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Im/partial inflections of 9/11 in photo-reportage

Abstract: Photo-reportage of the September 11, 2001 attacks represented a formative moment in the emergent visual ecology of digital photojournalism. In addition to throwing into sharper relief incipient technical factors being inscribed in refashioned protocols of form and practice, it signalled a disruption of corresponding professional boundaries, inspiring a more egalitarian participatory ethos to surface and consolidate. The influx of raw, typically poignant 'amateur' or 'personal' digital images, captured and relayed by those who happened to be in the wrong place at the right time, proved to be a precipitous impetus recasting visual truth-telling. In briefly assessing this inchoate moment of convergence in and between professional and civic repertoires of photographic documentation, this article argues its journalistic appropriation and remediation legitimated in/visibilities of othering that continue to reverberate to this day. More than a transitional point in the evolving reportorial commitments of photojournalism, the onset of this digitalisation of vision signalled an epistemic shift with profound implications for public perceptions of the 'new normal' of the US-led war in Afghanistan, and with it the moralising valorisation of perpetual militarism and its lived contingencies.

Keywords: September 11, 2001 attacks; 'war on terror'; Afghanistan war, Digital photojournalism; Militarism; Othering

'Saturday, just after midnight, we get the call. Rescue workers had found Bill's body.' Bill was William Biggart, a freelance photographer, who lived at Broadway and 18th Street, a few blocks from the World Trade Center in New York. 'When he heard about the explosion, in a reaction as natural as breathing, he'd grabbed a camera and dashed out to shoot it,' his relative Carol Hay (2001) later recounted in a press interview. 'He spoke to his wife, Wendy, just after the first building went down. He was with a fireman. He wanted to get a couple more shots. He'd see her in 20 minutes. Then the second tower collapsed.'

Shooting with three cameras – two film and one digital – Biggart had sought to record the experiences of people at 'ground zero' up close. Street portraiture was the best way to tell a human story, he felt, which meant he seldom used telephoto lenses in his work. 'He wanted to get the story,' Wendy Doremus (2001) told NBC News when asked about her husband. 'He liked to be in the middle of it.' This determination was confirmed by Bolivar Arellano, a *New York Post* photographer. 'I saw Biggart. I was across the street,' he later recalled. 'I saw this guy taking pictures from the middle of the street. I said to myself, "This guy is too close. It's too dangerous. He's risking his life"' (cited in Trost 2002). In addition to Biggart's battered equipment, personal effects retrieved from the rubble included his badly singed press card ('the only sign that he'd been at the scene of one of the world's great conflagrations,' Jerry Adler (2001) of *Newsweek* observed), eyeglasses, notebook, seven rolls of exposed film in damaged

canisters, and the 'microdisk' held intact in his otherwise destroyed Canon D30 digital camera. The disk contained 154 images, beginning with a distant shot of the two towers and ending with those taken immediately before his death, the time code in the final image revealing the precise moment. 'Bill was killed when the second building came down, and he was crushed under all the debris. I don't know if he jumped back under the underpass, or whether the direct debris killed him,' his photographer friend Chip East commented. 'We know in his last picture he was working to the very end, and that's telling of the commitment he had to his work' (cited in Halstead 2001).

Biggart, well-aware of how perilous it can be to bear witness in crisis situations, was the one professional photographer to die covering the aftermath of the attacks. In the days that followed, fellow practitioners described his passionate dedication to the craft, which extended to include an enthusiasm for experimenting with new techniques being made possible by digitalisation. 'He was at the cusp of photography,' Doremus explained. 'He took three hundred pictures. Half the film Bill carried that day was digital, half color-negatives and slides. September 11 became the watershed day. After that, photographers went digital' (cited in Friend 2007: 19). Viewed with the benefit of hindsight, this perception that photo-reportage of the attacks represented a tipping point in the transition from film to digital risks being overstated, yet it certainly threw into sharper relief certain technical factors being inscribed in protocols of form and practice. As detailed below, the immediacy of shot verification, the capacity to process, edit or delete imagery in the field, and the 'high tech' proficiency of despatching output at speed were invaluable, especially under pressure. At the same time, equally significant was its promise to disrupt corresponding professional boundaries, inspiring a more egalitarian participatory ethos to surface and consolidate. The influx of raw, typically poignant 'amateur' or 'personal' digital images, captured and relayed by those who happened to be in the wrong place at the right time, proved to be a formative impetus lending decisive shape and direction to the emergent visual ecology of digital photo-reportage.

