



## The anatomy of a photojournalistic icon: marginalization of dissent in the selection and framing of 'a death in Genoa'

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the case of a recent news 'icon', a celebrated product of photojournalism, Dylan Martinez's so-called 'death in Genoa'. The picture shows a scene moments before the death by police gunfire of a protester during the Group of Eight (G8) summit in Genoa in July 2001. The image was chosen by news and political elites as a metonym for the antiglobalization movement. Fitting into the typical characteristics and assumptions of the news icon, it served less to show what happened than to direct public gaze and interpretations to framed 'meanings' that, in this instance, marginalized a strike against authority by establishing 'protestor violence' as the news lead. The study highlights news photography's interpretive role of historical events and their context and complexity.

### KEY WORDS

effects • framing • icon • metonym • news • photojournalism • protest • schema • signage • spectacle

On the afternoon of 20 July 2001, during the Group of Eight (G8) summit in Genoa, Italy, Dylan Martinez of the Reuters agency photographed the events before, during and after the death of a man named Carlo Giuliani. As one of the several thousand individuals who gathered to contest the three-day economic conference attended by delegates from eight Western nations, Giuliani, a 23-year-old antiglobalization protester, was shot in the head by a member of the *carabinieri*, the Italian military police force, on a narrow path in the ancient city's downtown area. The armed officer's vehicle had entered one of the larger streets where both riot police and protesters had gathered when a group of young men, including Giuliani, clad in makeshift riot gear assembled from moped safety helmets, homemade shields and gas masks,



**Figure 1** Giuliani (in black balaclava helmet) pictured behind a police jeep during the anti-G8 protest, 20 July 2001, Genoa. Photo: Dylan Martinez, Reuters.

approached the officers' jeep from behind and the side, throwing objects at it and breaking its windows. Obstructed by a cement barricade and, consequently, unable to drive forward to distance their vehicle from the aggressive protesters, the officers began to maneuver their vehicle. During these moments, a gun emerged from the jeep's smashed rear window, a shot rang out, a protester – Giuliani – was fatally wounded by the fired bullet, a journalist took photographs, and a controversy was born: both a legal battle to determine responsibility for a man's death and a struggle to define the symbolic and political meaning of the images documenting the event as well as its antecedents and aftermath.

Of the many pictures taken by Martinez and hundreds taken by other photographers during the three days in July, only one was eventually accorded international notoriety: in this photo, Giuliani, wearing a black balaclava on his head, stands at the rear of the jeep with his back to the viewer and holds what has been reported to be a fire extinguisher.<sup>1</sup> As he lifts the object in the air, another protester prods the jeep with a wooden plank. In the shattered rear window of the vehicle, a pistol held by an obscured passenger seems to be aimed at Giuliani. As a backdrop to this action, the buildings behind show signs of the vandalism that had occurred throughout the city in previous days as a result of the anti-G8 protests. Most noteworthy – serving for many news viewers as the internal lexical framing, or *signage*, of the picture – the words 'NO MORE COPS' (in English) are spray-painted on a wall in the background. In addition, all the storefronts included in the photograph have been secured with metal grills or panels and the portion of the street pictured in the image appears to be littered with broken objects and trash.

The fatal encounter was not a coincidental meeting of the agents of authority, protest and press. Martinez, along with an army of other international journalists and photojournalists, gathered in Genoa to cover the much-anticipated assembly of heads of state from the world's leading industrialized nations. Initiated in the 1970s by George Shultz, the US Treasury Secretary at the time, the G8 summit was initially intended to provide an informal platform for economic strategists from various Western nations to come together and discuss international finance. In recent years, these meetings have grown both in scale and scope, and now include leaders from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States, who come together to brainstorm political as well as economic matters. Since the early 1990s, the G8, plus many other summits with the same objectives (including the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and the World Trade Organization meeting held in Seattle in 1999), have become settings for confrontation – physically between protesters and local law-enforcement authorities and symbolically between myriad antiglobalization groups and the leaders of the global economy.

