

7-1-2007

A Concise History of the Fauxtography Blogstorm in the 2006 Lebanon War

Stephen D. Cooper

Marshall University, coopers@marshall.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://mds.marshall.edu/communications_faculty



Part of the [Communication Technology and New Media Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cooper, S. D. (2007). A concise history of the fauxtography blogstorm in the 2006 Lebanon War. *The American Communication Journal*, Vol. 9 Issue 2.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Communications at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communications Faculty Research by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu.

A Concise History of the Fauxtography Blogstorm in the 2006 Lebanon War

Stephen D. Cooper

Keywords: *blogs, photojournalism, fauxtography, media criticism, journalistic ethics, citizen journalism*

Whatever the other consequences of the kinetic war between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, it gave rise to a neologism now commonplace in the blogosphere. In the blog lexicon, fauxtography refers to visual images, especially news photographs, which convey a questionable (or outright false) sense of the events they seem to depict.ⁱ Apart from the clever word play evident in the term, it is shorthand for a serious criticism of photojournalism products, both the images and the associated text. Since accuracy is a cardinal tenet of journalistic ethics, clearly stated in the ethics code of the Society of Professional Journalistsⁱⁱ and other professional associations of journalists, the accusation that news products convey a false or distorted impression of news events is potent. Critical questions about the factual accuracy of news reports predated this blogstorm.ⁱⁱⁱ So, too, did specific questions about the trustworthiness of photojournalism from hotspots in the Middle East.^{iv} It may well be that the emergence of a concise but powerful term for the central issue in it fostered the development of the blogstorm, apart from the intensity of the kinetic war itself as a contributing factor. While some participants in the fauxtography blogstorm did, indeed, make accusations of media bias—an accusation implicitly echoed in a column by a prominent journalism professor^v and a paper by a fellow at Harvard's Shorenstein Center^{vi}—we will need here to distinguish between the long-running debate about media bias, in general,^{vii} and the more concrete and specific blogstorm criticism that particular news products generated during the war were fauxtography rather than trustworthy photojournalism. The blogstorm this chapter describes centered on photojournalism during the 2006 Lebanon War; unlike some other blogstorms, however, the foundational issue underlying it predated this war and the central issue argued in it persisted after the event which initiated the blogstorm had concluded. The fauxtography blogstorm is perhaps one of the most complex to have yet occurred. It may help clarify the argumentation in this blogstorm to distinguish two levels: arguments about the reporting of a particular incident in the war, and arguments about journalistic practices in covering the war. The two are intertwined, in that arguments about reporting of specific incidents often led over time to broader, more general criticism of the mainstream news media practices. It is also interesting to note how a number of criticisms raised by bloggers and their readers during the course of the blogstorm appeared in the paper distributed by Harvard's Shorenstein Center, many months after the war had ended.

(c) 2007 by Stephen D. Cooper, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Marshall University.

Correspondence to : 246 Smith Hall, Marshall University, Huntington WV 25755. Email: coopers@marshall.edu.

This work will appear in Blogstorms: Case Studies in Media Criticism, forthcoming from Lexington Books.

The Story of the Fauxtography Blogstorm

The event which initiated the fauxtography blogstorm was an Israeli airstrike on a building in the southern Lebanese village of Qana on July 30, 2006, a couple weeks after the start of active hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel. While the Israelis contended that the building was a legitimate military target, since it housed Hezbollah missile launch crews, and that they had been unaware of the presence of noncombatants in the building, mainstream press outlets gave extensive coverage to civilians killed in the destruction of the building and accusations that Israel had committed a war crime. In a post on EU Referendum titled, "In Whose Interest?"^{viii} Richard North questioned the balance of BBC coverage of the incident, saying that it failed to adequately describe the Israeli military's explanation for the air strike. While the post, as a whole, was a critique of the fairness of the BBC reporting, of particular interest here are North's references to the visual images accompanying the reporting.

In support of his contention that the BBC, in effect, had taken Hezbollah's side in its reporting of the incident, he included in the post a photograph which had been published by an Australian newspaper a short time before. The photo depicted a Hezbollah anti-aircraft battery manned by men in civilian clothes, and placed adjacent to an apartment building. North referenced a statement by an Israeli air force officer, and related it to the photo (minor misspellings corrected).

According to this spokesman, Hezbollah had launched scores of missiles from Qana into Israel, including one that hit a hospital. He said several of the launches took place within a few dozen metres of the house that was bombed. What we don't get from the BBC and its other left wing fellow-travelers is any sense of this. Only from the blogs and other sources...do we get any understanding of what is going on.

Near the end of the post North commented on the role he saw visual imagery playing in unconventional warfare.^{ix}

Civilian casualties in war are always regrettable and the death toll in the Second World War is still subject to much debate. But what is different now is that such casualties are being used actively as a weapon of war, where propaganda is as potent as bullets in achieving strategic aims. The media have been given free access to photograph the bodies of victims, many of which, conveniently, have been wrapped in transparent polythene sheeting.

North sharpened his criticism of the photojournalism considerably in two posts on the following day. In “Milking It?”,^x North reacted to an Editor & Publisher Online commentary on the immediacy and emotional intensity of the photographs of the Qana incident.

But the photographers, it seems, are not too fussy about how they go about “adding to the shock value” [a quotation from the commentary]. These two sequences illustrate the extent to which photographers on the scene are prepared to ensure that the “shock value” is maximized.

North then assembled sequences of news photographs of two particular children apparently killed in the incident. He felt that in both montages, comparison of the composition, backgrounds, and rescue workers appearing in the multiple images of each victim indicated “the shots are clearly posed”; as evidence of this conclusion, he cited specific features in the photos. In both sequences, he noted that the rescue worker positioned the body toward the photographer, even holding the body up in the air in a few photos. He noted the presence of one particular worker wearing a green helmet in almost all the photos, carrying bodies. North pointed out that details of the man’s dress varied slightly from photo to photo (sometimes having a radio in a vest pocket, sometimes not; sometimes wearing latex gloves, sometimes not); based on the time stamps available for some of the pictures and their backgrounds, he felt that the apparent sequence of the man’s movements in picking up the bodies and conveying them to an ambulance was inconsistent. This led him to believe that the photos were not, in actuality, naturalistic images of a rescue operation. About the first montage, North offered this comment:

Interestingly, in this sequence, the pocket radio is missing. And, although the positioning of the child looks the same, the angle of the shot looks to be about ninety degrees from the first, but in each case, the “worker” is facing towards the camera. The shots are clearly posed.

After showing the montage of the second victim, North pointed to an inconsistency in the way she was brought to an ambulance.

Remember, however, earlier in the sequence, the girl is being carried to the ambulance by the other worker, sans jacket, helmet and gloves.

North followed his close scrutiny of the sequences with a stinging comment on the trustworthiness of the photojournalism.

Whatever else, the event in Qana was a human tragedy. But the photographs do not show it honestly. Rather, they have been staged for effect, exploiting the victims in an unwholesome manner. In so doing, they are no longer news photographs—they are propaganda....The profession of photo-journalism thereby is sadly diminished by them, and the trust in those who took them and in those who carried them is misplaced.

In his second post that day, “Who Is This Man?, ”^{xi} North assembled a number of photographs from the Qana rescue operation, all of which included the man in the green helmet. That the same person appeared in so many of the news photos likewise made North suspicious that the images were not a candid representation of operations at the site.

If he had been a genuine rescue worker, he would deserve a medal. Mr. “Green Helmet” is everywhere at Qana, rushing around pulling children out of the rubble, carting them to ambulances....

Near the end of the post, North provided an archival image of rescue operations in Qana a decade earlier. Noting that the press had compared the 1996 and 2006 incidents in Qana, North felt that the appearance of the same man in photographs of the two incidents raised questions about the man’s identity.

But the great tragedy for Qana, of which we are constantly reminded by the media, is that this is history apparently repeating itself. On 18 April 1996, the village was also visited by death and destruction. Re-visiting the photographs of the time, however, who do we see at the centre of the action? Why, “Green Helmet” of course. This is a younger man, without his glasses, but recognizably the same man, in his now classic pose of handling a victim of an Israeli “atrocious.” His presence at Qana on Sunday, and his central, unchallenged role, cannot have been a coincidence. Is he a senior ranking Hezbollah official? If not, who is he?

In these three posts, North had raised issues which other bloggers took up: apparent inconsistencies in the events at the site, and the prominence of one particular individual in the photos. His method of inquiry, comparing numerous contemporaneous pictures and scrutinizing them for both crucial discrepancies and implausible similarities, was also employed by other critical bloggers as the blogstorm developed. North followed up, about a month later, with a lengthy essay about the photographic coverage of the Qana incident.^{xii} The essay included many more images of the rescue operation, including stills captured from video coverage. From the photojournalism images and aerial photos of the site, North reconstructed what he felt were photo-opportunities provided to the press photographers, calling the movements of “Green Helmet” and others at the site “camera runs.” It would be difficult to adequately condense here the large amount of material North provided, and the reader is encouraged to view the document. While North acknowledged that his reconstruction of the photo-opportunities was speculative, he maintained that such a large amount of circumstantial evidence strongly supported his position that news photographs of the collateral damage from the airstrike had been carefully staged.

On August 1, the day after North’s initial posts raising the question of whether the Qana images had been staged, mainstream press outlets denied that had been the case. On Little Green Footballs,^{xiii} Charles Johnson quoted from an Associated Press report^{xiv} of their response to Richard North’s criticism.

The AP said information from its photo editors showed the events were not staged, and that the time stamps could be misleading for several reasons, including that web sites can use such stamps to show when pictures are posted, not taken. An AFP executive said he was stunned to be questioned about it. Reuters, in a statement, said it categorically rejects any such suggestion.

Johnson was not satisfied with either the flat denial or the terse explanation of discrepant times listed for the images.

If the wire services truly want to settle the timing issue, all they need to do is release the actual timestamps from when the photographs were taken. Digital cameras automatically record this information in the photograph itself, so it would be a simple matter for the wires to provide it.

Will they? Or are we simply supposed to take their word for it?...

For me, by the way, the timing issue is actually not the most damning thing about the photos, or the thing that most convinces me they were staged. It's appallingly clear when you examine all the photos that children's bodies were posed deliberately for photo ops, and that the Green Helmet Guy was doing this for quite a long time, in several different locations often with the same body.

Critical questions about news photos of the Lebanon war quickly spread to coverage of other events. On the same day Dan Riehl^{xv} expressed doubts about reports that the Israeli air force had fired missiles at Lebanese ambulances, about a week earlier.

