

The Role of Photography in Breaking News Events: The Trump Assassination as an Example

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Abstract:

This paper explores the role of photography in breaking news events through photographs taken by Evan Vucci during the Trump assassination. Using content analysis, the study analyzed 105 public articles to explore the visual guiding power of photography and how the media uses images to influence public opinion. The study found that photography can quickly attract public attention and influence the emotional level, while media can shape a specific narrative framework through selective display. The life of a news report lies in vividness, truth, and vividness. The same is true of news photography. Capturing real moments with both visual and emotional impact is the best news photo [1]. Meanwhile, it points out the shortcomings of China's WeChat in reporting, such as ignoring the victims and the deep-rooted causes, and suggests that the media should reflect on the problems in reporting and take social responsibility. The study also offers suggestions for future reporting practices, emphasizing the key role of photojournalism in shaping public perception and the importance of media ethics. The limitation of the study is that the sample mainly focuses on WeChat, with a short timeframe, and future research will expand the sample and deepen the analysis of the audience's psychological and emotional responses.

Keywords: photojournalism, breaking news events, opinion leadership, media influence, visual guidance

1. Introduction

This article is about national media coverage and analysis of the Trump assassination.

In the afternoon of July 13th, Donald Trump gave a speech at a presidential election rally in Pennsylvania. Suddenly a gunshot rang out and hit Trump's right ear. In this moment of urgency, former Pulitzer Prize winner Evan Vacci captured Trump raising his right hand to the American flag after being shot. Before that, in 1830 in France, Mariana held up the tricolor flag, a symbol of freedom and democracy. The compositions of both photographs are strikingly similar.

The aim is to get information about the role of photography in breaking news events and how the media uses photographic features of pictures and visual guides and so on to influence public opinion through the method of content analysis.

The purpose is to analyze the photographs of the Trump assassination and the related reports to understand other things that are mapped into the event (For example, the canvassing speech of the protagonist's daughter Ivanka: the collective unconscious of speech control, the political

correct output of the example of equal pay for men and women, etc. Victims of the event: Corey Comperatore The humanistic perspective of caring for the people and the different political orientations of the changing population in American society. To learn to recognize the world through objective analysis and the ability to see through the phenomena to the essence.

The content analysis method is used to objectively, systematically, and quantitatively describe the content of various media outlets. 105 articles were analyzed over 72 hours period regarding Trump's shooting photos. A coding scheme was used to analyze the content.

Coding table categories were constructed as follows: time of publication, title, author, nature of the organization (e.g., official media, professional media, self-media, and personal accounts), overall attitude (e.g., positive, negative, and neutral), content theme (discussion of the event itself, extended discussion of the theme), IP address (domestic/foreign), and dissemination data matrix: the number of likes, the number of comments, and the number of shares (weighted quantitative values: number of likes * 15% + number of comments * 50% + number of shares * 35%),

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This paper will first summarize the Trump assassination and analyze the moment of urgency when former Pulitzer Prize winner Evan Vaccì photographed Trump raising his right hand in the air after he was shot and mirroring the American flag. A coding scheme is then used to categorize the public content and analyze the differences between the different aspects. Finally, the visual guidance and media impact of photojournalism in breaking news is analyzed according to the categorization.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Overview of the study of breaking news events

Breaking news refers to natural disasters, accidents and calamities, public health incidents and social security incidents that occur suddenly, cause or are likely to cause serious social hazards, and require emergency measures to be taken to cope with them. Breaking news photo reportage is a field that combines timeliness, sense of scene and profound insight, which requires the photographer to capture the essence of the event in a very short period of time and deliver it to a wide audience through the language of the lens.

In today's era of information explosion, news breaking events have become the focus of public attention due to their suddenness, importance and wide social influence. News photography, as an important means of recording and disseminating such events, can not only quickly capture the moment of the scene, but also profoundly convey the emotion and truth, which has a far-reaching impact on public perception, public opinion orientation and even social behavior. Therefore, the study of breaking news photography is not only related to the theoretical development of journalism and communication, but also a key link to enhance the credibility of the media and maintain social stability and justice.

Breaking news photography has high requirements for shooting techniques and equipment. Photographers need to master basic skills such as fast focusing, stable shooting and reasonable composition to ensure that valuable images are captured in the complex and changing scene environment. At the same time, a high-performance camera, a stable tripod, a fast-responding lens and enough storage space are also essential equipment.