The protests are obviously attractive to media professionals in an age of visually driven news and have been ritually featured on the front page of

newspapers and news magazines, and been used as lead items on broadcast news. The effects of their sensational displays, however, are problematic for both G8 leaders and protesters. Certainly the national leaders have been forced to respond, at least rhetorically, to the protesters' allegations of causal links between the sprawl of global capitalism and the resulting environmental degradation and developing world poverty. For example, at the Genoa meeting, the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair boasted to reporters at the summit's close: 'For the first time we've got a positive, definitive process and plan for dealing with the problems of Africa' (Blair, 2001). Collectively, indeed, the participating delegates issued a final statement verbalizing their commitment to global topics, such as the spread of AIDS, debt relief for poor countries, international trade agreements, and environmental protection (*Summit Summary*, 2001). Also, for the first time in G8 history, heads of state from less-affluent nations, such as countries in Africa and Central America, were included in selected discussions during the three-day meeting (Sanger, 2001: 7; Tagliabue, 2001b; see also Tagliabue, 2001a).

At the same time, the G8 protesters have been criticized by many in the punditocracy – the op-ed and editorial commentators of mainstream political persuasions. Indeed, liberal commentators regularly cast doubt on the globalization protesters as a group too loosely organized, too prone to theatricality and violence, too radical in their aims, and too split in opinion to be effective. The day following the death of Giuliani, the *New York Times* added to this reputation by quoting several non-violent protesters on the streets of Genoa who had taken it upon themselves to verbally scold and even chase away their fellow marchers caught damaging property. The article closes by pointing out that 'issues of third world debt and unfettered capitalism were not foremost on many protesters' minds', as self-defense and avoidance of violence had taken center stage (Sanger, 2001: 7). The violence associated with the protests – not to mention the physical appearance and radical rhetoric of the more flamboyant protesters – is often cited as the root of current mainstream skepticism for a movement seemingly undermining itself.

The shooting in Genoa and the resulting imagery, then, provide an opportunity to investigate how and why news images are chosen and how they, alone, come to represent the events with which they are connected. They function as both a metonym (a picture that is taken to stand for a wider event) and a 'site of struggle' for the interpretation of the antiglobalization cause. Moreover, the process by which one of the thousands of images in the global news stream is favored over the others is partly an aesthetic one but also, to a large extent, a politically motivated process of manufacture and spin, *not* a natural selection (Perlmutter, 1997, 1998, 2003). This study seeks to illuminate how these elevated journalistic photographs, news icons, or 'big pictures' (Perlmutter, 2003) can be appreciated not just as striking compositions but also as rhetorical tools wielded by numerous, and often diverse, appropriating parties to support their respective arguments.

The case of the 'death in Genoa' image, thus, highlights that visual news icons are not natural 'windows' onto the world, as the most standard analogue proposed by news professionals describes them. Rather, photojournalism's output is as manufactured and framed for consumption as any other news product. Once created, captioned and imposed on audiences, however, the actual effect of pictures in the press is not simplistically predictable, and their interpretation is subject to change and debate.

## **BACKGROUND: MASS-MEDIATED PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS**

One crucial context of the Genoa shooting icon is the phenomenon of the mass-mediated demonstration. Obviously, large and often violent protests against existing power structures or social orders have taken place throughout history, including such famous cases as the plebes and proles of Rome, the Blue and Green factions of Byzantium, the Jacquerie of the Middle Ages, the rowdy patriots of the Boston Tea Party, and the various movements of the 1960s and 1970s, right up to the protests against the Iraq war in 2003. Such actions – even when they precipitated outright revolt – have always included a component of theatricality. However, in a modern age of instant, global mass communication, groups opposing the existing political, social, cultural or economic order are faced with the practical, political, psychological and existential quandary that might be summed up by the Hamletian paraphrase, 'To be a media spectacle or not to be a media spectacle?'

On the one hand, outsiders and fringe-dwellers – that is, coalitions or single groups of people holding opinions that deviate from mainstream popular and official thought – need attention for their causes to attract financial and material support as well as recruits. Most groups, from middle-class citizens protesting cuts in their local school's budget to a terrorist group seeking global power, recognize the need to attract the spotlight of mass media. Airtime and newsprint space, thus, are the *sine qua non* of anyone seeking societal change of any kind.

On the other hand, those very publicity-seeking tactics may ultimately distort, radicalize, trivialize and even undermine a group's cause, especially in the view of their more moderate proponents or non-agenda-sharing allies. Worse, the acquisition of space in the newshole, the governmental, press and public agenda, may constitute for the protest groups a lost victory of public relations. They become famous for 15 minutes simply for what they do (or look like), not the principles, policies or programs they advocate or oppose.