There's a story just starting to make the rounds of the MSM outlets—that Israel is targeting ambulances....The story goes that the Israelis struck two ambulances, injuring nine people, severing one man's leg. There's only one problem; it looks as though it isn't true.

Riehl quoted briefly from some of the news stories, and noted a number of substantial discrepancies in the descriptions of the purported missile strike. In some accounts, one ambulance was struck; in others two were hit. There were two different dates reported for the incident, differing by three days. Of particular interest here are his comments about the photographs of the damaged ambulance. Riehl supplied two images of the small van, one taken from above the vehicle showing a hole in its roof and the other at ground level looking into the passenger door; he linked to several others. He argued that the condition of the vehicle in the photographs was inconsistent in many respects with the report that it had been damaged by a missile.

The image at right above is one circulating showing the alleged missile strike at 300x magnification. Does that look like a missile strike to you? Or did someone simply remove the blue flashing light casing that should be there?...

It seems the missile that allegedly hit the van from above never managed to get inside. There is no hole in the floor....From the accounts, there was a man lying on one of the built in gurneys pictured, his leg severed by the missile. So how is it that neither gurney shows any damage at all?...

The roof of the ambulance is caved but the floor and side board are perfectly flat. The driver said there was a huge explosion and a fire [emphasis in original]. I couldn't tell it from the image of the inside of the van, can you? And in the image at left you'll see that the windshield caved in. There's no way that would happen from an explosion where it is alleged to have taken place....

Also, inside the van—no smoke damage at all. There is no discoloration, but we're supposed to believe that the ordinance exploded in there while the van was closed? No singe marks on anything, nothing. There's no way this adds up to an explosion and fire as the driver stated.

A few days later bloggers raised the accusation that two pictures of combat distributed by Reuters had been digitally altered. In "Reuters Doctoring Photos from Beirut?"^{xvi} Charles Johnson charged that a picture of the Beirut skyline, showing plumes of smoke rising from a building, had been altered using a popular computer application; he credited one of his readers for drawing the photo to his attention.

OK, now things are getting weird.

This Reuters photograph shows blatant evidence of manipulation. Notice the repeating patterns in the smoke; this is almost certainly caused by using the Photoshop "clone" tool to add more smoke to the image....

Smoke simply does not contain repeating symmetrical patterns like this, and you can see the repetition in both plumes of smoke. There's really no question about it.

But it's not only the plumes of smoke that were "enhanced." There are also cloned buildings.

Johnson provided the skyline photo, and identified specific features in it which he believed had been digitally altered in this way. He later updated this post with a link to a discussion site of sports photographers,^{xvii} noting that they, too, believed the image had been altered.

On the following day, Rusty Shackelford raised the same question about a Reuters photo of an Israeli warplane in flight, in a post on Jawa Report.^{xviii} He credited a reader for drawing his attention to an image of a plane descending steeply in the sky, with several smaller bright objects near it. He provided the image, and quoted the caption as "an Israeli F-16 warplane fires missiles during an air strike on Nabatiyeh in southern Lebanon." Shackelford disputed that the objects were missiles, and argued that this image, too, had been digitally altered.

The F-16 in the photo is not firing missiles, but is rather dropping...flares designed to be a decoy for surface to air missiles. However, a close up of what Hajj [the Reuters photographer credited with both the Beirut skyline shot and this warplane shot] calls "missiles" reveals that only one flare has been dropped. The other two "flares" are simply copies of the original.

Similar to what Johnson had done, Shackelford provided overlays of the bright objects, arguing that they were copies of a single object.

So, the original photo of the Israeli F-16 was probably of a single anti-SAM [surface-to-air missile] chaffe flare being dropped. In other words, the F-16 which Reuters purports to show firing missiles at Lebanon, was taking *defensive* measures [emphasis in original].

Other bloggers quickly raised more questions about the trustworthiness of war images. The anonymous blogger on Drinking From Home^{xix} noted two photos, one supplied by Reuters and the other by the Associated Press, each showing the close up of a woman grieving the loss of her home in an airstrike; the captions of both indicated the location as the Beirut suburbs, and the dates of the attacks were shown as more than a week apart. DFH provided the full images, then placed enlargements of the women's faces side-by-side. He/she commented, ironically:

Either this woman is the unluckiest multiple home owner in Beirut, or something isn't quite right....

Same clothes, same scar on her left cheek, same mark under her right eye. Two pictures of the same woman, maybe even taken on the same day. So, what gives?

(About two weeks later, Jim Hoft on Gateway Pundit would follow up DFH's post by identifying what he believed was yet a third image of the same woman^{xx} in yet another location at a later date, again grieving the loss of her home. As had DFH, Hoft provided all three full images, then compared enlargements of the woman's face showing the same features.)

On the same day as DFH's post, August 6, Scott Johnson of Power Line posted an email he had received from a reader.^{xxi} Robert Opalecky had searched the Reuters photo archive for other work of Adnan Hajj, who had been credited for the questionable Beirut skyline and Israeli

warplane images. Opalecky had found two photos showing the same building, with distinctive painting on its wall. The photos were datelined nearly two weeks apart, and the captions represented the damage as attributable to different Israeli attacks. Opalecky commented:

One is from July 24 of a bombed out area in Beirut, with a clearly identifiable building in a prominent part of the shot. The second is of the exact same area, same buildings, same condition, with a woman walking past “a building flattened during an overnight Israeli air raid on Beirut’s suburbs August 5, 2006.”

(A few days later, Charles Johnson would locate yet a third image of this building, datelined July 18 with a caption likewise suggesting it was fresh damage; this photo was credited to a different photographer and distributed by a different wire service. He gave his post the ironic title, “Multi-Use Buildings.”^{xxii})

On the following day, Reuters issued a statement acknowledging some of the criticism bloggers had raised.^{xxiii} The wire service agreed that the photos of the Beirut skyline and Israeli warplane had been digitally altered; it issued a retraction of those photos in particular, withdrew the entire archive of photographs which Adnan Hajj had filed, and fired him.

Reuters ended its relationship with Hajj on Sunday after it found that a photograph he had taken of the aftermath of an Israeli air strike on suburban Beirut had been manipulated using Photoshop software to show more and darker smoke rising from buildings. An immediate enquiry began into Hajj’s other work. It established on Monday that a photograph of an Israeli F-16 fighter over Nabatiyeh, southern Lebanon and dated Aug. 2 had also been doctored to increase the number of flares dropped by the plane from one to three....

The two altered photographs were among 43 that Hajj filed directly to the Reuters Global Pictures Desk since the start of the conflict on July 12 rather than through an editor in Beirut, as was the case with the great majority of his images.

It seems worth noting, here, that while the statement candidly acknowledged the digital alteration of the two images, it made no direct mention of the caption supplied with the warplane image, which had inaccurately stated that the jet had been firing missiles rather than deploying a flare as a defensive measure against anti-aircraft weaponry.^{xxiv} Moreover, while he complimented Reuters for “mov[ing] quickly to admit error and distance themselves from the incident,” James Joyner pointed out^{xxv} that by deleting the complete Hajj archive Reuters had foreclosed any possibility of bloggers discovering other altered war pictures which had been distributed.

By no means did Reuters’s action bring a reduction in blog scrutiny of the war photojournalism. To the contrary, fresh questions arose about many other images on the next day, August 8. An anonymous blogger named Slublog assembled a montage of photos from AP and Reuters,^{xxvi} each a close up of a child’s toy amidst the rubble of a damaged building. Giving the post the ironic title of “The Passion of the Toys,” he/she suspected the shots had been staged, from the composition of the images and the lack of dust on the toys.

As the photos here show, the first casualties of war are...the *symbols* of innocence [ellipsis and emphasis in original]. And photographers from Reuters

and the AP just happened upon many of these perfectly placed symbols of war's horrors....

This last one is the only one that seems...untouched [ellipsis in original]. Feel the pathos. Mourn for these oh-so-photogenic and suspiciously dust-free trinkets of childhood. Just don't ask any questions about their veracity.

Jim Hoft questioned the trustworthiness of an image in a slide show on the *New York Times* website. The photo, which became known sardonically in the blogosphere as the "Lebanese Pieta," showed a young man lying amidst building rubble with another man standing and lifting the apparent victim's arm. An emotionally evocative image, it was credited to a *Times* staff photographer.^{xxvii} While the caption did not explicitly state the young man was a casualty of an airstrike, it suggested that was the case: "The mayor of Tyre said that in the worst hit areas, bodies were still buried under the rubble, and he appealed to the Israelis to allow government authorities time to pull them out." Crediting a reader and another blogger for their input, Hoft argued the image and caption were misleading. In "The *NY Times* Hezbollah Photo Dust Up"^{xxviii} he questioned the lack of dust on the purported victim's body. Hoft provided two images, one a rubble-strewn street scene showing a car covered in dust; the other was the image in question. He quoted from an email he had received.

The question around [sic] manipulation is "Where's the dust?"

If you break concrete, heck even if you cut a little drywall, there is dust everywhere (look at 911 survivors)...

This picture [i.e., the street scene] has dust everywhere....This picture [i.e., the "Lebanese Pieta" image] mysteriously has none...

Hoft followed with a second post, "*New York Times* Busted in Hezbollah Photo Fraud!"^{xxix} He credited a reader with identifying inconsistencies in the complete sequence of images in the slide show; Hoft provided the images to accompany the comments.

This photo is part of a photo essay entitled "Turmoil in the Mideast"....The photograph shown on your site is photo number 6 in the array....

"Dead Guy w/ no dust" shows up with hat in photo no. 2...pointing out something to the photographer. You see him again scrambling over debris in photo no. 3 and no. 4. Finally, you see him laying [sic] dead on top of the debris with a heartbreaking caption....The "dead" man is sweating and holding his hat by his side!

(On the following day, the *Times* would acknowledge that the original caption had "imprecisely described the situation in the picture" and issue a corrected caption stating "one man helped another who had fallen and was hurt."^{xxx})

Many other images also drew blogger scrutiny on August 8. Allahpundit relayed emails from readers, calling into question the trustworthiness of an AP photo of a damaged car on the side of a road.^{xxxi} The caption explicitly stated the car had been struck by missiles from an Israeli plane. One Hot Air reader felt the appearance of the car was inconsistent with that

account of events, leading him/her to suspect the picture was a fake [minor punctuation and spelling errors corrected].

I am not saying the description is false, but I spent 20 years in the Air Force, much of that time doing targeting and mission planning for aircrews, which involved a lot of post-strike analysis. This is by far the least amount of damage from an “air strike” I have ever seen....The only damage, other than minor body damage, I see is a missing sun roof.

