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PHOTOGRAPHING A NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY DEATH:
EXAMINING THE ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND
THE NEW YORK POST

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ABSTRACT

On Dec. 3, 2012, Ki Suck Han was pushed onto the tracks of an oncoming subway train in New York City. Photographer R. Umar Abbasi, in an attempt to use his camera's flash to warn the subway driver of Han's presence, captured a series of images of the victim in the final seconds of his life. The following day on Dec. 4, 2012, the *New York Post* ran one of Abbasi's photographs on its front page, along with headline "DOOMED." The purpose of this thesis is to examine issues of photojournalism ethics as they relate to Abbasi's decision to photograph Han and the *New York Post's* decision to publish Abbasi's photograph on the front page. Research includes case studies of past photojournalism ethics issues, as well as an analysis of how images portraying death fit into the ever-changing world of photojournalism.

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PART 1

Background

The Death of Ki Suck Han

On Dec. 3, 2012, Ki Suck Han, was waiting for the Q Train at a Manhattan subway station when he encountered Naeem Davis. Davis, who admitted that he was under the influence of marijuana at the time, (Mongelli, 2012) was said by witnesses to have been "harassing and cursing at straphangers" (Conley, Schram, Fermino, & Babcock, 2012) on the platform. At some point, Han and Davis came into contact with each other, though it is not fully understood who approached who or what either's intentions were. Han, who earlier that morning had gotten into a fight with his wife and left their Queens apartment to make his way into Manhattan, was reportedly under the influence of alcohol at the time he encountered Davis on the platform (Conley, et al., 2012). Some witnesses said that Han attempted to calm down Davis, telling him "you're scaring people" (Conley et al., 2012), though Davis said he felt threatened by Han, claiming that Han grabbed his arm and said "I'm gonna kill you" (Mongelli, 2012). As this confrontation took place, Davis pushed Han away, inadvertently causing Han to land on the subway tracks as the Q Train approached the platform.

For less than 25 seconds, Han stood helplessly in the track bed before being crushed to death. As the train approached, R. Umar Abbasi was also at the subway platform. Abbasi, a freelance photographer, was on assignment for the *New York Post* to photograph Jeffrey Hillman, subject of a Nov. 14, 2012 cell phone photograph that

became widely circulated on the Internet in which New York Police Department officer Lawrence DePrimo is photographed giving the shoeless Hillman a pair of new boots. Seeing that Han was about to be hit by the oncoming train, Abbasi aimed his camera at the track and began shooting photographs in what he said was an attempt to use his camera flash so "the train driver would see something and be able to stop" (Abbasi, 2012).

Rather than effectively helping to save Han's life, Abbasi's photographs instead captured a series of images of the victim in the final seconds of his life. Laura Kaplan, a doctor waiting at the platform, made an attempt to resuscitate Han, though he could not be saved (Abbasi, 2012). Davis, who bystanders said watched as the train came through the station and end Han's life, then fled the scene and was not captured until the following day. Once in police custody, Davis admitted to pushing Han onto the tracks, though he said it was unintentional (Mongelli, 2012).

After police and medical personnel arrived at the scene, Abbasi went to the *New York Post* office with police detectives and reviewed the images. The following day on Dec. 4, 2012, the *New York Post* ran one of Abbasi's photographs [Figure 1] of Han on their front page, along with headlines "Pushed on the subway track, this man is about to die" and "DOOMED." [Figure 2] In an online article also published on December. 4, the *New York Post* included other photographs of Han on the tracks, offering readers a closer look at the moments leading up to his death.

Figure 1: Photograph by R. Umar Abbasi, Dec. 3, 2012.

Figure 2: *New York Post*, Dec. 4, 2012.

Introduction to Photojournalism Ethics

The National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), a professional society for visual journalists, seeks to be "the leading voice advocating for the work of visual journalists today" (NPPA, "About," n.d.). The NPPA Code of Ethics, standards by which to guide photojournalists in their work, is self-proclaimed to represent "the highest integrity in visual storytelling" (NPPA, "About," n.d.). This code of ethics is used in newsrooms and classrooms to help in the decision-making process that takes place at the time a photograph is taken and also when it is published. Other organizations of photojournalists have similar code of ethics, including the New York Press Photographers Association and the Press Photographers Association of Greater Los Angeles. Though it is not known if Abbasi is a member of the NPPA, the NPPA's Code of Ethics represents standards by which the public and photojournalism community judge a photograph and it serves "as an educational tool both for those who practice and for those who appreciate photojournalism" (NPPA, "Code of Ethics," n.d.).

Another key intention of the NPPA Code of Ethics is to "strengthen public confidence in the profession" (NPPA "Code of Ethics," n.d.). The Code of Ethics covers all aspects of photojournalism, including the digital manipulation of a photograph, the staging of photographs, and the way by which photographers report a story and interact with subjects. As stated in the Code of Ethics:

"Visual journalist and those who manage visual news productions are accountable for upholding the following standards in their daily work:

4. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy." (NPPA, "Code of Ethics," n.d.)

In the article *Ethics in the Age of Digital Photography*, NPPA Ethics Co-Chair and past president Long (1999) noted a difference between ethics and taste, stating, "ethics refers to issues of deception, or lying. Taste refers to issues involving blood, sex, violence, and other aspects of life we do not want to see in our morning paper as we eat breakfast." Long described issues of taste as quickly passing and often resulting in a public response of "subscription cancellations and letters to the editors." However, the debate surrounding the handling of visuals that are of questionable taste is still a primary focus in journalism ethics.

In the thesis, *Ethics in Photojournalism: Past, Present, Future*, Bersak (2006) distinguished between two types of ethics: photographer-centric ethics and institutional ethics. "Photographer-centric ethics have to do with photographers' choices at the time news photos are captured up until the photos are handed off to an editor," whereas institutional ethics have to do with "the policies of a particular newspaper or magazine," including decision-making in regards to the publication of an image.

Bersak described ethics as "an inherently subjective field," continuing on to quote the head of the San Francisco State University photojournalism program, Kenneth Kobre, who stated "photojournalism has no Bible, no rabbinical college, no Pope to define

correct choices." In a 1988 journal article, Parsons and Smith noted "the nature of socially acceptable material changes over time," a comment about photojournalism that still remains true today.

