

JEAN H. LEE BIO

Jean H. Lee is an award-winning writer, commentator and expert on North Korea who is now co-host of the Peabody-nominated The Lazarus Heist podcast for the BBC World Service.

As a journalist, Lee led the Associated Press news agency's coverage of the Korean Peninsula as bureau chief from 2008 to 2013. In 2011, she became the first American reporter to join the Pyongyang foreign press corps, and in January 2012, she opened AP's Pyongyang bureau. From 2008 to 2017, Lee made dozens of extended reporting trips to North Korea, visiting farms, factories, schools, military academies and homes in the course of her exclusive coverage across the country.

During Lee's tenure, AP's coverage of Kim Jong Il's 2011 death earned an honorable mention in the deadline reporting category of the 2012 Associated Press Media Editors awards for journalism in the United States and Canada. Lee also won an Online Journalism Award in 2013 for her role in using photography, video and social media in North Korea.

Lee is a native of Minneapolis. She has a bachelor's degree in East Asian Studies and English literature from Columbia University, and a master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

She worked as a reporter for the Korea Herald in Seoul, South Korea, before being posted with AP to the news agency's bureaus in Baltimore; Fresno, Calif.; San Francisco; New York; London; Seoul, South Korea, and Pyongyang, North Korea. Reporting assignments took her across Europe, North America and Asia.

In 2015, Lee joined the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC, as a fellow, then served from 2018 to 2021 as director of the Hyundai Motor-Korea Foundation Center for Korean History and Public Policy, and then as a senior fellow until June 2023. She is a member of the Council of Korean Americans, the National Committee on North Korea and the Pacific Council on International Policy, as well as a non-resident fellow at the European Centre for North Korean Studies at the University of Vienna. She served as a lecturer in North Korean media studies courses at Yonsei University and Korea University in Seoul.

Lee has served as a CNN contributor and has provided reporting and commentary to a wide range of media outlets, including the New York Times, NPR, PRI, BBC, NBC News and PBS Newshour and others. She also appears in the National Geographic series "Inside North Korea" as well as PBS' "Dictator's Playbook" and Netflix's "How to Become a Tyrant," among other TV appearances.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Council of Korean Americans

National Committee on North Korea

Asian American Journalists Association

Pacific Council on International Policy