Another reader pointed out that the windshield was intact; yet another amplified the point that the car showed no signs at all of being hit by a missile.

I work in missile research. This looks like nothing more than an abandoned car. The “hole” in the roof looks like a sunroof with a few extra dents around the rim. I find it impossible to believe a missile just happened to enter through the sunroof and do no external damage to the vehicle.

This post grew quite lengthy, as Allahpundit added updates concerning yet more images. Of particular interest here is the first mention of an image which had been used on the cover of *U.S. News* and in a *Time Magazine* article. A gunman appears in the foreground, with a dense plume of black smoke rising in the distance from a debris field down the hill from him. Two months later the image would again draw attention, described later in this chapter; at this point in the blogstorm Hot Air readers questioned the accuracy of the photo’s caption in *Time*. While the caption identified the image as “the wreckage of a downed Israeli jet,” Allahpundit provided an enlarged and cropped view of the debris field, and commented simply, “They’re burning tires. It’s a garbage dump.” In a follow-up post^{xxxii} he linked a news report of the Israeli Defense Force’s statement on the event,^{xxxiii} and pointed out that this was a much different account of the incident than the *Time* caption.

[T]he photo of the big tire fire comes from an incident in mid-July involving what Hezbollah claimed was the downing of an Israeli jet. That turned out to be bull....

An IAF jet had attacked a long-range-missile launcher, causing the missile to accidentally fire and crash near Beirut....

So I think what we’re looking at here is, indeed, a garbage dump fire. But it wasn’t a fire deliberately set by Hezbollah to make the scene look more dramatic. It was a fire accidentally set by Hezbollah while positioning a missile that could have hit Tel Aviv.

An extensive roundup and analysis of the problematic photojournalism appeared on this same day, on the web site of an anonymous writer using the pen name, Zombie.^{xxxiv} While the Zombietime site is not a blog in the strict sense of term,^{xxxv} the sharply-worded, incisive essay was an important contribution to the blogstorm and drew a great deal of attention from bloggers. As its title suggests, “The Reuters Photo Scandal: A Taxonomy of Fraud”^{xxxvi} sorted the controversial images into categories, with the stated intent of bringing some clarity to the profusion of criticism that had so far been generated by the war photojournalism.

[T]he proliferation of exposes might overwhelm the casual Web-surfer, who might be getting the various related scandals mixed up. In this essay I hope to straighten it all out.

It's important to understand that there is not just a single fraudulent Reuters photograph, nor even only one *kind* [emphasis in original] of fraudulent photograph. There are in fact dozens of photographs whose authenticity has been questioned, and they fall into four distinct categories.

The four types of photographic fraud perpetrated by Reuters photographers and editors are:

1. Digitally manipulating images after the photographs have been taken.
2. Photographing scenes staged by Hezbollah and presenting the images as if they were of authentic spontaneous news events.
3. Photographers themselves staging scenes or moving objects, and presenting photos of the set-ups as if they were naturally occurring.
4. Giving false or misleading captions to otherwise real photos that were taken at a different time or place.

Zombie then discussed each of the categories in turn, supplying images, links, and commentary to support his/her assertion that the images were untrustworthy or deceptive representations of wartime events. As is common practice in blogging, Zombie embedded hyperlinks to his/her source material for the convenience of the reader; this is essentially the same as the academic practice of extensively citing one's sources in a research paper. Again, it would be impossible to adequately summarize the large amount of material in this document, and the reader is encouraged to view it in its entirety.

Up to this point the accusation that images of civilian casualties in the war had been staged had been based on features of the images themselves. A different sort of supporting evidence appeared in an August 12 post on Little Green Footballs.^{xxxvii} Charles Johnson quoted from a discussion thread on a website for professional photographers; the thread^{xxxviii} concerned the controversy over the possible staging of photographs of civilian casualties, and had started as a reaction to the criticism raised by Richard North. Johnson pointed to the comments of Bryan Denton, who expressed concern at the working methods he had observed [punctuation, syntax, and capitalization as in the original].

i have been working in lebanon since all this started, and seeing the behavior of many of the lebanese wire service photographers has been a bit unsettling. while [Adnan] hajj has garnered a lot of attention for his doctoring of images digitally, whether guilty or not, i have been witness to the daily practice of directed shots, one case where a group of wire photogs were choreographing the unearthing of bodies, directing emergency workers here and there, asking them to position bodies just so, even remove bodies that have already been put in graves so that they can photograph them in peoples arms. these photographers have come away

with powerful shots, that require no manipulation digitally, but instead, manipulation on a human level, and this itself is a bigger ethical problem.

Denton clarified in a later post that he had observed this staging of photographs in another area of Lebanon, not Qana itself. Nonetheless, Denton maintained that he was troubled to have seen it repeatedly, and to have had other photographers tell him they had also observed it [punctuation, syntax, and capitalization as in the original].

sorry to have not been specific. just to make this clear. i was not in qana and am not referring to the massacre that took place there. i have been covering beirut, and it was at numerous protest, evacuations as well as the israeli strikes in chiyeh, which unfortunately did not get that much coverage in the media—where i saw this behavior occur. i have also heard from friends of mine in lebanon, respected photographers, that this was not an isolated incident.

unfortunately in each of these cases, it was the lebanese wire photographers that started these situations. that said, i am not trying to make generalizations....however, this has been something i've noticed happening here, more than any other place i've worked previously.

Ray Robison pointed out another apparent example of a staged photograph^{xxxix} on his eponymous blog. He provided two images of the same street scene of an overturned car amid building rubble in Chiyeh, the airstrike Bryan Denton had mentioned; one image was credited to the Associated Press and the other to Reuters. In the AP's photograph, a wall-hanging of Koran verses was propped up on an opened car door; the object did not appear in the Reuters photograph of the same car from nearly the same angle and distance. Robison felt there were two reasons to believe the AP image had been staged: the improbability of a wall-hanging from the inside of a house being thrown into the street by an explosion and landing upright on the edge of an overturned car's opened door, and the discrepancy between the two images of the same scene.

On August 14, another round of questions arose about more photographs of Lebanese vehicles purportedly damaged by Israeli missile strikes. As in the earlier incidents, bloggers felt the appearance of the vehicles was not consistent with news reports they had been struck by military ordinance in an airstrike. On Hot Air, Allahpundit gave his post the ironic title, "Fauxtography? Amazing New IAF Missiles Mimic Sledgehammer Damage."^{xl} He included the news images of several cars alongside a roadway, with the forward edge of their rooflines partly caved in and minor dents in other body panels. Allahpundit then made explicit the characteristics of the vehicles which he felt called the reporting into question.

Rockets. Which, again, somehow managed to spare the windshield on both vehicles. While making a dent in precisely the same spot in the roof of each....

Seriously, military people—what's the deal here? Am I just showing my ignorance by not recognizing genuine explosive damage when I see it? Bullet holes and charring would seem to be the trademarks of an air attack; these cars look like they've been beaten with a sledgehammer.

Charles Johnson expressed the same skepticism about the nature of the damage to the vehicles^{xli}; he contrasted an image of one of the cars in Lebanon with another of a car hit in Israel by one of Hezbollah's Katyusha rockets.^{xlii} The former was a complete car with moderate body damage; the latter was nearly obliterated.

Even though the kinetic war between Israel and Hezbollah ended with the August 14 ceasefire, the fauxtography blogstorm continued. On the following day the Associated Press published a story which many saw as a response to bloggers' accusations that "Green Helmet" had been staging photographs of civilian casualties in Lebanon.^{xliii} The story identified the man as Salam Daher, describing him as a "civil defense worker" who lived in Tyre; it referred to a number of critical points the bloggers had raised.

The 20-year veteran civil defense worker said he shows dead children to photographers to make clear that Israeli airstrikes killed young Lebanese during the month long conflict. Some Internet bloggers have accused him of setting up photos and of treating the dead insensitively. In one photograph, taken after an Israeli airstrike hit a building in the village of Qana, Daher held a dead infant over his head....

After the photograph taken at the July 30 Qana strike, which killed 29 people, Daher has found himself under attack, accused of being a propagandist for Hezbollah guerrillas. One Web site posted video purporting to show Daher arranging to have the body of a child taken off an ambulance and displayed for photographers.

Charles Johnson tartly reframed this content in "Green Helmet Admits Staging Photos, AP Spins Furiously."^{xliv}

Salam Daher, the Green Helmet Guy, admits pimping dead bodies for staged photos. The AP's bureau chief in Iran, Kathy Gannon, tries her best to spin the story.

Johnson also disputed the story's use of the singular to reference the photo of the dead infant, calling the passage an "outrageous line" and linking EU Referendum, which had assembled a large number of shots of that particular casualty.

One photograph? [emphasis in original] There are dozens of them.

About a week later Zombie posted another lengthy essay,^{xlv} this one a detailed examination of the news reports at the beginning of August that Israeli aircraft had intentionally fired on Red Cross ambulances operating in Qana on July 13. (The essay prompted a rebuttal by Human Rights Watch several months later,^{xlvi} to which Zombie then replied in detail.^{xlvii}) Zombie noted that the accusation was of grave consequence, but argued that while the mainstream press had generally accepted the veracity of the allegation there was considerable doubt about the story.

If true, the incident would have been an egregious and indefensible violation of the Geneva Convention, and would constitute a war crime committed by the state of Israel....Of all the exposes and scandals surrounding the media's coverage of

the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in Lebanon, The Red Cross Ambulance Incident [capitalization in original] stands out as the most serious. The other exposes were spectacular in their simplicity (photographers staging scenes, clumsy attempts at Photoshopping images), but often concerned fairly trivial details....

The ambulance incident, however, was anything but trivial. The media accused Israel of the most heinous type of war crime: intentionally targeting neutral ambulances which were attempting to rescue innocent victims.

Zombie recapitulated news reports of the incident as they appeared in the week following the July 23 incident; he/she provided quotes in chronological order, noting new details in the story as they appeared.

By the beginning of August, the story had spread to the rest of the world's media outlets, and became accepted as an unquestioned fact about the war: *Israel is targeting ambulances* [emphasis in original].

Zombie then summarized what seemed to him/her to be the accepted story of the incident, compiling the details provided in the numerous news reports.

If the media and Red Cross accounts are to be believed, here is a summary of what happened, pieced together from the articles cited above:

On the night of July 23, an ambulance left Red Cross station #702 in Tyre to rendezvous with another ambulance ferrying patients from further south. While transferring patients from one ambulance to another on a road in Qana, a missile fired from either an Israeli jet or helicopter pierced the exact center of the cross on the roof of the ambulance from Tyre, severing the leg of one of the patients inside, and causing a huge fire and explosion that knocked the driver as much as 25 feet away. Immediately afterward, a second Israeli missile pierced the roof of the second ambulance as well. All the patients sustained major injuries, and all the Red Cross workers received lesser injuries. After hiding out for a while in a nearby building, they were later picked up and brought back to Tyre by a third ambulance.

