



## **Soledad O'Brien**

*Acclaimed Special Investigations Correspondent  
and Host of CNN's "In America" Documentaries*

**Soledad O'Brien** is an anchor and special correspondent for *CNN: Special Investigations Unit*, reporting hour-long documentaries throughout the year and filing in-depth series on the most important ongoing and breaking news stories for all major CNN programs. She also covers political news as part of CNN's "Best Political Team on Television."

Most recently, Soledad has reported for the critically acclaimed *CNN Presents: Black in America*, a sweeping CNN on-air and digital initiative breaking new ground in revealing the current state of Black America 40 years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The landmark programming features six hours of documentaries and weekly reports with a focus on fresh analysis from new voices about the real lives behind the stereotypes, statistics and identity politics that frequently frame the national dialogue about Black America.

Soledad joined CNN in July 2003 as the co-anchor of the network's flagship morning program, *American Morning*, and distinguished herself by reporting from the scene on the transformational stories that broke on her watch. Her efforts following Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in Phuket, Thailand, have earned her numerous awards and critical acclaim.

Soledad served as CNN's point person for President George W. Bush's visit to Mexico, delivering a series of eye-opening reports on conditions south of the border that fuel illegal immigration to the United States. She also anchored and reported a highly acclaimed *CNN: Special Investigations Unit* documentary featuring a never-before-seen look at King's private writings, notes and teachings, which represent the foundation of his life's work as a preacher and human rights activist. Her initiative, "Children of the Storm," provided video cameras to young Katrina survivors so they could tell their stories of trial and triumph in their own words and images.

For CNN's Katrina coverage, Soledad's daily reports about the impact of Hurricane Katrina included an in-depth interview with former FEMA chief Michael Brown. She also covered the London terrorism attacks in July 2005, and in December 2004, she was among a handful of CNN anchors sent to Phuket, Thailand, to cover the disaster and aftermath of the tsunami that

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**MONDAY, August 9, 8:30 a.m.**  
**Keynote**



took more than 155,000 lives. She reported from Columbus, Ohio, on the late count of Ohio's contested electoral votes in November 2004. Earlier that fall, she anchored the live coverage of the burial of Yasser Arafat. In the fall of 2003, Soledad was the only broadcast journalist permitted to travel with first lady Laura Bush on her trip to Moscow.

Soledad came to CNN from NBC News where she had anchored the network's *Weekend Today* since July 1999. During that time, she contributed reports for the weekday *Today Show* and weekend editions of *NBC Nightly News* and covered such notable stories as John F. Kennedy Jr.'s plane crash and the school shootings in Colorado and Oregon. In 2003, she covered the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster and later anchored NBC's weekend coverage of the war in Iraq. Additionally, in 1998, she traveled to Cuba to cover Pope John Paul II's historic visit.

Before *Weekend Today*, Soledad anchored MSNBC's award-winning technology program *The Site* and the cable network's weekend morning show. Soledad joined NBC News in 1991 and was based in New York as a field producer for *Nightly News* and *Today*.

Before her time at NBC, she served three years as a local reporter and bureau chief for the NBC affiliate KRON in San Francisco. She began her career as an associate producer and news writer at the then-NBC affiliate, WBZ-TV in Boston.

In 2007, Soledad garnered a Gracie Allen Award for her reporting from Cyprus on the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict as well as her reports from the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. Also this year, the NAACP honored her with its President's Award in recognition of her humanitarian efforts and journalistic excellence, and she was also the recipient of the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay's 2007 Clara Barton Humanitarian Award. In April of this year, she received the first annual "Soledad O'Brien Freedom's Voice Award" created in her honor by Community Voices at the Morehouse School of Medicine. The award, honoring mid-career professionals who serve as catalysts for social change within their fields, will be bestowed upon her for her accomplishments in her field together with her commitment to cover stories that others fail to pursue, and her willingness to be a voice for those in society who are unable to speak for themselves.

Soledad was part of the coverage teams that earned CNN a George Foster Peabody award for its Katrina coverage and an Alfred I. duPont Award for its coverage of the tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia. In 2006, the National Urban League awarded her its Women of Power award. She also won a local Emmy for her work as a co-host on Discovery Channel's *The Know Zone*. She has been named to *PEOPLE* magazine's "50 Most Beautiful" in 2001 and *PEOPLE en Espanol's* 50 most beautiful in 2004. O'Brien was also included in *Crain's Business Reports' "40 under 40"*, *Essence* magazine's "40 under 40" and *Black Enterprise* "40 Under 40." Soledad has been named several times to *Irish American Magazine's* "Top 100 Irish Americans." Soledad earned the Mickey Leland Humanitarian Award from the National Association of Minorities in Cable in 2006 and has received honorary degrees from Siena College and Mercy College.

She is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

O'Brien is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in English and American literature.