

Pulitzer Prize Winning Photographs and the Rhetoric of “Poignant Presence”:

What Brings the War Home?

1. Introduction

The Pulitzer Prize is one of the most sought after and highly recognized awards given within journalism and the arts. Every year the Pulitzer committee receives many submissions for various categories, ranging from Feature Photography to Music, each requiring a cover letter explaining the submission’s merits. The category to be focused on within this essay is the Breaking News category. Having only been created in 2000, it is still relatively new compared to other categories, such as the Public Service award, which has named a winner since 1917. We can assume that all entries obviously have photojournalistic merit, but how does the Pulitzer committee go about choosing a single photograph or photo essay to win from all the submissions? Although each Pulitzer committee member sees an image through their own perspective, there are undeniable similarities within the images that are chosen as winners.

If we look at many of the sentence-long descriptions of the winning photographs on the website, it is quite apparent the language used is often the most intense available in English. An image is not just sad, but “heartbreaking;” a photograph was not just taken in a dangerous environment, but taken “under extreme hazard.” The list goes on, and one word that seems to pop up rather often is “poignant.” A 2013 finalist’s entry is described as “...capturing the scope of the tragedy in a **poignant** portfolio of pictures,” and one of the 2007 finalist’s images has its merits described as “...**poignant** photographs of the devastating injury to Barbaro, the famed racehorse.” The Oxford English dictionary provides many definitions for poignant, yet the one that seems to be most applicable to this subject reads:

Arousing or expressing deep emotions, esp. of sorrow or regret; keenly or deeply moving or affecting; (now esp. of art, literature, etc.) evoking a sense of sorrowful tenderness; touching.

Of course, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs are almost by definition extremely moving and touching images. But what is the driving force in all these images; what ties them together to be the ones that win? I argue that these images bring not only a sense of rhetorical presence to an audience, but that it is an idea of a *poignant presence* that captivates audiences. This idea of poignant presence is different from that of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's description of presence, and is one that is more intense and holds a greater sense of importance with an audience, done especially through visuals. This paper will briefly discuss the origins of photography, photojournalism, Joseph Pulitzer and his involvement with the arts. Then we will explore why it is important to study visuals, visual rhetoric, and what "poignant presence" is as related to three recent Pulitzer Prize winning photographs, all from the Breaking News Category and featuring combat in war.

2. History

Photography as an art form originated with very humble beginnings in the 1800s, having originally used sunlight through a small pinhole to darken a cement mixture to form a crude first photograph of a Parisian courtyard. However, photographic technology has evolved far from that. With just the click of the shutter, an aperture opens and closes in under a second to allow light to pass through a warped glass lens onto a film, permanently capturing a moment that often happens too quickly to be seen with the naked eye. The original image from that Paris afternoon was nowhere near the clarity that we are now able to get with even the most inexpensive equipment. Nonetheless, it was a beginning, and it launched many different scientists into a sort

of frenzied race to find new media with which to test light exposure, new emulsions and chemicals on varying types of metal and paper, all hoping to improve this ability to paint with light (Hirsch). Now with a digital camera's on-body flash, SD cards to store images, and shutter speeds pressing $1/500^{\text{th}}$ of a second, photography has evolved from a rich man's status symbol to a quite popular pastime for people of all socioeconomic levels. Naturally there is still a divide in the quality of equipment dependent on how much money a patron is willing to shell out, but even the most economical camera models out there boast double-digit megapixel abilities and can offer surprisingly great looking images.

