

MED Newsletter

MEDIA ETHICS DIVISION • WINTER 2023 • VOLUME 26 • NO. 2

Letter from the Editor

by Sorin Nastasia

A mass shooting that took place at a ballroom dance studio in Monterey, California on January 21, 2023 quickly became the subject of national news. In the following days, the media focused on the uncommon profile of the gunman, a 72 year old Asian American, and the dire outcome of the incident including 12 deaths and nine injuries. Media coverage also highlighted how the courageous actions of a 26 year old computer programmer prevented additional shootings at a second local ballroom dance studio. This mass shooting was just one of six in California and of over 60 in the United States during the month of January – many of which went unreported in the national media.

The fatal beating of a 29 year old Black man, Tyre Nichols, by five police officers during a traffic stop in Memphis, Tennessee on January 7, 2023 as well as the protests against police brutality that followed also captured media attention. Police body camera footage revealed that Nichols, who died in the hospital three days after being beaten, called out for his mother while the officers were kicking him and hitting him with batons even after he had fallen to the ground and had been handcuffed. According to a [Rolling Stones article](#) by Andrea Marks, at least seven unarmed people have been killed by police since the start of 2023, and in 2022 police killed nearly 1,200 people, with African Americans being three times more likely to be killed but 1.3 times more likely to be unarmed.

In this context, it is important for scholars to consider the ethics of the media, including the stories that news media venues choose to report on as well as those that remain ignored, and the angles that news media stories take that too often highlight individual circumstances and uncommon details but fail to account for broader trends or to make the case for policy change.

In this issue of the MED newsletter, you will find articles that examine and critique how media venues depict homelessness, civil rights, and sports injuries. You will also find pieces on increasing accessibility in media classes and branded storytelling enabled by artificial intelligence, announcements on professional opportunities, and the division's call for papers for the AEJMC annual conference.

The MED leadership team is looking forward to reviewing your papers, many of which address what media venues focus on, how they report on issues, and how they can improve their coverage for the benefit of communities and society.

MED Newsletter

Division Head: Anita Varma

Vice Head / Programming Chair: Yayu Feng

Newsletter Editor: Sorin Nastasia

MED newsletter is published quarterly by the Media Ethics Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Direct questions to: snastas@siue.edu



Table of Contents

Letter from the Editor	1
Sorin Nastasia, Newsletter Editor	
Media Ethics and Homelessness	2
Anita Varma, Division Head	
Creating an Inclusive Classroom with Accessible Digital Design	3
Yayu Feng, Vice Head and Programming Chair	
A Case for Media Reparations	4-5
Joe Jones, Research Chair	
A New Member of the MED Leadership Team	6
Rhema Zlaten, Teaching Chair	
Virtual Reality, AI, and the Ethics of Brand Storytelling	7-9
Kimberly Kelling, Professional Freedom & Responsibility Chair	
Sports Broadcasters Have a Duty to Report Injuries Responsibly – in the Case of NFL's Damar Hamlin, They Passed the Test	10-12
Nicole Kraft, Past Division Head	
Announcements	13
AEJMC Conference Call – Media Ethics Division	14-15

Media Ethics and Homelessness

by Anita Varma – Division Head



In early January, a business owner in San Francisco [sprayed](#) an unhoused woman with a hose to demand that she move away from the entrance. Another business owner recorded the incident and posted the video, which went viral.

Since then, San Francisco news outlets and national news outlets have covered this story – over, and over, and over again.

Some news outlets have used the video as an entry point for discussing the broader issue of homelessness in San Francisco and the Bay Area, while others have followed up to add the business owner with the hose’s “side of the story,” including his [remark](#), “I find it hard to apologize when we’ve had no help with the situation.” Overall, stories about this video tend to position the business owner with the hose as in the wrong, and contextualize homelessness in San Francisco beyond this isolated incident – as long as you read beyond the headline.

Still, I’m always torn about seeing this type of news item spread across news outlets and attract national attention. On the one hand, homelessness and housing instability are growing across major metropolitan areas. From an ethical perspective, such issues deserve far more media attention than Elon Musk’s latest trolling tweet. A business owner deciding to spray a hose at someone out of frustration is atrocious, and a viral video can create a “way in” for news outlets to raise public awareness. On the other hand, the catalyst of shocking, incendiary, outrageous content to satisfy major news outlets’ criteria for newsworthiness risks painting homelessness as primarily an encounter between fed-up business owners and individuals who lie down in doorways – instead of leading with the issue of housing unaffordability and accounting for the wide range of people it affects.

