

GONE TOO SOON:
THE EFFECTS OF PHILADELPHIA'S URBAN GUN VIOLENCE CRISIS

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by
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the people of Philadelphia, where I am proud to call home. I am forever indebted to the kind, selfless people who have let me into their lives to photograph them. May this body of work be an educational tool for the youth of Philadelphia, along with many other cities, dealing with the epidemic of urban gun violence.

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GONE TOO SOON

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ABSTRACT

Gone Too Soon is a photographic essay of the city of Philadelphia's gun urban violence crisis. The photographs are a visual documentation of people who have been physically affected by gunfire, families and friends as they mourn loss and police interaction and community involvement. On the average, at least one person has been murdered in Philadelphia every day over the last 25 years. A book based on this work is meant to educate Philadelphians and the general public on the atrocity of gun violence.

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS

Two photojournalists and one newspaper photography editor were interviewed using in depth, open-ended interviews. These three people include April Saul, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist and staff photographer at the Philadelphia Inquirer; Jim MacMillan, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist and editor of Gun Crisis.org was also interviewed; and Michael Mercanti, Executive Photo Editor at the Philadelphia Daily News and Philadelphia Inquirer was interviewed. These visual journalists discussed working and editing images in gun violence situations, ethical considerations and the process of disseminating the work.

KEYWORDS

Philadelphia crime rate, North Philly, Documentary photography, gun violence, urban crime, photojournalism, social documentary

Chapter One: Introduction

I grew up in Mayfair, a neighborhood in Northeast Philadelphia. My mother, father and I lived on the 4400 block of Loring Street in a row home, which nearly most of Northeast Philadelphians do. Philadelphia is a very middle class, blue-collar city full of socially and culturally diverse people. However, still my knowledge was limited. Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods and I never lived outside of Mayfair. It wasn't until I attended college at Temple University that I was more mature enough to recognize the texture and detail that made up Philadelphia.

While an undergraduate student at Temple University, in the heart of North Philadelphia, I became familiar with one of the city's most notorious neighborhoods. North Philly was always in the news for murder, rape or robberies. However, I found it beautiful, inspiring and hopeful. There was gorgeous architecture, murals and churches. On the other hand, there were blocks of dilapidated houses and closed school buildings. Temple was a foreign experience. These experiences in North Philadelphia really opened my eyes to my city.

As a photojournalist it only felt natural to use my camera to show the world my city's largest social concern: gun violence. Every year numbers were tallied and statistics were presented about this epidemic, but nothing seemed to change. While news TV broadcasts overwhelmed people with the statistical side of gun violence, a visual documentation of the horror of Philadelphia gun violence cannot be ignored as easily. Ultimately, photographing my Master's Project on the effects of Philadelphia's urban gun violence crisis has given me the skills to work in dangerous and emotional journalistic

situations. I now have the skills to research, execute and edit a long-term photographic essay. I am now fully aware of the time commitment of such an ambitious project as well as the discipline required to effectively execute this project.

Additionally, my research component, which featured in depth interviews with several prominent figures in Philadelphia's journalism field, offered important insight on working in traumatic news situations. Philadelphia Inquirer Photographer April Saul, Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News Directory of Photography Michael Mercanti and former Philadelphia Daily News photographer Jim MacMillan, currently editor for Gun Crisis discussed their thoughts on editing and gate keeping photographs of Philadelphia violence as well as winning awards for traumatic documentary photographs.

Photography is very much a research tool. We use images to dissect a certain population or issue. When done well we can create dialogue or even elicit change. My heart has, and always will be full of empathy for others. As a photographer my goal is to help other journalists, photographers and members of the public understand the story of gun violence in Philadelphia when it is presented with research and photographic evidence. My career goal is to create a body of work that will show the world important issues and stories from the city of Brotherly Love. This project is just the beginning of the work I'd like to make in my hometown.

Chapter Two: Field Notes

Week 1 Fieldnotes: May 26 – June 1

May 26:

Arrived back in Philly last week. Getting settled in. My house for the summer is in the police 22nd district, the most dangerous for gun violence. This will allow me to easily access crime scenes and potential subjects.

May 28:

I met with Jim MacMillan of Guncrisis.org who gave me names and emails of potential contacts. He directed me to several organizations who do outreach for victims of gun violence or families grieving from losses. Additionally, he put me in touch with trauma workers who are on the ground. These contacts will help immensely.

May 29:

I spent the day at home emailing contacts and placing phone calls. Whenever I'm home I keep the police scanner on (you can get this free online via the Police Departments website). There were several shootings that occurred, one 5 minutes away and one two blocks away, making the trip to these crime scenes fairly easy. I don't see myself listening to the scanner every day, but it's not a bad idea when I have a day where I don't have a shoot planned. During the first shooting at 17th and Dauphin I met Kammie who lost her son to gun violence several years ago at the same location. She seemed very eager to talk to me. I'm planning on following up with her early next week.

The second crime scene was a little different. I got the question "who are you?" a lot from residents of the area. I'm having a tough time explaining that I'm not working for a news organization and that "I'm a Master's student at the University of Missouri blah blah..." Saying I'm a freelancer might make this process a lot easier.

May 31:

Three men were killed overnight and another was shot. All of these crimes occurred after 2:30a, after I went to bed so I wasn't at any of the scenes. In order to make it to these scenes I'd pretty much have to stay up all night.

I did some social media research and found there was a vigil for one of the men killed. It wasn't posted on a news organization I ended up finding the link through some twitter and instagram research. Should I have gone to this vigil even though it seems a little private? Well, I did, and didn't see anyone. It was cancelled for another day and time (which I also found out through social media).

I'm finding that families and friends of people shot, murdered will retweet most new stories. Then someone will start the instagram hashtag #rip_____. Is it OK to go to these vigils even if they are kind of private? I would assume no other news outlets would be there. I want to be respectful.

June 1:

Spoke with Scott Charles, Temple University Hospital's trauma outreach coordinator. He pretty much sees every gunshot victim that passes through Temple's ER. He also holds pretty controversial programs surrounding gun violence prevention. While

he said he'd love to give me access to these ER situations, he said Temple will never allow it. However, he gave me the number of a good friend of his, a social worker, who works rehabbing youth from gun violence. He seemed pretty hopeful this lead me to a victim of recent gun violence to photograph. Sadly, there there is 4-5 gunshot victims for every murder. Philadelphia averages about 280 gun related murders every year.

Additionally, I will be meeting with several other gun violence organizations this week. I'll also be interviewing Philadelphia Inquirer photographer April Saul and Deputy Director of Photography Jim Selzer for my research component this week.



Committee Responses:

David Rees:

Kevin - yes, you're "doing this right" - getting totally immersed in your project, thinking creatively about accessing subjects, exploring new options as they appear.

Even though the Temple ER doctor said they would never give you access, might still be worth pursuing, especially since you're at the beginning of your project. Rather than asking 'permission' would encourage you to ask, what are the best ways/times for

me to photograph, to say that you already have the doctor's approval and that you will be willing to get permissions from anyone appearing in the photos before publishing. May not be an absolutely necessary part of the story to see gun victims in the ER, but I'm intrigued by the doctor who has to deal with them repeatedly - and other ER workers, perhaps.

Sure, using social media seems to make sense as a way to find out what's going on and to appear at the scene seems ok, respectful and willing to depart if your presence bothers them. Likely this will happen some, but others may well be glad to have you there and to photograph.

Rather than going into the long explanation about u of mo masters project,etc., maybe just identify yourself as a photographer interested in documenting gun violence - that you're creating a project, and want it to be accurate of what is really going on today. That's probably enough to either get you in or send you packing. Somehow to me 'freelance' doesn't seem quite right....

You're already making some excellent pictures - i'm intrigued by the police flashlights at the scene - fascinating. I'd like to encourage you to try to spend more time with individual people - and to develop some more in-depth profiles of some key players - maybe a cop, a victim's relative, a shopowner who has seen murders outside her/his shop, etc.

Jackie:

Kevin, this is a fantastic start! You're shooting images, setting up interviews, talking with excellent contacts and getting to know the community. This really is a solid start. I've enjoyed seeing your photos on Instagram too.

I wouldn't worry about being exact with your explanation every time. I think it's difficult to understand the whole "master's project" explanation. I agree with David that explaining that you're working on a long term project about gun violence is a faster, easier explanation. It's also the truth. You can go deeper with your explanation when you're working with people one-on-one. You just need a fast, but truthful, explanation at a crime scene.

I think it's fine to go to vigils posted on social media. That doesn't sound completely private to me. Go early and talk with a family member. Carry just one camera/lens and no bag. Be incredibly respectful and only shoot if it seems OK. You should be able to feel if you are unwelcome or in an unsafe situation. Leave if it doesn't feel right.

Also, if you keep showing up, people will soon recognize you and get to know you. At this point, those small contacts you make are critical. The contacts from the ER physician sound great. Getting access to an ER is a long shot these days (still worth trying, of course), but his contacts sound promising. I also like the idea of following up with Kammie, the mother who lost a child several years ago.

Kevin, what about riding with paramedics? That's similar to the ER, but a first responder might be even more interesting.

You are taking important images for the project at this point. You have to show the crime scene. I have no doubt that you will get more intimate images as you get closer to the community.

Joe:

I echo David and Jackie's sentiments that you are off to a great start. I also agree with them that when explaining your presence, it may be best to communicate your interest in the subject broadly without feeling like you need to talk about your thesis requirements. I do think there may be much to be photographed on site after gun violence events, like Sternfeld's On This Site <http://www.berk-edu.com/RESEARCH/joelSternfeld/>. This is about how places wear the memory of events and about erasure.

Also, the work with Kammie and any other victims of gun violence suggests much of this project could be made around those who have a rooting interest in the problem's exposure. While the Temple Dr. is not sure if you can access his patients, the idea of you connecting with his social worker friend sounds very promising. While being respectful is primary for you and that is important, I've felt that the terms for what is appropriate can become redefined as a result of extreme experiences. When photographing people in their final days at hospice, Nicholas Nixon began by drafting an introduction letter describing his project and interests. He then gave copies to the 3 or 4 doctors and social workers he'd met who trusted his intentions and they dispersed the letters to particular families. Nixon was able to make a lot of work, he says, as a result of that letter- by having the health care professionals essentially broker the relationship.

The scene of the crime seems important here. But it sounds like photographing survivors is of more interest to you, not just surviving gun victims but their families and friends. These relationships will be less fraught with bureaucratic hurdles and might be where the project gets its texture.

Week 2 Fieldnotes: June 2 - June 8

June 1:

Caught news of a shooting on the scanner tonight. A couple minutes from my house. Made a couple pictures. A man was shot a few times, but survived. A lot of police officers with flashlights and police tape. I'm afraid I'm going to get the same photos of officers using flashlights at the crime scene. I think the more scenes I attend the more diverse the work in these situations will be. Shootings in business areas are much different than residential areas, too. People pop out their windows or come out on the street during residential shootings. Family members might be in attendance, too.

June 2:

I followed up with several contacts today, although I'm not sure how successful this was. I briefly spoke to Marla Bellamy director of Philadelphia Ceasefire. She basically told me she was too busy to chat and we'll talk again next week. She seemed very interested in my project and appreciated "my approach and interest."

