

‘WOMEN OF VISION’: HOW FEMALES LEAD PHOTOJOURNALISM  
DEPARTMENTS IN A MALE-DOMINATED FIELD

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by  
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the  
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‘WOMEN OF VISION’: HOW FEMALES LEAD PHOTOJOURNALISM  
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Abstract

This qualitative research using feminist theories examines the ways in which female and male leadership characteristics differ according to perceptions of photojournalism editors. The goal is to understand how women feel about working in photo editing positions and to explore the challenges they face in a male-dominated industry. This study consisted of six in-depth interviews with women who manage photo departments across a variety of journalistic media – specifically magazines, newspapers and photo agencies. On a theoretical level, this study helps to illustrate why considering gender is still relevant in contemporary journalism studies based on the past and present experiences of the women in both the task of photo editing and the way they lead their departments. On a practical level, this work calls attention to the disparity in the number of female to male photo editors and thus present a call to action to consciously, and intentionally, incorporate more women into the industry and alleviate any existing discrimination, however small, in the workplace.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Fifty two percent of all adult women currently participate in the labor force. Women represent an estimated 47 percent of the total labor force in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013, p. 1). Though this marks an overall increase in female participation in the workforce — compared to the less than 41 percent in 1970 — the photojournalism industry has not seen such growth. According to a 2013 census, females continue to make up less than one third of employees in newsrooms, a number that has remained relatively consistent for the past 10 years (American Society of News Editors, 2013). Similarly, female photographers constitute less than 25 percent of the photojournalism field and even fewer are employed in photo editing or management positions (Thomas, 2007).

This gender imbalance was reflected as recently as October 2013, when National Geographic unveiled a project at the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C. titled “Women of Vision.” This exhibition recognized the work and careers of 11 female photojournalists and marked the first exhibition of female photographers among *National Geographic*’s 60 regular contributing photographers (National Geographic, 2013). By calling attention to the gender of the photographers in the title and overall theme of the exhibit, *National Geographic*, as a publication known for its expert photojournalism, appears to be recognizing that women are underrepresented in this field and are deserving of special attention and acknowledgment. This type of exhibition, while positive in its intent, reveals that women photographers continue to be the subjects of such affirmative action as minorities in the industry.

That being said, little, if any, research has been done on how gender influences the practice of photojournalism, so this study aimed to contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge regarding women in the photo industry – specifically in magazines, newspapers and photo agencies – and mass communication research in general. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the impact and role of female photo editors working in various media. The photojournalism industry is one historically marked by male leadership —and dominated by male photographers (Thomas, 2007) — and this research-sought to illustrate the ways in which women work in contemporary photo departments and the study focused on understanding the differences in their leadership styles compared to their male counterparts.

By addressing this topic, perhaps this study calls attention to this disparity in the numbers of female and male photo editors and thus presents a call to action to consciously, and intentionally, incorporate more women into the industry. On a theoretical level, if the women interviewed identify gender as a limiting factor in their careers or point to situations in which they consider their own gender while working in a male-dominated industry, this study helps to illustrate why considering gender and equality is still relevant in contemporary journalism studies. The research used different aspects of the feminist theory to analyze the response of the women photo editors interviewed.

The thesis identifies the ways that women manage photojournalism departments and how their gender contributes or detracts from their effectiveness in their profession. The research aimed to address adversity these female leaders may feel, or may have felt, in their careers in the photo industry. Ideally, in consideration of this project, journalists



and communication academics will better understand the role women play in photo departments across different media and their place in the broader categories of female journalists and photo editors. This research encourages both male and female photojournalists, photo editors, and journalists as a whole to reflect on women's—and ideally their own—roles in and contributions to the field of journalism.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature presented here highlights the main subject areas based on the available research surrounding women in journalism, specifically journalism management and leadership. The literature is used to study similar research and, eventually, support further research relating to women in journalism careers. The review focuses on gender and explores the gendered nature of photojournalism and photo editing as careers; it addresses the overall lack of women in these professions and, more specifically, the challenges women face in both entering and managing a male-dominated field. This review looks at the history of women in photojournalism, the general experiences of women in management and similar situations in other journalism careers. The consideration of each of these themes will help to encourage and support the need to search for an explanation for the gendered makeup of photojournalism leadership.

Because it would be impractical to review all of the articles considered for this study, the review below highlights the main points of the literature related to this topic. Little, if any, research has been done specifically on women in leadership roles in photojournalism; this literature will be used to justify and inform the research in this thesis.

Unlike other professions, women have been involved with photography from its conception. Though the earliest female photographers entered the field by assisting their husbands in the studios and darkrooms, by the mid- to late-nineteenth century, women were actively participating in the amateur realm and the photography business by running portrait studios and documenting America's landscape alongside the men. That being

said, it was not until 1899 that the first female photojournalist emerged (Cookman, 2009). Jesse Tarbox Beals, though she started as her husband's darkroom assistant, was contracted by the *Boston Post* to photograph the state prison; she was then hired by the Buffalo Inquirer and later opened her own studio where she worked until her death in 1942. Cookman notes that, because of the image of women during the turn of the century, Beals' profession was considered unfit for a woman. Photojournalism was considered both a risky and lonely profession and Cookman draws attention to Beals' willingness to cover all types of assignments – from New York City slums to murder trials – despite her conservative, impractical clothing and the inherent physicality of the profession. Photographers such as Beals paved the way for other women to enter the photojournalism field, including iconic female photojournalists such as Margaret Bourke-White and Dorothea Lange. Although these women made countless contributions to journalism past and present, it is important to consider the fact that they are often lauded because they are women; in the early 1900s it was impressive to be a woman working in a male-dominated field. Nearly a century has passed since the woman suffrage movement and since the female pioneers entered the photojournalism profession. Laws and other structures are now in place to treat women as equals in society and similar policies guide the American workforce in terms of hiring and avoiding workplace discrimination, including those outlined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2015) such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. However, the question can still be asked: Why are women so hugely outnumbered by men in careers related to photojournalism? What does it take to be a female photojournalist, particularly as a photo editor, in today's world?

After carefully reviewing the careers of pioneering female photojournalists and the history of women in the photojournalism field, Thomas (2007) seeks to analyze the position and perception of contemporary female photojournalists. Today, female photographers make up less than 25 percent of the photojournalism field, though the same research has not been conducted on photo editors. In her dissertation from the University of Texas, Margaret Thomas, a self-described female photojournalist and former *Washington Post* photographer, explains the disparity between male and female photojournalists by addressing the gender-specific personality traits that either help or hurt women wishing to work in photojournalism. She notes that women traditionally have been deterred from the profession due to its perceived danger and time commitment. Through in-depth interviews with 30 present-day female U.S. newspaper photographers, Thomas' research acknowledges the present-day struggle women face with this work-life balance and, though not unique to the photojournalism field, it addresses how these considerations affect women's decisions to stay in a career or leave it for a family. Thomas' research and analysis of the historical context of photojournalism reveals that women are gaining numbers in the photojournalism field as a whole, but not specifically in the realm of photo management. This continues to raise the question: why?

In 1940, women comprised less than 26 percent of the labor force in the United States; in 2013, women represent over 47 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Similarly, only 5.1 percent of the women working in the 1960s were working in managerial occupations, compared to the early 2000s, in which it was reported that women held nearly on third of all management jobs in the United States (Martin, 2010, pp. 8-9). Despite this marked increase in the overall workforce, such growth is not

reflected in journalism management careers. It is important to know that, historically, people found themselves in photo editing positions at the end of their careers, once they were too old and no longer able to do the work of photographers (Cookman 2009). The model for photo editing, however, has been modified in the last few decades, positioning the job as a career path and goal rather than an inevitable ending point for photographers.

Previous research suggests that gender is “still a factor in evaluating a person’s ability to perform satisfactorily in a particular occupation” (Couch & Sigler, 2001). The results of a study that asked participants to indicate whether given professions were perceived as masculine or feminine indicates that the power- and product-oriented occupations were perceived as masculine and the caregiving occupations were perceived as feminine; professions related to management and leadership were almost all perceived to be masculine. These perceptions encourage the existence of gender-specific roles within industries and make it increasingly difficult for men and women to enter into a field dominated by the opposite gender.

Some studies show that people consider managers to be “good managers” if they possess masculine traits and style. Traditionally, “stereotypical male behavior has been considered the norm for powerful positions. So-called ‘masculine’ leadership traits emphasize control, strategy, lack of emotion, and analysis, while so-called ‘feminine’ traits include flexibility, empathy, collaboration, and performance” (Everbach, 2006, p. 480). Females have displayed and utilized these “masculine” leadership traits to advance in the workplace. Research indicates that some of the characteristics associated with being a successful male leader include “competence, assertiveness, stability, independence, rationality and less concern for the well being of others” (Janus, 2008, p.

14). Women feel obligated to emulate these male characteristics to attain these high-power positions as explained by the liberal feminism theory discussed later in this review.

Not all scholarship supports this notion, however. A. H. Eagly's research focuses on the qualities, traits, and impact of women in leadership and management roles across all industries. In her research, she does acknowledge that "because leaders are thought to have more agentic than communal qualities, stereotypes about leaders generally resemble stereotypes of men more than stereotypes of women. As a result, men can seem usual or natural in most leadership roles, thereby placing women at a disadvantage. Although this dissimilarity between women and leaders appears to be decreasing over time, it has not disappeared" (Eagly, 2007, p. 6). Because of this, female leaders are often expected to be both communal and empathetic, and simultaneously assertive and authoritative. That being said, one of Eagly's studies suggest that subordinates respond best to leaders who resolve the cross-pressures and exhibit neither masculine nor feminine traits. In industries or workplaces that are male-dominated, female leaders are even less well-received by their male subordinates and are therefore at a disadvantage in their ability to lead. In these situations, women in "often have to contend with expectations and criticisms that they lack the toughness and competitiveness needed to succeed. In such settings, it is difficult for women to build helpful relationships and to gain acceptance in influential networks. Given these hurdles, advancing in a highly male-dominated hierarchy requires an especially strong, skillful, and persistent woman" (Eagly, 2007, p.7). Women face the most adversity when managing men, not because they are women, but arguably because of the management style and attributes they exhibit in the workplace. Women leaders are not received well when they simply emulate masculine qualities, but rather when they use

these qualities to balance their inherent feminine qualities, and contribute to overall office effectiveness, workplace cohesion, and employee happiness.

Though females comprise 64.6 percent of journalism school graduates (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 2013), they make up less than 30 percent of the journalism workforce, excluding strategic communications careers such as advertising, marketing, and public relations (Martin, 2010). As of 2002, women represent only 26 percent of all newsroom executives and leaders (Everbach, 2006). Some newsrooms, however, benefit from female leadership. In her recent study, Everbach reported that a majority of U.S. newspapers reported an aggressive, defensive newsroom culture in their newsrooms led by men. By contrast, the culture of female-led newsrooms, such as the *Sarasota [Fl.] Herald-Tribune*, are found to reflect the feminine traits and standpoints of its leaders, including family-friendly policies, transparency in decision-making, teamwork, and clear communication between management and employees. Because women traditionally value family and community, the newsroom had a much stronger focus on the interpersonal relationships and well-being of the employees. There was also a larger consideration of the work-life balance in all employees. The employees reported that they were motivated to work, compared to their experiences in other jobs and at other newspapers, because of the supportive, democratic environment created by leaders with feminine characteristics. Women “flourish in networks of connections and relationship” (Everbach, 2006, p. 488) which means female leaders have the ability to facilitate a more open and egalitarian workplace.

Women working in newspapers and broadcast newsrooms do not, according to previous research, report that their gender affects their everyday work responsibilities.

Women working in visual journalism, specifically art direction and design, acknowledge in a study by LaRue (2008) that they feel at a disadvantage because of their gender in terms of equality of pay. Women hold nearly 60 percent of art and production jobs in journalism industries, yet their male colleagues make more than \$10,000 more in annual salary (LaRue, 2008). Such inequity is commonplace across journalism careers. The subjects of LaRue's study did not show much preference for or distinction in the gender of their leadership, but rather addressed the genders within entire profession, a profession dubbed by the researcher as a "velvet ghetto," a concept discussed later in this review.

Regarding other related mass media professions, there is a good amount of scholarship addressing the gender of leadership within public relations, a profession often related to or seen as a subset of journalism and often considered a "velvet ghetto." Though women make up more than 70 percent of the profession, only 20 percent of its top leadership roles in public relations are filled by women (Janus, 2008). Research in this field suggests that there is little recognition within the public relations industry of a disparity between the number of men and women in leadership roles. The low physical risk and highly social nature of the profession attracts females to the industry; however, when a disparity is acknowledged, Dotson (2011) and Janus (2008) point to women's struggle with a work-life balance to account for the low levels of females in management roles. Public relations, like photojournalism, is a very time-consuming profession and is not conducive to outside obligations. It is understood that, as one advances in management, there is a larger time commitment required. This struggle restricts females' ability to advance because, at some point, women must make a choice between leadership and a personal life that has, historically, included family and child-raising. Additionally,



though work-life balance issues are not considered to be factors for employees' eligibility for advancement, women report that policies to make employment within the public relations agency setting more flexible would potentially alter their career progression or desire to attain leadership roles.

In the study of women in leadership roles in the field of photojournalism, it was important to consider the research discussed in this review that addresses related male-dominated careers, workplace policy, work-life balance, and the history of female repression in male-dominated fields. The literature here observes that, while the workforce as a whole is nearly equal in the numbers of male and female participants, the journalism industry, and specifically the photojournalism industry, is still defined by a male majority. Historically, this can be explained by the inherent dangers in the photojournalism career that were not conducive to other female interests, such as child raising and home making; however, as general workforce participation increased, women did not move into photography or photo editing careers as much as their male counterparts. This accounts for the disparity today in the photojournalism industry. This study does not seek to prove this disparity but, rather, understand the women who work in photo editing positions and address any hardships they may feel as the minority in this field. It also seeks to understand the qualities that have led the women to enter and become successful in the photo editing field.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In the broad category of gender studies, there are many theories that, until the last decade or so, have defined such scholarship. The United States has a strong history of patriarchy, which is inherently not an encouraging environment for women to enter the

workforce. Traditionally, women have been responsible for social, personal, and family-related affairs and men have participated in the workforce (Calvert & Ramsey, 1992; Dotson, 2011; Everbach, 2006; Janus, 2008; LaRue, 2008). Following the women's suffrage movement in the United States, culminating in the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, women gradually climbed in numbers to reach nearly equal proportion to men in the workforce. Even still, many women who did enter the workforce eventually left it to start and care for a family. Contemporary study shows that women are once again making a social shift that indicates that they are no longer leaving the workforce to have children, but, rather, attempting to maintain a balance that now includes both work and personal life, and are not leaving the workforce until much later in life, if ever (Dotson, 2011; Janus, 2008). Though the country has a history of patriarchy, which is important to recognize for the purpose of this research, the researcher argues that today such a concept is outdated, based on the general equality of male and female participation in the workforce.

In terms of management, gender-related scholarship has traditionally turned to concepts about the glass ceiling to account for the lack of female leadership across industry. The glass ceiling refers to the number of barriers, intentional or unintentional, that prevent both minorities and women from rising up the corporate ladder to its uppermost power positions, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Wrigley, 2009). The metaphor, while still common in informal literature, is no longer considered a valid lens through which to critique the lack of women in management and, rather, has been reorganized into a variety of new, more detailed explanations and theories. One such new explanation, the concept of pink ghettos, or velvet ghettos, suggests that women

are not able to climb to power positions because they are funneled into low-power “female jobs” and professions better suited to their feminine traits (Steiner, 2012). These professions include education and public relations, jobs that rely on women’s natural strengths in communication and desire to raise children. Generally, these professions either have little opportunity for any promotion, regardless of gender, or have such a strong tradition of male leadership that prevents women from moving out of the low-power positions or “ghettos.”

Recent scholarship on women in journalism identifies women, in modern society, as a minority in journalism. Female journalists “share a history of marginalization or being identified as the Other in a male-dominated world. The very act of referring to them as female journalists suggest that they occupy a separate sphere than just plain journalists, who are presumably male” (LaRue, 2008, p. 85). Past study of the feminization of the journalism workforce have included discussions of the theoretical glass ceiling and preference theory (Allan, Branston & Carter, 1998; Calvert & Ramsey, 1992; Janus, 2008; LaRue, 2008; Martin, 2010; Robinson, 2008; Steiner, 2012; Wanacathibault & Tompkins, 1998; Wrigley, 2002), but the proposed research in this case will rely on feminist theory.

Feminist theory can be broadly organized into three different perspectives: liberal feminism, socialist feminism and radical feminism (Steeves, 1987). With roots in political philosophy, liberal feminist theory views laws and politics as the way in which women can achieve equality. This perspective suggests that, though all humans have natural rights, only men have been granted these rights in society. When looking at gender inequality in the workforce, the liberal feminist perspective uses this lens as a

frame to critique the system. Liberal feminists “offer a two-fold solution towards achieving equality: women should enter the male-dominated work force and secure positions of power” (Janus, 2008, p. 7). The second perspective, Marxist/social feminism, focuses on class and, specifically, those oppressed within the class system. This perspective addresses women as a minority and as a part of the oppressed; therefore, it can also be applied to other disadvantaged members of society, including those bound by race, class, sexual orientation, age, and ability. Regarding women as an oppressed class, this perspective recognizes that a capitalist society relies on the concepts of reproduction of labor and the economic value of domestic labor; however, because this work is unpaid, women continue to be oppressed economically and in their position in the workforce (Wanaca-Thibault & Tompkins, 1998). The third perspective, radical feminism, considers reproduction and sexuality to be the causes of female oppression and often encourages women to fulfill their full potential by disassociating from male influences (Wanaca-Thibault & Tompkins, 1998). This thesis will most strongly consider the liberal feminism perspective, simply because photojournalism and journalism in general has been characterized by male participation and leadership; women have worked their way into the industry first as workers and then entered positions of power, even though, in photojournalism specifically, the field is still marked by a majority of male leaders.

There are other perspectives in feminist theory that are important to consider. Most relevant to this study are the psychoanalytic feminist lens, which argues that a woman’s nature is socially constructed (Janus, 2008) and the cultural feminist lens, which argues that women have their own cultural standpoint defined by their own values and

practices (Everbach, 2006). This is not unrelated to the idea of the social role theory, which refers to the principle that “men and women behave differently in social situations and take on different roles due to society’s expectations” (Janus, 2008, p.9).

The combination of these feminist perspectives will guide the research as it looks at women who broke through the glass ceiling in photojournalism. Through these different feminist lenses, the researcher will analyze the descriptions of female photo editors of their leadership traits and address the ways in which future women can move into photo editing careers. The specific lens that is most pertinent to this study is the liberal feminist perspective. This perspective acknowledges that there is an existing disparity in a given workplace, in this case, the photojournalism and photo editing fields, and will thus acknowledge the women who have attained positions of power. Again, rather than proving this minority exists, this study will use the feminist lens to better understand how the women photo editors function in a male-dominated industry, what unique qualities they employ – related or unrelated to their gender – and finally, allow them to discuss any adversity they have felt as women working with male counterparts. Overall, this research and analysis can be used as a starting point for both future research about the gender gap in the photojournalism and photo editing industries, but also as a means to assist and encourage women to enter similar positions in the future.

## **Research Question**

In order to touch upon multiple aspects of being a woman in a photo editing and leadership position, the researcher formed a single research question with two components. One half of the question aims to understand how women feel about their job as a photo editor in all of its components, from the day-to-day professional tasks to the way their management-position generally makes them feel. It asks women to reflect on why they like their job. The other half of the research question aims to directly address any problems, adversity or challenges the photo editors feel because they are a woman. In a simpler way, the first half of the question discusses the job of photo editing and the second half discusses being a woman in that job. The dual-pronged research question is: How do women feel about working in photo editing positions and what kind of challenges do they face as leaders in a male-dominated industry?

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The method for this study was in-depth interviews. An in-depth interview, or open-ended ethnographic interview, is described by Berger (2000) as a dialogue between a researcher and a respondent with the intent to gain information about a subject matter with which the respondent has information and expertise. This study will specifically use semi-structured interviews, which are used “in an attempt to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry” (Fontana, 1994, p. 366). Essentially, though the researcher used prior research to create an informed interview schedule, the interviews were conducted in a casual way that leaves the respondent room to create detailed descriptions and expand upon any topic she wishes. Because the research questions address perceptions of women the photojournalism field, it was appropriate to solicit personal accounts from contemporary female photo editors to attain this descriptive information. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with photo editors at six different media outlets.

In-depth interviews are “best when the researcher has identified people whose knowledge or experience in an event will shed significant light on the specific research topic” (Janus, 2008, p. 28). In her study on women in public relations management careers, Janus sought to address the disparity between men leading public relations and women leading public relations and to understand how women were perceived in these leadership roles. That research used twelve in-depth interviews with subordinated and managers at a single public relations firm. Using in-depth interviews as a methodology gives the researcher “a unique opportunity to explore the perceptions and attitudes

industry professionals have about gender's effects in public relations management” (Janus, 2008, p. 32). The researcher states that, by choosing that specific qualitative research method, she was able to attain rich detail and delve deeper into and personalize a topic that had previously been studied using quantitative methods.

Because the aim of this study was to elicit personal explanations and insight into the careers and experiences of female photo editors, interviews allowed for the level of depth required to appropriately answer the research questions. These types of interviews demand “face-to-face interaction in order to achieve authenticity and elaboration. One-on-one interviews will allow respondents to reflect on their own experiences, yielding rich, contextual information to help answer the ‘why factor’ in the research question” (Janus, 2008, p. 29). Another form of semi-structured interview, focus groups, was not appropriate in this study because this approach could elicit group think and discourage women from accurately and openly discussing their own unique work environment and experiences. Rather, by isolating the selected female respondents and leaving room for unscheduled interview questions, the researcher was able to discuss and address each woman's career in a more personalized way; this put the respondent at ease and inspired them to speak more openly about their experience and the meaning they make of those experiences.

To properly assess the research questions, it was essential to stratify the respondents across a variety of media. This was necessary to gain a better understanding of the different responsibilities and roles of photo editors in different media and also to be able to relate the responses to the photo-editing career as a whole. The subjects selected to be interviewed in this study were carefully and intentionally chosen by the researcher.



As previously mentioned, the subjects were chosen to sample and represent the field of photo editing from a wide variety of different media and publication types. The researcher selected six women from different cities, organizations, ages, and experience levels. The women selected were: Vivian Abagiu, 28, Photo Editor at the *Columbia [Mo.] Daily Tribune*; MaryAnne Golon, 53, Director of Photography at *The Washington Post*; Alyssa Goodman, 23, Photo Editor at the Associated Press in New York, New York; Becky Lebowitz Hanger, 40, Sports Photo Editor at *The New York Times*; Sarah Leen, approximately 50, Director of Photography at *National Geographic* magazine; Deb Pastner, 42, Director of Photo and Multimedia at the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It is perhaps important to note that the sample of interview subjects was selected based on suggestions from the researcher's thesis committee. All subjects have some connection to the University of Missouri; five were students and one works with various University of Missouri-based projects, such as the Missouri Photo Workshop and Pictures of the Year International.