PART 2

Ethics of Photographing

When an image of questionable taste is taken, the photographer's personal ethics in capturing the photograph are often brought into question. A common ethical principle that photojournalists adhere to is that "a journalist should act to save a life or prevent injury if he or she is the best person or the only person in a position to intervene" (Foreman, 2010). However, every situation is unique and there is no overarching policy that all journalists can follow, despite what may be written in ethics codes. To help journalists faced with the decision of photographing a subject in distress or helping them to safety, Steele of the Poynter Institute suggested four questions journalists should ask themselves while faced with the dilemma:

1. Is the danger imminent?

2. Is the danger profound?

3. Is there anyone else present who can help?

4. Do you the journalist, possess special skills needed in the situation?"

(Foreman, 2010)

Smolkin (2005), former managing editor of the *American Journalism Review*, suggested the following guidance for journalists when writing about journalists dealing with the choice of intervening with subjects during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina:

- "Follow your conscience. Your humanity - your ability to empathize with pain and suffering, and your desire to prevent it - does not conflict with your professional standards.

- If you change an outcome through responsible and necessary intervention because there's no one else around to help, so be it. Tell your bosses, and when it's essential to a story, tell your readers and viewers, too.
- Remember, though, that your primary - and unique - role as a journalist is to bear witness. If you decide to act, do so quickly, then get out of the way."

The viewpoints of photographers differ when it comes to the strength of their moral obligations. Drew, who at an early point in his career captured the assassination of Robert Kennedy, described taking photographs as instinctive and his top priority when in a crisis situation, specifically 9/11. "It's like a carpenter. He has a hammer, he builds a house. I have a camera, I take pictures" (Singer, 2006). In contrast, Burrowes, a *Life* photographer during the Vietnam War, believed strongly that he had the obligation to disregard his job as a photographer and help out, stating, "do I have a right to carry on working and leave a man suffering? To my mind, the answer is 'No, you've got to help him." You cannot go through these elements without obviously feeling something yourself – you cannot be mercenary in this way because it will make you less of a photographer" (as cited in Bersak, 2006).

R. Umar Abbasi

Prior to Dec. 3, 2012, Abbasi was a relatively unknown freelance photographer who had been shooting general news assignments for the *New York Post* since September 2012 (Sonderman, 2012). After the New York Post published Abbasi's photograph on the front page Dec. 4, 2012, Abbasi was cast into the public spotlight and faced harsh criticism from those who thought he should have done more than just photograph Han.

Through a *New York Post* article on Dec. 5, 2012, an interview on NBC's the Today Show on Dec. 5, 2012, and an interview with Anderson Cooper on CNN on Dec. 6, 2012, Abbasi defended himself against those he called "armchair critics," or those who improperly judged him despite themselves not having been in his situation.

While Abbasi was waiting for his train to arrive, his attention was piqued by commotion occurring on the adjacent platform. Abbasi recounted the event in his *New York Post* article:

"… out of the periphery of my eye, I saw a body flying through the air and onto the track. I just started running. I had my camera up – it wasn't even set to the right settings – and I just kept shooting and flashing, hoping the train driver would see something and be able to stop." (Abbasi, 2012)

According to Abbasi, there was less than 2 seconds between the time when he started photographing and Han was hit by the train. Abbasi claimed his intentions were not to photograph Han's death, as evident by the fact that he took no time to adjust his camera settings, which were set for outdoor lighting with a flash speed of 1/64th of a second (Abbasi, 2012). After the train had come to a stop, Abbasi went to Han's aid, describing Han as "twisted like a ragdoll" (Abbasi, 2012). In his interview on Today Show, Abbasi recounted that many observers at the scene had cell phones out and were taking photos and videos while a doctor, Laura Kaplan, attempted to revive Han. Though he said that he was assisting Kaplan, Abbasi also photographed her as she helped Han and this image is posted on the *New York Post's* website (Conley, Celona, Antenucci, Carrega, & MacIntosh, 2012).

After police and medical personnel arrived at the scene, Abbasi went to the *New York Post* office and, along with the *New York Post* photography editor and police detectives, looked at the images on his camera for the first time. The images had to be lightened significantly to show any detail, as the settings Abbasi had his camera at caused the images to come out almost completely dark. He did not know at the time that he had photographed Han on the tracks, and he said it was not his decision to publish the photographs. Abbasi stated in his interview on the Today Show, "I was on assignment. All the images were provided and I don't control what image is used and how it is used and how it is presented" (Nash, 2012). When asked in the interview if he had sold the images to the *New York Post*, Abbasi agreed that he had, stating that he preferred the term "licensed," as the act of profiting off these images sounds morbid.

In his interviews, Abbasi stated that his wished he could have done more to help Han, though he questions why no one else reached out to help him. Abbasi stands by the claim that he could not have gotten to Han in time to pull him up, telling Anderson Cooper, "If I could have, I would have saved him. It wasn't important to get the photograph" (Pearson, 2012).

Reactions

Both the journalism community and general public critiqued Abbasi's actions. Though Abbasi claimed that he did make an attempt to save Han's life by using his flash to alert the driver of Han's presence on the track bed, many believed he should have done more.

When asked what Abbasi should have done, Long remained non- judgmental, though he set forth questions all photographers should ask themselves in situations like Abbasi's, including "What are my priorities?" and "Is the greatest good served by making the photo or helping the victim?" If faced with the same situation, Long would have "put the camera down and [tried] to do something for the person involved. It is the human thing to do and in the end, your human values in turn give value to your photojournalism" (Long, Raymer, Elliot, & Southwick, 2012). Raymer believed that Abbasi should have attempted to aid Han for the sake of his own conscious, as the decision to photograph Han's death will likely cause him regret for years to come (Long et al., 2012).

Southwick agreed with Long's belief that photojournalists should help out in situations where they are able; however, Southwick does not believe that it would have been possible for Abassi to come to Han's aid. Southwick supported Abbasi's decision to take action by using his camera's flash to signal the train's driver and that if this decision is one that Abbasi can morally live with, then Abbasi should not be criticized (Long et al., 2012). In contrast, Kurtz (2012) of CNN was outraged at Abbasi's actions, stating, "one aspect of this tale that makes my blood boil is the role of [Abbasi]. His first instinct was to record death, not prevent it."