The Philly Police Department approved my ride along, but told me I can't bring my cameras. That is very frustrating. I tried to speak with the Officer, but she made it pretty clear there are no exceptions. She did mention that gun violent counties next to Philadelphia such as Chester County, Trenton, etc allow this. That doesn't really help me. I figured if I were to ride along with the Philly PD I'd probably be smacking myself in the head because I didn't have a camera.

I spoke to Keith Newerla who works with patients rehabbing gun shots. He didn't seem entirely against the idea of me meeting and potentially photographing gun shot victims. However, he will have to be that middle-man. I think spending time with someone who was affected (recently) could be a "mini story" I do within the entire essay. I like Joe's idea of writing a letter about my project and interests, which Keith could disseminate.

June 3:

I met with Jim Selzer, Deputy Director of Photography at the Inquirer. Jim remembered me when I was an undergraduate and interned at the paper. He was extremely helpful in giving me other potential interview subjects for my research component. In the end he doesn't think he is the best person to speak. We spoke off the record about a couple things. He is more than happy to talk to me about work as an editor and working with photographers, but he suggested I speak with Executive Editor Bill Marrimow about the coverage and decision making process regarding gun violence.

Jim introduced me to Michael Mercanti, director of photography at the Philly Daily News. Both papers share the same photo staff and newsroom, but put out different content. DN is known for a more hard hitting, on the ground type of newspaper so Mercanti might be a better interview. We are meeting early next week to sit down and chat. Additionally, I spoke with April Saul. Her schedule is a bit erratic, but we are planning on meeting soon.

June 4:

I met with Monique Bryant today. Her son Yasin, 16, was murdered 2 years ago. They moved from Atlantic City because of the increased crime in their neighborhood. Unfortunately, Yasin was murdered six months after their move. Monique was very kind to open up, but I'm not sure of the photographic opportunities here. Aside from a portrait, it's hard to photograph something that has happened in the past.

June 6:

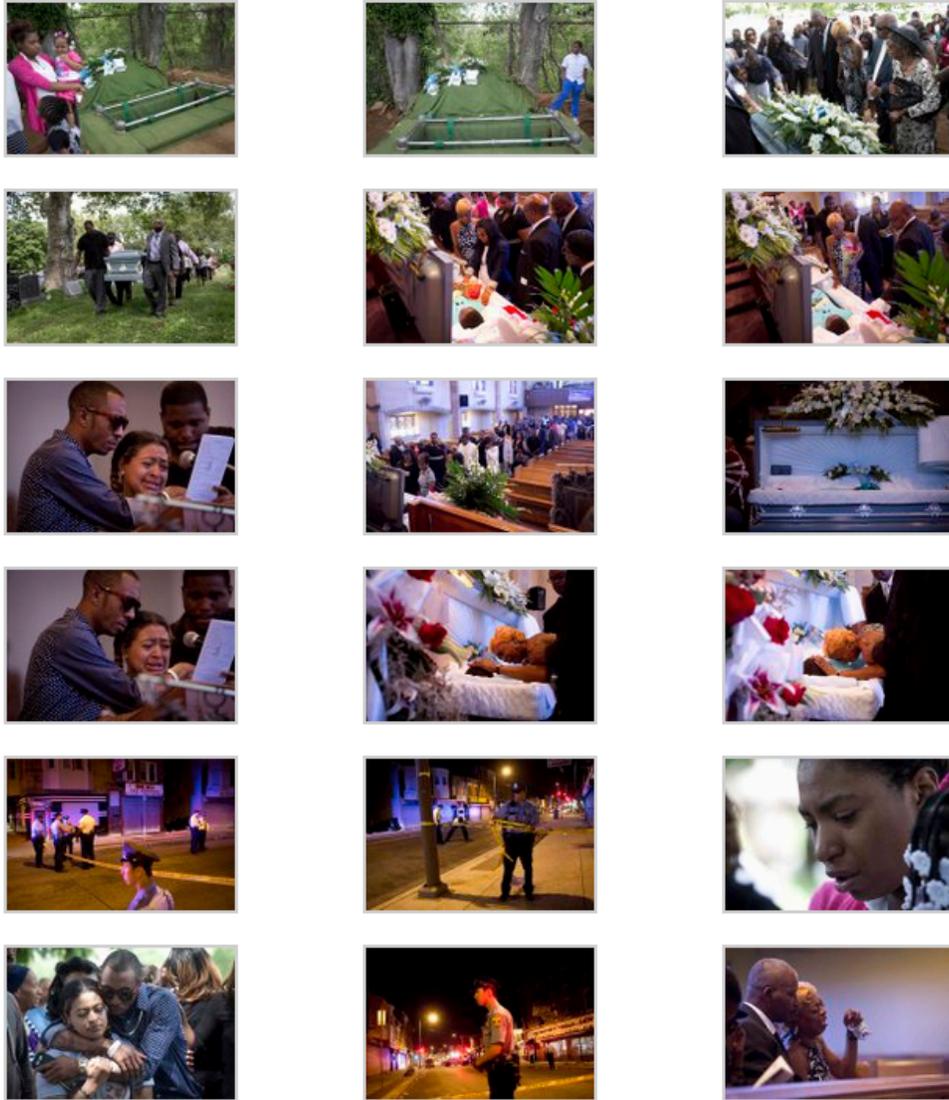
I attended the funeral for Tyrek Connor who was killed May 30. He was 25, had a 3-year-old daughter and never got into any trouble. He worked full time and lived independently. He was shot once in the head and killed instantly. The funeral was rough. I feel bad complaining about my emotions because I cannot imagine the pain that Karen, his mother, and Melissa, his girlfriend, were going through. Through some social media research I found out the location of the funeral home and called them. They then called Karen who was more than happy for me to be there. The family thanked me many times for being there. It was really amazing. This gives me hope that access isn't the difficult thing -- it's finding those people to gain access with. I was the only media member there. It really did mean a lot to the family I was there. That was unexpected, but really awesome.

After the funeral I spoke with Melissa and explained my interest in photographing her and her daughter. How are children raised without their fathers? What weight does this have on the mother, the family, the daughter? Sadly, Imani, Melissa and Tyrek's daughter is really too young to understand the death of her father. Photographing her and

Imani could make for another "mini story." I explained my project and why she would be a great person to photograph and she was extraordinarily interested. She's out of town Saturday and I'm out of town Sunday, but plan on following up first thing Monday.

June 7:

Woke up to find out that 3 men were killed and 2 others were wounded over the weekend. I can't find the names of these men anywhere in the news. Any idea who I'd ask at the Police Department for this information? Once again social media plays a huge role in connecting me to this news sometimes. For example, a 24-year old man named Tyrese Hall was killed last week. I searched #ripreese to find pictures from a candlelight vigil. Most of these vigils happen a day, maybe two after someone is killed. I could spend some time with a family before the funeral. I'm not assuming everyone will be supportive like the Connor family, but I can't let that stop me.



Committee Responses:

David:

Amazing pictures from the funeral, Kevin.

It's surprising in a way that you were able to photograph, but also understandable that they see the photography, the attention, as an affirmation of their loss and loved one. So glad you have the courage to ask, even when you *think* you know the answer.

I agree that riding along with the Philadelphia police without a camera would feel awkward/frustrating. Do you think you could use your iPhone - or does she mean all cameras of any sort? It *might* be worth doing the ride along anyway, just to build relationship with the officer/other officers - and then to talk with the police chief (or whoever is making these protocol determinations) and you will have that additional experience in your arsenal, and demonstrated commitment, that *might* make a difference, or might not...

And similarly it might be good to talk with someone in the P.D. about their attitude/perception of how the media cover (or don't cover) gun violence. Are they collaborators in this in some way?

I gotta say that if people had to look at gun victims in their newspapers (and on teevee) every day, they would hate it and maybe, like happened with the image from Viet Nam, be some sort of groundswell of support for change. But the change is really unlikely, considering the gun culture. Look at the recent 'demonstrations' in Texas about the 'open carry' "issue". Yikes, what a country.

So, another element of your project probably is something to do with the guns. Any idea how you want to try to deal with this? Do the police have confiscated weapons? Not sure you want to go looking for the supplier.

Jackie:

I'm impressed with how quickly you're moving on this project and how strong the photos are so far. Wow.

I understand that the crime scenes feel repetitive, but I agree that your images will become more diverse. More importantly, you will continue to make contacts, be recognized by the police and meet the victims' family members. While it may feel repetitive, it will likely remain important.

That's too bad about the police department restrictions. I agree with David that you might still consider the ride along in order to form relationships and meet victims/families. You need both victims' families as well as police, so I would still pursue this. They may allow you to get out of the car and walk with them if you don't have a camera (Sarah Rotherberg had somewhat similar restrictions last semester for her Vox story, but they told her she could stay in the car and shoot). Yes, ask about an iPhone. If you have the time, I don't see how it could hurt to do a ride along and will deepen your connection to the police.

The mini-story idea is good. Didn't we discuss that during the proposal meeting? A couple stories within the larger project will feel more intimate. It sounds like Tyrek's family is a good one to start with. They welcomed you and gave amazing access at the funeral. The photographs were gut-wrenching. I do think that people like to know that others care about their loss. It's sad that violence is so common that Phili media don't go to funerals. Showing up can be a kindness, in many ways.

I would definitely take Jim up on his suggestion to talk with the Executive Editor. I imagine he suggested this because of internal politics. I wouldn't be surprised if the lack of gun violence coverage comes from the top and that the EE would reveal some of that.

It could be interesting. I think Jim and Michael both sound like good interview candidates. Keep trying to get Jim to talk (good luck). Too bad about Joe, but you might still get what you want by talking with the other 4 people, including the EE.

Week 3 Fieldnotes: June 9 – June 15

June 9:

I met with Marla Bellamy of Philadelphia Ceasefire. They are based after a Chicago model in which gun violence is treated as an epidemic. It's an super interesting program where "interrupters," former gang members do outreach in communities trying to swell violence. It's worked in certain cities and may have worked in Philadelphia. It's only been implemented for one year and gun violence has decreased. 111 people were shot in May 2014, 138 in May 2013. I cannot believe those numbers, but still it's decreased. She seemed very interested in working with me. Possibly link me up with a "interrupter," as he/she works the Philly streets. She'll be out of town until Monday, June 16, so hopefully we'll make progress then.

June 10:

Today was rough. Four people were shot, two fatally within a few hours. Three men in North, one in West. The shooting in West was the earliest, around 2pm. I immediately responded to the West shooting. I got there probably a few minutes after the police. A 26 year old man was shot to death. He was only out of jail a couple months. His family was on the scene. They were visibly upset. I did my best to be respectful, but still make storytelling images. I talked to his grandmother. I didn't really know what to say. I told her I was very sorry. She wasn't surprised, sadly. Seems like gang violence or something of the sort. I'm not really sure how to speak to a family during this time. I'm

sure the last person they want to talk to is a guy with a bunch of cameras. This was my first murder. There were a lot of emotions. A lot of people asking me "who I'm with" and "what I'm doing." If I have the time, I explain. Most people seem interested. I clearly stick out.