The researcher contacted these desired sources by emailing them at work, because it had proved to be a successful, direct method in the past. In informal, informational interviews prior to the study, it was found that this topic is not an uncommon point of discussion among women in many newsrooms, especially those with a minority of females or those making a concerted effort to incorporate more women. The media that the research included were all environments in which female photo editors work alongside male photo editors and newsroom editors, as well as with male photographers. Therefore, even though the research focuses on individual women in specific photo-editing roles, the research can also provide insight into and be applicable to women in

leadership roles in other newsrooms as well, due to the diversity in sources and places of employment. Inherently, qualitative research does not seek to extend the findings to the whole related population and therefore this research cannot explicitly apply to every photography-related newsroom or every photo editor; however, the goal of this research is not to generalize the outcomes, but, rather, to develop a professional understanding of why certain perceptions exist. Using this study as a foundation, perhaps future research can incorporate quantitative methods as a means to generalize results across photo editing, photojournalism, or other journalistic professions.

The fully-transcribed interviews are included as appendices at the end of the thesis to offer complete transparency and insight into the thoughts of the female photo editors. There is undoubtedly valuable information included in the anecdotes and opinions not included in the results and discussion portions of this thesis that could be used by others to further understanding about the role of photo editors and the ways in which gender affects their daily jobs, their leadership styles, and the newsrooms in which they work.

### **Limitations**

This method, however, was not without its limitations. Due to the stratified nature of the sources and geographical separation with the researcher, the interviews all took place via telephone. These were limitations of time and money; the researcher could not afford to travel to each newsroom to conduct the interviews in person. In effort to maximize the researchers' and respondents' time, each interview lasted between 52 and 70 minutes. By using the telephone to conduct the interviews, the researcher was limited in her observations. The researcher had only met one of the interview subjects before,

Alyssa Goodman. Using a video call, such as Skype, perhaps would have allowed the researcher to observe mannerisms and other potentially-important visual cues. Janus (2008) notes that face-to-face interviews afford the researcher the opportunity to collect non-verbal information from their respondent, including facial expressions, office décor and general demeanor. Because the strength of in-depth interviews is in the personal verbal descriptions and information, using a phone to conduct the interviews was not inappropriate; however, in-person interviews could have yielded additional insights that a phone interview inherently cannot. In the recruitment letters emailed to each potential interview subject, the researcher gave the option to use Skype or phone. Because several of the subjects did not have access to Skype, the researcher opted to use the phone for all interviews for consistency purposes. Other limitations included the general sensitivity of the subject matter: gender and gender-related adversity. In-depth interviews provide a level of privacy, compared to ethnographies and focus groups, that encourage respondents to speak openly and without fear of judgment about their workplace experiences and perceptions by third parties. In this study, the researcher did not choose to guarantee the sources anonymity. This decision was based on the ease at which sources could likely be identified based on description alone (for example, describing the *Washington Post* as a major national newspaper inherently narrowed down the pool of possibilities and likely the audience, with any knowledge of the field or small amount of research, could easily identify both the paper and the subject of the interview). Additionally, it was decided by the researcher and advisors that identifying the sources would be beneficial to both future research and in contextualizing the sources' opinions

and insights for the purpose of this study. Each source was asked to sign a consent form, indicating their consent to use their names and opinions openly in this study.

### **The Interviews**

The operational questions used in the interviews covered the following topics: job information, perceptions about female leadership styles, diversity in the workplace, managing male photographers, work-life balance, and gender discrimination. The interviews were tape-recorded to insure accuracy. Although the semi-structured interview, like a structured interview, involves an interview schedule, the researcher left room for additional, unplanned questions, should the respondent have raised a point that needed to be elaborated on for clarity or contribution to answering the research question. This flexibility helped maintain the respondent's comfort, as it simulated a real conversation more than a structured interview.

The interviews took place from May 2014 to August 2014. Once the respondents were selected and their interview confirmed, the researcher developed an interview schedule containing 20 to 30 operational questions; this number was decided based on the review of similar studies by Dotson (2011), Janus (2008), and LaRue (2008) that all involve in-depth interviews with women in journalism. After the interviews, it was the researcher's responsibility to personally transcribe the interviews, immediately following each interview, and take time to let the information gathered soak in. After a few days of reflection, the researcher identified the trends and similar thematic elements that appeared across interviews; the researcher also identified unique anecdotes and opinions that could provide special insight upon further consideration and reflection. The researcher "may find connections among the experiences of the individuals he or she interviews. Such

links among people whose individual lives are quite different but who are affected by common structural and social forces can help the reader see patterns in that experience” (Martin, 2010, p. 28). It was essential to use these direct quotes and personal descriptions to better understand and interpret what it means to be a female photo editor. In the absence of any consistent themes, the researcher had planned to simply categorize the interviews based on relevance to the thesis topic and research questions, providing they were determined to be true, reliable, and complete (Berger, 2000). Finally, the researcher analyzed the data and drew conclusions to hopefully answer the research questions as completely as possible.

### **Goals: Analyze How Women Manage Photo Departments**

Overall, the goal of this research was to analyze the ways in which women manage photo departments in a variety of journalistic media, such as magazines, newspapers, and photo agencies. Through a series of six in-depth, semi-structured interviews with female photo editors, the researcher hoped to gain insight into the leadership careers of these women to better comprehend how the perception of their gender contributes or detracts from their professional careers. Using the lens of feminist theory, the opinions of the photo editors were analyzed to look for any indication of remaining, perhaps unobserved, oppression in the workplace and utilize the suggestions presented by leading feminist-perspective scholars to improve the work environment and encourage women to enter the field.

The research in its entirety will also hopefully start to answer questions about how female photo editors identify themselves in contemporary journalism careers. Do they self-identify as female journalists? How do they feel they fit into the larger categories of

female journalists, photo editors and journalists as whole? Perhaps it will reveal that, in 2015, women journalists no longer identify themselves in a way related to gender and instead have new ways to describe their position in the journalism world. Much like the results found in other areas of related journalism research, it could also be expected that this research will reveal that women in photo leadership careers have experienced adversity working in such a male-dominated field. In keeping with that research, this study will hopefully be able to identify that adversity and address the ways journalists can work to combat it.

A strength of this study is the personal perspective of the female, photojournalist researcher, often cited as a strength in similar studies (Calvert & Ramsey, 1992; McGregor, 2010; Thomas, 2007). This level of personal familiarity with the subject of the research aided in both the interview process and the ability to analyze and contextualize the results.

In conclusion, this research does more than simply add to existing scholarship and theory: it contributes to photojournalism practice and professional policies by shedding light on how gender affects leadership in photo departments. The interviews provide positive examples of female leaders that embody admirable leadership qualities that have proven successful in the male-dominated photo industry. This researcher looks to the future of photojournalism – specifically women in photography and photo management roles – with a hopeful move toward incorporating more women into the field and alleviating any discrimination in the workplace.

## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

The researcher conducted six in-depth interviews with photo editors at six different media outlets. The interviews presented the editors with an opportunity to share their experiences in photo editing careers and voice their opinions on being a female photo editor in a male-dominated field. They were given a chance to reflect on questions relating to being a female in both the field of photo editing and in the professional workforce in general, in order to add insight to an area of academia that has hitherto had little to no research or published study. The interviews also gave the opportunity for the subjects to provide insight into how gender has affected and presently affects their specific leadership roles, the photojournalism practice, and professional policies in their careers.

The women selected for this study represent the current state of the field of photo editing in a wide variety of different media and publication types. The subjects were chosen across a variety of media, age, and experience levels. It was essential to research and understand the background, history and context for each of the news organizations, in order to understand the different roles of the photo editors at the different type of organizations and publications. The information about each of the organizations and publications referenced in this study is below. They are listed in the alphabetical order of the name corresponding photo editor.

- The *Columbia Daily Tribune* is a privately-owned daily American newspaper founded in 1901. It is based in Columbia, Missouri. It has a total average circulation of

around 16,000. It has a Sunday edition, a website, and a tablet edition. It has a photo staff of 1 photo editor and 3 photographers, ranging in age from late-20s to 60s.

- The *Washington Post* is a daily American newspaper founded in 1877. It is based in Washington, D.C. It has a total average circulation of around 473,000 (Alliance for Audited Media, 2013). It has a Sunday edition, a website, a mobile app, and a tablet edition. It has a photo staff of 13 photographers and 13 photo editors, ranging in age from 27 to 53, as estimated by Golon.

- The Associated Press is an American nonprofit news agency and wire service founded in 1846. Its headquarters is based in New York, New York. It operates news bureaus in more 280 locations around the world and is contributed to by newspapers, radio and television. There are around 1,400 U.S. newspaper members. At the headquarters, there are about 20 photo editors, ranging in age from early-20s to 60s, as estimated by Goodman.

- *The New York Times* is a daily American newspaper founded in 1851. It is based in New York, New York. It has a total average circulation of around 1.8 million (Alliance for Audited Media, 2013). It has a Sunday edition, a Sunday magazine insert – which has a separate staff – and a website, mobile app, and tablet edition. It has a photo staff of about 25 photographers and about 30 photo editors, ranging in age from 20s to 60s, as estimated by Hanger.

- *National Geographic* is a monthly magazine published by the National Geographic Society. It was founded in 1888 and is based in Washington, D.C. As of 2014, it has a circulation of around 3.2 million. It uses 60-65 photographers each year and has 10 photo editors, ranging in age from late-20s to 60s, as estimated by Leen.



- The *Star Tribune* is a daily American newspaper founded in 1867. It is based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It has a total average circulation of around 301,000 (Alliance for Audited Media, 2013). It has a website, as well mobile and tablet platforms. It has a photo staff of 18 photographers and four photo editors, ranging in age from 40s to 50s, as estimated by Pastner.

The demographics of each publication or media type are important to understand in the consideration of the research, as are the demographics of the subjects themselves. The subjects in this study had varying levels of experiences, ranging from one year to more than 30 years in the photojournalism field. Their position within the publication or business that they presently held varied from photo editor to director of photography. All participants held a bachelor's degree and two held master's degrees as well.

The single research question used in this study asks how women felt about working in photo editing positions and also asks what kind of challenges they face working in a male-dominated industry. It would be fair to say that there were no overwhelming conclusions or consensus in the way the women felt about being females working in a male-dominated industry. There were, however, some similarities in the way the subjects responded to the questions. The interview questions and the way the subjects responded allowed for the analyses to be divided into two main themes that are discussed in this section: the way gender relates to the job of photo editing and the challenges of being a woman in the professional world in general.

Looking at the set of interviews as a whole, the majority of women did not agree that they felt conscious of being a female in a male-dominated field or that gender was a major factor in the work that they did, the path they took to get there, or the way they

managed their departments. Each woman, though, was able to identify at least one instance of a time when being a woman presented a challenge in the professional world in general, unrelated to the task of photo editing. There was a marked difference in the way the subjects would talk about gender in relationship to the job of photo editing and the way they would talk about being a woman in the workplace in general. The following analysis is divided into those distinctions.

Additionally, this research is based in the framework of feminist theory, most specifically the liberal feminist perspective. This theory suggests that women have not been granted equal rights to men in society and, by extension, the workplace. The liberal feminist perspective argues that women should seek equality by both entering the male-dominated workforce and seeking positions of power. This theory is an appropriate lens through which to view this study simply because the photojournalism industry is male-dominated and the women interviewed have secured these positions of power.

After analyzing the interviews and identifying these general patterns and similarities in the subjects' answers, this section discusses how those trends contributed to the understanding and answering of this study's research question.

### **Gender and the Job of Photo Editing**

The first part of the research question asks how women feel about working in photo editing positions. All of the women were extremely satisfied with and enjoyed their present positions. For the most part, the women agreed the actual job of photo editing – working with photographers, assigning stories, making edits of photographs, etc. – had nothing to do with gender. It could be generalized within this narrow set of interviews

that the women believed that the ability to complete the tasks of the job and the specific way of completing the tasks were related to skill, knowledge, and expertise, not gender.

Sarah Leen, approximately 50 years old, is the Director of Photography at *National Geographic* and describes the job as “a gender neutral occupation.” When asked how they thought women do the job of photo editing differently than their male counterparts, all of the subjects echoed the belief that gender was unrelated to the ability to be a successful picture editor. Leen said:

Any two people will pick different pictures or have a slightly different view. Like if I gave 100 pictures to five guys and five women, you would get ten edits. It’s not like the five women would have more in common than the five guys would. I think you would get 10 edits. What you hope is, among all ten of them, is that, if they’re really really good, that there’s crossover into what everybody thinks the best pictures are. I just don’t see how gender affects that. I’ve never seen gender affect that.

Leen leads a team of 10 photo editors, six women and four men; she leads a team of 60 to 65 photographers each year, with a large majority being men. She says, however, that *National Geographic*, both in the photo department and the organization in general, there are a lot of women – she points to her boss and other top leaders – so she never feels like “the only woman at a table with all big powerful men.”

Two other women in this study? working in female-dominated organizations agreed that they never really noticed or thought much about being a woman, simply because they were surrounded by both female photo editors and editors in general. Four

of the six women did not see how being female impacted their job on a daily basis or influenced the ways in which they completed tasks related to photo editing.

By contrast, Deb Pastner, 42, Director of Photography at the *Star Tribune*, did find that gender makes a difference in photography.

She said:

A lot of people say that technology is what changed how we do photography. I personally believe that...the introduction of women in photojournalism has helped push the more intimate photography. I believe that. I don't know that I can actually point to any specific trends for things, but I think in a lot of ways newspaper photography back in the day tended to be a little more like "I got there, I got the picture, I used a long lens and I shot the key moments." There wasn't necessarily intimacy. Technology has changed a lot. And there were cameras that changed everything. And being able to use wide-angle lenses, being able to get in close with people, all of these things have changed. But I do find that really interesting. That there's an intimacy that you see in newspaper photography with tough subjects that I think, in a way, having women in the department has made that difference.

Though she thinks that gender has played a part in increasing and encouraging intimacy in newspaper photography, she does not think that the job of photo editing is any difference based on gender.

Alyssa Goodman, a photo editor at the Associated Press in New York City, however, could point to specific qualities, in addition to intimacy, that women bring to the photo editing profession that are different than men. She believes that women pay

more attention to details where men pay attention to the bigger picture. She believes this is largely based on inherent, biological differences in men and women and that some of that nature is hard to divorce from in the workplace. She says, in regards to her daily job – which includes moving photos to the wire, editing broad submissions from photographers and communicating with photographers in the field – that she “pays a lot more attention to the color of the photo, the tone that the photo is saying, and how [she] feels when [she] looks at the photo.” She continues to say that generally, women are hard-wired to bring more emotion to the job and be more sensitive toward images and how the audience will respond to the images.

Vivian Abagiu, the only photo editor at the *Columbia Daily Tribune* in Columbia, Missouri, speculates that perhaps her unique perspective as a photo editor is derived from her gender, but it is more likely a result of individual human experiences. She said:

The only thing that I say that makes me different is that I have different experiences, life experiences, to draw from. And maybe that affects how I cover something or whether I choose to cover something or not. There’s never this conscious, deliberate thought of “I am female, so I am going to make this choice” it’s just my thinking that because I am a woman and I have these different experiences to draw from that affects how I shoot when I’m out on an assignment or what I choose to cover or not to cover, or run or not to run as a photo editor.

Like the other women, however, she is quick to note that diversity, in any occupation or part of the newsroom, is of utmost importance and that gender is just one part of that equation.

All of the women characterized successful picture editors by their efficiency and ability to make high-quality edits and smart decisions about pictures. In regards to what she looks for and expects out of her photo editors, Leen said:

I don't see where gender has anything to do with how somebody looks at a story or tells a story or picks the best pictures...I just want to know if you are good at it. It's all about are you good at this, are you a great storyteller, what's your aesthetic like, what's your taste like about photography? Can you inspire photographers to do great work? And then who cares about the rest of it? That's what important. I don't think gender is important.

Even in questions of hiring, most women agreed that they would hire the most qualified candidate, regardless of gender. If, as posited by socialist feminist theory, women are considered as a minority or oppressed class in the journalism industry, then the response to the lack of overall female leadership in the industry is addressed in what several women discussed: a conscious effort to create, overall, a more diverse workplace. The women working in the female-heavy newsrooms – Hanger and Leen – were more apt to say that gender was not a factor in hiring new photo editors or photographers. The other women working in offices with that were comprised of half or less than half women were more apt to say that they did consider gender – and other demographics – in their hiring in effort to make a more diverse workplace. This is evident in the recent hiring of Alyssa Goodman, who is one of 20 photo editors who works on the headquarters desk at the Associated Press in New York City; there are four female photo editors and the rest are men over the age of 40. She believed she was part of or at least the start of an overall department-wide effort to diversify the photo team and that, by including both younger

editors and female editors, the news desk would benefit from multiple perspectives and voices.

As outlined in the literature review, traditionally photojournalism has been a male-dominated field. Much of the culture and the demographic makeup of the workforce has changed since the “old white men” reputation of the journalism industry. Several of the women interviewed were still very aware of the fact that they were still working in a male-dominated industry; the majority, however, did not say they felt that male-dominated was a fair description of the industry today. Several of the longer-working photo editors interviewed for this study indicated times when, at the start of their careers, they were highly aware that they were women in a male-dominated field but were careful to note that it was a reflection of the decade and time in which they were working.

MaryAnne Golon, 53, Director of Photography at *The Washington Post*, was the longest-working photo editor interviewed for this study. She recalls a time when she started in the industry, first as a photo-editing intern at *Time* magazine and climbing all the way to Director of Photography position there. She noted that, while she sees the industry today as very evenly divided between male and female leadership, it was very clearly a male-dominated field thirty years ago. She said:

When I started, when I was 21, 22, 23, it was 95 percent men. So I didn't want to call attention to the fact I was female, by any stretch of the imagination so I always said, “treat me the same as you would treat anyone else.”

As highlighted in the literature review – and even highlighted in 21<sup>st</sup> Century popular culture, such as *Mad Men* and *The Newsroom* – journalism had a reputation of being a boys club and male industry. Most of the longer-working, more senior subjects could

point to a specific time in those days in which they faced adversity from the men they worked with. Becky Lebowitz Hanger, 40, Sports Photo Editor at *The New York Times*, recalled a time at her first job when she was out to lunch with an older male photographer who was “flabbergasted that [she] was a woman young enough to be his daughter and was now going to be his editor.” She believes his skepticism was due both to her young age and her gender. She recalls another time early in her career when she was working at a male-dominated newspaper and they told her they “had a yearly lunch at a topless restaurant.” But that they weren’t going to do it that year, and, instead, would go somewhere else because there was a female on staff. Similarly, Golon was able to speak about her first years in the male-dominated journalism world. She said:

When I first started in the business it was horrible. People would offer me up to have lunch with somebody hoping that they could get a person to work for them because they thought I was cute. Horrible things like that that would never happen in today’s workplace. I remember sitting down with an executive when I was probably 27 the executive said “oh you’re going to do just fine because you’re very pretty.” Not because I was talented. Not because I brought a lot to the table, but because I was very pretty.

In regards to moving to the male-dominated sports desk from another beat, Becky Lebowitz Hanger notes that she was “very clear about the fact that [she] knew very little about sports and that was fine with everyone” and that she was brought to the sports desk because they wanted someone with a different point of view. She says that sometimes it’s a bit of a joke that she does not know much about sports, but that the men on the desk have never shown any contempt or treated her any differently than they treat the other



men and members of the beat. She recalls the time when she was sent as a photo editor to the Sochi Olympics with a team of four male photographers. She remembers that, before leaving, a parent of one of her friends “asked ‘Oh is that hard? Is it difficult? Did they have a hard time with your authority because you’re a woman?’ And to be honest, until she said that, it wasn’t something I ever considered. I’m their editor! That’s my role. That’s the only role I’ve ever known with them.”

The younger editors interviewed for this study – Goodman and Abagiu – are both in their first jobs out of school. Despite entering a generally much more gender-balanced workforce, however, both were able to point to times when they were still conscious of being a woman on the job. Goodman discussed how the senior male photo editors on the sports desk at the Associated Press interacted with her when she first started her job. She said:

When I first got there, [the other editors] were like “Oh, when you want to look up stats and things there’s this thing called ESPN” and they were teaching me how to do that. And I was like, “Dear god I’ve been using the internet my entire life and I read ESPN on a regular basis but thank you very much, I appreciate it...thank you. But I think it was because I was so young and because I was a woman that my knowledge was questioned.

This specific example could, however, be due to any number of things. Goodman began her job at the Associated Press at age 22 and, perhaps, the men just were offering career wisdom to a new employee on their team. Perhaps also, it is assumed by our society that sports and sport fandom is generally a male interest and just naively assumed Goodman, as a woman, had no knowledge of ESPN. It is likely a combination of things, but

Goodman strongly felt this was a reflection of her gender in an all-male workplace and described it, and several other instances, as times she felt uncomfortable or at least aware of being a woman in a field of men. Throughout her interview, Goodman discussed her gender in relationship to her age; this relationship was not specifically addressed in this study, but could be an interesting comparison in future research. Goodman believed both were a disadvantage to her in her career.

And Vivian Abagiu, 28, the photo editor at the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, leads a team of three men and notes that at her newspaper there is a “women of the *Tribune*” happy hour, where the women on staff meet and have wine and discuss “girly things”; this is a contrast to her happy hours with her photo team, which often involves drinking beer at “places where they don’t even serve wine.” She feels like it might be different if there was a female photographer on staff and acknowledges that she interacts differently with her all-male team than she would with an all-female staff. She also, when she first started working, felt like she needed to “dress like a man.” She said:

I did not want to have any sort of male attention or risk having any male attention in the newsroom or when I was out shooting. So I looked terrible...I bought [pants] a size too big so they’re baggy on me. But slowly I became more comfortable with the fact that, okay I don’t have to hide the fact that I am a female. I can be able to look like a woman and still do my job.

It is interesting to consider the adversity that the women felt fifteen or thirty years ago compared to the adversity the women new to the field felt by their male coworkers. There are fundamental differences simply based on the time period and the view of women in the workplace in general, but there are also similarities. Most of the differences today

depend on a consciousness of being in the female minority. Both Abagiu, who is the only woman on her team, and Goodman, who is one of only four women on a large team, are obviously aware of their gender based on the sheer number of men still existing in their respective workplaces compared to women. The other women interviewed, however, both entered the field at a different time and have found themselves presently working at organizations with large numbers of women. Based on that, it is difficult to draw conclusions or make generalized observations about the difficulties, or lack thereof, of breaking into the male-dominated field today.

The other major part of a photo editor's job is working with photographers. All but one of the women said they interact no differently with their male photographers compared to their female photographers. Golon discusses situations in which she might choose a male photographer over a female photographer or vice versa – embedding with troops or for cultural reasons covering the populations in the middle east – but says that she does not interact differently with female photographers compared to male photographers. Similarly, Abagiu referenced a specific time when a male photographer sought her female perspective and advice about a particular image of young girls sitting without their legs crossed; Abagiu believed that, because she was once a young female, she could provide more valuable insight in her response than a man could. Neither of these situations indicate that these editors interact differently with their photographers based on gender but rather are indicative of smart photo editing, editing that takes gender into consideration as an unavoidable influencer and demographic descriptor in our society.