Photography was later refined in the early 20th century, and in addition to a growing civilian market, it quickly became a staple of news agencies and journalists around the world. The old adage "seeing is believing" had become a feasible accomplishment, for journalists were now able to provide visual evidence to support their stories. The art of photojournalism was born. Ever since it's beginning, photojournalism has been both judged and praised; praised for its raw imagery yet highly criticized for seemingly ignoring normal conventions of privacy and ethics of art. The term "photojournalism" was coined by Frank Luther Mott, the Dean of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, as a combination between photography and journalism, yet the art itself really began in 1925 in Germany with the invention of the 35mm Leica camera. It originally used surplus movie film, and began to become widely used because of its small size and portability (Collins). In conjunction with having a smaller camera, in Germany photo magazines began to pop up and become popular. With a more portable camera, photographers were able to take their craft to more diverse areas and get more pictures with less effort, allowing for a surplus of images to be chosen from for said magazines. Photographers would send in hundreds of images, only to have editors choose a few that they believed told a

story. Cutlines, or captions, were common and would help a reader understand a photo, and they became the main form of written communication in photo magazines instead of full on written stories.

This new form of journalism really came into global popularity during and after World War II. During Hitler's rise to power, he persecuted many photography magazine editors, causing them to flee with many going to America. In America, photojournalism had a slightly earlier start with Henry Luce, an already well-known photographer for magazines such as *Time* and *Fortune*. In November of 1936, he launched *Life* magazine, which would become the most famous and well-known photojournalism magazine in American history. Such outlets for photojournalists were used to display shocking and memorable images of the conflict and combat in World War II. Many documentary images from that time come directly from photojournalism magazines. Photojournalism also assisted with governmental influence, such as when Teddy Roosevelt hired photographers for the Farm Security Administration to document the dust bowl drought, and explain to the American people how the resettlement of American farmers was necessary and appropriate (Collins).

One huge proponent of journalism was Joseph Pulitzer. His passion for news-reporting and his no-nonsense attitude when it came to government corruption fueled his publishing career and propelled him into the limelight of journalism during his lifetime and even after his passing. He, as a publisher, would not shy away from sensationalist images or stories, and this only furthered his prominence and fame within the industry. He wrote a flexible will that originally outlined three categories for an award for excellence in the arts and journalism: four given for letters and drama, one in education, and four in traveling scholarships. However, he was sensitive to how quickly his society had progressed and would likely continue to do so; his will

was flexible in that it enlisted an advisory board to change the existing awards, add new ones, etc., with the changing technologies and propensities of the society at the time. Over time, photography and photojournalism categories began to emerge, beginning with an overarching Photography category in 1942 which ran until 1967 and the next year there was a Feature Photography category that has continued to run from 1968 until now. Additionally, a Spot News Photography category also began in 1968 and ran until 1999. Finally, the Breaking News Photography category, the same category that this paper gathers its texts from, is the newest category, having been started only in 2000 continues today.

Even though the Pulitzer committee still sees value in photojournalism, what with the continuance of the prize and even adding a category, some speculate that photojournalism's future may not be so bright. Some say that television has become the most important medium for communication in modern political times (Schill). A 2001 article from Peter Howe at the *Nieman Report* discusses what the reality is for photojournalism and that it may be a fading art. Howe quite explicitly states, "Television killed photojournalism, or if it didn't inflict the fatal blow, seriously wounded it" (25). Robert Schmuhl refers to it as follows: "Television is a medium highly dependent on engaging pictures. There is a visual imperative" (32). Although it is true that the advent of television has severely undercut photojournalism's impact, there is something about a stagnant image frozen in time that has more influence and power than most thirty-second video clips. Long gone are the days since *Life*, *Time* and *Fortune* magazines held the photographic impact and sway that they once did, but a great photograph makes up for the speed of video with the power of a frozen image. Howe also discusses how photojournalism seems to be becoming more about the paparazzi chronicling the every whim and fancy of celebrities of the day instead of documenting current events. And of course, with America's capitalist and status-

driven culture, it seems only logical that business and magazine owners would naturally flock to where the revenue is, regardless of the integrity of preserving photojournalism as a documentary art. The internet also plays a large part in how photojournalism is now viewed. Before the internet boom and the all encompassing reach of social media, images were only available in print. Howe states that this medium could be the final nail in the coffin for photojournalism.

