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# War and the iPhone

## New Fronts for Photojournalism

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Translator: John Tittensor

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### Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques/3480>

ISSN: 1777-5302

### Translation(s):

Guerre et iPhone. Les nouveaux fronts du photojournalisme - URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques/3294> [fr]

### Publisher

Société française de photographie

### Printed version

Date of publication: 24 May 2012

ISBN: 9782911961298

ISSN: 1270-9050

### Electronic reference

Vincent Lavoie, "War and the iPhone", *Études photographiques* [Online], 29 | 2012, Online since 25 June 2014, connection on 10 June 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques/3480>

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This text was automatically generated on 10 June 2022.

Propriété intellectuelle

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- 1 A number of commentators have called the media coverage of the London bombings of July 2005 a watershed in visual journalism, largely because of the new role played by amateur photography in the reporting of events. As never before, it seemed,<sup>1</sup> amateur photography imposed its presence on the front pages of major dailies in the form of images taken by eyewitnesses with mobile phones.<sup>2</sup> The impression of newness was such that in the days following the attacks media specialists and journalists homed in on what was seen as a profound, salutary change in the journalistic profession. According to Dennis Dunleavy of Southern Oregon University, who summed up the general reaction, 'Photojournalism history was made last week. For the first time, both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* ran photos on their front pages made by citizen journalists with camera phones.'<sup>3</sup> Dunleavy was quick to place this fortuitous documenting of the bombings inside the spectrum of journalistic practice, even if there had been no such underlying ambition; indeed, as the work of witnesses and survivors, the images were less the outcome of documentary intent than a response to a traumatic shock similar to that observed by Barbie Zelizer regarding the events of 9/11.<sup>4</sup> Even so, the 'amateur' coverage of the London bombings, produced outside of a journalistic framework, represented a conveying of information. Such was the opinion of *Washington Post* journalist Robert MacMillan, for whom the journalistic merit of these photographs was certain. Described as 'vivid, factual accounts of history as it explodes around us,'<sup>5</sup> they possessed characteristics fundamental to the profession: informational integrity, speed of production and transmission, and virtually immediate publication by the media. Convinced of their journalistic validity, MacMillan went so far as to describe them as 'the essence of reporting.'
- 2 Little else was needed for the London images to become the new tutelary models of a métier out to reaffirm its ideals: 'People like me spend years in J-school learning how to do it just right. We spend the subsequent years subjecting you to the mixed results. Stacey, Zoulia and hundreds of other amateur journalists, packing camera phones and

an urge to blog, reminded us how simple it should be.<sup>6</sup> The simplicity of these amateur 'methods' was even seen as reminiscent of the most daring gambits of field reporting: Scott Shamp, director of the New Media Institute at the University of Georgia, spoke of these mobile phone users as 'embedded,'<sup>7</sup> thus evoking conditions prevalent in war journalism. If Shamp's analogy implies that each citizen is a latent journalist and the public space a potential war zone, it also betrays the fantasy of instantaneous, ubiquitous news coverage. The novelty quotient of the way the London images were produced is high, with Mike Hughlett speaking of 'a new breed of accidental photojournalist,'<sup>8</sup> as if the accident/event were doing nothing less than transforming citizens into journalists.