In briefly assessing this inchoate moment of convergence in and between professional and civic repertoires of photographic documentation – indicative of what Andrew Hoskins (2014) calls 'the connective turn' – this article will argue its journalistic appropriation and remediation legitimated in/visibilities of othering that continue to reverberate to this day. More than a transitional point in the evolving reportorial commitments of photojournalism, the onset of this digitalisation of vision signalled an epistemic shift with profound implications for public perceptions of the 'new normal' of the US-led war in Afghanistan, and with it the moralising valorisation of perpetual militarism and its lived contingencies.

'The eyes were everywhere'

Time and again, interviews with professional photographers in the aftermath of the attacks – a special issue of *American Photo* (2002) magazine published eighteen of them in January the following year – have given voice to their personal difficulties in performing their role on that fearful, chaotic day. The New York-based International Center of Photography estimated between 150 and 200 newspaper, magazine or agency photographers were on the scene in Lower Manhattan. Biggart alone died on the scene, while several other photographers were hurt, some still suffering lingering respiratory concerns, others left coping with psychological stress (Fischer 2002; Friend 2007; Panzer 2002). Amongst those in harm's way, New York *Daily News* photographer David Handschuh (2002) was pushed beneath a parked vehicle by the force of the repercussion when the south tower collapsed. His leg broken in two places, he was rescued soon after by fire-fighters. 'I lost my glasses, my cellphone, my pager, but not my cameras,' he commented. 'They were filled with dust, but the disks were O.K. and the pictures were fine.' It was a 'true test of digital photography in recording history,' he believed, 'and it

definitely passed the test. The images will stand the test of time' (cited in Glaser 2001).[1] The advantages of digital photography under such conditions – such as being able to quickly evaluate an image's quality on a camera's LCD screen right after it had been taken, not having to open the camera in clouds of dust or ash to change rolls of film, or being able to transfer images via a laptop's modem connecting to a telephone line – were widely remarked upon by photographers, albeit as cold comfort given the traumatic nature of what transpired (Nachtwey 2002; Drew 2002). Describing a subsequent gathering of New York photographers, Handschuh stated there was 'a lot of hand-holding, a lot of hugging, a lot of crying, a lot of people already beginning to feel the effects.' He then added: 'Journalists have to realize they are not made out of metal' (cited in *San Bernardino Sun*, 26 October 2001).

