Change has come

Protests and pandemic converge, and we are witnesses
Geared-up

July 1, 2020: For Justin McCray, photojournalist at Fox 9 in Minneapolis, the protests marked his toughest assignment since covering the 2010 earthquake destruction in Haiti. “To be honest, it’s been hard,” McCray said. Story on Page 52

Photo by Liz Flores, Star Tribune
Looking in the mirror; looking outward

I was porch-pole-scrawling protest pictures on a humid Saturday morning when I got this in from Khary Mason. I had been meaning to contact him because I wanted to use his self-portrait in this issue (page 22). Khary is co-founder of Capturing Belief in Detroit, which I write about in the "Detroit, photojournalists have produced stellar work, and I have scoured through tons of it. An article by John Edwin McCoy was sort of on my radar, but I am also cautious about its approach when it comes to journalism. As the editor of News Photographer magazine, I am not on the NPPA board of directors, which makes it an editorial advisory. Do I have to agree with all of the points that make up the PBoR? No. That’s how life works. Changes are messy. Perspective comes with time.

I have concern about “informed consent” (also referred to as “minors’ harm,” look for information on the internet). It is an issue to me as it relates to photojournalism. I think about Charles Moore, Gordon Parks, Will Counts and numerous other photojournalists who covered the civil rights movement. What if those pictures had never seen the light? Where would we be today? Was that avoidance and lack of information. What if the video of George Floyd’s public death had been covered? Was it properly handled? How would you organize a contest award winner, if they were still alive? For the contest, we had to contact the photographers and ask for their permission to use their work. How do you handle that? Who can you count on? Do I have to agree with all of the points that make up the PBoR? No. That’s how life works. Changes are messy. Perspective comes with time.

I believe in leading from where your name is on PBoR or not. It’s about our actions and intentions as photojournalists. It’s about our ethics and how we conduct ourselves. It’s about our values.

As an editor, I can’t tell a photographer when to make a picture. That is pure experience. And there is no substitute for that. Do I have concern about “informed consent”? Do I have to agree with all of the points that make up the PBoR? No. That’s how life works. Changes are messy. Perspective comes with time.

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“Your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny.”

– Gandhi

Sue Morrow, Editor, News Photographer

The Photo Bill of Rights and me

I have stayed quiet in the dumpster fire that is social media because I find it unproductive. But that doesn’t mean I have not been active. I found the news about the Photo Bill of Rights. I look forward. I could have done better to help those who did not have my whiteness advantages. It feels like the lid is popping off our journalism community. The PBoR looks gutsy and a helluva lot of energy to develop. I respect that. It’s about time that this country (and the world) comes to terms with its history of racism, and if the photojournalism community finally corrects itself along the way, how is that bad? But I am also cautious about its approach when it comes to journalism.

I was reminded that our country’s Bill of Rights was an addendum to the imperfect Constitution. The PBoR, the way I understand it, is similar — the supplemental materials can change as growth takes place. Changes have already occurred, these authors are long to listen but I also hope they reach out to those who have years of wisdom built in this business.

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For more information: npppa.org/advocacy
It feels like it’s been years since March. I know that for many of us it has felt like a lifetime. We have endured furloughs, layoffs and gaps in work, and some of us have experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have documented, lived through and close friends reached out to let us know that the experience was like a lifetime. We have endured furloughs, layoffs and gaps in work, and some of us have experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have documented, lived through and experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have documented, lived through and experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have documented, lived through and experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have experienced illness and deaths. Amid all this, we have documented, lived through and experienced illness and deaths. 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Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the recent protests over the death of George Floyd, a few legal issues have come to a head in our industry. The first is fairly easy to sort out. Although protesters and other members of the public have a right to say they do not wish to be photographed or may claim they don’t give their consent to be photographed, photographers have a right to photograph and record in places where they have a legal right to be present (particularly when that place is a street or sidewalk or park). Additionally, people have no reasonable expectation of privacy in public. These principles, rooted in the First Amendment as well as over a century of relevant case law, are unchanged by recent conversations and debates among private individuals and organizations.

A second legal issue that has reared its ugly head is interference in the rights of a journalist to avoid government interference in newsgathering activities. The Fourth Estate operates as a check on the government, and the ability of journalists to report freely requires a certain level of protection from state actors, particularly with respect to their newsgathering activities. Whether because we are promising confidentiality to a source or just for the general principle that we must never be seen as an arm of law enforcement, journalists fiercely protect their independence. The means of newsgathering often play into the federal government’s search and seizure of their journalistic work product. Given these issues, the NPPA recommends visual journalists and newsrooms be familiar with the public’s right to confidentiality. Additionally, journalists and newsrooms should be aware of the state shield laws regarding the protection of their work product. We have responded and provided support to several members in recent weeks who were faced with attempts by law enforcement agencies to obtain subpoenaed materials for their video footage and images in a search for evidence related to recent protests. The spotlight in this behavior from law enforcement is concerning, and we advise all journalists to not only understand the protections available under state law, but to communicate with their employers and clients on the following:

Know your news organization’s policy regarding compliance/refusal concerning requests for material, whether published or unpublished, broadcast or not broadcast.

Know your news organization’s policy regarding retention/destruction of records in newsgathering periods for notes and unpublished/unaired images.

Know your news organization’s procedures and whom to contact should you receive such a request or be served a subpoena.

This privilege is being tested in Seattle by police who are seeking all unedited and unpublished videos and photos taken over a nine-hour period in downtown area during a demonstration protesting the killing of George Floyd. A subpoena for such material was issued to The Seattle Times and four television stations. After a hearing regarding the request, the judge ruled that the police had satisfied the elements of the Washington state shield law required to overcome the reporters’ privilege. In a subsequent proceeding, the judge stayed the implementation of his original ruling pending an appeal by the news organizations and also ordered that the subpoenaed material will be reviewed by the court or a special master before the police should the appeal be denied. The NPPA also issued a statement on this matter. NPPA members who are asked to provide outtakes or images to law enforcement, prosecutors or parties involved in a civil lawsuit, either by subpoena or otherwise, can contact NPPA’s attorney Mickey Osterreicher at lawyer@nppa.org or Alicia Calzada at advocacy@nppa.org for further information and assistance.