More than 7,000 people in San Francisco live unhoused, and that includes (and many say is an underestimate) people who work full time, elderly people, school age students, college students, as well as people who are immediately visible on city streets. Yet rather than representing these 7000+ people and reporting on why they can’t afford housing, news coverage often focuses on business owners and portrays homelessness as an interpersonal problem.

A far more mundane video would be of the regular [sweeps](#) of tent encampments that the city of San Francisco has done for years, requiring people to move without making shelter or temporary housing available to them. There’s no hose in those situations, but the problem is no less grave.

Here are some examples of articles that, I would argue, do justice to the issue of homelessness by starting with people who are living unhoused – rather than starting with people who are inconvenienced by them:

“Grassroots Nonprofits and Homeless Communities Create Their Own Fire Prevention Solutions” by Yesica Prado and Jenny Kwon for San Francisco Public Press <https://www.sfpublicpress.org/grassroots-nonprofits-and-homeless-communities-create-their-own-fire-prevention-solutions/>

“Inflation Is making Homelessness Worse” by Abha Bhattarai and Rachel Siegel for The Washington Post <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/07/03/inflation-homeless-rent-housing/>

Take a look at these materials and let me know what you think. How should our students cover homelessness, if at all? Whose perspectives should come first – and why? Please contact me at anita.varma@austin.utexas.edu with your input.

Creating an Inclusive Classroom with Accessible Digital Design

by Yayu Feng – Vice Head and Programming Chair



Over the previous semester, I had more experience with digital accessibility than I had expected. I worked with students who needed accommodations with digital materials. I witnessed students with disabilities using digital devices and

helped them with accessing course materials. In one of my classes, students even initiated and engaged in discussions about equity and accessibility on websites and digital devices. Through these experiences, I had opportunities to reflect on the digital tools I use for teaching and to make various improvements. The process generated a lot of ideas about inclusive classroom and solidified my sense of responsibility as an instructor committed to making my classes inclusive in terms of digital design. In this newsletter, I want to share a couple of things I did and encourage you to consider them if you haven't yet.

Video subtitles. Even though most of my students are native English speakers, I have learned the need to always turn on the subtitles for any videos I play in the classroom. When a video does not provide subtitles or automatic closed captions (luckily most videos do), I would put the transcriptions on screen along with the video. For situations when the class is meeting over Zoom, I would also enable the automatic closed caption function. While the automated captions are not always accurate, students who need this visual cue still find it helpful.

Perceivable design. Perceivable is one of the four principles of accessibility developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), and what I found to be most applicable to digital design for classroom. Following this principle, I would check my slides to make sure that all images I use include alternative texts and that the texts and illustrations are presented with a high color contrast to make the content distinguishable. This is especially important for in-

person classes, as the color contrast tends to be reduced when projected to a canvas screen.

Accessibility check. Our university uses Canvas, and it has the accessibility check for everything instructors create and upload that many learning management systems include. I would use this tool to check all the readings, links, and assignment pages to make sure that they are good for screen readers. I have become more aware of the structure of a document in Word and would check to make sure it conforms to a screen-readable paragraph style. For links to web content, I would always use a hyperlink, instead of the full URL, and improve the usability and accessibility by making the anchor text meaningful, concise, and descriptive.

While these may be small changes, they meant a lot for students who struggle with accessing course materials on a digital device. It also seems that students in general find these measures helpful. For the final project in my Media Literacy class, students are asked to present a lesson on a topic of their choice using the principles and knowledge structures outlined during the semester. One of the groups chose the topic of digital accessibility (I was so excited!), and taught a very successful class. During that class session, many students mentioned that subtitles help them process video content in class and stay focused during Zoom meetings. Moreover, accessible PDF files make it much easier for them to view, read, and interact. An inclusive digital design seems to benefit everyone to at least some extent.

What other advice do you have for improving digital accessibility in classroom? I would love to hear from you (yayu.feng@stthomas.edu)!

Hope you all have a productive year. Please submit your papers for consideration for the Media Education Division of AEJMC. Looking forward to reading more of your work!

A Case for Media Reparations

by Joe Jones – Research Chair



Following another Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the United States, some will feel it is time to take stock and reflect on the nation's race relations. Dusting off the old worn cliché of MLK's *I Have a Dream* speech (1963), public

figures across the country (and across the political spectrum) remind us that King desired a land where people are judged “not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” And sure. Who doesn't agree with that moral minimum? Stopping here, however, decontextualizes King's ideas and misunderstands his larger intentions.

Too often, this cherry-picking of King's words results in a colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017), by means of which it is assumed race is no longer a factor in life outcomes and people today simply get what they deserve in our supposedly “post-racial” meritocracy. Holders of this view point to the undeniable racial progress since King's time as proof that skin color no longer matters. As Crystal Fleming (2018) notes, however, even as there has been racial progress, there has also been *racist* progress and discrimination, marginalization, and institutional othering have also taken new, intensified forms.