Breaking news photography not only pursues the accurate transmission of information, but also focuses on the aesthetic value of the work. Excellent breaking news photography is often able to show the facts at the same

time, showing the photographer's unique understanding of beauty and the pursuit. Through the clever use of light and shadow, accurate color matching and composition of ingenuity, the photographer can give the work a strong visual impact and emotional impact, so that the audience in the understanding of the truth of the incident at the same time, but also can feel the charm of the art of photography.

2.2 Analysis of trump assassination photos taken by Evan Vaccì

The Trump assassination photo taken by Evan Vaccì is widely spread in global social media, with the American star-spangled banner fluttering under the blue sky, an old man in the arch of the agents, in the case of the danger has not yet been completely eliminated, without fear, like a real blockbuster movie of the assassination of the president of the United States, and it has even become the best Trump campaign posters. Some people analyze its composition and political metaphors, without any text, but the photo instantly conveyed a lot of information: the injured presidential candidate was assisted, but still raised his fists, behind the American flag unfurled in the wind, and Trump has long been advocating the concept of "Make America Great Again" is not quite the same.

Compositionally, the photo is a typical center composition, and the blood on Trump's face and ears has a strong visual impact. He is standing on the stage, and the photographer is on the ground, from low to high shot to form a backward visual, so that the subject is more tall and majestic, highlighting the image of the leader. Trump and the Secret Service form a triangular composition, with Trump in the highest position and his right hand raised higher in a fist, reinforcing the presence of Trump's subject and making the image more symbolic. The flag next to him is the finishing touch to the image, which carries so much information and many interpretations during a political event, and echoes the raised fist, further emphasizing the atmosphere.

In terms of technique, Evan Vaccì demonstrates the exceptional skill and extraordinary courage of a top photographer. He first observed the American flag in the environment and skillfully combined it with the image of Trump to form a profoundly symbolic image. At the same time, he was able to quickly adjust the scope, angle and timing of his framing under unexpected circumstances, accurately capturing the wonderful moments after Trump's assassination.

Freedom Leads the People is an oil painting on canvas created by French painter Eugène Delacroix in commemoration of the 1830 French July Revolution [2]. Netizens found that the photo of Trump's assassination taken by Evan vaccì is very similar to the oil painting Freedom Leads the People, and the comparison between the two is

analysed as follows.

About the similarity, first of all, the character action is similar, in the oil painting 'freedom guides the people', the goddess of liberty in the smoke, one hand holding up the tricolour flag of the french republic, the other hand holding a gun, calling on the people to march forward bravely. And in the photo of Trump's assassination, Trump also holds his fist high as he evacuates the lectern, signalling to his supporters that he's okay. As well as the similarity of the elements of the image, both photos have the element of the American flag. In Liberty Leads the People, the tricolour is at the apex of a triangle. In the Trump assassination photo, the American flag is also flying behind Trump. Secondly, the composition is similar, Freedom Leads the People adopts a pyramidal composition at the apex, and the main figure in the painting is the Goddess of Liberty, who is modelled on Clara Lessing. The goddess wears a Phrygian cap, a yellowish dress with a sash around her waist, and the dress slides down to under her breasts at the shoulders, and has a healthy, full-bodied and powerful physique, with a calm facial expression that conforms to the characteristics of the god. The Goddess of Liberty and Freedom is in the midst of the smoke, holding the tricolour flag of the French Republic in one hand and a gun in the other, calling on her people to march forward with courage. Beside Lady Liberty are students and workers with weapons and citizens, these are the ranks of the July Revolution at that time, and in the distance of the picture you can see Notre Dame de Paris. In the photo of Trump's assassination, the American flag is in front of Trump, and behind him are supporters wearing 'Make America Great Again' hats, with Trump's bloodstained face and fists raised in the air, and many people think of the painting 'Freedom Leads the People'.

About the differences, one of the picture content is different, 'freedom leads the people' shows the key moment of the victory of the July revolution in the street battle scene, with a romantic approach to the combination of realistic and realistic, full of dynamic composition, unrestrained brush strokes, compact structure, showing the revolutionaries high enthusiasm [3]; while Trump assassination photo, Trump in the speech was shot at, his right ear was pierced, the blood flowed on the scene. The content of the images in the two photos is different. Second, the meaning of the picture is different, 'freedom guides the people' is an epoch-making masterpiece, the painter with the crystallisation of realism and romanticism reflecting the lofty will of the French people love freedom and unrestrained enthusiasm for fighting, so that the work beyond the limitations of history and has become a universal symbol of the eternal struggle for freedom, and thus become the treasures of the world's art treasure trove; and Trump assassi-

nation photo, Trump was shot during his speech, his right ear was pierced, and blood flowed on the scene. shot, his right ear pierced and blood flowing from the scene. This photo records this historical event and has become a classic work of photojournalism. Symbolic meaning conveyed by the photo.