Whether or not Abbasi made the right decision, Carr (2012) believed that Abbasi's choices reflect poorly on other journalists, reaffirming the perception that journalists are bystanders in the face of danger and evil, "[secretly] rooting for its culmination." Hughes, editor of Photo District News, agreed that "news photographers in

situations where something horrible has happened are often viewed as vultures who

exploit other people's suffering," though she believed this to be an unfair opinion (Moos,

2012). Tufekci (2012) believed that selling the photograph was wrong and that paying for

a photograph that "represents a choice between potential saving a life, or clicking" was

ethically wrong. Tufekci noted that paying for such a photograph could help create a

climate that would encourage photographers in similar situations in the future to seek

profit instead of potentially saving a life.

Case Study: Nick Ut, Vietnam

On June 8, 1972, Associated Press (AP) photographer Nick Ut was on assignment

in Vietnam near Trang Bang village, when Vietnamese Air Force bombers attacked the

village. As napalm was dropped from the planes, villagers panicked and raced to leave

the village, running down Route-1 towards Ut and other journalists from *Time*, BBC, and

NBC. The photographers and videographers who had been capturing the air raid turned

their attention to the civilians running toward them.

A young girl, Phan Thi Kim Phuc, had been brutally burned by the napalm gas

and had ripped off all her burning clothes as she ran towards Ut and the other journalists.

Ut recounted the story 40 years later to ABC7 news anchor Dave Ono during a return trip

back to Trang Bang:

> "Then I look in black smoke and saw little Kim Phuc naked ... I keep shooting,
> shooting pictures of Kim running. Then when she passed my camera, I saw her
> body burned so badly, I said, 'Oh my God, I don't want no more pictures.' She was

screaming and crying, she just said, 'I'm dying, I'm dying, I'm dying' and 'I need

some water, bring water.' Right away [I] run and put water on her body. I want to

help her. I say no more pictures, I want to help Kim Phuc right away." (Ono,

2012)

According to Fass and Fulton (n.d. b), two cameramen, Le Phuc Dinh of NBC and

Alan Downes of ITN, captured on film both Ut and ITN correspondent Christopher Wain

helping Kim Phuc and giving her water. Ut gathered Kim Phuc's aunt, uncle, and two

brothers into his hired car and traveled to the nearest hospital. Once at the hospital, Ut

made sure that the doctors and nurses cared for Kim Phuc, even though the chance of

saving her life was slight. It was not until "Kim Phuc was on the operating table [that]

Nick Ut [left] the hospital … to bring his film to the AP" (Fass and Fulton, n.d. a).

When Ut's photograph [Figure 3] was published on the front page of *The New

York Times* on June 9, 1972, the American public was able to see a side of Vietnam

brutality that they had never seen before: innocent children caught in the middle of the

warfare. The photograph was also circulated to other publications across the country.

Issues of taste arose due to Kim Phuc's naked body, as well as the pain and suffering

shown. When an AP editor in Saigon had first saw Ut's image, it was rejected due to the

frontal nudity, which was unacceptable for publication no matter the subject's age or sex.

Eventually, Horst Faas, head of the Saigon department, encouraged Hal Buell of the New

York AP office to make an exception and allow the photo to be transmitted. The

significance of the image was apparent before it was even shown to the public; Faas told

Richard Pyle, the AP bureau chief, "I think we have another Pulitzer Prize here" (Faas

and Fulton, n.d. a). The following year, in 1973, the image was selected for the Pulitzer

Prize feature photography award.

Figure 3: Photograph by Nick Ut, June 8, 1972.

David Burnett (2012), a photographer for *Time* who was alongside Ut at the time

of the attack, stated that Ut "captured an image that would transcend politics and history

and become emblematic of the horrors of war visited on the innocent." In retrospect, Ono

(2012) acknowledged that there was an importance in publishing Ut's photograph, as it

went on to "have an enormous impact, creating a firestorm of outrage over Vietnam.

[Ut's] picture [forced] the rest of the world to finally see the innocent victims of war,

victims who now had a face." The image was so shocking that some found it difficult to

comprehend as true. The President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, was recorded on

tape musing to his aide H. R. Halderman over the authenticity of the photograph, stating,

"I wonder if this (photograph) was fixed" (Buell, 2009).

Today, Ut is lauded for his heroism in helping Kim Phuc and allowing her life to be saved. After more than 40 years, Kim Phuc maintains a close relationship with Ut, whom she calls "Uncle Nick" (Ono, 2012). There is no debate that Ut acted as both a journalist and human being and did the right thing by saving Kim Phuc, unlike what is said about Abbasi. Though there were Vietnamese soldiers at the scene, they did nothing to assist the napalm victims, making Ut and the rest of the journalists the most capable people to help out. Abbasi did attempt to aid Han after he had photographed Han, however there was no chance of saving his life at that point. The difference between Ut photographing Kim Phuc and Abbasi photographing Han is that Ut was already photographing a bombing when Kim Phuc entered his frame and immediately when he realized the severity of the situation, Ut put his camera down and acted as his morals dictated.

Case Study: Kevin Carter, Sudan

In 1993, South African photographer Kevin Carter was on assignment in Sudan when he came across a refugee child on her way to a Red Cross feeding station. Carter photographed the young girl as she crouched on the ground, seemingly unable to move, and a vulture sat eerily a few feet away. The photograph [Figure 4] was published on page A3 of *The New York Times* on March 26, 1993, accompanying Donatella Lorch's article *Sudan is Desperate to Placate the West. The New York Times* faced an outpouring of reader comments in regards to the fate of the child and the actions, if any, taken by the photographer to protect her from the vulture. In hopes of appeasing readers, *The New*

York Times published an editor's note on March 30, 1993 giving the public the best

answer they could in regards to the welfare of the child:

> "Many readers have asked about the fate of the girl. The photographer reports that
> she recovered enough to resume her trek after the vulture was chased away. It is
> not known whether she reached the center." ("Editor's Note", 1993)

Figure 4: Photograph by Kevin Carter, March 1993.

An experienced journalist, Carter had photographed brutal violence in post-

apartheid South Africa for 10 years. When photographing in Sudan, Carter remained

detached from his subjects and their plight, just as he had done for years in South Africa.

His colleague Joao Silva, also on assignment in Sudan, said that Carter came to him after

taking the photograph and told him "You wouldn't believe what I just shot. I was

shooting this kid on her knees, and then changed my angle and suddenly there was this

vulture right behind her ... I've just finished chasing the vulture away" (Marinovich &

Silva, 2006, p. 117).