3. Importance of Visuals

Regardless of television's assumed monopoly on journalism and information, there continue to be photographs shown on television, supporting the argument that frozen images are still relevant. Visuals remain a hugely important part of communication, especially in the realm of politics, yet there is a vast gap in the amount of scholarly research in visual rhetoric and visual symbols. Schill's paper on visual communication in the field of political communication can offer much insight into why visual images are so important and why it has become imperative that communication vastly expands research efforts in this field. Scholars in communication, political science, visual studies, psychology, and various other fields, all agree that visual communication is an area to be expanded upon, and they have begun to do so (Graber). Visuals often convey information to an audience much faster than the spoken or written word does, and they also carry more information than other forms (Schill 121). Visuals have a much more profound impact on an audience's attitude or belief than an entire broadcast may have. Several different empirical studies give rise to three overarching statements about visuals: 1. People believe what they see more than what they read or hear (Shea), 2. When visual and verbal messages are in conflict, viewers have difficulty remembering the verbal information (Lang), and 3. Visual messages override other messages when processed simultaneously (Noller).

Although Schill's paper focuses exclusively on how visual communication relates to political communication, there are many parallels between visuals used in television or print. First, the importance of the "image bite" has surpassed that of a sound bite. An image bite is a collection of "brief visual shots or video clips where candidates are shown but not heard" (Schill). Although this definition refers to politicians, it can still hold true for images of other contexts shown during a broadcast. For an audience, photographic evidence of whatever is being discussed can strengthen or weaken an opinion that they may already have of the situation. Also, in a culture that is built upon instant gratification and not much patience when it comes to news, image bites can display an extraordinary amount of information in a very minute time frame. To accurately study visuals, especially photos, Finnegan states that scholars and audiences alike must come to terms with the multiple ways that visuals participate in argumentation (134), and Schill expands upon that by delineating ten functions of visuals in politics. Seven of those ten can be directly related to photojournalism: image as argument, agenda setting, dramatization, emotional, documentation, transportation, and ambiguity functions.

Image as argument is the most important avenue of imagery in political communication as in the image can have rhetorical impacts and persuasive power on an audience (Schill). Photographs often do not function as singular entities, but function within the larger context of society and culture. Photography, like all types of communication, is a system of signs (Foss), and of course, signs may be misinterpreted. Audiences often see photographs as heuristics, or a sort of mental shortcut, that also can imply arguments. An enthymeme, also known as a truncated syllogism, acts on an implied major or minor premise, and is a more informal way of reasoning (Rhetoric). When an audience views a photograph, it acts as an enthymeme for whatever argument is being portrayed, even though it may be incomplete. Finnegan postulates that we

view photography as a “naturalistic enthymeme,” assuming that photographs are “true” or “real” until we are given a reason to doubt them (135). This enthymeme operates as a particularly potent yet ultimately vulnerable one.

Image as an agenda setting function works in conjunction with the image as argument function because the press, politicians, etc. can all use a photograph that supports their argument to further their agenda. Agenda setting theory states that the media is able to control information insofar as their ability to give press time to stories that have visually exciting images that will resonate with an audience. The image must be “news-worthy” for it to get attention, therefore limiting the stories available for news coverage to only those that are photographable. Pulitzer Prize winning media critic Shaw states “Clear, dramatic pictures are the key to both ‘good television’ and to the impact a given story will have on viewers” (Schill). Photographs are able to tell a story that sometimes a journalist is unaware of, yet because of it being “interesting” a photograph can be plastered all across the media in order to get a good story.