In the same speech denouncing race-based judgement, King reminded Americans that its foundational promises of equality were not met, that “America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned.” Overcoming racism was not just a change of mindset, it involved the redistribution of resources wrongly accumulated over an unjust history. King pointed to government

programs like the Homestead Act, farm aid, relief through the Great Depression, easy credit, and the GI Bill that gave money and resources to white Americans but denied similar support for Black Americans. In his 1963 speech, King intimated these issues through metaphor, saying Black Americans came to D.C. to “cash a check,” the promissory note of freedom, security, and justice promised by American democracy. By 1967, King was more direct (and subsequently deemed “radical”) in his *The Three Evils of Society* speech in which he argued that racial injustice “cannot be solved without redistribution of political and economic power.”

In the past few years, media outlets like the *Kansas City Star* and *L.A. Times* have apologized for past racist coverage, and many of our MED scholars have considered these apologies and subjected them to critical analysis. And those of us that study history are keenly aware that there is no shortage of reasons to apologize. The first Black-owned and operated newspaper (*Freedom's Journal*, 1827) was started because its founding editors were denied equal access to defend themselves against disparaging views in the dominant press. The 19th century frontier press framed Native Americans as savages and helped justify genocide and displacement, while anti-Asian and other anti-immigrant sentiment was continuously recreated in the pages of even the most reputable media. The white dominant newsrooms of the 20th century meant issues important to people of color, such as police brutality, were not meaningfully covered until amateur footage made such issues harder to ignore. The very principle of “objective” just-the-facts journalism obscured the particular point of view of news and enabled



a hegemonic order in which individuals could confirm their biases towards a racially defined, heteronormative, and cis-gendered status quo. In light of this well documented history, an apology appears to be a moral minimum, but is an apology enough?

Just as a change in consciousness does not make up for the historically accumulated wrongs of racist exclusion, an apology is not adequate to repair the damages done by a compliant media system. Black folks and other harmed populations must be made partially whole again through material means. This does not mean a simple cash payment but larger systemic and institutional changes: more jobs, more ownership opportunities, more scholarships, more grants, better representations, and overall more care for the vulnerable populations harmed by media. It's time the talk of "diversity" in newsrooms, PR firms, ad agencies, entertainment companies, etc. turned towards the action of people of color and other marginalized groups *belonging* in these spaces. In this manner not only will we begin to address the wrongs of the past, but we will also improve our media systems, doing our best to ensure widespread flourishing in the future.

Solidarity and continued success,
Joe Jones

joseph.jones@mail.wvu.edu

References and Further Readings:

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2017). *Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield

Fleming, C. (2018). *How to Be Less Stupid about Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide*. Beacon Press

Kilgo, D. (2021). "When Is 'Racism' Truly Applicable? News Media's Contribution to the Debatability of Racism." *Television and New Media Studies*, 22(2), 186-204.

Wallace, L. R. (2019). *The View from Somewhere: Undoing the Myth of Journalistic Objectivity*. The University of Chicago Press



Photo by [Maria Oswalt](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A New Member of the MED Leadership Team

by Rhema Zlaten – Teaching Chair



Hello MED members!

My name is Dr. Rhema Zlaten, and I am your Teaching Chair for the MED Division of AEJMC this year. I am looking forward to collaborating with you on assessing and improving teaching practices and strategies in regards to media ethics.

I work as an Assistant Professor of Mass Communication at a small university in Western Colorado named Colorado Mesa University. I am the only journalism professor at the school, which means that my phone rings or I get a flurry of emails anytime something journalism related comes up for the university (regarding faculty, students, and staff).

Whenever I introduce myself in the community as a journalism professor who researches in media ethics, without fail this is the response that I get:

“Oh good! I’m glad you are out there fixing all of the bad journalists!”

Which, of course, makes me cringe, and fuels my fire to teach whomever I can about the vibrant communities of smart and brave journalists out there, and the noble ethical decisions they often make.

I teach a wide variety of journalism courses and for each course I make sure to integrate many different layers of ethical discussion and deliberation into my course material,

especially for my antsy Media History freshmen who have rarely even considered the ethical tensions around how much they are surveilled, representation in media, gatekeeping, or transparency. My goal is to teach all of my students that ethics is a deliberate and dynamic process that expands as we grow in our moral development, and that it is never a simple fix or a box to check.