- 3 The London images, both still and moving, presented new ways of capturing, transmitting, and disseminating visual content; an unprecedented social phenomenon, they were seized as the symbols of a new era in media coverage. It was clear, according to the news commentators whose reactions came in the immediate aftermath of the bombings, that these images were part of journalistic practice. The figurative amateurishness of the process, along with the sometimes uncertain provenance and stylistic banality of the images, in no way diminished the conviction that this was truly a new form of journalism. Meanwhile, the professionals were rushing to get their hands on the eyewitnesses' images and slot them into a discursive context that they themselves controlled; the media coverage of the London events was highly unusual in that it forced the profession to redefine its prerogatives in light of the shift in journalistic output triggered by the mobile telephone. Hence the urgent need to integrate amateur images into an established field of expertise. While some in the media opted for playing the role of Cassandra and seeing these 'citizen' practices<sup>9</sup> as sounding the death knell for the entire profession, others spoke of a 'mobile turn' signalled by a simultaneous proliferation and deskilling of information sources.<sup>10</sup> It is for this reason that the London images were so telling, despite that, ultimately, few of them found their way into the traditional media. The added value generated by the involvement of various production sources was more notable than the actual number of images circulated.
- 4 This type of coverage, boosted by contributions from unknowns, has now become common. However, more symptomatic of the profound reshaping of approaches to journalistic output is the use by professionals themselves of tools usually associated with citizen practices. In February 2011 Ann Derry, editorial director of video and television at the *New York Times*, pointed out on Beet.tv that a number of journalists working for her paper were now producing stories with the help of an iPhone 4.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, in the spring of 2011 the *Wall Street Journal* announced its intention to train its reporters to not only make video recordings, but also to use the iPhone 4 for live streaming on Skype.<sup>12</sup> More recently still, the BBC said it was working on an application that would allow its reporters to transmit audiovisual content using an iPhone or even an iPad.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the mobile phone is no longer a mere purveyor of amateur imagery: it has now firmly established itself as both a portable communications platform – the nodal point of a new information economy – and a tool for the redefinition of photojournalistic skills, not to say the moving force behind a relegitimization of press photography. This article will propose to analyze the latter: what is the symbolic advantage offered to the press professional by the iPhone? What kind of credit and recognition can an experienced photojournalist draw from resorting to a technique that anybody can use? What order of truth does mobile telephony give shape to once it

has become part of the information sphere? These issues seem all the more crucial in recent years, which have seen an upsurge in the use of the iPhone in war photography, a field that exemplifies photojournalism's highest aspirations.

## Re-enchanting War Photography

- 5 More than just a device for the efficient transmission of visual content, the iPhone appears to be a catalyst for the ambitions of today's visual journalism and the emblem of an inexorable recasting of journalistic integrity. As such, in October 2010 it became the tool of preference for a small media team chronicling the deployment of a battalion of Marines in southern Afghanistan. Images produced by Balazs Gardi (*figs. 1 to 7 and 18*), Rita Leistner, Monica Campbell, and Teru Kuwajama fuelled the open source platform Basetrack, a provider of alternative visual, audio, and written content. For the most part, the images show the daily lives of the Marines and the Afghan population, portraying soldiers, everyday objects, and aerial views, as well as subjects less obviously related to the context of war. In Afghanistan in February 2011, photojournalist David Guttenfelder, winner of numerous World Press awards, used the iPhone's Polarize application, which imitates the look of a Polaroid, to produce pallid, washed-out war photographs – the intention was blatantly aesthetic. Some months earlier the iPhone's journalistic integrity was given a major qualitative boost when the front page of the *New York Times* showed four pictures taken by photojournalist Damon Winter in northern Afghanistan: an editorial gesture that confirmed the device's legitimacy as a tool for war journalism.
- 6 Damon Winter is no stranger to photographic honours: a staff photographer at the *New York Times*, he received World Press Photo awards in 2006 and 2007, a Pulitzer Prize in 2009 for his coverage of Barack Obama's presidential campaign, and the Picture of the Year International award in 2011. Winter's status as one of the most respected professionals in his field was further confirmed by his receiving the Photographer of the Year 2011 award from the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute. Winter is also the author of an iPhone reportage: taken in the summer and fall of 2010, the images, grouped together under the title 'A Grunt's Life,' follow a Marine battalion in northern Afghanistan (*figs. 8 to 15 and 17*). Aside from a few fairly succinct examples, none of these images actually portray combat, their content being mainly the everyday lives of soldiers: leisure activities, camaraderie, maintenance work, household tasks, rest, lots of rest – a reminder that war can be extremely boring. The visual scope of 'A Grunt's Life' is largely limited to the utterly ordinary, in the form of banal tasks, such as making breakfast and drying socks, and the presence of commonplace items, including an electric razor, a chair, and packets of jam. James Dao's front-page article 'Between Firefights Jokes and Sweat, Tales and Tedium,' published in the *New York Times* on November 20, 2010, was accompanied by a series of pictures whose caption underscored the inherent ennui quotient of any military operation. Inside the paper, six additional photographs illustrated the rest of the article; however, while the writer alternates accounts of fighting and day-to-day activities, the photographer seems concerned only with the latter – soldiers sharing an iPod, jumping on a wire bed frame, wrestling, asleep in a group, making breakfast, and shaving. There are four other images that do point, if only indirectly, to combat situations: an assault rifle on a bed of straw, a soldier climbing a ladder to an observation post, a patrol on the alert, and a

Marine brushing dust off his pants after a mortar-bomb attack. The indications of clashes and skirmishes are tenuous, discreet, and hard to spot without the help of Dao's text. The relative non-visibility of combat is due to the systematic exclusion of its attributes – gun firing, attacks, shell holes, smoke, wounded personnel, and enemy prisoners – from the camera's field of view. It is on the periphery of these images, which are free from the conventional notions of war, that the conflict is taking place.