Image as a dramatic function explains how photographs can be used to become icons for social movements or a metonym for an event (Schill). Image as an emotional function elaborates on how images are better at producing emotional responses than are some verbal or written media (Lanzetta et al). In our consciousness, we have a vast collection of images that relate to certain emotions and opinions, and when we confront an image that sparks one of those things within us, it triggers an emotional response that is difficult to recreate (Hariman and Lucaites). Studies have found that images trigger emotional responses near instantly, even before a logical or rational response can be created (Barry). An image-building function serves to alter the public’s opinion or view of a person, and imagery can do so by portraying someone within

different environments that can either dramatize or enact an emotional response with an audience.

Image can function as documentation, and this is probably the most applicable to photojournalism. Audiences are more likely to accept a visual image of an event than they would accept a written story or a politician's speech. Schmuhl again states that "We tend to believe what we see...engaging visuals carry their own means, frequently quite distinct from the words we might hear. The eye overrides the ear" (32). Julianne Newton contends that seeing is "the primary way of knowing—gathering information with our eyes." Additionally, Finnegan describes Western society as having an "eye-centeredness" that is well documented, dating back to before Plato's times (141). Western society's obsession with the visual can more directly be connected to Alberti, when he began to develop his theory of pictorial perspective in the 1400s; ever since then, Western society has ascribed to the ideology that "we see in pictures" (520). Also highly applicable to photojournalism and poignant presence is image as a transportation function. Visuals are able to bring presence to an issue by virtually transporting the audience to that specific spatial or emotional place.

Finally, image has an ambiguity function that acts on the fact that everyone has his or her own opinions of a situation or an issue, images inherently can add ambiguity to an argument, especially when dealing with negative messages (Blair). Images are able to "say" things without *saying* things (Schill). Even when audiences believe an image more so than they would believe a speech, each member comes with their own pre-existing ideas, attitudes, beliefs and morals.

In the introduction to the *Columbia Journalism Review* in 2013, the journal chronicled an event held in conjunction between the Columbia J-School and BagNewsNotes, an online resource that analyzes media images. The goal was to have people of varying backgrounds, from

audience members to professional photojournalists and scholars, look at and analyze images from last year's presidential race. They were to "read" them, and surmise stories or gather meaning from photographs in order to attempt to construct or discover the narratives that the photographer was aiming to portray. However, this sort of exercise is inherently biased. As one of the participants said during the event, "Everyone reads into pictures what they want to" (3). Truthfully, how often do we as viewers see an image that resonates something within us because of our past, our experiences or our beliefs? Similarly, how often will another person see that same image and have no such visceral reaction? I would bet it happens more often than not, and this echoes Schill's argument that an image can be a function of ambiguity. If photojournalism is to truly be considered an art, then it is vital that we accept that it affects different people in different ways.

But it can only be an art in so many ways. A professional photographer or painter has no limits when it comes to what they want to create; however, photojournalists are constricted by the confines of news agencies and press boxes. The *Columbia Journalism Review* introduction addresses this point as well. They state that when "reading" images viewers can sometimes get caught up in the trivialities of the photograph that are inherently meaningless. For example, a photograph could equally be read as "anxious soul-searching" or the photo could have been taken in bad lighting. What about the photojournalist's own bias? Could they subconsciously be shooting images that align with their political beliefs, or are they unable to move to get a better shot? All these questions arise when analyzing a photojournalism artifact, but the fact remains that the image is out there for the public to mull over and process. But disregarding political lean and bad lighting in photography, what is this idea of *poignant presence* in photography? What is presence at all, and what is the difference between the two?

4. Rhetorical Presence

Presence is a rhetorical device first introduced by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in their book *The New Rhetoric* as a way for rhetors to increase importance of an object. They truncate and quote a Chinese story that goes as follows: “A king sees an ox on its way to sacrifice. He is moved to pity for it and orders that a sheep be used in its place. He confesses he did so because he could see the ox, but not the sheep” (116). This short story simply identifies and explains the idea of presence and how it can affect someone’s viewpoint and decisions. However, how can presence be defined beyond that? Murphy states that although “presence is a tantalizing term for rhetoricians, it remains ill-defined and ambiguous...in Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca...and in scant secondary literature” (244). Of course, presence is going to play a part in rhetoric when an argument is brought to the surface of a debate, a lecture, or even private thought; just hearing it gives presence to the argument. Pezzullo elaborates on presence and provides insight by first identifying presence as a heuristic. This heuristic device seems to allow an audience to circumvent a more extensive reasoning thought process and give the object with presence more importance than they otherwise may have.