Got a question or topic for a future column? If you are an NPPA member, send your question to us or find us at an NPPA event. Email Mickey Osterreicher at lawyer@nppa.org or Alicia Calzada at advocacy@nppa.org in a civil lawsuit, either by subpoena or otherwise, can contact NPPA’s attorney Mickey Osterreicher at lawyer@nppa.org or Alicia Calzada at advocacy@nppa.org for further information and assistance.

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As the protests began to march, sounds of gunfire sprung into the air. The crowd began to panic and rush off the highway. This forced me to take a secure stance as I stood 10 to 15 feet away from the way the officers were chasing and firing projectiles at protesters. They soon moved in close and threw me to the ground. He turned to a woman and fired pepper balls at a close range into her chest. After she fell to the ground, he went after a young man and pulled him by the hair and kneed him in the chest. Once the officers handcuffed their prisoners, they targeted me. They told me I was under arrest. I put my camera up and said, “I am press,” and pulled out my press card. The officer I had been focusing on said, “Yeah, yeah, press, press. You are going to jail.” I respectfully complied with the officer, trying to not make matters worse. After being held for 24 hours and released from Dallas County Jail, I turned my anger into concern, concern for the news workers and this story. I have not been doing the job I have respected and dreamed about all my life. I have not been on the streets working, be mentally and physically ready to face the situation head-on. The one thing that I did not prepare for was how every time I went out to take pictures and gather the news, I was in reality on my own. Even as I wear my ZUMA Press ID that says staff member with big letters that read PRESS, I would not have protection from anyone if I were to be captured or injured. Being on assignment now means heading into danger without a shield.

Christopher Rusanowsky has been a photographer for eight years as a freelance journalist. Based in Dallas, he is represented by ZUMA Press and can be reached at c.rusanowsky@gmail.com or chrtrusanowsky.com. The Dallas Morning News used Rusanowsky’s photographs to investigate what happened the day he was arrested along with protesters: “I felt like my chest was on fire.” Photo shows Dallas police officer shooting protester with pepper-ball gun.

By Chris Rusanowsky

When I got my first press badge in 2015, I felt like part of a community. I thought that I would be protected and respected as a journalist. On May 29, 2020, I was placed in handcuffs and put in jail while doing my job. I was treated like a criminal by the very system that tells me I have the right to document and share with the public. This experience has left me with many thoughts and new fears while working in extreme environments. It has left me afraid to do my job.

On the evening I was arrested, I was photographing protesters blocking traffic on the Dallas Highway 35 East near Reunion Tower. The entire time I kept a safe distance off the highway from fear that a scene like the one in Charlotteville, VA would happen again.

As I stood to 15 feet away from the officers, with my camera up photographing the scene, I focused on one officer who started to use aggressive force on the complying protesters. He began to grab them and throw them to the ground. He turned to a woman and fired pepper balls at a close range into her chest. After she fell to the ground, he went after a young man and pulled him by the hair and kneed him in the chest. Once the officers handcuffed their prisoners, they targeted me. They told me I was under arrest. I put my camera up and said, “I am press,” and pulled out my press card. The officer I had been focusing on said, “Yeah, yeah, press, press. You are going to jail.” I respectfully complied with the officer, trying to not make matters worse. After being held for 24 hours and released from Dallas County Jail, I turned my anger into concern, concern for the industry I work in, and for others in the role of a freelance journalist. I decided I would talk and write about this experience to help others prepare and have conversations about how we can improve the way we do this job.

Be prepared

Before I left my house that day to document the unrest in Dallas, I left my fiancé with two phones numbers. One was a number to the National Press Photography Association’s general counsel, Alicia Calzada, who supports its members through legal advocacy. The second contact was to the founder of ZUMA Press, Scott McKiernan, who represents and dreamed about all my life. I have not been on the streets working, be mentally and physically ready to face the situation head-on. The one thing that I did not prepare for was how every time I went out to take pictures and gather the news, I was in reality on my own. Even as I wear my ZUMA Press ID that says staff member with big letters that read PRESS, I would not have protection from anyone if I were to be captured or injured. Being on assignment now means heading into danger without a shield. How do I move forward with my work? How can I better prepare myself? These are questions I ask myself more, but these are also questions that I should not have to answer alone. Any company that hires freelancers to go into dangerous situations should have some responsibility for their journalists. There should be a process to have the freelancer check-in, to share their location and whereabouts at all times. There should be a system with a plan if their journalists are captured, arrested or injured on the job.

The Dallas Morning News used Rusanowsky’s photographs to investigate what happened the day he was arrested along with protesters: “I felt like my chest was on fire.” Photo shows Dallas police officer shooting protester with pepper-ball gun.

Christopher Rusanowsky is arrested along with protesters by Dallas police after shutting down northbound Interstate 35 on May 30, 2020. Police fired projectiles at them forcing them off the Interstate. Protests across the US have taken place about the in-custody death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020.

Photo by Tom Fox, The Dallas Morning News

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After the Cinco de Mayo parade, lowrider aficionados and residents gather in Southwest Detroit for the Blessing of the Lowriders. The event started in 1997 to create a safe space for neighborhood youths.

The National Press Photographers Foundation is pleased to announce that Gabriel Scarlett, left, is the inaugural winner of the 2020 Alan Hagman Grant of $5,000. Scarlett is a four-time NPPF scholarship winner. His grant proposal grew out of his internship with National Geographic on assignment in the South Pacific. He was compelled to begin researching stories of climate change and its effect on oceans around the world. This trip marked his first experience with underwater photography and his first time witnessing relatively untouched coral reefs in the Phoenix Islands. He is completing his undergraduate degree at Western Kentucky University.