I left, got back home and about a hour later, I went to a shooting in North in the evening (not fatal). A 44 year old man was shot. A cop told me that their are "gang wars" between residents of two projects in the 22nd district. They believed one man was out to kill another man of a different project. Another cop recognized me. I'm noticing some of the same faces. They have been extraordinarily friendly.

June 12:

I met with Michael Mercanti, photo editor of the Philly Inquirer and Daily News. I interviewed him for my research portion. He had a lot to offer and is willing to put me in touch with other people to possibly interview. I haven't transcribed the interview yet, but wasn't sure if I should be doing that within my field notes or just to have for my final project.

Later in the day I spent about a hour photographing Melissa (she lost her boyfriend Tyrek to gun violence, went to his funeral last week) and their daughter Imani. I didn't get much time in making pictures (long day for Imani at daycare, I think), but Melissa seems interested in letting me spend more time with them. She told her life is pretty simple: just her and Imani hanging out. She doesn't go out much. I'm worried there won't be enough diverse photographs here, but we'll see.

June 13:

I met up again with Kammie. We spoke for about two hours. She lost her son to gun violence over 10 years ago, but it's still very hard on her. Her two other sons are in jail. She went through battles of depression and drug usage. Her birthday is this week as is her anniversary of her son's death, so I figured those would be good photo opportunities. She usually visits the cemetery on two days: his birthday and anniversary of his death.



Committee Responses:

Joe:

Gut wrenching, truly. Three to four homicides per day in the Month of May, I wonder how these Philadelphia figures compare to similar stretches of time in regions engaged in actual sectarian conflicts? The feuding projects bring that home to me.

The action peripheral to the taped off crime scenes interest me a great deal. There is one picture here, (a red faced building with 8 or so figures) that fits this bill.

Photographing grieving relatives in real time is poignant, but the collections of observers that I've seen you shoot as well on your Instagram feed provide an interesting counterpoint. While not unconcerned, this improvised gathering of residents has become a common social practice- to go see who was killed. When you said the Grandmother was not surprised at her grandson's murder, its probably because it is certainly not her first trip to this kind of crime scene. The adjacent gawkers remind me of Fusco's RFK Funeral Train, another project about local people gathering in the presence of a body. Bringing some form to this might be interesting, like merging Weegee with Winogrand.

The contact with the Interrupters sounds pretty promising. As for what to say about who you are in the midst of the chaos when the shooting has just occurred, I'll defer to Jackie and David on that one.

I'm really amazed by the access you are getting as it speaks well of your work ethic and affable nature. The pictures look promising to me, you should proceed with nothing but confidence.

Week 4 Fieldnotes: June 16 – June 22

June 16:

With no shoots planned, I monitored the police scanner most of the day. Around 3pm there was news of two men who shot a 13-year-old boy in SW Philly. Once again, I arrived way before any other news crew. Hours later, the police were still searching for suspects. There was now a swarm of media -- every TV and radio station in Philly. One arrest was made, but ironically, not the shooters. Apparently, they ran into a friend's house and the homeowner was arrested. The two men were never found. Luckily, the boy was in stable condition.

I got there before police tape was ever put up. Even while the tape was placed a Philly Police inspector, whom I've met before and explained my project to told me "you're OK here," signifying I was basically OK to make pictures where no one but police should be. As the crowd got larger he said I had to move back. It was quite boring for a while. I waited a few hours before the tape was removed and the police realized the suspects were no where to be found. This felt more like a "media event" than a crime scene. There wasn't much work to do once the police tape was set up.

June 18:

Had the scanner on again and heard of another shooting in my neighborhood. Quickly darted out, but unfortunately there wasn't much to see. Shootings that do not end in homicide produce fairly boring visual results. Regardless, I made some more contacts with local police.

June 19:

Quite a busy day. I met with Roslyn Pichardo. She runs an organization called "Save our City." Both her brother and ex-boyfriend were killed by gunfire (she has even been shot herself). She's an extremely intelligent and strong woman, who is using the pain of her past to do something positive. She works with families that have been affected by gunfire. She introduced me to Nathaniel, a friend of hers who has shot several years ago. He lost his leg and left rehab because he wants to learn how to walk on his own. We met up, I took a few photos. He is extremely excited to let me make pictures of him. He was intrigued why a white guy would care about urban issues. He spends hours working out everyday because it helps him escape the depression. When not working out he walks around his house with his prosthetic leg. He used to be a big time drug dealer, but once he was shot and his leg was amputated, unfortunately he became useless to everyone. He is 37 and lives at home with his mother.

June 20:

In the morning I met with the parents of Troy Smith who was killed and robbed in SW Philly early June. His parents were devastated. I felt terrible. Their son was a good kid. They both grew up in the streets, but moved out so their son would never have to experience that life. Unfortunately, Troy was in the wrong place at the wrong time: he was killed for \$100. My heart breaks for his parents.

Later in the day, It was Kammie's 50th birthday today so I spent time with her as she celebrated with friends. Her son Larry was killed by three different gunmen 10 years

ago. It's still hard on her, but she keeps tell me my presence is therapeutic and closure for her situation, which is wonderful. She is even putting me in touch with other subjects. I have so many people to make pictures of. At first I was so worried about access, but now I'm finding people want their stories to be told -- I just need to find them.

June 21:

A completely emotional and overwhelming day. This morning I was at a memorial breakfast for Tyrek Connor (I attended his funeral two weeks ago). His mother Karen, and his family were very receptive. There weren't many pictures to make, but I'm glad I followed up with the family. At night, I attended the March/Vigil for Troy. There were about 100 people there. I'm shocked that no other members of the media are covering these events. I feel like what I'm doing is important. We've been so desensitized to this type of violence in Philadelphia. But parents are burying their children and in no world is that ever fair. It meant so much to Renee (Troy's mother) that I was there. She, as well as several other family members, thanked me ten times. I couldn't believe that. I photographed them in their most vulnerable moments and they said "thanks." Wow.

They gathered at the site Troy was murdered. It's not easy to make pictures when people are mourning over the loss of a son, brother, friend. I'm hoping I can keep Troy's story in people's hearts and minds.



Committee Responses:

David:

Yes, it is amazing access that you are getting and that the families are seeing your photography as affirming of their lives and loss of their loved ones. So glad you're doing this. are you sharing the work with Obama or others who ought to be trying to do more to help stop this? Awareness seems to be the thing lacking - desensitization, as you note.

Do you have any more formed idea of what your presentation will look like - still pictures, multimedia...? Are you recording any audio with these people, or ambient audio? Any "news" about working on a ride-along with the police?

Jackie:

You're doing a great job, and I have no worries about you keeping up with your work. I think it's fine to combine two weeks and post on July 8th. But, I'm sorry for combining my responses! I'm in the Rocky Mountains right now, not very close to good internet or computer on a regular basis.

I do understand the feeling that you stick out don't fit in. I think this is a common feeling for photojournalists, particularly at first. My suggestion is to feel things out. Don't assume that you're presence isn't welcome or that people are upset. Hopefully you will know if you're welcome, unwelcome or in danger.

You asked if you should include interview transcripts in the field notes or final project. Save the transcriptions for the final project, but feel free to ask any questions about the content or the process.

Your images are gut wrenching and powerful. Even though you feel uncomfortable, you show peoples' responses and emotions. I like the shots of the police from week 4. They aren't just standing near tape. They show some movement and urgency. I would also like to see more bystander images.

Kevin, I think your eventual problem is going to be narrowing down the possible stories. That's why I think David's question about the final format is important. Don't spread yourself too thin by gathering too many leads. You have many good contacts and have started a few stories. I think it's time to focus in on a few in particular. You have Melissa: I think you have a couple strong images of her and her daughter. I also like that tattoo (any other images of that?). Even if it doesn't lead to a deeper story, you could use a couple images along with some text (quotes or audio from her perhaps?). You have Kammie: Why are Kammie's other two sons in jail? Does she visit? I also like the Interrupters story idea. This would be a different angle, concentrating on someone trying to stop the craziness that they used to be part of. I think Nathaniel sounds interesting and promising. Likewise, could you find the 13 year old boy and work with him? Those are both "survivors."

I like what Joe wrote: "You should proceed with nothing but confidence." Agreed! This is strong work. Your subjects are granting access because you obviously care. They trust your spirit, which is a wonderful thing.

Week 5 Fieldnotes: June 30 - July 6

June 24:

It's the anniversary of Kammie son's murder so she visited the cemetery. It was actually the same cemetery that Tyrek Connor was buried at last month. She was alone, didn't go with any other family, so it was a little different than I expected. I made maybe one picture I am happy with. Her son who was just released in jail lives about 2 hours away, so Im hoping to photograph them together soon if/when he visits.

July 2:

I photographed Nathaniel at home. Nathaniel was shot in the leg several years ago by a younger friend at the time. The two got into an altercation and he used a large gun that it required Nate to get his leg amputated. For several years after his amputation he has been incorrectly fit for his prosthetic. He was always in pain and uncomfortable to walk. He only recently changed companies and was fitted for his prosthetic today.

Next week he will either go into the office to be fitted or they will come to him. Regardless, I'm going to make sure I am there for those pictures. Nate works out a lot, like, a lot. He is really depressed because he lost his leg and the "natural high" he gets from working out really helps that. He has a gym in his small home. The nice light coming in from the front window made the scene dramatic.