However, I take issue with one of the main points of Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca’s arguments about presence. Many of their arguments claim that presence must be done “by verbal magic alone,” indicating that the speaker must bring an idea presence purely by speaking about it (117). Whether that be just mentioning an argument and giving it speaking time or elaborating on an issue, it is still the speaker’s verbal responsibility to bring a presence to the audience. But this idea of presence doesn’t fit with a case study regarding Pulitzer Prize winning photographs or photojournalism in general, because the presence is brought to an audience through imagery, and not a majestic speech. Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca build in a loophole in their rule of “verbal

magic alone” by stating that sometimes-impatient rhetoricians use physical objects to speed up an audience’s reaction to a certain event, thinking that a concrete example will garner quicker persuasion or adherence to an argument. But they cite this tactic as somewhat risky, for bringing in physical evidence can either help or hinder an argument, and still does not address a rhetorician using an image to increase a subject’s importance to an audience.

Pezzullo addresses this issue in her paper “Toxic Tours: Communicating the ‘Presence’ of Chemical Contamination,” by critiquing the verbal constraint as being limiting. Her paper discusses how taking individuals into places where chemical contamination is rampant, and touring areas that show visually the effects of such contamination brings presence to the issue. She rationalizes Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca’s “by verbal magic alone” comment by stating that she thinks that they do not wish to discount the non-verbal, but that it is necessary to distinguish the difference between the element of presence and reality. An audience member can see a physical thing and have their own opinion and viewpoint about it, similarly to what that audience member said at the Columbia J-School and BagNewsNotes event. Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca go on to forewarn “Presence, and efforts to increase the feeling of presence, must hence not be confused with fidelity to reality” (117-118).

This vacancy in the discussion about presence is where I propose expanding the idea of presence to that of *poignant presence*. The poignancy of physical and concrete items, images and surroundings, is yet another tool in a rhetorician’s arsenal, and is the only available means of rhetoric that photojournalists have, in that their medium is entirely photographic. These poignant images are what draws audiences in, makes them realize how real war and combat are even though they are not experiencing it, and are what is awarded by the Pulitzer committee. However, a poignant presence surpasses just a mere transportation of an audience, it transports

the audience to a place where they are forced to realize the bleakness of war and confront the death and suffering that those who live in those environments endure. These images unleash emotional tidal waves of recognition and realization upon the audience, and contributes to a much more visceral response than can be achieved purely through aural or written means. To exhibit this, three recent Pulitzer Prize winning photographs in the Breaking News category have been chosen as the texts for this case study. We will examine the background and circumstances under which each image was taken, elaborate on how each embodies a poignant presence for an audience, and what ties these images together as common winners for this prestigious prize. All images selected exclusively feature combat or the direct result of combat in war. But to what are these images giving presence? How do visuals interlock while bringing about a poignant presence for the audience? What brings the war home?

5. Photograph Introduction

Going in chronological order, the first image selected was the winner from 2004, the Pulitzer going to David Leeson and Cheryl Diaz Meyer of *The Dallas Morning News*. The Pulitzer committee describes why their images won as follows: “For their eloquent photographs depicting both the violence and poignancy of the war with Iraq.” Because this submission was a photographic essay, I chose one representative photo from the whole to analyze, and the caption of that specific photo reads “Risking their lives to save another, Lt. Jeffrey Goodman and Lance Cpl. Jorge Sanchez of the 2nd Tank Battalion drag a wounded civilian to safety after he was caught in the midst of battle on the road to Baghdad.”