In response to this challenge, protesters often evolve their own voice, that is, their private sets of symbols, sounds, bodily stances and articulations that express their own sets of beliefs, however 'discordant' to the eyes and

ears of mainstream press elites and the general public (DeLuca, 1999: 9–21; Sanger, 1997: 179–95; Simonson, 2001: 399–420; Stewart, 1999: 91–105). Indeed, in many cases, widely publicized protest movements might not be interested in public communication but may be more focused on reaching a specific (self-referenced) community or may be disdainful of wider public acceptance (Lake, 1983: 127–42; Low, 1996: 101–9; Terrill, 2001: 25–53).

In contrast, movements seeking mainstream connections and acceptance try to create narrative structures and visual symbols that may connect to (in research terms, they try to activate the *schemas* of) mainstream audiences. Martin Luther King's religious framing of the black struggle for civil rights and equality was an example of one such tactic in that he appealed to Judeo-Christian and American traditions for moral suasion (Selby, 2001: 68–93). In other cases, spectacle-oriented protests may have multiple and diverse internal and external target audiences (Watkins, 2001: 83–101). Finally, different groups with similar goals may choose tactics that are moderate or militant, compromising or confrontational, working within a system or in opposition to it (Kowal, 2000: 240–55).

Examples of the complexities of the protester image abound, but all reinforce a certifiable observation: most people's view of protest movements is filtered by mass media (Stamou, 2001: 653–80). News coverage of political issues and protest movements thus affects public perceptions and may even be said to spur 'opinion' about the protesters and their perceptually defined causes (McLeod, 1995: 4–19; McLeod and Detenber, 1999: 3–23; Shoemaker, 1984: 66–75; Wittebols, 1996: 345–61). For example, during the 1960s and early 1970s a large majority of the public, when surveyed, reacted negatively to anti-Vietnam War protesters (Gustainis and Hahn, 1988: 203–16; Kernell, 1978: 506–22; Milstein, 1974; Mueller, 1971, 1973; Robinson, 1970: 1–9). It is unclear, however, whether such feelings were engendered by antipathy to the goals of the more moderate wing of the movements or by the theatrical (and media-attracting protest) tactics of some anti-war protesters (Fiske, 1987: 284; see also Domke et al., 2003: 193–221). As Todd Gitlin described in his classic study, *The Whole World is Watching* (1981), media attention is a two-edged sword in that it can make and unmake a protest movement because mass media tend to focus on the most sensational rhetoric or actions of the more radical elements. Other crucial definitions are those of 'legitimacy' and 'worthiness' – that some protesters are worthy victims and to be accorded sympathy, e.g. the anti-government Tiananmen Square students, and others are unworthy (and almost execrable), e.g. anti-government Korean student demonstrators (Kim, 2000: 22–36; Larson and Chen, 1992: 78–104; Perlmutter, 1998). Finally, news media can choose to strip protesters of any political voice by focusing on their events and displays only as entertainment, not as meaningful expressions of opinion (Dow, 1999: 143–57; Ewen, 1988: 265).

Contemporary antiglobalization protests and movements are caught in these same struggles for attention, definition, legitimacy and worthiness.

Since the late 1990s, civil rights groups, environmental organizations and students from around the world campaigning for a variety of humanitarian causes have criticized global economic summits. To show their disapproval of the exclusive, hierarchical and (perceived) anti-poor, anti-environmental agenda of these meetings and the general failure to disclose decision-making processes to the public, demonstrators have gathered in ever-increasing numbers at the sites of meetings, such as that of the G8 and of the World Trade Organization. Advocating a diversity of causes and aligning themselves under the umbrella term 'antiglobalization', these activists claim to resist expanding, non-democratic corporate power. However, different subgroups choose to fight against manifestations of what they perceive to be Western economic privilege (see Klein, 1999). The antiglobalization protest movement at the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, Washington, and the ensuing violence surrounding it, triggered a rush of international consciousness and protest events at subsequent economic summits. These included acts of civil disobedience in Prague in September 2000, in Quebec City in April 2001, and in Göteborg, Sweden shortly before the 'death in Genoa' (Fleischhauer et al., 2001: 24–5).

