"Every time the diaphragm winks, the camera repeats the question that now travels through cyberspace and invades, as a modern virus, the memories of machines, men and women. The question that history always sets forth. The question that forces us to define ourselves and whose answer makes us human: On which side are you?"

From a Zapatista communiqué (167).

Both side of the lens:
A journalist's loyalties
in crisis photography

Introduction

About the time I became convinced that journalism is a calling, not a job, I also started getting the nightmares. Even as I was taught that journalism can be a noble commitment to public service and collective memory, I had nagging worries that anything less than the impossible ideal could do more harm than good. Journalism involving ordinary people seemed some brutal form of colonialism – invading for their own good, or so we tell ourselves. I worried that Janet Malcolm's sensational indictment of journalism might have some bit of truth:

> "Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people's vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse" (3).

There was some comfort in seeing the sentiment, however hostile, from those within the respectable family of journalism; I am not the only one with doubts. Joan Didion famously wrote:

> "My only advantage as a reporter is that I am so physically small, so temperamentally unobtrusive and so neurotically inarticulate that people tend to forget that my presence runs counter to their best interests. And it always does. That is one last thing to remember: Writers are always selling somebody out."

Hunter S. Thompson, universal antagonist, apparently eased his own misgivings with this book introduction:

> "An old woman was walking down the road when she saw a gang of thugs beating a poisonous snake. She rescued the snake and carried it back to her home, where she nursed it back to health. They became friends and lived together for many months. One day they were going into town, and the old woman picked him up and the snake bit her. Repeatedly. "O God," she screamed, "I am dying! Why? I was your friend. I saved your life! I trusted you! Why did you bite me?"
>
> The snake looked up at her and said, "Lady, you knew I was a snake when you first picked me up."

Much mass media and journalism research focuses on big-picture topics: agenda-setting, framing, bias, ethics decisions that are hammered out in intense high-level meetings of editors and executives. It focuses on trendy topics like digital manipulation and political coverage. Far less is said about the small, numerous interpersonal actions involving journalism's "boots on the ground" and the people they talk to.

This is what I really mean: Journalists must take from people. A journalist's raw materi-

als are people, their actions and their emotions. Even if the purpose is the noble one of bringing attention and aid to those same people, the taking must happen first.

Reporters “take” notes and photographers “take” pictures. Is it a semantic coincidence or something more? In Webster’s New World dictionary, these two reportorial uses of “take” garner their own entries below more common meanings: to capture, to seize, to get possession of by force or skill. Journalism people sometimes use phrases like “give voice to” – sometimes consciously and sometimes unaware – in order to counter all this taking.

None of this is more clear than in reporting by photography, because a person’s image at any one time exposes far more than a few strings of words. In many ways a photograph is informatively inferior to a written article or a video, but people believe in the power of images. As Susan Sontag wrote, “Nonstop imagery (television, streaming video, movies) is our surround, but when it comes to remembering, the photograph has the deeper bite” (Sontag RTSOO 22). Whenever I think of photography I think of introductory calculus and looking at a particular point on a curve. A photograph is taken as fact but does not tell the whole story. Why this point? But just as a single coordinate pair has more clarity than the whole equation, images endure in memory. “Photographs have a swifter and more succinct impact than words, an impact that is instantaneous, visceral, and intense. They share the power of images in general, which have always played havoc with the human mind and heart, and they have the added force of evident accuracy” (Goldberg 7). Images do not rely on language – in contrast to a written account, “a photograph has only one language and is destined potentially for all” (Sontag RTSOO 20). Photojournalism blossomed during World War II partly because photographs were “given two kinds of credit not accorded to the printed word: they were totally convincing and they would burn in memory forever” (Goldberg 36).

When a South Vietnamese general took a Viet Cong prisoner into the street and shot him, it was not the execution itself that made the photograph become an icon of the Vietnam War but rather the precise instant of execution captured (see Exhibit X). It is a moment that cannot be duplicated in prose or in film. As one editor said, “It was precisely its ‘stillness’ – the

sense of a moment frozen in time – that made its impact" (Evans PoaP 6).

"Narratives can make us understand," Sontag wrote. "Photographs do something else: they haunt us" (Sontag RTSOO 89). As Roland Barthes wrote in Camera Lucida, "If I like a photograph, if it disturbs me, I linger over it. What am I doing, during the whole time I remain with it? I look at it, I scrutinize it, as if I wanted to know more about the thing or person it represents" (Barthes 99). We naturally want to know the context, the rest of the curve, and that unfulfilled curiosity makes the single point salient. "A photograph provokes tension in us – not only about the precise moment that the image depicts, but also about the moments that led up to that instant and about all the moments that will follow" (Moeller 39).

So I am focusing on photojournalism – the most amplified form of the relationship between journalist, subject and public – and more specifically on images of conflict and vulnerability, where the ethical ante is highest. And the question is not a mere analytical convenience; I was introduced to American war only shortly before I was brought to journalism, and the reality of my peers fighting, reporting, dying in Iraq and Afghanistan has brought the issue of war closer to my thoughts than anything else in my adult life.

And, after all, there is an almost magnetic bond between photography and violence. Like journalistic taking, familiar semantic constructions support the perception of camera as weapon – "the irrepressible identification of the camera and the gun" (Sontag RTSOO 66). Often photojournalists are described as "wielding" their cameras – a word most commonly attached to weapons or power, and always bearing those connotations. Semantically indistinguishable from a gun, a person "aims" and "shoots" a camera. Even the act is similar. Ernst Junger observed in 1930: "It is the same intelligence, whose weapons of annihilation can locate the enemy to the exact second and meter, that labors to preserve the great historical event in great detail." (Sontag RTSOO 66-67). The two are so similar that a pioneering photographer aiming at Moroccan soldiers in 1888 got himself killed for aiming something looking "supiciously like a machine gun." As The New York Times reported, "the moral was obvious: photographers ought not to 'take aim with a lens at a group of natives without first carefully assuring them that it is not loaded' "

(Carlebach 60).

Such fatal confusion has mostly faded into a general sense of suspicion, but still "there is an aggression implicit in every use of the camera" (Sontag OP 7). When photojournalist Carol Guzy writes being female may make it easier for her to get to know subjects – "I'm less intimidating in the beginning than maybe a big, six-foot-four-inch man with a lot of cameras" (Chapnick 90) – the assumption is still that ordinary people are intimidated by photojournalists. Both having photographs taken and later seeing those photographs is profoundly disturbing to peoples whose cultures have not absorbed the technology. If photography does not actually "steal the soul," it is certainly a violation to our self-concept (Newton 64). "Photographs objectify: they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed" (Sontag RTSOO 81).

Then the photographs themselves are often described as dangerous to the viewer. A study about publishing photos with corpses describes such photos as "violent" and having "aggressive power" (Image Ethics Digital Age 65-66): "Metaphors of violence now invoke the fear that viewers' sense of place and space will be fundamentally altered as they are transported, against their will, into sharing physical presence with the corpse" (66). Barthes called this "element which rises from a scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me" the *punctum* (26). "The photograph is violent: not because it shows violent things, but because on each occasion *it fills the sight by force*, and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed ..." (Barthes 91). Sontag describes a time when she first came upon pictures from Bergen-Belsen and Dachau in a Santa Monica bookstore when she was 12. "Nothing I have ever seen – in photographs or in real life – ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously" (Sontag OP 20).

And though imagery of war and crisis far predates photography, violence and photography seem almost made for each other. "Ever since cameras were invented in 1839, photography has kept company with death" (Sontag RTSOO 24). Indeed, a conference of frustrated photojournalists in ____ looked back on the "golden era of photojournalism from the 1930's to the 1960's" – war years – and deplored a shrinking market for their work. (Riding) When, as an article about the conference states, the discussion question of the day is "what photojournalists

must do to stay alive these days," we are clearly far from the times and places when this question is not a contemplative one. (Riding).