Golon does note, however, that she is aware of the personality types that exist on her photographer staff that could, perhaps, relate to gender. She said:

Sometimes there are certain men and certain women who bring a special punch to the work that they're doing and you look for that talent, but I don't think it's gender specific. There's one photographer...on my staff who's male, who's incredibly sensitive and can work in incredibly delicate situations and everything because he's so sensitive and unassuming and terrific; and I have a female on my staff who is like a bull in a china shop sometimes and can get shut down in assignments because of her sort of brusque attitude. And I think that those are gender reversal roles in a way from 40 years ago.

The women agreed that a consideration of an individual's unique traits and qualities is important in delegating tasks and assignments to their employees; however, this consideration is not consciously linked to gender. Rather, there are specific traits inherently associated with each gender that cannot be disassociated with an individual's aptitude toward a certain task. It is important to note, though, that not one of the women felt that gender played a significant role in the ability to be a successful photo editor or photographer and the majority felt it had no impact at all.

### **Gender in a Leadership Position**

The second part of the research question asks how women feel about working in leadership positions in a male-dominated industry. The first half of this analysis address gender in relationship to the task of photo editing as a part of the job. This section will address the inherent leadership aspect of photo editing, that is leading a team of both photographers and, in some cases, other photo editors.

A main portion of the research conducted in this study and in other similar studies discusses the differences in male and female leadership traits. As summarized in the literature review, masculine leadership traits emphasize control, competence, assertiveness, independence lack of emotion, and less concern for the well-being of others; feminine leadership traits emphasize flexibility, empathy, collaboration and performance (Everbach, 2006, p. 480). The liberal feminist perspective believes that women feel obligated to emulate these male characteristics to attain high-power positions. Studies have also claimed that female leaders have resorted to employing masculine leadership traits to advance in the workplace, or at least have found the most success in employing both male and female traits to manage. None of the women in this study admitted to consciously employing male leadership traits to assert their authority. When asked to describe their personal leadership styles, however, many women used male-trait descriptors.

In an interesting consideration of the social role theory, the researcher asked the women to describe their personal leadership style. The top editors – specifically Leen and Golon– described themselves as very honest and direct. Pastner used similar descriptors, though, being new to the position, was not quite as direct in her descriptions. Leen and Golon both called upon adjectives such as “tough,” “demanding,” to describe themselves, adjectives that are often associated with male leadership. They even go so far as to describe themselves and their reputation as being “scary.” Leen said:

I do think that, just in general, a strong woman who speaks up – it’s very hard to criticize. How do you criticize constructively and raise the bar on people? ... I think there’s a bit a thing where men can do it and it’s seen one way and women

can do it and it's like, you're a bitch. That thing. I do think that that kind of exists in general and how you negotiate that, and the whole "women are nice and men need to be strong" thing. That's hard. I prefer to be strong.

Men have traditionally been seen as leaders and they have, as a result, been described as "strong" and "assertive." But perhaps these are words less associated with the male gender and more associated with effective leaders. Golon and Leen, arguably two of the top photo editors in the field, use "masculine" descriptors to describe themselves as leaders, not affiliating them with the male gender. Golon acknowledges the feminist belief that women need to use male leadership traits to be successful in a management position, and though she herself employs them subconsciously, she said she ultimately believes that women do not need to overcompensate for their inherent feminine qualities. Golon said:

But I do think women tend to be tougher in management positions because they have to – well, they feel that they have to – hold their own in a male dominated environment. So they'll be less soft...I've seen lots of women managers where I've seen men be softer than them because they overcompensate. I'm sure plenty of people have seen me that way. I'm very straightforward. I'm very no nonsense. I'm 6 feet tall. I have a loud voice. So I'm sure a lot of people think "Oh she's scary."

A few of the women also, when asked their strengths, identify stereotypical feminine qualities as well. Hanger, for example, sees her strengths in coaching, collaborating, and working one on one with photographers and designers. These communicative, open, and collaborative traits are those traditionally affiliated with

females and female leaders (Everbach, 2006). Similarly, throughout the interviews, the women all struggled with the term “boss” or “leader.” Instead, they preferred to refer to the job as a member of a team. All of the women spoke a lot throughout their interviews about teamwork and acknowledged the invaluable roles that all members of the team played; they just happened to lead the team. The women all also were quick to acknowledge their collaborative style and, when asked about problem solving and dealing with issues in the department – with photographers or with other editors – all of the subjects described their solutions as conversations. Leen said:

There are women photographers that I work with that are equally strong-minded about their work and will argue with you, just like guys will argue with you about it. I think it’s a conversation, in terms of the edit with the photographers. It’s a conversation and in many ways, the editor will probably have the last word. And I think that whether you’re working with guys or working with women, that’s just the structure in place.

And while words such as “collaboration” and “conversation” are noted to be female leadership characteristics, Leen acknowledges that it is a part of being a photo editor and leader to be able to make the final call in the decision-making process. To effectively lead a team, the women note, you must have authority and be “tough” while also encouraging and collaborating with photographers.

While it would be impossible without also interviewing their colleagues, the women also speculated about how their male coworkers viewed them as women in a leadership position. This would be a ripe area for future research. The basis of this study was based on research that reported that the photojournalism field was male-dominated,

especially in the realm of photographers. The researcher was always interested in the power dynamic and relationship between female leaders and male subordinates. The repetitive descriptions of the photographer-photo editor relationship as a “team” negates part of this wondering. The women, as in their contemplation of being a woman in the job of photo editing, saw no major challenges leading men and believed that their male coworkers did not consider gender in the leadership structure. Leen, the first woman Director of Photography at *National Geographic* in 125 years, said of her promotion:

A lot of the women photographers were really thrilled. And the photo editors were thrilled. The men... I don't know if they saw it that way. I know a lot of them. They know me. They know me from other walks of life. They knew me when I was a photo editor. They knew me when I was a photographer. So I don't know what they thought about it.

The women found it difficult to speculate about what their male coworkers thought about them, mostly because they saw the job as unrelated to gender. Many of them had also climbed the ladder within their company, so they knew their coworkers in several different capacities and, since they already knew each another personally, the subjects did not believe the men looked at them any differently or treated them any differently in their new positions of power.

Though most of the subjects could point to single instances when they were conscious of their gender in the workplace, their general responses revealed that their gender did not impact their job in either a practical – succeeding at the task of photo editing – or managerial – leading a team of photographers and photo editors – way.



## **Feminist Theory**

As previously outlined in this research, feminist theory is defined by the advocacy for female equality and, in this case, specifically in the workplace and in positions of power (Janus, 2008). Feminist theory as used here has three variations: liberal, socialist, and radical. Based on the research question and the responses to the interview questions, the most relevant lens for this study is the liberal feminist perspective, which suggests that, though all humans have natural rights, only men have been granted these rights in society and encourages women to achieve equality by entering the male-dominated workforce and securing positions of power. All of the subjects had made these moves into the workforce and have secured positions of power in a male-dominated industry; most of their responses indicated a belief in gender equality in the workplace. In fact, five of the women said they had really never even considered their gender in relationship to their job at all. Perhaps this is indicative of the field in which they are working. The journalistic field requires its workers to be as unbiased as possible in many ways, requiring fairness and objectivity in all aspects of the creation and running a respectable journalistic publication or media outlet. It is possible that this objectivity extends to how the employees view and interact with other employees within certain organizations as well.

Connecting back to the theoretical framework outlined for this study, analyzing this research through a feminist lens is difficult because the subjects indicated that they believed there already was gender equality in the workplace. Though they could point to specific instances of adversity, as a whole they believed that women and men were both positioned to be equally successful at the job of photo editing and at the task of leading a

department. Nonetheless, the fact remains that women represent a mere 25 percent of the photojournalism field (Thomas, 2007) and, whether the women interviewed are consciously aware of it or not, they have not only entered a male-dominated field, but also have successfully secured positions of power. Whether or not they choose to acknowledge their gender as a defining factor in their job is almost irrelevant. Nearly all of the women used some traditionally-feminine adjectives to describe their leadership style and approach to the job of photo editing. And though none of them claimed to face adversity in the workplace, nearly all of the women were able to call to mind specific instances that made them acutely aware of their gender, as compared to their male counterparts. It is important to note, however, that half of the women – Leen, Golon, and Hanger – work at publications that have a strong female presence, exceeding the 25 percent that Thomas notes as the norm. The leadership structure and general makeup of the *National Geographic* workplace, for example, is heavily female; therefore, it was perhaps easier for Leen to both enter the field and secure a position of power at this specific publication. Additionally, both Golon and Hanger note that New York City, where both of them work or have worked, is marked by a strong female presence in print publications, specifically because of the magazine industry. If a workplace is majority female, there are fewer hurdles to overcome in terms of gender in the quest to attaining leadership or management positions, such as photo editing. There is also inherently less of an opportunity to feel subjugated based on gender if the women leaders are managing and working alongside fellow women.

However, many of the women interviewed echoed a similar sentiment: they did not ever consciously consider their gender as compared to the people they worked with or managed. Golon said:

I've been approached many many times in my career to be a part of women's organizations, like Women in Business or Women Leaders in Photojournalism or Women Photojournalists in Washington, all these different things and I was never interested. And people said "Why are you so anti-women?" And I said "I'm not, I'm pro-women, but I don't want to look like I need to separate myself in order to play with the guys."

Golon's sentiments embody the general attitude of all of the subjects that, despite history and despite the statistics of demographic makeup of the workforce, they are successful leaders who happen to be women. They collectively felt that their gender generally does not impact either the task of photo editing or their ability to lead. The fact that they each were able to reference specific, single times they were aware of their gender or felt adversity because of it perhaps highlights their general unawareness of it and disregard for it.

Another important facet to consider that was discussed in the literature review is the concept of work-life balance (Dotson, 2011; Janus, 2008). Though the researcher noted that the history of work-life balance – notably the country's history of patriarchy and traditional female responsibilities such as child-raising and homemaking – was important in understanding this contemporary study, it was stated that such a concept was not relevant to this study due to its outdated nature, based on generally equal numbers of men and women in the workforce. Dotson (2011) and Janus (2008) both believed that the

concept of work-life balance is exemplified by a social shift from women leaving the workforce to have children to attempting to maintain their career and personal lives at the same time. While no questions in this study directly asked the subjects to reflect upon their own work-life balance or personal life outside of the office, Hanger discussed how having children impacted her career. Hanger said:

I have these wonderful hours that my boss has allowed me to have, to have a personal life outside of work. I think I have the best of all worlds because I get to work for this news section, I get to work for *The New York Times*, but I've been allowed to do it on my own terms. I have small children. I have a five-year-old and a seven-year-old and I'm able to balance these things now, as well as anyone can balance it. Being a mom and being an active, participatory mom and having this job that I have that requires a lot of me.

She said that she believed she was treated so warmly during her maternity leave because she had a female boss who was also a mother and could therefore directly relate to the experience of giving birth and caring for a newborn. She discussed how her boss helped her readjust to the job after the leave, including moving her to an easier desk with more regular hours. She described herself in her pre-motherhood life as a “workaholic” but is now, with the understanding of her boss, she is able to prioritize both her career and her family life. In her study of the *Sarasota* [Fl.] *Herald-Tribune* and its female-led newsroom, Everbach (2006) was able to observe that women “flourish in networks of connections and relationship” (p. 488) because women traditionally value family and community and place a great importance on interpersonal relationships and well-being. Hanger's female boss was able to relate to Hanger as a woman and understand her new

needs that came as a result of starting a family. Other research (Dotson, 2011; Janus 2008) outlined in the literature review, however, would say that because photojournalism and photo editing are time-consuming professions, many women are not able to strike such a balance and instead prioritize their personal life, accounting for a low number of females in management roles.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research is a collection of reflections and discussions about what it means to be a female photo editor and working in a leadership position in a male-dominated field. The six in-depth interviews used in this study provide valuable insight into these ongoing discussions but each woman's individual opinions are hard to generalize or extend to the photojournalism field, the photo editing field or the professional workforce as a whole. The women's candid responses to the questions, however, allowed the researcher to observe similarities in their opinions. Initially the researcher hypothesized that, because the photojournalism field is made up of mainly men, that the women in leadership positions – namely photo editors and photo directors – would feel some adversity managing male subordinates. This hypothesis was based on both personal experience and the research done in compiling the literature review for this study. After conducting this research, it can be noted that, though women statistically represent a minority in both photojournalism and journalism as a whole, these six photo editors said they feel no consistent or substantial discrimination as women. In fact, the women interviewed unanimously felt that, while there are certain unique qualities a woman can bring to any position, their gender was not something that they even considered in relationship to their profession. There were certain personality traits and characteristics that the women all shared in common, which supports the idea that they attained leadership positions not as a result (or in spite of) of their gender but, rather, because they all possessed other qualities separate from gender that were conducive to succeeding as photo editors and leaders in general.

This research is valuable in understanding the mindset of women working in photo editing positions. It was not, however, without limitations. It was impossible to interview all women working in photo editing positions and thus impossible to extrapolate the opinions and sentiments of the few interviewed for this study to the female photo editor population as a whole. Additionally, there are photo working in many different types of media organizations, from print to digital publications, photo agencies, and more. Each of these different organizations comes with its own set of demographics; different media types have different proportions of men and women working in them. This study sought to sample a variety of media in order to attain the most comprehensive look at the photo editing industry as a whole. It might be interesting, however, for future research to concentrate on a single type of media – print magazines, for example – and conduct similar studies based on that industry’s gender demographics. This study is a starting point for future research in the area of women working in photojournalism, photo editing, and journalism as an entire field. This study points to other areas that would be useful to conduct future research: One in the area of pay differential and the second in terms of how male photojournalists view their female counterparts. Suggestive of that, Golon said:

[Today’s workforce] is not utopia by any stretch of the imagination because women are still paid less than men. I’m sure I’m paid less than men in my position and the man who was in the position before me. But the part of it that I see as so so so so so much better is that I don’t think anybody looks anymore, even with a second glance, and thinks “oh this person’s a woman” or “this

person's a man" they just think "this person's a colleague." And that was the world I was dreaming of 30 years ago.

She echoes what has already been observed as a consistent opinion: that gender is not at the forefront of any of these female photo editors' minds. She acknowledges the problems with the past and that there are still some issues with the present and presents the potential for future research. Another way to expand upon this study for future research would be to consider other careers and professions. As noted in this study, women are becoming more common in photo editing positions, but the same fact does not extend to other male-dominated careers, such as those related to engineering. It would be interesting to look at those numbers and ask the women working in and leading those fields similar questions as the ones used in this study. It would also be interesting to look at the numbers female CEOs and investigate what accounts for that disparity. Overall, there are many ways this study can be used to prompt future research.

In conclusion, this research does more than simply add to existing scholarship and theory: it contributes to photojournalism practice and professional policies by shedding light on how gender affects leadership in photo departments. The interviews provide positive examples of female leaders that embody admirable leadership qualities that have proven successful in the male-dominated photo industry. The research aimed to address adversity these female leaders may feel, or may have felt, in their careers in the photo industry. Ideally, in consideration of this research, journalists and communication academics will better understand the role women play in photo departments across different media and their place in the broader categories of female journalists and photo editors. This research encourages both male and female photojournalists, photo editors,



and journalists as a whole to reflect on women's—and ideally their own—roles in and contributions to the field of journalism. Hopefully this work will call attention to the disparity in the number of female to male photo editors and thus present a call to action to consciously, and intentionally, incorporate more women into the industry in leadership positions. Hopefully this work will encourage budding female photo editors to both enter the field and excel at it.

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## Appendix A.

### Participant Interview IRB Approved Questions

1. How did you get to where you are today? What was your path to photo editing?
2. What is a typical day in the life of a photo editor at \_\_\_?
3. What is the chain of command?
4. Who do you work directly with on a day-to-day basis? How many photo editors/photographers do you work with?
5. What is the demographic makeup of the photo department? Gender? Age?
6. In your opinion, does gender matter? Example of why/why not.
7. Is there an effort to diversify your department in terms of gender?
8. How is gender discussed in your newsroom/workplace?
9. How do women contribute to the photo department at \_\_\_? At other magazines/newspapers/agencies you've worked at?
10. In your opinion, how do women do the job (photo editing) differently—or similarly—to their male counterparts?
11. What are the greatest challenges facing photo editors? Are the challenges ever related to gender?
12. Give me an example of a time when gender played a role of your being successful or not successful in photo editing.
13. Do you interact differently with your male photographers compared to your female photographers? What about other editors in the newsroom?
14. How do you feel like the men that you work with view you as a woman in a management role?
15. How would you describe your personal leadership style?
16. What unique qualities do you bring to the photo desk? Are there any gender-specific qualities you consciously employ?

17. There's a saying "clothes make the man, clothes make the woman." Does clothing matter? How does it enter into your work life? What is the dress code in your office?

18. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

19. What is the best way to reach you/follow up if I have more questions?

## **Appendix B.**

### **Interview Transcripts**

1 – Vivian Abagiu

2 – MaryAnne Golon

3 – Alyssa Goodman

4 – Becky Lebowitz Hanger

5 – Sarah Leen

6 – Deb Pastner



1.

Subject: Vivian Abagiu

Age: 28

Position: Photo Editor at *Columbia Daily Tribune*

Interview Date: 7/23/14

Elizabeth Pierson: Can start by saying your name, age and current job position?

Vivian Abagiu: My name is Vivian Abagiu. My age is 28, going to be 29 in December. And my job position, I'm the photo editor at the *Columbia Daily Tribune*.

EP: Perfect. So how did you get tow here you are today? What was your path to photo editing?

VA: Gee...I guess I first got into journalism in general in high school and then I went and got a communications degree at St. Mary's University, it's a private school in San Antonio, Texas. It's the school my parents went to. And they didn't have a journalism degree so I just went with communications and I joined – can you hear me okay?

EP: Yeah.

VA: Okay good. So they had a school newspaper, so I joined that my junior year. I started shooting for them and then I became the photo editor there and that's where it kind of clicked for me "I really like this, I really enjoy this, and I'm absolutely not prepared to get a job when I graduate." So I decided to apply to graduate schools and I ended up at Mizzou in 2008 and I graduated in 2010. And during that time, as you know, you have to go through the *Missourian*. And at that time I'm still thinking that I want to be a photojournalist, I want to take pictures for a living. And so I get to the *Missourian* and I take staff during the summer, not even the full semester course, you know, the summer course. And I did that because I was at Mizzou on a scholarship and I had to graduate in two years. IT would have cost me money if I stayed longer so I was hell bent on graduating in the two years and so I needed to take summer school courses to stay on track. So I hated staff. Part of it was just that I was so new and not a great shooter. It was kind of overwhelming on top of that. So I got through it but it wasn't my favorite thing. But then next semester I took photo editing and it was just the opposite experience. Photo editing is kind of unique – there's elements of managing and organizing and making things as efficient as possible that really drew me to that. I enjoyed that aspect. But there's also that creative side, where your working on a team, trying to create the best newspaper you can and working with photographers and seeing what they come back with...is a really unique and cool part of the process. So from then on it kind of clicked in my head that "Alright, this is where I love journalism and this is where I fit best." So after that – this is turning into a long story – while all of this is going on I met my husband and he's Romanian, as you know, so I graduated and he graduated and he had to go back to Romania and he proposed after we graduated and I accepted. So basically I moved to Romania with him and was there for about two years. And in that period my

career was pretty much on hold. I was shooting, I shot for a magazine over there and I took pictures everywhere I went but it wasn't for a publication or anything. I would help him, he would freelance over there, a lot of corporate events, things like that, and I was kind of the assistant on those shoots and I would help him edit. I also taught some English over there. But when we got back is when I started job hunting and that's when this position opened up at the *Columbia Tribune* and luckily they hired me, they considered me qualified. They gave me a chance. My boss Jim, Jim Robertson, he's a really cool guy and a great boss, and one of the things he told me, you know, he interviewed me sort of through means first and then I offered to drive up on my own dime for a face-to-face interview. And in the face-to-face interview, you know, he asked me questions and I answered them and he said "Well, you seem to have a good head on your shoulders." I think he knew that hiring somebody that didn't have previous experience in an editing role was a risk but he took it and I'm really happy to be here. And I hope I'm doing a good job, I go everyday and do my best. And that's how I got into photo editing. That's how I got here.

EP: That's a good path. I, as well, hated staff, so it sounds about right.

VA: Haha, yeah.

EP: So what's a typical day in the life of the photo editor at the *Columbia Daily Tribune*?

VA: Okay well at the *Columbia Tribune*, as I'm sure you probably know, we don't have a Director of Photography so the buck kind of stops with me in terms of deciding on coverage. Of course I consult and I talk with the city editors to see what's coming up and how we can make things visual but as far as directions to take with visuals, I make those decisions. And I also man a staff of three photographers and I also shoot when needed, kind of cover all our bases. And so the way I see it is that we're a team and I consult with them as well. But when it comes to, well, in the morning, when I show up I'm the first one there from the staff – they get there at 8 – and they print proofs the night before and they lay them on my desk so I can come in and see what's going in the paper that day and decide what from their take we're going to run. And then I put that together, whether its for a photo package, you know, one photo package or one image for one story. So I put that together and I take it to budget. And that meeting is at 8:30. You know everybody goes through what stories are running and what our wire options are and I pitch photos. And once that's decided, they get to work to start making the paper and I start planning what's happening and looking over the schedule for that day, with the photographers, you know, who's coming in, what they're going to be shooting. And I'm also fielding mugshots that come in that need to be in that day's paper and I process those and put them where they need to be. And I start, right in the morning, I start looking at what are we going to cover tomorrow and the day after that. So that kind of...well I need to be around until we meet deadline and make sure that everybody has what they need. And after that we break for lunch, come back and I start setting the photographers' schedule for the following day and I also, if I don't have photo requests in, I start going around to reporters and talking to them and seeing what they've got coming up and, you know, going to the city desks and reminding them about photo requests. Hmmmm, what else? I

manage the equipment, but that's not every day, it's just one of my responsibilities. I don't know what else to include on that.

EP: No that's perfect. I was actually kind of selfishly interested in it too because I know that you're an afternoon paper so I was wondering how it worked different from the *Missourian*. So what's the chain of command? You kind of touched on it a little bit, but if you could just start with the photographers and go up.

VA: Okay so if the photographers have a problem, they come to me. If it's not something I can resolve I go to the managing editor, that's Jim Robertson. Jim, I'm not exactly sure who he answers to, but the Waters family owns the paper. Andy Waters handles the financials of the paper – he's Hank Waters' son. Vicki Russell is the publisher and she's kind of the last say. If she wants something done, generally it happens.

EP: So then, who do you work directly with on a day-to-day basis?

VA: On a day-to-day basis, I work with the city editors. That would be Matt Sanders and Justin Willett. And the photographers obviously. Also I'm in touch with the web editor a little bit but, you know, we're not like planning things out together. I also work with two image techs. Technically they're under my supervision but they're also under the web editors' supervision, I don't know what the right word is, but he handles their schedule and they handle processing photos.