To complicate matters further, the antiglobalization movement is split internally among factions that disagree about the proper tactics for protest as well as the ultimate aims of the struggle. The most pronounced differences exist between the groups who advocate non-violent disobedience, those individuals who wish to answer (what they perceive to be) police violence with more of the same, and even those who consider property destruction as a necessary form of protest. In internal nomenclature there are the 'greens' versus the 'blacks'. Anarchist (or 'black') groups have received most of the blame for the defacement of property and attempts to injure police at the various summits. Ya Basta! (Enough Already!) is one of the more prominent anarchist, or 'direct action' groups, which came into being during the mid-1990s, inspired by Mexico's Zapatista rebels. Sympathizers with this group are easily recognized by their white overalls, which are meant to symbolize the invisibility of the marginalized populations. At the G8 in Genoa, Tutte Bianche (White Overalls), a group that emerged in 1998 out of the Ya Basta! movement, was joined by fellow anarchists, the Black Bloc, as the prominent perpetrators of violence. Instead of sporting white, the Black Bloc were known for their black attire and head coverings. Notably, this was the type of clothing often pictured in photographs of the destruction in Genoa and particularly the stocking cap worn by Carlo Giuliani (cf. Ratnesar, 2001: 34).

Unsurprisingly, at the same time, massive security became a feature of all global economic meetings. Genoa was no exception. As a precaution to deter what its federal police called 'potential suspects' from entering the country, Italy suspended the Schengen Treaty covering intra-European travel. The authorities' abrogation of this policy, which guarantees unrestricted travel throughout the European Union, caused hundreds of travelers to be turned away at the Italian border. The targeted individuals included those

already on police watch lists and those carrying banners, accessories and black clothing thought to be indicators of their participation in the Black Bloc (see Dickey and Nordland, 2001: 23). All railways, highways, airports and seaports servicing Genoa were closed for the duration of the summit, making entry even more difficult. Those lucky enough to arrive in Genoa were faced with further traffic restrictions, particularly the barricaded 'red zone' that was erected around the section of the city hosting the talks. This constructed fortress angered many of the protesters already agitated by the exclusive nature of the summit meetings. As a result, it became the goal of many of the demonstrators to surmount this physical (and, to their perception, ideological) barrier and defeat police measures to stop them. In sum, the stage of Genoa was set for violence and mass media attention. The more incendiary-minded protesters saw authorities stifling dissent and declaring a form of war on them; the police were primed to expect the worst sort of hooliganism; and the world press corps eagerly prepared to cover what promised to be colorful and spectacular protests and confrontations.

### THE MAKING OF AN ICON

Many images of police and protesters combating each other in the streets of Genoa were produced during the July weekend. However, the Dylan Martinez picture was a prominent icon in journalistic portrayals about the summit events (see Table 1).

Moreover, the photograph has come to demonstrate characteristics common to pictures that have achieved an elevated level of fame and recognition in our media-saturated world – that is, the standard elements of a photojournalistic icon. Following Perlmutter's (1998) typology, these include: (1) importance of the event depicted, (2) metonymy, (3) celebrity, (4) prominence of display, (5) frequency of use, and (6) primordality. What is most revealing overall is that Martinez's photograph is a *generic icon*, providing a scenario of conflict that came to represent incidents of violence in general within the antiglobalization movement and not just one moment in Genoa (Perlmutter, 1998: 11). By examining each item in this list, we can excavate the characteristics that allow this image to be used as an encapsulation and exemplification of the complex issues of the antiglobalization conflict.

The first characteristic, the importance of the pictured event, is a key component contributing to the iconic status of this photograph. Martinez's series of photographs document the first death to take place at an international economic summit. Since the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, the number of demonstrations staged in cities hosting these conferences has been growing along with the frequency of violence. Earlier in the summer of 2001, three protesters had been shot, although not fatally, in Göteborg, Sweden, where leaders of the European Union were gathering. This incident shocked many involved in the antiglobalization