Zombie proceeded to identify a number of specific factual assertions, in this narrative.

Claim #1: An Israeli missile pierced the exact center of the red cross on the roof of the ambulance....

Claim #2: The attack happened on July 23....

Claim #3: There was a huge explosion inside the ambulance....

Claim #4: There was an intense fire inside the ambulance...

Claim #5: A man lying on a gurney inside the ambulance had his leg sheared off by the missile....

After each, he/she disputed its veracity, based on contradictory details in the text of the news reports and the appearance of the vehicles in question. Of particular interest here is the way Zombie compiled many images of the van and argued that these in actuality constituted a refutation of the accepted narrative of the incident. Regarding the first two claims, Zombie noted that the hole purportedly made in the roof of the van was exactly centered in the position where ambulances had a circular roof vent, had fairly smooth edges, and exhibited a considerable degree of rust. Regarding the three following claims, Zombie noted that interior shots of the ambulance showed no signs of fire or bloodstains. Again, the material is too lengthy to adequately be summarized here, and the reader is encouraged to examine the original.

Several days later, fresh controversy arose with a Reuters report that two journalists had been injured in Gaza when Israeli aircraft hit one of its press vans with missiles. On Power Line, John Hinderaker quoted the essentials of the story and the Israeli response to the accusation.^{xlvi}

Israeli aircraft fired two missiles early Sunday at an armored car belonging to the Reuters news agency, wounding five people, including two cameramen, Palestinian witnesses and hospital officials said....

Capt. Noa Meir, an army spokeswoman, said the vehicle was the only one in the combat area, was driving suspiciously and came near Israeli forces during the nighttime raid. "That's why it was targeted. It was seen as a threat," she said. There were no clear TV marks (on the car). At least we didn't see one." However, the area was an active battlefield and the reporters should not have been there, she said, adding that three Hamas militants attacked soldiers from the same spot 10 minutes after the airstrike.

Hinderaker felt the story required critical examination, in light of the previous incidents it resembled.

So the attack could well have happened as described. However, given the many phony claims about Israeli attacks that have been uncovered in recent weeks, there is no reason to accord any credibility to Reuters' Palestinian stringers.

He then provided several images of the damaged press van, and questioned whether the appearance of the vehicle supported the description of the incident. In the pictures of the roof, a relatively small tear is apparent in the sheet metal; in the pictures of the side of the vehicle, there is little damage evident.

Here is a picture of the Reuters vehicle that was supposedly hit by two missiles. Is that hole supposed to be the place where a missile entered?...

Here is the rest of the vehicle. I don't see any other sign of missile entry, certainly not in the roof....

Does that hole look like it was created by a missile? Does it look like it was created last night?...

I don't have an opinion at this point about whether the claims being made by Reuters' Palestinian stringers are true. To my untrained eye, the photos of the vehicle do not appear to depict an armored car that was hit by two missiles. The visible hole looks to me like an old, rusted-out tear or gap in the roof.

On the next day, Hinderaker reiterated his skepticism about the veracity of the photojournalism, observing that major news outlets were "reporting the Israeli attack on the press vehicle as a fact" when, to him, many questions remained about the incident.^{xlix} He quoted from a BBC story,^l then contrasted it to a wire service photo he had found of the front seat of the vehicle.

The BBC describes the damage to the interior of the vehicle:

The front seats of the car were covered in blood, much of the inside of the vehicle was torn by shrapnel and one of the bullet-proof windows was completely destroyed, the agency says.

Here is the best picture I've seen of the interior of the vehicle. I have a hard time correlating that description with the photo of the vehicle's interior. The inside of the vehicle looks like an old, junked van, just like the outside.

Hinderaker included emails from his readers with experience in munitions and explosives; while one thought that a small projectile might have exploded in the vicinity of the van and produced the tear in the roof, none believed the reporting that two missiles had entered the van pictured and then exploded. He closed the post with a trenchant comment on why, he felt, the issue was of consequence.

An important point lurks here: if the purported attack on a Reuters press van was a fraud—if, in fact, the Israelis fired on a terrorist vehicle, as they believed, and the Reuters van was dragged off a junk lot for propaganda purposes—then Reuters has crossed the line from being the dupe of a hoax—we know that's happened—to being the perpetrator of a hoax. It is worth some effort to find out whether that is the case.

In many respects, this controversy resembled the prior month's about a purported attack on Lebanese ambulances. A lively debate ensued among bloggers about the facts of the press van incident, and what light they might retrospectively shed on the ambulance controversy. More than one blogger urged restraint, warning blog critics against a rush to judgment that either or both of the stories were complete fabrications, simply because there had been substantial issues with other photojournalism of the war. In a reflective post,^{li} Dan Riehl warned bloggers against being hasty in their weighing of evidence [minor errors corrected].

As the originator of the Red Cross Ambulance story, I would urge the elements of the blogosphere still running with the story to at least slow down, if not back up. They are increasingly looking like the very *drive by* [italics in original] media against which we so often rant, running the risk of being exploited by propagandists on another side of an issue....

There was some incredibly sloppy reporting by the MSM media around the ambulance incident....But what I was doing a month ago was asking for someone who could follow up. Now it has become a larger news story with blogs asserting it never happened. Blogs do not know that to be true and haven't come close to proving it....

Once I start seeing and believing what I want to believe, as opposed to the truth, I'll have become the beast I set out to battle when I took up the keyboard in the first place. And that isn't how I want this story, or blogging in general, to end.

The anonymous blogger Ace similarly observed^{lii} that the blogosphere was inherently no more immune to a meme-creation dynamic than the establishment press, and urged his colleagues to guard against it.

The MSM digs into a storyline or narrative and won't give it up, no matter what conflicting evidence there might be. It's human nature, and it's not surprising bloggers do the same. But still, if bloggers are supposed to be honest brokers more self-aware of the human foibles and biases that infect MSM reportage, we really do need to be more on guard against this....

The day after Reutersgate broke I advised a let's-settle-down a bit approach to all of this. Media criticism is all well and good, but the memes and narratives of media criticism must not be allowed to become as entrenched as those favored by the MSM itself. Otherwise we're just an anti-media, no different than they are, just, as the man says, on the other side.

In a third post about the press van story,^{liii} John Hinderaker pointed out what he felt were two inconsistencies in the story as it had developed in the mainstream press reporting. While the windshield was cracked in an interior shot of the van, the cracks were not apparent in an exterior shot. He also quoted a commenter on another blog, Ace of Spades HQ,^{liv} who said early television reporting of the incident had shown a dark-colored van as the press vehicle in question, rather than white as it appeared in later photos. Together these inconsistencies led Hinderaker to wonder "whether more than one vehicle has been offered up as the „clearly marked“ and „armored“ Reuters van that was reportedly shot at." The matter of the windshield cracks was resolved by Allahpundit in a Hot Air post^{lv}; he supplied a different exterior shot of the white van taken from another angle, in which the cracks were visible, and commented that "the crack is obscured in P[ower] L[ine]'s photo by the light reflecting off the glass." Hinderaker noted this in an update to his post.

A great deal of discussion centered around the assertion that the van had been struck by a missile, as a key issue here was whether the van had been an intended target. Several bloggers sought the opinion of munitions experts; unsurprisingly, the experts disagreed among themselves! Allahpundit posted emails he had received from a reader who speculated what type of ordinance might have caused the damage shown in the photos, had the van been a target.^{lvi} The reader acknowledged that the available evidence was far from conclusive [minor errors corrected].

The van was hit with either the “M” variant of the Hellfire missile or a 70mm unguided rocket....

The damage on the van looks a little light to me for this missile, but it’s still possible given the armor....The missile detonates above the target, spraying the surrounding area with shrapnel....

One problem with my hellfire theory is that the Israelis are not supposed to have the “M” variant yet...Another problem with this theory is that the “victims” [punctuation in original] reported two missiles. Two Hellfires are never fired near-simultaneously at the same target (and even if they were, they would both hit)...The final problem with this theory is that the damage still does not look heavy enough to me....

My second theory, which I think is slightly more probable, is that the van was attacked with two 70mm unguided rockets....The 70mm rocket has a smaller warhead than the hellfire and is typically impact detonated. I think the damage seen is consistent with a rocket of this type.

In the second post, the reader added that he did not believe a projectile had detonated inside the van, as some reports had indicated.

[T]he rocket itself certainly did not penetrate the vehicle before exploding. It detonated at, or just above the roof....In other words, the “crater” was caused by the blast, not the impact of the rocket itself. If the weapon had penetrated the roof and exploded, everyone inside would probably be dead and the hole would be blown outwards, not inwards.

On Junkyard Blog, the anonymous blogger SeeDubya^{lvii} quoted a German wire service report saying the damage to the press van was caused by shrapnel from missiles fired at a nearby target. It is worth noting that the storyline in this account^{lviii} differed considerably from the BBC’s, which Hinderaker had questioned. SeeDubya felt this was a good explanation for the tear in the metal of the van’s roof.

The eyewitnesses said that the two camera operators were in a Reuters jeep heading to the area to cover the Israeli Army incursion into eastern Gaza City. They said that an Israeli helicopter fired two missiles at people gathering in the Sheja’eya neighbourhood in eastern Gaza City as the Reuters’ car drove past nearby. Shrapnel hit the car, wounding Faddel Shana’a of Reuters and Sabah Hermeida, who works for Dubai Television.

Bob Owens queried manufacturers of armored vehicles, asking if they felt the photos of the van suggested a 70mm rocket had detonated on it or close by.^{lix} He posted replies from two on Confederate Yankee, neither of which believed the van had been hit by a missile or rocket. The second flatly stated the hole in the roof was shrapnel damage only, and that the vehicle showed no signs of having been struck by “any armoured [sic] piercing bullet/trajectory.”

There is clearly no blast damage internally and only from some object inconsistent with any rocket or missile attack. I’m unable to see any burn or

secondary explosion or markings from the picture... The inside is too intact including the upholstery for this type of ammunition detonation on impact. It looks as if the armor was penetrated by probably flying shrapnel.

This manufacturer also pointed out that the bodywork of the van showed none of the inward crumpling typically caused by the pressure wave from a detonation in close proximity to a vehicle. As an illustration of such primary blast damage, Owens provided an image of an armored SUV which had been damaged by a roadside bomb; bulletproof windows had been completely destroyed and the sheet metal of body panels pushed back onto the frame members of the vehicle. This was in stark contrast to the body panels on the press van, which were intact except for the hole in the roof.

