

# The power of images The peril of images

How to harness the power  
and minimize the peril



What is the  
power and  
peril of  
images?

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY JOE ROSENTHAL

American soldiers, Iwo Jima, 1945

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY BILL HUDSON

1963 civil rights protest in Birmingham

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



FRAME FROM ZAPRUDER FILM

The assassination of  
President John F. Kennedy

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY JOHN FILO

1970 Kent State shootings

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY NICK UT

Vietnamese children flee napalm in 1972

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY STUART FRANKLIN

1989 Tiananmen Square standoff

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY KEVIN CARTER

1993 Famine in Sudan

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



Abu Ghraib prison, 2003

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



Hurricane Katrina, 2005

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



2009's Obama fist bump

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



Gulf of Mexico after 2010 oil spill

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY BONNIE JO MOUNT

Mantoloking, NJ, on Nov. 1, 2012

OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PHOTOS



GETTY IMAGES / SCOTT OLSON

Ferguson, Mo., Aug. 11

The right 1,000 words?



PHOTO BY JOE ROSENTHAL

THE POWER OF IMAGES CAN BE SEEN EVERY DAY IN ITS IMPACT ON NEWS JUDGMENT







### Last week's Quick Quiz

1. Language and labeling help you distinguish between news and opinion journalism.
2. Moynihan's maxim: "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts."

### Your questions and comments ...

- ❖ Isn't opinion and bias the same thing? – Matthew Cheung
- ❖ Do the American public tend to gravitate towards opinionated journalism like they do with tragic news? – Micheal Caputo
- ❖ Can assertions be sued as libel/slander – Andrew Goldstein
- ❖ Isn't it wrong for news organizations like Fox to pass off opinion journalism as reporting? Or is what they do not exactly count as opinion journalism? – Humira Ferdush

### EXTRA CREDIT

## "My Life As..."

Foreign correspondent  
Roxana Saberi, Al Jazeera America

Monday, Oct. 20  
8 p.m. SAC auditorium  
Doors open 7:45



### After this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain how photos and recorded sound serve as powerful verification of journalistic truth, aiding the news consumer's search for reliable information.
2. Explain how the same photos and recorded sound can trigger strong emotional responses without adding to your understanding.
3. Use journalistic methods and questions to test the reliability of photos and recorded sound.
4. Explain the burden social media creators and participants bear when they use these powerful tools.

### The power of images

There's verification...



And then there's verification

### The power of images

#### Seeking Truth

#### Natural Hierarchy of Direct Evidence

- Video, Photographs, Recordings
- Documents, Records, the Paper Trail
- Journalist Eyewitness Account
- Observer Eyewitness Account

The power of images

### A social media truism

The power of images

The power of images

### Pics prove it did happen... unfortunately for some

### A picture shows me at a glance what it takes dozens of pages of a book to expound.

- I.S. TURGENEV, "FATHERS & SONS" (1862)

The power of images

### The birth of American photojournalism

PHOTO BY TIMOTHY O'SULLIVAN

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1863

The power of images

The power of images

## Photography launches a visual culture



**NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION:**

"images can reveal great truths, expose wrongdoing and neglect, inspire hope and understanding and connect people around the globe . . ."



## Professional Ethics (excerpt)

**"...Our primary goal is the faithful and comprehensive depiction of the subject at hand"**

- ✓ Be accurate, comprehensive (and) provide context
- ✓ Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
- ✓ Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups.
- ✓ Show private grief if the public has justifiable need to see.
- ✓ Do not intentionally alter or influence events you record.
- ✓ Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
- ✓ Do not pay sources or subjects.
- ✓ Seek diversity by including unpopular, unnoticed points of view.
- ✓ Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.

## The hungry eye

**PRINT**



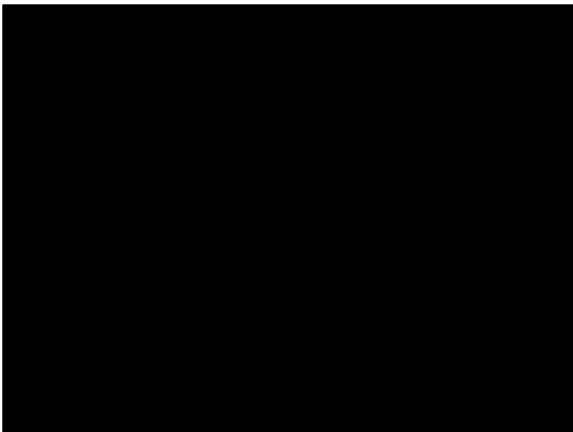
- Readers enter print pages through photos
- Only 25% of text is looked at

## The hungry eye

**ONLINE**



- Readers' eyes first seek navigational aids (story lists and teasers)
- Readers' eyes spend more time on photos than text
- Readers retain more from items that include graphics/photos



## Does each image tell the same story?





## Pivot Point

Every other row,  
pivot to the row behind  
to discuss in groups of four:

Which Tsarnaev photo is a  
“faithful and comprehensive  
depiction of the subject at hand”?

## Compression

ETHICAL  
CHOICES THAT  
CHANGE IMAGES



## Selection

ETHICAL  
CHOICES THAT  
CHANGE IMAGES



Susan Meibetas, 1978  
NICARAGUA. Lister, 1978. Senderistas at  
the work of the ECR.