And for most of photography's history, the world has provided a supply of crisis steady enough to keep the meaning of the question dangerously literal. Photography rode into the American lifestyle on the most American of wars, when the dead of the Civil War battlegrounds came home in pictures for the first time. There had been photography in a journalistic style (no one goes to war for the landscapes) already of the Crimean War from 1854 to 1856 and a few other colonial conflicts of the era. Roger Fenton was the first real war photographer after got permission to photograph the Crimean War from the British War Office, along with a strict instruction: No dead bodies. (Keegan 15) Since then, the development of photography can be traced from one battlefield to the next. Photography also had an unprecedented democritizing effect on crisis imagery, as Perlmutter points out (88), because historic portraits and depictions of battle focused on the commanders and leaders. Photography, with no such bias for grandeur (and perhaps the opposite) featured ordinary soldiers and civilians from the very beginning.

Cameras from the Civil War era could at best take a photograph in a 20-second exposure. Clearly there weren't going to be any battle scenes, but photographers could capture whatever wouldn't move – "the inanimate, the staged and the dead" (Perlmutter 109). The New York Times commented on these typical battlefield scenes of dead soldiers, expressing also the scientific reverance that surrounded photography at the time: "It seems somewhat singular that the same sun that looked down upon the faces of the slain, blistering them, blotting out from the bodies all semblance of humanity ... should have thus caught their features on canvas and given them perpetuity forever" (Keegan 33).

Though photography had improved, conflict images were "extraordinarily dull and repetitive" during World War I due to extremely strict censorship (Keegan 8). It took a remarkable photo of a Republican soldier, shot by enemy fire and a young Hungarian photographer's camera at precisely the same moment, to launch crisis photography into the next era of meaningfulness. That photographer was Robert Capa, who is often credited with creating the image of what

it means to be a war photographer. This image was a positive one in comparison to the early snappers of the yellow journalism and tabloid era: “For years news photographers were demonized for their fondness of sensation and sleaze. In the role of war photographer, however, they seemed more heroic than exploitative, their selfless and courageous actions at the front providing the public with life-and-death information, not fluff” (Carlebach 91).

The first Pulitzer Prize was handed out in 1917, but the first for photography was only introduced in 1942 after the public became interested in photos from World War II: “It was only with the entry of the United States into World War II that the Board responded to the American public’s intense interest in newspaper photographs that depicted graphically the travails of their soldiers in action” (7, Momentsold foreward by Seymour Topping) In September 1943 President Roosevelt lifted the ban on pictures of dead U.S. soldiers to avoid cynicism of all press photos since the Germans were publishing plenty of them. “Shortly after, Life magazine published a picture of Marine corpses on Buna Beach in the Pacific. Maggots could be clearly seen on one of the bodies” (Keegan 8).

By Vietnam, photojournalists “got everywhere, hitching lifts on helicopters, living and dying wherever the Marines and infantry were fighting” (Keegan 9). It also marked a pivotal era in visual technology; the war “began in an era of still, black-and-white photography and ended in one of color videotape beamed by satellite to television stations all over the world” (Requiem 9). Vietnam was documented like no other war before or since, and promptly sent home with few reservations. “Television and print media delivered images of death and violence as dependably as a milkman” (Requiem 35).

Journalists worked as intelligence agents for the government prior to Vietnam (Goldstein, 31). But Vietnam War journalists’ seeming indifference to patriotism – if not outright hostility – was used as reason by the Reagan administration to deny access to the Granada invasion in October 1983 (Goldstein, 32). Photographers during the first Gulf War were prohibited by the military from taking pictures in which the faces of wounded or dead could be recognized, resulting in very few casualty pictures were seen by the American public (NYT Feb. 1, 1991).

President George W. Bush allowed photographs of troops' coffins during his first two years in office, but revived his father's presidential ban at the commencement of the Iraq war (Patterson and Wilkins 275). Embedded reporters in Iraq get strict orders now to not photograph detainees' faces or identifiable pictures of wounded or dead troops before their families are notified (Hagengruber), but the newest challenge to coverage in Iraq is the reluctance of cash-strapped American newspapers to pay the expenses for security, insurance and guides. The war in Iraq is far more dangerous for photojournalists than Vietnam was (Pogash, Hagengruber), though no amount of danger could fully break the long tradition of conflict photography.

But why? If war and photography are natural brothers, then loyalty is the family trait they recognize in each other without fully understanding. It was one of Aristotle's four cardinal virtues, and revived to scholarly relevance by Josiah Royce in the early 20th century, coinciding interestingly with the spread of photography from the elite technicians to the general public. "Loyalty is indeed an old word, and to my mind a precious one," Royce wrote in *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, "and the general idea of loyalty is still far older than the word, and is immeasurably more precious" (vii). Royce actually took his title from a book titled *The Philosophy of War* in an ironic way to chip away at the association between war and loyalty. (12) He defined loyalty as "the willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause."

> A man is loyal when, first, he has some cause to which he is loyal; when, secondly, he willingly and thoroughly devotes himself to this cause; and when, thirdly, he expresses his devotion in some sustained and practical way, by acting steadily in the service of his cause (16-17).

What Royce ignores in his discussion is the necessity of sometimes holding multiple loyalties that conflict with each other. George Fletcher points this out in his outline of loyalty: "Missing in Royce is the sense of tragedy that inheres in conflicts of loyalty, tragedies born of fissures in the historical self" (153). With "historical self" Fletcher is pointing out how a person's kinship loyalties might conflict with their moral cause, such as a plantation owner's son siding with the South in the Civil War even while agreeing with the abolitionists. The concept can be translated to conflicts faces by journalists, not of personal fissures but of those inherent to the

profession – fissures in the professional self.

From Royce's definition it would follow that the journalist who remains loyal to the guiding principles of the profession, as the chosen cause, will always make the ethical decision. But loyalty is intrinsically about relationships, and journalists must engage with other people in pursuit of their chosen cause – take from them – creating tension between the loyalties demanded by their various roles. "Journalists occupy a special role in society as a conduit between the afflicted and the public. ... Newsgatherers simultaneously may be rescuers, bystanders, witnesses, advocates, victims, and even, at times, victimizers of the people whose situations they depict" (316, Newman, Elana. "The Bridge Between Sorrow and Knowledge: Journalists and traumatic stress"). Though they refer to "commitment" and "responsibility," Gross, Katz and Ruby are in effect listing these basic loyalty conflicts in their outline of four "moral imperatives" common to all professional image makers:

> 1. The image maker's commitment to him/herself to produce images which reflect his/her intention, to the best of his/her ability;
> 2. the image maker's responsibility to adhere to the standards of his/her profession, and to fulfill his/her commitments to the institutions of individuals who have made the production economically possible;
> 3. the image maker's obligations to his/her subjects
> 4. the image maker's responsibility to the audience. (6)

Their aim is to give journalists pause as they go about their jobs, but they offer no suggestions about how journalists could reconcile these "moral imperatives" when they conflict.

Question

How should journalists balance loyalty for subjects, the public, and themselves in crisis photography?

Methodology

Definitions

Answering this question first requires that the various components be defined. Crisis photography can be most simply defined as the photographs that are difficult to look at. They

represent a traumatic moment for each party involved: both photographer and subject at the time the photo is taken, and for the public each time the photograph is viewed. The category is a subset of documentary photography (as opposed to staged photographs) that includes war, famine, natural disaster, or any critical situation that puts a large number of lives in jeopardy for a prolonged amount of time. To borrow a phrase from Sontag, these are images "centered on war and victimhood"(Sontag RTSOO 34).

- In other words, each photo must contain the question "Why this one?" It is the element of choice, a notion I mistakenly took from Barthes – upon rereading, he didn't mean this at all. It remains a good principle: Why this subject? Why this particular execution, this corpse, this refugee? This marks the separation from other breaking-news photography that does not ask this question (Why these two victims? Because they are the only ones.)

- Each photograph must contain an act of violence, using the definition developed by Johan Galtung that includes deliberate actions (or nonactions) resulting in human suffering. This definition of violence would encompass refugees along with casualties, and class oppression along with revolution.

- I am including acts of violence with no perpetrator – that is, acts of natural violence such as epidemics, tsunamis or forest fires – because the notion of victimhood is still applicable.

