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## **Amendment to Journalism Ethics Proposed** Missing Guideline Is Harming Profession, News Consumers

**The Don't Inspire Evil Initiative calls upon all journalists to: “Refrain from gratuitous or repetitious portrayal of mass murderers’ names and images.”** This principle has been proposed for inclusion in the profession’s ethical codes.

News coverage of criminal, islamist, rioting and terrorist atrocities can be perfectly accomplished without incentivizing or encouraging copycat behavior. There is no value in subjecting news consumers and the public to offensive or repulsive content that repels audiences without adding fresh content.

The modern tendency to show the faces of the most heinous villains until they reach iconic status, often with bizarre graphic enhancement like doubling, silhouetting and highlighting, is a gross perversion of the public trust protected by First Amendment freedom. Copycat behavior is a well-established reality, borne out in numerous studies, easily observed in the behavior of fans in all popular pursuits and importantly, exhibited in criminals. Solid reporting does not require this increasingly frequent journalistic aberration.

Responsible journalists need not repetitiously show or name villains in reporting results of crime. Those who do, inadvertently perhaps but effectively nonetheless, are supporting, aiding and abetting the villainous actors themselves. Dredging up the names and images even years after they are news exacerbates the problem.

Limit the glorification of spree and mass murderers by restricting excessive use of the villains’ identities. Instead, if media staff feel compelled to publish names, focus on victims and results, or simply don’t dwell on yesterday’s news. Let “the Golden Age of violent spree glorification,” finally end. *Refrain from gratuitous or repetitious portrayal of mass murderers’ names and images.* It is not news.

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