Firstly, it reflects Trump's tenacity in terms of his personal image. The photo shows Trump raising his fist in the air despite the blood on his face, symbolising his stance that he will not give in easily in the face of dangers and emergencies (as well as potential political attacks on him, etc.), and that he will continue to fight on. At the same time, it also reflects his leadership posture. In the chaotic scene, he stands in a relatively prominent position and raises his fist, which symbolises to his supporters that he is still trying to lead them and steer the direction, showing his 'firmness' as a 'central figure' in the turbulent situation. 'Secondly, from the social and political point of view of the United States, he is still trying to lead them.

Secondly, from the perspective of American society and politics, the assassination scene and the dissemination of the photo reflect the severity of the political divisions in American society to the point of extreme violence. As a highly controversial and representative political figure, Trump's assassination symbolises the social instability and potential crisis brought about by political rivalry. As well as the contradiction of the American spirit, the contrast between the American flag flying in the background and Trump's assassination may symbolise the fact that the concepts of democracy, freedom and security preached by the United States are being challenged and distorted in the current social reality. The national order represented by the flag, etc. and the unexpected event suffered by Trump, a figure representing the interests and political power of some groups, together build up the complexity and ambivalence of American society at a particular stage. Against this backdrop, the political struggle has also become increasingly intense, making this photograph an iconic event symbolising the increasingly extreme and unpredictable means of political struggle in the United States, and foreshadowing the uncertainty and potential for even more intense conflict in the ensuing political situation.

Third, from a news dissemination and historical perspective. Historical moments are fixed here, this photo will become a powerful symbol and memory point of a specific historical event, representing an important slice of American politics and society in the special period of 2024 in the history of journalism, and providing intuitive visual evidence for the study and understanding of this period. It is also a concentrated expression of news value, symbolising the powerful power and value of photojournalism in capturing and communicating the moment of a major

event, and can generate global attention and discussion, as well as a variety of meanings behind the event.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Content analysis method

After Trump's assassination, we analyzed the WeChat public numbers, and we learned that most of the public numbers held a neutral attitude. In addition, the public numbers with neutral attitudes all recounted the events of Trump's assassination and did not bring their absolute personal feelings and views on politics, in addition, the public numbers with neutral attitudes only analyzed the composition of the photographs of Trump's assassination. There are some WeChat public numbers with a positive attitude, and these public numbers with a positive attitude think that Trump can win this election for the President of the United States, because in this event the former Pulitzer Prize winner took a picture of Trump when he was shot, which is extremely similar to the oil painting of the French leader who led the freedom and democracy, which encouraged the people of the United States, and during that time, Trump's approval ratings reached an unprecedented peak. In the photo of Trump raising his right hand high, those public with positive attitudes considered Trump's election speech as a successful political propaganda. When news photographers are interviewing and photographing a breaking news event, they not only need to record and photograph the scene but also need to convey information of social significance and value to the viewers, so that the viewers can gain knowledge or experience that can guide their thoughts and behaviors or be of practical value when they watch the news[4]. They also believe that Trump will win the presidential election. In addition, some public websites carefully analyzed the photo of Trump raising his right hand taken by a former Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer and believed that the photo was full of dynamic storytelling and highly infectious, not only in terms of theme or composition but also in terms of the details captured and the effect brought by light and shadow, all of which highlighted Trump's image of personal heroism worshipped by the American society.

3.2 Data Analysis

The data we collected this time includes the number of likes, comments and shares we used in the public number and obtained the data through the proportion weighting method, and the time of the public number published articles. After weighting these data, we know that only ten percent of the weighted values of official media and self-media are more than 100, while the weighted values of official media account for forty-three percent of the total values. This shows that the readers are more inclined

to the official media than the self media, and the self media is only read by a few people. In the comparison of the data, the self media has significantly more data than the official data. However, most of the official data is earlier than that of the self-media, which is a great advantage of the official media.

3.3 Data results

After Trump's assassination, we collect 39 public articles from the self-media and 7 public articles from official accounts during the 96 hours. But mainly all of them describe the process of Trump's assassination case.