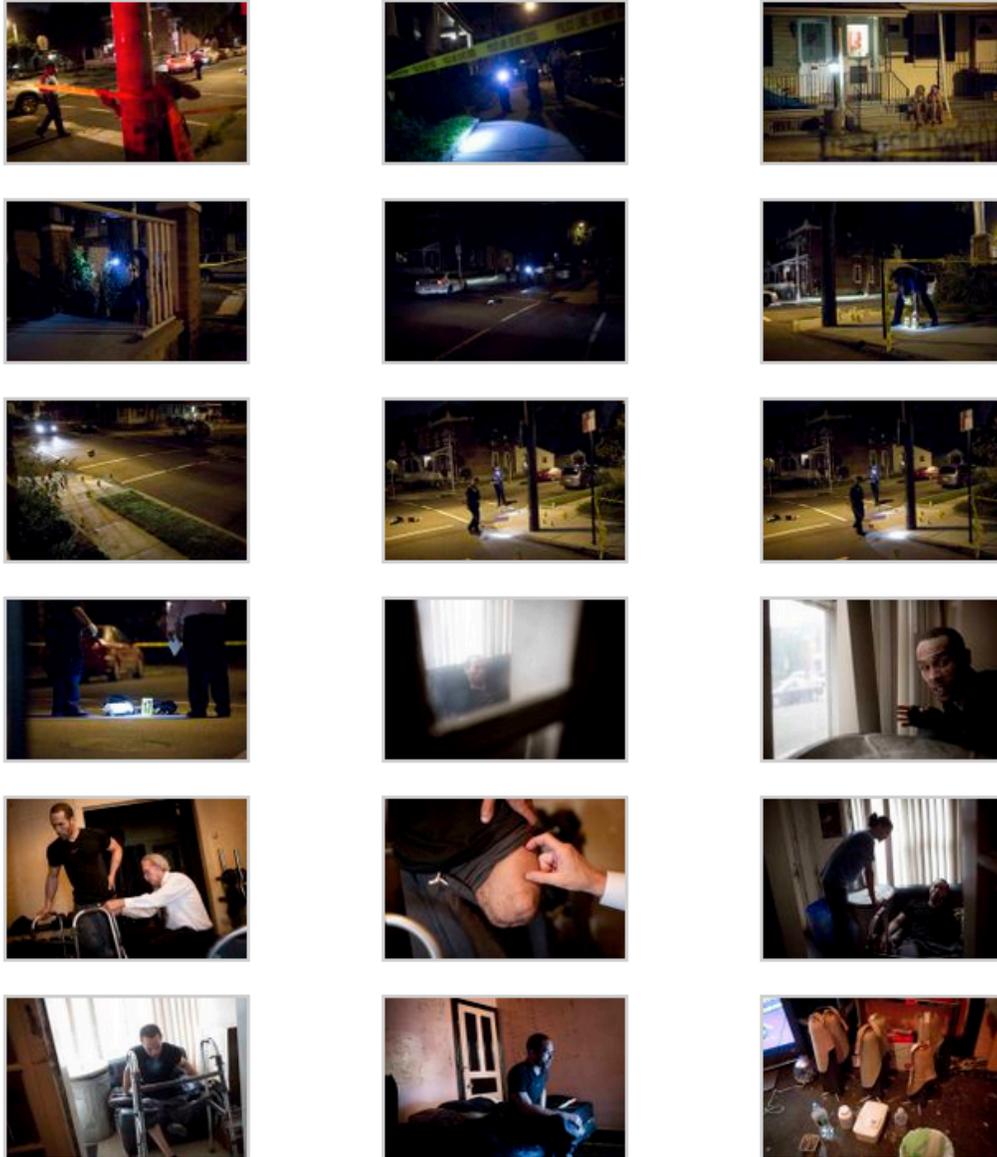
July 3:

I met up with Balla Black, 23, a Philadelphia rap artist who was shot 5 times in the back. His real name is Kwende Williams. He is now paralyzed. He lives at home with his mother and his two children. He was shot 3 years ago, but was put on house arrest because he had an illegally obtained gun on him. It's a hard balance for him because he seems really happy, but his story is very tragic. Showing a balance between these two emotions is important in my pictures. His next court date is July 22. I can't photograph inside the court, but that'll be a great day to make pictures. On the 22nd he will find out if might be taken off house arrest or possibly even serve jail time.

I'm not entirely happy with my shoot. Not making excuses, but it was the first time I photographed I him. I'm hoping to go back and get more soon. His birthday is this weekend

July 4 - July 6:

I spent the weekend monitoring the police scanner. Summer weekends where a lot of people are outside and the weather is hot are unfortunately very violent weekends. Between Friday and Sunday there were ten shootings and 2 people were murdered. I was at both murder scenes and went to 5 crime scenes all together. Unfortunately, none of these locations produced many visually interesting pictures. There were no crowds on hand or family to capture emotion or reaction. I guess it's all hit or miss. I did my best photographing the police activity. I'm going to continue to monitor the scanner, I find it to be an adrenaline rush to head out to a crime scene at 1am.



Committee Responses:

David:

Glad you have good relationship with the police and are able to move about effectively in these crime situations. Be patient, keep showing up. the other elements will be there sometime. Or not. It's ok. As Joe and Jackie said earlier, try to incorporate other aspects of the environment (signage, houses, windows, dogs, etc.) that help us to have a

stronger sense of neighborhood - in at least some of the pictures. I'm intrigued a bit by the routine-ness of the police when they are on the scene - talking with each other, hanging out, stepping up on a car's bumper, not really talking with the others on the porch or sidewalk, in their own world. this is perhaps an idea you can try to do somewhat better - to show the two worlds and their separateness. Almost all white cops, almost (?) all black gunshot victims. How are interviews coming along? I like your field notes a lot and I think you're doing a good job. I'm on another committee with Magazine faculty member John Fennell, who has a good structure for field notes - - passing it along to you for what it's worth....(see below):

Jackie:

Kevin, do you want to start narrowing down some images? It might help you to know how to proceed and what else you need. I'd be happy to look at a collective, loose edit, if you want to put one together.

Can you hang out with one or two officers in particular? The street scenes are beginning to look similar and repetitive (the cop shots). Getting to follow one officer might personalize the police side. You have personal touches on the "victims" side, but the police all blend together so far.

I do like the police images that show the street/houses, such as the one of the officer on the porch with two men sitting in front. I think it can improve, but that's the idea. I also want you physically closer to the police in some images.

like: 35, 40, 51, 53 of the police

like: 28, 30, 33, 21, 22, 4, 6, 7

In terms of the field note format, I'm fine with the way you've been doing it. However, doing it in diary format doesn't allow you to organize topics quite as well. You could add a paragraph or two at the end that updates us on research, asks questions of the committee or sets goals. Also, it's best to answer our questions and give updates via field notes, rather than emails.

But please always feel free to email or call me separately for quick or urgent questions. That's what a chair is for :) Your work is stellar, Kevin. I'm always impressed.

Week 6 Fieldnotes: June 7 – July 13

I decided to change the format of my field notes. I found the email David sent me with this format to be much easier and better organized.

I. Weekly highlights

-Decided to go with BW for this project. All images are being shot in color then converted. If you prefer, I can leave them in color and then convert for the final edit.

Whatever works.

- Photographed a funeral for John Berry Jr. John, 24, was murdered in West Philly the end of June. He was a good kid and unfortunately in the wrong place at the wrong time. Roz Pichardo, who introduced me to Nathaniel, got me access to photograph the funeral. The family was appreciate of me being there. Emotions were very high.

- It was Balla Black's birthday so I made some pictures of him at his house. I met his girlfriend. He doesn't get out much so I'm afraid of his pictures are going to look repetitive. In two weeks he has a court date related to his shooting, so this will be good to get him in a different environment doing something other then sitting at home.

-Nate got fitted for his new prosthetic so I made some pictures of that.

II. Work issue:

-It's been extremely tough emotionally thus far, especially with the funeral of John Berry. It's often hard to make pictures when people are at their worse. Although many people are appreciative I am there making pictures, I don't have a time for a "do over" so

I really have no choice but to be there with my camera, even if it means standing aside a casket as someone is weeping over their loss. I feel terrible.

III. Research progress:

-Transcription of Michael Mercanti interview this week.

IV. Briefly outline your agenda or goals for next week.

-I am scheduled to interview April Saul sometime this week, either Wednesday, July 16 or Thursday, July 17.

- Nate will receive a new prosthetic this week. I will be there to photograph as he receives it and begins to walk with it.

- Monitoring the police scanner this weekend to make pictures.

- Meeting up with one of Philadelphia's "interrupters" -- a former gang member who now works the streets for community outreach.



Committee Responses:

David:

Incredibly moving, Kevin. Don't know how you keep it together when you're doing this. Are you talking to anyone (family, counselor, whatever) to get some of this processed and made "understandable"? Hope so.

Are you writing also, making notes or transcribing interviews? If nothing else, it's a good idea to write down the quotes you hear, observations you have, from a journalistic perspective, as soon as you can - will be very useful to you as you begin to put the project together. Thanks for the update - good work. Keep us in the loop. Happy to try to offer perspective or answer questions, etc. - but you kind of have to ask...not sure what you're needing at present, if anything. Hang in there.

Jackie:

Kevin, your subjects' trust is evident, and your work is heartbreaking and amazing. The funeral (casket shots in particular) are very strong. Out of curiosity, what's the reason to go with B&W? I love B&W and think it works, but I'm curious what made you decide this. Are you doing anything to keep yourself together emotionally? Like David said, talking to someone isn't a bad idea. Also working out, seeing friend, doing whatever lets your mind rest.

Do you feel like you could take a short break from funerals and shootings, if you need? Even a week might help you emotionally. The alternative is to keep going,

realizing that you are helping by bringing attention to the subject. You're halfway now, right? Good luck with April's interview. That should be interesting.

Finally, are you thinking about following an officer or doing a ride along? Or does that feel like it strays too much from the main topic? As always, great work Kevin. Hang in there and stay safe!

Week 7 Fieldnotes: July 14 – July 20

I. Weekly highlights

-Made a rough edit of my images, which has been attached in the slideshow below.

- Met with Terry Starks, a North Philadelphian who was shot 5 times over a drug deal gone bad. He now is a "interrupter" who works the streets doing community outreach. He told he him and his group respond to communities after a shooting has occurred. I haven't followed them in the community, but he's interested and will keep me in the loop.

- Photographed Balla Black when he went downtown for a probation officer meeting. His court date to see if he will be released/put in jail has been delayed again. Apparently it's been delayed for 3 years. His story is really sad. He was shot 5 times and is paralyzed. He needs help with everything he does. His girlfriend and mother are wonderful. He told me he is really happy I am sharing his story. One of the most rewarding parts of being a photographer is when someone thanks you for making their picture and telling their story. We can make the pictures, but the stories always belong to the people in them.

-Made it to the scene of a double shooting in North Philly

- Spent some time with Kammie who went to a local basketball club. The basketball league was shut down because of a shooting at the court. A few years later it was reopened as a way to keep kids busy and active.

II. Work issue:

-Thankfully not many issues to discuss. Unfortunately, my scanner app was acting up this weekend and everything was coming in noisy. It was impossible to make anything out. I tried a different app and I had the same problem. Hopefully this issue will be cleared up. The iPhone app is \$3, compared to a \$300-\$400 handheld scanner, so this is really the best bet.

III. Research progress:

-Unfortunately, April Saul cancelled both of our meetings. Jim MacMillian also cancelled because of surgery. I'm hoping to interview both of them soon.

IV. Briefly outline your agenda or goals for next week.

- Photographing a large (1-2,000 people) protest against gun violence this weekend.
- Hopefully interview April Saul. Jim MacMillian is not available until August.
- Monitoring the police scanner this weekend to make pictures. Sent out emails about a possible ride along. Although I can't bring my camera I might as well go and see where this takes me.
- Hang out with the Interrupters crew as they do their work in Philly



Week 8 Fieldnotes: July 21 – July 27

I. Weekly highlights

- I finally caught up with April Saul and I spent about an hour interviewing her.
- Philly Police OK'd my ride along. Filled out some paperwork and I'll be doing that sometime in Mid-August and we will go from there.
- Photographed a rally to end violence
- Photographed a vigil for three children who were killed. Two gunmen carjacked a woman, lost control of the car and hit the three children (all siblings). Their mother is in critical condition. An extremely sad time for the family and the city of Philadelphia. It was really hard to shoot because it was so cluttered with people and media members. It was really impossible to move around and control my backgrounds.

II. Work issue:

- The citywide Philly Police scanner is now "offline," which makes it impossible to get to crime scenes (I've tested several apps and all of them are listed as "offline"). I'd like to avoid buying a handheld scanner as they are very expensive. I've looked into other ways of possibly finding a scanner, maybe a website online. I have no idea what the issue is with the scanner. Feeds from other city's police scanners are working just fine.