EP: So then you're actually the only photo editor?

VA: Yep.

EP: And I know you're in transition so you can answer these as if Ryan was still there, but how many photographers do you work with on staff?

VA: Then three photographers.

EP: And what's the demographic makeup of the photographers? I'm interested in gender and a rough guess on age.

VA: Sure. So when Ryan was here: three photographers who were all male. Two of them were in their late twenties. Ryan is my age and he's 28 and Nick is 26 or 27. And Don is the older person, he's been at the *Tribune* for about 15 years, and I think he's in his early 60s.

EP: All boys...that's interesting. So, in your opinion, does gender matter?

VA: Does gender matter for...?

EP: For the job. Your job, the photographers' job.

VA: Okay. I think it matters only in that it adds diversity, it adds a different voice, someone with a different viewpoint. You know, there are certain experiences and backgrounds and things that a woman goes through that a man does not go through in life. And so in some ways, in my opinion, it helps to have those different voices in the newsroom. I wouldn't say "oh yeah, women can do this job better" or that we have special skills, we just have a different perspective. And I think that is vital to every newsroom, to have as many different voices and backgrounds and perspectives as possible. Consider, well, I can site one particular experience where my background changed how something was covered, but I think that it does happen.

EP: Do you want to share what that was?

VA: Um.

EP: It's okay if you don't want to.

VA: Well, let me try to think of one...no, nothing comes to mind off the bat.

EP: So it's interesting that you're in the middle of hiring, considering this next question, but is there an effort to diversify the department in terms of gender? Are you going to look for a woman to bring in that different perspective?

VA: Well I can say that our newsroom, our employee handbook or whatever it is, I was never given some kind of standard issue, rules or guidebook on how to diversify or how to be open to diverse candidates that you might hire, or anything like that. But it's definitely something that I, it's in the back of my mind. I'm considering...well I would say I always hope for – because this is the second time I've gone through the hiring process – I always hope for a diverse candidate. I hope I get people from everywhere, all genders, every place. But last time I didn't have a lot of female candidates applying and I just thought that was interesting because when you think of the j-school, well, it's at least half of us are female. So I was wondering "where are they? Where'd they go?" And this time around I've had much more diverse candidates and people applying. So it's something I consider but the thing I look for first and foremost is can they do the job and do they have the best skill set...are they the best fit for this job? And secondly if they're female, you know, or if they're Hispanic or a minority of some kind, I'll think "well great" but the first thing I consider and what I think is most important is can they do the job and are they qualified for it.

EP: Right. So a lot of these next questions – and I'm only saying this because you're one of my last interviews and a lot of people have questioned why I'm doing this – but my whole thesis is based on women and the fact that Lean In is a popular book right now and just kind of women in management positions in general. So these questions deal a lot with gender and that's where my interest, as a woman heading into what I consider a management career, is. But feel free if you want to skip a question or whatever, you don't have to answer anything you don't want to.

VA: Sure.

EP: So in your opinion, how do women do the job of photo editing differently, or similarly, to their male counterparts? I know you're the only photo editor there, but thinking about your experience at the Missourian.

VA: It's hard to say since I'm the woman in the photo department. I think, like I said before, the only thing that I say that makes me different is that I have different experiences, life experiences, to draw from. And maybe that affects how I cover something or whether I choose to cover something or not. There's never this conscious, deliberate thought of "I am female, so I am going to make this choice" it's just my thinking that because I am a woman and I have these different experiences to draw from that affects how I shoot when I'm out on an assignment or what I choose to cover or not to cover, or run or not to run as a photo editor.

EP: I know this is hard, but can you think of a situation in which your woman life experiences would affect you, like how you would handle a situation differently as a shooter or an editor? Or something you would choose to cover that perhaps a man wouldn't?

VA: Maybe this has more to do with me being Hispanic, I'm like a double minority, but I do, when I'm out shooting, I'm aware that well, we're in Missouri, the population of Hispanics is four percent. But Columbia is pretty diverse. But our newspaper, there's not – well I guess I've never measured – but there could always be more diversity in the people that are represented in the newspaper. But when I'm out shooting I look around, you know, like "who's here? Is it 90% white or are there different minorities around?" And I don't go and say "oh there's two Indian kids, let me only go and photograph them" but I do look around and consider who's here and who's at this event. Does that make sense?

EP: Yeah, it does.

VA: And I don't know if everybody does that or not.

EP: Yeah I don't know. I haven't actually talked to anyone who's a shooter too so I'm interested in that perspective as well. Can you think of any times when gender played a role in photo editing? Like you said, it's not something you consciously think about but, because you're a woman, you were inclined to make a certain edit a certain way or make a decision as far as what was going to be printed?

VA: Well something happened yesterday, and this may not apply exactly, but I got a text from Nick Schnelle, a staff photographer, and he was photographing the queen, like the Boone County Fair queen competition. And he texted me and he was asking about a photo and he sent me the photo in text. And the photo was these three girls who were like teen queens competitors and they were sitting together and one was taking a selfie, you know, a group photo of the three. And two of them had their legs crossed and one of

them, the one in the middle, she did not have her legs crossed. She didn't have her legs crossed like even at the ankles. But I mean her legs were together but her dress was kind of short so he was a bit worried, you know, he wanted to check with me "well what do you think? Is it okay?" You couldn't see anything, but it was all black. So kind of? You know what I mean. Well in my mind I thought "well, hmm, would I be bothered as a girl if that photo ran?" and my answer was no, I wouldn't. And then I thought well, if I were this girl's mother would I be bothered? And I still felt like no. It's not the most elegant pose that she was sitting in but it wasn't revealing. So I said fine, put it in the slideshow. That's about it. That's all I have.

EP: No it's a hard thing to think about. I've encountered it in quite a few interviews. Everyday we're making decisions because you're a woman but you don't think about it. So since you've been photo editor have you had any female photographers on staff?

VA: No. Wait, do you mean on staff?

EP: Yes.

VA: No, no female photographers on staff. There was a female photographer on staff maybe five or six years ago.

EP: And the photo editor before you, was it male or female?

VA: To my knowledge, I am the first female photo editor at the *Columbia Daily Tribune*.

EP: Oh that's cool! Are you ever conscious of the fact that it's all male photographers? Do you interact with them differently than you think you would with female photographers?

VA: Okay so this is the question that I thought was really interesting because I don't know how other people have responded to it, but I think that, to give you an example, there's a "women of the *Tribune*" kind of group and we get together and we meet up for happy hour every now and then. And most people get wine and there's talking about girly things and whatever. There is no "photographers of the *Tribune*" happy hour. I meet the guys for beers. And when I'm with them I don't order wine. I guess I could get wine but we go to places where they don't even serve wine, you know? So that's just a little example of how, yeah you do notice. Maybe it'd be different with a female photographer on staff, but with an all-male staff I feel like sometimes I do interact with them a little differently than I would if they were an all-female staff.

EP: How so?

VA: Let me try to think of an example. Well, let's see, so, the guys, like I said, they like to meet up for beers. And we have a gym at the *Tribune*, and so after work they'll like head downstairs to play basketball every now and then. And I've gone before, just to be one of the guys, but I don't necessarily enjoy it so I kind of stopped going. There are, in

general, when you're working on a team with anybody, there is interest in different things. And you want to find that common ground where you can relate to people, find ways in which you can relate. So I'm trying to do that with the staff. I don't know if that helps.

EP: It does. And interestingly enough, three of my six interviews have brought up happy hour situations. So you are not alone.

VA: Really! That's funny.

EP: Yeah in one of my interviews, she worked at a newspaper where the guys would all go to a topless bar she said, and she said she never could go.

VA: Well yeah! So think of pizza lunch. I went to pizza lunch once when I was in grad school and this is partly because I didn't know people there very well, but also it's male-dominated so they talk about things that weren't particularly interesting to me or there were references that I didn't catch and so I went once and didn't go back. Now, I go to pizza lunch and I know people there more but still sometimes they're talking about stuff that I have no clue what they're even referencing or what player they're talking about, you know?

EP: Yeah. And that's why it was interesting when you were talking about graduating because in my photoj class of like 20 of us, I think there were like three girls. So it was a ton of guys, so I've always felt like that, like there was this boys club. Maybe it's just because I don't know anything about sports, but they're always talking about boy things. So, how do you feel like the men that you work with view you as a woman in this management or leadership role?

VA: You mean the photographers? Or every man in the newsroom?

EP: Both.

VA: Okay. This I wonder, I really don't know. I've been treated with nothing but respect in the newsroom and I absolutely do not feel like it has that boys club feeling, you know, where you feel like you're an outsider. Everybody's really respectful and straightforward and we're all colleagues so it's a great newsroom. What I wonder about though is maybe someone's inner thoughts, you know, what they really think and don't say kind of thing. There's situations – when I was just graduating from St. Mary's and I did this multimedia, not multimedia, communications internship at USAA in San Antonio in their communications department and I worked with a photographer and a designer. And the photographers said something to me and it's just always stuck with me and it just kind of floats up to my head every now and then and it just makes me wonder. She said “you know, if you're a man and you assert yourself, you're doing your job right, you're the boss. If you're a woman and you assert yourself, you're a bitch.” And she's been working corporate America for a very long time. A different time, I don't know if it's exactly the same now. But I do wonder because there are times when I do need to have conversation

with someone and you know maybe set some boundaries or question them about an issue or reinforce something, you know these are the standards for how we do things here and maybe someone's not meeting those standards, I have to have that conversation with them. And I wonder how they perceive me. If they perceive me as the manager who is doing their job or if they just blow me off and say "oh she's just being a bitch." Bossy. You know. I don't know, like I said I've always been treated with respect and I haven't had any major issues with anyone but I do wonder sometimes.

EP: I guess I just wonder especially, if you're the first female photo editor, and someone like Don who's been there for 15 years and is older, how he would perceive you in that role.

VA: Am I being quoted word for word here? Is this going to be transcribed?

EP: I have to transcribe it and, I don't know if you did a thesis or a project, but I have to put the transcriptions in the appendix but I think that my writing won't include direct quotes.

VA: Okay.

EP: Is that a concern?

VA: Well yeah, there's an example I have but it's of someone who's currently on staff and I don't really want to get into dirty details that are going to be out for anyone to read, especially students who it could possibly get back to that someone on staff.

EP: That's fine, I won't pressure you into sharing anything that you don't want to.

VA: Okay.

EP: I guess we touched on most of the rest of this stuff. How would you describe your personal leadership style?

VA: Like I said, I see our department as a team overall. I'm kind of like the person that's in charge of steering the ship and I set expectations and I trust that photographers are going to do their job to the best of their ability and so far they have not let me down. And I step in when needed. That's kind of how I like to play it. I don't like to overly manage people, I don't think it's necessary.

EP: And if there's a situation in which you need to take a heavier hand, you know if something goes wrong, how would you handle that situation?

VA: Well, this is like, the more I've had to do it, you know, have harder conversations with people, the more it helps. I try to ask them about the issue and I try to ask them their side of the story and see what they have to say about it. And from there it "okay, based on what you said and based on what happened, this is how I need things to be done



differently” or “here’s how I need you to approach it next time” or “I need you to communicate with me with so and so or such and such photo request fell through” things like that. But yeah, it’s conversations.

EP: So I only have one more questions here that we haven’t touched on already and that is that there’s a saying that clothes make the man, clothes make the woman, does clothing matter, do you think? What do you wear to work?

VA: Oh my goodness. I really struggled with this when I first started working here. I was deathly afraid, I did not want to have any sort of male attention or risk having any male attention in the newsroom or when I was out shooting. So I looked terrible. I felt like I had to dress like a man, basically. So you can’t really wear a skirt because you could be on the floor, you could be crawling across the floor at a news conference, like, taking pictures has you all over the place. I was wearing pants, I still have these pants, I think I bought them a size too big because they’re so baggy on me. But I was wearing those pants, and brown shoes, I don’t know. But slowly I became more comfortable with the fact that, okay I don’t have to hide the fact that I am a female. I can be able to look like a woman and still do my job. I hope I’m not the only woman who went through this. Yeah, I started off wearing baggy clothes, trying to not look feminine. I didn’t want that kind of attention. But over time I started to wear what I like to wear, which is you know, nice looking shirts, nice looking pants or capris, sometimes I even wear skirts as long as it’s long enough. And it’s okay if I’m wearing the proper size, I don’t have to wear baggy clothing and hide the fact that I have hips and breasts. So does it matter? Our dress code is business casual and with the photo department we lean a little more on the casual of business casual, I think, because of the nature of what we do and where we’re at. You know, we could be at a construction site to a funeral and back and forth. I think it matters to look professional but I don’t think, as I did, feel you have to hide the fact that you’re a woman and that you have curves.

EP: Okay I’m circling back real quick...how many women work in the office? How many women go on this happy hour?

VA: We had one or two leave a few months ago, but let’s see...I’d say there’s six of us.

EP: Okay, well that’s all the questions I have, so is there anything else you’d like to add?

VA: Um, nope!

EP: Well thanks so much for agreeing to help me with this.

VA: You’re welcome, that was fun.

2.

Subject: MaryAnne Golon

Age: 53

Position: Director of Photography at the *Washington Post*

Interview Date: 7/25/14

Elizabeth Pierson: Can you start by saying your name, your age and your current job position?

MaryAnne Golon: My name is MaryAnne Golon. I am the Director of Photography at the *Washington Post* and I'm 53 years old.

EP: Can you briefly explain to me how you got to where you are today? What was your path to photo editing?

MG: I was a photographer from a very early age and was on my high school newspaper and yearbook and wanted to be an art photographer actually. But the only way to get near photography or functioning dark rooms was to do journalistic work, so I could get to a dark room. So I did a lot of that early on in my career. I went to two different universities for my undergraduate and graduated ultimately with photojournalism and English degrees; I got a BS in photojournalism and a BA in English. I got an internship as a photo editor. At that point I still thought I might end up being a photographer but the internship as a photo editor was like finding my professional home and that's where I've been ever since.

EP: And where was your internship?

MG: At Time Magazine.

EP: And how did you get from there to the *Washington Post*?

MG: Well, I was at Time Magazine as an intern, like I said, and then I freelanced there for a couple years and then I was hired on staff as a picture researcher. And I worked myself all the way to the top of the food chain. When I left the magazine I was Director of Photography. But in between, all those many years, I was at Time for 13 years and when I left Time I went to US News & World Report, I was there for 3 years and then I went back to Time and was there another 10 years. And then I quit in June of 2008 with the intention of following a freelance career to do more of what I had always done on the side, which is teaching and exhibition and book projects. But I happened to quit about five months before the economy tanked so my freelance career wasn't quit as lucrative as I had hoped it might be, with the economy tanking, although I survived very very well for four years as a freelancer. And then I was approached by the *Washington Post* for the Director of Photography job here and I thought that because of all the things that were happening at the *Washington Post* that it would be an interesting return to daily and weekly journalism, which was what my career was to begin with. So I took the job.

EP: Perfect. So what's a typical day in the life of the Director of Photography at the *Washington Post*?

MG: Well it's extremely busy and it starts very very early in the morning, where you're reading not only whatever updates have been made to your website since you went to sleep the night before, but to many others that you have bookmarked on your friendly browser. Then I read at least headlines and ledes of 3 or 4 newspapers every morning. I check newspapers from around the world's front pages and to see how we shape up with the other front pages. I make my way to the office in time for a couple of the morning news meetings – the earliest morning news meeting starts at 7. I get in around 9:30 usually and then I usually leave by 8 at night. 7:30, 8, 8:30 [laughs]. That's after we've closed our first edition in print, but during the day we hit multiple deadlines for the web and our homepage, which start, as I said, at 7, and then another one at 10, another at noon, another at 2 and at 4 we're deciding what's going to be on the front page of the print publication. We'll have that come directly from stories and longer write-throughs of things that perhaps we've been doing on the web all day and other features. And so at 4 o'clock we present what we think the mix is for the front page of our sections and the front page of the paper. And then we'll usually post that unless we're doing major changes or rethinks of what we're doing in print. I'll turn to enterprise stuff that we're working on, and that could be longer term, not daily projects. So I focus my attention on different parts of the newspaper, could be the investigative team, could be the health & science team, could be the national/political team, could be whoever's doing enterprise work. And then by the time the first edition of the paper closes, as I said by 8:30, we've already checked color and got the first run, that's usually the end of the day.

EP: Wow, long day.

MG: I mean, not completely, because then I stay on email until I go to sleep at night. And then it starts all over again.

EP: Seriously, what a long day!

MG: Yeah it is a long day.

EP: So who do you work directly with on a day to day basis then?

MG: I work most closely with my own team. So I have a deputy and three primary news editors that I work with every single day. One is in charge of foreign and national. One is our assignment editor. And the third is our senior night editor, who sort of takes the baton around 3 o'clock in the afternoon and works until 11 or 12 at night. That editor and the three of us are mostly planning the A section. So I work with them very very closely. I work very very closely with the other directors on the visual presentation team, so I'm very close with the Design Director; I'm very close with the Graphics Director. And we meet two or three times a week to see how we're doing with communication between our staff, et cetera, but we work together every single day on specific stories, little things

here, little things there. And for the enterprise I was talking about, that I usually focus on later in the afternoons, I work primarily with our weekend top editor, who's in charge of the Sunday paper.

EP: So how many photo editors, specifically, do you work with?

MG: How many photo editors are on my team?

EP: Yes.

MG: Well, my team is split. There are five photo editors who are only digital. And what I mean by that is they are manning the homepage, building galleries, only doing digital...they have nothing to do with print. And then I have seven total print photo editors that – well they're photo editors, please don't call them print photo editors – I have seven photo editors that do both print and digital. I have five that do just digital. I have seven who do digital and print. So it's 12 editors total, and that's for seven-day-a-week coverage.

EP: And how many photographers do you work with? Or can you explain to me how photographers work at the *Washington Post*?

MG: Well we have 13 staff photographers and we have probably another 10 very frequent contributors. I would, as a joke, call them permalancers because we work with them all the all the time, maybe 2, 3, 4 times a week. So that's the numbers. How it works is that we're generating journalism, so we assign them. So we have 3 of the 13 staff photographers are devoted full time to sports coverage, so we really only have ten that are available for local, national, and international assignments. So it's a very small team.

EP: So then, first for photo editing, and then I'll ask about photographers, but what's the demographic makeup of the photo editing team, specifically gender and age?

MG: I'm not sure...how does that help you?

EP: Ok, this is where the questions take a turn to home in on what I'm writing about. I'm writing a thesis on women in photo editing positions, because a lot of the research I've found notes how it was a male dominated field for so long and so I'm interested – especially with books being published like #girlboss and Lean In – in women working as editors.

MG: Ok, got it. So there are five women, seven men. And they range in age from - well wait, Chloe's not on my list yet, so that would make one extra, so thirteen. I'm counting off my staff list. We have a new person starting in two weeks, so we should count her. So thirteen. So she would make it six and seven now. And they range in age from 27 to, I think I'm the oldest, 53.

EP: And what about the staff photographers?

MG: Staff photographers...I have seven women and eight men. So it's fifteen...I said thirteen. Man I'm getting none of this right, so you'll have to go back to fix that. So it's 50/50. And the photographers range in age from 37 to god knows how high. I think one of the photographers may be in the sixties.

EP: So how does this compare to other magazines or newspapers you've worked at?

MG: Well magazines and newspapers are completely different. I don't know of a single magazine in the United States of America that has any staff photographers, except for Sports Illustrated, which is a sports magazine, it's not news. I have no idea how it compares to...are you talking about demographic makeup? I don't understand the question.

EP: I'm talking most specifically about photo editing. How does the demographic makeup of your team right now compare to other places that you've worked at? Do you feel like typically it's male dominated or that this is about right for it to be 50/50?

MG: Well, when I first started in the business it was male dominated, but I don't see it as male dominated at all anymore. And certainly by the time I left my last full-time employment at Time Inc. it was easily 50/50. I don't see that much of a difference.

EP: So in your opinion do you think women do the job of photo editing differently than their male counterparts?

MG: No. I believe it's...no I don't. I think they might handle dealing with photographers differently. I think they might deal with photographers differently, but I think that males and females in every workplace, not just photojournalism, deal with people differently because there's gender-specific differences between men and women. But the job is identical, whether you're a male or a female, there are the same expectations. Again, I don't really understand the question... are there different expectations of a woman than there are of a man? Or...I mean, I don't understand the question.

EP: No worries. I guess I'm interested in this question in two parts. I mean the job specifically, if I'm given a set of photographs do you think I'm making a different edit than a man?

MG: Well if you are, then you wouldn't be on my team. I would expect the same edit from anyone on my team, whether male or female, because it should just be a group of the best pictures. So no, I don't see a difference or I don't think there should be a difference. I think that men and women should edit as identical, but I don't know if I'm answering your question.

EP: It does. And the other thing is that I view, or at least in my experience at Mizzou, I think of photo editing, especially when dealing with photographers, as a leadership

position. So I was wondering too, if you think that as a woman in a leadership position that they would do that portion of the job differently than a male counterpart.

MG: Well, I don't think they should, necessarily. I'm sort of gender neutral. I mean I am not gender neutral as a human being, I am 100% female, but I do not believe that there should be some giant difference. In most of my career, because I don't know how old you are - let me ask you how old you are, you're asking how old I am...how old are you?

EP: I'm 23.

MG: Okay so you're 30 years younger than me. And 30 years ago, when I was your age, was there a difference? Yes. There was a total difference. But that's the world I grew up in, not the world you're growing up in. By the time now, at 23, when you're 23 and you hit the workplace, it's 50/50 women and men. When I started, when I was 21, 22, 23, it was 95% men. So I didn't want to call attention to the fact I was female, by any stretch of the imagination so I always said "treat me the same as you would treat anyone else." Now, people say "oh no, let's take advantage of her femininity" or "let's have a female way to do this or a female way to do that" and my whole approach to my career from the very get go has been "no, I'm just going to be really good at my job, so I'm going to be a really solid picture editor and I'm going to make good business judgments and I'm going to find the best photographers and choose their best work to publish and I'm going to collaborate well with other people." And those skill sets are not gender specific. Those are the skill sets required to be a good or a great picture editor, but they're the same whether you're female or male. To me, there's no difference.

EP: So when you first got into the field, and you were the minority, can you recall and specific examples of times you were conscious of being a woman in this male dominated field?

MG: Oh my god I was conscious of it 24/7! It's a long long long time ago. That's what I'm saying. It's funny because I've been approached many many times in my career to be a part of women's organizations, like Women in Business or Women Leaders in Photojournalism or Women Photojournalists in Washington, all these different things and I was never interested. And people said "why are you so anti women?" and I said "I'm not, I'm pro women, but I don't want to look like I need to separate myself in order to play with the guys." So I come from a different era. It's funny because now women band together and say "we're the girls and we need our own place and we're the women" and I always resisted that because I thought that, by separating yourself, you're already separating yourself. Why make a difference in who's one thing or another thing? Because it's about skill set. Who's doing the best job? Who's bringing the best leadership and management and creativity to their position? What difference does it make whether they are male or female? You see, so I might have a unique perspective.