David Leeson has been a senior staff photographer at *The Dallas Morning News* since 1984, and was located in Iraq with the army at the time of these photographs. His work included both still images and video; both received global recognition and were featured in many different

newspapers including *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Newseek*, and *Time* and news television programs MSNBC, CSPAN, and ABC. Cheryl Diaz Meyer has been a senior staff photographer at *The Dallas Morning News* since 2000, and had previous experience in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2001. Her work in Iraq only consisted of still images, yet she also received wide recognition for her work and had it published in newspapers such as *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post* and *Chicago Tribune* and television networks MSNBC, CSPAN, and ABC News.

This image highlights the reality of the war in Iraq. It shows two American soldiers, and a third almost out of frame, dragging a civilian man to safety while a car engulfed in flames and billowing smoke stands ominously in the background. Although there is an American presence in Iraq during this time period, sometimes it is hard for the public to truly grasp that soldiers are dealing with combat often. Of course, there are news stories about our armed forces abroad, and countless political blogs either for or against the war and having American troops there, but even the most potent story or argument made through a message board or speech rarely has the same impact that a photograph does.

The second image, the Pulitzer Prize winning photograph from 2005, was attributed to the staff at the Associated Press. The Pulitzer committee describes the reasoning for this win as follows, “For its stunning series of photographs of bloody yearlong combat inside Iraqi cities.” This also was part of a photo essay, and the one image chosen to represent this grouping has a caption that reads, “Fallujah - Iraqi insurgents fire a mortar and small arms during the U.S.-led offensive against insurgents in the city.” This specific image was captured by Bilal Hussein and shows the opposing side of the conflict in the Middle East.

Though many images in the media and even within this photo essay portray American troops or victims, it is rare that we see insurgent action unless it is to show the aftermath or an attack. This image is so close up, so intimate with the insurgents, it really can make the audiences skin crawl; in the words of AP's director of photography, Santiago Lyon, "It's action, it's the moment, it's the fighting!" It shows four insurgents on a rubble-strewn city street firing weapons at an adversary that is out of frame. Bilal Hussein was an Iraqi photojournalist working with the Associated Press, and was part of the cohort that won the Pulitzer honor. However, at a later time Hussein was detained by the US military for being thought to have been involved with the terrorist insurgents.

The close proximity of this photograph led to questions of Hussein's alleged affiliation to terrorist groups because it seems that many of his images would have required a lot of cooperation from insurgents. In 2006, Hussein was arrested for allegedly having ties to al Qaeda and insurgent cell leaders. But even in 2007, no formal charges were ever brought against Hussein, and he had still not heard the evidence that was brought against him (Layton). Every accusation that was brought up against Hussein that the AP received specific details for was investigated and mostly found to be exaggerated or false. From this, AP's CEO, Tom Curley, and other executives postulate that perhaps Hussein was being held purely because he was taking photographs that the military did not like. His Pulitzer Prize winning image may well be one of those, but here is where the military and journalistic endeavors come head to head in a debate over what constitutes good journalism and when the line is crossed into complicity. AP executives argue that it was their decision to make whether or not to publish the image, not the military's to evaluate correct journalistic practice (Layton).

The final image to be considered was the Pulitzer Prize winning photograph from 2013, won by a collective of photographers, Rodrigo Abd, Manu Brabo, Narciso Contreras, Khalil Hamra and Muhammed Muheisen, from the Associated Press, who constructed a photo essay. The Pulitzer committee described the essay as a whole as follows, “For their compelling coverage of the civil war in Syria, producing memorable images under extreme hazard.” The specific image chosen from this essay for study has a caption that reads as follows: “A Syrian man cries while holding the body of his son near Dar El Shifa hospital in Aleppo, Syria, Oct. 3, 2012. The boy was killed by the Syrian army” (Manu Brabo, AP Oct. 3, 2012). Manu Brabo, the photographer who captured this image, is a freelance Spanish photographer whose work primarily focuses on social impacts around the world. He has been previously awarded for his photographs, and has traveled to many different countries documenting natural disasters, social uprisings, political changes, wars and revolutions.

