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Ethics in Photojournalism: Authenticity and Sensitivity in Coverage of Tragic Events

Minla Linn Shields

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ETHICS IN PHOTOJOURNALISM:
AUTHENTICITY AND SENSITIVITY IN COVERAGE OF TRAGIC EVENTS

by
MINLA LINN SHIELDS

Under the Direction of Dr. Carrie Packwood Freeman

ABSTRACT

Photojournalism captures moments within an event or space in time that are used to tell a larger story. Photographs are powerful tools for communication because these moments not only represent facts; they also have an ability to speak to viewers on a relatable and emotional level. With this power comes ethical responsibility and natural tension points between photograph, and journalistic practices.

Journalism’s ethics codes group points of discussion specific to photographs into categories of manipulation, privacy, or graphic content. This thesis argues that these issues fall into broader overlapping themes of authenticity and sensitivity. Using visual analysis of four photographs from the Boston Marathon bombing and Newtown school shooting, it considers how journalists deal with the relationship between photography and journalistic theory using this ethical framework of authenticity and sensitivity. It concludes with a discussion of best practices for coverage of tragic events from the real-world perspective of the photojournalist.

INDEX WORDS: Photography, Photojournalism, Visual journalism, Communication, Ethics, Media ethics, Boston Marathon bombing, Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting, Boston, Massachusetts, Newtown, Connecticut
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AUTHENTICITY AND SENSITIVITY IN COVERAGE OF TRAGIC EVENTS

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DEDICATION

To Jerry whose love and support has sustained me for more than half of my life.
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It began with UGA Professor Mark Johnson encouraging me finish the undergraduate degree I bailed on 33 years prior. Dr. Diane Miller took my mess of a transcript from 1975 and interpreted it into current day possibilities. With that, at the age of 56, I found myself retired from journalism and back in college. I didn't know what to expect, but what I found was an environment that challenged and invigorated me. And when I landed in Dr. Greg Lisby's Communication Law course as a transient student at GSU, I was completely hooked.

A year later, BA in hand, I wasn't ready to stop. Fortified by Dr. Lisby's encouragement I applied to GSU's graduate program and was accepted. In grad school I was challenged to think critically and consider the theory behind the practice of my career. I had the opportunity to teach my craft and discovered that teaching is some of the most stressful work I’ve ever done. Dr. Jaye Atkinson made being her researcher fun and taught me a new way to consider aging.

Dr. Carrie Packwood Freeman carefully guided this thesis and forced me to peel back the many layers of ethical reasoning in an attempt to uncover truths. It is a direct result of her tireless editing of many drafts and her thoughtful comments on them. Dr. Nate Atkinson taught me visual theory that, had I known earlier, would certainly have helped me win more arguments in news meetings. He pushed me to rewrite a contestable draft into a thoughtful paper that became the premise for this thesis. Throughout, Dr. Lisby’s continued support kept me going and his steady doses of law – with its wonderful concrete facts – were just what my too pragmatic brain needed when ideas threatened to overwhelm.

Hank Klibanoff supported this journey with encouragement and more than one letter of recommendation. I am fortunate to call him friend.
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1 INTRODUCTION

The explosion of content generation afforded by technology and the Internet has threatened journalism’s normative role in American society. What sets the voices of journalists apart in this information overload is credibility, largely based on practices, including adherence to standards of ethics that have been their guiding principles for decades. Photojournalists are reporters not simply recorders, guided by standards that seek to ensure truthful representations “leading viewers to the best ‘visual truth’ he or she can find and convey” (Newton, 2001, p. 91). Photojournalistic credibility depends on ethical actions of photojournalists who understand the power of the photographic medium.

There are numerous examples of the power of news photographs to end wars and advance social movements. When photography is used for journalistic storytelling, this power to evoke strong emotional response can cause the photograph to transcend the event and, if care is not given, manipulate the reader in ways that are at odds with journalism’s ethical mandate. The preamble of the National Press Photographers (NPPA) Code of Ethics (see Appendix C) states:

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. (NPPA, 2012, Preamble)

Callously intrusive can refer to invasion of the subject’s privacy or the intrusiveness of depicting graphic content. Manipulation most often refers to the actual altering of the image. To that end, scholarly research on codes groups points of discussion specific to photographs into the categories of manipulation, privacy, or graphic content. This thesis approaches these issues using the broader themes of authenticity and sensitivity that are sometimes at odds with one another,
but allow for overlapping discussions. Authentic reporting separates journalism from noise; sensitivity in reporting separates photojournalists from paparazzi.

Using visual analysis (which employs both qualitative content and discourse analysis) of four photographs from the Boston Marathon bombing and Sandy Hook School shooting and textual analysis of reader comments, this thesis considers how journalists and the public deal with the relationship between photography and journalistic normative theory grounded in this ethical framework of authenticity and sensitivity. Additionally, through textual analysis of professional publications, it considers the tension points between theory and practice as journalists make decisions in the field, often under pressure.

This work advances the current body of scholarly research, in part, because it uses specific photographs from these two recent news events to consider ethical mandates in visual journalism. The Boston Marathon as a sporting event is heavily covered by the media, so when bombs exploded during 2013’s race, killing three people and wounding more than 260 others, visual journalists were instantly on the scene producing images of carnage seldom seen in typical “aftermath” reporting. The resulting images provide a unique opportunity to combine for discussion the ethical issues of emotional manipulation of the audience, accepted practices of image alteration, invasion of privacy, and concern for the graphic nature of images. There are far fewer compelling images from the school shootings at Sandy Hook, a fact that points to a different ethical dilemma faced by photographers who needed to capture the magnitude of a tragic news event by covering grief in its aftermath. Ethical concerns in this type of situation typically involve weighing an individual’s privacy against news value. Together these two events encompass a wide range of ethical issues faced by photographers in all sorts of situations and the conclusions of this research can be widely applied. Limiting the discussion to tragic events,
where ethical issues can be most challenging, is a means to focus and allow for deeper
discussion.

Finally, the purpose of this work is to bring a new perspective to the scholarship of
photojournalism ethics by combining theory and practice under these central themes. It combines
debate within the professional community, drawn from the archives of professional publications,
with scholarly research to inform a practical discussion of best practices for photographers in the
field and editors making picture selection. My 33-year career as a photographer then photo editor
for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* enables me to present the discussion from the journalist’s
point of view where real-world situations can be at odds with best practices.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Photojournalism, the practice of visual reporting, captures moments within an event or space in time that are used to tell a larger story, “responding to, contributing to and mediating the understanding of contemporary culture” (Newton, 2001, p. 3). Photojournalism is variously defined as reporting with a camera or visual storytelling. “Photojournalism has as its underpinning a desire to portray accurately a visual scene which people around the world can relate to, respond to, and believe. Believability is the backbone of news imagery” (Harris, 2001, para. 15).

Photographs are powerful tools for communication because the captured moments not only represent facts, they also have an innate ability to speak to the viewer on a relatable and emotional level. With this power comes ethical responsibility and natural tension points for journalistic practices. This literature review examines scholarship on photography, photojournalism, and ethics. It begins with an overview of the theories behind the power of photographs to communicate and the various levels on which we read them. Photographic theorists describe the inherent tension of photography’s communicative power in terms of connotative and denotative, informative and affective. This thesis will use that theoretical foundation to argue that similar tension exists in photojournalistic communication between the seemingly opposing forces of authenticity and sensitivity. By considering the theoretical underpinnings of journalism next, we will begin to see where ethical concerns for responsible use of photographs as journalistic communication might emerge.

The second section of this literature review narrows the focus to examine scholarly research on specific photojournalistic practices. Here, photojournalism ethics, based on utilitarian theory, becomes the framework for specific discussions of authenticity and sensitivity.
The two broad and overlapping categories are used to describe the push-pull of utilitarian concerns seeking a balance between the public’s right to know and the individuals right to privacy, paralleling the authenticity (right to know) and sensitivity (privacy) tension at the core of this thesis. This section concludes with a review of ethical debates related to one practice relevant to this study, the publication of graphic images.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

In order to understand the importance of photojournalism as a form of communication, the first section of this literature review deals with general theories of photographic communication, the levels on which we read and relate to images, and journalism’s normative role in society. This section also provides an overview of ethical theories of the media.

2.1.1 Photographic Theory

News photographs do more than just illustrate events. It is the widely accepted practice of scholars to distinguish between a photograph’s literal (denotative) meaning and its more volatile connotative constructions. Connoted messages include ideology and belong in the realm of moral discourse. Foundational scholars on this topic include Roland Barthes and Stuart Hall. Barthes (1983, p. 198) positions news photographs as paradoxical in nature. Their “objectivity” is derived from the idea that their denoted meaning is simply an “analogon” of the scene or literal reality as simply a record of things seen. In contrast, the emotionally piercing quality of photographs functions as their connotative power, which “draws from broad symbolic systems in lending meaning to what is depicted” (Zelizer, 2010, p. 3). This power is derived in part because we take photographs to be true, thus the paradox. Additionally, to Barthes, the photographic process, which includes composition and selection, makes them subject to professional, aesthetic and ideological norms, which are also connotative in that they construct meaning. In this sense,
the connoted message is also “the manner in which the society communicates what it thinks of [the image]” or, put more simply, reader response to it (1983, p. 197). Marita Sturken (2009) interprets Barthes this way: “The photograph is imagined to have, depending on its context, a power that is primarily affective or a power that is primarily informative. Both powers reside in the mythical truth-value of the photograph” (p. 18). This dichotomy is particularly important when photos are used for journalistic communication, where the affective/informative balance, in part, determines authenticity. The idea of context will be important to later discussions of photo selection and use in publications.

Stuart Hall (1973) discusses denotation as operating under a hidden sign marked “this really happened, see for yourself” (p. 188). Denotation, Hall says, is “precise, literal and unambiguous” (p. 176). In contrast, he sees selection as part of the connotative power of photographs. He discusses news value (the ranking of importance journalists give to stories and photographs) as being an ideological structure rather than a neutral index. Emotional appeal is one such news value often “made salient by personifying events” and the emotionally piercing quality of personalized photographs is part of their connotative power (p. 182). Hall (1973) explains we “insert the photo into a set of thematic interpretations, which permits the sign (photo) via connoted meanings, to serve as the index of an ideological theme” (p. 184).

Foundational scholars in visual theory include Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen whose pioneering book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, first published in 1996 with updates in 2006, takes a social semiotic approach to the study of visual representation. They say their book, like all semiotics, is about signs, though they prefer the term “sign-makers.” In the most basic terms, forms (signifiers), such as color, perspective and lines are chosen by the image-creator to make the meaning (signified) (2006, p. 6). The scholars use theorist Michael
Halliday’s terms to describe the semiotic function of visual texts as 1) ideational, 2) interpersonal, and 3) textual (2006, p. 15). The ideational function, critical to credibility in photojournalism, is how the image represents the world around us. Modality, described by the authors as the truth-value of this representation, is determined by factors such as detail, depth and context of background, light, and color. High modality is the most believable and is represented by the baseline standard of a clear, well-lit photograph showing the subject in the context of the background. It best represents “naturalism” or what the viewer would have seen in person. Extremes of these factors, such as poor quality of light, high saturations of color, or tight crops lacking background detail diminish modality and therefore photographic authenticity (p. 172).

The interpersonal function of images is also a crucial component in visual journalism seeking authentic communication. Choices made by the photographer are one factor in determining this interpersonal narrative. Interaction and power relations are created through lens choice, perspective and camera angle. For example a low-angle perspective, looking up at the subject, gives the subject power over the viewer. Conversely, looking down on a subject diminishes them. Close-ups allow an imaginary intimate relationship between subject and viewer; medium shots (3/4 body or waist up) enact a social relationship; and long angle (full body) depictions are seen as impersonal.

The third meta-function of visual meaning according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) is composition, which is created by positioning, salience, and framing:

- Positioning refers to the information value determined by placement of subjects within the frame of an image or the placement of photographs and text on a page. Using a horizontal axis, the left side of the frame is the Given. Subjects placed left of center are
the familiar or agreed-upon point of departure for the message. Subjects on the right side are said to be New and potentially contestable, so the viewer pays more attention to them (p. 181). Using the vertical axis, what is placed at the top of the frame is Ideal and what is placed at the bottom of the frame is Real (p. 186). Placing the subject in the center (Centre) makes it the nucleus of the information and all other elements become ancillary and dependent, which can mitigate the x and y axis structures (p. 196).