EP: I mean, David Rees directed me to you because you could give me that long career perspective.

MG: Yeah it was horrible. When I first started in the business it was horrible. People would offer me up to have lunch with somebody hoping that they could get a person to work for them because they thought I was cute. Horrible things like that that would never happen in today's workplace. I remember sitting down with an executive when I was probably 27 and I was sitting down with an executive and the executive said "oh you're going to do just fine because you're very pretty." Not because I was talented. Not because I brought a lot to the table, but because I was very pretty. You know, if you were to say that now, if you were in a workplace and you said that now, it would be cause for a discrimination suit or something. What do you mean I'm pretty? What do you mean by that? But attractiveness was a big thing and I don't hear that as a part of any discussion anymore. I do think that the other thing I've seen change, which is so much for the better, is that not only was I working in a world of just men, but I was working in a world of just white men. So now there's far more diversity in the workplace, so I feel like gender diversity is almost complete. You know, even when I was just breaking down the staff for you, it's like half and half. But also in diversity. I mean we have a very diverse staff. And that's really great too because I feel like there's not just gender differences that are super important in journalism – I'm talking about journalism now, not just photo editing, but journalism in general – there are so many cultural differences and the more people you bring into the mix who can bring those experiences and those culture differences and perspectives to journalism, the more well-rounded it will be. So I'm also 100% pro-diversity in the workplace. I have African American people and Asian people and white people and Spanish people. We have a lot of different people that bring their perspective and community to the table which makes us better at what we do too.

EP: So now I'm interested in the beginning of your career when you first got into photo editing...how do you feel the men you worked with viewed you as a woman in what I call a leadership or management role?

MG: Well I wasn't really in a leadership or management role then. I was beginning my career. I think that my hard work was eventually recognized because I moved up the ladder. And I think that moving up the ladder was not because I was pretty but because I was good at the job. And there were other women who came and left in the same workplace I was and were not as successful as I was, so that supports my argument that I've already given you and that is that it's most important to be good at your job, you know? And that the gender difference doesn't have to matter, especially now. It's amazing to me. 30 years ago? Forget it. But even 20 years ago. How much better it is now that I don't even see it. It's not utopia by any stretch of the imagination because women are still paid less than men. I'm sure I'm paid less than men in my position and the man who was in the position before me. But the part of it that I see as so so so so so much better is that I don't think anybody looks anymore, even with a second glance, and thinks "oh this person's a woman" or "this person's a man" they just think "this person's a colleague." And that was the world I was dreaming of 30 years ago.

EP: So you touched on this a little bit at the very beginning but do you think that you interact differently, or that women photo editors interact differently with male photographers compared to female photographers?

MG: No, I hope not. I mean once again I would say I hope not. I don't know that to be true but I can tell you that I don't treat them differently. I mean there are certain situations where gender becomes an issue because of the nature of the story and I'll give you an exact for instance. If you're doing a story in Afghanistan and you're embedding with the Afghan army that's male, you can't put a female photographer in there because they won't allow it. If you're working in a situation that's cultural, even if you're from another culture or whatever you can't put a female photographer on an embed with an Afghan army. They'd just say forget it, we won't let them go. But there are also situations, I can flip it in the same country, where I'd rather have female photographer than a male photographer, like Afghanistan – as long as they're not embedding with the Afghan army – because a woman can cover both sides. The woman can be with the men and the woman can be with the women. So it's actually like being a third sex, if you will. If women are the only ones who can cover women, women can also cover men. But men can not cover women, you see what I'm saying? You can't see women outside of their abaya or their chador or whatever name depending on the culture for women being covered. So men can't go into the home, ever, but a woman could. So there are certain situations where it's an advantage to be a woman and certain situations where it's not possible to be a woman, like I gave you those two examples in the same country. I don't see men and women differently. I mean we have the exact same role. Everyone gets the same vacation, everybody gets the same number of days off, everybody's paid equally, so no I don't treat them differently. I think that sometimes there are certain men and certain women who bring a special punch to the work that they're doing and you look for that talent, but I don't think it's gender specific. There's one photographer that I'm thinking of immediately on my staff who's male, who's incredibly sensitive and can work in incredibly delicate situations and everything because he's so sensitive and unassuming and terrific; and I have a female on my staff who is like a bull in a china shop sometimes and can get shut down in assignments because of her sort of brusque attitude. And I think that those are gender reversal roles in a way from 40 years ago. I don't treat them differently because of their personality differences but I'd say that I have gender flipped people in roles that 20 years ago people would have said "oh that's a guy" but no, sorry, that's a woman. The really sensitive one over here is a guy, who's 6'6" or whatever. See I don't see it as gender based, I see it as personality and what interests people and the way they relate to other people. But I do think women tend to be tougher in management positions because they have to – well, they feel that they have to – hold their own in a male dominated environment. So they'll be less soft – I don't know what words you want to hear for your project or words that would be useful to you – but things like women being weaker or softer or whatever. I've seen lots of women managers where I've seen men be softer than them because they over compensate. I'm sure plenty of people have seen me that way. I'm very straightforward. I'm very no nonsense. I'm 6 feet tall. I have a loud voice. So I'm sure a lot of people think "oh she's scary." But then once people get to know me they realize I'm not scary at all, I've just spent too many years of my life in New York.



EP: Encouraging for someone about to move to New York.

MG: Good! New York will toughen you up.

EP: I'm excited for it. My next question was to describe your personal leadership style, but you just did that...

MG: Well, I think that what I consider myself is honest and fair. And very very direct. And that can be a very negative thing. I don't like to play games. There's nothing passive aggressive about me and as a matter of fact I despise passive aggressiveness in other people and I see a lot of it in the workplace. Where people get their way by behaving badly instead of just confronting their issues and dealing with them. So I think that I might seem, at times, confrontational when I'm not actually confrontational, I just want to take the thing out of the closet and put it on the table and say "Clearly there's a communication problem here, so why don't we get it out?" and a lot of people don't like to do that. They like to just say "I don't know what you're talking about...everything's fine" when in fact it's not fine at all. And there's a fearlessness you have to have to be able to confront problems that I find much more common in New York than in Washington DC. It's harder, it's always been harder – I lived here once before for three years – it's always been harder for me here because people are slower – not slower like not intelligent – I mean they literally move slower. They walk slower, they talk slower. They city has a slower place. And I think that the people who don't fit in – as in any environment you go to – if you're the one walking faster than everyone else they go "What's wrong with her?" And I'm not the only New Yorker that I've talked to that felt that way. And when I say New Yorker of course I'm not a New Yorker but I lived in New York for more than half of my life so I feel like you end up picking up the rhythms and flows of your city, wherever you live. So I'm trying desperately in my new environment to slow down.

EP: I'm from Chicago so in the move to Missouri I felt the same way.

MG: Yeah that's exactly it. Everyone's like "what's your rush?" I know what you mean.

EP: And I'm 5'11" so I walk fast as well!

MG: Well there you go! We'll have to meet sometime.

EP: Yes. Two tall women in the same place. I have just one more question. There's a saying that clothes make the man, clothes make the woman. Does clothing matter in your opinion? What do you wear to work?

MG: I think it does. I think that clothing matters in every situation. I think that you have to dress appropriately. And luckily for me I'm in presentation – at the *Washington Post* it's called presentation, previously I would have called it in the creative area of the company, meaning that photography and design and graphics and people in the art field –

there's usually a much wider berth and you can be a little more artier, a little bit more artsy. But you still have to dress appropriately. I don't wear flip flops to work. I've seen interns come to work in flip flops and I've wondered what that was going to do for them professionally. But I think that the entire workforce – not on the business side, I'm talking about journalism because I can only speak for the field I work in – but I think that journalists have both improved because 20-30 years ago, the images that you would see in popular films or in televisions they were always slobs with cans rolling out of their cars and scraps of paper on their desk and I think it was sort of a cliché, and I think there are plenty of people like that in the newsroom that I work in. But the bigger picture that I'm talking about is that the whole society, with the exception of hard core business bankers and those people, have become more mellow. Meaning that I see CEOs on stage wearing jeans, with a blazer and stuff, where 20 years ago you would have never, you would have never seen that. CEOs were always in suits. So I feel like there's been a relaxing. I don't wear suits, but I would say that I dress...well I can tell you that what I have on right now is an orange dress with nice shoes and a shrug and some Maasai beads. I wear what I feel like wearing, I just try to dress appropriately. I have a sister who's a banker and I know how she dresses and god help me if I ever had to be a banker. She has to wear panty hose in the year 2014. And it doesn't matter if it's 100 degrees, she has to wear them. And she has to wear a certain length skirt, but that's the business world because she's a banker. It's career appropriate. But I do think that if you dress like slob...well if you have signature style, you know, if you're like Steve Jobs and you want to wear a black turtleneck and Levi's because maybe it's your signature style or maybe other clothes didn't fit him properly even though he had a bazillion dollars, I don't know, but if you have a personal style I think you can pretty much get away with it in journalism, unless you're the executive editor and you have to go out and meet with the president, you know what I mean? Or you have to go out and meet the governor or other things like that. But I think it depends on how outward facing you are. But I think that journalism is far more relaxed than many many other industries, and I say that from firsthand knowledge because I have a sister who's a banker and she wears suits.

EP: Good thing I'm not going into banking! Pantyhose sound pretty awful.

MG: Yeah good thing.

EP: Well that's all of the questions I have...is there anything else you would like to add?

MG: Well, just that I think that in the magazine business – and I really feel like adding this – is the only place where, and this was specific to Time Inc., where I no longer work, and I don't want to say anything disparaging about Time Inc. because I owe my real life experience to a terrific, terrific run there, but it's interesting that the photo desk at Time Inc. – which might make it interesting for you to talk to some other [people at Time Inc., this is Time and People and Sports Illustrated – it's really female. It's like the only female place you'll find at any of those publications. You know, like overly female, because like back in the day – and I can say this in terms of your project – like 30 years ago a woman was the executive assistant to a powerful editor at Time Inc., they could move to a picture editor, because they figured anybody could pick pictures. Now that

changed dramatically since 30 years ago. I mean I was part of a new generation of traditionally trained photography people: I had a photography education, I worked as a photographer, et cetera. And I wouldn't say that happens at any of those desks now, so please don't take that the wrong way. I think that now it's all very professional but you'll still see that it's very female dominated. And it's also the same at Conde Nast that photo editing - and Meredith, and at Hearst, for that matter - is dominated by women because that's the one place where guys aren't as intimidated as they are in others and I think it goes all the way back to impressions from 20 or 30 years ago. I'm not saying that my editor would say "oh yeah, anybody can pick a good picture" that's not what I'm talking about. If you're going to give power in some area, it's safer for it to be visual power, which I don't feel like was the case in newspapers ever. Newspaper photo editing staffs and newspaper management has been male dominated and remains male dominated in America, with the unusual female leader like at *The New York Times*, and then they get kicked out. But I think you get where I'm coming from. I think that you'll find more females in photo editing particularly in New York City, which is inarguably, in my opinion, the publishing capital of the United States, it's dominated by females, which is completely the opposite of newspapers.

EP: That's really interesting. That's why I said that David wanted me to talk to you specifically. He said that you could give me a perspective on magazines and newspapers...you have a long, nice career.

MG: Yeah, I've been around forever. I can't believe I'm still upright.

EP: No he certainly didn't mean it like that!

MG: I'm just kidding. I just feel like I'm a million years old. So the places I would suggest...there's a woman named Elizabeth Griffin who is a young editor at Esquire.com, I think she's the lead photo editor, and that would be like a man's magazine...a girl at a man's magazine, which I find would probably be a really super interesting perspective for you. I'll look up her email address and send it to you. The other person I think would be really interesting to talk to...I'm trying to think of younger people because Elizabeth Griffin is like 30. I'm trying to think of a girl who works at a men's magazine like Esquire, where the entire masthead is male. She probably would have some kind of perspective that would be really useful. Let me see if I can find her email for you right now... [irrelevant chatter while finding the email address] ...just say MaryAnne Golon gave you the email address and if she can't do it, shoot her not me!

EP: Thanks I think she would be great to talk to.

MG: So you're in the graduate program right? You're doing your thesis.

EP: Yeah, I'm doing my thesis now, so I'll graduate in December.

MG: So are you going to be at the Missouri Photo Workshop?

EP: I hope so. I'm hoping to time my defense so I can come. I volunteered there for like three years in a row.

MG: Have we met there?

EP: No, I haven't been there a year when you've been there. I did it my freshman, sophomore and junior year.

MG: Oh so I missed you every time. Well I'm there this year so come and shake my hand and I'll shake yours.

EP: Yes! You'll find me...I'm really tall.

MG: And I'm even taller than you!

EP: Well hopefully I get to meet you. Thanks again for helping me out with this, it really means a lot.

MG: You're very welcome.

3.

Subject: Alyssa Goodman

Age: 23

Position: Photo Editor on the Headquarters Desk at the Associated Press

Interview Date: 7/10/14

Elizabeth Pierson: How did you get to where you are today? What was your path to photo editing?

Alyssa Goodman: Well I initially wanted to be a photographer but it wasn't until I came back from Brussels and took the photo desk management class and I realized that this is something that I actually really liked to do and I liked pushing people to get an end result and watching the progress, and having that last eye on things and having people trust your knowledge that you can get them to that point where they'll be happy with what they did that day. So luckily Brian Kratzer pushed me to take the photo editing class and then also to be an ADOP and that's when I realized this is the thing I want to do. But then I went to the Kalish Photo Editing Workshop, the only editing workshop that there is, and that's when I realized that I could see myself doing this for the rest of my life. I love the community and I just love hearing the knowledge that goes into making every decision. So when I left Kalish I knew that this is really what I wanted to do but my biggest struggle was how do I go from student to photo editor and I was really lucky to have good guidance and someone pushed me to apply to the AP job and I thought that there was no way in hell, to be honest. I really think it was the interview process that solidified their decision to give me an opportunity and a chance to show myself.

EP: What is a typical day in the life of a photo editor at The Associated Press?

AG: The thing about being a photo editor at the AP is that there is no typical day, which is not the answer people in office jobs really want to hear. Any day you go in, you don't know what is going to happen. And sometimes it happens when you walk into your shift and sometimes you're in that last hour and all hell breaks loose. Which is also what I love about this job, is every day isn't the same and it brings whole new challenges. And at this point I feel like I've done pretty much everything there is to do on the desk – award shows, Emmys, Grammys, Oscars, the Tonys. I've also done everything else, like sports. I've also started supervising the news desk, which is something that I'm feeling more comfortable with. I do weekend night supervisor and last night I supervised a Wednesday night, so during the week, which is a little different. You have more support on the desk, which helps a lot. There's more staff as well as managers working, but you never know what you can come up with at night. Like the shift could be going really smooth and everything's going along great and next thing you know someone comes over and there's a shooting. And you have to respond, and you have to respond calmly and quickly. You need to have a cool head. And so I guess there is no typical shift, except every shift is busy.

EP: How many photo editors like you are there?

AG: Right now I think we're probably around 20.

EP: And how many are women?

AG: Well luckily the last few hires have been women because I think they kind of realized that shift in the desk. Before the last two hires there was one woman. Well two women, but one just left. So there's four of us now.

EP: What is the chain of command in the AP photo department?

AG: At any given time there's a supervisor on duty and the supervisor is really just like everybody else. They're a photo editor, but they kind of are the liaison between the managers across the region, people around the world, and the people sitting in the office. So they, like yesterday, that time I needed to call a manager and see if that manager wanted to hire a staff photographer, a freelancer or somebody to go shoot the stand off in Texas. Or what is the plan. So that was a situation where I had to go to the manager of that region. However, something really big happened in Tokyo and then Tokyo brings it to my attention and says "can we run this photo." Those are the kinds of decisions that I don't want to be the last one to make, so I bring it to my manager and then my manager will raise it to the deputy chief who will raise it to the Director of Photography.

EP: Who is the Director of Photography?

AG: Santiago Lyon.

EP: Who do you work directly with on a day-to-day basis?

AG: I feel very fortunate because I work with a lot of our photographers around the world and the state and that's primarily the focus. And I work with a lot of freelancers as well. I work with the nerve center, so the people who oversee our coverage worldwide: what's being tweeted, what's being pushed out there more, how things are linked together and what order things are linked. I work very closely with the nerve center. I also work closely with reporters and supervisors all over the US. And oftentimes I'll have conversations with the supervisors and I have no idea even where in the US they are. Yesterday I had a supervisor contact me and ask if they could run a bunch of questions by me and I said of course and they called me and I was like "oh my gosh, this person's from Chicago! I had no idea" until I saw the 312. You really talk to more people remotely than you do face to face.

EP: What is the demographic makeup of the photo department? Most specifically I'm interested in gender and age. You already said there were four women...

AG: Well, I'm a young woman working there and all the managers are men, in my office. So that's a little interesting. Managers around the country, I think it's pretty equal of men and women. But in the office it's a lot of older men. For the most part they're there to

help you and guide you but at the same time I act strategically when I approach them with certain things because you don't want their answer to be, which I've seen it be, "Oh well I've been here 44 years and I know better" and you want to avoid that response from somebody who'd been at the company twice as long as you've been there, they're really going to lie. There's a lot of old men.

EP: Are the other women your age?

AG: One is much older, and she went to Mizzou as well. And the others are all new hires within the last 3 years and they're all in their mid to late 20s.

EP: But the majority of men are old? Specifically the managers?

AG: Yeah there's no young guys there. They're all 40 and up.

EP: In your opinion, does gender matter at the Associated Press? Example of why/why not.

AG: I felt uncomfortable when I first came in but I feel like my managers trusted my knowledge of sports and felt pretty comfortable putting me on the sports desk. I mean, I fall asleep reading sports and I wake up reading sports and that's really where I wanted to be and that's the best place for me to learn the photographers, and that's a lot easier on the sports desk. So I wanted to start there. However, that's typically a male-dominated field and I still very much like it is. Most of our sports writers are and most of our sports photographers are all male. So I felt very much like my knowledge was always being tested at first because I was a woman and it was little comments, like I think I told you about how when I first got there and they were like "oh when you want to look up stats and things there's this thing called ESPN" and they were like teaching me how to do that. And I was like, "dear god I've been using the Internet my entire life and I read ESPN on a regular basis but thank you very much, I appreciate it." Like you know when you're very new you just smile and say thank you. Thank you. But I think it was because I was so young and because I was a woman that my knowledge was questioned. It's just stuff like that. I had a photographer one time, I had questions on his captions and he blatantly said "I've been editing things, and I've been shooting baseball for this company for 30 years. It's a sports job, okay?" And I said yes, thank you, I understand baseball very well. However, in this situation, I do not think this caption is correct because here's what actually happened in the play. So just being able to support myself and know how to handle it when somebody does get like that. This industry is very opinionated in the sense that there never really is a right and a wrong. There's just kind of always someone else's opinion so it's just being respectful of that and knowing that I am still the underdog in age and gender, especially when I'm working on the sports desk.

EP: So do you think that, for the people who hire at the AP, that there is there an effort to diversify the department in terms of gender?

AG: Yes, oh definitely. I think that they realize – I actually forgot, the entertainment

person is a female, but she doesn't work on our desk. But when you look at the makeup of it, and I think that they see, it's just very much now turning toward a female-dominated area. If you look at *The New York Times*, all their higher-ups are all female, Director of Photography all the way down. They have so many female editors now and it's very different and I think that you can see the success sometimes as well. And it's not like they're better or worse, it's a matter of the people you put there, and their work ethic. At the AP I think they felt very comfortable hiring two new women at the desk because they knew it was something that they didn't have. They bring an energy and a work ethic, being young and female that I don't think they've seen in a while. And I think that, and this sounds weird, but I think that the older men on the desk respond a little better to a young woman working the desk as opposed to a young man. And there was a previous young man, before he left, and there was another young man with him and I know that they clashed a lot with the older guys because they've been around for a while and I think that that probably some of the reasons toward hiring a woman.

EP: How is gender discussed in your office?

AG: I don't think it's necessarily discussed. I don't think it's something photo people have blatantly talked about or understood to be a problem. I think at this point people recognize me for my work ethic and not necessarily my gender.

EP: In your opinion, based on other photo editors you've worked with, how do women do the job differently—or similarly—to their male counterparts?

AG: I think because, to be honest, most of the majority now of women in my office are younger and we've all gone to photojournalism schools. And I think it's kind of a different age and a different wave of a generation, where as a lot of these people are like "Well I've been doing this for so long" and a lot of time they'll look at me and say "Well, that's the new way" and I'll have to look at them and say "no, no, no – that's not the new way, it's the way." You know, you can't justify your decisions by saying "well that's new and I just don't know." It's just the way things are now. And I think that us young women have a lot more knowledge of the technology. We're always the ones on Twitter getting user-generated content. We're the ones volunteering to do galleries, update mobile, because it's more of a new-age thing that we have grown up doing and are familiar with, as opposed to some of the older people who are set in their ways and don't necessarily care to learn something new. So what was the original question?

EP: Well I guess I'm just interested in when photos come in and stuff, and in the daily tasks that you're doing, how women do the job differently than their male counterparts.

AG: I also think we pay more attention to little details, which sounds a little sexist but I think that some of the men will pay attention to the bigger picture. And I think that's just how women are wired, where I pay a lot more attention to the color of the photo, the tone that the photo is saying, how I feel when I look at the photo. I think that feeling and emotion towards a photo, and this sounds sexist, is a very female-generated thing. Often I'll be like "this photo makes me feel uncomfortable" and male counterparts will look at



me like I'm crazy. They're like "it's a photo, it's on the wire, it came through." And I'm like "no, you know, his face is kind of odd, I wouldn't want that photo of me out there, I'm going to pass it." So I think that we bring more emotion to the photos that we're looking at. It's just how women are hard-wired, we're hard-wired to be a little more emotional and more sensitive toward images.

EP: What are the greatest challenges facing photo editors? Are the challenges ever related to gender?

AG: I think that some of the challenges that I feel, when I look at all of the management right now, is that I wonder "can I be that?" I'm still very new in this industry, especially at my company, and I wonder if they see that in me. Like, can I head the sports section? That is a dream of mine. And I'm not going to let that go. If it's at this company or somewhere else, I really see myself heading a sports section for a while. I see myself working with sports photographers. I feel capable of doing feature packages. But I don't always feel that that's something I can do. What was the original question again?

EP: What are the greatest challenges facing photo editors? Are the challenges ever related to gender?

AG: I think that upward mobility is always a great challenge. And also just sometimes a lot of these photographers, they don't know me personally, they may just know that I'm a young woman working in this position and I feel like a lot of times before they can trust me with their work, they judge me for that. Whether it's just like "move my photos on the wire, don't question me" or now, the issue is just if I find a mistake in their work and or in their shoot, they're thankful for me taking that time and caring. I care a lot and I make that very clear with my photographers. I think that a lot of times the male photographers are very short and male photo editors are very short with photographers. When I first communicate with a photographer during the day I always, always ask "Hey, how are you? How are you doing today?" because I care about how they feel. Because how they feel during that day is going to affect their work and their work will affect how much I work, how hard I work, how careful I need to be and I think it's really important to know how they feel. And I know that sounds weird, to ask how they are doing today and is everything going well, but it's a really big part. And I think that's something that my male counterparts don't really take into account when they're working with a photographer.