To the extent the September 11 attacks proved to be a 'watershed day' for digital photojournalism, as Wendy Doremus characterised it above, the significance of ordinary individuals' reportage in effecting a rapid pluralisation of visual truth-telling was readily apparent at the outset. 'From the first moments of the attacks,' Michael Feldschuh (2002) of The September 11 Photo Project recalled, 'many people felt compelled to start recording what they saw and thought.' While the 'grief, shock, fear, and anger was overwhelming,' hundreds of citizens felt obligated to bear witness, almost as a moral duty. Some of them, he continued, 'shot in the style of photojournalism, consciously or not, focusing on the timing and composition of the images,' while others 'used photography as a tool of documentation (from its use on the missing person posters to pictures of the missing posters themselves, this was an attempt to capture what was).' Still others 'used photography as a means of personal or artistic expression' (Feldschuh 2002, ix). The array of heart-rending images suddenly appearing online, posted by those with access to a digital camera and a website, became 'instant history' for those struggling to 'process' what may have seemed a necessary response to the thought 'I cannot believe my eyes' (Hu 2001; Mandell 2001). These precipitous contributions by 'amateur newsies' or 'guerrilla journalists' engaged in 'DIY [Do-It-Yourself] reporting' or 'citizen-produced coverage,' to use terms appearing in the press, 'deluged' the web from diverse locations, so diverse as to make judgments about their relative veracity difficult, if not impossible. Some claimed to be survivors of the havoc, but more typical were shots offered by onlookers or bystanders, as well as relief and rescue workers arriving on the scene. Gayle MacDonald (2001) of Canada's *Globe and Mail* was one of many journalists to maintain that the 'most vivid images were captured by the pedestrians with hand-held cameras who found themselves playing bit parts in this unfathomable tragedy.' This judgement led her to contend, in turn, 'the preponderance of this pocket-sized technology is radically changing the way the world views things.'[2]

Re-inflecting this first-person reportage, which was unapologetically subjective in its expression of experiences, presumably served as a coping strategy for some, possibly engendering a cathartic effect for others. In any case, the contrast between ad hoc, spur-of-the-moment content generated via this burgeoning, collaborative newsgathering network and the dedicated work of professionals endeavouring to 'give us history unadorned in a succession of freeze frames' (Kakutani 2002) was stark. These eyewitness accounts, images and survivor stories, in the words of the *New York Times*'s Pamela LiCalzi O'Connell (2001), were 'social history in its rawest, tear-stained form.' In stretching the boundaries of what counted as photojournalism, 'amateur webloggers' threw into sharp relief accustomed, ostensibly impartial reportorial values and conventions. The webloggers, as Mindy McAdams pointed out, 'illustrated how news sources are not restricted to what we think of as the traditional news media.' Indeed, she added, the 'man-on-the street interview is now authored by the man on the street and self-published, including his pictures' (cited in Raphael 2001). Moreover, as photographs e-mailed in from users began to accumulate, some sites moved swiftly to organise them into discrete collections. 'At first I thought photo galleries on the Web might be

superfluous, given the wall-to-wall television,' stated Joe Russin, assistant managing editor at LATimes.com. 'But millions of page views can't be wrong. It appears people really wanted to look at these images in their own time, contemplating and absorbing the tragedy in ways that the rush of television could not accommodate' (cited in Robins 2001).

An open invitation to all New Yorkers to share their photographs for public viewing was proffered by SoHo resident Michael Shulun, who had set to work with several friends to organise a makeshift exhibition days after the attacks. 'Here is New York' opened on September 25 in what had been a vacant shop on Prince Street, with photographs clipped to wires for display – and to purchase, with the proceeds raising money for children of the victims. 'In those turbulent days it seemed as if everyone in New York had a camera.' Shulun (2002) later recalled, 'and we decided that the exhibition should be as broad and inclusive as possible, open to "anybody and everybody": not just photojournalists and other professional photographers, but bankers, rescue workers, artists and children – amateurs of every stripe' (2002: 7). The exhibition soon became a 'rallying point' for the community, with queues of people stretching around the block to see it for themselves. 'Photography was the perfect medium to express what happened on 9/11,' he believed, 'since it is democratic by its very nature and infinitely reproducible.' More than 5,000 images were submitted, captured using an extraordinary array of devices, 'from Leicas and digital Nikons to homemade pinhole cameras and little plastic gizmos that schoolchildren wear on their wrists,' each one speaking to the crisis in a different way. 'In order to come to grips with all of the imagery that was haunting us,' Shulun explained, 'it was essential, we thought, to reclaim it from the media and stare at it without flinching' (2002, 9). In so doing, 'Here is New York' was intended to help 'break down the barriers that divide us' through a 'democracy of photographs' at once intensely local while globalising in their reach.