For a while I thought "conflict photography" would be a better term, but "crisis" implies the imminent decision that must be made along with the overall situation of suffering. It is partly a reference to the difficult subject matter, and also to the decisions of the journalist. That the question refers to "journalists" is deliberate. A word like "photojournalist" may seem more precise, but an age of rapidly evolving technology and roles in journalism makes such a term archaic. Likewise, "photographer" is too narrow and brusque, not to mention inaccurate – the "journalist" part of "photojournalist" is the most important (Chapnick 42). Both writers and photographers are fundamentally reporters (Rhode and McCall 7). Kenny Irby, an expert on visual journalism at the Poynter Institute, advocates the use of terms like "visual journalist" and "print journalist" to avoid this trivialization. It also makes it clear that those reporting the

news have more commonalities than differences, regardless of whether they stand behind a pen or a lens. Journalists often take multiple roles, a practice that will likely increase as newspapers require more multimedia coverage with smaller staffs. Rather than being a photographer or writer, one is always a journalist. The only difference is the medium, which could change daily.

Nor would it be wise to broaden the category so generally as to include all people involved with crisis photography. A "journalist" bears no distinction from the rest of society in any legal or official way, nor can one tell by looking at a photograph whether it was taken by a journalist or non-journalist. However, the distinction is necessary when looking at ethical questions in crisis photography because journalists carry a different set of loyalties. It is not a press badge that makes a journalist, but intent and responsibility of knowing one is a journalist. "Philosophers claim that 'to belong to a profession is traditionally to be held to certain standards of conduct that go beyond the norm for others,' and journalism qualifies as one of those professions with a higher expected norm of conduct" (textbook 97). A journalist is aware of the harm or good she can do, and must filter decisions through this knowledge. To say that a war photographer differs from the surrounding soldiers only by his camera is true in regard to appearances, but that one piece of equipment represents huge differences in responsibilities, loyalties and ways of thinking.

That all being said, I will use the terms "photographer" and "photojournalist" interchangeably with "visual journalist" when appropriate, and "journalist" when there is little ambiguity.

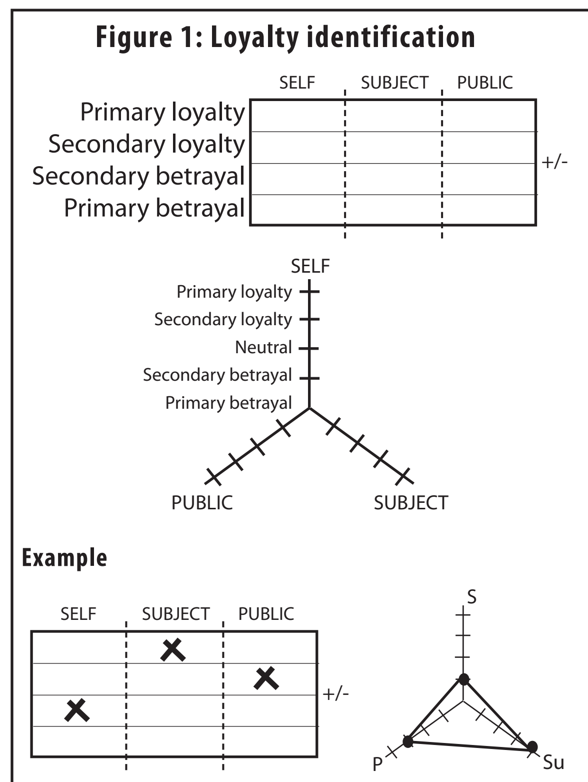
Loyalty will be taken in a more colloquial sense than Royce's definition. Indeed, Royce would not even recognize a loyalty to self because he sees them as one and the same; your self is defined by your chosen loyalty. Loyalty for the purpose of this analysis will mean *acting* in a way that demonstrates allegiance and consideration. It does no good if one feels an allegiance but does not act on it, though the act may be as slight as hesitating.

Before going into greater detail about loyalty judgments, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by "subject," "public" and "self." These categories are represent the three major parties in photojournalism. Roland Barthes called the three the Operator, Spectator, and Spectrum:

> The Operator is the Photographer. The Spectator is ourselves, all of us who glance through collections of photographs – in magazines and newspapers, in books, albums, archives ... And the person or thing photographed is the target, the referent, a kind of little simulacrum, any eidolon emitted by the object, which I should like to call the Spectrum of the Photograph, because this word retains, through its root, a relation to "spectacle" and adds to it that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead (9).

With Barthes' interesting exception, the "subject" nearly always goes by that term and represents the people depicted in a photograph. When regarding loyalties, the term will also encompass those affected as subjects, even if they are not directly in the frame, such as family members or even communities. The "public" is what print journalism refers to as "the readers" – the audience of media consumers who would never otherwise view the photographed situation in that way. The public also encompasses notions of posterity and world knowledge. The "self" is what we have been referring to all along as the photojournalist, photographer, image maker, and so forth. This is the person aiming the camera and therefore responsible for what gets transferred from subject to public. This term includes both a photojournalist's obligations as employee of a publication and personal duties as a human being.

We can now return to the measures of loyalty, which will be broken down into four categories: primary and secondary loyalty, and primary and secondary betrayal. Primary loyalty will be conscious and intentional acts of loyalty; secondary loyalty describes actions that show loyalty, but were not the journalist's main consideration. Betrayal categories are broken down the same way. The distinction has much to do with the the journalist's state of mind; for example, taking a photograph of a student baring his chest to an approaching tank (see Appendix A) may be primary loyalty to subject ("I want to capture his defiance



before he is killed"), primary betrayal to subject ("I want to expose the cruelty of the occupiers"), primary loyalty to public ("People need and want to see what is happening here"). It could also be primary loyalty to self if the photographer is on the side of the defiant youth and is in fact aiming to make propaganda. In the case of this actual photograph, little is known about the photographer and his state of mind at the time, so it only serves as the object of conjecture. In many other cases there is an abundance of information about the photographer's state of mind, and several of these cases will be examined later.

There is another word that must be addressed, and that is "should." The question assumes photojournalists have some conscious control over their loyalties, and make decisions about their actions accordingly. "Should" assumes in a normative way that some ways of balancing these loyalties are more ethical than others. It is the qualitative hinge between the other terms, and requires the messy analysis of opinions and experiences.

Research

Using these definitions, I identified applicable instances from memoirs, photography collections, published interviews, and other sources. I also collected photojournalists' statements from these sources and personal interviews conducted via e-mail and phone to find themes and differing opinions about what defined ethical conduct for journalists. In instances where information about the photojournalists' intentions were available with the corresponding photo, it was possible to identify the primary and secondary loyalties or betrayals. A chart helps organize these classifications (See Figure 1) by indicating how the loyalties align for a specific situation. These values can then be translated to a diagram to show the relationship in a visual format (See Figure 2). Though these loyalty values are subjective and no meant to show a scientific relationship, the visual representation still assists in finding patterns in how photojournalists balance loyalties in various crisis photography situations.

Results and Discussion

In February 1993, photojournalist Kevin Carter and a freelancer friend flew into the Sudanese village of Ayod, where Carter spent the day photographing starving people coming to the feeding station there. At one point he walked into the bush and heard the whimpering of a small child crawling toward the station. "At that moment, a vulture landed nearby, sensing carrion. Carter positioned himself to take a picture of the child with the vulture waiting patiently for its time. Carter took a few photos, then chased the bird away" (Moments 224).

Like the vulture caught on film behind the baby, that photograph stalked Carter. He was criticized by some people who "questioned his ethics, saying that a photographer who concerned himself with the picture instead of helping the child was just another vulture on the scene" (Moments 225). Vultures of both the literal and metaphorical species keep showing up in discussions of crisis photography. There is nothing lovable or noble about a vulture; they're either seen as malicious predators or pathetic scavengers resorting to the lowest of existences. Neither portrait makes an encouraging comparison for crisis photographers, but the connection persists, often even coming from the journalists themselves. Journalist Frank Smyth wrote that "the ethics of our profession mandate that we not intervene ... we interact with evolving tragedies more like vultures who pick at the scene" (crisis workers anecdotes 293).

In Uganda during the bloody reign of President Idi Amin, Don McCullin writes how "in the Apollo Hotel, there was the vulture-like influx of journalists of whom I was one" (175). Just pages later he has been imprisoned by Amin's guards and remarks, without any apparent irony, that he "spent hours staring through the window grille at the egrets and the little weaver birds. From time to time they were scattered by the arrival of a party of vultures." A fellow prisoner said they always arrive for the body truck (182).