I have been a part of MED ever since one of my paper submissions won the Carol Burnett Award for Graduate Students when I was pursuing my Master’s degree in Public and Technical Communication at Colorado State University. I also won the Davis Ethics Award in 2021 for my dissertation work on the future of autonomy in digital journalism. Many MED members have supported my journey since then, throughout my work on Master’s, Ph.D., and all the way until now. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your desire to mentor me and I hope to give back that mentorship now and in the future.

I look forward to seeing you all this summer at Washington D.C.!

Yours,

Rhema Zlaten

rzlaten@coloradomesa.edu



Virtual Reality, AI, and the Ethics of Brand Storytelling

by Kimberly Kelling – Professional Freedom & Responsibility Chair



After taking a deep breath, I took my first zero gravity step into the International Space Station. I never could have imagined how disorienting and nauseating this experience had turned out to be; yet, there I was out of balance, trying to navigate the narrow corridors of the ISS.

For those of you who know me, you know that my life is not *this* interesting. No, I haven't physically been to the ISS, per se, but after experiencing Mission: ISS on the Meta Quest 2 virtual reality headset, it's fair to say the dizziness, sense of imbalance, and nausea are all very real experiences.

Previously, I was an assistant professor of advertising at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. One of the courses I taught was the senior level Strategic Campaigns in Advertising class that often participated in the National Student Advertising Competition. As some of you may know, last year's client for the campaign was Meta. The company graciously deployed Meta Quest 2 headsets to participating campuses to ensure students (and faculty) were able to explore the product's offerings and possibilities.

Today, I am a senior strategist at a media research firm working on advertising effectiveness studies on behalf of media conglomerates, such as NBCU, Google, Univision, Dotdash Meredith, Paramount, and Disney. Apart from client work, I often collaborate with other researchers on internal

studies (AKA answering questions we think offer interesting insights into marketing communication, technology, and media).

Without getting into specifics, one such study is focused on the future of storytelling. Being advertising minded, my interest here turned to branded storytelling in virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence platforms.

Historically, branded storytelling has been used to describe the narrative the brand wants to sell to the consumer. I always think of the near monopoly Coca Cola has in the soft drink space during the holidays. Remember those lovable polar bears? Nothing brings us together like a Coca Cola.

A brand's storytelling is transmedia in nature. In other words, it tells its story across multiple media platforms. In a world of overwhelming advertising and information clutter, brands fight to stand out from their competition and appeal to their consumers. How do they get their stories to stand out? Diversification.

One way to diversify storytelling is to reach consumers in new, innovative ways, such as through simulated experiences using augmented reality or integrating the brand in virtual reality spaces. Brands have already ceded control of the brand narrative by encouraging user generated content on social media platforms. How does this power dynamic unfold in new immersive and social spaces? (Sorry, I can't answer that, yet.)

As I'm sure many of us discuss in our media law and/or ethics courses, new technology often introduces gray areas in what communicators

and organizations should or should not do in those spaces. We also know that regulation may lag in many of these newer spaces. Thus, practitioners (and users) theoretically inherit the responsibility to self-regulate in these spaces.

Well, I said theoretically, didn't I?

One such area that concerns me pertains to the mesmerizing storyworlds that will continue to build on AI/VR to deliver captivating audience experiences. More specifically, to the *ad supported* storyworlds where brands become paratextual elements without the consumer realizing they are participating and engaging with an advertisement.

While this may sound like a somewhat outdated concern relating to product placement or brand integrations, in general, I believe there are some distinctions between branded storytelling in AR/VR platforms and the more traditional concept of product placement.

First, we're exploring entirely new methods of transmedia storytelling that not only invites users into virtual worlds, but also provides them with a sense of agency and gives them (perceived) control of the story arc. Through AI systems, users may make decisions in the story that affect the narrative by routing it down a predetermined and pre-programmed path.

Second, some users of VR found the experience to be so intense that they claimed to have entered a flow state and lost track of time, altogether (see WSJ's Joanna Stern's experience [here](#)). Similar to what artists may experience while at work, or video gamers in the new *Call of Duty*, VR users may spend more time than intended in the device due to their enthrallment with the experience.



Photo by [Christine Sandu](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Third, the purchase journey for consumers in online spaces can be greatly expedited. Rather than seeing the branded content on the big screen and letting the benefits of the brand mull around in their mind for several days, the consumer now can purchase content almost immediately with just a couple (sometimes one) click. VR spaces will be no different.

It's important to note that AR/VR platforms may be just one element of a brand's storyworld. The concept of a storyworld is not new, but the dynamism of the VR/AR platforms brings the storyworld to life in new ways.

I also think it's important to note that the benefits of this new technology to the consumer purchase process is extraordinary. For instance, imagine test driving a vehicle without leaving your couch. These opportunities empower the consumer and enable additional insight into consumer purchase decisions.