What does each photograph have in common, and how does each bring poignant presence to an audience? All images selected were intended to show combat or the immediate after affects of combat, so naturally that is a connecting factor which brings an element of violence to each image. With that in mind, I postulate four primary aspects that all the artifacts share that bring poignant presence to the audience: the use of color, the use of human photographic subjects, the importance of facial expression, and imagery of action.

6. Analysis

All of the artifacts are color photographs opposed to black and white. The audience doesn't have to wonder how bright of a yellow the flames are in the first image or how red the boy's bloodstains are in the last one. This jarring use of color brings to light how real the injuries or catastrophes are in the Middle East. The first photograph shows a stark contrast between the

flames of the car fire and the black smoke billowing away. The contrast in the photo is intensified between the American military dark green uniforms and the desert sand of the terrain or the burn victim's white clothing. These color differences illustrate how foreign the American troops are in that country, for their forest green camouflage makes them stand out way more than it hides them, and brings presence to the audience showing how truly out of place the troops look.

The second image is of a group of insurgents preparing to launch explosives at what the audience can assume are opposing forces. The image is darker, with more greens, blues and greys, and is quite obviously in a more urban setting than the first photograph. Their often-monochromatic clothing pieces blend them into their background way better than the American soldiers in the first image. The grey smoke billowing from the mortar suggests that it has just been fired, simultaneously creating a sense of anticipation and anxiety for the audience. The black head wraps help contribute to a sense of mystery, not knowing who the enemy is, creating a sort of unknown beast that American troops are fighting, for even though there is photographic evidence of the opposition, we still do not know who they are.

The third image uses probably the most potent use of color to create presence. Bright red blood, freshly shed, covers the boy's limp arms, torso and feet. His father's hands are stained as well, along with his khaki pants showing how fresh the event is. The boy's jeans are hopelessly stained with blood as well, documenting how severe the trauma was, how violent. This illustration of violence brings presence to an audience because it is a fact that they cannot escape. Regardless of who inflicted the fatal blow against this child, it was his proximity to the war in the Middle East that caused his bloody and tragic death.

The second connecting factor that draws these images together is the use of human subjects, rather than showing blown up buildings or bullet casings lying on the ground. Showing two American soldiers carrying a civilian victim away from a car fire is far more potent than just showing the car fire with no context. The civilian being dragged by the two soldiers has a torn open shirt and obvious bloodstains; he is most likely a burn victim. The rescue efforts bring an aspect of humanity to the war and bring presence to an audience, reminding viewers that there are real people and real tragedy happening abroad.

In the second image, we see four men, all dressed in street clothes, some with their heads and faces covered in cloths, one has a gun, one a string of bullets, another has a rocket-like weapon that he is setting up, and the fourth stands in a ready position the furthest back of them all. Even though the subjects' identities are hidden, their physical being gives presence to the mystic enemy that the US troops are fighting. Although faces are covered and there are not any identifying markers, the adversary becomes less of a mysterious "other" and becomes a person. The weaponry displayed in the photograph shows violence directed at other people, bringing another pseudo-human subject into the image, the victim or target of the shot.

In the third image, human subjects are the complete focal point of this image. Whereas the first and second feature inanimate effects of warfare or weaponry, this image shows the ultimate sacrifice that those who live in war zones deal with, death of innocent civilians and children. The photographic focus is exclusively on the father and son, blurring out the background, which shows a red Isuzu SUV and another bystander. An audience is fully confronted with the finality of life in this image, showing how irrevocable the damages of war can be. Images of death bring poignant presence to an audience because they bring about

emotional responses, and often can ignite memories or connections within the audience that other images may not have the power to do.