One of the earliest photographs showing the effects of conflict comes from the Sikh uprising in ____. The bones of about 1,800 rebel defenders bayonetted by the British were picked clean by "vultures and dogs," then redistributed in the palace yard by the photographer six months later for a more striking photograph (Sontag RTSOO 54).

The vulture fixation symbolizes the main loyalty questions journalists face in crisis photography. At what point does a photographer cross from observer to predator? Is it ethical to sacrifice objectivity and intervene? Are journalists loyal to their subjects, and should they be? If photographs are inherently aggressive, then photojournalists must be aggressors and, to a certain extent, predators. Sontag writes that "there is something predatory in the act of taking a picture."

> To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed. Just as the camera is a sublimation of the gun, to photograph someone is a sublimated murder – a soft murder, appropriate to a sad, frightened time (Sontag OP 14-15).

"As others have noted before me," Newton writes, "photographic observation is not dissimilar to hunting with a gun: A person is caught and frozen in the frame, much as other kinds of creatures are shot and stuffed for display – or consumed" (Newton 58).

Once again the camera is seen as a weapon, but without even the dignity of an assassination. What is meant by this journalist-as-vulture theme is the use of people as means rather than ends – a transgression of basic human ethics. A rare guide for journalists covering victims advises, "Always treat victims with dignity and respect – the way you want to be treated in a similar situation" (Journalists and Tragedy 4). It sounds inanely obvious, a weak echo from millennia of religious and ethical teachings summed up as The Golden Rule. But it is not taken for granted in a profession that places so much emphasis on being stoic, objective observers. Compassion is not an attribute public perception often grants the press. "Many journalists would be surprised to see compassion considered an important issue for journalists," two journalism professors wrote. "And about two-thirds of the public would be surprised to find out that journalists even know the meaning of the word" (Goodwin 306).

> "Journalists, especially the newspaper variety, shun the notion of compassion for many reasons. Some believe it runs counter to objective reporting, which they try to practice despite widespread doubts about its achievability or desirability. A tenet of objective reporting is that reporters are spectators and not participants in what they cover. ... Reporters are not supposed to get involved with the people in their stories; they are supposed to be neutral observers" (Goodwin 306).

The News At Any Cost includes a piece from an essay where journalism student wrote, "If you're too ethical and nice, you're never going to get anywhere in journalism, in my opinion. ... As a journalist, you do whatever you have to for a story. That's your job" (9). Another student scribbled in the margins of the copy from the Washington State University library on a different page: "Does work come first or life" (27).

It's a serious question. Objectivity and other seemingly basic tenets of journalism become suddenly complicated when, as in crisis photography, lives are at risk. Carter faced this quandary in criticism of the vulture picture: "Being close enough to photograph the starving child meant being close enough to help. The responsibility to bear witness does not automatically outweigh the responsibility to be involved" (Moeller 40). Photographer John Isaac had a nervous breakdown after returning to New York from photographing Rwandan refugees in Goma, where he witnessed a cameraman happily exclaiming about the beautiful shot he had lined up of a row of dead bodies. In 1984, covering the famine in Ethiopia, he'd been shocked to see photographers stepping over dying children to get a better angle.

> "To photograph a situation was very important to me, but I was a human being first and then only a photographer. Many times I chose to help someone rather than take a photograph. I was criticized by many, as 'not a true photojournalist.' I accepted that, and learned to live with it, even though it is a contradiction when you have chosen to be a photojournalist and make decisions as to whether to take a photo or not" (290).

William Sanders, former president of the National Press Photographers Association, said "you're a member of the human race first and a photographer second" (Goodwin 325).

But it's unfair and irresponsible to say intervening is always the ethical option. In many cases it's true that "photographing is essentially an act of non-intervention. ... The person who intervenes cannot record; the person who is recording cannot intervene" (Sontag OP 11-12). Intervention is not always practical, nor even possible in crisis photography because the scale is too great. After facing criticism, Carter said he wished he had picked up the baby and taken her away from the vulture. But, he said, there were hundreds of babies like her out there. "When someone is drowning and no one else is around, a journalist obviously ought to act. But in

wartime, with lives constantly at risk, a journalist cannot do his job if he must be responsible for each life around him" (Goldstein 33). Is a photographer primarily obligated to attempt to stop the violence, or to get the pictures recording the event?" Chapnick wrote in "______."

> As in many of these behavioral and ethical questions, there are no easy answers. ... Whenever possible we should make every effort to discourage violence or at the very least alert the proper authorities so that they can do whatever is necessary to prevent the loss of life. If this fails and the disturbance is ongoing, the photojournalist should follow the action and record the event" (Chapnick 296).

It was December 1971 when visual journalists were summoned to a racetrack in Dacca, Bangladesh, for a "rally" (Momentsold 98) or "photo opportunity" (Evans vi). It turned out to be a slaughter of prisoners ______. "People were to be murdered for the cameras; and some photographers and a television camera crew departed without taking a picture in the hope that in the absence of cameramen the acts might not be committed," editor Harold Evans wrote. "Others felt that the mob was beyond the appeal to mercy. They stayed and won Pulitzer prizes" (Evans vii). The photographers who stayed were Horst Faas and Michel Laurent, and they indeed won the 1972 Pulitzer for their photos of the execution. They were no strangers to the area or crisis photography. In "Moments," which inevitably celebrates the Pulitzer winners, the story is told from their perspective:

> "Laurent joined Faas at the scene as Bahinis tortured the bound prisoners by burning them with cigarettes. Faas twice asked them to stop, then he and Laurent moved away because they thought the event was being staged for the camera and hoped their departure would end the public brutality. No one noticed their leaving, however, and the torture continued. Faas and Laurent moved back, but stayed in the crowd and watched."
>
> They then watched as a Bahini political leader took a bayonet and plunged it through one of the men, followed by fighters doing the same. They maneuvered their way to the front of the crowd and took pictures.
>
> "Although there was some criticism of the two photographers by people who felt their presence had encouraged the action, others said that the pictures generated international pressures that improved the treatment of the ethnic minority in Bangladesh."

Faas recalled that his "hands were trembling so much I couldn't change the film. ... The crowd cheered and took no notice of us. I hoped the men would die quickly, but it took almost an

hour." (99 Momentsold). If the worst is to be believed, their primary loyalty to self – to getting any possible story and the ensuing glory – led to brutal executions that otherwise may not have happened. At best, their primary loyal was to the public – that they might see what happened – with secondary loyalty to the victims and secondary betrayal to themselves for photographing despite the danger of the mob. Or it could be primary loyalty to subjects, whose deaths would have gone unrecorded after the other journalists left the scene.

"In looking back on my 20 years with the AP, I realized that it was frequently impossible to avoid becoming involved in the story," P. Arnett Newton said. "Not only were we eyewitnesses to history, but by our presence we influenced it" (49). It's not a question of whether a journalist can avoid interaction – they can't, their mere presence intervenes – but of what their influence means.

Loyalty to subject

One thing is certain: Photojournalists are far from oblivious to their subjects. In an editor's list of what leads to successful photojournalism, the first item is "Intuitive sympathy and identification with the subjects of a story." This before technical skill, curiosity, planning, and luck – all of which are plenty important (229 Rhode and McCall). The very first of a bulleted list on acknowledgments page of photojournalist Julianne Newton's book "The Burden of Visual Truth is devoted to the subjects: "To all those whom I photographed. They were my best teachers" (xv). In this book she writes that "visual reportage depends on the people it serves – the human beings whose life stories are photographed and published. Yet we know little about how a photographer's behavior affects those he or she photographs for the mass media, nor do we understand how people feel when they are photographed in different ways" (Newton 67). Scholarly research hasn't caught up with professional experience in this area, and must yield to the photojournalists who often do understand, at least in particular circumstances, how their subjects feel. And while there are examples of photojournalists shamelessly living up to the vulture reputation, many are profoundly concerned about their subjects.

Capa recalled taking pictures of the 301st Bomber Group of the U.S. Air Force at a British airfield as they were getting ready for a mission to St. Naziare, then waited for them to return.