With additional support from the National Geographic Society, Scarlett will use the Alan Hagman Grant to document the effects of climate change on the Florida Reef Tract. A focus will be on scientific coral restoration efforts and sustainable solutions for the future of the ecosystem.

“My hope is to one day cover the vast topic of climate change and humanity’s relationship with the natural world for publications like National Geographic. And this project is a step in that direction,” Scarlett wrote in an email. “It is true that many of the most important and overlooked stories are sitting in our own backyards, in this case in Florida. Yet they still have much to offer to the global discourse on climate change and ways science is being used to fight back.”

Read more about Scarlett and his project here.

The Hagman Grant

Alan Hagman, right, was committed to the highest standards of photojournalism and the impact of photography to convey the importance of events around the world. He supported freedom of the press and helped protect journalists reporting stories from countries where news was suppressed. Hagman’s family announced the Alan Hagman Photojournalism Grant in his memory. A $5,000 grant, to be awarded annually, will be administered by the National Press Photographers Foundation (www.nppf.org). The grant is supported by donations from the Hagman family and Alan’s friends and colleagues.

“Alan was so talented, yet very humble,” said his sister, Dr. Jennifer Hagman. “He was a passionate advocate of the free press, The Los Angeles Times and the critical role of photographers bringing national and global perspectives to Times readers. The Alan Hagman Grant will support photographers in carrying forward Alan’s dedication to the importance of photography and visual storytelling to raise awareness of issues and stories that might otherwise not be told.”

Read more about Scarlett and his project here.
Eyes on Research is a column that will digest academic research on still and video photojournalism for the professionals who can put the research into practice. Research needs a real-world audience. This column is the result of discussions between Kevin Moloney and Martin Smith-Rodden, two long-time photojournalists who recently switched over to the academic world. If you have research that professionals can put into action, with results that can be outlined in 700 words, we would love to hear from you at ktmoloney@bsu.edu or magazine@nppa.org

Journalists are working in increasingly threatening environments—as evidenced by recent footage of journalists across the country facing hostility from police as they work to cover escalating protests in the Black Lives Matter movement. Take Omar Jimenez, a CNN correspondent who was handcuffed on live television while covering protests in Minneapolis. Or, on the same day in Louisville, Kentucky, police fired pepper balls on live television at WAVE3 reporter Kaitlin Rust and photojournalist James Dobson as they covered protests. Indeed, threats are escalating for journalists across the U.S. as emotions flare and the need for information gets ever more pressing.

While these novel examples make clear the vitriol and risks journalists face when covering protests, there is another problem that affects journalists nearly every day: harassment.

In a recent paper, Dr. Seth Lewis and I explore how women working in broadcast journalism on-air roles experience harassment from viewers, readers and strangers. Though the previous examples from protests may appear anomalous, stories like that of Alex Bozarjian are not. In December, NBC reporter Bozarjian was covering a run in Savannah, Georgia, on live television. During her on-air live shot, runners were seen passing behind her—waving at the camera and making faces. Bozarjian is seen making a face of shock herself after one of the runners slapped her butt as he passed by. The video went viral on social media, and Bozarjian took to Twitter, saying: “To the man who smacked my butt on live TV this morning: You violated, objectified, and embarrassed me. No woman should EVER have to put up with this at work or anywhere!! Do better.”

To better understand experiences like that of Bozarjian, I interviewed 19 female journalists about harassment they experience from viewers, readers and strangers, and how they emotionally respond to it. We found that women in broadcast journalism experience four common types of harassment: disruptive in-person harassment, physical and abrasive in-person harassment, online harassment as unwanted sexual advances, and online harassment as threats and criticisms.

Disruptive in-person harassment was the most common form that female television journalists reported experiencing while working outside the newsroom. Such harassment is aimed at disturbing female journalists while they work. Primary examples of disruptive in-person harassment include whistling, catcalls, shouting phrases such as “fake news” and making obscene gestures toward journalists while in a marked work vehicle or performing live reports.

Unwanted sexual advancement was the most common form of online harassment mentioned. This includes repeated requests for dates, solicitations for sex, compliments about the journalist’s body, and images of male genitalia, referred to as “penis pics” by many of the journalists.

Contrary to disruptive harassment, physical and abrasive in-person harassment is more up-close. This harassment includes touching or throwing objects with the intention of causing harm. One journalist remembered getting “hit, slapped, pushed, kicked” at live shots when large groups were around.

Journalism has a harassment problem—particularly for women in broadcast
Get off the comfortable track of passivity about racial injustice

Black Lives Matter is a call to action. As a response, many white people, like myself, are taking stock in how they have taken part in systemic racism. I am deeply moved by the pain of the Black community, and I am looking into my contributions to this pain.

I have been interested in racial justice since I was 15 years old, when an Indigenous teacher taught me about the Black community, and I am looking into my role. What I learned that year was this: I am not responsible for creating the system of oppression that exists in our country, but I am responsible for doing my part to change it.

I took this understanding with me to college as a journalism student, taking every opportunity to educate myself on social issues such as race, gender and class. In the United States, I found myself wishing I could bring positive change within my own community.

I have quietly pursued my entire life. It’s like being invisible. It’s like being a cog in the wheel. It’s like being a part of a system that prolongs itself. It’s like being a part of something that happens to people regardless of what they do.

I would like to offer a suggestion. Instead of trying to identify the most ethnic-sounding name on a pile of unknown internships from the so-called “A-schools” and hoping to snag a minority, we should start utilizing the ranks of our local community colleges. I have had the pleasure of teaching at my local community college, Sacramento City College, intermittently for three years. In that time, I’ve encountered several students of color with great potential. These students may have been green, but we all started out with the same skills and experiences.

I would like to offer a suggestion. Instead of trying to identify the most ethnic-sounding name on a pile of unknown internships from the so-called “A-schools” and hoping to snag a minority, we should start utilizing the ranks of our local community colleges.

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It’s a Tuesday night. Day five of protests in Atlanta.