- Salience, or the “visual weight” of elements in an image is determined by compositional factors such as placement, size, color, and focus that create a hierarchy no matter where they appear in the image (p. 202). The most salient point element in the image draws the viewer’s eye to it first. The viewer follows a “reading path” from the most-to-least salient elements.

- Framing is the absence or presence of devices that visually connect or disconnect elements in the image. Such devices help determine visual hierarchy through connectedness instead of position or weight. The more connected the elements are, the more they belong together as a single unit. Connectedness can be realized in proximity or with the aid of “vectors”, such as perspective lines or gazes that help point the way (p. 204).

Formal analysis of an image employs an inventory of the literal elements of the image, called “elements of design” by Marguerite Helmers (2006, p. 34) to determine meaning. They include color, value, line, shape, form texture and space. Arranged together these elements create the “principles of design” that tell a story, create an emotion, or make an argument. Helmers lists these principles as perspective, point of view, framing, dominance, balance, proportion, pattern, contract and grid. Meanings determined by these types of formal reading of the image should be
an important consideration in journalism seeking authentic and sensitive connections. “Visual structures do not simply reproduce the structures of ‘reality’… they produce images of reality which are bound up with the interests of social institutions within which the images are produced, circulated and read.” They are ideological and contain a “deeply important semantic dimension” (Kress, 2006, p. 47).

Gillian Rose (2012) describes the meaning of visual texts as occurring at the “sites” of 1) production, 2) the image, and 3) viewing (p. 16). Content analysis provides a formal reading at the site of the image itself, where discourse occurs at the sites of production and viewing. Rose defines discourse, as “statements that structure the way a thing is thought and the way we act on the basis of that thinking” (p. 189) and attributes it to the work of Michel Foucault. Discourse analysis of visual elements seeks to create meaning by considering factors beyond the formal elements contained in the image. First, at the site of production, the photographer must be sure that the picture conveys proportional, authentic representation of the scene. Choices made by the photographer can skew meaning. Discourse also occurs at the production site of newspaper layout and web page design where image size and placement on the page are elements of design that signal importance. Here the context of images and associated words provides discursive meaning. At the site of viewing, readers construct discursive meaning. Factors such as audience (how we relate to or see ourselves in others), intertextuality (relationship to other texts and images) and context are considered in these discursive deconstructions. Since the goal of journalism is authentic representation to inform, educate, and foster reasoned debate, careful attention needs to be paid to reader-constructed meanings, which are often connotative and emotionally laden. Research on how viewers relate to these connotative meanings on an ideological level and, therefore, as part of moral discourse will be considered next.
Janis Edwards (2012) says newspaper photographs resonate because they are “easily recalled, stabilized, and repeated representations” that encourage viewers to “consider events and their symbolic significance through the pictures of a moment” (p. 683). She provides as example, “a slain president’s son saluting the funeral cortege, the raising of a flag on an embattled Pacific island, the horrific impact as a terrorist-flown jet crashes into a skyscraper, a hooded prisoner posed for torture” (p. 683). Photographs such as these have the ability to create, perpetuate or implicate ideology. Susan Sontag (2003) describes them similarly as “memory freeze-frames,” a quick way of understanding and a “compact form for memorizing” (p. 22). As easily-recalled representations, packed with emotional interpretation, photographs help us naturalize ideology.

Additionally, scholars posit that photographs belong in the realm of moral discourse. Victoria Gallagher and Kenneth Zagacki (2007) use the example of Charles Moore’s photographs of the violence in Birmingham and Selma, Alabama during the Civil Rights Movement to show the power of photographs to create empathy and moral outrage. The scholars credit Moore’s photographs of violence with gaining the attention of the nation to the cause. The photos appearing in Life magazine “reminded viewers that a large gap existed between abstract political concepts like democracy and what was actually occurring in American streets” (p. 117).

A few scholars take a less positive view of the value of Civil Rights Movement photographs, however, and consider the way in which the mainstream press used a few iconic images to consistently frame the movement, reducing complex social issues to a simple narrative of white-on-black violence and, therefore, undermining true reform. Martin Berger (2010) says, “The appeal of civil rights photographs to whites rested largely on their success in focusing white attention on acts of violence and away from historically rooted inequities in public accommodation, voting rights, housing policies and labor practices” (para. 23). This line of
reasoning brings into question photography’s authenticity in representing a complete truth. In Berger’s exploration of “shame” (the emotional level on which whites related to the photographs), he reinforces the idea that context is key to the reading of texts. “Emotional texts are not better or worse than rational texts in general; each must be judged in context” (2011, p. 73).

Some photographs, such as Dorthea Lange’s “Migrant Mother” and Nick Ut’s “Accidental Napalm” achieve “iconic” status as symbols of an ideology. When discussing these easily recognized photographs, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites (2007) call them the “zenith” of photojournalistic achievement (p. 3). In theorizing about visual culture’s role in the public sphere, they say such images produce “complex emotional responses” that situate the individual as part of the collective. Citizenship, they say is transferable from one person to another “through acts of empathy, affectional identification, and emotional expression” (p. 145).

When considering photographs of tragedy, Barbie Zelizer (2010) makes the distinction between “as is” photos depicting a corpse and “as if” photos depicting a person, with varying degrees of certainty, about to die. Iconic “as if” photos include images of people jumping to their death from the towers on 911 and Oswald’s death at the hands of Jack Ruby. She claims the power in these “about to die” photo resides in the fact that readers are forced to consider what happens in the minutes after the photo is taken, creating a different emotional investment on the part of the reader. Zelizer, explains the different communicative purposes this way, “Where images of dead bodies often push viewers away, creating a sense of distance and objectification, images of impending death do the opposite: They often draw viewers in, fostering engagement, creating empathy and subjective involvement, inviting debate.” (Shafer, 2011, p. 3, para. 7).

As the above examples illustrate, news photographs are a powerful tool for fostering
moral discourse, as demonstrated by their ability, through the truth claims of their denotative reading and various levels of connotative reading, to create a connection between subject and viewer, including empathy and the motivation for citizens to act against wrongs in society. However, the potential for photographs to be read on a purely emotional level, without context, might be problematic to journalistic communication seeking unbiased, informed and reasoned debate. The next section will explore journalism theory in order to set up a discussion of photography’s ability to serve journalistic functions.

2.1.2 Journalism Theory

In *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*, Bill Kovach & Tom Rosentiel (2007) discuss journalism’s normative role in society to “provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing” (p. 12).

The first obligation of journalism, they say, is to truth, however, they note that truth seeking is confusing and misunderstood. They explain that journalism’s practices allow journalists to strive for a functional (rather that absolute) truth that aims to give the reader accurate facts as well as the context in which to understand them (p. 42). It is achieved through a discipline of verification maintained by thoroughness, accuracy, fairness and transparency – principles that have replaced objectivity in today’s journalism according to Dan Gillmor.

[T]he idea of objectivity is a worthy one. But we are human. We have biases and backgrounds and a variety of conflicts that we bring to our jobs every day. I’d like to toss out objectivity as a goal, however, and replace it with four other notions that may add up to the same thing. They are pillars of good journalism: thoroughness, accuracy, fairness and transparency. (Gillmor, 2005, para. 2)
Although use of the term objectivity often is criticized in academic theory, Stephen J. A. Ward (2004) insists a redefined “pragmatic objectivity” remains at the heart of ethical journalism seeking accuracy, verification, and completeness (p. 299). Traditional “just the facts” objectivity has been replaced by more interpretive, interactive story telling (p. 262) that takes into account new media changes in journalist-audience relationship. Like Hall, all of these scholars acknowledge the inherent issue of subjectivity in editorial choices. A prescription for this potential conflict is to develop credibility through processes and procedures, including the codes that govern ethical decisions.

Journalism ethics codes have long been centered on the utilitarian theory, introduced in 1789 by Jeremy Bentham, but popularized by John Stuart Mill in the 19th century (Christians, 2012, p. xii). Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism holding that moral action should weigh harm against the greater good; simply put, it seeks the most happiness and least harm to the greatest number of people. In journalistic terms, the greatest good is an informed public (often cited as the public’s right to know), which at times outweighs harm to an individual, such as loss of privacy. Christians notes that utilitarian reasoning pervades American life, including journalism where “utility calculus fits the press’s zeal for the public’s right to know” (p. xiii).

Deni Elliott (2007) explains the importance of understanding utilitarianism in journalism teaching and practice and proposes a decision tree based on principles of justice (p. 110). An action must pass through this series of questions to determine whether it is just, and only then can it advance to what she calls the final questions of “utilitarian calculus,” a term she uses to describe the quantitative aspect of the theory. These final questions include:
• How will harming this individual promote the overall good of the community? Consider whether the community will be better or worse if everyone knows that individuals can be harmed in this way for this reason.

• How will the community be harmed if the proposed action is not taken? Consider whether the community will be better or worse if everyone knows that individuals will NOT be harmed in this way for this reason (p. 111).

Because justice is the first consideration, individuals aren’t sacrificed for the good of the whole. Christians (2007) proposes another way to consider journalism ethics based in the Kantian ethics of duty. He explains the limits of a purely utilitarian approach this way:

We usually find ourselves confronting more than one moral claim at the same time involving different ethical principles. Asking only what produces the most good is too limiting. It does not cover the ordinary range of human relationships and circumstances. People recognize promise keeping, equal distribution, nonviolence, and preventing injury as moral principles. In various situations any of them might be the most stringent. (p. 120)

To him, one weakness in utilitarian approaches is that they “depend on assessing the consequences accurately, when in everyday affairs the results of our choices are often unknown, at least in the long term” (p. 120). That argument is particularly useful for considerations of sensitivity in using emotionally charged or graphic photographs and in concerns for privacy. Additionally Christians notes that technological advances and changes in the industry have “pulled the news profession away from its traditional role in facilitating democratic life” (p. 119). He proposes that “rather than searching for neutral principles to which all parties can appeal, our ethical theory should rest on a complex view of moral judgments embedded in duty
and thereby in society” (p. 119). Duty ethics extends beyond subjective approaches where ethical breaches can be rationalized.

Further complications arise when journalists and readers disagree philosophically on issues of ethics because of their different perspectives. Harris and Lester (2002) say the six philosophies most useful to visual journalists are: categorical imperative, utilitarianism, hedonism, golden mean, golden rule, and veil of ignorance. The first four are applied by visual journalists, while the last two are invoked by offended victims and readers. According to the authors, categorical imperative is applied when a journalist, oversimplifying the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, claims a photograph is news. “And since we publish news, it had to be used” (P. 46). Hedonism is any action that has a purely personal motive, such as personal satisfaction or financial gain (winning contests or selling papers). They say it is the "most denied" principle but "probably most widely applied" (p. 47). Golden mean is used to find middle ground when considering photos that might cause offense. If one extreme is to publish a graphic depiction prominently on the front page and the other extreme is not to not publish it at all, golden mean might produce a compromise such as publishing it small on an inside page. The golden rule is applied when readers complain that graphic photographs add to the grief of victims and; veil of ignorance is used by those asking the journalist to consider the feelings of the victim’s family.

Lester (1999) explains “Ethical arguments are usually not satisfying” and there is no winner “when perspective guides a determination.” He cites as example the publication of graphic photos, which are justified as benefitting the community by journalists using utilitarian approaches even though they disturb individual viewers. “The underlying philosophy for [readers] is most probably the Golden Rule. It is important to understand that the two conflicting philosophies have long been debated by philosophers without a satisfactory resolution.
Emotional issues find little room for compromise” (ch. 1, para. 22).