**Table 1** Press reports of the ‘death in Genoa’

<i>Periodical, date</i>	<i>Headline</i>	<i>Byline</i>	<i>Caption</i>
<i>Time</i> 30 July 2001	Death in Genoa	Michael Elliott	Lethal Force: Giuliani joins an attack on police, a pistol is aimed at him from the van, medics attend to him after he is shot and run over.
<i>Newsweek</i> 30 July 2001	First Blood: Death and violence in Genoa may mark a permanent split in the antiglobalization ranks. Radical hooligans, one moderate says sadly, ‘have hijacked the whole thing.’	Christopher Dickey and Rod Nordland	The 23-year-old Giuliani prepares to heave a fire extinguisher at the rear window, where a carabinieri is aiming a pistol.
<i>New York Times</i> 21 July 2001	Italian protester is killed by police at Genoa meeting	David E. Sanger and Alessandra Stanley	Just before he was shot, a protester, Carlo Giuliani, tried to hurl a fire extinguisher at a police vehicle in Genoa as an officer aimed a pistol.
<i>Chicago Tribune</i> 23 July 2001	Riots turn Genoa into a war zone, 1 killed, hundreds injured	Tom Hundley and Bob Kemper	A paramilitary police officer points his gun at a protestor who is about to hurl an object into the rear of his besieged vehicle during Friday’s riots in connection to the G8 summit.
<i>Los Angeles Times</i> 21 July 2001	Summit opens amid deadly street protests	James Gerstenzang	A policeman points a gun at a protestor lifting a fire extinguisher in the air. The demonstrator is killed shortly afterward.
<i>Der Spiegel</i> 30 July 2001	‘Murderer, Murderer’. The dead demonstrator in Genoa shocks the world	Hans-Juergen Schlamp and Sven Röbel	Attack on the police jeep, guerrilla-like invasion of Genoa’s old city; Carabinieri with a pistol, ‘Extreme violence on both sides’

movement who were accustomed to martial use of tear gas and rubber bullets for crowd control, but never live ammunition (Ratnesar, 2001: 33). The left-leaning web magazine, *The Monitor*, likened the Genoa events to the infamous student killings at Kent State University during a Vietnam War protest (themselves subject of a ‘death of ...’ photojournalistic icon):

Genoa is reminiscent of nothing so much as Kent State, where, after hundreds of thousands of deaths in Southeast Asia, it took the death of four young, privileged American students on a Midwest campus in May 1970 to galvanize opposition and transform the US anti-war movement into a force that shut down campuses across the country for a full season. (Parrish, 2001: 5)

Yet, notably, this statement reveals more hope than prophecy: manifestly the death of a protester in Genoa in 2001 did not incite any sort of mass reaction. There was no great ‘galvanization’ nor ‘transformation’ of the antiglobalization movements.

In considering the metonymy of the image – how it was used to stand for or represent the greater event (the Genoa summit) or the general issue (globalization and its discontents) – the choice, description and use of the photo-icon most associated with the modern event explains why the perceived effects of the event may have been so muted or diffuse. For, unlike the famous ‘woman screaming over body of dead student’ image associated with Kent State, the Genoa picture that received a majority of the press space does not actually depict the moment in which Giuliani was shot or the moments after the bullet’s impact when Giuliani had been knocked to the pavement, pinned under a jeep tire, or lying in a pool of his own blood. These later images existed: Martinez and other photographers took them. But, crucially, the mainstream Western newspapers and magazines chose not to print them. Indeed, they are available primarily on pro-protester websites that, of course, most ordinary news consumers would not visit. Instead, the icon displays the frame photographed directly before the incident and, as a result, the image functions metonymically, representing the entire story of the man’s death without actually showing it. We, thus, were not shown the victim and the aftermath of the shooting, but the alleged provocation of the shooter. The visual metonym of Genoa was then protester violence, not police violence.

The third iconic characteristic of the image is its celebrity, promoted by editors of press content who blatantly declare this picture to be particularly noteworthy. Such statements lead the viewer to believe that one should pay close attention to the image because of its claimed worth and, as a result, should burn the image into one’s mental data bank (Perlmutter, 1998: 11–12). One such claim to the picture’s celebrity status appeared in *Time* on 30 July 2001, when journalist Michael Elliot opened his article, ‘Death in Genoa’, with:

It has already become one of those iconic images, like the picture of a naked, napalmed girl running down a Vietnamese road, or a bloodied American being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. Last Friday afternoon in the Piazza Alimonda in Genoa, Italy, a photographer caught a young man getting ready to hurl a fire extinguisher at a police Land Rover trapped against a wall. (Elliot, 2001: 22)

Elliot asserts that Martinez's image is one that has entered the pantheon of famous journalistic photographs depicting violence and conflict. With this maneuver, the commentator equates the current image with familiar icons, thereby assigning value to the G8 picture new on the scene. Furthermore, when news or political elites state that a picture will be famous, it is often a self-fulfilling prophecy since they are the arbiters of which pictures become famous (Perlmutter, 1997). Only the decades to come will show whether the prophecy comes true, but at the moment of its iteration it further served not only to accord celebrity status – literally and visually 15 minutes of fame in one frame – for the image, but to point a rhetorical lens at it for an audience and ascertain that it is the most important picture for us to consider. (And, of course, this article participates in the process of celebrity-making. Academics are part of the machine of imposing status on any text, from an oil painting to a news photo.)