“Something’s wrong. Something’s about to happen,” I tell my producer. “Clear the streets. Within a few minutes, I see the chaos waiting to erupt. There are rows of police and National Guard members blocking protesters — and my crew — on all sides. We’re right in the middle. Tear gas is coming from every direction. People scatter, pulling down fences to get away. My team runs to the National Guard line. A member yells, “Get the fuck down!” In shock and obedience, I did. Mind you, I’m still on air, now whispering into the mic. “If all you can hear me back there, I know that looked dramatic, but we’re fine. There’s a lot of tear gas, and they’re blocking everyone in.”

But I wasn’t fine. In my mind, I’m thinking, “Please don’t shoot me. Please don’t arrest me.” And please let my co-worker have his Vexus rolling.

Spoiler: Of course it was. Photojournalists know the record button is not a feature in the camera. It’s a gesture in the dark. Eventually the Guard tells us to get up, allowing us through its line to the other side.

A member comes up, apologizing for yelling, but they didn’t want us to get hit by any more tear gas or get hurt.

“Thanks! We’re fine!” I reply. For the next 30 minutes, my co-worker, the photojournalist who had been with me since day one covering the protests, kept asking, “Are you all right? You seem? I’m fine,” I said, waving off his concern. I don’t want to leave the scene.

Soon it was time for another live hit. I walked by and saw something I had missed.

All day, there were thousands of people protesting. But now it was just news crews, police and this memorial. As it was 16 crosses, all bearing familiar names.

I’m a journalist. I don’t take sides. But I can’t sit here and pretend like I don’t have perspective as a Black person, like I don’t know why they’re out there in the first place. I can’t ignore the very real pain protesters, my family and I feel daily. I report down the middle.

As a journalism community we say: “Attacks against journalists are wrong. They are targeted and attacked for doing their job by police and protesters. This is a direct violation of their rights.”

As long as there have been journalists of color, there have been race issues we’ve covered. As long as there have been race issues, there’s been suspicion. “Suspicions that journalists of color will be biased.”

But through that suspicion, we’ve always maintained our ethics and reported truth to power. This is one of those things, and it seems silly to even have to highlight that.

I’m a Black, Puerto Rican, bisexual, female journalist with a Jewish white boyfriend and a Chihuahua. At any given time of any day, I’m aware my sheer existence is pissing somebody off.

So, like every journalist, I’ve gotten used to covering topics that affect me personally, I report down the middle.

As long as there have been journalists of color, there have been race issues we’ve covered. As long as there have been race issues, there’s been suspicion. “Suspicions that journalists of color will be biased.”

“SORRY! THERE IS NO JOB AS A JOURNALIST TO REMAIN IMPARTIAL! YOU KNOW WHAT YOU SIGNED UP FOR! IF YOU DON’T LIKE IT, FIND ANOTHER JOB,” I’ve been written by former and current journalists.

It’s a zero tolerance. No impartial. Yes, I know what you signed up for. Yes, I can always find another job. It’s also a job to report on facts. Masks protect and slow the spread of COVID-19. Women get paid less than men. And even though I showed raw emotion in my piece, I still covered protests, the ones in 2020. In 10 years, I’ve never cracked.

And through I showed raw emotion on camera, I had no idea that the very same moment I was back on air two minutes later, composed, and never brought up the moment again on camera. It didn’t stop me from doing my job for the next three weeks and hopefully the next 30 years.

Every single journalist at one point in time has been or will be affected by an issue — and will remain impartial.

“Attacks against Black people are wrong. They are targeted and attacked by society. This is a direct violation of their rights.”

Now, in the second statement, did you feel the need to say “alleged attacks”?

“Black people say they’re targeted?” Do you have an issue voicing that on social media? If so, then you know it’s easier to support the journalist statement because you’re a part of that community, and you know at any time, you could be in the same situation.

That’s how Black people feel.

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June 1, 2020, North Charleston, South Carolina

AJ Jenkins, an organizer for BLM843, a Black Lives Matter organization in Charleston County, leads protesters on East Montague Avenue during a rally. "We out here standing up for our rights. We have a list of demands, and we want to be heard," Jenkins said. "We won't rest. We won't be slept on. We won't rest." The organized protest started at North Charleston’s City Hall and ended at East Montague when demonstrators were turned around by law enforcement.

The first march I covered was in Columbia, South Carolina, that ended at the State House. When I arrived it was hard to tell how many people had come, but once we reached the State House, the size of the protest became apparent. The steps were full, and people stood together as they tried to make change. As a Black photographer, I feel lucky to cover this time in our country and in my community. There have been some difficult days, but I’m encouraged by some of the change that has happened.

Contact Gavin McIntyre
game17@gmail.com
I was challenged to take a self-portrait in these tragic but revolutionary times by @mgyoungphotography on The Gram. I am a Black law enforcement professional. I use imagery to fight for the lives of the people that I love, and so … this was my response.

Hold members of law enforcement accountable for their actions / for their failure to act in service of the public. "The duty to intervene" should be state and federal law across the nation, not just an internal department policy. Had any law enforcement officer present at the scene of George Floyd’s eventual murder intervened he would still be alive today.

George Floyd allowed himself to be handcuffed out of trust that the person wearing the badge would keep him safe. Then after they removed his ability to defend himself, he was executed while the world watched. When the cuffs go on it doesn’t matter what happened before, you are now responsible for that person’s wellbeing, period.

Serving Society with every Breath, Speak Up #BlackLivesMatter

A Black cop
By Khary Mason
Detroit
June 13, 2020: On this day I was taking portraits of people at Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, D.C. It had been pretty quiet. I was about to leave when I felt a shift. A crowd gathered around a man, Mike D’angelo, standing at the top of the traffic light speaking from a bullhorn. Another man on the street challenged D’angelo about the purpose of the protest and became agitated. D’angelo came down to street level to talk to him. At that moment I had a choice to move away as a safety precaution or stay where they were in a heated discussion next to me. I stayed. People formed a circle around us as the discussion became more intense. The agitated man eventually backed off, and the energy shifted to one of peace again. People approached D’angelo thanking him for keeping the peace. Then he hugged a Black man who was standing next to me. It was a simple, powerful moment between two Black men showing love and support. Two strangers united in a brotherhood of being Black men in America.