- 7 In an article in *Lens*, the *New York Times* photojournalism blog, Winter insists that the iPhone allowed him to take photographs that would have been impossible otherwise: 'The image of the men resting together on a rusted bed frame could never have been made with my regular camera. They would have scattered the moment I raised my [Canon] 5D with a big 24-70 lens attached. But with the phone, the men were very comfortable. They always laughed when they saw me shooting with it while professional cameras hung from my shoulders.'<sup>14</sup> The iPhone is well suited to scenes perceived as intimate and informal, which is essentially Winter's point when he suggests a correlation between his chosen recording technique and the level of discretion required – a stealth camera for private situations. In ascribing this kind of discretion to the iPhone, Winter brings to mind the 'candid' photography of the 1930s, made possible by the advent of miniature cameras that could be used undetected. However, this revival of candid photography acted concurrently with the phenomenon of the iPhone, which, more than just giving privileged access, has functioned as an interface for a new kind of sharing between Winter and the soldiers: 'The soldiers themselves often take pictures of one another with their phones,'<sup>15</sup> explains Winter, for whom the device is more a tool for group integration than a force for differentiation. With the mobile phone as the common denominator for all concerned, the usual separation between photographer and subject is diminished, if not eliminated.
- 8 Nonetheless, this mutually beneficial interpretation, rooted in the principle of a redistribution of authority, does not hold up when analyzing the publication contexts of Winter's images. 'A Grunt's Life' also appears on the website for the project 'A Year at War,' an interactive platform documenting operations by an American infantry division in northern Afghanistan between March 2010 and March 2011.<sup>16</sup> Winter's pictures accompany a web version of James Dao's article – the only text on the site to be illustrated with iPhone photographs. All of the other reportages feature imagery – still and video – made with a Canon 5D Mark II, a standard for photojournalistic production. No other article uses the square-format photographs so characteristic of the Hipstamatic application employed by Winter for 'A Grunt's Life.'
- 9 The application seems not to have interested the military, as none of the images they contributed to *A Year At War* show any sign of its formal features: the pseudo-instamatic format, discolouration, vignetting, borders that are white and irregular, or a semi-transparent black. The photographs taken by the military are rectangular and show no particular signs of manipulation; adhering to the medium's specific descriptive characteristics is obligatory and governs the production of images overtly intended as testimony and commemoration. Comrades in arms appear, as in Winter's pictures, but are shown in the course of activities that justify the American military presence: aiding or chatting with Afghan civilians, keeping watch on the Pakistan border, firing at insurgents. All of the images produced and put online by the military attest to the rightfulness of the American mission and readily align themselves with the standard

representational codes of heroism. This valour is absent from Winter's coverage, where the soldiers are mainly engaged in ordinary, playful, and even frankly futile pursuits.