Harvard philosopher Sissela Bok (as cited by Whitehouse, 2010) identified a test for ethical decision-making using three levels of publicity. First, can you justify your actions to your own conscience? This is a question a photographer in the field must ask and it’s the easiest to answer affirmatively in order to justify shooting a scene. Even a “great” photo, with tremendous emotional appeal that honestly reflects the event surrounding it, must be considered in terms of news value. Is there a reason to risk potential harm to subject and reader by photographing the most vulnerable in times of tragedy? Is there a defensible greater good or is it simply about contests and egos? The second question involves justification to your colleagues, which calls into play an understanding of professional practices and codes of ethics. Bok’s final and greatest test of publicity is whether your action can be justified to “the whole world of reasonable people”? This question provides the basis for ethical decision-making involving the subject and reader. Ginny Whitehouse posits, “It is far more difficult to justify violating ethical norms to the whole world than to yourself thinking alone” (p. 313).

2.2 Ethical Issues in Photojournalistic Practices

Research on photojournalism and ethics tends to focus four primary areas, which include: digital alteration of photographs, concern for the subject’s privacy, the publication of graphic images, and how ethics codes address images (Keith, 2006, p. 247; Harris, 2002, p.50).

The first three of these concerns fall into two broad and overlapping categories – authenticity and sensitivity – that will be discussed next.

2.2.1 Authenticity

A citizen and a journalist may differ over the choices made about what is important. But citizens can accept those differences if they are confident the journalist is trying to make
news judgments to serve what readers need and want. The key is citizens must believe the journalists’ choices are not exploitative—they are not simply offering what will sell—and that journalists aren’t pandering. (Kovach, 2007, p. 213)

A photojournalist’s goal is to maintain the credibility of photographs through authentic reporting. Used in this context, authentic photojournalism can be described using four interconnected principles:

1. Authentic photos truthfully and accurately reflect the scene being depicted. In photojournalistic terms, accuracy refers to the integrity of a photograph free of manipulation and truthful in meaning as seen through formal reading of its elements.

2. Authentic photos provide complete context. Photographs that are accurate to the scene do not depict the outliers at news events or tell only half of a story. To tell the story accurately and completely, photographs sometimes need the context provided by associated words, including headlines and captions. Photographer David LaBelle describes it this way:

   It is the words that appeal to our intellect while images generally appeal more quickly to our emotions. Pictures need words. They need context. Unfortunately we have been taught that a picture is worth a thousand words. This is true on rare occasions. But most pictures need words to complete the understanding and the experience. (LaBelle, 2013)

3. Authentic photos must have proportional news value. Traditionally news value is determined by impact, timeliness, proximity, currency, prominence, conflict, weight, and emotional appeal. These values are considered in conjunction with one another, however not all are equal. In coverage of tragic events, impact (sometimes determined
by proximity) determines a journalist’s willingness to emotionally disturb the reader. Emotional pulls without the justification of impact (importance) become gratuitous and manipulative.

4. Authentic photos are not manipulated.

The final principle of authentic photojournalism is freedom from manipulation. NPPA Code of Ethics (2012) directly addresses three types of manipulation as concerns for accuracy. First, it cautions the photographer to avoid being manipulated by staged photo ops or “pseudo” news events (standard 2). Additionally photographers should not “intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events” being covered (standard 5). Finally it states, “Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images … in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects” (standard 6). Although staged photographs is a fascinating topic with roots back to Mathew Brady’s Civil War photographs (Lester, 1999, ch.6, para.11) actual manipulation of the digital image is the discussion most relevant to this thesis and will be considered next.

Editing manipulation usually takes the form of digitally altering the actual pixels of an image, most often using powerful PhotoShop imaging editing software. The software has the ability to “clone” one area of a photo into another to add or remove objects. For example cloning nearby sky and placing it over power lines that distract from a scene can create a cleaner image. In photojournalism this practice is strictly forbidden as evidenced by The Associated Press’s News Values and Principles (see Appendix C), which states “AP pictures must always tell the truth. We do not alter or digitally manipulate the content of a photograph in any way … No element should be digitally added to or subtracted from any photograph.” (AP, 2013, Images/para.1). A recent and seemingly innocuous incident of cloning illustrates the point. Contract freelance photographer and Pulitzer Prize winner Narciso Contreras was fired from The
Associated Press (AP) for cloning out a colleague’s video camera that appeared in the corner of a photograph taken in Syria in September of 2013.

In responding to the incident Santiago Lyon, Vice President and Director of Photography for AP said that even though the cloned corner was of little importance to the event or the meaning of the photograph, "AP's reputation is paramount and we react decisively and vigorously when it is tarnished by actions in violation of our ethics code” (Colford, 2014, para.3). While some might make the argument that the camera was not a part of the actual scene and therefore taking it out actually made the image more faithful to the news, photojournalists see any manipulation of this sort as a slippery slope.

There is a great deal of scholarly work on the subject of digital manipulation, some of it focusing on how murky ethics codes, and practices, can be. In simplest terms, codes generally allow PhotoShop enhancing (such as lightening to ensure faithful reproduction), but not altering (such as cloning discussed above). Thomas Wheeler (2002) says it is not helpful for codes to simply assign “an ethical hierarchy” to various techniques. Cropping, for example, can be misleading if information essential to a photograph’s meaning and context is removed (p. 197).
Susan Keith (2006) posits that although 73% of large circulation newspapers have formal rules about the digitally altering photographs, a survey of design directors of large circulation newspaper reveals 40.5% can recall recent examples of unethical digital manipulation in their own newsrooms (p. 248).

Phototruth – or the expectation of reality – is “qualified” according to Wheeler. The reader understands and allows for variations in the process of translating scene to print, however, demands preservation of the fundamental meaning of the image (p. 130). “This ‘qualified expectation of reality’, or QER, derives from professional codes of ethics, traditions of photographic grammar, some presumed awareness of photographic processes, and a public faith founded on decades of experience” (p. 131). Dona Schwartz (2003) evaluates strings of commenting on the NPPA’s discussion board regarding digital manipulation to posit that there is a great deal of confusion and ethical uncertainty on the very complicated subject, which suggests “a range of ethical stances rather than a uniform approach” (p. 45). She proposes strategies based on different belief systems: depict as the camera sees it; depict as someone present at the scene would see it; and authorize the photographer to make decisions based on prevailing and consistent norms (p. 46). The first two belief systems prioritize authenticity, as they address digital manipulation by limiting it to “toning” and processes to ensure faithful reproduction. The third approach is, according to Schwartz (2003), a “social contract” between the journalist and reader, encompassing a wider range of issues, including authenticity. It relies on the journalist to build credibility through accuracy and transparency, much like Kovach’s elements described earlier in this review. It suggests the need for written rules, or codes, to govern professional practices by acknowledging the subjectivity of photographs to “represent rather than duplicate” events and dislodges “naïve assumptions about photography’s inherent objectivity” (Schwartz,
This approach acknowledges theory that positions photographs as having connotative meaning beyond their “evidentiary” truth.

Theory accepts that both denotative and connotative readings of photographs give them the power to reach the viewer on an emotional level. In photojournalism, ethics demands authentic representation and restraint from another kind of manipulation, the emotional manipulation of the audience that comes with photos gratuitously depicting tragedy and violence. Since stimulating moral discourse is the desired effect of journalism, the need for it to be reasoned is paramount to its success. How then do emotionally charged photographs help or hinder that discourse? Through an examination of research on specific photojournalistic practices, we can begin to see where natural tension points might exist.

One common tactic of any type of journalistic storytelling is to “personalize” the story by focusing on one person involved in or affected by the events, so that readers can relate on a personal level. David Levi Strauss says “one needs first to feel the pain of others before one can begin to act to alleviate it. And one of the ways humans recognize the pain of others is by seeing it, in images” (2007, para. 9). In her book *The Burden of Visual Truth*, Julianne Newton (2001) quotes a photojournalist describing it this way, “I want to close the gaps between people. A photograph can cause you to stop and look at another person’s life. It’s the only way we’ll get closer to each other” (p. 10). The power of photographs to emotionally manipulate, rather than effectively communicate, lies in this personal connection of reader-to-subject. In simplest terms, photographs must seek emotional authenticity.

Photographers in the field and editors making publishing decisions with regards to this type of intimate photography are called upon to make ethical choices based an individual’s privacy and the public’s need to see graphic images of horrific news events. Sensitivity to both
subject and reader is another way of ensuring emotional balance. Topics of sensitivity are discussed next.

### 2.2.2 Sensitivity

Authenticity and sensitivity are often in play as journalists seek effective storytelling. They sometimes become opposing forces journalism’s ethical dance of greater good. For example, Nick Ut’s photograph of a naked girl running from the effects of a Napalm strike in Vietnam intentionally pushed the standards of sensitivity, deliberately disturbing the reader, in order to authentically convey the magnitude of the war. When journalists find themselves covering the aftermath of tragic events, personalizing the story requires them to interview and photograph people in their worst moments of grief. Ethical concerns in these situations involve sensitivity to the subject and concerns for invasion of privacy.

Journalism ethics regarding privacy is most often grounded in Mill’s concept of utilitarianism and the greater good. The duty to inform the public must be weighed against the harm caused to the individual whose privacy rights are at risk. NPPA’s code, one of the few that is specific to visual journalists, calls for photographers to “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” (NPPA, 2012, standard 4). Ginny Whitehouse (2010) notes that written codes of ethics for media professionals typically address issues of privacy under the umbrellas of fairness or minimizing harm. Like legal codes, they often make distinctions between public and private citizens, affording more rights to those who have not thrust themselves into the public eye. She cites an example of the Society for Professional Journalists’ code, which requires “an overriding public need” to justify intrusion into anyone’s privacy (p. 5).
A shortcoming of applying utilitarian theory to evaluating photojournalism sensitivity is that harm cannot always be accurately measured. In some cases, reader reaction becomes a barometer. Today’s practice of online commenting makes audience response an increasingly important and visible part of new media practices, but audience outrage, on behalf of the subject of photographs depicting grief, is not new, as the following example illustrates.

![Figure 2-2 Drowning victim, Bakersfield, Ca. 1989](image)

In 1986, after the *Bakersfield Californian* ran this photograph of a local 5-year-old drowning victim and his grieving family, the paper received more than 400 telephone calls, 500 letters and a bomb threat in protest of the photograph. Approximately 80 readers canceled their subscription to the paper before the editor, Robert Bentley, issued an apology (Lester, 1999, Ch.4, para. 36). Did running the photo have news value that would justify the possible harm to the subject and outrage of the community? Did the photograph stop other children from drowning, or lead to corrective action of unsafe conditions? Would a less disturbing photograph have had the same effect? Opinions on the answers to these questions are mixed. In the two months prior to the boy’s death, 14 people drowned in same general vicinity along the Kern River. In the month after the photo appeared there were only two (Elliott, 2003, para. 13).
strict interpretation of journalism’s utilitarian-based ethics codes might justify running the disturbing photograph. The power of the photo to serve journalistic communication is in its emotional punch, which would have been diminished with a less invasive selection. Those questioning its news value, however, say a true causal link cannot be made and generic grieving photos are manipulative and serve no purpose.

In Lessons in Death and Life, Dave LaBelle (1993) describes the backlash to “pictures of survivors in mourning” that took place in many newsrooms in the early 1990s. Editors felt like this type of photograph had become “redundant” and, at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the ombudsman called for a moratorium on their publication (p. 20). LaBelle counters that argument with a discussion of the inherent value of “admittedly unpleasant images” to all concerned–victims, public and journalists. His assertion that these images, when published responsibly, can provide comfort and help victims of tragedy cope (p. 32) is backed by empirical evidence throughout the book. Strauss (2007) says that 9/11, which he calls one of the most photographed tragic events in history, “effectively reset the clock on documentary images, clearing away years of accumulated censure.” He says “Photography’s special capacity as a medium for mourning brought us close to it again and made us realize how much we need public, shared images to make sense of such events” (para. 2). Susan Keith (2006) however, cautions that images depicting personal grief have the potential to disregard “human dignity and the right to private grief of the individual involved.” She says basing decisions mostly on whether the grief was public or private, a common justification, is inadequate (p. 250).

The photographer’s approach is an important aspect of sensitivity discussed by journalism ethics scholars such as Deni Elliott:

A mother crying over the death of her daughter is not simply an image to be focused, a
print to be made, and a picture to be published. The mother's grief is a lesson in humanity. If the photojournalist produces a picture without a thought for her tragedy, the lesson is lost. But if the photographer cares for her loss, is made more humane, and causes the readers to share in her grief, photojournalism has reached its highest potential. (Elliott, 2001, para. 19)

The primary consideration for publication of emotionally charged photographs needs to be news value, which must go beyond emotional appeal. “The fact that something makes for a ‘hell-of-a good picture’ does not make it news” (Elliott, 2003, para. 9). However, when news value demands, disturbing readers might be the desired effect for authentic storytelling.