In the days and weeks to follow, discursive iterations of the 'war on terror' declared by the Bush administration, seeking rhetorical justification for the subsequent US-led military invasion of Afghanistan, resounded in Western news reporting. Researchers have examined the extent to which news imagery shot that Tuesday morning prompted diverse interpretive responses, with some media commentaries underscoring its 'surreal' or 'dreamlike' qualities, ostensibly blurring the calamity into a breath-taking catastrophe scene from a Hollywood film (Žižek 2002; see also Good, 2015; Zelizer and Allan 2002). The professional's avowed objectivity, underwritten by years of training and experience, did not necessarily 'confer an insuperable advantage over the untrained and inexperienced,' Susan Sontag (2003) reasoned. Amateur imagery may well possess a 'special kind of authenticity,' she argued, which in this instance brought to the fore 'the large role that chance (or luck) plays in the taking of pictures, and the bias toward the spontaneous, the rough, the imperfect' consistent with the citizen image-maker's personal subjectivity (2003, 25). 'For the photography of atrocity,' she added, 'people want the weight of witnessing, without the taint of artistry, which is equated with insincerity or mere contrivance' (2003, 23). Fred Ritchen (2013) pinpointed how the types of photographs made by ordinary individuals, such as those appearing in the 'Here is New York' exhibition, contrasted with 'the more sensational, traumatizing imagery published widely in the press' (2013, 99). So often in citizen imagery, he observed, the distant 'other' collapses, effectively replaced by neighbours and friends. 'Rather than an angry response to an enemy, or a view from outside of its horrific aspects,' he continued, 'the collective exhibition of work became part of an attempt to understand, to weep, and to remember' (2013, 99).

Visual Displacements

Recognising the importance of photography for helping with the perceived public need to find 'closure,' to come to terms with anguished suffering and loss, brings to the fore what literary

critic Michiko Kakutani (2002) aptly called ‘a therapeutic arc that underscores the nation’s movement from shock and horror, through grief and mourning, toward patriotic solidarity and resolve.’ While works of photography serve as ‘firsthand pieces of testimony,’ she cautioned, ‘the dangers of aestheticizing or selfishly appropriating an atrocity, still raw and terrible in our minds, remain great: it will be a long time before the events of Sept. 11 can be absorbed by our collective imagination.’ Writing in the *Guardian* newspaper two days into the crisis, Mark Lawson (2001) anticipated this transitional politic would become increasingly apparent, maintaining it is ‘cruelly appropriate that the attack on America is essentially a photo-story’ setting down a preferred narrative order and sequence. Moreover, the ‘picture-book nation’ is now beset with images certain to be ‘horribly iconic for future generations,’ Lawson argued. In ‘looking at what was shot as America snapped,’ he added, ‘what strikes me first is that the most vividly appalling images are all, in a strange way, palimpsests: reflecting other images from the nation’s visual memory, whether factual or fantastic.’

This conception of image as palimpsest has since been recalibrated by Clément Chéroux (2018), who contends that ‘what is at work here is inter-iconicity,’ an elaboration of intertextuality in that ‘9/11 icons’ will ‘evoke other images, just as much as, if not more than the reality of the actual event of which they are the direct imprints’ (2018, 140). Chéroux describes how the news media’s reiteration of a small selection of images in the immediacy of the event invited a collective sense of déjà vu, a feeling engendered by ‘iconographic repetition’ revelatory of ‘a desire to treat 9/11 as an act of war’ where retaliation was the only legitimate response (2018, 140). Two instances of inter-iconicity proved particularly prominent in this regard, the first being images of the fiery explosions and billowing clouds of smoke at Ground Zero becoming visual allusions to the surprise Japanese military attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 (and explicitly signalled in headlines such as ‘Second Pearl Harbor’ or ‘A New Day of Infamy’). Second, images of New York City firefighters lifting the US flag in the ruins of the World Trade Center conjured up the celebrated photograph of Marines raising the flag during the Battle of Iwo Jima (see also Golon 2019; Hoskins 2014). For Chéroux, the ‘inter-iconicity of 9/11’ continues to be reliant upon this reiterative process of reference and association – called forth from factual reportage as well as popular culture over the years – amounting to a ‘memorial trend’ that consolidates, even standardises through replication. ‘Media imagery of September 11 does not refer to history,’ he asserts, ‘but to memory – a version of memory that is seen through the lens of Hollywood entertainment and the spectacle of contemporary news coverage’ (2018, 142).