- 10 Winter's images point to a marked interest in prosaic situations devoid of any element of heroism. The predominance of subjects that are either minor or seemingly unrelated to the major themes of war photography – the exchanges of fire, attacks, and casualties preferred by the illustrated press – reflects a redefinition of standards in photographic illustration. By gathering together images that show what happens on the periphery of combat, 'A Grunt's Life' brings a new, exemplary quality to everyday war imagery. For the most part, war photographs – at least those singled out by the media and the historiography of photography – are highly event-related. Linked particularly to the type of content shown – an explosion (Ut), an execution (Adams), an ambush (Burrows), a D-Day landing (Capa) – this characteristic is in line with a modern notion of the event, which stresses, as Raymond Aron has put it, 'the unforeseen and unforeseeable consequences of what happens.'<sup>17</sup> Disorderly and uncontrollable, the event is characterized by its interruption of the regular course of time; photojournalism's most iconic images have largely to do with this accidental quality. The event quotient of a photograph can also be measured in terms of the social and political fallout of its media use, that is, the extent of the discursive activity generated by its circulation. Without massive media propagation an image cannot lay claim to potential iconic status. As Robert Hariman and John Lucaites explain, iconic photographs catalyse opinions and so represent basic determinants of public culture.<sup>18</sup> Reproduced on a massive scale, filtered through different media and even adjusted to fit with current events, these icons can be likened to public spaces – John Hartley aptly uses the term 'agora'<sup>19</sup> – usable as venues for debate. However, some photographers, among them Danfung Dennis, who made the stunning Afghanistan documentary *Hell and Back Again* (2011) with a modified Canon 5D Mark II, no longer believe in the social performativity of iconic photographs. This changed perspective demands a redefining of the forms and procedures of visual journalism; whether as Dennis has done by tampering with one of the favourite tools of the professional photojournalist or, like Winter, by photographing the war with an iPhone. The *New York Times* did not get it wrong: re-enchanting the war image was accomplished with the iPhone, the new symbol of the discourse of citizenry.

## Re-engineering Photojournalism

- 11 Due to the moral values that it conveys – courage, selflessness, sacrifice – war photography is considered the noblest of all forms of photojournalism; the icons of photojournalism are mainly war images, conflict zones being the scenes of the most vigorous of political debates, and the frontlines acting as the theatre for photoreportage's greatest myths. War is photojournalism's paradigmatic setting, the seedbed for its foremost ideals. This paradigm is the yardstick with which to measure the symbolic significance of Winter's images. However, to photograph war with a smartphone – that is to say, with the aid of a technology associated with a strictly dilettantish practice of image making – is to clash with the prevailing values of the field. The strongest reactions came not immediately after the images appeared in the *New York Times*, but several months later, and the reason was simple: on February 7, 2011, the winners of the sixty-eighth Picture of the Year International (POYi)

competition were announced. Organized by the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri, the POYi, along with Columbia University's Pulitzer Prize and the World Press Photo in Amsterdam, is one of photojournalism's most prestigious international awards. Established in 1944 'to pay tribute to those press photographers and newspapers which, despite tremendous war-time difficulties, are doing a splendid job,'<sup>20</sup> the competition now aims to reward 'the best documentary photography and photojournalism.'<sup>21</sup>

- 12 On February 7, the POYi's jury awarded Damon Winter third prize for 'A Grunt's Life.' Four days later he was named Newspaper Photographer of the Year for his overall achievements in 2010. The news garnered disapproval from a number of photojournalists, for whom this institutional recognition trivialized their profession; they could not understand why a validating body as respected as POYi would give its seal of approval to work of this kind. However, Winter's iPhone was not the main problem for his detractors. Smartphone use is more than admissible in the context of a protocol intended to create an atmosphere of reciprocity with subjects who themselves are familiar with the device in question; and all the more so in that it represents only one of a broad range of techniques consented to by the industry. With the notable exception of 'A Grunt's Life,' the assignments that earned Winter the title of Photographer of the Year were all carried out using other, more conventional methods. There is nothing unusual about combining different techniques, and it is customary for photojournalists to carry multiple cameras: one equipped for close-up work, another for distance shots, and a third loaded with colour film. Quite often these are all worn at once, slung around the neck; with ready access to all of them, and each pre-set for a specific kind of subject, the photographer can reduce his reaction time to the minimum, which is especially useful in combat situations.<sup>22</sup> In some cases atypical techniques are used in combination with standard equipment. For example, Joel Meyerowitz's photographs of the wreckage at Ground Zero were partly captured with a large-format wooden view camera dating from 1944. The long exposures required by this relic of another age tallied perfectly with the American photographer's idea of producing a meditative documentation of the destruction by including time-lapse in the actual genesis of his images. At a basic level, the decision to carry out a press assignment with an iPhone is not very different from Meyerowitz's choice of using a camera from the Second World War to build a visual archive of 9/11 – in each case the photographer opted for the figurative protocol best suited to the situation. Thus, the use of the iPhone alongside other techniques reflects a kind of logistical preference aimed at optimizing the performativity of the photographic act.
- 13 The criticism pointed at Winter was directed not at the use of the iPhone as such, but at the Hipstamatic application that he had installed on his smartphone. One of the iTunes Store's most commercially successful downloads, Hipstamatic lets users produce images that mimic those made by the Hipstamatic camera developed in the 1980s by brothers Bruce and Winston Dorbowsky. The application's history is of note: in 1972 the brothers were given a Russian plastic camera as a gift; when it broke in the 1980s and a replacement could not be found, they decided to make and market a model of their own. Such was the birth of the Hipstamatic, an all-plastic camera equally inspired by the Kodak Instamatic. One hundred and fifty-seven Hipstamatic cameras were produced between 1982 and 1984, though in 1993 all the relevant documentation and archival material were lost in a fire. In 2009 the Californian firm Synthetic launched the