EP: How would a photographer working in the field know that you're a woman and know that you're young? Is your IM screen name have a bio link or anything?

AG: No, but I think that – well, it's actually interesting because I started asking a lot of them "how old do you think I am?" and they always, always, always think I'm older than I am, but that's still young to them. So that's a good question, because they don't necessarily know. But when I was hired it was released that I had recently graduated from college and it was released that I was a female and I think that my name and personality gives it away. I also talk to a lot of them on the phone. But I've asked a bunch recently.

One time I had a photographer in San Francisco who I talk to all the time, and he asked me if I was married, and that blew my mind because in my head I'm like "I'm not even 23 yet! Like, no I'm not married!" But to them, when I ask them how old they think I was, they all think I'm a young woman, and I'm like, well what is that? And to them that's 30. And I think it really blows their minds when they hear how young I am. But for the most part they learn to trust me and to work with me and it feels like a bit nervous to feel like I don't have the gender thing going for me and then you lay on the age aspect on top of it I feel like it influences them but it doesn't necessarily have to.

EP: Do you interact differently with your male photographers compared to your female photographers?

AG: Yeah I think there's a lot of things I talk about with a female counterpart that I wouldn't necessarily talk about with a male counterpart. Just like little things. Like I'll be working and I'll be like "Hey, where are you going?" and they'll be like "Oh, you know where I'm going" and I'll be like "Oh you're going to the candy room" and they'll be like "Oh it's that time!" And I'll be like "Oh I could really go for some candy right now too." But it's just little conversations like that where I would never be like "Hey Dave, you need some candy?" It sounds weird but it's just that it feels like a lot of times with women, it's like "you're my friend and you understand who I am and what I'm going through." Even with a lot of the managers I feel like at first they all intimidated me, but I still feel like they respect what I'm doing. There's just more of like a camaraderie I feel like, with the girls.

EP: What about with the photographers you work with in the field? Do you talk differently or interact differently with the male ones compared to the female ones?

AG: I feel like mostly they're male. But I feel like some of the woman, sometimes I feel less sheltered especially because there's a lot of male photographers that are...well they kind of have a clique. There's basically an A team and they're the ones that go to the Olympics, they're the ones that go to World Cup and they're the ones who work for all these great companies. And they're all male and I'm very, very censored around them because I'm afraid that too much of me is too much of not what the company wants to see. And I guess this sounds horrible but I guess that a lot of times the female freelancers all feel comfortable coming to me. It's also that understanding of how they feel. Women want to leave something feeling like they did a good job. They want instant gratification and they want reassurance that they did okay. There are people that are freelancers, mostly male, that will go to an assignment and never communicate with us. And it's like they have a fear of hearing from us. And I almost always feel like any woman freelance staff that we send to an assignment that we're going to hear from them. They're going to check in and they're going to want that instant gratification. They're going to be super sweet and they just want to make sure that they did a good job. And they care and they'll ask. Where as I don't always feel like a male photographer needs that gratification. And maybe that's a good thing, maybe they're confident in the work that they're doing and they don't need to check in or hear that from us, whereas I feel like most of our females will check in at least one point and see how we're doing too.

EP: How do you feel like the men that you work with view you as a woman in a leadership role?

AG: I definitely feel like I started as an underdog. I had age going for me and gender going for me. And I started on the sports desk, which is male dominated. I feel like I had a lot working against me at first when I really had to work hard. I feel like if you throw a guy on that desk, there's not going to be a million questions. I really do feel like that. And I think it took a while for them with me to feel the same respect and the same mutual excitement. I get really excited when I get to work with certain photographers, like I want to talk to them and I want to work on their beautiful photograph and I feel like now they are mutually excited to have me and that maybe wasn't always the case. But they know now how much I care about the work and how I'm going to take time with what they care about, which is their photos.

EP: So in regards to both the editors that you work with at AP and the photographers how would you describe your personal leadership style?

AG: I think my personal leadership style is that I'm not someone who, well I often come into the office and my manager will come up to me and say "Alyssa, I haven't even heard from you. I didn't even know you walked in the door." Meanwhile I've had several conversations with different photographers. I think I'm a very personal, one-on-one person. My leadership style is that I'm going to do the right thing and I can't necessarily, it's hard because there are people here who have been here for 44 years – twice as long as almost I've been alive - and so my leadership style when I'm supervising is to empower them to do the work, not tell them to do the work and that's so, so, so key. They have to feel like it's not me telling them "hey, can you do that?" I think it's really important because I am young and because I haven't been here that I want to do my best. And there's some things I'll fight and there's some things that I let go. However, the goal always for me, especially when I'm working with someone who's twice my age or who has worked for the company twice as long, is to motivate them intrinsically. They have to be intrinsically motivated to want to move a photo, because if you tell them to do something it's going to make them want to do it less. There are times when I want to be like "well why didn't they do it?" and I'm doing more important things and they feel unimportant. So it's always, always, always about presenting it in a way that makes them want to do it. And that's hard because there are those things that nobody wants to do and I think that my goal as a leader is to develop personal relationships with photographers. I often find that if I'm on news or sports that any given night 20 people will message me and they feel comfortable working with me. There's one photographer that every time I tell her who her editor is that night and she will not message anyone else. It's so funny, but people get offended. And she says to me "you know what? You're the only one who cares, you don't get mad at me and you catch my mistakes" and she says "thank you, I needed that, and you get it. And I like working with you." And I'll be like "great but I'm not your editor tonight!" And she'll still try to talk to me about her photos. But at the same time I think it's my manager style. And I try to work on it a lot. A lot of times the photographers, when we see a mistake and we catch it, I've seen editors take that blame

and throw it right back on [the photographers] and that is the worst thing you can do. I've learned to just absorb a lot of that and just watch them and see that they don't continue to make mistakes. And I think that really, really, really shows in my management style and I think that everybody on the desk is a manager in their own way because we do manage the photographers.

EP: So if something goes wrong, what would you do if you had to reprimand someone?

AG: I sometimes definitely do have to yell at people and I feel awful doing that and I don't like doing it. I think on a lower lever one of the hardest things is approaching someone on the photo desk and telling them they made a mistake and they need to correct it. The other day I went up to somebody and I was like "Hey, you know actually Obama's fundraiser event is tomorrow. I don't think it's today, I read the story and could you double check?" And I try to make it a mutual thing, like "hey I was looking at these photos and they might be wrong," where at the same time I could just tell them "Hey, all these photos you moved are wrong" but instead I just say "Let's just both make sure we're on the same page with this." It's a mutual thing. So a lot of times photographers will be tell me we did something wrong and rather than blaming them, I have to say "I am the editor and I should have caught that." Which is how I used to react. I used to get so down on myself. I would take everything wrong that happened and say "I fucked up." So I've learned to take a lot of it. I have had to yell at some people, especially freelancers. And it's not fun. And there's a couple ways I've handled it to make sure it's handled. One is that you have to get your point across. In most cases you have to have a clear assignment sheet and clear communication with me and if you can't do that, it's never going to work. That's how mistakes happen. And then there's a second thing, and I think this is key, you can contact the photographer later on. There are times when a photographer will send photos and I'll go back to the photos five hours later and I'll always go back and email or IM or talk to them on the phone after I've been upset with them to make sure everything is okay with them. To say here's what happened, here's the problem, but honestly, you did a great job, and I look forward to working with you again. Because that's what makes the photographers happy and makes them want to work with me again.

What unique qualities do you bring to the photo desk? Are there any gender-specific qualities you consciously employ?

I think I bring energy. I work nights and there's normally not a lot managers around. Not that that means there's a lot of stuff we could get away with but we can loudly joke about things. And I think that's something that goes along with my ages. During the day when all the managers are out, I think we're a little quieter. I think I bring a sense of work ethic and pride to what I do that I also think makes people around me want to work hard. I think I'm caring. Being a female and because I work with a lot of men in sports, I see a lot of these guys on the sports desk doing their job without energy. Yesterday there was a game and I was watching the score on the way to work and when I got there I ran over to the sports desk and was cheering. And they all were like "you're glowing!" I can walk in there and I can relate to something they were working on the last two hours. They were

working and pulling photos and they knew I was going to come in like that. The level of excitement I bring to the sports department is unique, and that's what a lot of people tell me. They say a lot of the energy and work ethic has changed on the photo desk because of the enthusiasm I bring to work with me. They were just doing their jobs...they forgot to enjoy it for a while.

EP: There's a saying "clothes make the man, clothes make the woman." Does clothing matter? How does it enter into your work life? What is the dress code in your office?

AG: Yes. Clothing matters. The other day I wore a dress and I had females tell me "you look so nice today" and I knew they meant it well. And it feels a lot different when my male counterparts compliment my outfits. I feel uncomfortable and it's weird. And if a girl says "oh that's a cute dress" I just say thank you. But other days I wear more casual outfits and no one says anything.

EP: What's the general dress code?

AG: During the day it's more formal. Before I started I asked the managers what to wear and they said "well we used to wear ties but then it was the summer and we got hot." So it's kind of all over the place. So I'm so confused. During the day, you're wearing a dress shirt and skirt and flats. I come in in the evening, I usually wear jeans and a t-shirt or a nice shirt or sweater. Weekends I'll wear t-shirts because no managers are there. During the day it's more formal. But that's the environment.

EP: That's all my questions is there anything else you'd like to add?

AG: No! Did I answer everything you needed?

EP: Yes, it was wonderful. Thank you.

4.

Subject: Becky Lebowitz Hanger

Age: 40

Position: Photo Editor at *The New York Times*

Interview Date: 7/16/14

Elizabeth Pierson: Can you start by saying your name, your age, and current job position?

Becky Lebowitz Hanger: My name is Becky Lebowitz Hanger. I'm 40 – had to think about that for a second. I a sports photo editor at *The New York Times*.

EP: Okay. So how did you get to where you are today? What was your path to photo editing?

BLH: I went to Mizzou for grad school and thought that I'd become a photographer and then I was the student director – I don't know what the title is – for POY when hire a student to take the semester off to help run the contest, actually I don't know if they even still do that. But I did that and when MaryAnne Golon who is now the AME for photo at the *Washington Post* but at the time was the DOP at US News & World Report, was one of the judges. And she offered me a picture editing internship because she said that I talked like a photo editor, rather than a photographer. So I did the internship and realized that she was right. And I've since been in photo editing instead of photography. So yeah. I don't know if you need beyond that...

EP: Yeah, so what did you do after that?

BLH: I had my internship at *US News* and then I came back and I went to school and did my master's project – it was an editing project – at the *Hartford Current*. And then after *Hartford Current* I got a job as a picture editor at the *Palm Beach Post* and I was there for a few years and then I was hired at The Times so I came up here.

EP: And were you hired on the sports desk initially?

BLH: I wasn't and we don't – I guess my job title, so let me rephrase that, my job title would just be picture editor. I work in sports. I've worked in sports for the past three years but we – Michelle McNally is our boss, AME for photo, and she, well...all of The Times, is really built around this idea of churn, where they like moving everyone around, Michelle especially, every few years to sort of keep things fresh. So when I first came here I was the National photo editor for a few years and then I was on the Metro desk, I was a metro photo editor for a few years and then I did real estate and now I do sports.

EP: Ok, perfect. So what's a typical day in the life of a photo editor at The NYT?

BLH: I think we have a lot of photo editors, you know, just in sports there are two of us. And on the National desk there are three of them. There are a lot of us. So, there's like 30

I guess, photo editors, maybe more, so I don't know that any two people would tell you the same thing. So I can only answer for me, but I think that my job is actually quite different from most of my coworkers. I work on a news desk, you know, sports has daily deadlines, but I don't work deadline hours. I work nine to five, Monday through Friday because most of my job is that I have to plan features and I edit during the day and I edit the things that are on the website but I don't do most of the games, which are at night. I share my job with Jeff Furticella, who is another photo editor and he comes in at four every afternoon. He puts the paper together. So I will work with designers on big projects or things that we do ahead of time, but I, for the most part, don't do deadline stuff.

EP: So on a day to day basis you're just working on bigger project stuff?

BLH: Yeah, bigger projects and trying to figure out like, you know, well right now we're trying to figure out like how we're going to cover the US Open, it's here in town and we cover it - the tennis tournament, as opposed to golf. You know, who are we going to credential? Are we going to cover it every day? Do we want to do a photo essay beforehand and what will that be? And where will that be and who will shoot it? Another one of our long-term projects a photographers is getting ready to go out on the road for that, you know he sort of shot half of it and so I've been editing that and talking about what we still need and what to look for on the road. And during the day I'll edit a few stories that will go online during the day. I'll plan for stuff. It's a lot of sort of planning and editing. Mostly planning and editing. And, you know, we have one thing, that we were talking about running tomorrow, and the story isn't done but the photos are great so maybe it could be a picture page. Well that's already in so I'll probably sit down with the designer at some point today and design that page and a slideshow...sorry it's kind of a mushy answer.

EP: No that's fine! I've gotten all kinds of answers for that, from like a very regimented hour by hour to stuff like yours.

BLH: Right. And certainly when I was on the metro desk and the national desk the way those desks are structured here, my day was very regimented and I did, as the way most of our desks are, is we have sort of long days but you work fewer days. So you come in the morning and you see the paper through from the first thing in the morning to when you close the section in the evening. But because of the nature of sports it doesn't end until midnight or 1am, one person can't do it so that's why we split it up.

EP: So then what is the chain of command there, with all these desks and all the moving parts?

BLH: Michelle McNally is the AME for photo and she is in charge of all of the photo editors. She has two deputies, who are actually both women. The whole power structure here is women at the top, as far as our photo department. Beth Flynn and Meaghan Looram are her deputies so we report to them, although certainly on a daily basis my interaction with them is not...I don't have a ton of interaction with them. I always run big decisions by them and any structural changes they need to make or at least sign off on

But, you know, on a daily basis I sit on the sports desk with the sports editors so those are the people that I'm interacting with daily. Once a day we have a photo editors meeting where we all report to the page 1 photo editor, because page 1 is a separate job, so we'll all report to the page 1 photo editor and the photo editor of the home page and Michelle, so she knows what's going on, and then we all go back to our desks. And we all sit with our sections, as opposed to sitting with the photo department.

EP: So you sit with sports people, not photo people necessarily?

BLH: Right.

EP: Okay that's interesting. So you said there's about 30 photo editors...how many photographers do you work with? Or can you work me through the process of getting photographers?

BLH: Yeah, I mean, we have – this is also a guess – 20? 25? Probably 25 staff photographers, mostly in New York, a few of them out around the country, you know, a few based in Washington, one in LA, one in San Francisco, one in Johannesburg and one in Nairobi. I think that's all of them. And then, I don't know, hundreds of freelance photographers who we work with. And I tend to use a lot of wire images in my section, a lot of games that are not in New York we won't send anyone because well, I think in years past we would have sent more photographers on the road but now, with the budget what it is, we certainly try to use wires for games that are not in New York, except for big stuff. So I work with a lot of freelance photographers and the portion of our staff that is comfortable shooting sports features.

EP: So, of the staff photographers, there are no sports-specific photographers?

BLH: There's one photographer, Barton Silverman, who is in his 70s and has been at The Times certainly before I was born. And he shoots almost exclusively sports. But I think he's allowed to do it because that's what he's always done and certainly that's just – well, like the way Michelle expects photo editors to be able to be nimble on any desk, she understands that people have certain strengths and weaknesses but she expects us to be able to do anything, she expects that of photographers too. Everyone should be able to do just about anything. But because Barton has been here so long doing it this way, he's allowed to continue shooting almost exclusively sports.

EP: I guess if you're 70 you can keep doing what you're good at.

BLH: Right! This has worked for him for the past 40 some odd years, so we're just going to let him keep doing it. But at this point I don't think she would ever hire a sports-exclusive photographer.

EP: Okay. So I didn't realize that you all sat in your different departments with the writers and stuff. But what would you say is the demographic makeup of the photo editors, of the photo department?



BLH: Our photo department is...you mean gender demographics?

EP: Yeah, I'm interested in gender and age, specifically.

BLH: Okay. Gender...shoot I don't have a list of photo editors. Gender...women certainly outnumber men in our department, maybe even 2 to 1. As for the photo editors. As far as age, we sort of run the gamut. I'm 40 and that's kind of in the middle. My partner Jeff, who I work with on the sports desk, is 29. He's on the younger end of the spectrum. There's a few 20 year olds. And then there are people who have been here a long time who are in their 50s maybe 60s too.

EP: And what about on the sports desk, so the writers and everyone who you work with in the sports section?

BLH: On the sports section it's predominantly male. On the sports desk I would say it's maybe 3 to 1, male to female. And age demographics...man, we're mostly the same age, now that I think about it. Most of the sports editors, we're in our 30s and 40s.

EP: Okay. So I guess I'm interested, I know that you say you've done a lot there, but the next couple questions are, I guess, thinking about the sports desk because they do have to do with gender and that's where you're outnumbered. In your opinion, does gender matter.

BLH: You know I don't think it does. I think it probably at one time did, but it doesn't. And you know, somebody asked me this question, a parent of one of my good friends, asked me this right before I left to go to the Olympics. I was the on-site photo editor for Sochi and I went over with a team of photographers, of 4 photographers, and they were all men. And she said "Oh is that hard? Is it difficult? Did they have a hard time with your authority because you're a woman?" And to be honest, until she said that, it wasn't something I ever considered. I'm their editor! That's my role. That's the only role I've ever known with them.

EP: I guess a lot of my interest in this stems from books like Lean In being at the forefront of people's conversations these days, and just women in powerful roles in general, so that's just where a lot of these questions come from on my end.

BLH: And I do think that, this is a little bit of a digression but Lean In made me think of it, is that, I told you I have these wonderful hours that my boss has allowed me to have, have a personal life outside of work. I think I have the best of all worlds because I get to work for this news section, I get to work for the NYT, but I've been allowed to do it on my own terms. You know, I have small children. I have a five year old and a seven year old and I able to balance these things now, as well as anyone can balance it. Being a mom and being an active, participatory mom and having this job that I job that requires a lot of me. So my boss let me keep these hours. But certainly before I had children, and even for the first three years when my oldest was a baby, I was kind of a workaholic and I would

stay at work until well after my child had gone to bed. I worked crazy crazy hours and it was after I had kids, I guess this is married tied in because, having a woman boss, I remember going on my first maternity leave and I was a total workaholic on the national desk, we just had mid-term elections, 2006 mid-term elections and we'd just been through 2005 with hurricane Katrina, which was a crazy news cycle where I'd work insane hours and I remember saying to my boss "I want to come back after my maternity leave to the national desk." And she said to me "Well, let's not set anything in stone until you're ready to come back." So I took a six month maternity leave and when I came back I was like "No way. I don't want those hours." I didn't think I could do that anymore! And so she put me first on the culture desk, just like a few months, just to get me back into the idea of working. And then after three months on the culture desk, she said okay – well for us, culture is arts and entertainment, that kind of stuff, though in New York it tends to be kind of a newsier beat because culture is such an industry here – she moved me back to metro and she said but okay, you know, you really do have to get back to work if you're going to go to a section that requires longer hours. And then she did the same thing when I went on my next maternity leave, which is why I went to the real estate section, which had very set hours. After a year, I think, on the real estate desk she said to me "we would like for you to go back to a news desk, but we would like for you to do it on your own, you can go to a news desk and keep your hours so you can still see your kids and be a parent" and all those things. So I think that was very much related to her being a woman and a mom and understanding what that struggle was. And knowing to say to me, when I wanted to come back to the national desk and these crazy hours, knowing that I couldn't make that decision at that point. Sorry that was really long and not exactly what you were asking.

EP: No that's good, it is! I'm interested in all facets of being a woman in the workplace, so it's good to hear.

BLH: And I think though that people respect that. Like I leave at five and I'm very adamant about leaving at five, except on special occasions, because I have to go pick my kids up. My husband and I have a very carefully choreographed ballet for when we get our kids, but I feel like it's less of a gender thing at this point than other parents understanding. Certainly my coworkers who are fathers understand that. Like, daycare closes, so I gotta get outta here. But so people are very respectful of that.

EP: So how does where you are currently compare to other places you've worked at, as far as women in the workplace? It's very surprising to me that there are so many female photo editors there. Has that been the case at other papers you've been at?

BLH: No. And it's funny because I came from a meeting right before this – the other places I've been at have been completely male-dominated, photo editors. I think it's specific to New York, to New York City. In New York City I feel like photo editors are predominantly women. And I think that a lot of people that I work with – so, I came from this meeting that I went to right before this and I was sitting in the room and it was almost all women at our photo editors meeting today. And I said "Oh I'm about to be interviewed about what it's like being a woman photo editor" and the other women, who

have only worked in New York or come from the magazine industry, where the magazine industry is a primarily female dominated profession, they were like “well, that’s weird. Aren’t most photo editors women?” So I came through a different path than most of my coworkers, where the path that I came through was mostly male-dominated through, like, smaller papers.

EP: That’s why it’s so surprising to me because I lot of my research and a lot of other people that I’ve talked to say that it is very male-dominated still, so perhaps it is New York based.

BLH: Right, New York. But even if you look at, like, the *Washington Post*, their photo desk is run by a woman, our desk is run by a woman, *Time* magazine is run by a woman, it feels like a lot...

EP: Yeah, yesterday I talked with Sarah Leen from *National Geographic* and she’s like “There’s so many women here, these are hard questions.” So, talking about photo editing, do you feel like women do the job differently or similarly to their male counterparts? Do you think they approach editing stories in different ways?

BLH: You know, I don’t think we do. I mean, I edit differently than other people because I’m different. But I don’t think that necessarily has anything to do with my gender or their gender. I think everybody edits a little differently. I don’t know if that’s gender based.

EP: What do you think are the greatest challenges facing photo editors?

BLH: Well, the destruction of newspapers, the loss of newspapers, the loss of a place to do our job. I mean just like everybody in the newspaper industry and the magazine industry, we’re trying to figure out what the future is, so we’re trying to learn different skills so we’re ready for the future. But who knows what that future’s going to look like.

EP: That’s a good answer. I just went through five years of school where they said jobs are dwindling so that’s fitting. So as an editor, what unique qualities do you feel like you bring to the photo desk?

BLH: Do you mean, like what unique qualities do photo editors bring or me personally?

EP: You personally, to the job, compared to other people you work with.

BLH: I think that my strengths, I guess, are that I’m really good at the coaching of photographers. Like I feel like that’s one of the places that I do best. Like I’m good at working with our photographers one on one on long term projects and helping them to get the photos that tell the story. I feel like I’m good at seeing what’s needed to fill out a story and helping photographers see that too. And then sort of on the other end of it too, I think I’m very good at working with designers and understanding how best the page or the site, you know, what pictures work together and having a good understanding of how,

hopefully, readers will interact with the photos. Those are the things that I'm good at, that I bring to the job, as opposed to good organization or planning ahead...those are not my greatest skills.

EP: So when you're in a leadership role, dealing with photographers and stuff, how would you describe that personal leadership style?