Mike D’angelo, left, last year walked from D.C. to Philly to fight gun violence. It was a walk he took for the many kids across the country who have lost their lives to senseless gun violence and in honor of his 10-year-old niece, Makajah, who was killed by a stray bullet in D.C. in 2018.

I feel a responsibility to tell the stories of the unrest and demonstrations happening across the country, and why — those quiet, powerful stories. It’s hard, sometimes tense. It triggers pain, anger, and hurt from my own personal experiences with systemic racism. I can’t take off the color of my skin with my press credential. When I’m out covering these stories, it’s from the lens of a Black woman.

IG and Twitter cherissmay
Website: cherissmay.com
May 29, 2020: A protester takes a knee in front of San Jose police officers during a protest in downtown San Jose, Calif., in response to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

By Dai Sugano
The Mercury News
June 14, 2020: Members of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity take a knee in solidarity on Black Lives Matter Plaza, in Washington, D.C., to protest against racial inequality in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody.
June 5, 2020: Protesters gather around Jackson Square in New Orleans, La., demonstrating the racial tensions stemming from the death of George Floyd and similar racially charged acts of violence around the country.
June 6, 2020: A unifying walk in memory of George Floyd and of Martin Chambers, a 19-year-old African American who was shot in the back by a white police officer and died in Tampa, Florida on June 11, 1967.

More information on the following page.
Monumental
By Julia Rendleman
Independent
For REUTERS


United (previous page)
By Octavio Jones
For the Tampa Bay Times

My experience covering several George Floyd protests throughout Tampa had my adrenaline pumping over the days leading up to the KJ Sails Unity Walk. Sails, who is a father and husband as well as a student-athlete at the University of South Florida, brought together his family, friends and his hometown community of Tampa to pay tribute to George Floyd and Martin Chambers. (Chambers, 19, a burglary suspect, was shot and killed by a Tampa police officer on June 21, 1967.)

That Saturday morning brought a torrential downpour of rain, but I knew I wanted to make beautiful pictures of this moment. While I was getting soaked with little to no rain gear protecting my cameras, I was determined to get the best frames that I could make. I was very happy to come away with the image. It set the tone photo for the Unity Walk.

June 6, 2020: (From left) Kiana Campbell, 24, walks with her 2-year-old son, King, along with her partner, KJ Sails, and USF football coach Jeff Scott during the unifying walk. KJ Sails, a USF player and graduate of East Bay High School, organized a unifying walk in memory of George Floyd and of Martin Chambers.

Honorable sendoff (following page)
By Lynsey N. Weatherspoon
Independent, Atlanta, Georgia
For REUTERS

June 23, 2020: While making this photo, I knew that I had to be respectful of the space and Rayshard Brooks’ family during their time of grief. This was my first assignment for Reuters and I was anxious about being there because of the circumstances. Being able to witness the honorable sendoff by his family and friends was a reminder that this was a celebration of his life, and potentially an act of change within our current society.

Rayshard Brooks was killed almost two weeks after George Floyd, and it caused additional frustration in the local and national community. I hope as we document this uprising that we see forth a moment of humanity and perseverance as we actively commit to breaking down the current systems that have oppressed Black and people of color for centuries.
Honorable sendoff
By Lynsey N. Weatherspoon
Independent, Atlanta, Georgia
For REUTERS
June 23, 2020: Rayshard Brooks' coffin is transported by horse and carriage at the Forest Hills Memorial Gardens in Forest Park, Georgia.
See story on previous page.
Protests
By Alyssa Pointer
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
May 29, 2020: Following a peaceful march to the Georgia State Capitol to protest racial injustice and police brutality, demonstrators returned to the area around Centennial Olympic Park, clashed with police and destroyed patrol cars outside of the CNN Center in Atlanta.
I had just come off a week of furlough and was eager to begin documenting the protests again. That evening, there was a Juneteenth celebration happening at the Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, Virginia. The grounds of Lee Circle were busy. Most people were gathered on the south side of the monument listening to speakers. I left the crowd, circled the monument and saw the young boys playing pickup. Just then the sun peeked through the clouds and provided great evening light. The hoop was aligned perfectly with the heavily graffitied monument.

I knew when I made this image I was witnessing a sea change in Richmond’s history, as a young boy wearing an “I Am My Ancestors’ Wildest Dreams” shirt soared high on one of the most hallowed grounds of Confederate legacy. Only a few years earlier, I had photographed hundreds of people in the exact same spot with Confederate flags, at a Sons of Confederate Veterans Heritage Rally, so I never thought I would see this moment.

OPENERS

Black lives matter
By Demetrius Freeman
For The New York Times

July 9, 2020: Activists and city officials, including Mayor Bill de Blasio, paint a Black Lives Matter mural on 5th Avenue in front of Trump Tower in Manhattan, New York.
Caught in the crossfire

By Nathan Howard
Independent, Portland, OR
Nathanhphotography.com

The Portland Police Bureau and thousands of protesters clashed in the days following the death of George Floyd, oftentimes catching unaffiliated Portland residents in the crossfire. Follet said that “Ma,” (who declined to give her real name) called him, terrified and unable to make it past a police line to her home, or to explain to police she wasn’t a protester with her limited English.

As protesters took interest in the situation and urged riot police to let the woman pass, cops perceived the crowd’s reaction as aggressive and began firing tear gas into the streets. Unable to breathe in the clouds of gas, Ma was carried by Follet four blocks away from the advancing police line. Neither were protesters.

May 30, 2020 - Portland, Oregon: Roman Follet carries a family friend, identified by her nickname “Ma,” after she was caught in a cloud of tear gas while making her way home from work early Saturday morning.
Lighting the way
By Mason Trinca
For The New York Times

Thoroughly prepping gear and working in groups is essential to safely photograph what is happening in Portland. It’s about Day 56 of the protests, but things escalated about a week ago when the feds arrived, which is when I started to venture out and have been working for The New York Times.