Carter's story differed from person to person and as time went on. In the version

of the situation Carter told to his friend Reedwaan at home in South Africa "he did try to

shoo the bird away after he had finished taking pictures, but that it wouldn't go far away

and he just couldn't deal with it, so he walked away and started crying" (Marinovich &

Silva, 2006, p. 189). When *The New York Times* photo editor Nancy Lee asked Carter

what happened to the child so she could publish the editor's note about the photo, Carter

told her that he had seen the child get up and walk to the feeding center. The following

year, when Carter was in New York City to accept the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for feature

photography for his photograph, he described the story to Lee differently, saying that he

"worked the situation," shooting from different angles, and hoping for the vulture's wings

to flap so as to make for a better photograph (Marinovich & Silva, 2006, p. 188).

Two months after the Pulitzer Prize ceremony, Carter committed suicide due to

what is speculated to be a combination of drug use, post-traumatic stress from years

witnessing violence in South Africa, and the public criticism he faced in regards to his

prize-winning photograph. In a suicide note, Carter had written "I am haunted by the

vivid memories of killings and corpses and anger and pain ... of starving or wounded

children, of trigger-happy madmen, often police, of killer executioners" (Macleod, 1994).

The largest ethical debate about Carter's photograph is whether he should have

done more to help the child. Since Carter was the only eyewitness to the situation, it will

never be known for sure what was going on outside of the frame or the complete extent

of his actions to shoo the vulture away. Unlike Abbasi, Carter walked away from the

scene after taking photographs without knowing what would happen next to the girl. However, like Carter, what Abbasi witnessed did have a profound effect on him. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Abbasi stated, "every time I close my eyes, I see the image of death" (Wilson & Krieger, 2012).

Carter could have acted as Ut had in Vietnam, carrying the child to safety after the photograph had been taken. Carter was the only one in the area to help the child; therefore her safety was his responsibility. However, the child in the photograph is one of many starving children in Sudan, others of which Carter photographed and was unable to help. Silva, too, had been photographing suffering children without helping them and therefore saw nothing wrong with Carter's actions (Marinovich & Silva, 2008, p. 151).

Regardless of what Carter did after he took the photograph, he fulfilled his role as a photojournalist and helped in accomplishing the United Nations mission of increasing public awareness of the famine in Sudan (Marinovich & Silva, 2008, p. 113). According to Steele, Carter "was the one who got the message out to the rest of the world." Steele stated, "The military, the aid workers, the Red Cross - no one filled the role Kevin Carter did" (Stamets, 1994). Dougherty (2006) of the *Massachusetts Review* argued that Carter's work was only seen unethical as it "begged the viewer to act," causing people to feel "horror, empathy, anger." Without an instantaneous and physical way to help out the situation, Dougherty noted viewers took their feelings of distress out on Carter, "and attacked the messenger," just as viewers did with Abbasi. Though Abbasi's situation was similar to Ut's and Carter's in that the photographers were all given the chance to act as

more than photojournalists, Abbasi's situation differs as his photograph did not capture a

situation the viewer could act to change; instead, the impending doom it portrayed just

left viewers horrified and paralyzed.

PART 3

Ethics of Publishing

Many aspects of an image are considered by news agencies to decide if the image is tasteful and suitable for publication. According to Long, photos that may be considered tasteless are appropriate and necessary for publication if the photograph is the best source of information available to society to allow for informed decision-making in regards to local, national, or international issues. (Long, 1999)

When deciding if an offensive or graphic photograph should be published, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* assistant managing editor of visual journalism Sherman Williams takes four factors into consideration:

1. The scale of the event.
2. Who is involved.
3. Whether the event is close to home.
4. Whether the image will appear in print or online.

(Foreman, 2010, p. 347)

Gene Forman (2010), author of *Ethical Journalism*, elaborated on William's methodology in more detail. Foreman noted that less caution goes into publishing images from major news events or images of public officials or celebrities, and "if the image is graphic and the people involved are ordinary people involuntarily thrust into the news, Williams is less likely to run it." Additionally, Foreman stated, "the audience may be tolerant of a graphic image if the subject survives, but decidedly offended by the image if

the subject dies." As for determining whether to publish an image based on its closeness

to home, some images are important to run because they allow the viewer to know what

is happening in his or her community, whereas others are not run because they can be

traumatic for viewers due to the subjects involved. Lastly, Foreman noted that people

react more strongly to print images than online ones, causing Williams to receive more

reader criticism about the print version of an image rather than the online one.

The decision-making process for publishing images of graphic content or

questionable taste varies by publication, and while not all publications adhere to

standards similar to Williams', standards like his are fairly common for American

newspapers.

New York Post

The *New York Post* has been criticized for issues of ethics and taste on multiple

occasions over the newspaper's course of publication. Some of these instances gained

much attention, as they focused on issues of politics, race, religion, and death. The *New*

York Post often has less reserve when handling graphic photographs than other major

newspapers. When Moammar Gadhafi was murdered in Libya in 2011, less than 20

American newspapers published graphic photographs of Gadhafi on its front page (Moos,

2011). The *New York Post* was one of only seven newspapers to publish a photograph of

a blood splattered Gadhafi in full cover prominently on the front page. Additionally, the

New York Post mocked Gadhafi's death with the headline "Kadafy killed by a Yankees

fan" and including a small insert photograph of the boy who killed Gadhafi wearing a New York Yankees baseball hat.

On March 10, 2004, the *New York Post* ran a photograph of New York University student Diana Chien during her fatal suicidal fall from a 24th floor apartment. The photograph ran in full-color on the newspaper's front page, after having previously been run inside the paper in black and white three days prior. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2004) accused the newspaper of using Chien's death to sell papers, ignoring the fact that dramatizing suicide in the media leads to copycat suicides.

The *New York Post* is rarely apologetic when its publication decisions cause offense. An exception occurred, however, in 2009 when the *New York Post* ran a cartoon by Sean Delanos depicting a police officer shooting a chimpanzee with the text "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill." Some deemed the cartoon to be a racist attack against President Obama, leading to a protest of around 200 people outside of the *New York Post's* office (Moos, 2009). The *New York Post* responded to the outrage with a rare apology, stating, "sometimes a cartoon is just a cartoon - even as the opportunists seek to make it something else" (Otterman, 2009).