BLH: I don't know. I think that I'm a fairly good – well, I don't know that leader is even the right word, because I don't...so many of the photographers that I work with have so much more experience than I have. I went to the last two Olympics and most of the people that I went with had been to many more Olympics than I had and so they had to lead me through a lot of it and teach me. But I don't think that leadership is the right word. But I play a specific role. Like I'm good at helping them figure out what else we need or saying here's what our report is going to look like tomorrow. Like on an average day at the Olympics saying "here are the things that are coming up" and "here's what I think is most important." And I'm good at saying "okay, you're going to do this and you're going to do this and you're going to do this." And people listen, I don't know. But I hesitate to use the word leader because I think we're all kind of a team and everyone plays their role and works together. I'm not like their captain or anything.

EP: Do you feel like – I mean I think it's really interesting that when you went to the Olympics it was with all guys, I didn't realize that was the case – but do you feel like you interact differently with male photographers compared to female photographers?

BLH: No, I don't think so.

EP: How do you feel like the men – I'm still thinking about the Olympics – but any male photographer views you as a woman in a power position? Like you get to deal with their photos and you get to tell them what to do essentially.

BLH: I mean, I think they're respectful of it. But the reason that I don't think that gender has much to do with it is because I think they just look at the job that I'm doing and that I'm doing a good job. The photo editor's job is to set the photographer up for success and make sure that they're, hopefully, beautiful and – I don't know what the word is – to make sure that we're telling the news in a beautiful way in the paper and online. And as long as I'm doing that job, I don't think it makes any difference. And that I'm doing that job well and they feel like they're being respected and listened to and their work is getting good play and that I'm supporting them, I don't think that my gender plays any role at all. You know I could be doing the same thing and be a man or I could be doing a shitty job and be a woman and then they wouldn't respect me at all. I don't think it would have anything to do with being a woman, I think it would have to do with doing a shitty job.

EP: What about on the sports desk, because that's all men, how do you feel like they view you as a woman working on sports desk?

BLH: You know, when I came to the sports desk I was very clear about the fact that I knew very little about sports and that was fine with everyone. I was brought to the sports desk because they wanted someone with a different point of view. They wanted someone with a different point of view who wasn't a life long sports person. So I came in very open with the fact that I'm a sports fan but I didn't know very much about it and I think that sometimes it's a bit of a joke, but it's true but I came in knowing that. But everyone is okay with that because everyone defers to me for the visuals they don't defer to me on obscure baseball rules, you know? It's like I said before, I'm not necessarily a leader, I'm part of a team and the same thing can be said for the sports desk. Everyone plays his or her own role. And I think I'm good at playing my role and it doesn't matter that I'm a woman.

EP: So, in thinking about the fact that you said that in New York it tends to be a lot of women, thinking about the other places that you've worked at do you think that gender ever played a role there? Like, hey this is a men's world and here I am? Or was it never an issue?

BLH: There are two specific occasions that I can remember. One of them was a place when I started – and I think this probably has more to do with age than with gender – there was a male senior photographer, who was probably 20 or 25 years older than I was and when I was hired I went out to lunch with him and he was flabbergasted that I was a woman young enough to be his daughter who was now going to be his editor. And I remember he kept saying through this lunch “How did you get this job?” like “What was the path that got you here?” He was so confused by my arrival and I think that was both age and gender. And I don't know if they were faking me out but at a job once at a newspaper when I was a photo editor, all the other editors were men and they told me that they had a yearly lunch at a topless restaurant or topless bar but they weren't going to do that that year, they were going to do it elsewhere because of me. But I don't know, they could have been pulling my leg but they told me that once. I kind of find it hard to believe.

EP: I mean it's certainly changing over time, journalism as a whole is no longer a male-dominated industry the way it was, but were you ever personally uncomfortable being the only woman there? Or was it just the job?

BLH: No, not about being a woman. I think I've certainly been conscious of being the youngest one when I first started because I think it was less – and maybe it still is, but certainly at the time – it was a less common thing for someone to come straight out of school and become an editor. I know when I finished at Missouri I was the only person in my class who wanted to be a photo editor. Everyone else wanted to be photographers. So I've been self-conscious about being younger than everyone else, but not about being the only woman.

EP: Okay well I only have one more question and it is: There's a saying that clothes make the man, clothes make the woman...do you think that clothing matters at the job? What's the dress code and what do you normally wear at work?

BLH: I wear dresses simply because I like to wear dresses. But we wear everything here, from jeans to ties – because no one wears suits. But kind of the higher up you are up the hierarchy I'd say the more likely it is that you dress nicer, dress fancier. I mean certainly our nightside editors come in every day wearing jeans and the day time people who are going to go to meetings with the top editors dress up a little more.

EP: What do the guys on the sports desk wear?

BLH: It differs for different people. The sports editor and his deputy wear nice slacks and button down shirts and only when they have big meetings will they wear ties. But the other sports editors under them, like the baseball editor and the soccer editor, they're more likely to show up in jeans.

EP: Okay well that's all of the questions that I have prepared...is there anything else you'd like to add?

BLH: No but I'm sort of curious to know what other people have said...what are you finding?

EP: So what kind of started my interest in this was that, when I got started in school I always knew I would continue and get my masters. So when I graduated all of my friends went and got jobs and I have a good friend who got a job at the Associated Press and they put her on the sports desk. And on her first day, it was her and all these guys, they sat her down and said "There's this thing called ESPN where you can go and look up stats" and she just felt so appalled. She said "I don't know if it's because I'm a girl or if it's because I'm 22 but they're treating me like a little girl" and so I just got interested in that dynamic. And I was looking forward to this interview because I knew you also worked on a sports desk. And yesterday I interviewed Sarah Leen and she had very similar things to say as you and I think it's because she also works in a female dominated office at *National Geographic*. But it's been all over the place. I intentionally picked people across a stratified group of media because I knew that people would probably have different answers based on where they worked. I'm sure if I talked to the editor of Cosmo she would say "yeah, it's all girls here!"

BLH: I actually had a friend who worked at Glamour and he was the only man.

EP: Wow that would be an interesting interview.

BLH: Yeah it was a strange experience for him. But yeah, I think that experience with your friend, I think the assumption is that if you're here and you have a job that you're an intelligent, competent person and you can figure that out for yourself. Certainly when I need obscure information people are happy to give it to me but I think the expectation is that I can figure it out. I came in with no knowledge, but I should be able to figure it out on my own.

EP: Right. It's been very interesting. I don't know how it was when you went to Mizzou, but most of the photojournalism department was boys. I think there were, in our graduating undergrad class, five girls and maybe 15 or 20 boys.

BLH: I guess I never even thought about it but ours was majority guys also.

EP: It's funny, a lot of people in these interviews have been like "oh, I never even thought about it, but now that I'm thinking about it..."

BLH: So what are your plans after you finish the project? What are you doing in Maine now?

EP: I came to Maine for the summer because my roommate's sister works here so we decided to come explore a new state before the real world starts. And then I want to work in New York City. I'm from Chicago originally so I miss the city. Columbia was great, but it was small. To be honest, I'm just now thinking about applying for jobs.

BLH: Mhm. I went to Colby College for my undergrad and then I lived in Portland after I graduated. I liked it. I did the Salt Center for Documentary Studies. And then I went to Mizzou. But look me up when you come to New York you can come and see where I work.

EP: That would be amazing thank you.

5.

Subject: Sarah Leen

Age: estimated mid-50s

Position: Director of Photography at *National Geographic* magazine

Interview Date: 7/15/14

Elizabeth Pierson: So I mentioned in my email, but I'm writing a thesis on women working in photo editing so I have a series of questions here that I'm going to ask you, but I'd like it to be as much of a conversation as possible.

Sarah Leen: Okay good.

EP: Can you start by saying your name, your age and your current job position?

SL: I'm not going to say my age, I don't want to say my age. My name is Sarah Leen and I'm the Director of Photography for *National Geographic* magazine.

EP: So how did you get to where you are today? What was your path to photo editing?

SL: Well I started out as a fine art student and I majored in fine art photography. Then I became very interested in journalism, in photojournalism, and went to the University of Missouri journalism school for photojournalism. Then I worked at newspapers as a photographer. I then started freelancing after several years at the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper. I started freelancing here, at the *National Geographic*. Actually, let me rewind a little bit, I was a photo intern here. In 1979 I won the College Photographer of the Year contest and the prize for that was an internship, and it still is to this day as an award for that contest. Then I was at newspapers. Then I started freelancing here for 20 years or so, and then about ten years ago I saw an opening for photo editing and I really liked photo editing – I had done a lot of workshop teaching and also my husband and I had a book packaging company so I did a lot of photo research and editing for some of his books – and I really enjoyed editing. I found it to be very rewarding. I liked looking at other people's work and organizing it and it was, in many ways, less stressful than looking at my own work and doing the same thing. So I applied for the job as photo editor and got that job. And I was still, at the time, shooting here and stories for the magazine, but after about 6 months of being in the job as photo editor I stopped shooting stories for the magazine. And I stayed in that position until a little bit more than a year ago, when I was promoted to the Director of Photography position.

EP: Okay so you've only been in that position for a year?

SL: That's right. A little more than a year.

EP: So what is a typical day in the life of the Director of Photography at *National Geographic*?



SL: I start out every day at our daily news meeting we have for the web, we have a daily news site, and I attend the daily news meeting. And I look at all the stories that are coming in with the photo editing team, as they are coming in and we discuss what we are going to do photographically with the stories. Sometimes we make suggestions for various photo galleries. I just participate in that daily news meeting. And after that the days are – well, it depends on what day of the week it is – but often, most days, I'll have a staff meeting for my staff of photo editors and coordinators and the daily news photo editors. On Tuesday I would be in what we call "board review" which is where we look at the line up of issues and what stories are in each issue and we plan the issues and we move stories around and we add new ideas – that's the executive team that gets together and does that. But on a Wednesday it's a different first meeting, so every day I attend different meetings. I go to a lot of meetings, a lot of planning meetings. I review a lot of photo stories that are at their halfway point and at their final point. I review the layouts for the stories that are coming together. I also look at any photo galleries and multiple-picture stories that are going to be on the web. I spend a lot of time doing emails to people, whether its people from other societies or people here or things for exhibits, talking to exhibits people, if they need images for something or for PR or the communications department or something. So there's a lot of outreach into the rest of the society that I'm called on to participate in. I'm still editing stories myself, but I'm sort of winding that down. I've still been doing them and spending some time editing on some stories. Like today I've been looking at pictures for a small gallery of pictures on the web that we're putting together and I'm going to do that one myself because I've started on it already. I've got a photographer coming in in a couple of weeks to finish editing their story. I'm also working on the photo journal section of the magazine a lot, which is a new feature we're starting next year, which will be little, short – it was in the front of the book but now will be in the feature well – and they're generally photographer projects that are already completed and so we would just get together and edit them. And I'm looking at a few layouts of those this afternoon. And I'm involved in all the meetings where story teams pitch their stories and make their plans. I'm in charge of the budget for the whole photo department. I look at all the budgets for every story and make sure we don't spend more money than we have. So that's my world.

EP: A big world. A lot to do.

SL: There is a lot to do. It's a big job.

EP: So what is the chain of command, in terms of who reports to you and who you ultimately report to?

SL: Well I report to the editor of the magazine, Susan Goldberg, and also kind of have a dotted line with the chief content officer Chris Johns who was the editor of the magazine until a few months ago. So I pretty much report up to the two of them. And who reports to me are all of the deputy directors of photography; all the photo editors; I have people in the photo engineering department that are part of the photo department; we have two video photographers that are part of the photo department; we have a couple of guys who run our imaging, so all the hard drives come in to them and they put them into an archive

system; we have some admin work staff; a photo business manager who is a part of my department. I guess probably maybe 30 people in the department when you count the editors and the coordinators and the admin staff and engineering. We have one researcher who works on our stories.

EP: How many photo editors are there?

SL: There are approximately ten, although we have three people who are doing photo editing on stories, but that's not their full-time job. Like, you know, the deputy director of photography also edits stories and we have an executive editor of environment who also photo edits stories. So probably about ten people.

EP: And how many photographers do you work with?

SL: It really varies because it's a moving pool. We have about approximately 72 stories a year and not all of them have a single photographers, but you could say 60 to 65 different photographers every year. It's a floating pool of people, you know, it's not always the same people. We have a much larger pool of people that we draw from every year.

EP: Right. You're in charge of a lot of people!

SL: Yes. I mean, I'm not in charge of them...I'm assigning them.

EP: You work with many people. So, just talking about photo editors, what's the demographic makeup of the photo department, in terms of gender and age?

SL: Mostly women...let's see. Okay there's six women and four guys, that includes the two photo editors that are sort of part time. So that's the ten. Age-wise, it's a pretty big range. We have a new person that hasn't started yet, and she's probably going to be the youngest – I don't know how old she is, but she's probably maybe late-20's. But I would say 30 to 58 or 60. It's a big range.

EP: And what's the demographic makeup of the photographers? More men? More women?

SL: Oh yeah, more men.

EP: So then, in your opinion, does gender matter at the job?

SL: No. I don't think it has anything to do with it.

EP: Is there an effort, when hiring, to diversify your department in terms of gender?

SL: I mean, it's pretty diverse. I mean, no. We already have more women than men. I try like who's the best person for the job. I think about talent and the best person for the job...I think there's always an awareness of diversity and wanting to have diversity but I

don't think it's gender, as much as it is more ethnicity or race-based. I think we would love to have a more diverse workforce here, but I think we hire based on talent, ultimately.

EP: So traditionally photojournalism and journalism in general is a male-dominated field and that's changing – and obviously in your office there are more women, which is encouraging to hear – but how is gender discussed in your office, in terms of subject, in terms of people who work there? Is it discussed?

SL: I mean, not really. I don't think so, but what context? Give me an example of what you're talking about. Like how would that come up?

EP: I guess I'm just interested in if there's a conscious awareness of gender because it is traditionally a male-dominated field. I guess I'm just interested in knowing if there's a conversation being had about it or what would prompt a conversation about it in your newsroom.

SL: Well, we don't have that problem in the building, in terms of in the magazine. There's a ton of women working here. Inside the magazine, for the people working in the magazine and on the website, it's very balanced. And I never get that feeling of "oh, it's a bunch of guys." Not at all. I think that out there in the freelance photography world there's definitely more men working in photojournalism – qualified men working in photojournalism – than women. So if there's ever a conversation of like "yeah, we'd like to get more women on the pages or for a program" – like some kind of program where we're putting our photographers out there – then it's like, we'd love to have some women. Right? We need more women on this panel or we need more women in this program or at that kind of thing. That's where I'd say – and that's more kind of about the photographers than it is about the staff. We don't have that problem. We have tons of women to pick from, but in terms of the photographers we have to pick from to do the job, or who are qualified to do the job, or say you wanted to do a program or you wanted to do a program or you wanted to send people out to do talks for us, it's a smaller pool of women. And that's when we're thinking about how we wish we had more women. And we're looking for more women, photographers who could work here. I think there's a conscious effort to bring in more, to try to bring in more women. The problem is that it's not like there's all these qualified women photographers and we're not picking them. That's not the problem. There's just not enough. There's not enough qualified women photographers to do the work. We'd pick them if there were! We'd totally pick them. I try to when I can but there's just not enough to give the work to, to do this job. So that's the problem. In house, it's not a problem. We're surrounded. You come there and we're full of women inside, which is interesting. Mostly women photo editors and support staff, but it's the photographers where we're lacking women.

EP: So with all of the women working there presently, is that comparable to other places that you've worked? Do you think that's reflective of the industry?

SL: No. When I worked other places, I was working as a photographer and it was a long long time ago. When I was working in newspapers ages ago and it was definitely more men than women on the photo staff. I don't know how it is today in the newsrooms or any other magazines. I think there's a lot of women at other magazines as well. But I really don't know. I've never seen a survey on something like that.

EP: I was just curious in your experience. So in your opinion then, how do women do the job of photo editing differently or similarly to their male counterparts?

SL: I don't see any difference. I don't ever really see any difference in between how men and women do photo editing. It's not that kind of a job. It's not the kind of a job where gender makes much difference. It's a gender-neutral occupation in a way. I don't see where gender has anything to do with how somebody looks at a story or tells a story or picks the best pictures. I don't know what gender has to do with it. I don't see the world that way. I don't look at the world that way – what gender you are or what color you are. I just feel like it has nothing to do with anything, for me. I just want to know are you good at it. It's all about are you good at this, are you a great storyteller, what's your aesthetic like, what's your taste like about photography? Can you inspire photographers to do great work? And then who cares about the rest of it? That's what important. I don't think gender is important. I just don't have a brain like that. It seems like it's really important to you though, because all of the questions you're asking me are about gender and not about photo editing. I'm curious...why is it so important to you?

EP: Well, I guess we just live in a world right now where books like *Lean In* are being published and I look at photo editing as a leadership role, at least in terms of the work I did at the *Columbia Missourian* and when I was the head of the photo department at *Vox*, which is the city magazine insert. So I look at it as a leadership role and I look at these other industries where women are coming out, talking about what it's like to be in a leadership role as a woman – from what kind of leadership characteristics you employ in your job, personality traits, etc. And no research has been done on this, so this is kind of an original path I'm taking. I don't have much of a hypothesis or any idea of what I think women are going to say. I'm just curious to hear your answers.

SL: I see. Well, I think then that's more about – that has nothing to do with picture editing. That's more about being a woman leader in a workplace. How do you conduct yourself if you were one of the only women at this table and it's all big powerful men, that kind of thing. Just how do you conduct yourself as a woman. We don't have a lot of those situations here because we do have a lot of women in leadership roles. I mean, my immediate boss, the editor in chief, is a woman. The head of our communications department's a woman. Head of ex-commission group is a woman. Head of education department is a woman. There's a lot of women in leadership roles here, so I'm not too often in a group where I'm a minority and I have to negotiate that. I don't have a lot of experience with that. I've read about it. I do think that, just in general, a strong woman who speaks up – it's very hard to criticize. How do you criticize constructively and raise the bar on people and how do you do that in such a way that...well, I think there's a bit a thing where men can do it and it's seen one way and women can do it and it's like, you're

a bitch. That thing. I do think that that kind of exists in general and how you negotiate that and the whole “women are nice and men need to be strong” that’s hard. I prefer to be strong. It’s faster. But I think that’s more generic, more general. There is one of our photo editors here who is very interested in women’s issues and women-centric stories, where I don’t have any guys that are interested in guy stories. I see that as an interesting difference. I don’t think you can necessarily extrapolate that because other women photo editors on my staff are not like that. There not as proactive in that way, wanting to come up with or work on stories that are women-focused. She’s just the one on the staff that has that interest and is promoting those kind of stories. But that’s more her than others.

EP: So, you say that there’s a majority of male photographers but a majority of female photo editors, do you think that they ever – this is totally random –but do you think they ever feel a power struggle with the male photographers?

SL: Well, I think that might happen but I don’t know if that’s a men-woman thing. It could just be that photographers are pretty opinionated and have strong opinions about their work. But I don’t know if that’s gender. I think that there are women photographers that I work with that are equally strong-minded about their work and will argue with you, just like guys will argue with you about it. I think it’s a conversation, in terms of the edit with the photographers. It’s a conversation and in many ways, the editor will probably have the last word. And I think that whether you’re working with guys or working with women, that’s just the structure in place. We want to know what they think and we want their voice in the magazine, we want their voice in the story and we want to know how they see the narrative and what their favorite images are. We’re very much engaged with them in that process, probably more so than most magazines or publications. We spend a lot of time at it. Often if I get into something with a photographer, I get a third opinion. I ask someone else to step in the room and see what they think and break the log jam that way. I think that some people are just stronger or more argumentative than others.

EP: Right. So would you say, either now or when you were a photo editor, that you interact differently with your male photographers compared to your female photographers? Or is it just a case-by-case basis?

SL: No. I don’t think there’s a difference.

EP: How would you describe your personal leadership style?

SL: I don’t know. That’s a good question. I haven’t been in the job that long, and I was not really a manager before this. I mean, I was managing projects and photographers, but I was not managing a staff. I think I’m a bit of a work in progress in terms of that. I tried to set a standard of excellence and try to work to reach that. I try to encourage people to have autonomy and ownership of the projects they’re working on. I don’t know if I even have the language to say what my personal leadership style is.

EP: It’s okay!

SL: What would be an example of a personal leadership style?

EP: Well how about if you're in a position when you need to reprimand someone. What would that conversation or situation look like?

SL: I would schedule to have a meeting with them in my office. I would start talking about whatever the particular incident is and then give them my observation of this incident and say what I think is unacceptable about what happened. And then I want to hear what they think happened and why it happened. And we have a conversation about how we can change that and come up with some solutions. I want to get to the root of why this happened like this and make it so that we're not put into that position. I'd give them the help they need and walk out with the understanding that we're not going to let that happen in the future. Is there a personal leadership style in there somewhere?  
[laughs]

EP: Yes that was perfect thank you. This is helping me think through why I'm asking these questions too, which is good personal reflection for me. I guess we talked about most of these questions already... I kind of veered off my path a little bit.

SL: We can swing back.

EP: I guess I'm just interested in how you think the men you work with view you as a woman in this powerful role or if you think they even think about that or if you've ever thought about that.

SL: I don't know. I think that's a question for them. I think that when I got the job, most people were very happy for me. And I think that a lot of people were excited that a woman – I'm the first woman Director of Photography here in like 125 years – so it's like woohoo! And I think a lot of the women photographers were really thrilled. And the photo editors were thrilled. The men... I don't know if they saw it that way. I know a lot of them. They know me. They know me from other walks of life. They knew me when I was a photo editor. They knew me when I was a photographer, this is the photographers and the staff. So I don't know what they thought about it. I would say that my reputation is that I'm tough. I am tough. I know that. I know my reputation is not that I'm a coddler. I'm tough. I'm demanding. I don't suffer fools lightly. I want it done now and I want it done perfectly. So I'm pretty demanding. And they all know that. So there's probably a little fear factor. That I'm a little scary. Because I'm very honest. I'm very blunt and honest. I absolutely will tell you what I think. I'm not afraid at all of saying what I think. I feel like It's my duty, just to not ever have anyone walk away without perfect clarity. I don't want anybody thinking one thing when it's really another. I've seen that too much in my life, where people are really really nice to you and really really praise you but it's not actually what was happening. When you would go out as a photographer trying to get a job someplace, and they were really nice to you, telling you how great you were, and then you never got any work from them. They never actually felt that way about your work. And what would have really been helpful is to actually have the person explain themselves and you could actually learn from that and you could learn how to make

yourself better and craft yourself so you were more appealing to publications. So I think it's really important to be honest. And sometimes honesty is painful, because I'm going to say "that's not going to work for us" and "you have to be much much better." And I'm willing to talk to them about what they need because it doesn't stop there, the conversation. If I think a photographer's not doing a good enough job at a story I will tell them that "you have got to step up your game" and "you're not being as good as you can be." And generally I tell people that who are really really good because you know they're really really good and they're not doing as good as they can be. And that's the message that "I know you can do so much better...I've seen it. You are better than this. How do we get you there? How do we get you so you are working at your peak? Which is why I wanted you on this story in the first place. I want that guy." I think it's really important. And everybody knows that's what they're going to get from me.