We’re all exhausted from this but this is important history being laid out and it makes you understand the reasons you’re out doing this day after day. I have been tear-gassed, shot at (rubber bullets??), and the repellent being used itches and burns.

The New York Times has been incredibly supportive by providing safety equipment with protocols for use. Just as we did while covering the fires in the Bay Area, photographers keep one another within eyesight in case anyone needs help. It’s a very intense time and it’s really important to do this job. The crowd is very angry, people are upset, so our energy is fed by adrenaline to keep going.

July 20, 2020: Thousands of protesters raise their cellphones and sing in front of the Multnomah County Justice Center in Portland, Oregon.
Brutal clashes
By Mason Trinca
For The New York Times

I’ve covered a significant number of riots in my career, but the first day I landed in Portland, I could immediately tell something was different. The air felt charged with anger and frustration. That night, as white smoke enveloped a sea of protesters and fireworks violently exploded in front of me, I realized I was about to witness something I’ve never experienced before.

Being born and raised in Portland, Ore., I always wondered when I would be able to come back to cover my hometown. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that it would be under these circumstances.

I watched through sweaty and foggy goggles as Orion Crabb was dragged through the streets by federal officers in a cloud of tear gas. As he screamed out in pain, I felt his anguish reverberating through every empty street in Portland. I became a photojournalist so I can document history through the lens of human emotion, but I never felt that it would hit so close to home.

July 24, 2020: Orion Crabb, 37, of Portland, is dragged by federal officers at the Mark O. Hatfield United States Courthouse in Portland, Oregon, on the 57th day of protests.
May 28, 2020: Seen from Hiawatha Avenue, a fire burns on E. Lake St. during the third night of protest following the death of George Floyd while in Minneapolis police custody.

Photo by David Joles, Star Tribune
By Regina McCombs

The killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer May 25 sparked protests and riots in the Twin Cities that reverberated around the world. The photojournalists documenting those first moments were caught in emotional upheavals that many say they’d never had to deal with before.

Protests against police killings of Black men are not unusual in the Twin Cities. The death of Jamar Clark at the hands of police in 2015 triggered weeks of marches, a takeover of part of the Mall of America, and an 18-day-long encampment outside the Fourth Precinct police station — in the dead of winter.

After Philando Castile was shot and killed in his car in 2016, and his dying moments broadcast on Facebook Live by his girlfriend, marchers shut down freeways and blocked access to the governor’s mansion. When Officer Jeronimo Yanez was acquitted of manslaughter the next year, the light rail system and freeways were shut down by protesters.

But the chaos this spring was something new, as photojournalists said over and over again in interviews. Jerry Holt, a photojournalist at the Star Tribune, summed it up: “This was very, very different.”

Different, and difficult.

“To be honest, it’s been hard,” said Justin McCray, a photojournalist at Fox 9. On May 31, McCray was walking with his gear down an entry ramp onto I-35W in downtown Minneapolis toward a group of protesters when he heard a loud horn. “It was just outrageous loud and you didn’t know where it was coming from. And you just heard this honk-honk-honk-honk.”

He watched as a semitrailer raced toward the crowd, which was observing a moment of silence for Floyd on the highway bridge. As the tanker truck plowed through the panicking people, McCray stopped being a journalist momentarily. “I just kind of screamed in the air. And I was just like, God, what is going on in our world right now?”

He pulled himself together and went on camera live to talk about what he was seeing. Fortunately, no one was killed in what later turned out to be a mistake by the driver and not an intentional attack.

For McCray, the drama of the week marked his toughest assignment since covering the 2010 earthquake destruction in Haiti.

Late one night, he was in tears as he pulled into his suburban driveway. “Everybody in my neighborhood was at home and was comfortable, but knowing what I just left, it was like a nightmare,” McCray said.

Adding to the tension was his wife’s distress. A former journalist, she broke down sobbing when a neighbor — a Hennepin County sheriff’s deputy — got McCray a bulletproof vest.

That was on a Friday. It was the Friday and Saturday after Floyd’s death when the police appeared to target the media. Rubber bullets and pepper spray were shot at clearly identified journalists.

Story continued on the page 56
Wine & Spirits

May 27, 2020: Minnehaha Lake Wine & Spirits was one of many stores broken into. These largely were peaceful protesters, but some people saw it as an opportunity to “go break some stuff,” said Carlos Gonzalez, a photojournalist at the Star Tribune.

Ground zero

Deputies were seen puncturing tires of cars. CNN reporter Omar Jimenez was arrested during a live shot. Social media showed all of it.

The mood was ugly

For photojournalist Elizabeth Flores, of the Star Tribune, being afraid of the police was new. “If anything, you go to a tense environment and you somewhat feel safe with the presence of police,” she said. This time, that wasn’t true. “I felt more fearful of them than I did of anything else.”

Tom Aviles, of WCCO-TV, has been arrested on the job before. During the Republican National Convention in St. Paul in 2008, he was caught up among protesters. But this time, “the emotion that you felt with the protesters and emotion you felt with the police was the highest I’ve ever felt in my career.”

He was with a producer in a news car when he hopped out to cover protesters marching. As he began rolling, he was shot in the knee with what he thinks was a pepper ball. “I instantly got a face full of pepper spray and it hurt pretty bad,” he recalled. He limped over next to a building and continued to record.

Officers ran over and yelled at him to get out of there. He identified himself but then saw they were targeting the car that still held producer Joan Gilbertson. He yelled to her, telling her to drive away. “At that point, I think they were just in the mood to crush everything,” he said, and they threw him on the ground, handcuffed him and put him in the back of the police wagon where he spent several hours.

It was a nerve-wracking experience listening to the noise going on outside, knowing that buildings and cars were being looted and burned. “That was the only time in my career I really prayed,” Aviles said, worrying that protesters might destroy the car.