> "I waited for six long hours in the control tower before the first returning Fortress appeared on the horizon. As they approached we started to count them. In the morning there had been twenty-four ships in beautiful formation. Now, counting all over the sky, there were only seventeen.
>
> They circled over the control tower and waited for permission to land. One of the ships had had its landing gear shot away, and had wounded aboard. The tower ordered it to come in first and attempt a belly landing. I got my Contax ready and got one roll of film used up by the time the plane came to a safe standstill. I ran up to the plane and focused my second Contax. The hatch opened, and what was left of a guy was handed down to the waiting medics. He was still moaning. The next two didn't moan anymore. The last man to leave the plane was the pilot. He seemed to be all right except for a slight gash on his forehead. I moved to get a close-up. He stopped midway and cried, 'Are these the pictures you were waiting for, photographer?' I shut my camera and left for London without saying goodbye.
>
> On the train to London, with those successfully exposed rolls in my bag, I hated myself and my profession. (Capa 33).

More recently, in Sarajevo, it was "not uncommon to hear, in the middle of a bombardment or a burst of sniper fire, a Sarajevan yelling at the photojournalists, who were easily recognizable by the equipment hanging round their necks, 'Are you waiting for a shell to go off so you can photograph some corpses?'" (Sontag RTSOO 112).

Trying to counter the morbid vulture reputation and accurately represent his brother's ethics, Cornell Capa coined the term "concerned photographer" – those who are out taking photographs "because they have a concern for mankind and because they believe in its important and relevance to our times" (Chapnick 24). Capa is revered as the ideal concerned photographer. "No one has ever photographed war with greater bravery or with more intense compassion," (Capa v) biographer Richard Whelan wrote. Just pages later he writes of the "great heart and an overwhelming compassion" that shines through Capa's work. "If you look at the pictures in my film that he took of Nazi soldiers surrendering, they are full of humanity," said Anne Makepeace, who made a 2003 documentary about Capa's life. "The Nazis killed some of his relatives. He would have had every reason to make them look like monsters, but you see their suffering" (Loos).

It is a spirit shared by many of the photojournalists doing crisis photography. Larry Burrows felt deeply about photos he took of a U.S. unit in Vietnam: "I was torn between being a photographer and the normal human feelings. It is not easy to photograph a pilot dying in a friend's arms and later to photograph the breakdown of the friend ... Was I simply capitalising on someone else's grief?" (Keegan 191). McCullin recalled a similar experience with a vulnerable solider in Vietnam:

> There was blood and saliva running down his face, and the huge personal dressing he was applying was turning red as I watched. His eyes were like infernos, pleading with the pain. I raised my camera as he turned his head from left to right, requesting me not to do it. I backed off" (McCullin 103).

David Leeson, who won the 2004 Pulitzer for photos in Iraq, said there were scenes with bodies that he would not photograph. "I must live with myself," he said (Pogash). Eddie Adams remembers pulling his camera away from the face of a terrified 18-year-old Marine in Vietnam. "I'll never forget what was going through my mind – that my face looked exactly like his," Adams said. "I was just too embarrassed for his sake and mine, plus the picture could have labeled that kid for the rest of his life. I always try to put myself in the other person's place" (Goodwin 325-326).

Only Adams can visualize the young man's face that he didn't photograph, but people worldwide recognize the faces in a photograph he did take. It is the picture of a Viet Cong prisoner at the moment he is being executed on a Saigon street. It is also a picture of the executioner, a Vietnamese general named Nguyen Ngoc Loan. Adams became acquainted with Loan later in the war, and once visited the restaurant Loan and his family opened in Virginia after the war. There he saw, written on the bathroom wall, "We know who you are." (Momentsold 80).

"Two men died that day," Adams said years later, "the VC and Loan. Sometimes a picture can be misleading. Sometimes it does not tell the whole story. Many Vietnamese held great affection for Loan. He was not all that bad a guy. I don't say what he did was right, but he was fighting a war and he was up against some pretty bad people. Sometimes we tend to forget what the VC did to a lot of innocent citizens. I think of that sign in his restaurant, and I say to myself

that I caused that sign to be there" (Momentsold 81).

Many journalists sharing these kind of experiences in crisis photography flat-out reject any lionization of objectivity. A camera in itself is a paradox; as a machine, it is completely objective, and yet it cannot operate without a person pointing the lens. As Dorothea Lange wrote, "His machine must prove that it can be endowed with the passion and the humanity of the photographer; the photographer must prove that he has the passion and the humanity with which to endow the machine" (Lange 69).

Those who believe photojournalism is "selective but objective" show a complete lack of understanding of the profession, W. Eugene Smith wrote. "The journalistic photographer can have no other than a personal approach; and it is impossible for him to be completely objective. Honest – yes. Obejctive – no" (Smith, W. Eugene 103). As he points out, if three of the best photojournalists were at the same location photographing the same subject, obviously none of their photos would be identical" (Smith, W. Eugene 103). Though aiming to be an objective photographer and aiming to be a concerned photographer are not pointing toward polar oppositite, the distinction is partly about how a journalist should prioritize loyalties. Those proponing objectivity are basically declaring an overwhelming loyalty to the public and neutrality to all other parties. They see this as the best way to attain truth. Those who reject objectivity as a futile or dispassionate pursuit feel that truth is not necessarily found in neutrality, and loyalty to the subjects of a photograph is an important duty – perhaps the most important one. "We photographers, in the course of taking pictures, inevitably make a judgment on what we see," Henri Cartier-Bresson said, "and that implies a great responsibility" (Cartier-Bresson 50).

Loyalty to public

Still, a journalist's very involvement in crisis photography speaks of an enormous loyalty to the public. The public is involved in an instance of crisis photography long before it knows it is; photographs are taken to be seen. A picture is "made more meaningful by intimacy – an intimacy shared not only by the photographer which his subject but by the audience" (Lange 71).

It was the public that inspired Mathew Brady to first take photos of the Civil War, and the public reacted with the interest he expected. Civil War photographs “are relatively dull now, but they were new then and the public studied them for insights into war” (Goldberg 25). An oft-quoted passage from The New York Times speaks of this fascination:

“The dead of the battlefield come to us very rarely even in dreams. We see the list in the morning paper at breakfast but dismiss its recollection with coffee. Bt Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it ... These pictures have a terrible distinctness. By the aid of the magnifying-glass, the very features of the slain may be distinguished. We would scarce choose to be in the gallery, when one of the women bending over them should recognize a husband, a son, or a brother in the still, lifeless lines of bodies, that lie ready for the gaping trenches” (Sontag RTSOO 62-63).

At the door of his gallery hangs a little placard, ‘The Dead of Antietam.’ Crowds of people are constantly going up the stairs. ... Of all objects of horror one would think the battlefield shoudl stand preeminent, that it should bear away the palm of repulsiveness. But on the contrary, there is a terrible fascination about it that draws one near these images, and makes him loth to leave them. You will see hushed, reverend groups standing around these weird copies of carnage, bending down to look in the pale faces of the dead, chained by the strange spell that dwells in dead men’s eyes” (Goldberg 26).

Since that time, journalists who do crisis photography are the ones who, since they cannot bring home the bodies, feel a duty to “do something very like it.” It has become so pervasive and remains so convincing, even in an age of easy digital manipulation, that “something becomes real – to those who are elsewhere, following it as ‘news’ – by being photographed” (Sontag RTSOO 21). In the early part of the century photojournalists developed the same sort of occupational culture that police officers or soldiers share: “News photographers increasingly saw themselves as embattled and misunderstood tribunes of the people. When news happened they rushed to tell the story; and if their pictures sickened or enraged or saddened, that was proof of

their effectiveness and necessity" (Carlebach 43).

Is it true that there is, as Sontag says, an "ethical value of an assault by images" (Sontag RTSOO 116)? This loyalty to public is an antipathetic loyalty, sometimes openly hostile. McCullin repeatedly cites this as a motivation for pursuing difficult images despite the emotional toll – he wanted his photograph to "imprint itself on the world's memory" (McCullin 56) and "remain engraved on the minds of all who see" (McCullin 124). This was his overriding thought when photographing starving Biafran orphans:

"I would like to think these images brought help to the beleaguered hospitals with their dying children. I knew my pictures had a message, but what it was precisely I couldn't have said – except, perhaps, that I wanted to break the hearts and spirits of secure people" (McCullin 125).