application as a tribute to the Dorbowsky brothers, who died tragically in 1984.<sup>23</sup> This sad story has all of the qualities of a pre-digital photography era epic. Indeed, as the advertisement says, 'Digital Photography Never Looked So Analog': Hipstamatic's analogue simulation offers square images with imprecise colours, random tones, excessive contrast, ragged edges, and inexact focus. According to those who disparage the use of this application in journalism, Hipstamatic enumerates the mistakes made by amateur photographers. The iPhone, which employs the application, is thus a tool for aesthetic sabotage and deprofessionalization, according to Martin Gee, features design supervisor at the *Boston Globe*. To expose this deception, on February 12, 2011 – less than a week after the POYi awards were handed out – Gee published an article titled 'Look at this Fucking Hipstamatic,' illustrated with side-by-side reproductions of a famous portrait of football player O.J. Simpson (fig. 16). Both photographs were taken using an iPhone, one with Hipstamatic (right) and the other without (left). The point of the exercise was less to highlight the application's aesthetic sloppiness than to condemn its ethical dishonesty. By juxtaposing the two portraits, Gee rekindled a debate about the unscrupulous use of computer technology that had flared up in 1994, when *Time* magazine was severely criticized for digitally accentuating the colour of Simpson's skin (at a time when he was facing murder charges). Gee's comparison of this dubious editorial action with the use of Hipstamatic was intended to demonstrate that the application violated journalism's ground rules and consequently was not consonant with the ethical principles of war photography: 'The app,' he wrote, 'adds borders, textures, colours and effects on top of the original photo. ... In a war zone? I think not.'<sup>24</sup> In a similar vein, Matt Buchanan challenged the veracity of Winter's photographs, calling them 'fauxlaroids' and comparing them with Adnan Hajj's notoriously doctored – and reproached – images of an air raid on Beirut in August 2006.<sup>25</sup> Even Winter's award as POYi Photographer of the Year has been contested, with photojournalist Logan Mock-Bunting maintaining that his colleague's images contravene the rules of the organization in question. He backed this claim with an excerpt from the POYi's rules, which formally forbids all forms of image manipulation. According to Mock-Bunting, use of the Hipstamatic application violates this rule and automatically renders Winter ineligible.<sup>26</sup> Yet, these critics all make the same mistake by not establishing a distinction between the manipulation of a source-file image post-capture and digital modifications inherent in the functioning of a given application. The supposedly illegitimate modifications are in fact the outcome of an encoding process that occurs at the moment the photograph is taken. If the photographer plays no part in creating these effects, where does the fault lie? For the critics, it lies in the photographer's indifference to the making of his own images.

- 14 We all know the famous 1888 slogan that launched the Kodak, the camera that marked the beginning of amateur photography: 'You press the button, we do the rest.' It was this promise of easy-as-pie photography – a catchphrase that encapsulated the prerequisites for the rise of amateur practice in the late nineteenth century – that triggered the camera's enormous success with the public.<sup>27</sup> Photography had to be turned into the simplest of activities and this was done by delegating 'the rest' – developing and printing – to industry. This ease gave birth to mass-market photography: the amateur could now make his/her own pictures in blissful ignorance of the technical side of the medium. The same liberating ignorance is at work in Winter's recourse to the Hipstamatic application; what bothers his detractors is not so much his use of a widely hailed technology as the discarding of an age-old skill. To turn



the management of visual testimony over to the crassly popular app market is inconceivable. That institutions such as the *New York Times* and the POYi should give their blessing, in the form of publication and awards, to such deliberate acts of deskilling is nothing short of heresy. Such is the opinion of a conservative fringe in visual journalism, which sees use of Hipstamatic as irresponsible, an abdication of one's expertise.