The militarisation of this ‘spectacularised’ mediation of the attacks, several critics have suggested over recent years, constitutes a decisive turning point in the visualisation of atrocity. The attacks signalled the onset of a ‘war of images,’ according to W.J.T. Mitchell (2011), one ‘fought by means of images deployed to shock and traumatize the enemy, images meant to appall and demoralize, images designed to replicate themselves endlessly and to infect the collective imaginary of global populations’ (2011, 2-3). Writing in an earlier essay, he took care to qualify precisely what he meant by this reference to a ‘war of images’ unfolding since the attacks:

To call this a war of or on images is in no way to deny its reality or to minimize the real physical suffering it entails. It is, rather, to take a realistic view of terrorism as a form of psychological warfare, specifically a use of images, and especially images of destruction, to traumatize the collective nervous system via mass media and turn the imagination against itself. It is also to take a realistic view of the ‘war on terror’ as quite literally, a war against an emotion (like ‘pity’ or ‘love’ or ‘hate’). It is thus a war on a projected spectre or phantasm, a war against an elusive, invisible, unlocatable enemy, a war that continually misses

its target, striking out blindly with conventional means and waging massive destruction on innocent people in the process. The aim of terrorism is, in fact, precisely to provoke this overreaction, to lure the 'immune system' of the social body (its military and police powers) into responses which will have the effect of increasing the power of the terrorists, in effect 'cloning terror' in the process of trying to destroy it (Mitchell 2008).

The discursive mobilisation of 'war on terror' rhetoric by officials across the journalistic field set down the conditions for the ensuing US-led invasion of Afghanistan, codenamed 'Operation Enduring Freedom,' underway from 7 October, 2001. And yet, rather tellingly, Mitchell (2011) observes that the conflict would prove to be 'a relatively minor engagement in the war of images,' a point he underlines by citing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's tactless remark that the country was not a 'target rich environment' (either militarily or symbolically) at the time (2011, 3).

Following the commencement of US bombing attacks on Taliban-controlled territory, the lack of so-called 'valuable targets' meant the range and diversity of imagery emerging from the country was severely limited. 'This is a struggle that's going to take awhile,' President Bush stated during a November press conference. 'It's not one of these Kodak moments,' he continued. 'There is no moment to this; this is a long struggle and a different kind of war' (White House transcript, 2001; see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2003). Pertinent constraining factors included the near-absence of Western photographers on the ground to cover this 'new war', the ruling Taliban militia having ordered all foreigners to leave the country following the September 11 attacks. With the US retaliatory bombing campaign underway, however, a small number of temporary visas were quickly granted for international correspondents to facilitate visual reportage of the damage and casualties. Journalists gathering along the border with Pakistan also faced tightening restrictions, making it very difficult – and dangerous – to enter Taliban-held territory to document the military intervention (several of those caught without official permission were arrested and held, accused of spying). 'If someone goes inside Afghanistan without proper identification. . . we will also take action against the particular agency or network sponsoring that person,' Pakistani foreign ministry spokesperson Riaz Mohammad Khan warned at the time. 'Advise your own colleagues not to be adventurous' (cited in CPJ 2001). Photographs shot inside the warzone were relatively rare in the first phase due to the denial of direct access, compelling news organisations to rely on visuals (screengrabs from broadcast footage being common) of state leaders, military officials, missile launches, troop movements, training exercises, weaponry and associated technologies, or public demonstrations. In the case of newspapers, Paul Verschueren (2012) maintained, the scarcity of combat imagery made it difficult to challenge what was fast-becoming a 'tale of two wars: a high-tech battle of rational Western soldiers whose precision bombings caused collateral damage only, and a low-tech war of primitive warriors with a savage reputation' (2012, 92).