So, here is where my questions come in.

At what point is the perceived agency in AI-enabled branded storyworlds problematic and deceptive?

How are brands going to monetize the consumer journey in virtual storyworlds? For example, will we see advertisers enable (micro) transactions directly from VR/AR spaces?

How does the consumer's state (emotional or cognitive) influence their purchase tendencies?

How might regulators, academics, consumers, or practitioners hold practitioners accountable for ethical business practices, while still enabling practitioners to maximize potential for meaningful connection with consumers in these spaces?

I don't have many answers to offer you. In fact, I am mostly posing questions. Why? This is a very underrepresented area of scholarly research.

However, we know advertising is not going away and brands will continue to look for new ways to connect with the consumer. This means brands, media systems, and platforms will need to think critically about how to use these spaces

in the right ways – ways that are *relevant* and *rewarding* for both the brand and the consumer, but also *socially responsible*.

There is some real room here for brands to continue to deliver the right content at the right time to audiences. The opportunities for storyworld development are always growing, and new technologies and algorithms provide brands the means in which they can engage with audiences like never before. But how can brands add value to the consumer experience in these spaces? How might advertisers use these technologies to create new experiences that would not have existed otherwise in positive ways for people and the brand?

One final note: Dr. John Ferré (University of Louisville) shared a PBS video with me years ago that I used in my Principles of Advertising course called [Generation Like](#). It is a documentary that explores how brands have successfully implemented and operated storyworlds – success here being defined as both virtual currency (likes, shares, etc.) and real world profit. I think it has relevance in the context of VR/AR/AI-enabled storyworlds and the potential those spaces hold for brands.

Photo by [Hitesh Choudhary](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Sports Broadcasters Have a Duty to Report Injuries Responsibly – in the Case of NFL’s Damar Hamlin, They Passed the Test

by Nicole Kraft – Past Division Head



Injuries are an unfortunate part of any sport – none more so than in the NFL, where players can be felled in front of a TV audience in the tens of millions.

Typically, when a player suffers an injury, the media cuts to commercial and returns with replays of the injury – sometimes running it over and over, using every available camera angle, while analyzing what might have happened and the ramifications for the player and team.

But in the case of Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin, who collapsed to the ground after a tackle during the “Monday Night Football” game between the Bills and the Cincinnati Bengals, it quickly became apparent that this was no broken arm or torn ACL. This was a matter of life and death. Paramedics worked to keep him alive on the field before he was transported to a hospital, where he remains in critical condition.

As the tragic scene played out, ESPN’s broadcasters and studio hosts were left to explain what was happening in real time, with virtually no information.

I am a professor of sports journalism and spend much of my time teaching students how to cover games. As a sportswriter, I have covered many contests as if they were battles, with the language of war interwoven with feats of extraordinary human accomplishment.

When crisis strikes sports, however, it is left to the media to report in, around, about and through the moment. Some do it well and some

fail miserably. In its coverage of Hamlin’s injury, ESPN was, I believe, a sound and responsible broadcaster during one of football’s darkest on-field moments.

ESPN’s Measured, Restrained Response

ESPN’s broadcasting duo of Troy Aikman and Joe Buck, along with sideline reporter Lisa Salters, relayed the scene as it unfolded. But instead of filling the live airtime with rambling commentary and sensationalism, they responded with compassion and care. They avoided speculating about Hamlin’s condition and ultimately appealed to the NFL to suspend the game, with Aikman asking, “How do you, as a member of the Buffalo Bills or the Cincinnati Bengals, continue on to play football?”

As The Washington Post [noted](#), “The broadcast was measured, informative and emotional.” From the studio, former NFL players Booger McFarland and Ryan Clark offered their perspectives on what it might feel like to be a player on the field, in that moment – whether as a member of the Bills or the Bengals. They reminded the audience that players are first and foremost people. McFarland acknowledged the inherent violence of the game, adding, “I think we reached a point where nobody is concerned about football anymore tonight.”

Clark, who himself was hospitalized for a splenic infarction in 2007 shortly after playing a game for the Pittsburgh Steelers, acknowledged that part of living an NFL dream is “putting your life at risk.” “Tonight we got to see a side of football that is extremely ugly, a side of football that no



one ever wants to see or never wants to admit exists,” he said.

The gravity of the situation was reflected in ESPN curtailing all commercials for more than an hour to provide uninterrupted coverage. In doing so, the network stressed the importance of a player’s life over the game or profit motive.

When the Media Misfires

When disaster strikes on a live sports broadcast, it’s easy to say something wrong, especially in an age where words can be distributed widely, dissected and criticized on social media.