### 2.2.3 Publication of Graphic Images

Authenticity, privacy and reader sensitivity are all crucial components in ethical decisions about whether to publish graphic photos. This discussion begins with a case study: In the spring of 2004, four American contractors were killed in the city of Fallujah, Iraq. Their burned bodies were dragged through the streets, to be beaten by crowds of civilians and two of them were hung from a bridge over the Euphrates River. The resulting graphic images provide a good discussion of how American newsrooms deal with the publication of graphic images.

*Figure 2-3 New York Times front 4/1/2005*
In a Neiman Reports story about the Fallujah photo decision-making process, St. Louis Post Dispatch editor Ellen Soeteber is quoted as saying, “It was one of the toughest calls I’ve ever had to make” (Perlmutter and Major, 2004, p. 71). The report provides a set of basic questions that need to be answered by all decision-makers “whether one edited a small-town daily or a network newscast” (p. 71). They are:

- What pictures should we use, where and why?
- Which ones should we not use and why not?
- Should we digitally edit those we use to reduce their “horror” quotient?
- For print editors, should the pictures go on an inside page of the front page?
- How should we caption and contextualize what we are showing?

  An additional question should be added to consider online platforms.

- For online platforms, should the picture go behind a warning screen?

The Neiman authors note the transparency around the process as many papers wrote about their choice in ombudsman columns, expanded op-ed pages, or subsequent stories reporting on strong, though divided, reader reaction. Faced with harsh criticism from its readers, *U.S. News and World Report* published this apology, “Our intention was not to offend but to present a faithful record of a transformative moment. In doing so, however, we did offend, and for that I apologize” (p. 72).

The faithful record (accuracy)/offense (sensitivity) dichotomy, at the heart of ethical
decision-making, was also expressed in the following quote by *The New York Times*’ executive editor Bill Keller:

You can’t shy away from the news and the news in this case is the indignities visited upon the victims and the jubilation of the crowd. At the same time you have to be mindful of the pain these pictures would cause to the families and the potential revulsion of readers, and children, who are exposed to this over their breakfast table. (p. 74)

In newsroom lingo, passing the “the breakfast test” is shorthand for a judgment call on the potential for reader revulsion. The transparency associated with this type of public discussion of “angst and indecision” about the Fallujah images was good for journalism according to Perlmutter and Major (2004). “One reason why public esteem for and faith in the fairness, accuracy and honesty of journalism is so low is the public’s feeling that news professionals are not ‘people’” (p. 74). Humanity is revealed in these “gut wrenching debates” and admissions of error. Readers who are part of the discussion feel their voices matter, making the process both accessible and flexible. “Because of the Fallujah debate, bus drivers, insurance salespeople and firefighters heard and saw that journalists, like everybody else, face tough decisions in their jobs and struggle through them with similar reliance on professional codes, ethical constraints and thoughtful uncertainty” (p. 74). The need for a new set of 21st century guiding principles to supplement codes has been suggested by Kenny Irby, senior faculty at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. They include transparency – a willingness to share how reporting was done – and engagement – an ongoing effort to understand the needs of the audience you serve (Irby, 2014, presentation).

Graphic images of people who are badly injured and perhaps “about to die” present similar ethical challenges though, to scholar Barbie Zelizer they also allow for a compromise.
The about-to-die image offers one solution to the discomfort and squeamishness raised by pictures of death in the news. Offering an escape hatch both for journalists who are reticent about showing gruesome photos and for viewers who are not comfortable with their depiction, it's as if these images do the manual labor of depiction without getting anyone's hands dirty. (Zelizer, 2011, para. 3)

Scholars call the process through which content is selected for publication “gatekeeping.” Further, they say, it is where “the social reality transmitted by the news media is constructed” (Shoemaker, 2001, p. 233 as cited by Fahmy, 2005, p. 150). They acknowledge that factors beyond ethical mandates enter into newsroom decision-making, which may trump strict adherence to codes of ethics (Fahmy, 2005, p. 160). Images of war have an additional layer of political sensitivity that affects picture use (Perlmutter and Major, 2004; Fahmy, 2005). Other considerations include organizational mandate and cultural norms of the target audience (Fahmy, 2005, p. 150), which might account for regional and size-of-publication variables in picture selection. A small-town newspaper in the south, for example, would likely choose less graphic photos than a large paper with a national audience.

Additionally, scholars point to standardized news frames to explain the predictability and lack of variety in photo selection in American newsrooms (Fahmy, 2005, p. 151). For example AP’s practice of labeling what they consider the “best” photos of the day with “APTOPIX” serves to standardize the visual gatekeeping process. Photo editors making decisions in newsrooms find comfort in validation that their choices are the “best” ones. Photographers and photo editors surveyed about their perception of picture use from 9/11 and the Afghan War say factors such as those above can be more important than an organization’s codes of ethics. “[O]ne could argue that written codes are perceived to be less important in the gatekeeping process, as
external factors seem more central in selecting graphic imagery of tragic events” (Fahmy, 2005, p. 160).

Research also centers on inconsistencies in American journalistic practices when it comes to the use of graphic images. Research suggests that American news organizations are more likely to publish graphic images of foreign subjects. Arielle Emmett (2010) uses photos of the Haitian earthquake to posit that while the American press is “often squeamish” at running disturbing images, they seemed less so in their selection of images from Haiti. She questions whether “the deluge of images of naked corpses and severed body parts was insensitive and dehumanizing” (p. 28) and quotes numerous picture editors articulating that ethical balance of need to know and sensitivity.

Sue O’Brien (1993) considers a Pulitzer Prize winning photograph of the very graphic and public murder of a Zulu spy in Soweto, South Africa, to posit that readers are savvy to the difference between “photos run for shock value and shocking photos run to tell an important story” (p. 71). She outlines ethical decision making of picture selection that ranges from “the breakfast test”, which often leads to choosing weaker photos, to assertive and thoughtful use of the most dramatic photos. The later, “less condescending” approach requires contextualizing the story through associated words and packaging (p. 71). O’Brien summarizes “simple utilitarian balancing: If the photograph violates principles of compassion or taste does its social or news value outweigh the other values it violates?” and posits that contextualization can shift the balance (p. 71). A central theme in much of this literature is the subjective nature of visual gatekeeping, which relies on instincts rather than precise formulas to implement ethical decisions. “When dealing with graphic photographs, the context of the news, self-censorship, personal ethics, and audience expectations are active ingredients in the selection process”
Scholarship on ethical photojournalism considers a wide range of topics including basic utilitarian theory, ethics codes and actual practices. This literature review seeks to introduce fundamental theory on photography as a means for understanding the power of photographs in journalistic practices as an additional resource for future scholarship.
3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first question proposed by this thesis explores photographic and journalistic theory.

*RQ1: How should journalism deal with the natural tension points caused by photography’s ability to speak to viewers on an emotional level and journalism’s mandate for reasoned discourse?*

Additionally, this thesis will be grounded in a discussion of specific examples that consider ethical mandates and real world situations. The questions here are:

*RQ2: How do and should journalists apply professional ethical principles dealing with authenticity and sensitivity in real world situations covering the aftermath of tragic events?*

*RQ3: Does analysis of the sample photographs suggest the codes adequately address these issues? If not, what language should be added to the codes to alleviate tension caused by photography’s ability to speak to viewers on an emotional level and journalism’s mandate for authenticity, sensitivity and reasoned discourse?*

In answering this question, criteria for best practices and suggestions for language in photojournalism codes of ethics will emerge
4 METHODOLOGY

This thesis considers still-photography used in news coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing (April 15, 2013) and Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting (December 14, 2012) to explore photojournalism’s standards of authenticity and sensitivity. Since photographers were present to cover the marathon prior to the bombing in Boston, the event produced numerous photos, many of them graphic in nature, as the news was unfolding. At Sandy Hook, coverage primarily depicted grief in the aftermath of the event, which is more typical of the type of news photos seen out of tragedy. Combined, these events allow for a wide range of ethical topics to be discussed.

Certainly, similar photos from other tragic events of national significance, such as the school shooting in Columbine or terrorist bombing in Oklahoma, could have been chosen; however, this thesis limits case studies to two events for the purposes of scope and manageability. Additionally, the events selected are more recent and have the benefit of temporal proximity, allowing for direct comparisons and eliminating concerns for changing media practices.

The discussion does not make a distinction between types of tragedies – shootings, bombings, terrorist acts, or the work of a deranged individual – because the resulting images of carnage or grief are often similar, and concern for authenticity and sensitivity does not change. Both events are domestic because research suggests that different decision-making criteria may be employed in coverage of international tragedies. All of the photographs examined were taken by professional photojournalists employed by wire services or print publications. Although the findings should be useful to all visual journalists, this research does not address concerns that are specific to videographers or broadcast platforms.
Specific pictures to analyze were selected from The Newseum’s front-page archive, which is contributed to by more than 400 U.S. and 800 worldwide newspapers, as well as from galleries found on news organizations’ online databases. It is commonly accepted that images appearing on the front page of print media are deemed the “most significant” for journalistic storytelling. Since these events were of national importance, almost every newspaper lead with them, resulting in a significant sample pool. Additionally, the archives of online-only news sites, The Huffington Post and The Atlantic Wire, were examined to represent new media platforms. On those sites, photo galleries provided a large subset of images from which to choose.

The search was limited to U.S. based newspapers, since the resulting image sample will be analyzed against American news ethics standards. Although it can be argued that today’s global society calls for a more universalized approach to media ethics (Christians & Cooper, 2009; Alleyne, 2009), that discussion falls outside of the scope of this thesis.

The goal of this process was to identify key photographs to analyze based on ethical dilemmas of manipulation, privacy, and graphic nature, which are the broad categories in which many ethical challenges in visual journalism fall. Four key images (see appendix A and B) that represent typical photos from the respective events will show how Boston coverage dealt with graphic content, sometimes by manipulating the image to obscure carnage, and how Sandy Hook coverage negotiated issues of privacy.

Newseum’s archive includes 522 US-based newspaper front pages from April 16, 2013, the day immediately following the Boston Marathon bombing. The photo of blast victim Jeff Bauman being wheeled to an ambulance (appendix A, image 1) was used 26 times, 18 of those as the dominant image on the page. Publications leading with it included The Philadelphia Inquirer and Denver Post. One of two versions of the photo of police officers reacting to the
blast and downed runner (appendix A, image 2) was used 83 times and as the dominant image in 79 publications, including the prestigious *The Washington Post*. These figures don’t represent quantitative significance because the sheer number of images taken that day provided editors with multiple similar choices. The two photographs do, however, represent the decisions that every editor made in picture selection that day – whether to choose one of the safer, literal photos or to show carnage, and whether to crop or otherwise obscure the more graphic portions of some photos. Since the significant news of the Boston tragedy quickly evolved from the bombing to the manhunt and capture of the suspects, the nature of the images changed on subsequent days.

For the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, photos were selected from Newseum’s archive for December 15 – 17, the three days immediately following the tragic event. Since the news was not changing as quickly as it was in Boston, newspapers tended to use similar photos depicting grief for several days as the community came to terms with its loss. The photograph of Carlee Soto on her cellphone seeking news of her sister (appendix B, image 1) was used on the front of 106 of the 436 newspapers archived from December 15, the day immediately following the shootings. On subsequent days, images of individuals or small groups grieving before makeshift memorials or at candlelight vigils were used, but there wasn’t one dominant recurring image. The photograph of Aline Marie praying (appendix B, image 2) was selected from *The Huffington Post*’s online archive as a generic representation of this type of personalized grieving in part because subsequent interviews on NPR and in professional publications provide rare insight into the subject’s reaction and photographer’s response, adding real world perspectives to the research.