Though questions of credibility have come up in relation to the *New York Post*, its extensive readership proves it to be a common source of information for people in New York and across the country. According to the BurrellesLuce report *Top Media Outlets: Newspapers, Blogs, Consumer Magazines, Broadcast, Websites & Social Networks* (2013), the *New York Post* was the seventh most read newspaper in the United States in

2012, with over 500,000 readers. Within New York City, the *New York Post* is the third most read, after *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and it is read by 15 percent of the residents of New York City (Trichter & Paige, 2004).

Despite its high readership, New Yorkers find the *New York Post* to be lacking credibility. *The Pace Poll: New York City Media Survey Analysis Report*, a survey conducted in 2004 by Trichter and Paige, polled 642 residents of New York City about their opinions on the city's newspapers. According to the Trichter and Paige, "among media outlets recognized by at least 60 percent of all New Yorkers, only [the *New York Post*] earns a higher negative than positive rating on the credibility scale," with a 39 percent not credible rating and a 44 percent not credible rating. In comparison, results of the poll found that *The New York Times* had a 64 percent credible rating and a 23 percent not credible rating and the *Daily News* had a 49 percent credible rating and a 38 percent not credible rating. Additionally, Trichter and Paige found that the *New York Post* has a 58 percent approval rating and a 22 percent disapproval rating.

Reactions

Among the journalism community, there is a consensus that the *New York Post* was wrong to have published Abbasi's photograph in the way that it did. The *New York Post's* treatment of the photograph was seen as offensive and voyeuristic. Some agree that the photograph was of news value and should be seen by the public, though others believed the trauma it could have cause in viewers outweighed its need to be seen.

Irby of the Poynter Institute noted that ethical codes are not strict foundations for every publication decision to be made upon (Moos, 2012). The image, in his opinion, was not unethical; however its treatment lacked respect and compassion for the victim. Many critics were not surprised at by the *New York Post's* treatment of Abbasi's photograph, as the newspaper is "not known for its subtlety in taste decisions" (Long et al., 2012). The decision represented "another low" in the *New York Post's* history, according to Southwick (Long et al., 2012). Though Kurtz (2012) believed the photograph to be newsworthy, he referred to the photograph's publication as "a cheap, sensational, stunt" through which the tabloid decided to "take tragedy and … milk every bit of emotion out of it." Ashburn of CNN accused the *New York Post* of rubbernecking, publishing the image only to generate profits (Christopher, 2012).

McBride of the Poynter Institute argued that the image had no journalistic value and was instead harmful for Han's family and the general public. For Long, the image did not require such prominent display on the *New York Post's* front cover, as it did not provide intrinsic value to society to assist in informed decision-making (Long et al., 2012). Tufekci (2012) advocates for the publication of graphic photographs but did not see Abbasi's photograph as necessary for publication, as it did not represent widespread, on-going tragedy and instead depicted one person in an uncommon circumstance. Hughes noted that newsworthy events may sometimes be upsetting, but unlike photographs of major events, there was little to be learned from Abbasi's photograph (Moos, 2012).

Carr described the image as personal to New Yorkers, evoking in them a "primal" fear that will haunt them during their everyday routine of riding the subway (Carr, 2012). Lowder (2012) of Slate similarly stated that the image "manifests a collective nightmare" for New Yorkers, continuing on to say that "no one likes a nightmare, and so we resent being forced to experience it." Shafer (2012) of Reuters noted that the image is more harming to viewers than those of war causalities from around the world as "it documents the anticipation of [human] destruction," and therefore caused viewers to imagine themselves in Han's place. Furthermore, Raymer noted the connection between journalism and trauma, citing studies done by the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at Columbia University that found that images of trauma, such as Abbasi's photograph, can "aggravate symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome in individuals who have experienced trauma in the past" (Long et al., 2012).

Case Study: Richard Drew, The Falling Man

When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001, over 2,700 people were killed (FAQ about 9/11, 2013). For those people near or above the floors directly hit by the airplanes, there was little chance of escaping down the stairwells to safety. It is estimated that 200 people jumped or fell from the upper floors of the Twin Towers. These people, referred to as "jumpers," were shown on news broadcasts during live coverage of the attacks and were also captured on film by photographers shooting from the ground. With thousands of people on the streets, including hundreds of professional photographers, "the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center was the most photographed news story in history" (Buell, 2009).

Associated Press (AP) photographer Richard Drew was one of the photographers to capture jumpers at the World Trade Center. Drew was on assignment shooting a maternity fashion show when he heard that a plane had crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center. Drew quickly made his way to the scene where he stood near emergency personnel as disaster unfolded. Between capturing the destruction of the buildings and chaos on the ground, Drew focused his camera on the upper floors of the buildings and captured images of bodies falling from the sky.

For Drew, photographing the jumpers was just part of his job. He stated, "you photograph what's there in front of you, you just instinctively take pictures of what is there" (Singer, 2006). When Drew was editing his images at the AP office a few hours after he had taken them, he instantly recognized the powerful significance of one of his photographs of a jumper, the photograph today known as "The Falling Man." [Figure 5] The image was circulated by the AP and published in newspapers nationwide on Sept. 12, 2001, including on page A7 of *The New York Times*.

Figure 5: Photograph by Richard Drew, Sept. 11, 2001.

With the country in a state of mourning, the public shunned images of death and destruction. Images portraying heroism became the symbols of 9/11 in the media. Drew's photograph "was branded distasteful, exploitative, voyeuristic," and never again published in *The New York Times* (Singer, 2006).

For editors at *The Morning Call* in Allentown, there was no question whether to publish the image or not. The newspaper ran the image larger than any other newspaper; it took up almost half of the back cover of the newspaper's main section. The editors of the paper recognized the painful nature of the photograph and anticipated that they would catch flak for publishing it. Business editor Michael Hirsch agreed that the image should be published, though he noted there was an uneasiness in looking at it, stating, "[the

photograph] feels like a private moment, you feel almost obscene looking at this. You feel like you're taking away the person's humanity a little bit" (Singer, 2006).

Though many see the photograph as an image of impending death, Drew believed he captured the true nature of the day which was not the structural ruin or heroism in the aftermath, but the feelings and choices made by those attacked. Drew stated, "I didn't capture this person's death. I captured part of his life. This is what he decided to do, and I think I preserved that" (Singer, 2006). David Erdman, managing editor of *The Morning Star*, saw the image as more powerful than the more graphic images shot that day. Zelizer, a professor of communications at the University of Pennsylvania, said that Drew's photograph caused squeamishness in viewers due to a connection between viewers and the falling man, as he was an American civilian in an American city (Shafer, 2011). In a column defending the publication of the image, David House (2001) of the *Star-Telegram* in Fort Worth, noted that "readers accused the newspaper of sensational disregard for the dignity of the man," displaying more anger towards the *Star-Telegram* for publishing the image than towards the terrorists for the attacks.

