



Max Lugavere (left) and Jason Silva

## THE NEW GONZO JOURNALISTS

*UM grads Max Lugavere and Jason Silva are Current TV's dreamy—and dynamic—duo.*

*By Humberto Guida*

**G**ive a couple of hip, young dudes who spent their formative years rollicking through South Beach the reins to their own television show, and you'd think the result would be high-octane riffraff. But while “party philosophers” Max Lugavere, 27, and Jason Silva, 28, the hosts and producers of Current TV's *Max and Jason: Still Up*, gladly navigate the nooks and crannies of male fantasies and superficial experiences, the duo also explores serious issues from all corners of a fast-moving world.

“Journalism is not dying, as some believe,” Silva explains. “It is merely changing, transforming into something more accessible and organic, fashioned by the same dynamic forces shaping the Internet. We reflect the kind of person who is at the helm of the new media—a young person with something to say, who wants to empower themselves and inspire others.”

“Technology has begun to remove the gatekeepers of media and change how information is disseminated,” adds Lugavere. “At Current TV, we're about getting young people engaged in the media, democratizing television, redefining journalism. There are now

more perspectives than ever before on issues from around the world, and less of a filter.”

Their nightly show typically contains a series of podcasts, with topics ranging from plastic surgery to how technology is affecting culture. The hosts wax philosophical from a studio in Los Angeles while interacting with the network's virtual community.

Lugavere and Silva have been with Current TV since its launch in 2005. They were hired based on a short documentary they submitted after hearing a network rep speak at the University of Miami, where both were film

students. *Textures of Selfhood*, a foray into their lives as South Beach party people, was quickly hailed by Current TV's then head of programming, David Neuman, as “the *Citizen Kane* of all submissions.” Taking footage of their nightly misadventures on South Beach and weaving throughout their thoughts and feelings about the nature of these often depraved “fleeting moments,” the project was as much about their environment as it was an introspective peek into their insatiable personal lives.

The best-friend dynamic between Lugavere and Silva allows them to be fluid and natural in front of the camera despite their lack of any formal training in broadcast journalism. Even their looks are complementary: Lugavere, a hipster born and raised in Manhattan and disdainful of anything that reflects “frat boy” behavior, could have popped out of an A&F ad, while Silva, born in Venezuela and genuinely excited about everything, could pass for Antonio Banderas' little brother.

So what's next for the new faces of new media? Lugavere puts it simply: “Staying true to our gonzo-journalist roots.” **OD**

CURRENT TV, a fast-growing cable television network available to more than 50 million viewers, was founded by former Vice President Al Gore and prides itself on being at the forefront of new media. While television outlets continue to scramble

for content that makes sense in today's niche-filled media market, the kind of programming that Current TV features offers a unique submersion into the

topics and worlds covered on the network's podcasts, many of which are produced by viewers. Last year, the channel also received a moment of inter-

national sensation when two Current TV journalists, Euna Lee and Laura Ling, were detained for

five months in North Korea for crossing over into that country. A special diplomatic mission by Bill Clinton ensured their release in August 2009.

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