This kind of intention – and the fact that it works, that people are pierced or hurt by these images – again brings up the moral question of where to draw the line to shield the public. Elana Newsman writes that ethics codes focused on "minimizing harm" to subjects and self rarely mention the public. "Interestingly, the focus of ethics codes has not been on minimizing harm to the sources and subjects, not the audience. Yet more journalists and news corporations are addressing issues related to potential harm to the audience, even though this has not formally entered the ethics code" (Newman Elana 191). Photos with corpses, an inevitability in crisis photography, are a perennial source of contemplation for editors – to publish or not to publish? "Once defined as an instrument of 'torture,' the corpse photograph is ethically condemned for inducing traumatic pain and crippling individual agency by denying the reader choice and an opportunity to escape the pain. Indeed, the denial of a choice to avoid pain is quite the definition of victimization" (Image Ethics 66).

Even if informally, the public's reaction is often a prime priority in newsrooms – editorial discretion or censorship, depending on the point of view. But journalists who recall putting the camera down without taking a particular picture seem to feel no corresponding ethical duty to shelter the public. Rather, their loyalty to the public is letting them, or forcing them, to know what is happening in the world. After Capa's unnerving experience photographing the air force,

he woke up the next morning glad he'd taken the pictures that angered the pilot, for the sake of the public:

> "Next morning, after sleeping it over, I felt better. While shaving, I held a conversation with myself about the incompatibility of being a reporter and hanging on to a tender soul at the same time. The pictures of the guys sitting around the airfield without the pictures of their being hurt and killed would have given the wrong impression. The pictures of the dead and wounded were the ones that would show people the real aspect of war, and I was glad I had taken that one roll before I turned soppy" (Capa 33).

Burrows recounted a similar feeling of resolution from that time in Vietnam when the crew chief broke down and cried after a costly mission, when he wondered whether it was even right to photograph someone's grief. "But then I justify, in my own particular thoughts, by feeling that I can contribute a little to the understanding of what others are going through; then there is reason for doing it" (Requiem 98). When Life magazine published that first photo showing dead Americans in World War II, the editors eloquently defended their decision:

> "We think that occasional pictures of Americans who fall in action should be printed. The job of men like [photographer] Strock is to bring the war back to us, so that we who are thousands of miles removed from the danger and the smell of death may know what is at stake. Maybe some of our politicians would think twice about their selfish interests if they could see him lying on the white sand. ... Why should the home front be coddled, wrapped in cotton wool, protected from the shock of the fight? If Bill had the guts to take it, we ought to have the guts to look at it, face-to-face" (Goldberg 197)

"And I think it's important to give people credit for being able to cope with the truth, cope with reality, deal with it and have some kind of genuine, worthwhile response to it," James Nachtwey said in an interview. "I believe it's a disservice to a readership to condescend, be patronizing and feel that the whole world can't really take knowing what's going on. I think people can. I think they want to know." (Nachtwey). The difficult pictures are the ones that have the greatest effect, the greatest potential – however slim – for creating real change.

During the Gulf War air annihilation of the retreating Iraqi army, _____ Jarecke took a close-up photograph of a dead Iraqi soldier in his vehicle – a solitary individual in the transfixation of a hideous death (Evans PoaP vi, introduction). Using journalist Neil Hickey's method of describing the violent power of corpse photos by their "volume level" from 1 to 10 (Image Ethics

65), this photo is probably at 9.5. It is horrifyingly personal. Of all the difficult photographs I have seen in the course of this research, it is the only one I still avoid seeing. When I must look, it is the only one I still physically brace myself against.

Asked why he even took the shot, Jarecke said, “How could I not take the picture?” (Newton 55). “To Jarecke, photographing the gruesome scene was imperative in order to show the world what occurred during the war, despite military censoring” (Newton 55). Before a photograph like that, people had been able to “enjoy the lethal felicity of designer bombs as some kind of video game” and get caught up in the martial excitement. No more. (Evans PoaP vi, introduction). Jarecke was acting with a primary loyalty to the public – antipathetic loyalty, yes, but that was his motive in taking the picture. The photo could do nothing for the dead soldier or thousands of others already killed, or create a noble image for victims’ families to remember by. It was just an inordinately powerful way to show the public what combat really means, a goal of many journalists.

“No one after a certain age has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance, or amnesia” (Sontag RTSOO 114), Sontag wrote, summing up the sentiment of most crisis photographers. When contractors were killed in Fallujah in the current Iraq war and their charred bodies strung up while _____ celebrated, major U.S. papers were criticized by readers for running photos showing the bodies, even in the background. “Those incensed by the [Fallujah] pictures should ask themselves what is most troubling, the fact that the violence happened or that we have photographs of it? No image of war is ever as brutal as war itself” (Sandweiss).

Loyalty to self

Of course, none of this would even matter if there weren’t individuals working as photo-journalists willing to go into the difficult parts of the world. Some of this might be due to negative pressure when journalists won’t turn down stories “for fear of losing ‘esteem’ among their peers” (Cramer aid workers 276). But it seems, overwhelmingly and from the beginning, that journalists do not do crisis photography unless they want to be there. Mathew Brady explained

his Civil War mission by saying, “A spirit in my feet said go, and I went.” Don McCullin was caught by the spirit when the Berlin crisis started while he was on his honeymoon:

> “Suddenly I saw the direction in which my photography had to go. I said out loud: ‘I have absolutely GOT to go to Berlin.’ ... We cut short the second honeymoon and returned to London. I raced to the Observer, to be told they were not interested in my going to Berlin. ‘Okay,’ I said to Denis Hackett, the editor on the desk, ‘but I’m going anyway. Tomorrow.’ My blood was up” (McCullin 47).

The Associated Press pressured Henri Huet to transfer out of Vietnam to Tokyo, but once there gave them a firm ultimatum: “Send me back or I quit” (Pyle). “Henri goes to war the way other people go to the office,” Horst Faas said while in Vietnam (Pyle).

But why? ____ Pedelty interviewed a number of war photographers and concluded that “no journalist becomes a war correspondent without some attraction to war and violence” (Pedelty 153). They earn a more respect and the chance “to be remembered as more than a plain photographer” (Pedelty 154). “We who were print people and dealt only in words and not in images always knew that the photographers were the brave ones, and in that war [Vietnam] ... they held a special place in our esteem,” ____ wrote. “We deferred to them, reporter to photographer, in that venue as we did in few others” (Requiem 9). Journalists have been known to resist training and proper gear, eager for the danger and even the possibility of being being a “martyr” to their cause (Cramer 277). Crisis is exciting: “To live in a war zone is to live on top of the world; friendships are closer, love deeper, fear stronger. Vietnam was not a cautionary tale. All that mattered was the work and staying alive to get it out” (Requiem 156).

Capa, reflecting on his time covering war after World War II, did not harbor any interest in another war: “When all this was over I was very happy to become an unemployed war photographer, and I hope to stay unemployed as a war photographer till the end of my life” (93). But naturally when Vietnam began he couldn’t stay away. Nor did he leave alive.

While journalists may pursue crisis photography in hopes of getting famous, rich, or at least respected, a strong egoist loyalty to self is not enough to stay in crisis photography. Taking pictures for a certain side in a conflict – propaganda – is a more common act of loyalty to self, but photographers with such motives cannot be considered journalists. A secondary betrayal to

self is almost necessary to be in situations so dangerous to life and sanity. Regardless of photojournalists' reasons for going to war, the dangers they faced and continue to face are very real. In a study 170 war correspondents, one photographer had been shot four separate times (Feinstein 305). In the course of the study, one journalist "was killed on assignment while the questionnaires were en route to him" (Feinstein 308).

Capa died with a mine-shattered left leg and a camera in his left hand in 1954 in Vietnam (Requiem 64). Four well-known photographers, including Burrows and Huet, died on the same day in Vietnam aboard a helicopter that got shot down. The crash site was finally identified in 1999 by three Nikon lenses, 13 rolls of blank film, and a piece of a Leica camera body (Pyle). This year's Pulitzer Prize-winning news photograph honored two visual journalists: the one who shot it and the one who is pictured, still taking footage as he lays on his back in the street, dying.