III. Research progress:

- Interviewed April Saul. Do you suggest I still reach out to Barbara Davidson, etc? Or Should I stay local? So far I have two of my interviews done -- Saul and Michael Mercanti.

IV. Briefly outline your agenda or goals for next week.

- I'm going to be out of town Tuesday, July 29 - Thursday, July 31 for freelance work and then I'll be in Missouri August 3-10. Unfortunately, I won't really be able to shoot again until I get back. In the meantime I'm planning on transcribing all my interviews and working more on the research side of things.



Committee Responses:

Jackie:

There are a couple of advantages to interviewing Barbara. She might give insight into your project. I also think she's a great contact for you to make. Your work is fairly similar. I know you're dealing with gatekeeping and wanted to keep the interviews local, but Barbara's information could be an interesting contrast. I would definitely interview Barbara if Jim isn't available. If you get Jim, I think you're OK either way.

I'm not sure what apps you have, but have you tried broadcastify online? I haven't used it, but I know shooters who do (staff class). Another goal I would suggest for the next week or two, when you're out of Philly, is to begin an overall edit. Can you narrow this down to 50-100 images for a rough edit? Start thinking about how you want the essay to flow. Keep up the good work! I'm glad to hear you have a ride along too.

Week 9 Fieldnotes: August 11 - 17

I. Weekly highlights

- Full transcription of both my interview with April Saul and Michael Mercanti.
- Photographed a vigil and funeral for Terrance "Bird" Cox who was killed in North Philadelphia. I also got the OK to spend time with his family before the funeral although there wasn't much to photograph.
- Attended a vigil for a teenager named Malik who was shot and killed down the street from me. He was a victim of Philadelphia gang violence.

II. Work issue:

-The citywide Philly Police scanner is still offline. All of the websites I've tried to stream (broadcastify, etc) are also offline.

-Finding it difficult to photograph the "interrupters" in action. They typically attend all of the vigils and funerals, occasionally speaking to the crowd at the vigils about the horrors of gun violence. These crowds have a lot of young kids who could sadly be Philadelphia's next victim. I guess I'm finding it hard to real find many visual opportunities to photograph them.

III. Research progress:

-Full transcription of both my interview with April Saul and Michael Mercanti.

-Interview set up with Jim MacMillan for August 27.

IV. Briefly outline your agenda or goals for next week.

-Ride along with the Philadelphia Police Department either Friday or Saturday

-Follow up with some of my subjects including Kammie, Nathaniel and Black.

-Put together a loose photo edit for next week's field notes

-Contact Malik's family about possibly spending time with them before the funeral

Committee Responses:

Jackie:

Kevin, this is another excellent field note. All good work! I hope the Newsweek Instagram project works out. It's obviously timely now, and your work is strong. I think you should find a way to integrate a section about instagram in the final project. It doesn't need to be a major section, but you should talk about it and show some images. It might enter into the evaluation section, but it could also be a very short portion of the "abundant evidence." Think about it. It sounds as if the Interrupters don't work in the way we had hoped or envisioned. It's worthwhile to keep your eyes on them and keep in touch, but it appears they may not be the story you had hoped to find. I'm glad you were able to interview three locals for the research project. I look forward to hearing the results.

Good luck with the police ride along, with Malik's family and with getting together your rough edit. Keep up the good work!

Joe:

I'm very impressed by the breadth of work from the last few weeks and it reflects your commitment to the project. I particularly enjoy some of the quieter images that exist on the periphery of the more direct gun violence work, basketball games, neighbors conversing. The contrast of "normal" daily life in the context of the gun issue keeps things pretty human.

I can't remember if I responded to your decision to process your images in black and white but I have thoughts on this. I'm not sure my reaction to this decision is entirely correct so I'd love to know what Jackie and David are thinking. After reviewing all of the work and thinking of the pictures in the context of your instagram images, many of which are provided in color within the same scene, I think the subject has a very definitive palette and this palette seems extremely important. In my view, black and white has gained a particular conceptual dimension since the primary way we consume photographs now is in color.

Because I feel it references a historical approach to "concerned" photography, I wonder if the monochrome causes your project to reference the photographic and historical reportage too much, locating it within an ocean of like work. While I know it is not always the case, the organized mourning ritual occurs by day and the blood shed occurs at night. There is in my view a tremendously important palette distinction here, where daylight gives way to the ubiquitous urban amber of sodium vapor bulbs. The contrast between a community's organized mourning activities with the veritable no-man's-land it becomes is the same contrast you achieve with the kinds of events you're photographing, which I mentioned above. I think that visually the color in this world would tag along nicely when describing these dualities.

Week 10 Fieldnotes: August 18 - 25

I. Weekly highlights

- Interview and transcription of Jim MacMillan, editor of Gun Crisis and former Philadelphia Daily News photographer
- Went through every shoot folder, selecting all "maybes" for edit in a larger folder.
- Rough edit. Will send dropbox link in a day or two looking for any feedback on my work and any "holes" that need to be filled while out shooting. Will include two folders, a tighter and larger edit.

II. Work issue:

- None

III. Research progress:

- Interview and transcription of Jim MacMillan

IV. Briefly outline your agenda or goals for next week.

- Photograph any "holes" for my project
- Begin putting together my project as outlined by the Journalism school

Chapter Three: Evaluation

Overall, I am proud of the work I completed and the lessons I learned throughout my project. I am happy that I was given the wonderful opportunity to share some incredible stories photographically and hopefully use them as a vehicle for understanding and change. While I don't think I'll ever be fully satisfied with a project, I put my heart and soul into my work. I feel more comfortable working in situations where access may be hard to achieve. At first, the thought of photographing people's most vulnerable moments does not seem like something easy to access. But after explaining to everyone I photographed who I was and what it meant to me, I always achieved access.

Access is different for every situation. Since my project contains multiple subjects I had to gain access to their lives in a variety of ways. Sometimes after explaining my project and my goals I achieved access right away, but other times it was more difficult. Finding someone who was physically injured by gun violence was the most complicated. Hospitals, rehabilitation centers and non-profits who work with the victims were no help. After several calls and emails I got nowhere. Luckily, I met several people through vigils or crime scenes that introduced me to new photo subjects.

I learned that people on the ground, seeing and living every day life, are always going to be the best resources. Essentially each person I met worked as a "fixer." For example, I met Kammie at a crime scene in May. After we got closer she introduced me to Balla Black.

Additionally, I found some of my subjects through the use of twitter, Facebook and Instagram. I browsed news reports every day to see who was murdered. I'd then

search for those people on social media and see who was posting comments on their pages. From there I'd try to identify family members and message them directly. I explained who I was and what I was doing. This was not successful every time, but with the large amount of those murders I was able to find several interested families. Furthermore, I'd search hashtags. For example "#ripbird" or "#live4bird" were very popular hashtags for Terrance "Bird" Cox who was murdered, summer 2014. Lastly, Roz Pichardo, who I found on facebook, introduced me to Nate.

The project was emotionally difficult. Every photograph I made was around people who have been physically or emotionally distraught by gun violence. There is no easy way to avoid such traumatic situations. I've internalized a lot of these emotions and still have difficulty processing what I saw. Some mornings I'd wake up and attend a funeral and then a candlelight vigil at night. Other days I'd be at a crime scene at 1am. All of these situations are emotionally difficult to work in. I would, and still do, constantly think about the families I photographed. Their strength in such difficult times was admirable.

There were several times I was "thanked" for photographing a loved one's funeral or vigil service. At both the vigil and funeral of Terrance Cox various family and friends appreciated my dedication to telling his story. Other photo subjects such as Nate and Kammie were appreciative as well. They hoped by telling their story it would help others who have been physically or emotionally effected by gun violence. There wasn't one situation I photographed in that I wasn't welcomed with open arms.

I learned that a long-term photo project is a large undertaking. Beginning with researching and finding willing subjects, it can take a while until you start making

pictures you are happy with. A photo essay is like a puzzle, which takes many pieces to put together. After I was a few weeks or months into my project the puzzle began to make more sense and I just needed to fill up the holes. Starting a project is definitely the most overwhelming task, but once things begin to fall into place it all seems more manageable.

The research portion, although difficult, did not present the same problems. Although the people I interviewed had busy schedules, I planned well ahead. Transcribing their interviews before even writing my analysis allowed me to write it much more seamlessly.

Lastly, it was truly an honor to receive the press and recognition from my project. Never did I imagine that I would have had my work published in the Washington Post as well as featured on MSNBC and Al Jazeera. Placing in College Photographer of the Year was a great honor as well. However, It meant more to me that I was able to share my subject's stories on a more national platform. My subjects are incredibly strong people who I've become close to because I gave them a voice when they might have felt voiceless.

Chapter Four: Physical Evidence

Please refer to the Media Folder and find enclosed the .PDF file *Gone Too Soon: The Effects of Philadelphia's Urban Gun Violence Crisis* book. Per discussion with committee chair Jackie Bell the final book should be included as the Abundant Physical Evidence for the project.

Chapter 5: Analysis

The City of Brotherly Love, the fifth most populated city in the country, Philadelphia, is first for being the country's most gun violent. Although news is dominated by gun violence in Chicago, persistent gun violence has produced a higher rate of homicide in Philadelphia in 2014. Philadelphia is on pace for a greater annual rate of 14.8 homicides per 100,000, Chicago, 12.6. This is unfortunately a title that Philadelphia also held in 2012-13. As gun violence continually affects Philadelphia, the media market must decide on how to cover crime. Readers would prefer not to be inundated with consistently traumatic imagery, but it is an important topic.

I interviewed three members of Philadelphia's photojournalism community: Philadelphia Inquirer Photographer April Saul, Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News Directory of Photography Michael Mercanti and former Philadelphia Daily News photographer Jim MacMillan, currently editor for Gun Crisis. The three discussed what it is like to work in situations of gun violence, what and how ethical decisions are made and what it means to receive recognition for tragic photographs.

Editors as Gatekeepers

The Philadelphia newspaper market is dominated by The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News. The Inquirer is a broadsheet, which tends to focus on its suburbanite readership and the Daily News is tabloid that will cover more crime and spot news than the Inquirer. The director of Photography, Michael Mercanti, who has worked at the paper since 1993, must make editorial decisions on what images to run.

Mercanti is the director of Photography at the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News. These two different newspapers share the same photo staff. Essentially, Mercanti is working the same position for two different news entities.

Jim MacMillan a former newspaper photographer and Pulitzer Prize Winner, who runs an independent news organization, Gun Crisis, is his own editor. MacMillan has the final say on editorial photographic decisions. Gun Crisis attempts to cover every instance of gun violence in Philadelphia: robberies at gun point, shootings that result in injury and shootings that result in death. Some stories are more in-depth than others and some have original photography.

When gun violence occurs in the city these editors must be careful in their decision-making. “We are always concerned about how viewers react to photos. We don't run graphic photos – that's the domain of European publications,” Mercanti stated. “We are always aware of not only how the readers react, but how's families react.” A common crime scene photograph is of pedestrian reaction to a crime scene, Mercanti and MacMillan said. The pedestrian's expressive reactions can often tell a story in itself.