“The chaos of that evening was unlike anything else. It was pretty scary because nobody really seemed to be in control of what was going on,” he said. Several hours later, Aviles was taken to the police station and released.

But it wasn’t just the police causing tension. Many photographers talked about trying to sort through all the people who came out to protest. These largely were peaceful protesters, but some people saw it as an opportunity to “go break some stuff,” as Carlos Gonzalez, a photojournalist at the Star Tribune, put it.

Richard Tsong-Taatarii, also of the Star Tribune, got caught up with one such group. As he photographed the Third Precinct police building burning, he heard several young white men talking about heading over to the Arby’s to burn it down.

First, he followed them and photographed them outside, then he went inside. “I don’t know what I was thinking. I followed them in there and started documenting,” Tsong-Taatarii said when asked why he was taking pictures of a crime.

“I was trying to make the best of a bad situation.”

In hindsight, he realized it wasn’t his smartest move. He had been in the Target store earlier in the day and taken pictures of looters smashing the cash register.

People ignored him. “I didn’t think about it enough, but that was an open situation, a big space, where people are going in and out so I could have run for cover much more easily,” he said.

As soon as the man turned and left, Tsong-Taatarii walked into the fire and pulled it out by the leather strap. “Actually, it was still working,” he said. “The message said, ‘Please put me in a cool place. It’s a little hot, I need to cool down.’”

“I was scared. I’m not going to say that I was totally calm,” Tsong-Taatarii added. “I was trying to make the best of a bad situation.”

“People ignored him. ‘I didn’t think about it enough, but that was an open situation, a big space, where people are going in and out so I could have run for cover much more easily,’ he said. He said he might reconsider if he was in the same situation again. Maybe. ‘I’ll just go where the picture is. And you can almost rationalize anything. But obviously, if you die or get seriously injured, you can’t walk back time, so that’s something you have to think hard about.’

Story continued on the page 60

Photo by Richard Tsong-Taatarii
Star Tribune
Chad Nelson was out working that same evening. As director of photography at KARE-TV, he was juggling the task of keeping crews organized and safe while communicating with managers back at the station.

He made a call on where he thought crews would be OK, but it changed quickly. First, they were positioned two blocks from the burning precinct building. “All of a sudden, two blocks was right in the middle of it, too,” Nelson said, so they moved two more blocks. “We’re about to go live and they start smashing windows at U.S. Bank and trying to set it on fire, so we get out of there. And then we’re two blocks further and now the Walgreens is next. We kept moving east, which I thought was going to be better.”

This is Nelson’s part of town, 2 miles from his home. “I thought the closer we got to the river, it would maybe go the other way toward Uptown, but it just went both ways. It just kept going.”

Flores, of the Star Tribune, had the additional stresses of being a woman working alone. While looters were attacking stores in St. Paul, she had to park several blocks from the scene and walk. “It may seem very minor to some people,” she said, “but if you’re by yourself and you have to walk in the dark back to your car and tensions are high — you just don’t know.”

Shortly afterward, the paper began sending photographers out in teams. Then there was the noise.

Flores remembers flinching at the noises, “the popping sounds. We didn’t know if there were fireworks or what they were. It’s kind of traumatizing,” she said. The sounds were often the most difficult part for photojournalist Evan Frost, of MPR News, especially the engines. “That’s been a thing to create noise during the protest,” he said. “Someone will pull up in a truck and just rev their engines. So you really have to keep your head on a swivel. You think of Charlottesville, and how that could happen anywhere, and it’s pretty unnerving.”

In the middle of all this, it was easy to forget what just days before had been the biggest story of the year: the coronavirus. Aviles was locked in the back of a police van with nine people. All of them had been hit with flash-bang grenades or pepper spray, so everyone was coughing. He quickly gave up on wearing his mask because he felt like he was suffocating.

“It’s miserable,” Aviles said. “It definitely clears the sinuses, but it’s something that once you have it, you’ll never forget it.”

Outside, social distancing had disappeared as well. Frost said the nature of the crowd didn’t allow everyone to keep 6 feet apart. “You had to choose between staying safe with COVID or getting the story because that’s the environment that you’re in.”

Up until that week, photojournalists said they had been extremely cautious in public, wearing masks, staying physically distant from subjects and being careful in their personal lives as well.

“Then they start marching and there’s so many,” Gonzalez said. “All of a sudden, it was almost an afterthought.”

Tong Taatarii agreed, noting that when he went to talk to people, often they wouldn’t have masks on and they would lean in close. He’s been telling people that “the most COVID risk you take is not taking the pictures, but in getting names.”

Wild swings of emotion

The volatility of the crowds was an ongoing challenge for journalists. At one point, a man charged a group of photographers with a tire iron, hitting Lucas Jackson, of Reuters, breaking

May 30, 2020: Citizen medics help a protester clear her eyes as police moved in aggressively with tear gas to disperse a group of protesters that had gathered near the Minneapolis Police Fifth Precinct about a half hour after curfew.

Photo by Anthony Souffle, Star Tribune

Story continued on the page 62
May 28, 2020: Tony L. Clark holds a photo of George Floyd where he was killed in front of the Cup Food Store.

Photo by Jerry Holt, Star Tribune

Ground zero
Continued from page 61

camera and barely missing Jackson’s head. He continued to swing at the people nearby. Chris Cruz, of WCCO-TV, had his camera smashed by the same individual.

Gonzalez saw it happen from about 20 feet away. He and several other photographers quickly backed away. As they were walking down the street later, people in the crowd thanked them for what they were doing. “I got that several times on the same night where some guy just took swings at a colleague with a tire iron. It was that much of a change and contrast on the same night, 15 minutes from each other.”

Flores experienced similar emotional

One day, Holt caught a drift of pepper spray in the face and felt like he couldn’t catch his breath. As he was coughing, he thought about how difficult it was, even for a few seconds. “I was thinking, eight minutes and 46 seconds, a guy cannot freaking breathe,” he said. “And to be honest with you, it made me extremely angry.”

