

Where are they now?

We all know – or keep in touch with – **colleagues who have left the Department** for pastures new. **Feedback** caught up with **two ex-colleagues** who have turned their passion into their bread and butter.

Simon Lancaster



Simon Lancaster was chief speechwriter at the Department between 2006 and 2007.

He spent most of his career working in Private Office. Becoming Patricia Hewitt's speechwriter in 2001, before going on to write speeches for Alan Johnson. "I loved working in education," he says: "It's an inspiring Department filled with passionate people – and an infectious sense of mission. Education affects everyone deeply, so it's hard not to care about what you're doing."

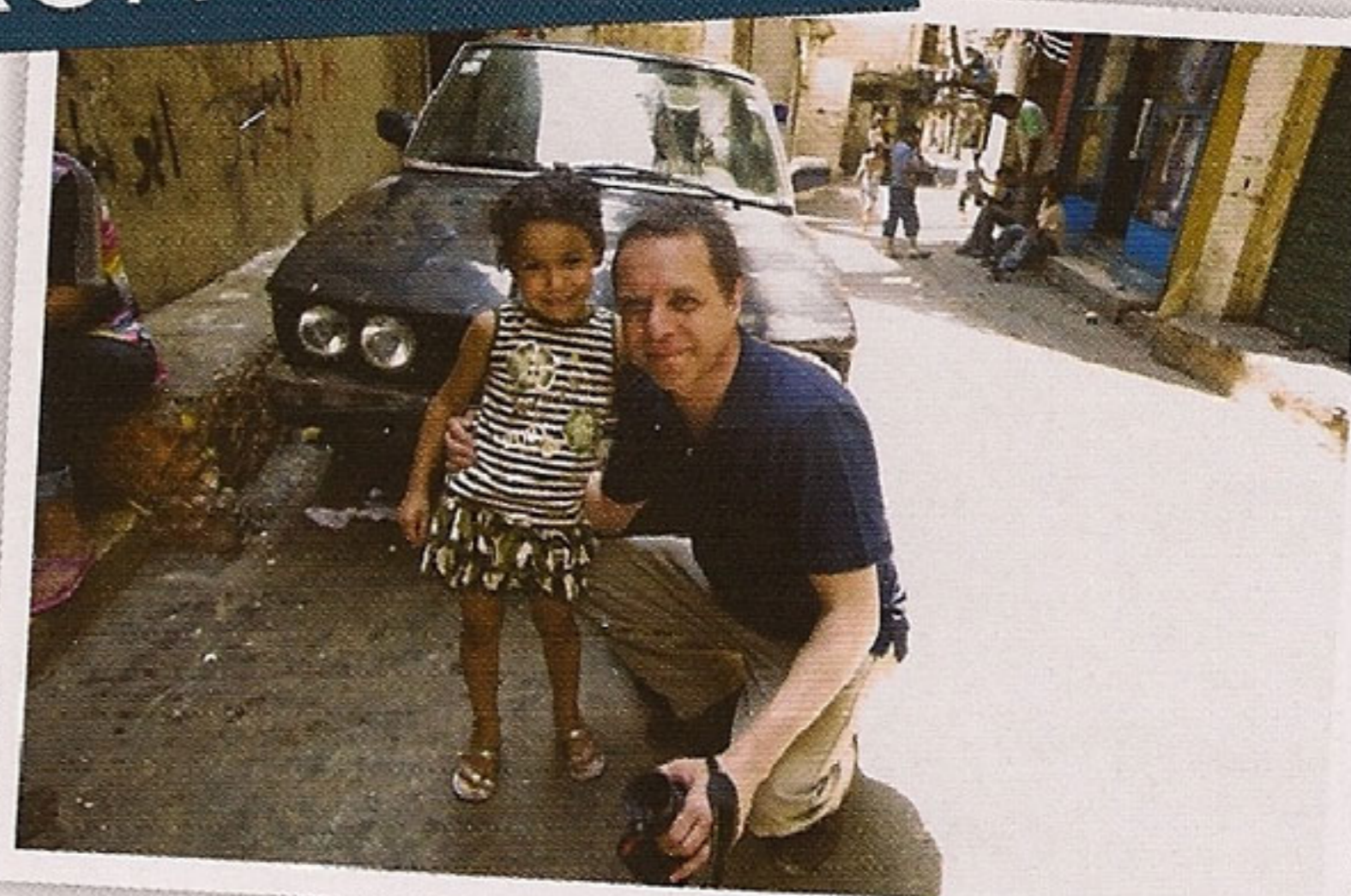
Simon left the civil service to set up his own company: Bespoke Speechwriting Services Ltd which offers bespoke speechwriting and specialist training services.

"I got sucked into the private sector."

He continues: "I started receiving offers to write speeches for some big banks, media companies and even Matthew Freud's PR company. I've always wanted to run my own business so it was a no-brainer."

He is currently on paternity leave after the birth of his daughter Charlotte (Lottie) Lancaster.

Ron Coello



Former employee Ron Coello worked in the Department's HR section between 1994 and 2004.

It was while working in the Department that Ron began achieving his goal to work as a professional photographer. He helped out with the Department's photo library, and even re-shot some of the images contained in the library. He also studied for a degree in photography while working in the Department.

Ron now works as a freelance photographer specialising in photojournalism for public and charity sectors, as well as a number of private-sector clients. His work includes news events, international documentaries, architecture, landscapes, education, events and weddings.

In 2005 Ron took a trip to the displacement camps in Sudan. An exhibition of this work, entitled 'Spirit of Sudan' went on display at Foyles bookshop and Sanctuary Buildings and was also featured in *The Independent* and *Daily Telegraph*.

Ron is currently working on a range of projects for Transport for London, the Home Office, Rising Stars (educational book and software publishers) and the Ministry of Justice. He is also looking forward to a fashion shoot in Brighton, and returning to Lebanon.