Before the Trump assassination case, public speeches in public venues to publicize their political positions are all politicians in order to build their public image and political advocacy, and speeches in public have the means to publicize their will and political positions. Momentary imagery in photojournalism means that the image of a news photograph records only a momentary scene in the process of the development of something objective, which comes from the special way in which the camera records things [5]. In the public with positive attitudes, they believe that Trump as a strong contender to give so many speeches in public, and in the assassination, Trump didn't flinch because he was shot. Trump didn't cower when he was shot at but instead raised his right hand high, which was a great display of strength and defiance as a leader, and which led to Trump's approval ratings going up considerably during that period of time. There are also public numbers that see that as a sign of Trump's victory. Instead of discussing whether or not Trump would be the key to winning the election because of the shooting, the neutrals discussed the photo taken by the former Pulitzer Prize winner, and they discussed the composition of the photo, which uses a three-center composition with the American flag behind it, which highlights as well as emphasizes the central figure's defiance and heroism. A triangular composition was also used, with the four figures forming a large triangle, which would serve as a guide line to move the viewer's eyes to the waving fists, symbolizing the figure's struggle for the country and showing the figure's high status.

4. Results of the study

Photojournalism is a form of news reporting using photographic technology, mainly through the combination of pictures and text to convey information about recent events. It has eight features: timeliness, authenticity, typicality, sense of scene, visual impact, documentary, information transfer, and combination of graphics and text. Compared with the text, news photos with the above characteristics are more likely to make the viewer have an impression and point of view. As a means of recording and dissemination, breaking news photography plays

an important role in shaping public perception, guiding public opinion and influencing social behavior. It requires photographers to have quick reactions and superior photographic skills to ensure that valuable images are captured in complex environments. The viewer's impression and opinion of a news photograph is not only generated from an internal subjective perspective but also from the role of the photographer and the media. In addition to the information they receive about the event through the photograph, the viewer is also influenced by a viewpoint that is not their own, which may be the one intended by the media and the photographer. Evan Vucci's photo of Trump's assassination has generated a lot of discussion on the internet, attracting the viewer to learn more about the event and its relevance. Because of its intuitive nature and strong visual impact, photography has a unique power to lead the way in conveying news information. In a breaking news event like Trump's assassination, photography can quickly attract public attention and have an impact on the emotional dimension of the event. Visual elements such as color, composition, and subject expression can enhance or change the viewer's perception and understanding of the event.

The use of photography in the media to influence public opinion can result in positive and negative attitudes towards an event, respectively. This has to do with the elements that appear in the photographs and the opinions and emotions that are conveyed. South African photographer Kevin Carter won the Pulitzer Prize for journalism in 1994 for his 1993 photograph "Hungry Sudan". The picture shows a skinny, naked boy being silently watched by a vulture, immediately becoming its meal. This is the most realistic portrayal of the African continent, but also provokes people to think deeply. The public opinion affected was either in favor of the photographer to show such truth to everyone or morally condemning the photographer and scolding him for only focusing on filming and not rescuing the little girl. Eventually, under pressure, Kevin committed suicide, and the photo made people realize that there are still a lot of people in the world who are starving. -The media may shape a particular narrative frame by selectively showing certain moments or perspectives of the photographs, thus guiding the public's interpretation of the events. From an objective point of view, the reuse of photographic works and their dissemination on different media platforms can deepen the public's impression of an event or issue and influence the formation of public opinion. Through the annotation and contextualization of the photographs, it can guide the public's viewpoints and attitudes.

By analyzing the content of WeChat public numbers, it is found that there are differences in the attitudes and inter-