In addition to photos of the van itself, images of a cameraman injured in the incident had also drawn some scrutiny. Some had been suspicious of the appearance of a blood stain on his shirt in one image, wondering why blood was not also evident on his undershirt in another image in which the outer garment had ridden up somewhat. Saying he shared Ace's sentiment that bloggers ought not rush to judging the incident to have been a fabrication,^{lx} Allahpundit supplied a wider shot of the cameraman on a stretcher^{lxi}; in this image, a minor wound on his hand can be seen.

The stain on his shirt was probably caused by his hand either being placed on his chest or him trying to stanch the blood before he lost consciousness.

Just for the record.

As noted above, the discussion of the press van incident prompted more discussion of the ambulance incident. Dan Riehl, who had first expressed doubts about the early reports of a July Israeli airstrike on one or possibly two ambulances, remained concerned about glaring discrepancies in various press accounts of the incident. He juxtaposed passages which contradicted each other with regard to substantive details concerning the sequence of events and the nature of injuries to passengers in the ambulances, and wondered how they could be explained.^{lxii}

This is what has always troubled me the most about the ambulance story. You can Google a dozen stories and get a dozen versions. Bad journalism? Bad sources?.. How can any of this alleged fact checking be trusted?

Still, he seemed willing to reconsider the matter^{lxiii} when an Australian newspaper published a new story^{lxiv} insisting the account was true [minor errors corrected].

New images and some older video appear to support at least one defense of *The Age* in the ongoing Lebanese Red Cross ambulance story. Though certainly nothing can excuse the otherwise sloppy reporting that went on around a, by definition, international incident....

In all honesty, I had set out to debunk claims by *The Age* that the photos we've been looking at were the wrong ones; however, careful analysis appears to depict what looks like a hit from something on a second ambulance and the location of it does line up with other basic elements of the story.

This isn't to say that I don't have concerns over the coverage of this incident, taking, at most, what was likely an inadvertent hit, or a strike at an ambulance being co-opted for battle and turning it into a story suggesting Israel was deliberately targeting ambulances. But I can only go with the evidence I turn up and be as honest as I can be about it....

The vehicles have moved multiple times and the story became news long before professional journalists had any access to the vehicles at all. Given Hezbollah's well-known reputation for playing the press for advantage, we all need to be watchful when reports such as this one emerge.

Australian blogger Tim Blair was unconvinced by the new reporting defending the account. In a tongue-in-cheek post,^{lxv} he pointed to numerous factual inconsistencies in various reports on the incident; he embedded hyperlinks in his bullet points to allow his reader to view the stories from which he had culled the statements [underscore indicates the hyperlinks].

On July 23, two Red Cross ambulances were attacked by an Israeli Apache helicopter that was also a drone.

The ambulances were struck by rockets, missiles, Israeli bombs, small weapons, and a large explosion....

[Qasin] Shalin was inside the ambulance and outside the ambulance while it was moving and parked at the moment the rockets, missiles, Israeli bombs, small weapons, and large explosion hit....

Ahmed Mohammed Fawaz was inside ambulance 782 and inside the second ambulance.

Fawaz couldn't stop the bleeding from his leg wound which had been sealed and cauterized.

Israeli drones fire warheads so small that they don't kill people directly in their path and also puncture huge holes in ambulances.

Blair followed with a skeptical commentary^{lxvi} on the current reporting in *The Age*. Unlike Riehl, he felt the new image of the second ambulance reinforced the doubts about the veracity of the story [emphasis in original].

Unhelpfully, the Age doesn't run any image of the ambulance in question online. I think I know why. I've got a print copy of the paper in front of me. Only one photograph accompanies the article... The "huge hole" [reporter] Smiles describes is in fact only about twice the size of the vent hole on ambulance 782. The vehicle's roof is caved in, as with 782—so much for a concussive force within—and there are similar scattered holes and abundant rust. But, unlike 782, the red paint of the cross is cracked and split with age and faded down to a weak pink; this unit looks *very old*.

Blair updated the post to add a scan of the print newspaper photo. He updated a second time with an image of the ambulance's interior, captured from a news video; while objects in the van are disordered, there are no obvious signs that a fire occurred in that space. Blair quipped, in reference to reports that a victim's leg wound had been cauterized by fire in the vehicle: "Note all the limb-cauterizing fire damage."

About a month later new evidence became available concerning two well-known images of a gunman standing on a hilltop with a column of dense smoke behind him. When they had first appeared in the press, blog critics had doubted the accuracy of *Time*'s caption identifying it as the burning wreckage of a downed Israeli plane. On November 14 Bruno Stevens, who had taken the photos, posted a detailed account of the images^{lxvii} on a discussion site for professional photographers. A number of elements in it were startling, and drew the renewed attention of bloggers.

Stevens described how he had seen Lebanese news video of "a large metallic object falling from the sky and exploding upon touching the ground" and identifying the object as a downed Israeli plane. He was near the location of the incident, and drove to it. He included one of the photos he took, and described the caption he provided with it [punctuation as in original; spelling error corrected].

This is the picture published by US News, and this is my original caption for it:

"Kfar Chima, near Beirut, July 17, 2006 An Israeli Air Force F16 has allegedly been shot down while bombing a group of Hezbollah owned trucks, at least one of these trucks contained a medium range ground to ground missile launcher."

This caption clearly says that there is no proof that an Israeli jet had been shot down and that the objective was indeed to destroy a legitimate military target.

Stevens then inserted a second photo he had taken at the scene, and noted how the caption he had supplied had been altered when the image was published [capitalization and punctuation as in original; spelling error corrected].

A week later TIME published this image shot at the same time as the first. They chose to caption it this way (I had NO control in this matter), they HAD my original caption:

"The wreckage of a downed Israeli jet that was targeting Hizballah trucks billows smoke behind a Hizballah gunman in Kfar Chima, near Beirut. Jet fuel set the surrounding area ablaze."

Stevens went on to describe how he had taken pains to insure his caption was accurate [syntax and punctuation as in original].

In the meantime, after returning 3 times to the site, and collected more evidence, I had modified my original caption to this:

“Kfar Chima, near Beirut, July 17, 2006 The Israeli Air Force bombed a group of Hezbollah chartered trucks parked on the back of large Lebanese Army barracks, at least one of these trucks contained a medium range ground to ground missile launcher, at least one missile was hit, misfiring high into the sky before falling down and starting a huge fire in the barracks“ parking lot.”

He ended the post with two other images he had taken at ground level where the object had crashed. One showed the burning debris field at a closer distance; Stevens commented that it was apparent the site was a military installation. The second showed the wreckage of a semi-trailer truck; Stevens identified this as a bombed missile launcher [punctuation as in original].

This is a very important piece of evidence showing probable collusion between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Army, there is little doubt that the Lebanese Army was aware of the presence of at least one missile launcher and at least one large missile on their parking lot.

The story-behind-the-picture prompted harsh criticism from bloggers. Charles Johnson felt “[t]he anti-Israeli bias of mainstream media has never been revealed more nakedly”^{lxviii} [emphasis in original].

In this post, Stevens reveals that the captions he sent in with his pictures described the scene accurately—but editors at the magazines changed the captions to completely alter the story....

And even more damning is the photo they chose not to publish, showing a medium range ground-to-ground missile launcher hidden in a civilian truck—on a Lebanese Army base....

As I’ve written before, mainstream media is [sic] an absolute disgrace—and this time we can’t even blame it on local stringers doing the work of Hizballah. These distortions were perpetrated by Western editors, sitting in comfortable offices, demonizing Israel and covering up evidence of Hizballah war crimes and collusion with the Lebanese Army.

Allahpundit couched a similar criticism^{lxix} as pointed questions about editorial judgment.

Why would Time deliberately omit key details about what Israel was targeting and, just as importantly, where it was located?...

Did Time have that photo in hand [i.e., Stevens’s picture of the wrecked missile launcher] when it chose to describe the vehicles as nothing more than “Hezbollah trucks”?

A month later the head of Reuters made a public statement about the digitally-altered photographs of Adnan Hajj. Charles Johnson took note of the speech,^{lxx} complimenting the agency “for reacting quickly when the Adnan Hajj scandal broke.” While Johnson was pleased that Reuters established new policy guidelines requiring its staff to state in photo captions if an image had been taken during “a tour organized by Hezbollah” and reasserted guidelines barring digital manipulation of an image beyond what a photographer could “legitimately do in the

darkroom,^{lxxi} he was concerned that Reuters's deletion of the entire Hajj archive had made it impossible for critics outside of the agency to check for other manipulated photos, apart from the two Reuters had already acknowledged [emphasis and punctuation as in original].

Notice how Glocer [i.e., Reuters's chief executive officer] says they discovered only two photographs that were altered. Yet they immediately removed Adnan Hajj's entire category and never talked about it again. Were there other altered photographs in there? We'll apparently never know; the evidence has been "disappeared," and Reuters seems to have no intention of discussing it.

Another detail about this controversy emerged yet another month later: in addition to firing Hajj and deleting his archive, actions which it had publicly announced, Reuters had also fired a photo editor. Charles Johnson quoted an online line trade journal^{lxxii} reporting that "Reuters fired a top photo editor for the Middle East during an internal investigation of two doctored photos from the Israel-Lebanon war that were published last summer." He wondered why this had not come to light before.^{lxxiii}

In all of Reuters's statements and reports on the incident, they've never mentioned that a "top photo editor" was also fired. Why were they secretive about this, and why won't they release the editor's name?

Referring to Hajj and the unnamed editor, Allahpundit commented that "not only were the photos disappeared, so were the people who knew the most about them."^{lxxiv} He also recalled that at the time the controversy had first arisen, Reuters had stated Hajj "filed 43 photos directly through the agency's global picture desk, rather than through an editor in Beirut, as is standard procedure..." This led him to speculate that there might have been intent to cover up at least some elements of the misbehavior.

If the policy at the time explicitly authorized photographers to bypass editors, then why fire the editor here? Is it because he/she was responsible for having set the direct-filing policy? Or was the direct-filing policy nonsense cooked up at the time to make it look like the problem was limited to one rogue stringer instead of having infected the editorial chain of command?

Michael J. Totten has contributed a substantial body of independent reporting on his Middle East Journal blog. In late January 2007 he described a fresh example of a fraudulent composite image which Lebanese bloggers had exposed.^{lxxv} He provided the image, which had been shown on a Lebanese news channel, and described it in this way [punctuation as in original].