The attack on the World Trade Center was tragic and unlike anything that had happened in the United States and images were critical aspects of telling the story. Irby believed that the event transcended everyday standards and allowed for rules to be set aside (House, 2001). Therefore, Drew's image was newsworthy and the newspapers that ran it were right in their decision to do so. Though the photograph appalled the public, the falling man represented one of many jumpers and the image captured his story. In

contrast to Drew's photograph, Abbasi's photograph of Han on the track bed showed an uncommon event that could have been told without the photograph.

Case Study: The Suicide of R. Budd Dwyer

On Jan. 22, 1987, Pennsylvania State Treasurer R. Budd Dwyer held a press conference for what many assumed to be his resignation. Instead, Dwyer "pulled a 357 Magnum from a large manila envelope, placed the gun barrel in his mouth, and pulled the trigger" (Parsons and Smith, 1988), committing suicide in front of reporters, photographers, and videographers. As the room stood in shock of what was happening, photographers and videographers kept their cameras raised and captured the process of Dwyer's suicide from beginning to end. The AP distributed eight photographs [Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8] to its affiliates. The images and the way they were presented in newspapers and across the country became the subject of an ethical debate over the public's need to see such graphic images.

Figure 6: Photograph by Gary Dwight Miller, Jan. 22, 1987.

Figure 7: Photograph by Paul Vathis, Jan. 22, 1987.

Figure 8: Photograph by Paul Vathis, Jan. 22, 1987.

In a study conducted of 93 Pennsylvania newspapers, Baker (1988) identified the prevalence of graphic photographs of Dwyer on the front page and throughout the entire publication. Of the photographs used by newspapers, only seven of the images used on a front page were described as "grizzly," which included the UPI and the AP issued photographs of Dwyer immediately after pulling the trigger and slumped on the floor. Though the five largest newspapers did not use one of these photographs on their front page, they were more than three times as likely to use a "very graphic" image than smaller newspapers. Smaller newspapers were found to be five times more likely to use the "not too graphic" photographs. Baker concluded that the publication of graphic photographs varied by proximity to the victim, stating that "newspapers more than 200 miles away from the victim's hometown were two-and-a-half times as likely to use the 'very graphic' photos than those within 100 miles."

The difference in publication preferences of graphic images brings up issues of sensitivity and taste in regards to death. While the graphic images of the bullet going through Dwyer's head confirm that the suicide took place, the images of the gun in his mouth could have established the same idea and confirmed what took place if accompanied by a caption. The difference in the publication of photos based on distance from Dwyer's hometown showed editors' intents to protect their readership from an issue with which they had a personal connection.

Guthman (1987), editor of *The Inquirer* in Philadelphia, wrote a letter to readers in response to their outrage over the images *The Inquirer* had chosen to publish: Dwyer

holding the handgun [Figure 6], Dwyer with the gun in his mouth [Figure 7], and Dwyer on the floor after he had committed suicide [Figure 8]. Guthman stressed that Dwyer chose to publicly commit suicide in front of reporters, therefore he removed all dignity from his death and portraying it in any other way would be a "basic distortion" of the event. Photographs of Dwyer were critical aspects of the story and without them, the public would not have been able to fully understand Dwyer's actions and the statement he was trying to make "about crime and punishment in high public office." The graphic photographs and photographs of Dwyer about to die therefore had a purpose to serve and though they depicted his death, he was a public official who chose for this intimate moment to be documented.

PART 4

Evolution of Photojournalism

Social Media and Technology

Journalism and photography are ever-evolving. Since the advent of the Internet and the widespread use of social networking platforms, information exchange has become instantaneous. The speed at which information can be accessed by millions of people around the world has allowed civilians to act as journalists. This prevalence of civilian journalism has created further ethics issues for news agencies, including deciding when to reproduce a photograph and how to ensure its authenticity. Cell phones have allowed photographs to be taken in places where a professional camera would normally not have access, giving editors the dilemma of deciding when to publish these photographs.

In 1997, Philippe Kahn transmitted the first cell phone photograph over the Internet (Kahn, n.d.). Beginning in the early 2000s, camera phones and Internet capable phones, or smartphones, became available in the United States; the technologies eventually merged to form smartphones with cameras (Berkman, 2012). In 2012, 94 percent of Americans over the age of 16 owned a cell phone, with 53 percent owning a smartphone and 38 percent owning a multimedia capable phone (Neilsen, 2013).

When the London subway system was bombed in 2005, the first images to reach the public were cell phone photographs taken by those at the scene. When reporting the story the following day, *The New York Times* published a cell phone photograph on its

front page, the first time such treatment had been given to a cell phone photograph (Dunleavy, 2005). Alexander Chadwick, a civilian who was commuting via the subway at the time of the bombing, had captured the photograph and sent it to BBC who then distributed it to other news agencies (Perez & Hadge, 2010).

With the ubiquity of smartphones, society has become what Poniewozik (2012) called "Homo Documentis – the man recorder." People's first reaction to any situation seems to be to take out their cell phone and begin taking photographs or video of what's happening, just as Abbasi said observers had done when Kaplan was attempting to revive Han after he had been struck by the subway (Abbasi, 2012). Murphy of Slate noted that the speed at which cell phone photographs circulate can be detrimental, as they may be posted without supporting information to help the viewer understand what is happening, or "untrained photographers can get facts wrong; they're bystanders, not journalists trained to report the facts to the best of their ability" (Murphy, 2012).

Case Study: Empire State Building Shooting

On Aug. 24, 2012, Jeffrey Johnson shot and killed a former co-worker, Steven Ecrolino, outside the Empire State Building in New York City. As police attempted to apprehend Johnson, nine uninvolved bystanders were injured by police gunfire intended for Johnson. Eventually, the police fatally shot Johnson. (Barron, 2012)

Civilians captured cell phone photographs and videos of the event from all angles. Two photographs posted on the social media platform Instagram by users @ryanstryin

and @mr_mookie were picked up and published online by major local and national news

organizations. The photograph taken by user @ryanstryin, whose real name is Ryan

Pitcheralle, [Figure 9] showed Ecrolino lying on the pavement after having been shot by

Johnson (Zhang, 2012). The photograph taken by user @mr_mookie, whose real name is

Muhammad Malik, [Figure 10] showed one of the accidental victims who suffered a head

injury being helped by another bystander (Gill, 2012). Both images were published online

in the *New York Post's* story of the shooting (Celona, Schram, Bain & Fasick, 2012).