## Cropping

ETHICAL  
CHOICES THAT  
CHANGE IMAGES



## Cropping

ETHICAL  
CHOICES THAT  
CHANGE IMAGES



“...be accurate and  
comprehensive ...  
provide context...”

— NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS  
CODE OF ETHICS

## What is the power and peril of recorded direct evidence?



## Pivot Point

Every other row,  
pivot to the row behind  
to discuss in groups of four:

How much is too much  
in the Boston Marathon photo?

Ethical, squeamish or fraudulent?  
NY Daily News doctored marathon bomb aftermath photo



PHOTOSHOP  
JUST MADE  
IT EASIER  
TO FOOL  
PEOPLE



## History of photo manipulation



Now you see him . . .



And now you don't

When soviet dictator Josef Stalin ordered the death of the head his secret police, N. Ezhov, he had his photo-retouchers "albrush" the man out of existence.



Code of Ethics

**Preamble:** "...Photographs can also cause great harm if they are callously intrusive or are manipulated."



BY TIMOTHY O'SULLIVAN

Bodies of the dead have not yet been buried after the three-day battle at Gettysburg, PA July 1-3, 1863 between the U.S. army led by George Meade and the rebel army led by Gen. Robert E. Lee.



**Pictured vs. Posed**  
Context explains symmetry/framing



The space shuttle Challenger explodes, 1986

**HOW ARE THESE TWO DIFFERENT?**

**BOTH ARE POSED, BUT ONLY ONE IS DECEIVING THE READER**

Tonya Harding, left, and Nancy Kerrigan appear to skate together in this New York Newsday composite illustration. Tomorrow, they'll really take to the ice together.

Image-testing skills and tools

Retouch.wmv

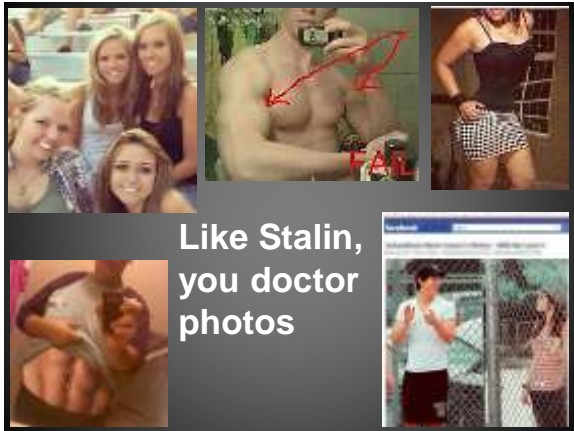
Image-testing skills and tools

**Why is the burden on you to be a skillful news photo consumer?**

**General disclaimer**

Across four experiments, manipulative photos inflated confidence. It is equally surprising that photos inflated the ratio of "false" claims. The photos depicted celebrities and should have inflated integrity of these celebrities during various things—all of which would be possible evidence of character. The interesting finding is that the manipulative photos inflated the numbers of "false" claims. **The photos did not produce an "Othello" effect in "Othello" tests.** Moreover, the confidence effect generalized beyond "good" or "false" judgments. Manipulative photos inflated the subjective rank of general knowledge claims, too.

If there's a photo, we feel it must be true



Like Stalin,  
you doctor  
photos

Image-testing skills and tools

No eye candy from strangers



Image-testing skills and tools

How can you tell?

Again with the language and labeling!

- Check photo credits
- Check photo captions
- Note: "file photo" (how old is it?)
- Look for these words:

PHOTO ENHANCEMENT  
DIGITAL PHOTO MANIPULATION  
COMPOSITE PHOTO  
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

Image-testing skills and tools

Which photo outlets can you trust?

	Social Media	Anonymous, REDDIT, ETC	Marginal or Partisan Outlet	Reputable News Outlet
Accountable for professional ethics and standards	NO	RARELY	POTATIVELY	YES
Supervised by experienced journalists	NO	RARELY	USUALLY	YES
Accountable by name	MAYBE	NO	USUALLY	YES
Payroll-based Independence	UNKNOWN ALLEGIANCES	UNKNOWN ALLEGIANCES	USUALLY	YES
Subject to Peer Review	NO	RARELY	YES	YES
Neutrality enforced	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	SOMETIMES	YES
<b>TRUST RATING</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>HIGH</b>

Is This North Korean Hovercraft-Landing Photo Faked?



Image-testing skills and tools



© Reuters. Tibetan Protestor on Fire  
Jampe Yeshe, a Tibetan protestor self-immolated in New Delhi, ahead of Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to India, March 26, 2012

Image-testing skills and tools

### On big news days, be skeptical




NY Post, Monday, May 2, 2011



Image-testing skills and tools

BBC News uses 'Iraq photo to illustrate Syrian massacre'

Crowd-sourcing via social media means outfits like the BBC, CNN and Reuters hire information forensics experts





Inside the BBC's photo verification hub . . .

"What everyone wanted to know, on Twitter and in the newsroom, was this: Was the video real or fake? That is the kind of question the Hub is there to investigate."

Image-testing skills and tools

### How can you be sure?

Two simple tools – Tin Eye and Google Images – can at least tell you who else is using the same image





Image-testing skills and tools

### Citizen watchdogs



Amnesty International trains supporters to help spot bogus images from crisis spot

Image-testing skills and tools

### Ethical photos 'Open the Freezer'

A photo credit declares who is accountable for the integrity of the image. The caption provides detail that can be crosschecked and provides the context that makes a depiction "faithful" to the truth.



### "Faithful and Comprehensive Depiction"?