- 15 However, the use of this application in photojournalism actually reveals a strategy of relegitimization. In one of his most enlightening texts, Jeff Wall – using the term 'deskilling' – reminds us that the rejection of expertise was an integral part of the recasting of artistic values that marked the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, during that period it was in imitation of amateur practice that photography undertook the critique of its own precepts, which ensured its artistic modernity. This questioning came along at a time when amateur photography itself was undergoing radical change. Pentax and Nikon supplanted Kodaks and Hawkeyes as the tools preferred by amateurs in the 1960s, thus bringing a new sense of professionalization to amateur practice. Requiring greater technical know-how, and much respected because of their popularity with press photographers, these cameras became symbols of a more enlightened amateurism and, according to Wall, signalled the end of the Eastman era. As it happened, this period, and its qualitative technical advances in amateur photography, coincided with Conceptual Art's appropriation of the forms of a more 'primitive' amateurism. The marks of incompetence and carelessness found in the work of Ed Ruscha and John Baldessari – exaggerated repetition of motifs, trivial subject matter, bad framing – came to be interpreted as signs of a salutary deprofessionalization<sup>29</sup> of art. In this respect Conceptual Art was updating a prior stance – detectable in the early works of Gustave Courbet and even more so in those of Edouard Manet – that called for a de-emphasising of the indication of academically learned skill. As John Roberts<sup>30</sup> has pointed out, modern painters were less concerned with adopting the then devalued methods of the craftsman and the amateur than with sabotaging the normative arsenal of the Academy, and most of all its repressive demand for technical mastery.
- 16 Today, contemporary art practices are witnessing a revival of the amateur's technological tools: slide carousels, Super-8 projectors, pinhole photography. As Charlotte Laubard states, 'Retroengineering'<sup>31</sup> is the latest of these artist-initiated ventures in technical reversion; Hipstamatic is part of this same movement advocating the resurgence of outdated aesthetics and procedures. Purely rhetorical though it may be in practice, the analogue resurrection promised by Hipstamatic is part of a critical tradition extending from Courbet, to Conceptualism, to 'retroengineering' in an ongoing devaluing of officially recognized skills. Since the 1990s, photojournalism has been looking for salvation in the canonical symbols of institutional recognition: large format, luxurious prints, solo exhibitions, affirmation of authorial prerogatives, and admission into significant public and private collections. Then along came Damon Winter, photographing war with Hipstamatic and forsaking all of these status indicators in favour of – more rewardingly still – deliberate deprofessionalization, technical deflation, conspicuous amateurism, and aesthetic obsolescence.