Stratified relations of in/visibility inscribed visual reportage's conditions of scopic possibility. 'Our greatest pressure is that we have no images,' Auberi Edler, a foreign news editor at France 2, told Elizabeth Becker (2001) of the *New York Times* a month into the conflict. Ulrich Deppendorf, a bureau chief for Germany's ARD television network, echoed the point. 'We are experiencing the same problem that we had in the gulf war – no pictures,' he stated. 'We have to rely on what the U.S. government claims, or on what the Taliban via Al Jazeera claims, or on information from the Pakistani news agency' (cited in Becker 2001). With the protocols of 'embedding' yet to be implemented, the Pentagon's enforcement of media management strategies amounted to keeping photojournalists distant from the violence. Shaping public perceptions of 'winning the war' to align with officially-sanctioned definitions of reality on the ground was openly legitimised as a pressing priority, and as such required

‘handling’ those striving to gather independent viewpoints, to see for themselves what military successes or failures looked like. Working within these narrowed interpretive parameters, the few photojournalists intent on bearing witness were left with little choice but to document life far from the warzones. Ron Haviv’s (2002) photographs of Afghan Northern Alliance troops encountering civilians as they advanced across desolate landscapes on their way to capture Kabul, for example, were praised by commentators for their heartfelt, lyrical quality. More typical, however, were the misgivings expressed by Simon Norfolk (2006), who recalled of the conflict’s early coverage: ‘what you got was a guy on a ridge in a turban watching a very, very far away explosion. That was war photography!’ (2006, 17). Exceptions included the efforts of Tyler Hicks, who hastily made his way to the country after the September 11 attacks, when the borders were still open, arriving in time for the outbreak of hostilities. His sequence of images showing Northern Alliance soldiers’ mistreatment of an injured Taliban prisoner of war, pleading for his life before being executed, appeared in the US press in November 2001. Susan Sontag (2002) later remembered being emotionally moved by their publication. Still, ‘the disgust and pity that pictures like Hicks’s inspire,’ she cautioned, ‘should not distract from asking what pictures, whose cruelties, whose deaths you are not being shown.’

Pictorial Reframings

The absence of iconic ‘Kodak moments’ – to repeat Bush’s turn of phrase – capable of stabilising initial framings of the conflict’s realities on the ground prompted Western photo editors to recurrently return to the September 11 attacks (by this logic, the definitive Kodak moment) in order to represent this ‘new war’ in relatable terms. ‘It was if Afghanistan had come up short as a source of war-related photographs,’ Michael Griffin’s (2004) research confirmed. ‘A steady stream of war illustration seemed harder to sustain in Afghanistan than it had been in the Gulf War and an image of the war had to be cobbled together from a greater range of material’ (2004, 389). Over the years to come, this relative dearth of visuals would continue to prove particularly challenging to redress, compounded as it was by a host of logistical, safety and reportorial factors confronting Western and Afghan photographers alike. In the case of the latter, ‘during the rule of the Taliban it was more dangerous to carry a camera than a Kalashnikov,’ photojournalist Travis Beard (2009) pointed out, such were the numbers of Afghan photojournalists arrested, beaten and tortured, in some instances for allegedly violating Islamic law by making images. ‘When the press started to feel empowered to show and tell the truth,’ Beard argued, ‘it was only a matter of time before the military and government powers would retaliate’ (2009, 82). Retaliation can take a variety of forms, of course, with Western photojournalists hardly immune from intimidating pressures to conform, in some cases by exercising self-censorship to stay ‘on message’ within a militarised field of vision.