Photo editing ethical dilemmas are always a debate whenever a large, newsworthy issue erupts. When editing for Guncrisis.org, Jim MacMillan, always has a few questions, “I guess the question fundamentally is “is the photograph too graphic for your audience?” So the next question is “who is your audience?” In Gun Crisis's case MacMillan said it is a very local, Philadelphia audience. Most gun violence that receives national media attention is from Chicago. Although more people are murdered in Chicago by gunfire, the population of Chicago is 1.25 million higher than Philadelphia. Per capita, Philadelphia is the highest. Gun Crisis is Philadelphia's only news resource that covers almost every

single shooting and murder in Philadelphia, both through text posts and crime scene photographs.

Regardless of the scenario, MacMillan believes he cannot sugar coat the reality of Philadelphia's deadly neighborhoods. "What's more important? Making a horrible time a little less horrible by editing more delicately or failing to inform the people that make the decisions that could maybe stop this or could slow the violence," he said. "Make sure they see it." MacMillan's experience is on both sides of the lens. His Pulitzer win came from coverage in Iraq and his editing experience at Gun Crisis.

Photojournalism goes through several filters before the audience receives the final product. First, a photographer must make the picture and send it back to the newsroom where editors decide what image to run and what ones to hold. From there the audience views the image. They react based on the picture, never fully understanding the process of how it got to them. In 2007 *The Montreal Gazette* ran a segment called "You Be the Editor". Readers were presented with 10 ethical dilemmas and then made a decision. The study showed that in 20 percent of the cases the audience chose differently than the editors.

In MacMillan's case, photographer Joe Kazcmarek photographs and sends his images to Jim, who decides what to run. According to MacMillan, as of the last 2.5 years, 25 percent of shooting incidents in Philadelphia pass with no traditional media coverage whatsoever. However, most homicides get some coverage. The amount of coverage always depends on the newsworthiness of the issue.

"Every picture is a question of identity and mission. Another way to look at the question is "what is too graphic?" MacMillan asked. "What harm can come of this?"

Images on Gun Crisis often depict police investigating a shooting, vigils and funerals with pictures of mourning families. MacMillan must cover an entire city's gun violence epidemic with one photographer, Kaczmarek. Kaczmarek, who has been honored with a Keystone Press Award as the Distinguished Visual Journalist by the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association, often sells his pictures to the Daily News and Inquirer, too. Mercanti, on the other hand, has a larger staff, but one that has been affected by budget cuts and layoffs. "It fine tunes the amount of coverage," Mercanti said about working with a smaller staff. "[Years ago] we might have chased 12 stories a day, but we can't do that, we need to be more particular in what we choose."

After these pictures are published readers must determine if an image is too graphic. In a 2007 article by Andrew Mendelson, the author found that people will respond differently to these pictures based on how "visually oriented" they are. A photographer and photo editor may in fact find it difficult to understand the ordinary observer's reaction to images. "High visualizers" typically list more ideas and find images more meaningful than others. On the other hand, those who are not as familiar with visuals do not go through the same process. Further, "high visualizers are predisposed to look for meaning in images." Research has shown that these graphic images have powerful effects on the public because they "increase levels of concerns with the issue being covered."

Awards and Recognition for Tragic Photographs

Presenting an audience with a graphic image always opens up a news agency to criticism. In 1992, Fraser stated that editors wanted to show more pictures of graphic situations and "detailed pictures of people dying," but at the same time they felt it was

appropriate to filter this images for the viewer and thus “cleaning up events to make them acceptable.” However, “cleaning up” certain graphic situations, would be altering the message to the audience. By not fully presenting an audience with imagery that is true to the graphic event, we are failing our viewers. Most journalists agreed that situations like this must be taken on a case-by-case basis. Images of trauma and destruction are typically images that succeed in prestigious photojournalism contests.

For example, in the 71st Pictures of the Year International Competition (2014), the General News Category had 5 winners. Most of the images were from war zones. First was a photograph of a young boy treated for burns in Aleppo and Award of Excellence was a picture of lifeless, bloody man in Egypt. In World Press Photo’s 2014 General News Category, first place was displaced Syrians, second was a bomb maker in Aleppo and third was a photograph of a man before he was hung and killed. Year after year the best photographs are of the worse possible situations. A photographer’s bravery and dedication to their craft must always be remembered when working in difficult, but important newsworthy events.

Jim MacMillan has won various accolades for his work. MacMillan told the story of a photograph he made at a funeral for a law enforcement officer. As his grieving wife and children proceeded towards the casket MacMillan made an emotional image that ran in the paper the following day. “It certainly did tell the story and inform the public,” he said of the photograph. However, although he received recognition for his award it’s important for the photographer to question himself or herself. “You’ll definitely be challenged. You better have a pretty good argument for public service and why you did it. The next question is why are you bringing yourself attention on this level.” Despite

recognition for such an unfortunate circumstance, MacMillan was shocked by the family's support. He received a call in the newsroom from the girl's grandmother who thanked him for the photograph. "The photograph led so many people to sympathize and reach out," he said.

April Saul has also received a tremendous amount of recognition during her career. She was the first recipient of the Nikon/ NPPA Documentary Sabbatical Grant for her work on Hmong refugees in 1985. Over the last twenty-five years, she has won numerous honors, including the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, the World Press Photo Budapest Award for Humanistic Photography and on various occasions, been named Photographer of the Year by the Northern Short Course, the Pennsylvania Press Photographers Association and the New Jersey Press Photographers Association.

"Winning awards should help enable you to continue to doing work that you feel like is important," Saul said. Saul's work in Camden, which in 2012 was not only the poorest city in America, but--following massive public safety layoffs the year before--the most dangerous, was honored in the 70th Pictures of the Year International. The following year, with a body of work and awards to back the project she received the Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship grant. "Getting recognition brings attention to the people you deserve and hopefully improve the situation," she said.

Criticism is unavoidable. Journalists rarely ever explore the subject's reaction to the images photographer's make. Photographers typically focus more on the audience that views the pictures, instead of the subjects in the photo. However, how can someone not be angry or upset seeing images of loved ones or countrymen in terrible conditions? According to Lesley Wischmann, a friend of Elaine Miller Holstein, whose image of her

son Jeff Miller's murder at Kent State was national news, believes Miller's private death was "stolen." "It became a commodity to be bought and sold, to confer prizes on, to launch careers with, and to advertise products," she said.

Journalists should be able to articulate what they do and if it is right or wrong, MacMillan believes. "The critic can be misinformed. The journalists have to be able to articulate why they do what they do, right or wrong. It could have a practical value and it's raising the standards of your profession. But it's never comfortable. I don't embrace guilt about it, but I understand the critics."

Working in traumatic situations

As a massive tragedy hits, journalists run in as others run out. Photojournalists, specifically, use their skill to cover war, death and destruction on American and foreign soil. However, this does not come without criticism. People view these images as exploitative and unnecessary, while others appreciate the images ability to effectively communicate a story that cannot be effectively told in words. The most powerful photos are typically made in the worst situations; however, they are important tools in documenting world history.

Still working on her Camden photograph essay, April Saul's catalog of images includes moments of grief. Her more recent work is focusing on the youth, their successes and the mentors of Camden. "I've covered some murder and this has been an emotional period for me, just it was in 2006 with all those kids dying." In 2006 Saul documented in words and photos the death of every child by gun in the Philadelphia. The column, published in the Philadelphia Inquirer was called "Kids, Guns and a Deadly

Toll." "My heart is just full all the time in Camden because you just feel like life is so fragile here. There is so much poverty and so much violence." She believes balance is the most important part of any successful project. "There is a lot of sadness, but there are a lot of beautiful things too. I think the people, when they do triumph, they are so joyful," she said about making photographs of Camden's residents.

Saul believes the commitment to her photography subjects is just as important as the act of photographing. "I'm always fearful that people will look at the stories I do about struggling families and judge them and make these cruel comments and not understand the context of what I'm trying to do. There have been times I've tried to engender empathy for my subjects and I've found none. I can't seem to get through to them.

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Appendix: Project Proposal

Kevin Cook

Professional Project Proposal, May 2014

Introduction

As a photojournalist and documentary photographer the University of Missouri's graduate photojournalism program has equipped me with the necessary skills and lessons to become a successful visual storyteller. Through several courses, Staff Photojournalism, Fundamentals of Photojournalism, Picture Story and the Photographic Essay and Photography in Society, I have grown as a photographer, using my camera and eye to document important issues and stories around me. Additionally, I have become more critical while looking at and judging photographic work. I look forward to using the knowledge I have been given at MU while documenting and researching the gun violence crisis in Philadelphia this summer.

Ultimately, my goal as a visual journalist is to give people a way to see the world around them and give those who may remain voiceless, a voice. Specifically, I have learned several different ways of visual storytelling that have led me to this point. David Rees' Fundamentals course gave me an introduction to the medium, understanding using different pictures to communicate a story. Photographers must be devoted to their craft, spending countless time with their subjects and understanding what pictures must be made to effectively tell their story in the final edit. Furthermore, Keith Greenwood's Photography in Society was an important course in allowing me to understand the

public's perception of photojournalism. In a society inundated with visuals, I now have a greater critical understanding of photographs and the different contexts in which photographs can appear. This course has allowed me more empathy for our subjects and the people we document. My work is not about myself, but about the people who open up their hearts to the camera so everyone can see their story.

Lastly, Jackie Bell's Staff Photojournalism course has equipped me with the skills to become a daily newspaper photographer balancing portraits, spot news, sports and features. A photojournalist must be a "jack of all trades" and available to shoot in a variety of situations. My interest, however, lies in the longer form photo documentary. Picture Story and the Photographic Essay has allowed me to shoot long term projects. To spend time with my subjects and really get a feeling of their lives and then translate through imagery is definitely the most enjoyable type of photojournalism.

Despite all of the photographic skills I have learned, I have learned to become a better journalist and researcher. Yong Volz's Qualitative Research Methods course has been a vital tool in preparation for my Professional Project. I am now much more familiar with qualitative methods, including data gathering and data analysis, as well as a variety of theoretical foundations of qualitative approaches. Learning a variety of qualitative research techniques including interviews, which will be done in my project, is key for any good researcher.

Photography is very much a research tool. We use images to dissect a certain population or issue. When done well we can even elicit change. My heart has, and always will be full of empathy for others. As a photographer my goal is to help other journalists,

photographers and members of the public understand the story of gun violence in Philadelphia when it is presented with research and photographic evidence.

My goal is to work as a documentary photographer, working on long-term issues and stories in my own backyard. Philadelphia is my home, and I want the world to see socially and politically important issues in my community.

Following graduation, I'd like to work as a freelance photojournalist/documentary photographer in Philadelphia. I'd hope to work a variety of photography jobs: commercial, news, weddings and portraits to support longer form documentary photography projects. My goal is to make money using my skills, while doing more artistic and creative work on the side. While I've done a lot of newspaper work, I feel I am better suited for a career as a freelancer.

