

**TELL HIM THAT I HEARD.**  
By Patricia Hangen. Harper & Row; 267 pp.; \$7.95.

Reviewed by  
*Patricia Holt*

## A Rare Glimpse Behind a TV-News Correspondent's Life

**WELLES** Hangen was the distinguished NBC correspondent who walked into an ambush in Cambodia seven years ago and was never seen again. It is known from an eyewitness that although two other newsmen were killed instantly, Welles was not. He was escorted out of the area and held as a hostage somewhere in the jungle. Months later, cryptic messages began to float into the hands of his wife, Pat, who from their home in Hong Kong was desperately trying to reach him:

"The newsmen will not be released until Phnom Penh falls," read one. And then, nothing. At times she was reduced to sending Welles' dental charts into Cambodia for a match-up with the teeth of otherwise decomposed bodies of Americans discovered near the ambush site. No identification was ever made.

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Pat met or corresponded with Henry Kissinger, Walter Cronkite, Edgar Snow, Edwin Newman, Barbara Walters and many others, all of whom, once inside the top-secret confines of Vietnam, Cambodia, and even Peking, tried to find word of Welles and other Americans. (All but one helped her: President Nixon responded to her impassioned plea with a form letter.) A Stanford graduate and former reporter who later became a writer for the Ladies Home Journal and press officer for the U.S. Embassy in Athens, she eventually left Hong Kong to return to the Bay Area with her children to seek new inroads into the hopelessly tangled information network that is now Southeast Asia. Nothing worked.

One expects a certain amount of bitterness from Pat's book, but there is not a bit of it in "Tell Him That I Heard." This poignant story is

rather her last testimony to a tragically brief marriage with a journalist who was gifted, adventurous, excitable, moody, passionate, and gentle all at

once. It is as if she knew intuitively, as long ago as 1958 when they were married, that the lot of a newsmen can be as hazardous, tunnel-visioned, ex-

haustive, frustrating, and lonely as it is challenging and at times historic.

So we see Welles and Pat dodging bullets as they dart across battle-torn Beirut, or taxing into an explosive cross-fire where a young boy, suddenly orphaned, is thrown onto Pat's lap with a plea from a soldier that she take the boy to whatever relatives he has left.

So Pat Hangen has provided a rare and much welcomed glimpse behind the cameras of the working TV-news correspondent's life. While she may be overly romantic and politically naive at times, she is also skilled at showing the dramatic and often hilarious ways newsmen tumble all over themselves to get their story—sometimes (as in her case) at all costs.

Perhaps this kind of journalism is one of the last frontiers of human resourcefulness, but ironically we don't really know what true resourcefulness means until Welles' disappearance, when Pat Hangen quietly pulls her children and her life back together and moves on.



PATRICIA AND WELLES HANGEN