Below is the photo. It supposedly shows a (Christian) Lebanese Forces "militia man" in the lower-left corner pointing a weapon at Lebanese soldiers. Notice the cross on his sleeve. The man and the cross were photoshopped in.

Totten then provided two images which had been combined to produce the composite. The background was a long shot of a group of Lebanese soldiers in what appears to be a public plaza. The foreground image of the gunman, inserted into the scene, ironically enough had been taken from one of the well-known photos of the misfired Hezbollah missile!

And here is the picture that was used as bad photoshop fodder. It was taken during last summer's war and was *itself* [emphasis in original] criticized as propaganda for its inaccurate caption. Notice the cross on the [gunman's] sleeve isn't there. That's because this man is Hezbollah, not a member of the Christian Lebanese Forces.

Allahpundit felt the political implications of the fake image might not be apparent to all readers, and provided some additional context.^{lxxvi}

The guy on TV holding the [composite] photo is Michel Aoun, a Lebanese Christian leader who's aligned himself with Hezbollah. The guy in the photo pointing a gun at the Lebanese army is supposed to be a member of the Lebanese Forces, a rival Christian faction led by Samir Geagea, who's currently aligned with the anti-Syrian/anti-Hezbollah faction. It's a frame up, pure and simple.

On February 9, Charles Johnson posted what he described as "a photograph taken during the ghoulish dead baby display after Israel's bombing of the town of Qana...from a different angle than the dozens and dozens of similar photos that were splashed all over the front pages of the newspapers of the world."^{lxxvii} This image was taken over the shoulder of the man holding the infant's body aloft, and shows a crowd of photographers, shoulder-to-shoulder and several rows deep, taking frontal images of the corpse. Photographers in the back rows held their cameras up at arm's length, to be able to shoot over the heads of colleagues closer to the body. Johnson was incensed by the "staging and arranging" of bodies for the press.

Why was this picture left in the editor's kill file until now? Because it really wrecks the suspension of disbelief that actors need to convince the audience. It's like seeing the scaffolds and lights and fake landscapes behind the scenes at a theater, in the middle of a performance.

The Qana photographs are some of the most gut-wrenching, heart-breaking images you could ever imagine....But imagine if pictures like the one above had the same 24/7 coverage as all those pictures with a weeping rescuer running alone down a dusty road. Context, anyone?

Richard North took note of the image, as well,^{lxxviii} and felt it was further support for his contention that the civilian casualties from the Qana airstrike had been exploited by Hezbollah to influence public opinion.

Many bloggers saw a conference paper made available by Harvard's Shorenstein Center^{lxxix} in April 2007 as validation of their critique of the war photojournalism. The abstract indicates the paper's thesis to be that the press had become an asset for one of the combatants.

Based on content analysis of global media and interviews with many diplomats and journalists, this paper describes the trajectory of the media from objective observer to fiery advocate, becoming in fact a weapon of modern warfare. The paper also shows how an open society, Israel, is victimized by its own openness and how a closed sect, Hezbollah, can retain almost total control of the daily message of journalism and propaganda.

Charles Johnson related the paper to the Adnan Hajj controversy in which he had played an important role.^{lxxx}

During Israel's war against Hizballah, at L[ittle] G[reen] F[ootballs] we were continually outraged by the media's uncritical promulgation of terrorist propaganda, and their overwhelming bias against Israel. The barrage of staged and manipulated disinformation culminated in the infamous Adnan Hajj fauxtography incident....

It's interesting that in an age of obsessive media focus on scandals, no wire service or newspaper has ever followed up on that story in any real way. Adnan Hajj seemed to simply vanish off the face of the earth; no interviews, no photos of him, no investigations....

Now the Harvard Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, hardly a bastion of neocon wingnut thinking, has issued a paper that absolutely skewers the media for their outrageously biased and terrorist-enabling behavior.

The other blogger who had first identified one of Hajj's digitally altered pictures, Rusty Shackleford, characterized the paper in terms of a metanarrative of the war.^{lxxxi}

The Western press was duped by Hezbollah, a new Harvard report suggests. In the "framing war," Hezbollah won and our media did their part to help....

The entire thing focuses on how the media framed the Hizballah/Lebanon-Israeli war. And that framing, and the images that led to it, was one of Israeli aggression, the loss of innocent Lebanese lives, and the ultimate defeat of Israel. Hizballah was rarely shown as aggressor and carefully staged media manipulation on Hizballah's part was rarely reference[d].

Shackleford ended the post by pointing out a consequential detail about the Hajj photo he had challenged [syntax, punctuation, and emphasis as in original; minor spelling error corrected].

Just in case you're new around here, it was Charles [Johnson] that debunked the first photograph—the one of the smoke—and it was me that debunked the second photograph—the one of the "flares."

But the Harvard report is wrong about the additional "flares" being the important point. The important point was that in addition to adding "flares" to the photo, the Reuters caption said:

An Israeli F-16 warplane fires missiles during an air strike on Nabatiyeh in southern Lebanon, August 2, 2006). (LEBANON)

That is, the picture was purported to be of an Israeli F-16 firing multiple missiles on a village, presumably filled with innocent civilians. In fact, the undoctored photo was of an F-16 firing *defensive* flares against anti-aircraft missiles. Big. Difference.

Analysis and Commentary

While some observers have been dismissive of bloggers, blogging, the blogosphere, and the periodic blogstorms that arise in it, a careful analysis of this collaborative multimedia content reveals a substantial body of evidence-based reasoning and thoughtful reflection. By no means does this author intent a blanket endorsement of all blog content! Certainly there is much content in the blogosphere which does not merit serious consideration—name-calling, unsubstantiated rumors, and conspiracy theories, for instance. But the low-quality content ought not obscure the high-quality content, and the fauxtography blogstorm illustrates this point well. The sheer volume of posts and the temporal overlap of distinct threads within it may indeed make the substantive features of the argumentation and reflection hard to perceive with only a cursory examination.

It may help to begin by distinguishing two general categories of the media criticism in this storm. Some threads concerned the photojournalism of particular wartime incidents; this category would include the posts about the Qana building collapse, the Qana ambulance, the “Lebanese Pieta,” the “garbage dump” fire, and the Reuters press van. In essence, these post argue that the reportage of those particular events is untrustworthy; in other words, the mainstream news products convey an inaccurate or misleading sense of the event to a consumer remote from the event in time and space.

A different variety of media criticism in this storm would be roundups or general criticism of the practice of photojournalism in this war. These documents argue that there were systemic problems in the news coverage, rather than isolated deficiencies in event coverage. Richard North’s “Corruption of the Media” and Zombie’s “Taxonomy of Fraud” essays would be examples of this category; we might also consider the number of smaller posts on Hot Air and Little Green Footballs questioning the images of damaged civilian vehicles to constitute a generic critique that mainstream outlets failed to adequately fact-check the materials submitted by their stringers.

Given that dichotomy—imperfect as it is!—we can note that blog criticism in the first category, criticism of particular event coverage, tended to be based on deductive reasoning; that is, there were particular characteristics of the images which called the storyline into question. In contrast the second category, the criticism that systemic problems existed in the practice of war journalism, tended to be inductive; that is, the accumulation of specific critiques supported the conclusion there was a substandard pattern and practice in the overall war coverage, or that canons of journalistic ethics were violated.

For instance, much of the blog critique of mainstream media coverage of damage to vehicles (as in controversy over the purported strikes on ambulances, civilian vehicles, and the press van) took the form of *modus tollens* syllogisms.^{lxxxii} In general, this variety of deductive argument starts with, or at least implies, a linked cause and effect as its major premise. This is followed with the observation that the effect did not occur, which leads to the conclusion that the purported cause did not occur, either. In general form, a *modus tollens* syllogism is this:

(major premise) If p then q.

(minor premise) not q

(conclusion) not p

Sometimes the blogger's argument that the purported photographs of vehicles damaged by Israeli missiles was stated in full; often, though, the argument appeared as an *enthymeme* with the major premise implied. These criticisms of photojournalism the blogger felt was, in actuality, fauxtography, were structured along this line:

(major premise) When a missile strikes a vehicle, the damage has particular characteristics (such as massive structural damage to the vehicle, scorching of paint, burned interior, windows or bodywork blown outward, etc.).

(minor premise) The vehicle in the news photograph does not display those characteristics.

(conclusion) The vehicle in the picture was not struck by a missile.

(corollary) The representation that the vehicle was hit by a missile is fraudulent.

Supporting arguments sometimes included deductive arguments in a related form, *modus ponens*. This type of deductive argument takes the form

(major premise) If p then q.

(minor premise) p

(conclusion) q

For instance, this argument concerned the appearance of rust surrounding holes in the bodywork of vehicles which reportedly had been damaged only a short time before the picture was taken.

(major premise) If substantial rust is evident around a tear in a metal surface, the damage occurred some time ago.

(minor premise) A great deal of rust is evident around the hole in the vehicle where the projectile purportedly entered it.

(conclusion) The hole in the vehicle was made some time ago.

(corollary) The representation that the picture shows a vehicle damaged by a missile only a short time ago is fraudulent.

Similar arguments also appeared in the controversy over whether some photographs had been staged, particularly images of objects used in daily life shown in the rubble of buildings. As with the photographs of damaged vehicles, bloggers often argued that the objects in the pictures did not display characteristics consistent with the description of events. The logical structure of these arguments can be characterized along this line:

(major premise) When an explosion damages a building, objects that had been within the building are covered with dust and/or strewn haphazardly.

(minor premise) The object in the picture is clean and/or positioned in a conventional manner.

(conclusion) The picture is not a candid image of the scene of an explosion.

(corollary) The photo has been staged in some way.

Other criticism that photographs had been staged can similarly be analyzed as deductive arguments in the form of an enthymeme. Regarding the woman who appeared in multiple images as the owner of a destroyed housing unit, for instance:

(major premise, implied) An individual has one residence.

(minor premise) The same individual was identified as having lost several different apartments.

(conclusion) The captions are not accurate.

(corollary, an alternative explanation) The photos were staged, using the woman in question as a model.

The relationship of the two categories is evident in Zombie's "Taxonomy of Fraud" essay. In essence, specific critiques of particular event coverage (supported primarily by deductive reasoning) accumulate into a broader critique of the practice of photojournalism (generalization supported by inductive reasoning). Regarding the dynamics of the blogstorm, we should note that this essay synthesized the various threads of specific criticism of reports on particular events into a systemic criticism that the war photojournalism was a not-entirely-trustworthy representation of events. That is to say, the deficiencies which had been identified in the reporting of particular events were not isolated problems but, rather, accumulating indicators of a systemic problem in the coverage of the war. Although Zombie did not use the term *fauxtography* in the essay, the case he/she made for a systemic deficiency in the photojournalism parallels the emergence of the term as the one-word identifier for an enduring critique of photojournalism. In addition, Zombie's compilation of other bloggers' work into a broad taxonomy of objectionable news products illustrates well the interactivity and collaborative content generation commonplace in the blogosphere.