The third aspect that brings poignant presence to an audience is the importance of facial expressions. In the first image, the first soldier, on the right of the victim in the image, looks as if he is crying out for help or assistance. The second soldier, to the left of the victim if you're looking at the photograph, has his mouth agape as he may be breathing heavily bringing this victim away from harm. Although the victim's face is away from the camera, we can tell that he is still conscious as he is holding his head up, yet we can infer that he is most likely in excruciating pain. The caption reads that he was a civilian caught in the middle of a battle on the road to Baghdad. Therefore, we can assume that the car on fire is most likely his as he was probably driving to the city.

In the second image, it is the lack of facial expression, or visible faces even, that really drives the point home. This image creates a smokescreen surrounding the enemy, almost as if we are fighting a ghost that we know exists but cannot be identified. The man furthest back from the action has the most presence to me, and is by far the most intimidating. He stands behind the rest, almost as if he is overseeing the action, most importantly watching the man set up the rocket. His baggy pants, black shirt and black head-wrap all obscure his identity, the only skin visible is his nose, part of his neck in shadow, and his poised hands. His stance is wide and bent at the knees, ready to run at a moment's notice. He looks powerful and dangerous. The audience is left to imagine what their faces look like or what expression they are making, truly bringing presence to the audience's consciousness.

The third image shows a man clutching his recently deceased son's body, as his face shows the anguish of searing loss. The pain that this man felt at the time of the photograph was

most likely insurmountable by any other event he had ever experienced, and that emotion was etched along his face as obviously as the bloodstains on the boy's pants. An audience doesn't have to imagine how this father feels, and is probably reminded of the death of one of their loved ones. It is impossible to ignore this man's torment when it is essentially staring the audience in the face, and this is probably the most effective way to bring a poignant presence to an audience of the three images.

The final way that these images bring poignant presence to the audience is that they are all action shots. Echoing Lyon's comment in regard to the second image, all of these photographs are taken within the moment. The first image is in the midst of dragging a victim away from a burning car, the second taken right after the mortar was fired, and the third as a father holds his lifeless son. None are staged, none are posed for; all are taken in the midst of the action, showing the reality of the war, bringing it home for an audience.

7. Conclusion

The Pulitzer Prize is given to honor those who display excellence in journalism and the arts. Winning pieces, especially photographs within the Breaking News category, are the ones that are not afraid to affect audiences in ways that may make them uncomfortable, question their choices or even slap them across the face with truths that they may be unwilling to think about. They may disagree with it, or they may not believe what they see, but there is no way that they can forget what they saw.

These images bring more than just presence to an audience, more than just a heuristic for emotions. Each photograph is pregnant with a story, drowning in emotion and pulling the audience into deeply intimate moments. These are the images that truly emanate what the nature of photography is: a moment that happens for a split second, captured forever, often overlooked

in real time. This is the fulcrum at which presence becomes poignant. It exceeds just bringing the audience's attention to something, whether that be rescuing, attacking, or mourning, and draws them in to really looking at what is going on thousands of miles away. When an image crosses over from just reminding someone how scary a car fire is to really bringing into focus that this is a real image from a war zone half way around the world. The images provide proof that no speech or journalism editorial can provide. Audiences see with their own eyes the civilian victims, soldiers helping others away from danger, insurgents attacking an unknown enemy. This is poignant presence. Presence becomes rhetorically so strong and so obvious that audiences cannot disregard it. At that point, the presence of these images has touched them, deeply affected them, aroused deep emotions; images become emblazoned upon the subconscious and are not easily or quickly forgotten. It has truly taken on a poignancy that is absent in other artifacts that bring presence to an issue. Poignant presence is a new and more intensified version of presence that is often only achieved via imagery and photography. The Pulitzer Prize committee has noticed and harnessed this rhetorical device and began to award those who effectively use it for excellence. This poignant presence is what links these prize-winning photographs, and is exhibited through photojournalism: one of the few media that can truly bring the war home.

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