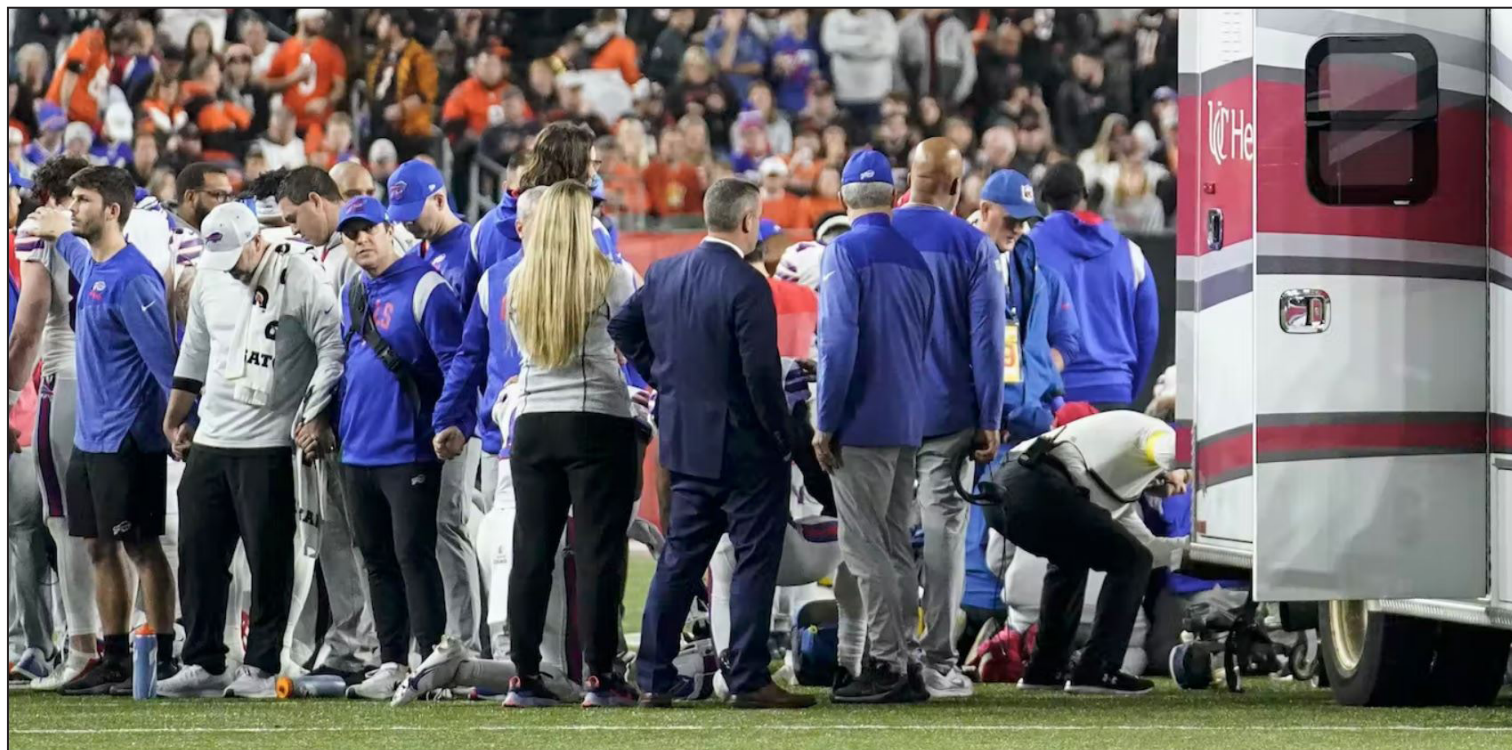
Just ask controversial sports commentator Skip Bayless, who wasn’t even on the air, but nonetheless went viral for all the wrong reasons after tweeting: “No doubt the NFL is considering postponing the rest of this game - but how? This late in the season, a game of this magnitude is crucial to the regular-season outcome ... which suddenly seems so irrelevant.”

Bayless may have had a point – the NFL must now work out how to address the outcome of this game and the implications for the postseason – but his tone and timing led to much criticism.

Bayless is far from the only broadcaster to be accused of insensitively following the death or serious injury of sports stars.

The 2020 death of Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna was a model for what can go wrong, with TMZ breaking the news before their family was notified. ESPN relegated the news to ESPN2 so as not to interrupt Pro Bowl coverage. In their rush to break details from the story, some reporters trafficked in misinformation. ABC News ultimately suspended a reporter who said on air that all four of Bryant’s daughters were among the crash victims, while the BBC ran footage of LeBron James instead of Bryant. Driver Kevin Ward, Jr. was killed during a 2014 sprint car race, but it was Tony Stewart, the man

Below: Medical personnel attend to Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin after he collapsed on the field during an NFL game in Cincinnati on Jan. 2, 2023. AP Photo/Joshua A. Bickel



whose car struck him, who garnered most of the media coverage. The media was quick to lay the blame squarely on Stewart before an investigation absolved the driver and revealed Ward was under the influence of enough marijuana to impair him at the time of the crash.