Professional insights were pulled, using relevant keyword searches, from the article archives of The Poynter Institute, and National Press Photographers Association, which provided
valuable links to other publications, such as Neiman Reports and The New York Times media column. Similar searches were done against each of the sample photographs and for the topics of image ethics in general. Additionally, each image was viewed as to how it fits criteria set forth in the NPPA Code of Ethics and, where possible, include reader reaction to the image as seen in online commenting.

Visual theory employs a formal reading of the elements contained in a photograph to determine its discursive meaning. Formal reading is a crucial first step in measuring authenticity in journalistic storytelling. Simply put, it answers the question of whether the photograph conveys what is intended. The methodology used here for analysis of the meanings of selected images falls under the broad scope of visual analysis and contains elements of both qualitative content analysis and discourse evaluations. It is largely based on the semiotic approach of scholars Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2008), described in the literature review of this thesis and the research of Gillian Rose (2012), who posits that content analysis provides a formal reading at the site of the image itself, where discourse analysis occurs at the sites of production and viewing.

The research questions will be answered in the following manner:

*RQ1: How should journalism deal with the natural tension points caused by photography’s ability to speak to viewers on an emotional level and journalism’s mandate for reasoned discourse?*

Using the theoretical foundations of Barthes and Kress and van Leeuwen discussed in the lit review, this question will be answered by applying the concepts of authenticity and sensitivity to the actual situations presented in the case studies. It will be shown that finding an ethical
balance between authenticity and sensitivity leads to effective journalistic communication.

**RQ2: How do and should journalists apply professional ethical principles dealing with authenticity and sensitivity in real world situations covering the aftermath of tragic events?**

First, employing both content and discourse analysis as described above, this thesis will consider the formal meanings (presumably the intention of the photographer) and constructed meanings (possible connotations or emotional appeals that thwart authenticity) of the four sample images as a way to discuss the ethical issues faced by photographers and editors in seeking sensitivity and authenticity in the coverage of tragedy.

**RQ3: Does analysis of the sample photographs suggest the codes adequately address these issues? If not, what language that should be added to the codes to alleviate tension caused by photography’s ability to speak to viewers on an emotional level and journalism’s mandate for authenticity, sensitivity and reasoned discourse?**

This final set of question will be answered in the conclusion section of the thesis. Using textual analysis of debate in professional publications and reader commenting, the photographs will be viewed against codes of ethics, and in light of real world situations, to launch a discussion of best practices.
5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Case Study 1: Jeff Bauman photo by Charles Krupa / Associated Press

Spectator Jeff Bauman was standing just a few feet from the first bomb when it exploded at the finish line of the Boston marathon in 2013. The blast severed both of his legs near his knees and left shredded skin, severed arteries, and a length of bone protruding from one. A photograph taken by AP photographer Charles Krupa of Bauman (unidentified at that time) being rushed to an ambulance was transmitted over The AP wire service in both cropped and uncropped versions (see appendix A). In his book entitled *Stronger* Jeff Bauman says the photo was the first to depict a recognizable human face. “Everyone calls it ‘iconic’ now, but at the time it was horrifying,” writes Bauman. Family members, including his father, learned of his injuries through the photograph and then had to “live with the image” for five hours as they waited for an update on his medical condition. Bauman describes the significance of the photograph this way:

> It was the talk of Boston, and maybe beyond. For the rest of the day, whenever people huddled together to talk about the bombing, they talked about me: “Did you see the man in the wheelchair? The one without his legs.” That was the short-hand people used, when they wanted to share their horror. In those first hours, that was the image that brought the tragedy home. (Bauman, 2014, para. 6)

Since publication, the photograph has become an iconic representation of the heroism surrounding the tragedy. Through numerous follow-up stories (Rohman, 2013; Bauman, 2014) Bauman and his rescuer Carlos Arredondo have achieved fame and come to symbolize “Boston Strong,” illustrating Sontag’s theory of photography’s ability to naturalize ideology.

Various treatments of this graphic photograph by print and online media outlets provide an opportunity to consider authenticity – here in the form of graphic carnage and image
alteration – and related issues of sensitivity to both subject and reader. Through formal reading of the photograph, this case study discusses the meanings of each version as a way to examine ethical authenticity. Various uses of cropped and pixelated versions will be viewed against codes of ethics demanding authentic representation and sensitivity. Professional and reader reaction will provide additional viewpoints for discussion.

5.1.1 Usage

Traditional print newspapers and their online platforms unanimously chose to run the cropped version of the photograph. Analysis of the Newseum’s front-page archive shows it was used on the fronts of 26 newspapers across the United States and as the lead image on 18 of them. None of the publications ran Bauman’s name because it was not known at the time of publication A comparison of The Denver Post and The Philadelphia Inquirer shows that some papers chose an even tighter crop than was provided by The AP to further hide the bloody right knee.

![Figure 5-1 Two versions of a tight crop on Krupa’s photo](image)

The un-cropped version appeared in a Huffington Post photo gallery and on The Atlantic’s popular “In Focus with Alan Taylor” news photography gallery. On The Atlantic site, the photograph was placed behind a warning screen requiring readers to make a conscious
decision to click to unveil it. The screen provides a measure of sensitivity similar to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*’s front-page warning of graphic content on inside pages, seen in the example of the images from Fallujah. Further, although originally the photograph behind the screen ran unaltered, 15 minutes after it was posted the decision was made by editors at *The Atlantic* to pixelate Bauman’s face (see figure 5-2) in respect for his privacy. Bauman was still unidentified when these galleries were posted; however, throughout the day his name began to appear in more places across the Internet.

![Figure 5-2 Digitally altered face](image)

*The Huffington Post’s* gallery actually ran three photographs of Jeff Bauman – both crops of Krupa’s photo and a slightly different angle shot by another photographer. The gallery contained over 200 photographs, in contrast to *The Atlantic*’s 16, indicating little to no picture editing actually took place. In *The Atlantic*’s gallery the Bauman photo was the only one containing carnage, while *The Huffington Post’s* gallery contained numerous images with extremely graphic content. A warning about graphic content appeared as the third slide in the gallery, but no single image was placed behind a warning screen.

5.1.2 **Formal readings of the photograph un-cropped, cropped, and altered**
The un-cropped photograph (figure 5-3) was shot from eye-level, because the photographer was running alongside or even backward as he followed the action, shooting only 7 frames as the group rushed by him. It is a wide angle using a technique photographers call shooting close and wide. By placing the subject in the foreground of a wide-angle shot, we have the benefit of clearly seeing both subject and surroundings. The modality of the image is high due to good light and clear detail. The street gives us a literal context and a sense of place, adding to its truth-value.

The figure of Jeff Bauman is in the Centre of the frame as the literal nucleus of the action. The people attending him are in the dependent Margins. The horizontal axis places the faces of the policemen and rescuer wearing a cowboy hat (later identified as Carlos Arredondo) as the Ideal, giving the scene a sense of hope and Bauman’s leg as the Real spelling out the horror.

Although the most salient element of the image is the policeman’s yellow jacket, the group’s close proximity to one another creates a connectedness that frames them as a single salient unit. Tension and movement are created by the action running right-to-left and diagonally out of the frame. The policeman’s lifted foot, Arredondo’s gaze, and the line created by the
bodies of Bauman and Devin Wang, the woman pushing his wheelchair, are vectors pointing in that direction. The yellow jacket first catches the reader’s eye, drawing it down the policeman’s arm – as if he is literally pointing – to the graphic detail of Bauman’s leg. The gazes of Bauman and the policeman also direct the reading path to the injuries.

Although this quickly breaking scene limited the photographer’s actual choices at the site of production, the photograph is well composed and informational. The visual elements, such as perspective, lines, and color, all work to create urgency and tension authentic to the scene. However, the discursive meaning of this photo at the site of viewing is mostly horror. It is primarily conveyed by our inability to reconcile the protruding bone and flapping skin with what we would expect to see, even in the most graphic of photographs. We question how it can possibly be real, and, as evidenced by reader comments, feel voyeuristic in looking at it. The attachment becomes almost clinical as we wonder how this man can possibly be alive and sitting up. The impersonal long shot, depicting full bodies, does not allow for a relationship to be formed between reader and viewer, so empathy for Bauman is somewhat limited.

The cropped version of the photograph (figure 5-4) is a medium shot, primarily depicting people and enacting a social relationship between subject and viewer. Although most of the street perspective is lost, enough is left to create context. Overall modality is actually heightened
by the detail and clarity in the depicted faces. The tight crop urges the viewer to focus on these faces instead of their surroundings. Bauman’s face is placed in the all-important New side of the frame to be carefully considered by the viewer. Arredondo’s face is crystal clear as the Ideal of hope, where the Real horror of Bauman’s wounds is not as clearly spelled out.

The bright yellow jacket, still the most salient element in the photograph, catches the viewer’s eye first. The reading path moves in a circle, past the face of the rescuer to Bauman’s ashen face. The connectedness of the group working in close proximity tells a complete story of urgency, action, and trauma, in almost equal proportion, as seen in faces and body language. The yellow sleeve still points to the black and burned knee and what appears to be one missing leg, giving us a hint of the carnage instead of a clear view.

At the site of production, the crop as chosen by Krupa or his editor, removes the informational aspects of the graphic nature of Bauman’s wounds. The discursive power of this version is in the subject’s faces and the viewer’s ability to connect to them. The absence of color in Bauman’s ashen face and his stoic expression add to its emotional punch at the site of viewing, as we wonder if we are looking at a man about to die. A connection is made between subject and reader through empathy and we think of what is about to happen rather than what happened. Will he make it? In contrast, the urgency conveyed in the face of Arredondo gives us hope as his gaze points us forward.
In the cropped Bauman photo viewers engage in Bauman’s plight with empathy. That connection is made more difficult in the full-frame photograph, because the viewer focuses on his leg instead of his face. The pixelated photo (figure 5-5) further draws focus to the carnage, creating the distance and objectification Zelizer says is depicted in photographs of corpses. Modality suffers by lack of detail in his face. These various uses demonstrate the complex pull of authenticity and sensitivity, which can be measured to an extent by viewer reaction.

5.1.3 Reader reaction

Although it is important to separate issues of taste from issues of ethics, reader reaction to the various uses of this photograph can be used to gauge whether its message was effective and whether publication breeched an ethical standard of sensitivity.

The Atlantic’s gallery generated 522 comments. While comments covered various topics including religion and politics, a small percentage of them directly addressed photo usage. Quantitative content and textual analysis (see Appendix C) of comments directly relating to the Bauman photo showed mixed reaction including 20 specific requests to remove the graphic photo, citing concern for his family (13), his privacy (8), and just general respect (8). Twenty-eight more generally condemned the use, including Toyko5 who thought the photo should not
have been used: “Once a picture is published online it can never be removed. If this man lives he will always be haunted by this image that he never gave permission to publish. If he dies, it will always torture his family.” Comments such as these illustrate Harris and Lester’s (2002) claim that viewers apply golden rule and veil of ignorance ethics to news coverage of tragedy.

Eight people wished they hadn’t seen it, while five warned others not to click beyond the warning screen. Eighteen viewers reminded others that the choice to click was theirs, indicating an understanding and appreciation of the warning screen practice.

Thirty commenters supported the photo’s use citing the need to see it to understand the horror of the situation. Commenters supporting use of the photo didn’t want to be “coddled” or have their news “sugar-coated”, as is the practice for traditional media sites according to some. “That one photo that is being censored by the main stream media needs to be seen by everyone, to see the real results of TERROR,” wrote a reader calling himself Devol. Words such as censorship (14) and reality (27) were used most often to justify this opinion. “Real life isn't hidden safely behind article titles and headlines; seeing what another person has experienced goes way beyond what reading and hearing about something does and it truly brings home the panic, confusion, and pain everyone there went through,” said Lavelvet, reinforcing theoretical assumptions about the power of photographic communication.