In addition to heralding the significance of this image, reporters and editors granted the picture a prominent position and frequent appearances in their publications. Both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* placed Martinez's photograph on the front page of the Saturday, 21 July edition, the day after Giuliani was shot. Also on Saturday, the *New York Times* used the image in their Section A article reporting the disquiet in Genoa.<sup>2</sup> Within the following week, both *Newsweek* and *Time* presented a series of images from the Martinez sequence to illustrate their coverage of the violence, placing the image of Giuliani with the fire extinguisher as the central and prominent photograph in their spreads. In addition to such popular news media, smaller, mostly web-based, independent news sources uploaded Martinez's photographs on their web sites. *Indymedia* (2001) served as one of the most comprehensive suppliers of information regarding the G8 summit among the alternative press centers. As demonstrated by these examples, many different types of media sources repeatedly used Giuliani's confrontation with the police jeep to visually represent the events that occurred in Genoa.

Finally, this image, like many photojournalistic icons, can be read as a representation of a primordial theme – a theme embedded in a specific visual and literary culture – of conflict, that of the 'underdog' who decides to take on the powers that be. This is not to say that any image contains a natural idea or theme; rather we recognize an idea by previous mnemonic association, or by being reminded of such connection by captions or suggestive allusions. So a pro-protester might suggest a theme in line with the story of David versus Goliath, where the less-equipped individual challenges a stronger and more authoritative opponent. However, with the image of Giuliani lifting a fire extinguisher, it is difficult to detect which opponent, the police or the protester, is the actual underdog. The protesters are less martially equipped; however, they still do a fine job of destroying police property. Read either way, it is a story of victims – either the protesters oppressed by the 'system' or the police being unjustly assaulted. Such

ambiguity is resolved for the viewer when the respective mainstream media sources frame the image for reader consumption through captions.

### **FRAMING THE IMAGE**

As the visual anthropologist Sol Worth noted, most audiences receive an edemic (edited, published) rather than cademic (as photographed, unedited, unprinted) version of photographic narratives (Worth, 1981). What we are allowed to see has socio-political importance because mental schemas can be established and activated by the frames through which media represent issues, events and persons in the news and even by the mere choice of determining a topic newsworthy (Berkowitz and Rogers, 1986; Domke et al., 1998; Fiske and Linville, 1980; Graber, 1988). For most stories, most news viewers and readers cannot be on site while the events occurred. We rely on others, typically mainstream news gatherers and disseminators, to report to us what they allege they saw, show us what they claim to have ‘captured’ on video, film or digital media and, often, tell us what we should think about what we are being told and shown. In many cases, the audience has little access to (and little tendency to seek out) alternative views and narrations of news events. Therefore it is important, first, to identify the frame that mainstream media choose in terms of any image selected for popularization in the place of other possible or available images. Then we can further appreciate the associated narratives, descriptions and commentary; that is, how we were told to see a picture by those who present it to us. One still photographic image or a video shot and its accompanying captioning, voices or narration, thus, constitute a single frame of interpretation.

In this case, the image of Giuliani approaching the back of a police jeep is, as noted, the dominantly selected icon by mainstream media. Notably, it is the fourth in a series of 11 images taken in sequence by Dylan Martinez before, during and after Giuliani’s shooting. Rather than feature the scene where Giuliani lies contorted on the ground in a pool of his blood or even an image where the police jeep has backed over his body, the mainstream popular press selected the suggestive image of Giuliani lifting the fire extinguisher and the police officer pointing the gun out of the back of the vehicle. Again, the content of this image, while subsuming some ambiguity and complexity of plot, still was selected by mainstream media to assert a simple narrative of protester violence, not police violence.

Yet, even a picture whose meaning or ‘plot’ is self-evident to one person or faction may hold other possible ascriptions of meaning for another person or group.