It goes without saying that argumentation without evidence is dubious; along that line, it is helpful to categorize the evidence offered by bloggers, both in the deductive-based and inductive-based critiques. The evidence can be summarized in this way:

- a) characteristics of image composition unlikely to occur in real life (e.g., toys in rubble)
- b) prominence of one individual in a large number of shots at multiple locations (e.g., Green Helmet Guy)
- c) characteristics of objects inconsistent with description of events (e.g., mild damage to cars purportedly hit by missiles)
- d) comparison of multiple images of the same scene, noting discrepancies (e.g., two shots of a wrecked car, with and without wall hanging of Koran verses; one damaged building identified as multiple airstrikes on different dates)
- e) inconsistencies in sequences of shots of same scene (e.g., "Lebanese Pieta")

f) substantial inconsistencies or contradictions in the text journalism or captions accompanying the images, as reason to question the trustworthiness of the photojournalism (e.g., discrepant press reports of the ambulance strike; the warrant is that if the text description is questionable, similar doubts would extend to the associated images)

g) personal accounts of photojournalists describing questionable journalistic practices in the field (e.g., Denton's and Stevens's comments on the Lightstalkers site)

h) indicators of digital alteration of images (e.g., cloned smoke in the Beirut skyline, cloned flares beneath a warplane)

A very interesting feature of the fauxtopography blogstorm is the disputation among bloggers, themselves. Unlike other blogstorms, the split between left-leaning and right-leaning bloggers did not play a significant role in the dynamics of the storm. Often that kind of ideologically-identified debate becomes prominent in a blogstorm, but the political polarity was not evident. Instead, mostly right-leaning bloggers argued among themselves about the strength of various bits of evidence, even as they generally agreed that the war journalism had serious problems. Nor is it sound to perceive this blogstorm simply as "old media versus new media"; for one thing, there were instances of mainstream outlets at least tacitly acknowledging the worth of bloggers' criticisms.

More importantly, in the ambulance and press van stories, there was a vigorous argumentation concerning the facts of wartime events, not just between bloggers and mainstream news outlets, but among bloggers. In stark contrast to the "piling on" dynamic which sometimes does develop in a blogstorm—which we might consider to be a form of the groupthink dynamic^{lxxxiii} in which open disagreement among discussants is inhibited—bloggers challenged the factual claims or speculative explanations advanced by other bloggers. Examples include the issue of rust on allegedly fresh body damage, windshield cracks, and the blood stains on the clothing of the cameraman. While at first glance these details might seem trivial, they actually were of consequence in that they could potentially support or refute Hezbollah's claim that Israeli forces intentionally targeted noncombatant vehicles. Also worth noting, here, are the reflective posts by some bloggers, warning against a pack mentality among like-minded bloggers and asking bloggers to maintain high standards of accuracy and evidence. While critics of bloggers often suggest the bloggers exhibit a pack mentality—that is, are insufficiently critical of their own criticisms of the mainstream press—the arguments among bloggers in the Reuters press van controversy is clear evidence to the contrary.

One more point is necessary here. Some observers might be tempted to dismiss the entire controversy as trivial, merely a tempest in a (cyber) teapot. In one way or another, each of the incident threads related to an underlying meme^{lxxxiv} that one side in the war was violating conventions about the civilized conduct of war, either by deliberately targeting noncombatant vehicles and civilians or by engaging in violence disproportionate to the provocation. No doubt, that is a substantial accusation, and one the bloggers disputed. So, too, is the question of how well the press performed its structural role of informing the public in an impartial manner. It seems clear that both are enduring and consequential issues.

ⁱ The term *fauxtography* had been used earlier by a few art photographers to refer to their work; see, for instance, <<http://fauxtographer.blogspot.com/>>, <<http://www.photofaux.com/>>, and <<http://www.myfauxtography.com/default.php>>. In that usage, however, the *faux-* refers to their artistic manipulation of ordinary visual images. The contemporary blogosphere meaning of purposely deceptive or misleading photojournalism appears to have been coined by a Little Green Footballs commenter named kay1212 early in August 2006; see <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=22001_MSM_Fauxtography_Watch&only>. This usage quickly spread through the blogosphere as the blogstorm developed.

ⁱⁱ Society of Professional Journalists (1996). Code of Ethics. <http://www.spj.org/ethics_code.asp>.

ⁱⁱⁱ See the second chapter in this author's *Watching the Watchdog* (Marquette Books, 2006) for an exploration of blog critiques of the accuracy of news products.

^{iv} See <<http://michellemalkin.com/archives/005640.htm>> for a roundup of such criticism of earlier news coverage; note <http://billroggio.com/archives/2006/04/a_street_corner_in_r.php>, in particular, for questions about the trustworthiness of news photos and the descriptions provided with them.

^v David D. Perlmutter, "Photojournalism in Crisis," Editor & Publisher Online (August 17, 2006). <http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/columns/shoptalk_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003019475>.

^{vi} Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," Harvard University/Kennedy School of Government (February 2007). <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/presspol/research_publications/papers/research_papers/R29.pdf> Note pages 7, 13-14, 18, and 29 in this context.

^{vii} An overview of the media bias question can be found in this author's article, "Media Bias," in *Social Issues in America* (Sharpe Reference, 2006).

^{viii} Richard North, "In Whose Interest?" (July 30, 2006). <http://eureferendum.blogspot.com/2006_07_01_archive.html>

^{ix} In essence, North was anticipating the thesis later developed in the Kalb and Saivetz paper.

^x Richard North, "Milking It?" (July 31, 2006). <<http://eureferendum.blogspot.com/2006/07/milking-it.html>>

^{xi} Richard North, "Who Is This Man?" (July 31, 2006). <<http://eureferendum.blogspot.com/2006/07/who-is-this-man.html>>

^{xii} Richard North, "The Corruption of the Media" (August 23, 2006). <<http://www.eureferendum.com/admin/media/Corruption%20of%20the%20Media.pdf>>

^{xiii} Charles Johnson, "Wire Services Defend Staged Photos" (August 1, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=21884_Wire_Services_Defend_Staged_Photos&only>

^{xiv} David Bauder, "News Agencies Stand by Lebanon Photos" (August 1, 2006). Associated Press Online.

^{xv} Dan Riehl, "More MSM Propaganda Exposed" (August 1, 2006). <http://www.riehlworlview.com/carnivorous_conservative/2006/08/more_propaganda.html>

^{xvi} Charles Johnson, "Reuters Doctoring Photos from Beirut?" (August 5, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=21956_Reuters_Doctoring_Photos_from_Beirut&only>

^{xvii} "Odd Photo From Lebanon...". <http://www.sportsshooter.com/message_display.html?tid=21302>

^{xviii} Rusty Shackelford, "Another Fake Reuters Photo from Lebanon" (August 6, 2006). <<http://mypetjawa.mu.nu/archives/184206.php>>

^{xix} DFH, "Extreme Makeover—Beirut Edition" (August 6, 2006). <<http://drinkingfromhome.blogspot.com/2006/08/extreme-makeover-beirut-edition.html>>

^{xx} Jim Hoft, "Hard Luck Beirut Woman Extreme Makeover—Take 3" (August 20, 2006). <<http://gatewaypundit.blogspot.com/2006/08/hard-luck-beirut-woman-extreme.html>>

^{xxi} Scott Johnson, "Reuters Calls the Doctor, Take 2" (August 6, 2006). <<http://powerlineblog.com/archives/014919.php>>

^{xxii} Charles Johnson, "Multi-Use Buildings" (August 9, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=22024_Multi-Use_Buildings&only>

^{xxiii} Unfortunately, Reuters does not maintain a publicly-available archive of its picture advisories, and did not respond to email requests for those concerning Adnan Hajj's work. The statement was quoted by Charles Johnson in "Reuters on the Run" (August 7, 2006) <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=21976_Reuters_on_the_Run&only> and by Michelle Malkin in "Breaking: Reuters Withdraws All Hajj Photos; Second Photo Doctoring Confirmed" (August 7, 2006) <<http://michellemalkin.com/archives/005674.htm>>. The NPR story about Reuters's retraction may also be of interest: Renee Montagne, "Reuters Retracts Altered Beirut Photo" (August 8, 2006)

<<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5625098>>. Screen captures of the two picture kills issued by Reuters appear in Ed Driscoll, "Picture Kill: How We Got Here" (August 6, 2006) <<http://eddriscoll.com/archives/009436.php>> and Good Lieutenant, "Jawa Report in the News" (August 7, 2006) <<http://mynetjawa.mu.nu/archives/184216.php>> .

^{xxiv} Rusty Shackelford would raise this point several months later in "Harvard: Hezbollah's Fauxtography Pawns in the MSM" (April 25, 2007). <<http://mynetjawa.mu.nu/archives/187585.php>> The term *rowback* is used to denote the questionable journalistic practice of addressing a factual error in reporting only with revised wording in a follow-up, rather than an explicit correction of the error. See this author's *Watching the Watchdog* (Marquette Books, 2006), pp. 214-216 for more discussion of rowbacks.

^{xxv} James Joyner, "Reuters Purges All 920 Adnan Hajj Photos from Database" (August 7, 2006). <http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/archives/2006/08/reuters_purges_all_920_adnan_hajj_photos_from_database/>

^{xxvi} Slublog, "The Passion of the Toys" (August 8, 2006). <http://www.slublog.com/archives/2006/08/the_passion_of.html>

^{xxvii} "Hostilities in the Mideast" (n.d.; apparently July 27, 2006). <http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/world/20060727_MIDEAST_FEATURE/index.html>

^{xxviii} Jim Hoft, "The NY Times Hezbollah Photo Dust Up" (August 8, 2006). <<http://gatewaypundit.blogspot.com/2006/08/ny-times-hezbollah-photo-dust-up.html>>

^{xxix} Jim Hoft, "New York Times Busted in Hezbollah Photo Fraud!" (August 8, 2006). <<http://gatewaypundit.blogspot.com/2006/08/new-york-times-busted-in-hezbollah.html>>

^{xxx} "Corrections: For the Record" (August 9, 2006). <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/09/pageoneplus/corrections.html?ex=1180584000&en=2162d98294328df2&ei=5070>>

^{xxxi} Allahpundit, "Another Bogus Photo?" (August 8, 2006). <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/08/08/another-bogus-photo/>>

^{xxxii} Allahpundit, "Photo Follies: More on the U.S. News Tire Fire" (August 9, 2006). <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/08/09/photo-follies-more-on-the-us-news-tire-fire/>>

^{xxxiii} Hanan Greenberg, "IDF: 'Plane Downed in Lebanon'—Long-range Missile" (July 17, 2006). <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3277449,00.html>>

^{xxxiv} An informative interview with Zombie is available at <<http://policybyblog.squarespace.com/journal/2006/12/5/zombietime-blogs-and-the-anti-war-movement.html>> Rather than as a *blogger*, Zombie identifies him/herself as a *citizen journalist*.