Sports media was perhaps never more criticized for incident coverage than it was in 2020, when Danish soccer player Christian Eriksen suffered cardiac arrest on the field. BBC cameras showed not only medical professionals performing chest compressions as Eriksen struggled for life, but also his crying life partner and traumatized teammates. Cameras lingered for a full 15 minutes before cutting to the studio hosts.

Prioritizing Mourning Over Moneymaking

From the tragic deaths of basketball players Hank Gathers and Reggie Lewis, to the deaths of auto racers Dan Weldon and Dale Earnhardt and to Chuck Hughes who, in 1971, became the first and only NFL football player to die in a game, it is the media's responsibility to navigate a tragedy on behalf of the public.

Research has shown that the media is often responsible for modeling appropriate public displays of emotion when traumatic or tragic events occur, be it respect for victims and their families or public mourning. It can be argued that the media – especially in the digital age – is a key conduit to community connection amid a tragedy, when people seek to show their support and share their grief.

There is a fine line when it

comes to sports and catastrophe, for much of what people love about football is its warlike nature. Players are depicted like gladiators in a coliseum. Media quote athletes saying they will die for their teammates.

But when life and death become all too real, the athlete's well-being takes precedence over wins and losses. At that point, the media, in my view, has one main job: help remind viewers of the player's humanity.

As "SportsCenter" host Scott Van Pelt put it: "Sports is important. And suddenly it's not."

Nicole Kraft is an Associate Professor of Clinical Communication at the Ohio State University.

(This article was republished with permission from *The Conversation* - <https://theconversation.com/sports-broadcasters-have-a-duty-to-report-injuries-responsibly-in-the-case-of-nfls-damar-hamlin-they-passed-the-test-197192>)

Below: Tony Stewart, front right, speaks to the media three weeks after his car hit and killed sprint car driver Kevin Ward, Jr. during a dirt track race. Jamie Squire/Getty Images



Announcements



Free Ethics Case Studies

The Center for Media Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin has a lineup of over 140 free case studies for you to use in your courses. Each one is concise, has discussion questions, and is available in PDF. If you are tired of requiring expensive textbooks and case books, simply grab some of these and combine them into a free e-reader for your students. They are all on cutting edge and edgy topics your students probably want to discuss. Browse through the various categories of digital ethics, free speech, journalism, political communication, advertising and public relations, aesthetics/art, sport media, South Asian media, health communication and select what you think you can use: <https://mediaengagement.org/vertical/media-ethics/>

SCOTT R. STROUD, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Communication Studies

Program Director of Media Ethics, Center for Media Engagement

Moody College of Communication | The University of Texas at Austin

Editor, Media Ethics

Integrity Awards

The Arthur W. Page Center is hosting its annual integrity awards at 7 pm EST on February 22, 2023. The virtual event is an excellent opportunity for faculty and students to hear from leading communicators representing different areas of public communication. It will certainly spark dialogue for compelling in-class discussions. Join us and encourage your students to attend too!

The event is free and virtual, and there are a number of ways to get students involved. This year, a Student Essay Contest will encourage students to reflect on the honorees' insights, integrity, and stories. Winning essayists will receive a cash prize and have their work featured on the Page Center website.

At registration, participants can submit a question for one or all the honorees. There will also be a live chatroom to converse with peers from other colleges and universities. The Page Center has also developed some simple activities instructors can share with students to enhance the experience. Learn more here: <https://www.bellisario.psu.edu/page-center/events/awards2023/activities-for-students>

Event information below:

7th Annual Page Center Awards for Integrity in Public Communication

February 22, 2023, 7 p.m. (ET)

Virtual. Free. Registration required.

Register here: <https://mailchi.mp/psu/page-center-awards-23>

The 2023 honorees are:

Mary Barra, chair and CEO of General Motors

Lester Holt, anchor and managing editor of "NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt" and anchor of "Dateline NBC"

Jon Iwata, former senior vice president and chief brand officer at IBM

The Page Center is a non-profit research and education center at Penn State. Its mission is to integrate scholarly work with the needs of professionals in the communications industries.