The quotes used to explicate the image in different news sources of varying political leanings demonstrate the different interpretations of the photograph. The descriptions vilifying Giuliani in major media sources are as follows (emphases added):

The 23-year-old *Giuliani prepares to heave a fire extinguisher* at the rear window, where a carabinieri is aiming a pistol. (*Newsweek*) (Dickey and Nordland, 2001: 23)

Just before he was shot, a protester, *Carlo Giuliani, tried to hurl a fire extinguisher* at a police vehicle in Genoa as an officer aimed his pistol. (*New York Times*) (Sanger and Stanley, 2001: 7)

A policeman points a gun at a *protestor lifting a fire extinguisher in the air*. The demonstrator was killed shortly afterward. (*Los Angeles Times*) (Gerstenzang, 2001: 1)

In contrast, the independent, left-leaning *Monitor* suggests:

The protesters with the lumber appear to be ready to flee – they have taken the lumber out of the window and have turned away. Carlo Giuliani now has the fire extinguisher in his hands right in front of his face. *He is not poised to hurl it*. Looking up, he may just have noticed the carabinieri with the gun. (*The Monitor*) (Parrish, 2001)

Each of these four captions highlights the same visual information; the picture itself remains the same. Each statement, however, offers a different reading of the event, thereby creating a ‘site of struggle’ in this image: but only if the voices of struggle are allowed to be heard and their emblematic images are allowed to be seen.

More revealingly, as a cue to a process of purposive framing at work, many mainstream media sources *discontinued* their coverage of the G8 by the Monday following Giuliani’s death. It was almost as if once the metonym of ‘anarchist violence provokes police response’ had been shown and written up, the work of these press agencies was complete. However, an event that was framed by protesters and sympathizers as even more of an outrage occurred the night after the shooting. The police, searching for contraband and members of the Black Bloc, raided the Diaz School, which served as the headquarters for the Genoa Social Forum – a primary organizer of the weekend’s protests. Despite their denial of involvement in violent protest, members of the Genoa Social Forum were physically and verbally assaulted that evening by the police, their computers and files were confiscated, and many individuals were arrested. These events earned little if any airtime and surface area in the media and, most important, photographs of the incident remained largely unprinted, except for amateur snapshots posted on independent websites. In addition, photographs allegedly documenting the tactical collaboration between the police and the Black Bloc and their supposed cooperative instigation of violence were also ignored (see Yuen, 2001; see also Tomchick, 2001). Therefore, an alternative ‘frame’ presenting the argument that the police had acted harshly and unjustly and that the protesters were justified in their counterattack never materialized in the more prominent news venues.

## CONCLUSIONS

Over all, the case of 'a death in Genoa' suggests that the study of modern news imagery must not only be part reception analysis and part general content analysis but also part icon analysis. It is vital to look at the 'big pictures' that gain overriding fame and that garner greater argumentation than all or any others. While discourse elites who choose the images to print – including, we are aware, the authors of this article – and the public who turn to them for information are typically exposed to a range of imagery on most public affairs issues, certain images may be retained as exemplars of a picture of what happened where, when, to whom and why.

These mnemonic and metonymic functions are crucial to the shorthand of journalism; a picture must stand for a thousand words, but also must replace a thousand other pictures. Which events are witnessed by photojournalists, which pictures they decide to take of which sections of a greater reality, which ones they send to news organizations, which of those are printed with what captioning and contextual framing and, finally, which become icons are political as well as aesthetic and industrial choices. Rather than summing up any reality of event, persons, place and time, they offer cut-out frames of a fraction of a second and a narrow view. Whatever the technology that produces both still and moving images, these images are only time-, setting- and frame-specific 'anecdotes' that can never be all of reality (Perlmutter, 1992; Worth, 1981: 162). As such they become examples of *genres* and *types* of news events, serving as tools for purposive 'exemplification' by news elites and facilitating the public's mental storage of the event (see Zillman and Brosius, 2001). This provides all the more reason for researchers and critics of today's image-driven journalism to excavate the icons that falsely and superficially seem so sensational in appearance, definitive in meaning, and transparent in effect.

## NOTES

1. The origin of this 'fire extinguisher' designation is uncertain. Internet discussions have deemed the object to be everything from a paper box to a Genoa salami to a tear gas canister such as those carried by riot police. In a frame previous to this photograph, the object is seen in the back window of the jeep. It is unclear whether it was originally inside the jeep and fell out in the disorder or if it had, moments before, been thrown into the jeep by the protesters.
2. Although the image does not appear on the front page of this paper, it is printed on page 7 of the front section.

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