Neither of the images was initially sent to news agencies by the photographers. Instead,

photo editors and staff from news agencies including Reuters, AP, and CBS

communicated with the Instagram users via the comment section on their photographs,

asking permission to use reproduce the photographs (Murphy, 2012).

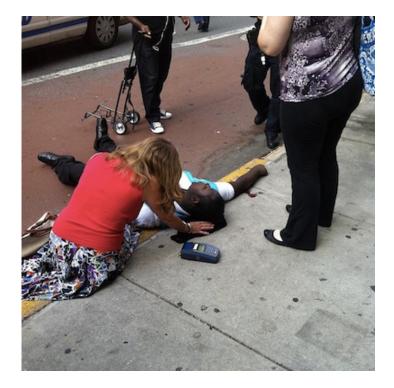Figure 9: Photograph by @ryanstryin (Ryan Pitcheralle), Aug. 24, 2012.

Figure 10: Photograph by @mr_mookie (Muhammad Malik), Aug. 24, 2012.

Sam Gewirtz, a worker on the third floor of the Empire State Building took another cell phone photograph [Figure 11] that was circulated by news agencies. Gewirtz took the photo using his iPhone and was prompted by coworkers to sell the image to *The New York Times*, which then published the image on the main page of their website (Berstein, 2012). The image was deemed too graphic by many, as it showed Ecrolino face down on the pavement lying in his own blood after Johnson had shot him. *The New York Times* later took the image off the main page of their website, though it remained in the slideshow of images from the day. The photograph was considered by some to be too graphic and too private, including the brother of Ecrolino who told a New York radio show "they gave Osama bin Laden more respect and dignity than my brother," continuing on to call the images and the decision to run them by the *New York Post* and *The New*

York Times "horrific" (Chung, 2012). Carr (2012) defended *The New York Times* decision to run the photograph on their website, as the victim's position in the photograph hid his identity, and though the image was graphic, his blood "was a reminder that, unlike the way it is portrayed on television, gun crime is extremely violent."

Figure 11: Photograph by Sam Gewirtz, Aug. 24, 2012.

Though no other photographs of Han about to die have circulated, at least one bystander had been recording the scene before Han was murdered, as a cell phone video of Davis and Han arguing before the fatal shove was released by the police department and embedded in the *New York Post's* online story of Davis' arrest (Mongelli, 2012). Graphic images of Han similar to those of the Empire State Building shooting could have circulated online. The bystander's footage of Han and Davis gave police a different

perspective of the event and helped them find and arrest Davis. Civilian photographs and videos can do the same in other investigations, however when they are posted to the Internet without complete details about the situation, these images can cause confusion or panic in viewers, just as some of the Empire State Building shooting photographs did.

Sensitivity by Subject Matter

Graphic photographs began their prevalence in the news during the 1930s with the work of New York photographer Arthur Fellig, professionally known as Weegee. Weegee was known for capturing the dramatic and grisly scenes of New York City, including murders, fires, accidents and crimes. Weegee's work, though portraying disaster in a sensational manner, was unlike that of other photographers at the time that may have been too shy, or too unopportunistic, to capture the gritty happenings of New York City (Smith, 2012).

During World War II, the publication of images of dead or wounded allied soldiers was banned in American media, shielding the public from the graphic brutality that was occurring abroad. This censorship was lifted when President Roosevelt allowed images of the Battle of Tawara, taken by Marine Photography Officer Norman Hatch, to be shown to the public. Buell (2009) noted that at the time "morale needed stiffening, Americans were becoming complacent about the war, and the War Bond sales needed a boost." With this film and the images that were released after it, Americans were hit with the reality of war and the sacrifices that American soldiers were making for victory. Even when direct access to battle allowed Vietnam War photographers to capture an array of

images, news agencies have always been more apt to show images of opposition soldiers and civilians suffering from the effects of war, especially in recent years during conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In addition to graphic images of war, graphic images depicting the brutal realities of everyday life in the United States are shunned, causing news agencies to impose upon themselves a self-censorship. Zelizer noted that American news outlets shy away from showing death and dying, stating that images most effective in portraying death cause the public to acknowledge that these images are of "real people and real events" (Shafer, 2011). Images are even more real to the viewer when there is a connection between the subject and the viewer, such as race or nationality. Additionally, the public is much more likely to react to images of women and children, as noted by Ashburn who believed that the image of Han on the subway tracks would not have been published had Han been a "white woman" (Christopher, 2012).

Case Study: Julie Jacobson, Afghanistan

Some argued that publishing Abbasi's photograph was hurtful to his family, especially as they were mourning his unexpected death. Similar issues of taste and sympathy also surrounded Julie Jacobson's photograph of Lance Cpl. Joshua M. Bernard in the last moments of his life. In August 2009, Jacobson, an AP photographer, was on assignment photographing U.S. Marines in Afghanistan. Amidst a Taliban ambush,

Jacobson photographed Marines helping Bernard to safety after a rocket-propelled

grenade had struck him [Figure 12].

Figure 12: Photograph by Julie Jacobson, Aug. 14, 2009.

Jacobson's image outraged viewers, as Bernard represented the son, father, or

brother of many people. The AP decided to distribute the photograph three weeks after it

was taken; after the burial for Bernard had taken place and after his family had already

been notified of the photograph's existence (Associated Press, 2009). The family asked

that the AP not release the photograph and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates expanded

on the family's wishes, telling the AP that even without law or policy preventing its

publication, compassion for the family, decency, and "common sense" outweighed its

need to be viewed by the public (Dunlap, 2009).

