised later that I won't achieve that objective, so I said I am going to change some little but important things in our society. The image that we broadcast and the things we reveal helped empower people and force leaders to do ways differently.”

3rd Degree, which is now watched in 12 countries around the world, started at a slow pace with a modest budget and little experience, e.tv CEO Marcel Golding revealed today. Golding hailed Patta for her courage and perseverance, saying she epitomises the true values of his company.

But, 3rd Degree's decade of glory and success has not been without controversy and pain as its presenter had to endure abuse and 'unfair' criticism at the hands of, among others, politicians, some ordinary citizens and corporate leaders.

In just once instance, Patta put ANC Youth League president Julius Malema on the hot spot, and as the interview got tense, she called Malema ignorant. Malema told Patta during the interview: “You white people look down upon our culture, so you are not qualified to talk about my culture because you know nothing about it.”

“Learn how to walk away”

Asked whether she has ever been physically threatened or afraid that something might happen to her, Patta told Bizcommunity.com: “Not really but you have to learn how to walk away from that kind of situation.”

Producing a programme of such a journalistic magnitude surely has its challenges, and Patta said: “The main challenge is to come up with fresh ideas. But sometimes you also have to tap into the culture of South Africa and see what issues various people are facing. But we will keep carry on doing what we are doing. There is

no reinventing journalism, journalism is journalism.”

Former e.tv journalist Nkepile Mabuse, now plying her trade at US network CNN, also hailed Patta for teaching her work ethics, which she said she is still applying in her career.

Describing 3rd Degree as a ‘movement’ that played a significant role in her life and taught her to practice classic and cutting-point journalism, Mabuse said: “This programme has given people some sort of platform to seek justice and we need to appreciate e.tv and appreciate what Patta is doing for South Africa.”

Would not have existed

But, in a continent challenged by lack of freedom of expression, media predators and where outspoken journalists fear for their lives on a daily basis, some believe 3rd Degree would not have existed if South Africa did not have a proper freedom of the press guaranteed in the Constitution.

Patta said: “We are doing this because we have a true democracy. Otherwise we could have been thrown jail if we were doing it somewhere else or during the apartheid era.”

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.
View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>