The site’s choice to obscure Bauman’s face was applauded by nine viewers, though 16 pointed out that his face was seen widely elsewhere. Viewers complaining about the pixilation reinforced the storytelling power of faces to create empathy. “The look in his eyes is heartbreaking. I just can't get him out of my head” wrote ExLawrenceGirl referencing the unaltered photo seen elsewhere. Reader Kyle Campbell posted:
I would've liked it if they didn't blur his face. So much can be said about a person's facial expression, but I'm not entirely insensitive. I can respect his privacy. But, in general, most of you people need to grow up and feel the absolute pain that so many people are feeling tonight. And, yes, these kinds of images are very important in conveying those feelings. (Taylor, 2012, comments section)

5.1.4 The Ethics Debate

Each treatment of this photo represents a choice made by a journalist considering ethics. First the photographer had to decide what to shoot and what to transmit, next editors chose whether to publish the more graphic versions of the photo and, if so, where and how they would appear.

A photojournalist’s first instinct is to shoot because once a moment is gone it cannot be recaptured. In the chaos that existed moments after the bombing these instincts were running on adrenalin in Krupa, an experienced news photographer. The actual taking of the photograph of Bauman was professional reaction and not obtrusive to the scene or an invasion of the subject’s privacy. Through no choice of his own, Bauman was at the heart of a significant news event that impacted the nation. Cropping for sensitivity was not an issue at the point of creation of the photo; there would be time for that consideration later in the process.

The decision to transmit two versions over the wires (likely made by an editor on the desk at The AP) also conformed to AP’s ethical standards. Cropping is an accepted form of editing done to perfect composition and eliminate unnecessary parts of the photo that may change its meaning or lessen its impact. In this case it was done to protect the privacy of the subject and to provide an alternative choice to the very graphic un-cropped version.
Formal readings indicate, both photos accurately reflect the tragedy though they do it in different ways – through horror or empathy. A wire service’s mission is to provide thorough reporting that will serve different types of publications; therefore they do not censor photographs that meet their ethical standards. They do provide an editor’s warning with the caption of photos that may offend. It is interesting to note that AP’s code would have specifically prohibited Krupa from pixelating Bauman’s face in the manner The Atlantic did. It states: “The faces or identities of individuals must not be obscured by Photoshop or any other editing tool” (AP, 2013, Images para. 2).

Discussions over which photograph to publish reveal the most difficult level of ethical decision-making. As noted above, most publications chose to run the cropped version of the photograph on both their print and online platforms. The New York Times Public Editor Margaret Sullivan (2013) wrote in a column that the paper considered both versions before deciding the cropped version was stronger. She quotes Managing Editor for Photography, Michele McNally, defending the choice this way: “You did not need to see the rest of the picture. The legs actually distracted you from seeing the intense look on his face, the ashen quality that suggested how much blood had been lost” (para. 20). Sullivan adds that the cropped version “packed a huge emotional punch without confronting readers with gore” (para. 20). The un-cropped version was published on online platforms only. The Atlantic defended their choice to run the full frame by saying: “We agree that this image is difficult to look at but believe that it is also a true depiction of the terrible nature of this story” additionally they noted they “were careful to prepare viewers for the graphic content, including a warning that entirely obscures the photo” (Kassel, 2013, para. 4). Each of these comments demonstrates that a conscious level of ethical decision-making took place in the gatekeeping process.
The Atlantic’s decision to obscure Bauman’s face, not his injuries, after the un-obscured version had already appeared on its site and elsewhere, received criticism in the professional community, such as this caustic post on NPPA’s website:

[R]ather than tile the graphic blown-apart legs and protruding bone fragments, editors at The Atlantic tiled Bauman’s face. Not only was it done hours after being published, but the Krupa photograph has been published in print and online around the world hundreds and hundreds of times. So it's not like by digitally altering the photograph after the fact The Atlantic is protecting readers from seeing the horrible physical injuries, they're attempting to re-write history by obscuring the victim's face? (2013, para. 6)

Bob Cohn, digital editor for The Atlantic told The New York Times the decision was made because Bauman “obviously was in a very vulnerable situation. He was fully identifiable” (Haughney, 2013, para. 11).

Authenticity calls for fair and accurate representations that are proportional to the event and shown in proper context. Both crops of this photograph achieve that, in part because of the magnitude of the tragedy. Even the graphic nature of the un-cropped photo, some argue, was proportional to the significance of the event. Ethical issues in this case study, therefore, are more about sensitivity. Was there a compelling reason to run one photograph over the other? Did the reader need to see the gore to understand the scope of the tragedy? Was pixilation of Bauman’s face an effective compromise?

The easiest ethical choice to defend is publication of the cropped version of Krupa’s photograph. For storytelling purposes it conveyed the tragedy of the situation, using empathy to connect the subject and reader in powerful ways. Enough of Bauman’s injuries were included for the reader to know he had lost at least one leg. Sensitivity for the both subject and reader was
achieved through the crop and the photograph’s storytelling power was intact or even increased by the impact of the faces.

*The Atlantic* editors who, after justifying the photo of carnage using journalism’s need-to-know mandate, ran the photograph behind a warning screen made an ethically sound choice as well. Reader comments support the idea that warning screens are understood and appreciated as a device for sparing offense. The screen showed sensitivity to readers, but not to Bauman. Their decision to be sensitive to Bauman came later in the ethically questionable pixilation of his face.

While done in the name of sensitivity, pixelating Bauman’s face breeched the mandate of authenticity because by most ethical standards it would be considered manipulation of the photograph. According to Don Winslow, editor of NPPA’s *News Photographer Magazine*, “News outlets either publish an image or do not publish it. If parts of the photograph are too graphic, then the image should be cropped” (Haughney, 2013, para. 7). Some reader commenting favored *The Atlantic*’s choice to hide Bauman’s identity; indicating hardline approaches might need reconsideration. It should be noted that *The Atlantic* made the pixilation obvious and explained their decision in the caption, which should be a minimum standard for the practice.

More problematic is that obscuring Bauman’s face changed the power and meaning of the photograph. Without that connection to the human being, the reader is just left with the carnage. Although a news outlet’s ethics can’t be based on “what everyone else is doing”, the fact that Bauman’s face appeared extensively elsewhere should have been a consideration in the media outlet’s choice. In the bigger picture, their choice did not achieve the sensitivity they were seeking.

*The Huffington Post*’s unedited gallery of more than 200 photos shows complete lack of a gatekeeping role and likely no adherence to journalistic codes of sensitivity. Graphic warnings
were sloppily done and ineffective, for example, every image is labeled “graphic” including the one depicting President Obama’s reaction and a policeman directing traffic. The screen (three pages into the gallery) warning of graphic content to come is ineffective because it must be clicked past to see any of the photos. By clicking through less graphic photos labeled graphic, the reader is desensitized to the warning.

5.2 Case Study 2: Police photo by John Tlumacki / Boston Globe

![Figure 5-6 Police by John Tlumacki/ The Boston Globe](image)

Boston Globe staff photographer John Tlumacki was covering the finish line at the 2013 Boston Marathon as a sporting event when he heard the first explosion just 50 feet away. He describes the scene in this way:

Everything was going on as usual. It was jovial — people were happy, clapping — and getting to a point where it gets a little boring as a photographer. And then we heard this explosion. It was sort of like, ok, what’s that all about? It wasn’t super loud but all you saw was the smoke. There was this big cloud of smoke and people screaming. The percussion from that explosion threw my cameras up in the air. Right in front of me, one
of the runners fell on the ground — he was blown over from the blast. My instinct was…no matter what it is, you’re a photographer first, that’s what you’re doing. I ran towards the explosion, towards the police; they had their guns drawn. It was pandemonium. Nobody knew what was going on. (Tlumacki, 2013, para. 1)

According to Tlumacki this photo of police reaction was taken “probably one second after the explosion.” The runner fell to the ground “blown over by the blast” and the police pulled out their guns “reacting as cops” (para. 6). The resulting powerful image quickly became the iconic photograph of the Boston Marathon bombings, without depictions of carnage. What is unusual about this photo is its immediacy. Journalists often cover aftermath rather than tragic events unfolding because breaking news rarely unfolds in front of their eyes.

5.2.1 Usage

There are actually two slightly different versions of this photo taken seconds apart, but both conveying the same information. Both are cropped versions of wide frames of the scene. Together they were used on the fronts of 83 publications. The horizontal version, chosen for this case study was used on The Washington Post’s front. The vertical version was used almost full page by The Chicago Tribune.
The photos are very similar and factors determining which photo was used might have included layout considerations and constraints. The tightly cropped vertical needs depth on the page if used large and, as a result, the runner appears in the less desirable “below the fold” position. The horizontal photo has space on the sides of the image to accommodate various layout depths and its shape allows it to run at a dramatic size without taking up too much valuable front-page real estate. Deep verticals are problematic for web pages for similar reasons. When selected, the image almost always ran dominant on the page, likely because it contains too vast of a scene to be conveyed small.

5.2.2 Formal reading

The smoky scene is contrasted by the bright yellow bursts of color on the officers’ vests and red shirted runner, which serve as entry points for the viewer. The salient elements in this photograph, the police and the runner, are largely determined by the visual weight of these colors. Although the photo is taken at eye level, the runner’s perspective to the police officers diminishes his power. Because the police are at eye level to the viewer, they are not threatening.
Modality is high because of good light and wide angle providing context to a scene that appears to be authentically portrayed as the photographer saw it. The long shot forms an impersonal relationship between subject and viewer.

The position of elements within the frame of this photograph easily demonstrates Kress and van Leeuwen’s concept of the information-value of the x/y axis. The fallen runner is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame indicating reality and demanding contestation from the reader. In short, the runner is on the ground and reality is not as it should be. Conversely, the police appear in the Ideal and Given positions indicating action and expected protection.

The people depicted in the photograph are standing close in proximity, but their gazes all point in different directions creating a feeling of confusion. Other vectors, such as the shadows mimic that disconnectedness.

**Meaning:** The literal meaning of this photograph is chaos amid immediate danger. It contains all the necessary elements to symbolically depict the situation in a compelling and emotionally charged way. A runner is down and police are responding with urgency and confusion. Smoke contrasted by vivid colors, fills the background indicating a blast has occurred.

### 5.2.3 The Ethics Debate

This widely used photograph can be seen as “safe” from an ethical standpoint, but that does not mean it was chosen as a compromise to the more graphic photos. It is informative, clearly depicting the scene described by Tlumacki in the seconds following the blast. Photography’s potential for powerful storytelling is realized in this emotionally charged moment, but does it do enough to authentically communicate the horror and grief of the scene that followed? Similar to the Krupa’s photo, there is a pull between authenticity and sensitivity. Here
sensitivity is privileged, however, some might argue authenticity is not sacrificed. It is a good lead photograph for papers choosing to spare readers by placing more graphic images on inside pages or using written commentary to convey it.

5.3 **Case Study 3: Carlee Soto photo by Jessica Hill/Associated Press**

Photojournalists will tell you good storytelling is about intimacy. Their aim is to create photographs that explain a situation and evoke emotion by authentically representing the story or scene— not photographing the outliers, but people and situations that fairly depict the story. When covering situations depicting grief, photojournalists are called upon to practice ethical decision making, often on the fly, as they decide when to photograph and what best tells the story while respecting the integrity of the moment. When a shooting rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary school left 27 dead, most of them children, intimate photographs of personal grief became the means to tell the story of the tragic event. Two of these photographs will be considered next.

![Carlee Soto by Jessica Hill/Associated Press](image)

**Figure 5-8 Carlee Soto by Jessica Hill/Associated Press**

The first photo, taken by AP photographer Jessica Hill, depicts a woman on her cellphone, crying in anguish. At the time of print publication her name was unknown, but she was identified as someone seeking news of her sister. The power of this photo is not in knowing
her specific identity, but rather in the agony expressed on her face. It was later learned that she is Carlee Soto, the sister of slain teacher Victoria Soto and the photograph was taken after she learned of her sister’s fate. Just as the story of her sister Victoria’s heroic actions inside the school that day have come to symbolize a heroic spirit, the photograph of Carlee has become an iconic representation of the magnitude of grief and loss suffered at Sandy Hook.