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NOTES

1. In fact, amateur photographers have always fuelled the illustrated media with images of interest to the public, and the press has always been open to anonymous contributions. This has been the case at least since the First World War, when the illustrated press called out for photographs by amateurs. Thus, photographic illustration has never been the exclusive privilege of professional photojournalists, but rather the reflection of a variety of aspirations and job statuses.
2. It should be remembered that three of the bombings in London took place in the Underground, which was rapidly sealed off by the police. This exceptional situation made press access difficult, not to say impossible, the result being that the only images available were those taken by Underground travellers – hence the seemingly exclusive character of the grim evacuation scenes. This was one of the main reasons why the media coverage of the London terrorist attacks looked so remarkable.
3. Dennis DUNLEAVY, 'Camera Phones Prevail: Citizen Shutterbugs and the London Bombings,' *Digital Journalist*, July 2005, <http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0507/dunleavy.html>.
4. Barbie Zelizer analyzes the essentially redemptive role played by popular press photography in response to the events. With their main function being to call for 'documentary meditation' and to guide readers toward a 'post-traumatic space,' the minimal journalistic stipulations seemed superfluous. Barbie ZELIZER, 'Photography, Journalism, and Trauma,' in *Journalism After September 11*, eds. B. ZELIZER and Allan STUART, 55–74 (London: Routledge, 2002).
5. Robert MACMILLAN, 'Witnesses to History,' *Washington Post*, July 8, 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/08/AR2005070800584.html>.
6. Ibid. The author is referring here to Adam Stacey, a 24-year-old civil servant photographed at his own request by Elliot Ward as he was being evacuated from an Underground station; and to Matina Zoulia, whose account of the attack appeared the same day on the *Guardian's News Blog* (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/blog/2005/jul/07/youreyewitness>). On the effects of globalized technological witnessing, see Anna READING, 'The London Bombings: Mobile Witnessing, Mortal Bodies and Global Time,' *Memory Studies* 4, no. 3 (July 2011): 298–311.
7. Quoted in Mike HUGHLETT, 'Technology is Changing How Big Media Cover Stories,' *Chicago Tribune*, July 10, 2005, [http://www.satrib.com/nationworld/ci\\_2850091](http://www.satrib.com/nationworld/ci_2850091).
8. 'The pictures taken by the new breed of accidental photojournalist are different than those taken by professional news photographers. That's partly because they're simply not as skilled as pros.' Ibid. In a similar register Julia Day identifies London Underground users as 'a new avant-garde of amateur reporters,' emphasizing the radical shift attributed to the images in question. See Julia DAY, 'We Had 50 Images within an Hour,' *Guardian*, Monday, July 11, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2005/jul/11/mondaymediasection.attackonlondon>.
9. On the op-ed page of Paris daily *Libération* for August 20–21, 2005, Patrick SABATIER addressed the profession's anxiety in the face of what was then being called 'citizen journalism' and 'alterjournalism': 'Technology makes it possible for any citizen to gather and, especially, to publish – to disseminate to a wide audience – facts, sounds, images and opinions. Everybody is becoming an image producer, everyone can make his view of reality known. Once a rare – and thus expensive – commodity monopolised by the media, information is now becoming broadly available to all, is being privatised. And journalists are wondering if the prophets of doom might not be right in their prediction of the end of the media.' Sabatier went on to stress 'the need to shape, classify, decode and analyse' information: the importance, in other words, of the selection and checking of content that only an expert is capable of. Faced with this new situation assumed by the media, the journalism sector was feeling a need to restate the virtues of specialized

knowledge and skills. Far from welcoming amateurism into the fold, the concern here was the distinction between the man in the street and the professional. The underlying motives were as much economic as symbolic: the hope is that resistance to the pressures of a market that saw the use of amateur photographers as a godsend would be accompanied by protection of the privileges of a journalistic aristocracy seen as the guarantor of an enlightened press.

10. Regarding the 'citizen journalism' issue, see Dan GILLMOR, *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*, 2nd ed. (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2006), 125–29.

11. Andy PLESSER, 'New York Times Staffer Using Apple iPhone 4 for Video News Gathering, "A Huge Game Changer" Says Paper's Video Chief,' February 1, 2011, <http://www.beet.tv/2011/02/iphone4nytimes.html>.

12. 'Wall Street Journal Deploying iPhone 4 Globally for News Gathering and Live Streaming,' May 10, 2011, <http://www.beet.tv/2011/05/wsjiiphone.html>.

13. Joel GUNTHER, 'BBC Developing New iPhone App for Field Reporters,' June 14, 2011, <http://www.journalism.co.uk/news/bbc-developing-new-iphone-app-for-field-reporters/s2/a544714/>.

14. Damon WINTER, 'Through My Eye, Not Hipstamatic's,' *Lens* (blog), *New York Times*, February 11, 2011, <http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/11/through-my-eye-not-hipstamatics/>.

15. Ibid.

16. See <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/world/battalion.html#/NYT>.

17. Raymond ARON, *Dimensions de la conscience historique* (Paris: Plon, 1961), 155.

18. Robert HARIMAN and John L. LUCAITES, 'Public Culture, Icons, and Iconoclasts,' in *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 25–48.

19. John HARTLEY, 'Agoraphilia: The Politics of Pictures,' in *The Politics of Pictures: The Creation of the Public in the Age of the Media* (London/New York, Routledge, 1992), 28–41

20. See 'A Brief History of POYi,' <http://www.poyi.org/67/history.php>.

21. 'Pictures of the Year International is the oldest and one of the most prestigious photojournalism competitions in the world. Each year POYi honors the best documentary photography and photojournalism, setting the gold standard for excellence': <http://www.poyi.org/68/Newseum.html>.