EP: So at what point in your career did that become a conscious decision to act that way? Or is that just how you've always been?

SL: I don't know. I think it's always been that way in terms of editing. I've always felt like I just can't sit and look at a set of pictures without saying what I really think. I'm just built that way. I can't have a look on my face that's happy when I'm not. I'm looking at the pictures or somebody's portfolio or the edit or something and how I feel is how I feel. Now that's just how I feel. That's one person's opinion. But it's how I feel. And hopefully what I'm going to express about this will be helpful to the person in some way. That's the goal. The goal always in all of this is how do you help people achieve their dreams and be better. Because they all have a dream. If they're showing you their work, they have some kind of a dream. So what's that dream? How do we achieve that? What do you need to do to get to that place where you want to be? And often people show me their work and it's not about how they want to work at *National Geographic*, they just want a portfolio review and they have other dreams for themselves. And that's fine, we can talk about that. It's all about how do you help people achieve their dreams. And for me that's about giving the best, most honest feedback you can.

EP: I mean I certainly I would appreciate that if I was a photographer.

SL: I think anybody does. And I really like doing that. I love looking at people's work and doing that. Like identify "here's what you're trying to do" and "here's what you need to do to do that and to get there." And you can give people things to think about.

EP: Do you think that looking at the same set of images a male photo editor and a female photo editor would inherently have different ways of looking at the set of pictures? Would they make a different edit?

SL: I just don't think it's gender based. I think any two people will pick different pictures of have a slightly different view. Like if I gave 100 pictures to 5 guys and 5 women, you would get 10 edits. It's not like the 5 women would have more in common than the 5 guys would. I think you would get 10 edits. What you hope is, among all ten of them, is that, if they're really really good, that there's crossover into what everybody thinks the

best pictures are. I just don't see how gender affects that. I've never seen gender affect that. It's more about individual personalities – what they like and what they don't like and they're interests. There's a lot of overlap in looking at what the best pictures are. And then there's a lot of disconnect. But I've never seen it as having anything to do with gender. People are different.

EP: Ok. One last question: there's a saying that "clothes make the man, clothes make the woman." Does clothing matter to you? What do you wear to work? And what is the dress code in your office?

SL: Dress code is pretty much people can dress how they like. I mean, business casual I guess you could call it. It's not a very dressy place. All though there are some people who dress up a little bit more than others. I wear pants mostly. Loose clothing. If there's an occasion I might get a bit more dressed up, if I have to do a presentation or something. Or attend some sort of event. Like anybody would. It's not like sports coats and ties or anything here. That would be more of the executive staff, where people put on a sport coat or a tie. Like the very very top executives here are more sports coats and ties. And the women on the upper levels wear dresses. But mostly on our floor here is more casual. We would dress if we had something we needed to do and dress up.

EP: That was more just a fun question I guess. Is there anything else you'd like to add.

SL: No I'm good. I hope this was helpful.

EP: It was, it was really helpful. I'm interviewing people at different kinds of media and everyone has had very different answers.

SL: Well let me know if you come to any conclusions.

EP: I definitely will. Have a good rest of your day!



6.

Subject: Deb Pastner

Age: 42

Position: Director of Photo & Multimedia at the *Star Tribune*

Interview Date: 7/11/14

Elizabeth Pierson: How did you get to where you are today? What was your path to photo editing?

Deb Pastner: I'll start back at the very beginning. In college I was a philosophy major but ended up being introduced to photography by a friend so I ended up minoring in studio art. The college I went to didn't have a journalism program, it was a small liberal arts school. So got my teeth into photography at that point, ended up getting a job right out of college at a small community newspaper up in Nantucket Island, which no longer exists, but it was a great introduction to community journalism. I was one of two photographers on a very small staff and I got to do a little bit of everything. After that I went to Seattle, just because this was 1994 and every young hip kid wanted to live in Seattle. I didn't have a job there but I ended up getting a job at a weekly newspaper there. I stayed there for two years and at this point realized that if I wanted to be a photographer and a photojournalist that I really needed more schooling, I could only learn so much working at these small papers. So I applied to Missouri and went to Missouri for a couple years. And I am, unfortunately, a Missouri school drop out. I remind myself that I could always finish it at some point. So I basically went there for a year and then the second year, the first semester I took classes and the second semester I worked on POY full time, which I don't know what it's like now, but this is in '97 and this is when we were still doing slides so it was a lot of work because you had to fill trays and all that. Maybe the job's a little easier now but I was a coordinator and it was just a lot of work so I couldn't take classes at the same time. And then I ended up finishing that and then my partner ended up getting a job in Michigan so I moved to Michigan and freelanced and worked for a while at a paper there. And through my connections with Rita Reed who is a Missouri graduate, she worked at the *Star Tribune* at that point – well you probably take class with her, of course – she had been down for the Missouri Photo Workshop and I ended up inviting her to come back to do a presentation on her *Growing Up Gay* book which had just come out. And that was really great. So through that connection, she ended up contacting me the next year when I was living in Michigan and said “Hey, there's this job opening at the Trib, would you be interested?” And truth be told I was vastly under-qualified but Steve Rice, who was the director of Photography at the time – you know Steve I'm sure – he brought me in for an interview and I just decided that even though I was completely green and I didn't really know what I was doing, and Steve was like “You know, I'll take a chance” and hired me. So my first job was a very standard job for intro picture editing, which is the night photo editing job. But that was actually great trial by fire too because, especially at that point, a lot of the picture deciding was happening in the evening. So there was a lot of responsibility I had and I will freely admit that I was an utter failure for probably the whole first two years. And Steve was patient with me and you learn from your mistakes and I definitely did. So I had that job for a while and then I transitioned

into a night-slash-sports picture editing job and then moved to, trying to remember the order, then I moved to features and did that for a while. And then came back to the news desk and started doing projects in Sunday. You know Sunday papers generally are the key one for most newspapers. And then I ended up kind of running the department on an interim basis after our Director of Photography at that point left. And that was another trial by fire because I really didn't know what I was doing and suddenly I was in charge of a lot of stuff. And then I was the first one to say "you know, we really need a Director of Photography who knows what they're doing." So they ended up hiring Janet Reeves, who had formerly been at the Orange County News until it closed. So he was here for 3 years and then she left last summer and then I reapplied for the job because they had a DOP job again and got it. So I guess my story is pretty similar to a lot of other people, which is just kind of moving your way up. For me, what's been great is that I've have seriously every single job on the picture desk so I know when I'm talking to the assignments editor, I know what they're going through because I've had to sit in that chair, features photo editor, night photo editor. So that's often a big challenge being a picture editor is you have to deal with a lot of different people in a lot of different jobs and, you know, understanding their challenges. So anyway, that's my very long, drawn out explanation of how I got to where I am now. So I've been here since, well, I started the summer of '99 so I guess it's been 15 years.

EP: What is a typical day in the life of the Director of Photography at the *Star Tribune*?

DP: Usually get up at 7 and immediately check emails, just to double check if I need to know anything, look at our website, double check if there's anything we need to be jumping on. We have our first photographer start at 7 a.m., so if some kind of breaking news should happen, like this past week we had a lot of shooting, and there was one shooting in her neighborhood so she started jumping on that. Our first picture editor on the desk is on by 8 so I might text them and say "Hey, are we on this?" And then I get in to work by about 9:30 and then we have our first news huddle at 10 a.m., so that's kind of where you're getting your basic sense of what we're going after today. We talk very generally about what our best hopes are for like the cover. And then I come back to the picture desk and huddle with the other photo editors and we just kind of go over assignments and double check are we going after the right stuff, do we need to move anybody around, "oh my god, now we're going to do this as our centerpiece," and that kind of thing. So everybody's doing that until about 10:30. And then I'm spending the rest of the day, you know, looking at the wire, meeting with photographers that are working on projects and going over photos with them, I'm meeting with design director on upcoming stories. We have a lot of projects, ongoing projects, that are happening now. So, I don't know if you've looked at our website much, but we just had a huge project that we launched, so we've been working a lot on that. And Brian Peterson has been doing this thing called State of Wonders, which is incredible photography that really showcases what's beautiful about Minnesota. So a lot of that kind of stuff, circling back and doubling checking on how we're doing on that. And my deputy, she's the senior video editor so she really deals with the video much more than I ever do. I'm mostly checking in with her on that. Most of my interaction is with stills, quite honestly, and that's something on my part I really should be doing more with video. But I really depend

on Jenni Pinkley who is the senior video editor to kind of strictly working with all that, so I'm checking in with her, saying "how's this going, how's that going, what can I help you with." Most of our photographers do some video, and we have a little core group of people who all they do is video, so at this point we're mostly kind of doing video via traditional film photographers that are out shooting and just end up doing some video during the coverage of the story. Okay, so that's what I kind of do as the day goes along. I have a lot of meetings, way too many meetings. And then at 2:30 we have a small meeting with the editor, actually no with just the managing editor, and that's when we decide what we're putting on the front page, what's the centerpiece. If we have the photos in hand, I'll bring my laptop to show the photos that we have. And we agree if we're good or we discuss if we're not. And then I do a little bit more prep work for 4 o'clock and that's the bigger presentation with all the top editors. And then after that we literally start putting the paper together. And I just kind of spearhead the front page. I leave inside pages and the metro section and sports and business section to those editors to deal with that. I mostly concentrate on the front page and picking the photos for that. And then at 5 we huddle again as a picture desk to go over the next day's assignments just to make sure again, are we going to the right target tomorrow, is there anything we're missing, do we need to go to plan video assignments or anything for the next day, just kind of reconfirm everything. And then that's it. And then it's kind of groundhog day...you just do it over and over and over again. I mean that's the basic structure of day.

EP: Who do you work directly with on a day-to-day basis? How many photo editors/photographers do you work with?

DP: Jenni Pinkley she's the senior video editor, the assignments editor is Dave Denney, and then there's features and business and the night photo editors, so let's see that's 4 people, so I'm working directly with those four people. In the photo department those are the people I probably work with the most. And then obviously we've got, I always lose count, but I think there's 18 photographers right now. This week we also had buyouts so we have three people who are essentially retiring. But anyways, so 18-20 photographers, and I definitely have interaction with them but not necessarily every single day. And then outside of the department the people that I work closest with are my boss Derek [Simmons] and he's the AME of visuals and the other person I work most directly with is the editor of the paper, Rene Sanchez. I don't know if that's usual at most other papers, I think that maybe generally speaking a DOP works more directly with the managing editor, but Rene and I have worked together for years and we actually just hired a managing editor from Seattle, and she's kind of new to the job so if they ends up staying maybe I'll transition to working more directly with her but up until this point Rene and I have worked pretty closely together. So those are the key people. And then there are lots of other people, but those are some of the key people.

EP: What is the demographic makeup of the photo department? Most specifically gender and age.

DP: Let's see, wow, I'm trying to think off the top of my head. Jenni and myself are mid-to-late 40s. The rest of the picture desk is three men who are in their 50s, I think they're

all in their 50s. I'm not good at knowing everybody's age.

EP: You can just guess.

DP: And of the shooters there are three women, one is in her mid thirties and the other two are in their late 40s. And then everybody else is a man. And let's say most of them are in their 50s. The youngest man is like my age, so mid-40s. And, again, I'm kind of thrown off because the three people that are leaving, they're in their 60s. So mainly 40s to 50s. Do you want to know race too?

EP: No, it's fine.

DP: Ok.

EP: So, in your opinion, does gender matter?

DP: Well, I have a lot of opinions on that. Well, I have a personal theory. A lot of people say that technology is what changed how we do photography. I personally believe that, well, let's put it this way. I think that anybody is capable of taking beautiful pictures. So no, I'm not gender biased there in any way. I do think, however, that the introduction of women in photojournalism has helped pushed the more intimate photography. I believe that. I don't know that I can actually point to any specific trends for things, but I think in a lot of ways newspaper photography back in the day tended to be a little more like "I got there, I got the picture, I used a long lens and I shot the key moments." There wasn't necessarily intimacy. Technology has changed a lot. And there were cameras that changed everything. And being able to use wide angle lenses, being able to get in close with people, all of these things have changed. But I do find that really interesting. That there's an intimacy that you see in newspaper photography with tough subjects that I think, in a way, having women in the department has made that difference. And, actually, I do remember when I worked on POY at some point I looked at a list of winners and I looked at the number of women who had entered the contest in general. And I can't quote the specific number, but I remember it was noteworthy because a vast majority of people at that point who had entered the contest were men, but a much higher percentage – it wasn't that more women won in the contest than men, there were still more male winners in the contest – but compared to the number of women who had entered, there was a higher number of winners who were women. And I just thought that was noteworthy. So I guess that's maybe a roundabout way of saying that I do think there is a benefit to – I don't know if you'd want to call it the female mind – but there is an ability that women have to enter stories and tell stories that push photojournalism into a different route. Because, you can't help it, everybody brings their own personal thing to a story. Sometimes that's a wonderful thing, sometimes that's a bad thing. That's my thought as a photo editor is trying to find the right assignment for each photographer. Everybody has their strengths and everybody has their weaknesses. So, anyways, I guess I would say in some ways that absolutely - just like making sure that you have a diverse staff in other ways is important – absolutely gender makes a difference.

EP: So is there a conscious effort to diversify your department in terms of gender?

DP: Well I haven't been able to hire anyone, so I can't really say. Now that we're having buyouts – we're about to have our first set of fires in years – I mean I'm conscious of it. I'm not saying that when I end up deciding on who we are going to hire – there's lots of factors that you have to weigh in – yeah, I do believe it's important. I mean you don't want a staff of all men and you don't want a staff of all women either. So will that be a factor? Yes. That won't be the only factor though.

EP: So how is gender discussed in your newsroom?

DP: You know I'd say the way gender is discussed the most is kind of in a practical way. When we look at the front page, we are very conscious about if we are showing enough women in pictures or if there's a space of time when we've only shown men. That will come up. People will say "wait, why have we only shown pictures of white men for a week?" or "Are we reaching all the different parts of our community?" We're not discussing it all the time, it will just come up every once in a while. And I think absolutely our editor has been conscious about making sure that he is promoting women in terms of higher positions in the management team. So I would say it's very heartening because I'd say there's more women sitting at the table during our budget meetings than there have been in previous years.

EP: Ok. How do women contribute to the photo department at the *Star Tribune*? And what about compared to other newspapers where you've worked?

DP: I'm sorry, what do you mean?

EP: I guess you've already answered it. I guess I'm interested too, because you've been in the industry for so long, how the *Star Tribune*'s female contribution compares to the other newspapers you've worked at.

DP: Well the other newspapers I've worked at were so small. The first paper I worked at there was one other photographer and he was a man. The second paper I worked at I was the only photographer. And then when I worked at the *Bay City Times* in Michigan there was one other woman on the staff of five people. So no matter what, the *Star Tribune* is going to be different. I mean, it's like way bigger, like 300 times bigger. So it's hard for me to answer.

EP: Okay. So now back to photo editing specifically, in your opinion, how do women do the job differently or similarly to their male counterparts?

DP: That's an interesting question. I would say there really is no difference. I don't think it matters what gender you are. I think the pitfalls are the same and certain things are the same. The pitfalls that I fell into when I was first picture editing, is I made the mistake, because I had zero experience picture editing, I made a mistake that a man could make or a woman could make, which was a little too much bravado, a little too much not wanting

to compromise and standing on my opinions and not wanting to budge, which I suppose some people could say “well that’s what a man would do and a woman would be more willing to concede.” And I think a lot of that is your specific personality and I would absolutely say that – I mean again Jenny and I are the only females on the picture editing staff and the rest are men – and I would say that all of them are very good at compromise and discussion and all of the things you might think a woman would more likely do. I mean I have certainly met female editors who are tough as nails and not willing to budge. And I’ve met men that are way more nurturing. I don’t know that it makes any difference. I think a lot of it comes from your confidence level and your comfort with the people you’re working with, too.

EP: So how would you describe your personal leadership style?

DP: I will be the first to say I continue to learn on the job. I’ve been an editor for 15 years, but I’ve had this position only since November. I think at this point what it’s become – I mean, if I compare myself to what I was 15 years ago as I was just describing – I understand how to compromise. I understand when it’s worth fighting a war or battle over something and when it’s worth conceding. I see the forest for the trees. I think I was way more likely, when I first came here, to try to win every single argument. And I realize now that’s not what it’s about. You’re building relationships. So in that sense, when I’m dealing with the rest of the newsroom, like trying to pitch a certain picture that might be difficult, I understand what it takes to have a discussion without feeling like I have to get up on top of a table and yell it. So that’s a good thing. And in terms of working with photographers, I’m just more confident. When I first came, I was 26 years old and I really didn’t know what I was doing. And I felt intimidated! That staff is filled with really talented people, people who really know what they’re doing. And that’s tough to walk in there and act like I knew what to do. And I guess that’s what I’ve learned. My job each day is not to tell someone what to do. It’s to literally help direct our department to whatever the biggest news is that day and to help photographers feel like they have all the resources they need to do their best work. And when they come back with their work, help them figure out what is the best picture and then also to be able to be a hard ass, quite frankly, if need be, and say “I don’t think you got it.” But just make it feel like a conversation and not like I’m over their heads, trying to make their lives miserable. And also I’ve worked with these people for so many years that I think they trust me, so that when I say “you really did a great job on that” they know that I really mean that compliment. And at the same time, if I’m working, we can have that conversation and usually the photographer is like “you know what? You’re totally right. I agree.” and we just kind of talk it out and figure out how we can go back to this and make it work. So I guess I would just describe my style as, well, I try to be very discussion based. And it’s not me sending out directives or orders. It’s really just to try to coordinate to make sure our best stuff gets into print and gets online.

EP: Okay. What are the greatest challenges facing photo editors? Do you think the challenges are ever related to gender?

DP: The greatest challenge to picture editing, in our business, is making sure that

newspapers stay open and keep employing people. In the world of photojournalism, I think the greatest challenge is making sure that people understand that the work we do takes professionals and that it's not a reporter running around with an iPhone. And just as much as you need a professional out there with professional equipment, you also need professionals back at the office to help pick those pictures and help edit that video. And I don't think gender has anything to do with it. I think it's really about finances in our industry.

EP: Right. Well I'm from Chicago so when they fired the whole staff there it was a shock.

DP: Oh yeah, sure. I know all about it.

EP: So can you give me an example of a time when gender played a role in your being successful or not successful in photo editing?

DP: Honestly, I can't. I don't think so. I guess it's kind of hard to separate my gender from any other aspect of who I am. But I don't think my gender has had any bearings no.

EP: Do you interact differently with your male photographers compared to your female photographers?

DP: No.

EP: How do you feel like the men that you work with view you as a woman in a management role or a leadership role?

DP: I mean, our department, the photo department, has had other women. Right before me, Janet Reeves ran the department. Before I came, Earline Cistor was the director of photography. So there has been a history of women running the department, so I don't think it has any bearing. I think the only bearing it ever had was, when I first came, I was so green. But gender? No. I don't think it had any bearing.

EP: What unique qualities – and I know you said you don't directly do as much picture editing now – but what unique qualities do you think you bring to the photo desk?

DP: Honestly I think the best quality I have is that I'm really organized. I mean, more than my ability to look at photos and discern the best image out of an entire take. I think there are a lot of people who are incredible at that and way better at that than I am. So god honest truth, I think my best quality is that I am an anal-retentive person and I am just able to multitask and manage a bunch of things at the same time, which doesn't really sound like I'm pitching myself so well, but a lot of the job is making sure that all these different balls stay up in the air and I'm good at that. As far as my picture editing abilities, I think I'm decent. I'm not the first one I would send to a sporting event and edit a large take. That's not my strength. I'll be the first to say that. And frankly, I feel like I continue to grow as a picture editor. I hope five years from now I'll be even more

confident in picture editing. I don't think you ever stop growing. A lot of it is just experience. And also, frankly, picture editing is changing. Because how you edit for a newspaper is different than how you edit for the web. So that's changing the business too and I feel like that's really evolving for me.

EP: Okay I have only one more question!

DP: Okay.

EP: So there's a saying that "clothes make the man, clothes make the woman." Does clothing matter in your opinion? How does it enter into your work life?

DP: That's a good question. I will be very frank. I will be the first one to describe myself as I dress very schlubby. I get poked at by my friends because I don't necessarily dress as professionally as I probably should. I would say in the newsroom that really doesn't matter. I think if I were maybe at *The New York Times* I would probably pay better attention. I am wearing jeans today because it's Friday, but I've tried to up my look. I pretty much dress the same way as I did at Missouri, which is that I look like I dress like a college student. I really don't care about my clothing and I'll be frank that a big part of the reason that I loved the idea of becoming a photojournalist because I knew it would be the kind of job that I knew I wouldn't have to worry about what I wore. I grew up in a family where both my parents were professors and, like most professors at most universities, they dressed nicely but they wouldn't wear a tie or a skirt. So I grew up in a family where I wasn't used to seeing my dad wear a three piece suit to go to work. I dress very casually. And I don't think it's made any difference at all.

EP: Okay. Well is there anything else you'd like to add? That's all of the questions I've prepared.

DP: Nothing that I can think of. I think it's great you're doing this project though, I'll be very interested to read it. Is there any way you could send me a copy when you're done? I'd love to find out what you found.

EP: I would be happy to once it's approved and finished.

DP: Oh! Fabulous! Well good luck. Since I never finished my project, I'm impressed by anyone who actually finishes theirs.



## Appendix C.

### IRB Approved Recruitment Email

Dear XX,

My name is Liz Pierson and I'm a graduate student in the Missouri School of Journalism.

David Rees, my mentor, suggested reaching out to you for help with my thesis, currently titled *'Women of Vision': How women lead photo departments in a male-dominated field.*

As you can see, I am writing about women working in journalism, specifically photo editing/management, and am interested in interviewing you about your experience in the industry. Your insight and expertise would be invaluable to my research.

It won't be a big time commitment. I would ask for about 30-60 minutes of your time to answer ten questions via Skype or telephone, whichever is most convenient for you. If possible, I would like to complete the interviews by the end of June. So please let me know about your interest and availability.

I am originally from Chicago but for the past five years I have studied photo editing at the Missouri School of Journalism and with a dream to work as a photo editor. I worked as a photographer and photo editor at the Columbia Missourian and Vox magazine, where most of my colleagues and mentors were men.

Your contribution to this study will be invaluable to women looking to start careers in photo editing and gain a deeper understanding about the issues that women in journalism face today.

If you can help me out with this, let me know soon.

Thank you,

## Appendix D.

### IRB Approved Consent Form

Title of Thesis:

*'Women of Vision': How women lead photo departments in a male-dominated field*

Name of Researcher:

Elizabeth Pierson

Name of Institution:

University of Missouri-Columbia

### AGREEMENT OF CONSENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in the above study and am willing to be interviewed and have my interview audio recorded for the purpose of transcription.

I understand that my information will be held by the Missouri School of Journalism and agree to its being used for the purpose of research and study in the proposed MA thesis.

I understand that my name and place of employment will be published in the proposed MA thesis in effort to contribute to the understanding of leadership in present day journalism and photo editing careers.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date