Five years down the line, I'd ideally like to work on grants to finance my projects or work for news organizations or nonprofits that would fund long-term work. Although I'd be happy shooting pictures in any capacity, it's my dream job to make a living working on documentary photography stories. I believe my strength as a photographer is getting my subjects to trust me and open up; allowing me to tell their stories effectively. I love being able to use photography as a tool to meet and understand people. My "subjects" are so much more than that, but wonderful people who have shared their lives with me. I hope to give everyone a voice and give everyone a way to see and understand the world around them.

The professional skills component

On site supervisor

My project will be completed independently of a news organization. I will not have an internship; however, Jim MacMillian will supervise me on site, at guncrisis.org. Jim MacMillan will be a wonderful help because of his journalism background. He has led journalism courses at numerous colleges and universities (including Missouri and Temple) and is presently the Assistant Director of the Center for Public Interest Journalism. He was member of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Associated Press photo staff in Iraq. His talent and expertise on the gun crisis issue will be vital to my project. I have spoken to Jim about a weekly meeting, where he will provide feedback on my work, allow me to contribute to Guncrisis and be a wonderful resource for contacts within the community.

Joseph Kaczmarek, a freelance photojournalist based in Philadelphia, also staffs Gun Crisis. He has done work for a variety of publications and is based in his hometown of Philadelphia. He has been honored with a Keystone Press Award as the Distinguished Visual Journalist by the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association. MacMillian and Kaczmarek will be beneficial in providing me guidance in a difficult and sensitive story. Additionally, since they are so familiar with the ongoing story, they will be able to give me contacts and resources within the community.

Photographic component

I will spend time documenting spot news (crime scenes), community outreach, memorial services as well as the police activity and affected family members. Spot news will be the most difficult part of the project because it will require me to capture police activity. I'll have to sit by a police scanner waiting to go out to make pictures. Although

this will be important to the final photographic story, it will be secondary to the other material. Additionally, I would like to ride along with members of the Philadelphia Police department.

While most Philadelphia news coverage focuses on the crime event itself, little is even seen of how families cope with the loss or what community members do to change the violence. There are several outreach groups such as Mothers in Charge and Philadelphia Ceasefire that provide grief support and hold events to prevent and educate Philadelphia on the gun crisis. My hope is to show a complete picture of Philadelphia's gun crisis. I do want to photograph spot news, but I do not want my project to be focused solely on this.

I will spend more time photographing some subjects over others. I will have a few mini- stories within the longer photographic essay. These subjects may be met through Mothers in Charge or Philadelphia Ceasefire or on the streets of Philadelphia. Going deeper with certain subjects will give my project intimacy and emotion.

The project will be a photographic essay of approximately 40 images, with 3-5 stories and several singles. Examples of stories might be: a mother who has lost a child to gun violence, a member of the community organizing outreach and grief support and a police officer who works in the city's most dangerous neighborhoods. The final edit will be representative of Pictures of the Year International's definition of The Community Awareness Award. This category "recognizes a photographer's extended story or essay that demonstrates an understanding of and appreciation for everyday life within a community. The purpose is to encourage attention to the small events in life that are often

overshadowed by the news of the day, and to celebrate those images that reflect the work and dreams of humankind” (POYi Entry Forms and Categories, 2014). Logistics

I will begin my project approximately the last week of May (May 26) and conclude the second to last week of August (August 18). This will give me one week to move back to Philadelphia after the end of the Spring 2014 semester. I will work 30 hours a week, but a firm schedule is hard to nail down because I may be shooting at 6 p.m. some days, and 1 a.m. other days.

I will update my committee with weekly field updates on my progress. Select edits and images will be available on guncrisis.org, but may be freelanced out to other Philadelphia news organizations. Philadelphia has a small photojournalism community and certain incidents of gun violence might not be covered in the news. I could sell these images to other media outlets. I’d like a gallery or exhibit following the completion of my project, if possible. However, the final photographic component will be presented to my committee with an edited essay on a website layout or book design.

Inspiration for project

Photographers who I admire who have photographed powerful projects on gun violence are April Saul, Barbara Davidson and Carlos Javier Ortiz. All three projects depict the entirety of the gun violence in their respective communities (Saul in Camden and Philadelphia, Davidson in L.A. and Ortiz in Chicago). Images of crime scenes, memorial services and community outreach are collected into large bodies of work. In this sense, I want my project to be similar to the work of these photographers.

I respond more to Ortiz's photographs because of the striking composition and emotional intensity in each frame. They are uniquely shot; playing with lighting, angle and tilt in each picture. Saul's work looks a little outdated, possibly because of the equipment she is shooting with. Each project is shot in black in white. I have considered using B&W, but won't make that decision until I edit my work. Regardless, it will all be shot in color.

I have several years freelance experience that will allow me to gain access to sensitive situations I will be photographing. My work has been published in a variety of outlets in the Philadelphia area, and I've been fortunate enough to have received recognition for previous work. Staff Photojournalism and Picture Story classes have allowed me to enhance my skills as a photographer. This project will be a culmination of all the photographic skills I have learned at MU. As a native Philadelphian, I am very familiar with the city. Additionally, I will be living in North Philadelphia during this summer. This will allow easy access to the community I will be documenting.

The analysis component

In an attempt to understand one of Philadelphia's most growing concerns I will be spending this summer documenting the gun violence crisis in Philadelphia. According to official Philadelphia Police statistics, 1,594 people were murdered between 2008 and 2012 and of those crimes, 82.5% (1,315) were executed with a firearm (Philadelphia Police Department 2014). As the gun epidemic becomes an issue of national security, news agencies with dwindling budgets and finite resources are forced to change the way they cover the news. The Philadelphia Inquirer, the oldest daily newspaper in the United

States and "An Independent Newspaper For All The People," has a duty to report this gun violence and inform their readership of the violence perpetrated in their city. I will be researching what criteria photographers and their editors at the Philadelphia Inquirer/Daily News use to decide which incidents of gun violence will appear in print. This is a major concern in Philadelphia. In a 2013 PEW study 56% of Philadelphia's young adults said they would not raise their children in Philadelphia because of crime (Pew Trusts 2013).

Research Question

What factors and journalistic criteria do photographers and editors at the Philadelphia Inquirer/Daily News use to decide which incidents of gun violence will appear in print?

Theoretical framework: Gatekeeping theory

In any journalistic outlet: newspaper, broadcast news or online publication an editor judges which stories are appropriate, what photos best illustrate the story, what quotes are the most effective, etc. This master's project will help analyze these issues and thought processes, understanding what criteria Philadelphia Inquirer/Daily News photographers and editors choose while disseminating news on gun violence in Philadelphia.

Gatekeeping was a term first coined by Kurt Lewin as a way to describe a person who decides what food is on a dinner table. For example, the gatekeeper is the person who decides what shall pass through each gate section, of which, in any process, there are several. Although he applied it originally to the food chain, he then added, "There are

forces which may either constrain or facilitate the passage of news items through the gatekeeping process.” Journalists decide what stories are filtered through the public for consumption. Currently, gatekeeping is much different because of the access points for now. Aside from information presented in the physical copy of a newspaper, gatekeeping is seen through social media and in online news.

David Manning White was the person who took Lewin's gatekeeping ideals and applied them towards journalism in 1950. He researched the decisions made by a wire editor in choosing stories to be printed. White concluded that, overall, the editor's decisions were “highly subjective ... [and] based on the gatekeeper's own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations as to what constitutes the news” (White, 1964, p. 161). Although White's research did not analyze a specific newsworthy topic (for example: social issues like gun violence) the research project will use similar research criteria to understand the decision making process for a specific newsworthy issue.

Furthermore, others duplicated the study with mostly similar results. Another prominent research study on gatekeeping is Steven E. Clayman and Ann Resiner's study on gatekeeping in action. They studied how newspaper editors, in conference meetings, determine which stories will appear on the front page. Their results were very similar to Whites'. However, according to Schudson, “In the studies of journalistic practice, the story selecting work of editors have been overshadowed by a focus on the proper newsgathering work of reporters” (Schudson, 1989 p. 267). In the 1970s, McCombs and Shaw “found that audiences learned how much importance to attach to a news item from the emphasis the media place on it.” For example, if a story on gun violence runs on the front page, this is much different than a story that just runs online. Research done will

help understand, similar to McCombs and Shaw, how gatekeeping is vital to journalism. Additionally, the authors pointed out that the gatekeeping concept is related to the newer concept, agenda-setting (McCombs et al, 1976).

Shoemaker and Reese's research of visual gatekeeping influences described five factors that shape news content: individual, media routines, organizational, extramedia, and ideological. The authors argue that there are infinite amounts of information available and editors "cut down and transform [visual news] into the hundreds of messages." (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991, p. 1). In the newspaper newsroom, gatekeepers control the flow of words and images. Based on research from Peterson and Spratt, much of the research on visual gatekeeping focuses on the reluctance of US news outlets to disseminate graphic images. This research will be vital in understanding the dissemination of graphic images of gun violence in North Philadelphia. Many factors guide editors during ethical considerations of distributing graphic visuals. Traumatic personal experiences and repeated exposure to tragic images play a role in the intricate process of choosing graphic images (Peterson and Spratt, 2005). Considering the small amount of research done on this topic, the professional project will discover new information about gatekeeping, specifically visual gatekeeping.

Gatekeeping has changed tremendously as online news grows. During a two-week period in October 2009, Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton (2012) surveyed 500 journalists and their 22,248 tweets to establish gatekeeping in the social media realm. According to the authors, retweeting is a journalist's way of "opening the gates" (Lasorsa et al., 2012, p. 26). Based on their tweets, "J- Tweeters," or journalists who actively tweet and have worked for national news outlets, (newspapers, television and cable) were less likely than

their peers working for other media to resign their gatekeeping role by sharing their stage with other news gatherers and commentators beyond their own news organizations page (Lasorsa et al., 2012).

One important study on gatekeeping is William P. Cassidy's study comparing gatekeeping for online and print journalists. The author extracted data from a national survey and found that "routine gatekeeping forces exerted more influence on the professional role conceptions of print and online journalists than did individual level forces." For example, Cassidy found that audience research, advertisers, public opinion polls, wire service budgets and prestige publications are significantly more influential than print daily newspaper journalists. He surveyed 655 newspaper journalists and revealed that gatekeeping at each level showed differing amounts of influence and gatekeeping is very tricky process. Online technology must be factored in more than ever before (Cassidy, 2003, p.6).

Literature Review

Similar studies: News placement No studies have been done on the coverage of gun violence in newspapers; however, several studies have been done on the placement of stories in the newspapers versus online or the coverage of gun violence. Although separate topics, these studies, in essence, will be combined while researching the Inquirer's editorial decision making process regardless gun violence stories.

While reading the newspaper, readers understand that an above the fold, front-page story is the most important story in the issue. Althaus and Tewksbury found that while comparing front pages of the New York Times that online readers appeared to read

fewer stories than readers of the print version. Furthermore, although the authors agree that online news is now becoming more important than newspaper print content because online news “might encourage greater depth of exposure to a particular topic even as it inclines people to be more selective in the topics they read about” (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2002, p. 182). Santana et al concluded that print readers recall more than online readers. In 20 minutes of reading, printer readers remember an average of 4.24 news stories while online readers remember an average of 3.35 stories. The researchers found this to be the case because Internet usage can be used for a variety of reasons, therefore readers can be easily distracted and online news can appear and disappear without warning” (Santana et al, 2013, 79). Despite this, Internet has become a must-have for newspaper content.