Aside from the regular hazards of conflict, photographers can be targeted specifically for their work. The 1980 Pulitzer Prize for news photography was awarded for a photo depicting the executions of ethnic Kurds in Iran by a government firing squad under command of Ayatollah Khomeini. For many years the photographer stood alone among all Pulitzer winners as the only one not identified. "To protect the photographer from a similar fate, one that might even follow him beyond Iran's borders, United Press chose not to identify the man who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize (Moments 136). He was finally publicly identified in 2006 as Jahangir Razmi, who regularly covered government activity in Iran. He was invited to the 2007 Pulitzer award presentation in New York and awarded his $10,000 prize. By that time he was not the only unidentified photographer – one photograph of the 2005 award-winning set depicting the Iraq War had the byline "Stringer" and the photographer remained anonymous for a picture of two election workers shot to death by insurgents (293 Momentsnew).

And death is not the only risk. If a camera can be a weapon, it also acts as a shield against the tragedy journalists must observe, if not endure. "As a photojournalist you hide your emotions behind a camera," Irwin Thompson said about covering the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. "But at the end of the day, you would put down the camera and sit in the truck by yourself,

and that's when it would hit you" (Momentsnew 303). When a mortar explosion sent pieces of shrapnel into both of McCullin's legs during a jungle ambush in Vietnam, he got dumped in a lorry with other wounded. "The deafness and the shock were wearing off. I took my mind off the pain by photographing the wounded soldiers," he said (McCullin 151). Max Becherer, reflecting on his time covering the war in Baghdad, said, "I see images. Not the images I took. I see the images and feel the sensations I keep mentally when I am without the help of a lens."

Research about journalists' occupation risks is new, and not very developed. However, "the emerging evidence indicates that most journalists are extraordinarily resilient in the face of covering trauma-related assignments. In fact, it is somewhat remarkable that in the face of high trauma exposure only a few journalists develop long-lasting disorders" (Newman Elana 188). On the spectrum of mental wellness, no crisis journalist returns unscathed. Before he died in April 1945, legendary war reporter Ernie Pyle said, "I've been immersed in it too long. My spirit is wobbly and my mind is confused. The hurt has become too great" (Tragedies and journalists 7). "Hunting for, waiting for, watching, reacting to the disasters of the world had taken a grievous toll on my spirit," McCullin wrote. "You cannot walk on the water of hunger, misery and death. You have to wade through to record them. ... I felt I had seen so much horror that it was likely to destroy me" (McCullin 218). Elizabeth Neuffer, who covered the war in Kosovo for years, wrote about how difficult it became to show compassion and aso get the job done:

> I did what I thought was best: I let people cry on my shoulder as I took notes with one hand. I brought food to families whom I was interviewing. I carried letters in and out for families I befriended who turned up in stories, over and over again. But as the weeks turned into months that turned into years ... there came a day when I realized I could no longer report a story and still have the strength to be compassionate, as well.
>
> In today's wars, you are asking reporters not just to write stories, but also to give up a piece of their soul in the process, as well (287).

Kevin Carter's never recovered from his photo of the baby and the vulture, especially when a journalist friend died on the job shortly after. On July 28, 1994, he committed suicide. "The explanatory note he left behind told of a man frustrated by lack of money and haunted by unrelenting memories of killings, madmen with guns, starving children, of corpses and pain"

(225). He was 33.

Robert Frank put it this way: “Newspeople need to hear, from each other and from their readers, listeners and viewers: ‘We know that is is not easy to witness evil or misfortune, and we are sorry if this reporting has become painful for you. Thanks for illuminating an otherwise dark world for us. We hope that you find the courage to go on and report another day” (335). More newspapers are requiring training and trying to quash the machismo culture in crisis coverage. “I am pleased to see that there is a will to recognize even the interveners’ feelings,” ___ Bertocin wrote, “because the risk is that the brave ones, those who are willing to share the suffering and the frustrations of the people they work with, will just increase the number of traumatized people” (Bertocin 301).

Decision-making: Instinct

What isn’t necessarily clear from post-hoc explanations is how journalists make their decisions and decide their loyalties in the first place. The only consistent theme that came up was instinct. “Photography is a process that starts in a photographer’s brain and ends up on film – or, these days, on a digital chip. What happens in between, any of these photographers would insist, cannot be described. It is a combination of instinct, insight, anticipation, technical proficiency, visual awareness, and the ability to express visually a mood or an understanding of a subject” (Momentsold 9). Nachtwey said he worries about the boundaries, but he has “developed an instinct for how far to go” (Nachtwey 13). McCullin recalls his first time covering a battle, remembering putting his cameras down to run into the fire-field to retrieve a 3-year-old to safety: “There was no theory at work that day. It was all instinct” (McCullin 54).

But despite the many examples of photojournalists acting nobly on instinct, it’s still a troublingly irrational method of decision-making, especially in crisis situations. As McCullin also points out, in war “you are on a schizophrenic trip.”

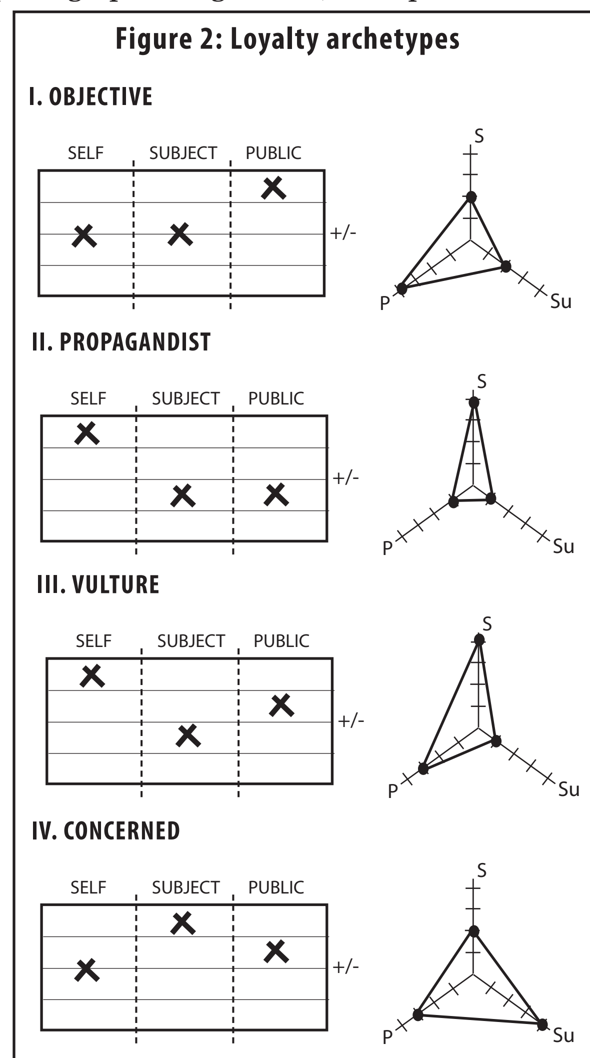
> You cannot equate what is going on with anything else in life. If you have known white sheets, and comfort, and peace in the real world, and then you find yourself living like a sewer rat, not knowing day from night, you cannot put the

two worlds together. None of the real world judgments seem to apply. What's peace, what's war, what's living, what's dead, what's right, what's wrong? You don't know the answers. You just live, if you can, from day to day (McCullin 105).

Instinct doesn't have a shape or a plan. It is a necessity of crisis photography to be flexible and alert, but that doesn't give license to be morally unprepared for the many decisions to be made when vulnerable people are your natural resource. I think what photojournalists call instinct does in fact have something of a definable shape, if not a bulleted set of guidelines.

Archetypes

From stories and comments from those within the media, as well the subjects of their work and the public viewing it, four archetypal crisis photographers started coming into focus. These models represent the balance of loyalties a photographer might have, or be perceived to have. Actual situations, as seen throughout this analysis, rarely match up so neatly. Still, these archetypes might provide an ethical guide to help identify the ideal balance.