Jacobson states that there was no question whether to shoot the photograph or not,

but instead, the only question was whether or not it should be published, and she believed

it should be published. In her personal journal, Jacobson detailed her thoughts about the photograph, writing, "death is a part of life and most certainly a part of war. Isn't that why we're here? To document for now and for history the events of this war?" (Dunlap, 2009). Jacobson saw the image as more powerful than just a name added to the list of war casualties. Lyon, AP director of photography, and Daniszewski, an AP senior managing editor, agreed with Jacobson that the image caused the public to think about the reality of war. According to Lyons, the image showed "in a very unequivocal and direct fashion — the real consequences of war, involving in this case a U.S. Marine" (Associated Press, 2009).

Buell (2009) did not see the photograph as any more graphic than other war photographs, including those from World War II and Vietnam. Additionally, McNally, an assistant managing editor of *The New York Times*, noted that the image was "not gratuitously graphic" and sensitively represents a mortally wounded soldier and his comrades (Dunlap, 2009). Jacobson expressed frustration with the double standard that allows for the frequent and unabashed publication of casualties of opposition forces and civilians and prevents the publication of images of injured or dead American soldiers (Dunlap, 2009).

Long (2009) agreed that the image should have been published, stating that the purpose of photojournalism "is to report as accurately and fairly as possible" and "accurate reporting sometimes demands the use of difficult images." Though Bernard's family directly opposed the photograph's release, the image served the greater good of

showing a side to combat in the Middle East that Americans are normally shielded from.

Bernard's photograph was published tastefully and not sensationalized as Han's death

was by the *New York Post*.

PART 5

Conclusion

Abbasi's photographs of Han's impending death resulted from what he considered to be an attempt to save Han's life through the use of his camera's flash. Even though his actions did not correlate with the ethical guidelines that suggest photojournalists put aside the camera to help someone in need, Abbasi cannot be criticized for doing what he did if he truly believed that taking photographs would save Han's life. Abbasi was not the only person at the scene capable of potentially pulling Han from the tracks; therefore the public is misguided to hold him accountable for Han's death. However, Abbasi would not have been faulted for trying to physically help Han up, even if he had failed. By instinctively photographing the situation, Abbasi was ignoring his moral obligation to help out a member of his community.

Abbasi did make an unethical choice to sell his photographs to the New York Post, as profiting off Han's death is insensitive. Because he was working as a freelance photographer on assignment to photograph something different, Abbasi was not obligated to sell the photographs of Han to the New York Post for publication.

The New York Post was wrong to publish Abbasi's photograph in the way that it did. The newspaper used the photograph and dramatic headlines to draw in readers, giving no respect to Han or his family. The New York Post's sensational portrayal of Han's death removed the journalistic value from Abbasi's photograph, instead making the photograph a gut-wrenching depiction of a vulnerable person in a helpless situation.

The photograph of Han's impending death was of news value and should have been made visible to the public. An alternative, more appropriate treatment would have been for the photograph to be printed inside the newspaper with a tasteful headline. Abbasi's photograph did help facilitate some discussion about potential subway reforms; however these talks were overshadowed by the ethical issues surrounding the photograph.

On December 27, 2012, less than a month after Han was killed on the subway tracks, Erika Menendez allegedly pushed Sunando Sen intentionally onto the subway tracks in front of an oncoming train in Queens; Sen was immediately killed after being struck by the train (Brown, 2012). According to a release by the Queens District Attorney Richard Brown, Menendez allegedly stated in sum and substance "I pushed a Muslim off the train tracks because I hate Hindus and Muslims ever since 2001 when they put down the twin towers I've been beating them up." Two other reports of people being pushed onto subway tracks occurred in 2012, but both victims survived (Tangel & Khouri, 2012). In total, 55 people were killed by New York City subways in 2012 (Flegenheimer, 2013a), though subway deaths are primarily suicides or accidental and cases like Han's and Sen's are rare occurrences.

The publication of R. Umar Abbassi's photograph did not influence a direct change in any New York City regulations regarding subway safety or efforts to prevent similar attacks and accidents from happening in the future. A rash of subway deaths in January 2013, combined with the subway murders in December 2012, prompted the Transport Workers Union Local 100 to encourage subway drivers to slow down as they

entered stations in attempt to save lives and prevent drivers from the emotional distress

that comes from killing a person inadvertently. The Manhattan Transit Authority opposed

the union's message to drivers, as slowing down trains would cause delays and disrupt

subway schedules (Flegenheimer, 2013b). In March 2013, Han's family filed a lawsuit

against the Manhattan Transit Authority, claiming that Han's death was a result of an

unsafe platform and negligent driving by the train's operator (Marsh, 2013).

APPENDIX

NPPA Code of Ethics

Preamble

The National Press Photographers Association, a professional society that promotes the highest standards in visual journalism, acknowledges concern for every person's need both to be fully informed about public events and to be recognized as part of the world in which we live.

Visual journalists operate as trustees of the public. Our primary role is to report visually on the significant events and varied viewpoints in our common world. Our primary goal is the faithful and comprehensive depiction of the subject at hand. As visual journalists, we have the responsibility to document society and to preserve its history through images.

Photographic and video images can reveal great truths, expose wrongdoing and neglect, inspire hope and understanding and connect people around the globe through the language of visual understanding. Photographs can also cause great harm if they are callously intrusive or are manipulated.

This code is intended to promote the highest quality in all forms of visual journalism and to strengthen public confidence in the profession. It is also meant to serve as an educational tool both for those who practice and for those who appreciate

photojournalism. To that end, The National Press Photographers Association sets forth the following.

Code of Ethics

Visual journalists and those who manage visual news productions are accountable for upholding the following standards in their daily work:

1. Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.

2. Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.

3. Be complete and provide context when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one's own biases in the work.

4. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.

5. While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.

6. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.

7. Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation.

8. Do not accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.

9. Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.

Ideally, visual journalists should:

1. Strive to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public. Defend the rights of access for all journalists.

2. Think proactively, as a student of psychology, sociology, politics and art to develop a unique vision and presentation. Work with a voracious appetite for current events and contemporary visual media.

3. Strive for total and unrestricted access to subjects, recommend alternatives to shallow or rushed opportunities, seek a diversity of viewpoints, and work to show unpopular or unnoticed points of view.

4. Avoid political, civic and business involvements or other employment that compromise or give the appearance of compromising one's own journalistic independence.

5. Strive to be unobtrusive and humble in dealing with subjects.

6. Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.

7. Strive by example and influence to maintain the spirit and high standards expressed in this code. When confronted with situations in which the proper action is not clear, seek the counsel of those who exhibit the highest standards of the profession. Visual journalists should continuously study their craft and the ethics that guide it.

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