First and foremost, the Internet is an entirely new narrative and social environment. Arielle Emmett found that, “The internet changes, at the outset, modes of transmission—both the coding and decoding—of stories along with the speeds with which breakaway stories and images can be transmitted, replicated, and absorbed” (p. 221). Emmett is only one of a few discussing the Inquirer’s editorial process. She found at the Philadelphia Inquirer there are no “barriers” in cyber-space and searching for content can be limitless. Readers can now “hop, skip, and jump at will from one idea, image, phrase,” creating an unlimited amount of information to find in which an editor cannot control (p. 222).

Jane B. Singer, assistant professor at the University of Iowa, found that gatekeeping has changed. First, editors would choose newsworthy stories and these stories could only be read in a print form. But as papers go online, their editors face new

decisions relating to that gatekeeping role. Singer's study examined the print and online versions of six Colorado newspapers, comparing the amount of local and nonlocal news, sports and business content in each. "The findings indicate online products have a much stronger local orientation than print ones, suggesting that online papers may be moving toward a reinterpretation of their role in connecting readers to the world beyond their horizons" (Singer, 1998).

Similar studies: Gun Violence

As gun violence has become an issue of national concern in the wake of school shootings and various other violent crimes, it has been a very newsworthy issue. Walter Shapiro of The Columbia Journalism Review found that news articles seem to fall into two categories: the emotional or the narrowly political. For example, the emotional connects a face to the story, while the political uses quotes from politicians and examples of legislation to discuss the issue. For example, USA Today ran a story about a Senate gun-control hearing. The story began, "The father of a 6-year-old killed in last year's Connecticut elementary school shooting wept as he urged a Senate panel Wednesday to pass legislation to prevent another gun massacre." However, a political story on the same topic from USA Today discussed the status of gun bills and used statistics (Shapiro 2013).

It seems with newsworthy and breaking news issues such as gun violence misreports can be delivered to the public. The American Journal of Public Health analyzed a random sample of news stories on gun violence published in 14 national and regional news sources from 1997 to 2012. Across the study period, most news coverage occurred in the wake of mass shootings, and "dangerous people" were more likely than "dangerous weapons" to be mentioned as a cause of gun violence (McGinty et al, 2014,

p. 407). Across the 16-year study period, nearly 70% of news coverage of gun violence was event-focused, describing specific shooting events by persons (p. 409).

Further, Miguel A. Faria Jr. argues that the media sensationalizes gun violence. For example, following a gun rampage the media intensely covers the story and gives the impression that we are “about to be swamped by shooters.” The truth is that the occurrence of mass shootings is very low by any standard and advantageous uses of firearms (for example: protecting or saving lives and property) the attention these positive acts deserve, which usually go unreported (Faria Jr, 2013, p. 85). The way in which an article or news report is delivered can affect its message.

Ultimately, as news stories are disseminated a certain way, so are the photographs that accompany them. Images can be delivered in a peace journalism frame or a war journalism frame according to Fahmy and Neumann. A peace journalism frame is one that that highlights peace initiatives and tones down differences by promoting conflict resolution. A war journalism frame highlights differences between opposing parties, urging violence as means to a resolution (Fahmy and Neumann, 2010, p. 22). The authors argue that typically news agencies provide more than just gruesome, graphic images. Of course, the more graphic the image, the more of a reaction it elicits. Therefore, although coverage may be balanced, viewers do not realize it. However, “research demonstrates that graphic images in general are perceived to have powerful effects on the public because they increase levels of concerns with the issue being covered. (Fahmy and Neumann, 2010, p. 22).

When South African photographer Greg Marinovich won the Pulitzer for his work documenting African National Congress sympathizers killing an accused Zulu spy, the

photographer tried and failed to stop the violence. Presenting an audience with a graphic image is always opening up a news agency to criticism. Typically, these images only are presented from newsworthy situations abroad. In 2008, Folker Hanusch stated that editors wanted to show more pictures of graphic situations and “detailed pictures of people dying,” but at the same time they felt it was appropriate to filter these images for the viewer and thus “cleaning up events to make them acceptable” (Hanusch, 2008, p. 310). However, “cleaning up” certain graphic situations, would be altering the message to the audience. By not fully presenting an audience with imagery that is true to the graphic event, we are failing our viewers. Most journalists agreed that situations like this must be taken on a case-by-case basis (Hanusch, 2008, p. 310).

Author Sue O’Brien looked at reasons newspapers decided to run photographs. Before the audience sees the image, gatekeepers decide whether or not it is suitable to run. This begins with the photographer, then editor(s) who examine the image. “If the photograph violates principles of compassion or taste, its social or news value outweigh the other values it violates?” (O’Brien, 1993, p. 71). Although reaction amongst readership varied, most editors played the photos aggressively.” Moeller found that certain victims such as mothers and children were simply “better” victims than others. They elicited a stronger response from the audience. O’Brien, 1993, p. 71).

When editors decide what stories to cover internationally, typically the stories must involve “Huge death tolls, sensational charges, breaking news (rather than chronic) events, innocents (preferably children) who need to be rescued, key security interests at stake, violence, scandal and/or corruption” (Moeller 1999 p. 34). However, most importantly, without imagery to go with the text, the stories are useless. Images are more

powerful than text, and the magnitude of a world event cannot be understood without appropriate visuals (Norris 2010).

Additionally, newspapers are more willing to show blood if the photos run in black in white, as opposed to color, to “lessen the impact.” According to one journalist, who was not identified, “There are different degrees of death. So a mass grave with a thousand people who died two years ago, you’ve got much more chance of that running on the front or world page than you have of a headless corpse directly in front of you now, bleeding red and raw and meaty” (Hanusch, 2008, 311). The Montreal Gazette ran a segment called “You Be the Editor”. Readers were presented with 10 ethical dilemmas and then made a decision. The study showed that in 20 percent of the cases the audience chose differently than the gatekeepers. Research has shown that these graphic images have powerful effects on the public because the audience is concerned with the topics being reported on (Fahmy, 2007 p. 233).

Methodology

My professional project will research and understand the photographers and editors at the Philadelphia Inquirer/Daily News use to decide which incidents of gun violence will appear in print and the web. In-depth, open-ended interviews will be conducted with members of the newspaper team who cover crime and who edit the stories/visuals. According to Carolyn Boyce and Palena Neale, in-depth interviewing is a “qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation” (Boyce and Neale, 2006, p. 4). Through in-depth interviewing, I will be searching for information

that is vital to understanding the gatekeeping and editorial decisions regarding gun violence coverage.

According to qualitative researcher Clive Seale, the qualitative interview did not become popular until the 1940s. Before postwar social research researchers were influenced by interviewers that had “questioned respondents about the circumstances of families living in particular streets rather than members of those families.” Furthermore, after the war large scale surveying was popular that involved face-to-face structured interviews. Currently we live in an “interview society” because we are living in a society where interviewing is vital to understanding our world and information around us (Seale, 2014).

There are many different types of interviews. According to Hitchcock: structured interview, survey interview, counseling interview, diary interview, life history interview, ethnographic interview, informal/unstructured interview, and conversations (Hitchcock, 1989, p. 79). Furthermore, Cohen and Manion group interviews into four kinds, including the structured interview, the unstructured interview (also known as in depth interview), the non-directive interview, and the focused interview (1989, p. 273). A structured interview is more restrictive than an unstructured, because the interviewer asks the respondent a series of pre-established questions with a “limited set of response categories.” However unstructured interviewing will be vital in the Inquirer/Daily News interviews because it allows more freedom and will produce very descriptive data (Fontana and Frey, 1994 p. 366).

Anderson and Jack believe interviews will allow the “narrator the opportunity to tell [his/her] own story in [their] own terms” (Anderson and Jack, 1991, p. 13).

Furthermore, by taping the interviews and taking detailed notes, the researcher will “preserve a living exchange for present and future use; we can rummage through interviews...comparing, checking insights, finding new treasures...then arranging and carefully documenting our results” (Anderson and Jack, 1991, p. 13). The team of Inquirer photographers and editors will be interviewed on their process in photographing the news, how they decide what gun violence covered and what is not and how the process is evolving in an ever changing news business in order to understand the criteria in which incidents of gun violence appear in the newspaper. In order to make these interviews successful, Fontana and Frey suggest it is vital to establish rapport with your respondents. This will open doors to more informed research (1994 p. 369).

Potential Interview Questions

A topic guide will be used, however it will only contain a few broad questions. This will allow the respondents to explore in detail their thoughts and accounts of gun violence coverage. This method will be beneficial for gaining an in-depth understanding of how gun violence is covered because the information will be coming from the source that is generating it, that is the gatekeepers.

In order to determine the factors and journalistic criteria to decide what incidents will appear in the print I will have several questions to begin with. For example, are all gun violence incidents reported photographically? What is the process from the photographers end and editors end? How often are ethical issues discussed in regards to gun violence coverage. How is this information made available photographically? How do you decide what images make it in the newspaper? How do you decide how large an

image is played within the paper? How does a photographer decide how to cover a sensitive news story such as gun violence?

Interview Candidates

I plan on interviewing four members of the Philadelphia Inquirer/Daily News visual team. This will include photographers April Saul and Joseph Kaczmarek as well as photo editors Michael Mercanti Jim Selzer. April Saul is a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist and staff photographer at the Philadelphia Inquirer. In January 2006, Saul vowed to document the death of every child by gun in the eight-county Philadelphia region in 2006. The column in the Philadelphia Inquirer was called “Kids, Guns and a Deadly Toll.” She is currently continuing to work on a POYI winning project on Camden, which includes coverage of the city’s gun violence crisis.

Additionally, I plan on interviewing Joseph Kaczmarek, who shoots for Guncrisis.org and freelances his spot news work out to the Daily News and Inquirer. As a freelancer he can provide insight on shopping his images out to news organizations. Since 2005 the Inquirer/Daily News photo staff has dwindled from 45 to 12. Because of the lack of resources at the papers Kaczmarek covers most of the gun violence spot news. His images regularly appear in both newspapers.

I will also interview Michael Mercanti, Executive Photo Editor at the Philadelphia Daily News and Jim Selzer Deputy Director of Photography at the Philadelphia Inquirer. Furthermore, it might also be beneficial to interview a nighttime news or photo editor who makes decisions when incidents of gun violence occur late at night.

Calls and emails will be placed to request access to interview these journalists. All interviews will be done in person in the newsroom. They will all be recorded and

transcribed. Each interview will be approximately two hours, but I will follow up if need be. Additionally, if all of my interviewees are giving similar responses it might be beneficial having a broader interview pool. This could help to enhance an understanding of why gun violence is covered the way it is in the context of this publication.

Publication Possibilities

Possible outlets for publication include News Photographer Magazine, an industry magazine for working photojournalists. Additionally, Columbia Journalism Review and American Journalism Review, which discuss newsworthy topics on the state of the media – are also possible outlets.