5.3.1 Usage

The photo was used on the front page of 106 of the 436 newspapers archived from December 15, the day immediately following the shootings and in numerous online galleries. Caption information trickled out on the photo. It was first moved over The AP wire and posted on news websites as simply an unidentified woman on her cell phone. Quickly the information that she was seeking word of her sister inside the school was added. This was all the information known most of the first day and therefore appearing on print versions of the photo. At some point on the day following the shooting, her name was erroneously reported as Jillian Soto (who is actually Soto’s third sister). That incorrect information is still associated with the image on many online galleries, including those found on The Huffington Post, The Palm Beach Post and Memphis Commercial Appeal. Finally, the full caption transmitted with the photo was updated to: “Carlee Soto reacts as she learns her sister, Victoria Soto, a teacher at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, was one of 26 people killed in a shooting at the school in Newtown, Conn., Friday, Dec. 14, 2012.” This caption appears on online galleries that have been updated.

5.3.2 Formal reading

In breaking news situations there is little chance for framing or selection of background. Behind these quickly taken “grab shots” is professional training that instinctively enhances the impact of the photograph. This photograph appears to have been taken with a telephoto lens as
evidenced by the perspective and lack of focus on objects in front of or behind the subject (called the depth of field). The narrow depth of field makes the subject stand out from the background minimizing the surroundings. Although the photographer was not close to the subject when the photograph was taken, she, not her surroundings, becomes the clear subject of the image. She is the center of the frame and the margins depicting her unknown surroundings are mitigated. Her arms serve as vectors, pointing to the anguish on her face. Although Kress and van Leeuwen limit intimate connections to close-ups, this medium shot including Soto’s body language enacts that connection because it is so cleanly about her. The viewer looks directly at her, creating an equal status that also helps the viewer relate.

**Meaning:** The look in Soto’s face, her hand at her heart and the curve of her body tell the reader that something tragic has happened. There is no context in her surroundings, we can’t see the school in the background for example; but the surrounding cars give the reader a hint that she has perhaps arrived at the scene of the news event being reported. The power in this photograph rests in the young subject’s anguish and the reader’s empathy for her.

### 5.3.3 The Ethics Debate

The ethical issues here are authenticity in complete storytelling as Soto’s identity unfolded and sensitivity to her privacy in moments of grief. Core to ethical consideration is the news value of the photo of Soto. When the photograph first appeared on the wire it was not known that her sister was inside the school. It was not possible for the photographer to approach her and doing so would have breeched ethical considerations of sensitivity in the moment. In the chaos of the developing story it was moved over the wire and posted on websites as a generic grief photo to signify something horrible had happened. Had her strong connection to the story not developed, this could have been an ethically suspect choice because the news value of the
photograph was based solely on emotional appeal. Later, when she was known to be a sibling of someone in the school there became a more justifiable news value, and therefore authenticity, to the photograph.

Early use of the photo without any pertinent identification indicates a different ethical standard exists for online platforms. Kenny Irby says that “the age of the always on” forces you to make slightly different decisions for each. Gatekeepers, having vetted the truth of the image itself, must be willing to “take some risks and continually – not episodically but progressively – build the narrative” by adding information when it is known (Irby, 2014, audio). For print products, where there is no chance for updates, it is not likely editors would have lead with the image had her family connection not been known at the time of publication. Without the context of associated words, it left too many questions unanswered.

NPPA Code of Ethics, calls for photographers to “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” (NPPA, 2012, standard 4). Carlee Soto was vulnerable that day so use of the photograph involved issues of sensitivity. Like Jeff Bauman, she was thrust into the news through no choice of her own and it is certain the widely published photograph caused her harm. In describing her reaction to the photo, Carlee Soto told CBS (2012), “It’s like a reminder of that moment all over again, and it’s… it kills” (para. 13). Soto’s image has become an iconic representation of the tragedy at Sandy Hook conveying the grief felt by a nation. Since the tragedy, Carlee Soto has used that pain and notoriety to become an advocate for gun control. Although her actions are her own, it is reasonable to assume the photo helped to propel her into the spotlight where she could gain a
greater voice for her cause. Journalism’s role to promote discourse was served by the photograph’s ability to personalize tragedy.

5.4 Case Study 4: Aline Marie photo by Emmanuel Dunand / AFP

The above photograph, appearing on NPR’s website, sparked debate regarding photojournalism and privacy after the woman who was photographed contacted the media organization. The photograph, taken by AFP photographer Emmanuel Dunand, depicts a solitary figure of a woman praying outside of a church in Newtown, Connecticut the evening after the shootings. The photograph that was transmitted by Getty Images and appeared in The Atlantic’s The Wire online gallery did not identify the woman. Her name wasn’t included in the photographer’s caption because, according to him, he didn’t want to intrude on her private moment and ask her for it. After the photo was published on NPR’s website, again without her name, Aline Marie sent a message to the media organization identifying herself as the subject of the photo and expressing her frustration over the taking and publishing of the photograph depicting her in such a “personal powerful moment of tears.” She acknowledged the beauty and power of the image, but said, “I would like to make a point about responsible journalism, it
would have been nice if someone could have asked my permission" (Dukehart, 2013, para. 9). Although seeking permission is not standard practice in news coverage, the incident provides an example of the complex ethical issues of authenticity and sensitivity faced by photojournalists when documenting private moments of grief in the aftermath of tragedy.

5.4.1 Usage

The photograph was selected from the Huffington Post’s online archive as a generic representation of this type photograph of personalized grieving. It appeared on NPR’s website five days after the shooting with a story about tragedy and religion.

5.4.2 Formal reading

The salient elements in this quiet photograph are the statue, candle, and praying figure of Marie, emphasized by the light cast on or by them. The photographer was standing to the side and at a distance, limiting the viewer’s actual engagement with the subject. The imposing religious statue looks down on Marie, diminishing her power. Mood is created by the stillness of the moment; however, the hint of shadowy figures in the background (most of them journalists) adds tension. Modality is high because of the light on the main subjects, but lessened by the dark surroundings.

**Meaning:** The poignant photograph juxtaposes the religious icon with a small human figure surrounded by an unknown darkness. Using Kress and van Leeuwen’s axis analysis, the statue is the Ideal-Given and Marie is the Real-New, literally depicting the struggle to reconcile the crisis of faith often discussed in the wake of tragedy. The headline accompanying the photo on NPR’s website, “Newtown Tragedy: Would A Good God Allow Such Evil?” reflects this interpretation.
5.4.3 Reader reaction

Follow-up stories on Aline Marie’s reaction to her photograph resulted in more than 171 online comments, representing a wide variety of opinions, and illustrates the tension points that can be created by a photograph’s raw emotional power. Some readers clearly sympathized with Marie and complained about the “rugby scrum of photographers” and “voyeurism of grief”, where others were less sympathetic because she chose to pray in a public place. A few acknowledged the complexity of the issue, like commenter Richard Robb who summed it up this way: “Sadly, as I thought over this, [there] is no correct answer. The nation as a whole needs to see and feel the complete ramifications of this horrible act. The families also need to be left to themselves to grieve over this terrible act” (Dukehart, 2013, comments).

5.4.4 The Ethics Debate

Marie told NRR she felt violated. "I understand the poignancy of capturing a moment," Marie is quoted as saying, "Photography is incredibly powerful when used appropriately, and all I am saying is, how about a little respect? Say who you are and get out of the bushes" (Dukehart, 2013, para 15). AFP photographer Emmanuel Dunand told NPR he knew Marie was suffering, and his decision not to approach her and identify himself was, in his opinion, the most respectful thing to do. Additionally, Dunand says he “was overwhelmed by the assignment of having to photograph residents during such extreme grief” but he saw his mission to take photographs that would tell the story to the world (para. 5-7). This case study provides several points of discussion for the ethical dilemma of documenting from the perspective of the photographer.

Ethical photojournalists are not paparazzi. Dunand’s intention was not to hide in the bushes, but rather to be a fly on the wall so his presence didn’t interfere or manipulate the situation. Photographs of private citizens in their worst moments of grief can provide visual truth
to a tragic event and the empathy required to understand it. Photojournalists feel extreme pressure not to miss these often-fleeting moments and that requires quick evaluation of the situation and fast action. Many photojournalists can anecdotally recall situations when they chose to put their camera down; however, more often their storytelling mission requires them to document, in a very intimate way, the scene in front of them. A photographer’s first instinct is to take the photograph because if missed, it’s gone forever. In the field they also face real world problems of competition to get the best photo, deadlines and limitations such as physical access.

Journalists, subjects and readers alike acknowledge the power of these photographs. However, often they disagree on the appropriateness of taking and publishing them because they are so emotionally charged. The disparate viewpoints fuel the credibility gap that exists between media organizations and the public. The photographer’s approach at the scene can be the first step in bridging the gap.

Marie’s “private” moment of grief took place in a public place where cameras were present so there was no legal expectation of privacy. She went out that night because she was seeking interaction with the community to help process her grief. Instead she felt assaulted by journalists legitimately covering this news story of national significance. The interaction she could have had with an empathetic photographer might have provided the “human connection” she reported needing. Victims of tragedy can benefit from interaction with the press. It’s human nature to want to tell your story and there is validation in recognition of your despair.

But that’s only the first step. A compelling photograph taken with sensitivity must also have context, often provided by the associated words. Who is the woman in the photograph? Did she have a connection to the school? Authenticity is missing in the absence of these obvious questions a reader would have asked on viewing this photograph. Dunand acted with his
conscience and had what he considered valid ethical reasons for not approaching Aline Marie; however, most industry experts believe he made the wrong decision. Kenny Irby explains:

[B]enefits when photographers introduce themselves and interact with their subjects are they can obtain accurate caption information — which ultimately adds more meaning, value and credibility to the photo for the reader. The other is that it can make the experience of being photographed more rewarding for the subject — even in a moment of extreme grief. (Dukehart, 2013, para. 9)

Caption information is the text that would have put this photograph in context providing the reader with an accurate account of the scene. Giving her name for the caption could have served as the “implied” consent she was seeking. Additionally, his actions would have served to give the subject a better understanding of the process of journalism. Had she refused to give her name, indicating a lack of permission to publish, Dunand’s ethical dilemma would have been whether to run the photo anyway, which was his legal right, but not necessarily the correct moral choice in this example. Dunand would have missed an important storytelling moment, but there were plenty of other opportunities to depict grief on this tragic evening.
6 CONCLUSION

These case studies have presented an array of ethical issues regarding authenticity and sensitivity, which will be viewed against the research questions of this thesis.

*RQ1: How should journalism deal with the natural tension points caused by photography’s ability to speak to viewers on an emotional level and journalism’s mandate for reasoned discourse?*

Journalism’s place in democracy is to “provide citizens the information they need to be free and self-governing” (Kovach, 2007, p.12). This very broad mandate includes various roles, such as that of watchdog over those in power and voice for those who are not. It seeks to inform and provide a public forum for reasoned debate. Photographs are powerful tools for journalistic communication because they represent visual proof while enacting a personal connection between subject and reader that fosters understanding and perhaps motivation to act. We believe photographic images to be simple mechanical reproductions of the scene being photographed – we all have cameras and we are familiar with the process. We realize there is subjectivity in choices made by the photographer – what to include, angle, composition, etc. – but accept this qualified reality. At the same time, we react to photographs on an emotional, often-visceral level. Scholars acknowledge this paradox as a benefit and possible conflict for photojournalism:

Because images evoke almost immediate emotional responses among viewers, pictures have tremendous impact. With well-chosen words, visual messages combine to educate, entertain and persuade. But the flip side to such visual power is that images can also offend, shock, mislead, stereotype and confuse. (Lester, 1995, para. 3)

Photographs can perpetuate ideology and become iconic representations of events as we have seen in two of the case studies discussed. In Charles Krupa’s photograph, Jeff Bauman and
Carlos Arredondo symbolize both the horror of the marathon bombing and what it means to be “Boston Strong.” Carlee Soto’s grieving face, as captured by Jessica Hill, reflects the pain felt by the nation after the senseless shootings of children and their teachers in Newtown.

These cases demonstrate that fulfilling photojournalism’s purpose may require deliberately disturbing the subject and viewer in order to convey the scope and magnitude of the news being reported. Proportional outrage can be the desired reaction to depictions of tragedy or injustice seeking to spark discourse and motivate action. However, when carelessly applied without thought to context, news value, or sensitivity to both subject and reader, the resulting photographs rely solely on emotional appeal that thwarts reasoned response. O’Brien (1993) claims that readers know the difference and are “willing to take on difficult subjects that are addressed decently and honestly” (p. 71). Photojournalists rely on guiding principles, such as codes of ethics, to determine ethical action in the taking and publication of potentially volatile images. Under utilitarian ethics these principles seek to give the public information needed to make informed decisions (seeking truth) while minimizing the harm done to any one individual. This thesis proposes that photojournalism’s guiding principles fall under two broad categories, which are authenticity and sensitivity.