I. Objective: The first is the objective archetype, which comes from the American journalism tradition of objectivity as path to presenting the truth. It represents perfect neutrality toward self and subject, with the only loyalty being toward providing the public with accurate information.

II. Propagandist: This comes from the opposite tradition, from those whose sole interest in media is promoting their own loyalty, be it to nation, faction or cause. It represents primary loyalty to self, secondary betrayal to public and

secondary betrayal to subject. "The word propaganda means nothing more than dissemination of some doctrine ... If the doctrine is your own, disseminating it is good public relations; it someone else's it's propaganda" (Goldberg 24). This does not include journalists with journalistic purposes whose work is later used as propaganda, which often happens, but only those who press the shutter with these intentions.

III. Vulture: This comes from notions about photojournalists, both from the critical public and subjects who feel exploited, but from within the ranks of journalism as well. It is the heartless portrait of failed objectivity – those who will stop at nothing to get the story and defend their actions as informing the public. It represents a primary loyalty to self, a secondary loyalty to public, and a secondary betrayal to subject.

IV. Concerned: This comes from within the ranks of journalism to present the photographer as first and foremost a human being. This depiction stands for compassion and siding with the most vulnerable – valuing life above professional conduct – while also trying to bridge the chasm to the rest of the world. It represents primary loyalty to subject, secondary loyalty to public, and neutrality to self.

Conclusions

It is time to face the undercurrent of persistent doubt: Can crisis photography ever be ethical? Does crisis photography provide a benefit to the world that justifies the toll taken on subjects, the public and the photojournalists? It has only limited and unpredictable effects – if any effects at all – and a photojournalist can give the subjects no promise about how the photograph may be used or manipulated beyond their control.

Does a journalist even have a right to take the photographs? Zapatista fighters have detained journalists for "image theft," (Depth of Field 168) and privacy laws mean little in times and places where people don't have homes. Photojournalists themselves express frustration and doubt about their work:

> "We all suffer from the naive belief that our integrity is reason enough for being in any situation, but if you stand in front of dying people, something more is

> required. If you can't help, you shouldn't be there. Was I of any use at all to the Biafran people? Or was I simply aiding a war that was not in their interests, a secession generated by power-hungry zealots with no thought of the anguish and deprivation they left behind when they moved their weapons of destruction on?
>
> I was ravaged and confused by this war as never before, and could see not the smallest justification for it. Or for my presence here – unless it was to remind people, through my pictures, of the futility of all wars" (McCullin 124).

What right do journalists have to force disturbing images on the public, and what good does it do for the public to see suffering they can do nothing to ease? "Perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering of this extreme order are those wo could do something to alleviate it – say the surgeons at a military hospital where the photograph was taken – or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be (Sontag RTSOO 42).

A journalist must assume good will come from her work. There is no way to know at the moment the shutter closes what impact the photograph will have, if any. A photograph does guarantee the subject personal aid, nor does is it guaranteed to affect the public's perceptions and opinions. It's a gamble. "For a long time some people believed that if the horror could be made vivid enough, most people would finally take in the outrageousness, the insanity of war" (Sontag RTSOO 14). But war and suffering have not stopped. "No longer do photographers trust their pictures will change the world, as most did at least through World War II" (Goldberg 189). Photojournalism may not have cured the world's pain – but, as Chapnick points out, neither has anything else.

It's a gamble, with human dignity and emotion on the table. Keisaburo Shimamoto, a Japanese photographer who grew up under American B-29 raids on Tokyo during World War II and went on to die in the same helicopter crash as Huet and Burrows, is as close as possible to fully knowing crisis photography as subject, public and self. "War buffets people with suffering and smears them with humiliation," he once wrote in his diary. "Do I want to see such truths? Perhaps, I think so."

I think so, too.

Journalists are the modern storytellers, the impatient historians, seeking to relay and

preserve the world's travails so that our own humanity might be reinforced. Journalists are social scientists, "professional observers" like anthropologists (Newton 54). Crisis photography is a reminder – often a terrible one – of who we are as people. Those of us who were not present or even born during World War II and the Vietnam War and today's wars have a better idea of what it was like because photography creates a "communal reservoir of memories" (Goldberg 8). We weren't there and we can't ever really know, but we might be able to learn a fraction of the same lessons. Look at enough battle pictures and you begin to notice the distinction of each face and the sameness of each corpse.

Truth and Humanity

But the doubt about crisis photography reminds us it must be done responsibly. This is where it comes back to Royce's definition of loyalty, of dedication to a cause. "Loyalty, then," Royce wrote, "fixes our attention upon some one cause, bids us look without ourselves to see what this unified cause is, shows us thus some one plan of action, and then says to us, 'In this cause is your life, your will, your opportunity, your fulfilment'" (42). It's hard to pin down a specific balance of loyalties that is ideal in every situation, but it becomes clear that ethical crisis photography depends on loyalty to both truth and humanity.

> "Even in an era of sometimes shifting loyalties, there are some loyalties that should only be most reluctantly abandoned. We recommend you give further consideration to two of them: loyalty to humanity and loyalty to truth. *Virtually no situation in media ethics calls for inhumane treatment or withholding the truth*" (textbook 100, emphasis in original).

"I'm on the side of humanity. That's the only side you can take," James Nachtwey once said when he was once asked about choosing sides (Chapnick 20). It seems very often that this is a loyalty to the most vulnerable, reminiscent of Rawls' veil of ignorance. "The heart of photojournalism is reporting human experience accurately, honestly, and with an overriding sense of social responsibility" (Newton x). And as much as we would like it to be avoidable, loyal photojournalists must be willing to risk their lives in crisis photography and know that not everyone will come home in one piece – be "ready to live or die as the cause directs" (Royce 18).

But what does loyalty to humanity look like? What about loyalty to truth? It would be tidy to say humanity's side represents the subjects and truth represents the public and public knowledge, but it is not that simple. The ideal balance of loyalties is neutral to self – neither out using other people's plight as a means for personal gain, nor neglecting personal safety and sanity. But a journalists cannot be fully loyal to subjects without sacrificing the difficult pictures, the important ones, and becoming too sentimentally connected with those they photograph. Being a messenger often means treading on already vulnerable people, but enough other people already look the other direction. To serve both humanity and truth, the photographer must look.

Neither can a photographer be fully loyal to the public and presenting the objective truth that he is denied his emotional response as a person. McCullin said he always tried to be "an independent witness – though not an unemotional one" (101). No, there is an even finer balance still between the loyalties to subject and public. Burrows, described as a master of compassionate photography, "often worried about intruding on his subjects' privacy, but never missed the essential moment" (Pyle).

> "A fine photographer plants one foot firmly within the visual pursuit of objective reality as we now know it – the most accurate recording of life events a human being can make. This person is keenly aware of a role as a professional eyewitness, working as proxy for the world at large. But a great photojournalist also plants the other foot firmly within subjective experience, with its passion, dedication, artistry, and drive to document people at their best and worst – and often with a clear point of view and at great sacrifice" (Newton 50).

Twin brothers David and Peter Turnley, both photojournalists familiar with crisis, once held an exhibit of their work together. Both photographed the cholera epidemic that broke out among Rwandan refugees in 1994: Peter photographed a mass grave for cholera victims, a lifeless pile of corpses' tangled limbs. David photographed an overflowing orphanage bed, showing the death toll by the number of orphaned children left together. "One of the children has caught the photographer's eye, sending out a little beam of consciousness."" (Boxer) Peter's images are more violent – blood, bodies and other troubling evidence to document the conflict and suffering that happens in our world. David's images are more intimate and subtle, images of the people within the crisis. "But it may be a surprise,"an exhibit reviewer wrote, "that the Turnley's

twin leanings are complementary, two halves of some ideal photojournalist: one with the detachment to get the shocking proof of inhumanity and one with the empathy to catch its human after-image." (Boxer)

I originally thought there could be no way to do crisis photography ethically without full loyalty to the most vulnerable, the subjects. But, like Capa at the British airfield, I woke up and realized an excess of concern is paralyzing sentimentality. There is no ideal fixed position for a journalist's balance of loyalties, but a perpetually adjusting balance between primary loyalty to subject and primary loyalty to public. A journalist must be in each instance devoted to the subject, and each day re-devoted to the public.