Denise Sevick Bortree, Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Director, Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communication

Professor, Communications

Bellisario College of Communications, Penn State University

www.thepagecenter.org

AEJMC Conference Call – Media Ethics Division

The Media Ethics Division (MED) seeks a diverse range of original faculty and graduate student paper submissions related to ethics. Media ethics pertain to all manner of communication types and practices, and we welcome submissions that address both traditional and emergent issues in our changing media landscape.

Ethics-related topics and concerns include but *are not limited to*: issues of justice, power, and representation; the ethics of storytelling; the ethics of diversity, inclusion, and belonging; ethical decision-making; moral development; truth-telling and deception; privacy; credibility; accountability; the relationship between journalism and democracy; organizational norms and routines; global ethics; the impact of technology on ethics; the relationship between economic structures and ethical practices, audience considerations; applied ethics in journalism, advertising, public relations, digital technology (such as social media and platforms), or entertainment; and the relationships between law, history, and ethics.

The division seeks scholarship on all media contexts such as journalism, advertising, public relations, entertainment, digital media, social media, etc.; from a range of theoretical/paradigmatic approaches including philosophical, critical, sociological, psychological, pedagogical, etc.; and using a range of methods including qualitative, quantitative, critical-cultural, and mixed methods. Essays grounded in ethics theory are also welcome.

All papers should adhere to APA style (7th edition); must be no more than 25 pages (excluding title page, references, figures, illustrations, and/or appendices); should be double-spaced, use 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent font; should be saved as Word or PDF; and must otherwise conform to the rules outlined in the AEJMC Uniform Call for Papers. MED also accepts extended abstracts (750-1,500 words) following the Extended Abstract Call Guidelines for AEJMC. Papers or extended abstracts that do not conform to these rules or contain information identifying the author(s) will be disqualified. Before submitting, we highly suggest an internet search for how to remove metadata from your chosen document type (Word or PDF) based on your use of either Windows or macOS. Implementing those steps ensures identifying factors are not present (as can especially happen when someone “saves as PDF” even after clearing metadata from a Word doc). AEJMC’s Uniform Call for Papers includes helpful solutions to self-citations. The Division strongly advises authors to submit papers with sufficient time to review them in the All Academic system and ensure identifying information is removed.

Submitting a paper or extended abstract to the Media Ethics Division implies that the author (or one of the co-authors) intends to present the paper in person at the conference.

Burnett Award Graduate Student Papers:

The Media Ethics Division is committed to supporting and promoting promising graduate





students with an interest in research related to any of the many aspects of media ethics. All graduate students who submit full papers to the Media Ethics Division are automatically entered into the Carol Burnett Award competition. The Media Ethics Division teams with the University of Hawaii, the Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible Journalism, and Kappa Tau Alpha to sponsor this honor for graduate students. Students are invited to submit papers on any topic related to media ethics, from any theoretical approach, using any method or combination of methods.

The winning paper and runner-up will receive the Carol Burnett/University of Hawaii/AEJMC Prize, which includes a monetary award. Authors for the top two submissions also receive a small travel assistance stipend. The winner will be invited to accept his or her prize at the Kappa Tau Alpha Awards Luncheon at the AEJMC conference. Graduate student papers must include graduate student status on the title page. The Burnett Award is reserved for graduate students, and papers with faculty co-authors are ineligible.

Division Awards:

Professional Relevance Award: The Division gives special recognition to a paper that is judged to be the most relevant to working professionals in a media industry. The recipient will be selected from the open and special calls.

Top Faculty Paper: The Division gives special recognition to the faculty paper judged to be the best paper submitted among faculty authors.

The Penn State Davis Ethics Award: Scholars who have successfully defended ethics-related dissertations in the 2022 calendar year are encouraged to apply for the new Penn State Davis Ethics Award. The award provides a \$1,000 honorarium, travel support to present their scholarship in a session of the Media Ethics Division at the 2023 AEJMC annual conference, and a fully supported guest-lecture visit to Penn State's Bellisario College of Communications. The Don W. Davis Professor in Ethics at Penn State, Patrick Lee Plaisance, will administer all aspects of the award competition and selection process.

Applications should include a cover letter stating applicant's ethics-related focus and contact information, statement of defense date, full dissertation (either in PDF format or a web link), and dissertation adviser contact information. All applications are due April 1, 2023, and should be sent to plp22@psu.edu. The award will be presented at the Media Ethics Division's Business Meeting during the 2023 AEJMC conference. This award is intended to recognize new scholarship in the fields of media and communication ethics and is sponsored by the Davis Program in Ethical Leadership at Penn State. Arrangements for a guest-lecture visit to Penn State will be made for fall 2023 based on recipient availability.

Questions regarding submission should be directed to Media Ethics Division Research Chair, Joe Jones, West Virginia University, joseph.jones@mail.wvu.edu.