Authenticity encompasses truth, accuracy, news value and associated context. Sensitivity expands the standard of utilitarian ethics to consider harm to the public and the profession of photojournalism as well as the individual. Further explanation of these themes and how they can and should be applied to the coverage of tragic news events will be considered next.

*RQ2: How do and should journalists apply professional ethical principles dealing with authenticity and sensitivity in real world situations covering the aftermath of tragic events?*

Photographs from the Boston Marathon demonstrate how authenticity and sensitivity are
always in play with one another. Seemingly a less graphic photo, chosen for reasons of sensitivity, might be a less authentic representation of a tragic event. Conversely, showing the horror authentic to an event can be an invasion of the subject’s privacy and insensitive to the person viewing it. Whether depictions of carnage were necessary to authentically convey the tragedy of the Boston bombing can be debated. The magnitude of the event warrants such considerations. The argument was made, however, that the cropped version of Krupa’s photograph of Jeff Bauman in Case Study 1 actually produces a more authentic image through formal reading at the site of the image and at the site of the viewer where it elicits empathy instead of objectification. The photograph shows the human cost of the blast in a very personal and relatable way, without unnecessary graphic depictions. The sensitivity of the crop, the news value of the event, and the power of this storytelling photograph are strong arguments in justifying the invasion to Bauman’s privacy caused by its publication. In Case Study 2, Tlumacki’s photograph of police reacting to the blast privileges sensitivity and provided many papers with a powerful, ethically “safe” photo that still authentically informs readers about the blast, if not the horror that followed it. Leading with Tlumacki’s photo and running more graphic images in secondary positions was the choice of many news outlets.

When dealing with graphic content, cropping and warning screens are effective ways of sparing offense, while the practice of digitally altering/obscuring parts of the image remains ethically suspect. Case Study 1 reveals mixed ethical reasoning behind the practice of digitally altering a photograph out of respect for the subject’s privacy, which supports previous scholarship on the general murkiness of codes and disparate practices of the media (Keith, 2006; Schwartz, 2003). Since authenticity demands a firm stance on this slippery slope and we have
seen that sensitivity can often be achieved in other ways, this thesis advocates for a uniform, hardline approach where possible.

- AP’s Statement of News Values and Principles, expressly prohibiting content alteration (including digitally adding or subtracting information or obscuring faces) should be the uniform approach and similar specific language should be added to all codes.

This researcher recognizes that hardline rules may not apply in rare cases, such as the nudity depicted in photographs from Abu Ghraib Prison or incidences where publication of an image might jeopardize the subject’s life. Even in those cases a firm code would necessitate careful consideration of alternatives before being intentionally broken.

Examples in the Sandy Hook case studies are more about sensitivity to the subject and authenticity of context. News value needs to be a prime justification for taking and running any photograph. Without caption information, the photo of Carlee Soto, discussed in Case Study 3, was used on websites as an ethically suspect “generic” photo of anguish and grief surrounding the tragedy. The immediacy of online news allows for updates and changes not afforded a print product, so ethical decision-making for digital platforms might involve a different scale. At the time of print publication deadlines, the valuable insight that she was the sister of a victim added important authenticity in news value and context. The invasion of privacy caused by the image was more justifiable when she was thrust into the news because of her actual connection to the story beyond the photograph. In Case Study 4, the quiet moment of citizen Aline Marie’s grief was interrupted by the photographer’s presence; however, his failure to engage with her actually thwarted his intention to respect her privacy because she was so disturbed by sound of cameras. Ethical action begins with the photojournalist’s approach. Photojournalist David LaBelle
suggests the importance of empathy when photographing the aftermath of tragedy. He says too many photographers are concerned with “my” pictures or “my” story and lack sensitivity for the people they are photographing – people who share “the same fears and the same dreams that we all share” (Stickler, 2011, para.1). Engaging with Marie for valuable caption information might have prevented charges of insensitivity against Dunand. Misunderstandings such as the one presented by Marie to NPR erode the public trust of journalism.

RQ3: Does analysis of the sample photographs suggest the codes adequately address these issues? If not, what language should be added to the codes to alleviate tension caused by photography’s ability to speak to viewers on an emotional level and journalism’s mandate for authenticity, sensitivity and reasoned discourse?

The umbrella of media ethics codes includes maximizing truth, acting independently, and minimizing harm. Although the ethical issues discussed in these case studies are generally covered by language in codes aimed at visual journalism, we have seen that other factors influence real world decisions. Additionally, disparate media practices create confusion and debate among readers. Scholars and media professionals propose the need for updated principles, specifically considering readers, to be used in evaluation of media ethics. For example, transparency about the photo selection process, through notes from the editor, might mitigate claims that graphic photos are used solely to drive business interests under hedonistic ethics. Reader commenting can gauge the success of practices such as warning screens, and follow-up ombudsman columns can foster an open discussion. Kenny Irby suggests this type of transparency and interaction with readers as “21st Century guiding principles.” Scholar Ginny Whitehouse (2010, p. 322) proposes a “balancing question” in her research on privacy and social
media that, with a few alterations, can be used as by photojournalists covering tragic news events. Does the value of information gained outweigh the harm done to the individual’s sense of privacy, the public understanding of privacy, and to the profession as a whole? Examples in this thesis support such approaches.

Additionally, this thesis proposes use of the themes of authenticity and sensitivity as a way in which to discuss photojournalism ethics and as effective language for deliberating photo selection. The concepts are often in direct tension with one another, so picture evaluation weighs the importance of each to find the best balance under utilitarian mandates. Using this common terminology creates uniformity without the need for a laundry list of specific rules that do not address the specific demands of multiple platforms or the changing media landscape.

**Guiding questions for authenticity include:**

- Does the photo truthfully and accurately reflect the scene being depicted?
- Does the photograph need/have associated words to provide complete context?
- Is the impact of the photograph proportional to the news value of the event?
- Has manipulation of the photographer, scene or photograph been avoided?

**Guiding questions for sensitivity include:**

- Does the taking/publication of this image cause harm to the subject, reader, or profession as a whole?
  - How can the benefit or harm be measured?
  - Can harm be mitigated at the scene by contact with the subject?
  - Can harm be mitigated by ethically accepted practices such as cropping?
  - Can harm be mitigated upon publication by devices of transparency such as warning screens or notes to readers?
• Can that harm be justified under utilitarian, not solely hedonistic ethics?
  ▪ Is the purpose to inform rather than sell papers or win contests?

The final guiding question seeks to view authenticity and sensitivity as a sliding scale to ensure that the situation/depiction reaches the appropriate balance:

• Considering authenticity and sensitivity, does this photograph sacrifice one for the other to the point that either is lost? Is there a better choice to maintain both?

Using case studies from recent tragic events, this thesis adds to the body of scholarly work on photojournalism ethics by proposing authenticity and sensitivity, viewed as points in opposition, as a language for discussing the effectiveness of photography for journalistic communication. A checklist of guiding questions, to be used by professionals and aimed at measuring ethical action, is developed. Although the examples cited were limited to American journalism, these guiding questions, applied against other cultural expectations and societal norms, might form the basis of a cross cultural approach. The findings of this thesis suggest that further research is needed to develop broader issues of universal ethics for photojournalism in a digitally connected world.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A- Images from the Boston Marathon Bombing April 15, 2013

Image 1: Jeff Bauman photo by Charles Krupa

Author’s note: Out of respect for Mr. Bauman’s privacy, the uncropped version of this photograph was removed from this thesis upon publication. It can be viewed at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/15/boston-marathon-bombing-photos_n_3087332.html#slide=2340956 or elsewhere on the Internet.
Image 2: Police photo by John Tlumacki
Appendix B- Images from the Sandy Hook School shooting December 14, 2012

Image 1: Carlee Soto photo by Jessica Hill
Image 2: Aline Marie photo by Emmanuel Dunand
Appendix C- Sample Codes of Ethics

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.

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.
AP NEWS VALUES & PRINCIPLES / IMAGES

AP pictures must always tell the truth. We do not alter or digitally manipulate the content of a photograph in any way.

The content of a photograph must not be altered in Photoshop or by any other means. No element should be digitally added to or subtracted from any photograph. The faces or identities of individuals must not be obscured by Photoshop or any other editing tool. Only retouching or the use of the cloning tool to eliminate dust on camera sensors and scratches on scanned negatives or scanned prints are acceptable.

Minor adjustments in Photoshop are acceptable. These include cropping, dodging and burning, conversion into grayscale, and normal toning and color adjustments that should be limited to those minimally necessary for clear and accurate reproduction (analogous to the burning and dodging previously used in darkroom processing of images) and that restore the authentic nature of the photograph. Changes in density, contrast, color and saturation levels that substantially alter the original scene are not acceptable. Backgrounds should not be digitally blurred or eliminated by burning down or by aggressive toning. The removal of “red eye” from photographs is not permissible.

When an employee has questions about the use of such methods or the AP's requirements and limitations on photo editing, he or she should contact a senior photo editor prior to the transmission of any image.

On those occasions when we transmit images that have been provided and altered by a source – the faces obscured, for example – the caption must clearly explain it. Transmitting such images must be approved by a senior photo editor.

Except as described herein, we do not stage, pose or re-enact events. When we shoot video, environmental portraits, or photograph subjects in a studio care should be taken to avoid, misleading viewers to believe that the moment was spontaneously captured in the course of gathering the news. In the
cases of portraits, fashion or home design illustrations, any intervention should be revealed in the caption and special instructions box so it can’t be mistaken as an attempt to deceive.

For video, the AP permits the use of subtle, standard methods of improving technical quality, such as adjusting video and audio levels, color correcting due to white balance, eliminating buzzing, hums, clicks, pops, or overly long pauses or other technical faults, and equalization of audio to make the sound clearer — provided the use of these methods does not conceal, obscure, remove or otherwise alter the content, or any portion of the content, of the image. The AP also allows digitally obscuring faces to protect a subject's identity under certain circumstances. Such video must not be distributed without approval of the Editor of the Day or senior manager. In addition, video for online use and for domestic broadcast stations can be fonted with titles and logos.

Graphics, including those for television, often involve combining various photographic elements, which necessarily means altering portions of each photograph. The background of a photograph, for example, may be removed to leave the headshot of the newsmaker. This may then be combined with a logo representing the person's company or industry, and the two elements may be layered over a neutral background.

Such compositions must not misrepresent the facts and must not result in an image that looks like a photograph – it must clearly be a graphic.

Similarly, when we alter photos to use as graphics online, we retain the integrity of the image, limiting the changes to cropping, masking and adding elements like logos. Videos for use online can be altered to add graphical information such as titles and logos, to tone the image and to improve audio quality. It is permissible to display photos online using techniques such as 360-degree panoramas or dissolves as long as they do not alter the original images.
Appendix D - Analysis of reader commenting

**Case Study 2: Jeff Buman by Charles Krupa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of comments appearing with The Atlantic gallery*</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments in support of using the photo</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments opposing use of photo</td>
<td>28; including 20 specific requests to remove it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments in favor of pixelating his face</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords on posts referencing the photos in general (including variations on these words)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terror</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Censorship</td>
<td>14; sugar-coat: 5; sanitize: 6; coddled: 2 – total: 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Case Study 4: Aline Marie by Emanuel Dunand

Total number of comments appearing on NPR.org*: 162


| Comments in support of photographer/photograph: 9 |
| Comments opposing taking/use of photo: 6 |
| Commenters who believe the photographer should have approached Marie*: 21 |
| *introduce himself: 10 / seek permission: 3 / get name: 8 |
| Commenters who believe Marie had no expectation of privacy: 11 |
| Commenters questioning the media’s motives; complaining of media frenzy: 14 |
| Commenters who understood seeking prior permission would hurt authenticity: 6 |
| Keywords (including variations on these words): |
| Privacy: 39 |
| Respect: 22 |
| Voyeurism: 7 |