^{xxxv} Some degree of imprecision has crept into the usage of *blog*, as one might expect. In the strict sense of the word, a blog consists of a web site with a running series of posts displayed in reverse chronological order, each of which has a unique permanent URL in the site's archive. While Zombietime is a web page, it is not a blog.

^{xxxvi} Zombie, "The Reuters Photo Scandal: A Taxonomy of Fraud" (August 8, 2006). <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>

^{xxxvii} Charles Johnson, "Photographer Alleges Unearthing of Bodies" (August 12, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=22071_Photographer_Alleges_Unearthing_of_Bodies&only>

^{xxxviii} "Staged Shots from Lebanon? Please Comment..." (begun August 7, 2006). <[http://www.lightstalkers.org/staged_shots_from_lebanon_please_coment\[sic\]](http://www.lightstalkers.org/staged_shots_from_lebanon_please_coment[sic])>

^{xxxix} Ray Robison, "al AP At It Again with Staged Photos" (August 13, 2006). <http://rayrobison.typepad.com/ray_robison/2006/08/al_ap_at_it_aga.html>

^{xl} Allahpundit, "Fauxtography? Amazing New IAF Missiles Mimic Sledgehammer Damage" (August 14, 2006). <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/08/14/fauxtography-amazing-new-iaf-missiles-mimic-sledgehammer-damage/>>

^{xli} Charles Johnson, "Lebanese Autos Miraculously Survive Airstrikes" (August 14, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=22100_Lebanese_Autos_Miraculously_Survive_Airstrikes&only>

^{xlii} The image of the car hit by a Katyusha rocket appeared in Michael J. Totten, "Inside Hezbollah's Free Fire Zone" (August 13, 2006). <<http://www.michaeltotten.com/archives/0012355.html>>

^{xliii} Kathy Gannon, "Lebanese Rescuer 'Green Helmet' Injured" (August 15, 2006). Associated Press.

^{xliv} Charles Johnson, "Green Helmet Admits Staging Photos, AP Spins Furiously" (August 15, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=22123_Green_Helmet_Admits_Staging_Photos&only>

^{xlv} Zombie, "The Red Cross Ambulance Incident" (August 23, 2006). <<http://www.zombietime.com/fraud/ambulance/>>

^{xlvi} "The 'Hoax' That Wasn't: The July 23 Qana Ambulance Attack" (December, 2006). <<http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/mena/qana1206/index.htm>>

^{xlvii} Zombie, “Update to the Red Cross Ambulance Incident: The Human Rights Watch Report” (December 28, 2006). <<http://www.zombietime.com/fraud/ambulance/hrw/>>

^{xlviii} John Hinderaker, “Reuters Alleges Israeli Air Strike” (August 27, 2006). <<http://powerlineblog.com/archives/015118.php>>

^{xlix} John Hinderaker, “Reuters Missile Attack Update” (August 28, 2006). <<http://powerlineblog.com/archives/015128.php>>

^l “Israeli Rocket Hits Reuters Car” (August 27, 2006). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5289984.stm>

^{li} Dan Riehl, “I’d Advise the Blogosphere to Slow Down” (August 29, 2006). <http://www.riehlworlview.com/carnivorous_conservative/2006/08/id_advise_the_b.html>

^{lii} Ace, “Debunking the Debunkers” (August 29, 2006). <<http://ace.mu.nu/archives/194519.php>>

^{liii} John Hinderaker, “Reuters Missile Attack, Updated” (August 29, 2006). <<http://powerlineblog.com/archives/015137.php>>

^{liv} See comments 12 and 31 on the thread for Ace, “Breaking Foxnews: Israel Accused of Airstrike on Car Containing Reuters Reporters” (August 26, 2006) <<http://ace.mu.nu/archives/194158.php>>.

^{lv} Allahpundit, “Faux Photography [sic]: Did the Windshield on the Reuters Van Magically Heal Itself?” (August 29, 2006). <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/08/29/fauxphotography-did-the-windshield-on-the-reuters-van-magically-heal-itself/>> .

^{lvi} Allahpundit, “Reuters Van Attack: 70mm Unguided Rocket?” (August 29, 2006) <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/08/29/reuters-van-attack-70mm-unguided-rocket/>> and “Milkin” It: Another Bomb Expert Thinks Reuters Van was Hit by 70mm Rocket” (August 30, 2006) <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/08/30/milkin-it-another-bomb-expert-thinks-reuters-van-was-hit-by-70mm-rocket/>>

^{lvii} SeeDubya, “Shrapnel” (August 29, 2006). <<http://junkyardblog.net/archives/2006/08/shrapnel.php>>

^{lviii} “Israeli Shrapnel Wounds Cameramen” (n.d.). <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breaking_news/breakingnews.php?id=112492>

^{lix} Bob Owens, “Armored Vehicle Experts: Reuters News Vehicle Not Hit by Israeli Missile” (August 30, 2006). <<http://confederateyankee.mu.nu/archives/194661.php>>

^{lx} Allahpundit, “Fauxtography: Ambulance Chasers” (September 4, 2006). <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/09/04/fauxtography-ambulance-chasers/>>

^{lxi} Allahpundit, “Faux Photography [sic]: Undershirtgate” (September 5, 2006). <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/09/05/fauxphotography-undershirtgate/>>

^{lxii} Dan Riehl, “More on Alleged Ambulance Attacks” (September 1, 2006). <http://www.riehlworlview.com/carnivorous_conservative/2006/09/more_on_alleged.html>

^{lxiii} Dan Riehl, “New Ambulance Images May Support Journo’s Claim” (September 3, 2006). <http://www.riehlworlview.com/carnivorous_conservative/2006/09/new_ambulance_i.html>

^{lxiv} Sara Smiles, “Ambulance Attack Evidence Stands the Test” (September 2, 2006). <<http://www.theage.com/au/news/world/ambulance-attack-evidence-stands-the-test/2006/09/01/1156817099370.html>>

^{lxv} Tim Blair, “Missile Story IX” (September 3, 2006). <http://timblair.net/ee/index.php/weblog/missile_story_ix/>

^{lxvi} Tim Blair, “Missile Story X” (September 3, 2006). <http://timblair.net/ee/index.php/weblog/missile_story_x/>

^{lxvii} Bruno Stevens, “The Lebanon ‘Garbage Dump’ Story: Complete Explanation” (November 14, 2006). <http://www.lightstalkers.org/the_garbage_dump_story_complete_explanation> (Note double and single underscores, in the URL for this document.)

^{lxviii} Charles Johnson, “The Media Are the Enemy” (November 14, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=23339_The_Media_Are_the_Enemy&only>

^{lxix} Allahpundit, “Fauxtography: The Great Hezbollah Tire Fire Revisited” (November 14, 2006). <<http://hotair.com/archives/2006/11/14/fauxtography-the-great-hezbollah-tire-fire-revisited/>>

^{lxx} Charles Johnson, “Reuters CEO on Adnan Hajj Scandal” (December 14, 2006). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=23661_Reuters_CEO_on_Adnan_Hajj_Scandal&only>

^{lxxi} Tom Glocer, “Trust in the Age of Citizen Journalism” (December 12, 2006). <http://tomglocer.com/blogs/sample_weblog/archive/2006/12/12/142.aspx>

^{lxxii} Daryl Lang, “Reuters Investigation Leads to Dismissal of Editor” (January 18, 2007). <http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/newswire/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003534746>

^{lxxiii} Charles Johnson, “Reuters Quietly Fired Top Editor During Photoshop Scandal” (January 18, 2007). <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=24052_Reuters_Quietly_Fired_Top_Editor_During_Photoshop_Sca>

nal&only>. While Glocer actually had made a passing reference to firing Hajj's editor in his speech, posted on December 12, it appears Johnson's point is essentially correct, that Reuters's firing of an editor was not disclosed until some months after they had publicly announced Hajj was fired and his archive deleted, and, even then, only in a speech to a trade conference.

^{lxxiv} Allahpundit, "Fauxtography: Reuters Fired Unnamed Photo Editor Over Adnan Hajj Pics" (January 19, 2007).

<<http://hotair.com/archives/2007/01/19/fauxtography-reuters-fired-unnamed-photo-editor-over-adnan-hajj-pics/>>

^{lxxv} Michael J. Totten, "Busted" (January 29, 2007). <<http://www.michaeltotten.com/archives/001374.html>>

^{lxxvi} Allahpundit, "Fauxtography: A New One from Hezbollywood" (January 29, 2007).

<<http://hotair.com/archives/2007/01/29/fauxtography-a-new-one-from-hezbollywood/>>

^{lxxvii} Charles Johnson, "Qana Media Swarm Revealed" (February 9, 2007).

<http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=24378_Qana_Media_Swarm_Revealed&only>

^{lxxviii} Richard North, "Not a Pretty Sight" (February 10, 2007). <<http://eureferendum.blogspot.com/2007/02/not-pretty-sight.html>>

^{lxxix} Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," Harvard University/Kennedy School of Government (February 2007).

<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/presspol/research_publications/papers/research_papers/R29.pdf>

^{lxxx} Charles Johnson, "Harvard: How the Media Partnered With Hezbollah" (April 25, 2007).

<http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=25244_Harvard-How_the_Media_Partnered_With_Hezbollah&only>

^{lxxxii} Rusty Shackleford, "Harvard: Hezbollah's Fauxtography Pawns in the MSM" (April 25, 2007).

<<http://mypetjawa.mu.nu/archives/187585.php>>

^{lxxxiii} See Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3rd Ed (Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), p. 40 ff. for a concise overview of various forms of deductive argument.

^{lxxxiii} A helpful summary of research on the groupthink dynamic is at <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink>> .

Consider, in particular, how the contributing factors for groupthink may occur in a network of like-minded bloggers, even though they are not a face-to-face small group.

^{lxxxiv} See this author's *Watching the Watchdog* (Marquette Books, 2006), p. 97 ff., for discussion of the problem of memes in mainstream reporting.