22. For example, Robert Capa, the most iconic of war photographers, set off for Omaha Beach wearing two Contax 35mm monocular reflex cameras, each loaded with 36-exposure black and white film, and a medium format, square-negative Rolleiflex. During the disembarkation he used the Rolleiflex to photograph the action from the shore, and the Contaxes while he was in the water and making his way toward the beach. See Richard WHELAN, ed., *Robert Capa: The Definitive Collection* (London: Phaidon, 2004).

23. See Synthetic's [www.hipstamatic.com](http://www.hipstamatic.com) site.

24. Martin GEE, 'Look at this Fucking Hipstamatic,' February 12, 2011, [http://web.mac.com/hellvetica/Site/martypants/Entries/2011/2/12\\_look\\_at\\_this\\_fucking\\_hipstamatic.html](http://web.mac.com/hellvetica/Site/martypants/Entries/2011/2/12_look_at_this_fucking_hipstamatic.html).

25. Matt BUCHANAN, 'Hipstamatic and the Death of Photojournalism,' February 10, 2011, <http://gizmodo.com/5756703/is-hipstamatic-killing-photojournalism>. Regarding the actions taken against the Reuters freelance photographer, see Donald R. WINSLOW, 'Reuters Apologizes over Altered Lebanon War Photos; Suspends Photographer,' August 7, 2006, National Press Photographers Association, [http://www.nppa.org/news\\_and\\_events/news/2006/08s/reuters.html](http://www.nppa.org/news_and_events/news/2006/08s/reuters.html). For a discussion of the implications of this kind of violation of professional ethics, see Vincent LAVOIE, 'Photojournalistic Integrity: Codes of Conduct, Professional Ethics, and the Moral Definition of Press Photography,' *Études photographiques*, no. 26 (November 2010): 213–25, <http://etudesphotographiques.revues.org/index3123.html>.

26. Mock-Bunting cites verbatim the rules of the competition – notably the stipulation that 'No masks, borders, backgrounds or other artistic effects are allowed' (<http://www.poyi.org/64CFE/>

rules.html) – as disqualifying Winter’s work: ‘The issue **IS** about a digital manipulation that was applied to the image. The filter changes the content of the image, and by the rules stated above, should not be applicable in this contest.’ Logan MOCK-BUNTING, ‘Drawing the Line,’ *Birds to Find Fish* (blog), <http://blog.birdstofindfish.com/?p=947>.

27. See François BRUNET, *La Naissance de l'idée de photographie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), and in particular chapter 5, ‘La révolution Kodak,’ 213–67.

28. Jeff WALL, “‘Marks of Indifference’: Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art’ (1995), reprinted in Douglas FOGLE, *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography, 1960-1982* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2003), 32–44.

29. Here I am using the term ‘deprofessionalization’ in Edgar Morin’s sense of a process of ‘regression of specialisation to the benefit of multiskilling and general skills.’ See *Critère*, no. 26, 1979, 147–60, [http://agora.qc.ca/reftext.nsf/Documents/Profession\\_A\\_propos\\_de\\_la\\_deprofessionnalisation\\_par\\_Edgar\\_Morin](http://agora.qc.ca/reftext.nsf/Documents/Profession_A_propos_de_la_deprofessionnalisation_par_Edgar_Morin).

30. John ROBERTS, ‘The Amateur’s Retort,’ in *Amateurs*, ed. Grace KOOK-ANDERSON and Claire FITZSIMMONS (San Francisco: Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, 2008), 15–24.

31. See the report ‘Retroengineering,’ edited by Charlotte LAUBARD, in *02*, no. 36 (winter 2005/2006): 9–18. Regarding the role of digital culture in the revival of ‘vintage’ art forms, see Simon REYNOLDS, *Retromania: Pop Culture’s Addiction to Its Own Past* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011).

## ABSTRACTS

No longer a mere purveyor of amateur imagery, the mobile phone has now firmly established itself as both a portable communications platform – the nodal point of a new information economy – and a tool for the redefinition of photojournalistic skills, not to say the moving force behind a renewed status for press photography. This article will propose to analyze the latter: what is the symbolic advantage offered to the press professional by the iPhone? What kind of credit and recognition can an experienced photojournalist draw from resorting to a technique that anybody can use? What order of truth does mobile telephony give shape to once it has become part of the information sphere? These issues seem all the more crucial in recent years, which have seen an upsurge in the use of the iPhone in war photography, a field that exemplifies photojournalism’s highest aspirations.

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