‘Nothing in the modern history of the Middle East – Taliban or the Saddam or Assad regimes – has equalled the horror unleashed by the US’s “wars of 9/11”,’ Simon Jenkins (2019) recently surmised. ‘They have come to seem as interminable as they are unspeakable,’ with no prospect of ‘victory’ in sight. Where once the notion of ‘wartime’ characterised a temporary period of exceptional divergence from the ostensible ordinariness of peacetime, its apparent endlessness has become a defining feature of the ‘new normal’ of the post-September 11 era. The conflict in Afghanistan, where thousands of US troops remain, like the ongoing operation of the Guantánamo Bay detention centre established in January 2002 – ‘a symbol of torture, rendition and indefinite detention without charge or trial,’ in the words of Amnesty International (2018) – make evident how ‘forgotten wars’ with in/visible victims perpetuate. In her book *War Time*, Mary L. Dudziak (2012) reminds us how and why the Bush administration expended considerable effort in the immediate aftermath of the attacks to frame

this era as a boundless wartime. Its preferred strategic narratives, effectively conflating previous understandings of ‘terrorism’ and ‘war,’ projected to legitimise agendas for a ‘new kind of war’ to be waged against ‘terror’ in the national interest. ‘Once the enemy was not a nation-state or even an identifiable social group, but an ideology,’ she writes, ‘war seemed to have no boundaries in space or time, but seeped into the global spaces where those evil ideas reside’ (2012, 108). In ceasing to be a state of exception consistent with international law, wartime has become limitless, its normalisation serving to propagate a legitimacy for actions previously prohibited as morally indefensible. ‘As war goes on,’ Dudziak maintains, ‘Americans have lapsed into a new kind of peacetime. It is not a time without war, but instead a time in which war does not bother everyday Americans’ (2012, 135).

The proliferation of new threats – with corresponding configurations of enmity – proceeds apace. Looking ahead to 2021, the twentieth anniversary of September 11 is almost certain to feature images made familiar through persistent repetition, ostensibly hegemonic relations of iconicity facilitating the anchoring of their privileged claim on the real. And yet these visualisations, particularly when employed to regulate the normative terms of commemoration and remembrance, continue to be sites of representational struggle. To the extent it is possible to discern militarised modes of vision, this article has shown, they are beset by tensions, displacements and re-inscriptions open to tactical reversal, that is, to a counterpolitics of image-rendering. To reframe the visceral purchase of ‘9/11 icons,’ it follows, binarised ways of seeing, knowing and ordering the world need to be disrupted and then recast, and with them our affective investments in the pictorial violence of othering.

Endnotes

[1] Freelance camera operator Thomas Pecorelli was a passenger on the first flight that crashed into the World Trade Center. Robert Stevens, a photo editor working for the tabloid *Sun*, died on 5 October after inhaling anthrax enclosed in a letter sent to the newspaper’s Florida offices.

[2] The motivations of those engaged in photo-reportage varied, of course, but few would deny the impromptu compulsion to bear witness proved therapeutic for some of those involved. ‘Even as we watched, we wanted to record everything ourselves - however grainy, small, amateurish - on home videos, digital or analog cameras,’ Marianne Hirsch (2003) recalled. She wondered whether such imagery ‘might enable us to look at an indescribable event, to make it manageable, frame it, bring it home, show it to friends, make it small enough to fit into our living rooms or even our pocket,’ effectively amounting to a strategy of containment. ‘We need to place a camera between us and the sight,’ she added, ‘to use it as a form of protection and distancing.’ Tellingly, what seemed so remarkable about citizen newsmaking that day, photojournalist and editor David Friend (2011) pointed out a decade later, would become almost routine: ‘Ten years after, we don’t just expect a crowd-sourced profusion of digital images to accompany a significant event as it unfolds; for better or for worse, we demand it.’

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