pretations of different public numbers towards the Trump assassination. Public numbers with a neutral attitude focus more on the event narrative and photo composition analysis, while public numbers with a positive attitude believe that the event is beneficial to Trump's election and emphasize Trump's heroic image and leadership. By analyzing the number of likes, comments, shares and publication time of the public numbers, it is found that the official media has a stronger tendency of readers, while the self-media, despite the large amount of data, accounts for a smaller proportion of readers' choices. This suggests that official media have an advantage in information dissemination, especially in the timeliness of event reporting. In China WeChat public media mostly just state the Trump assassination and Evan Vucci's photo shoot, as well as the transmission of photographic skills, but ignore the victims of the incident as well as forget to think about the deeper reasons. The attitudes of the publics can be divided into positive and neutral, the publics with positive attitudes think that Trump's assassination is beneficial to his election, while the publics with neutral attitudes pay more attention to the artistry and symbolism of the photographs. In summary, this study provides an in-depth exploration of the news photography coverage of the Trump assassination event through content analysis, reveals the importance of breaking news photography in news dissemination, analyzes the artistry and symbolism of specific photographs, and explores the attitudes and ways of interpreting the event in different media. The findings show that photojournalism is not only a tool for recording history, but also an important medium for shaping public perception and influencing social behavior. In the case of the Trump assassination, the media's performance may include immediate coverage of the event, in-depth analysis, and exploration of the deeper social issues behind the event. The media needs to reflect on whether there was bias or improper guidance in the reporting process, and whether the facts and the dignity of the victims were fully respected. Reflection should also include consideration of media ethics, such as how to balance disclosure of information with avoidance of over-exaggeration when reporting on violent incidents. Evan Vucci's photographs have been widely interpreted as having political metaphors and symbolism. When reporting and interpreting such works, the media need to reflect on whether there is over-interpretation or subjectivity and whether they respect the multiple meanings of the work itself and the different interpretations of the viewer. Conclusions may point to the crucial role of photojournalism in shaping public perceptions of events and the responsibilities and ethical considerations that the media should take into account in their coverage as well as suggestions and directions for improvement in

future reporting practices. Through these reflections, the media can better fulfill its role in society, promote the fair dissemination of information, and maintain social stability and justice. At the same time, these reflections will also help to enhance the credibility and professionalism of the media and provide the public with higher quality news content.

5. Summary

This paper discusses the role of photography in breaking news events by taking the photographs taken by Evan Vucci in the Trump assassination incident as an example. It analyzes the visual guiding power of photojournalism, the way the media use photography to influence public opinion, and the performance and reflection of the media in the Trump assassination incident, pointing out the shortcomings of the Chinese WeChat media in their reporting, such as ignoring the victims of the incident and the deep-rooted causes, emphasizing that the media should reflect on the problems in their reporting, and putting forward suggestions for the future practice of reporting. It points out the key role of photojournalism in shaping public perceptions and the responsibilities and ethical considerations that the media should take as well as makes suggestions and directions for improvement in future reporting practices. The visual guiding power of photojournalism is more likely to make the viewer's impression and opinion than text. The viewer's point of view will be influenced by the photographer and the media to influence the media. The media influences the public opinion direction through photography, which may present positive or negative attitudes, which are related to the elements of the work and the emotion of the viewpoints conveyed. The article enriches the research on photographic coverage of breaking news events in journalism and communication and provides new cases and analytical perspectives for the theoretical development of related fields. It deepens the understanding of the mechanism of the role of news photography in visual guidance and public opinion orientation. It provides references and lessons for news photographers when shooting breaking news events, and helps to improve their shooting skills and the impact of their work. Promote the media to utilize photography more cautiously when reporting breaking news events to avoid improperly guiding public opinion and better assume social responsibility. To help media practitioners reflect on their shortcomings in reporting, improve their future reporting practices, and enhance the quality and depth of their reports. Enhance the public's knowledge of photojournalism and media reporting, so that the public can look at news events and contents presented by the media more rationally, and trigger concern and reflection on social issues.

The limitation is that the research sample mainly focuses on WeChat public number articles, which may not be able to comprehensively reflect the various media platforms about the ability to cover all the factors that may affect the results of the study. The analysis of photographic works is mainly based on more superficial aspects such as composition and symbolism and lacks in-depth measurement and analysis of the audience's psychological and emotional responses. The timeframe of the study is relatively short, only analyzing the content within 72 hours after the event, which may not be able to capture the long-term influence and change of public opinion. For future research directions, the study sample will be expanded to include more types of media platforms, such as traditional newspapers, TV news, social media, etc., to obtain more comprehensive findings. The coding table categories will be further improved to include more detailed and critical factors, such as the differences in media coverage in different regions and the responses of different audience groups. Apply research methods in psychology and communication studies to explore in depth the mechanism of the audience's psychological and emotional responses to such photography, and how they are translated into public opinion, and behavior. Conduct long-term tracking studies to observe the sustained impact of events on social opinion, political situation and public perception over a longer period. Compare and contrast photography and its role in different types of breaking news events, and summarize more general patterns and patterns. To study the international dissemination and influence of this type of photojournalism in the context of globalization, as well as the differences in interpretation in different cultural contexts. In conclusion, photography plays a crucial role in breaking news events, and the news industry should continue to improve its professionalism and ethical standards, adapt to technological development, and give full play to the advantages of photography, to provide the public with truthful, accurate and valuable news services.

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