“You try to be an objective journalist, but for me, it was hard not to get angry. It was hard not to feel what the people out there were feeling, because of our personal experiences,” Flores added.

Personal experience was on Black photographers’ minds, evoking not just anger, but fear.

“Most people who look like me have had that fear for a very long time,” said Holt. “It’s a realistic thing. It’s a realistic fear.”

Holt has had difficult encounters with police throughout his career. While working, he’s had officers pull guns on him and throw him to the ground. He’s been pulled over numerous times while driving.

“One day, Holt caught a drift of pepper spray in the face and felt like he couldn’t catch his breath. As he was coughing, he thought about how difficult it was, even for a few seconds. “I was thinking, eight minutes and 46 seconds, a guy cannot freaking breathe,” he said. “And to be honest with you, it made me extremely angry.”

“He also believes these encounters have had an effect on his work, because “you get conditioned to how you cover an event based on how you’re treated.” And this time around, he said, it’s hard to stay neutral. “Sometimes I don’t even want to do the photography part, I just want to be a part of what’s happening for change. And that’s a struggle for me,” he said.

May 30, 2020: Top, Verrettta Strickland, of St. Paul, get emotional while listening to audio from Floyd’s memorial service in south Minneapolis.

Photo by Anthony Souffle, Star Tribune

June 4, 2020: Above, Minneapolis and St. Paul firefighters kneel as the hearse carrying George Floyd leaves his memorial service in Minneapolis, Minn.

Photo by Evan Frost, MPR News

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Ground zero
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But Holt hopes that all the coverage may be helpful in the long run. “This is kind of a good thing, in the sense that people are aware of how police can react at times.” He added, “It’s like, ‘OK guys, you’re seeing what I’ve experienced for a very long time.’”

That echoes the hope of many of the photographers interviewed — that good can come from this different and difficult time. McCray believes it has brought many people together. “These community coalitions coming together and really bringing ideas together to try to make a change” are inspiring, he said. “This movement is a movement that’s going forward in the right direction.”

As the breaking news has passed, Frost, of MPR News, has been thinking how he can support photographers of color. During the protest he was tweeting frequently, letting people know what was happening live, and his Twitter following grew fivefold. Now, along with his own work he’s reposting others’ as well.

There are other people who I can create space for,” he said. “I feel like I have this audience, and I can flip that to really amplify some other voices.”

“This is the biggest story that perhaps I’ll ever cover,” said Aviles, of WCCO-TV. Web traffic to Twin Cities news sites exploded during the week, and he believes that local journalists have a big role to play in the coverage. “Balance and objectivity now are extremely important, and I hope, moving forward, we can take the experience we had over the last few weeks and use it to mend the city.”

“This is an important time for journalists, more than ever.”

Regina McCombs teaches visual journalism at the University of Minnesota and is also a freelance photo editor. She has worked at KARE-11, the Star Tribune, the Poynter Institute and MPR News.

Postscript: No journalists were infected with COVID-19 as a result of the Twin Cities protest coverage, and infection rates did not spike because of the protests, as some had feared.

May 30, 2020: Names of people who activists say died as a result of racial injustice were painted on Chicago Avenue in south Minneapolis near the site of George Floyd’s death.

Photo by Aaron Lavinsky, Star Tribune
Remote teamwork and re-examined structures

By Sue Morrow

“I’m exhausted at this point. It’s been horrible and sad … and hopeful,” Kyndell Harkness said.

As the night picture editor at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Harkness was working as protests began on May 26 following the death of George Floyd while in police custody the day before. The video made by a bystander showing what had happened, went viral. Minneapolis was ground zero and the city had been here before. But this time was different.

Harkness has worked at the “Strif” for 20 years. As a photographer, she covered the police shooting death of Jamar Clark in 2015. In her first year as a picture editor, Philando Castile was shot and killed by police during a traffic stop in 2016. Her experience covering those stories prepared her for the current news.

“Lessons learned from Castile, I knew what people (photographers) needed from me. I understood the pacing as things happened and dispatched them to locations,” she said. “We made sure two people were in each location having one another’s back.”

The thing that made this different? The pandemic.

The video of Floyd’s murder went viral on social media and the newspaper posted surveillance video of his arrest, which left no question about what happened. Normally busy people had the time to digest what had happened, and hundreds took to the streets.

“Undefinably, this guy was not resisting and we saw it all,” Harkness said. “It left no doubt about what had happened. The fact that they (the protesters) actually fought back and summoned help was a new thing.”

Working remotely was also a new challenge. From their homes, four picture editors coordinated staff, keeping every one safe. The newsroom has 19 full-time photographers and designers had access. It became the virtual huddle, the place to watch the news unfold and know where everyone was. They used group texts with reporters and photographers.

Getting it right

Through photographs of past events, Harkness was familiar with a handful of the protesters and recalled what they had expressed about news coverage.

“We’ve had long conversations about what the coverage looks like,” she said. She has talked with them about how a newsroom operates and also strives to keep the voice of the community in mind as she edits.

The decision to make a screenshot from the Floyd video was a mindful one. “Please don’t reinjure me by showing me things again and again,” she recalled people saying. So the picture of the police officer in the video did not include Floyd, it was just the officer’s face.

Editing hundreds of photos that are rolling in on deadline is a monumental task. It takes a certain degree of separation to be able to place things in context and to also include the emotion of the event.

“We had to show a range of emotion -- angry, exhaustion -- and the diversity of people, too. EVERYBODY was showing up -- in a pandemic!” Harness said. She had never seen anything like it.

“It had not been this group’s fight before. That, for me, is part of the story,” she said. “These are not the same people being killed by police who are risking their lives as they protest.”

Harkness talked about avoiding pictures that were stereotypical of looting, but there were white people doing the looting. That was the story and these pictures provided critical context.

Newsroom leader

After George Floyd’s death, many journalists of color within news organizations spoke up about the lack of diversity within the workplace.

“We hold other people’s feet to the fire -- I never bring up the police and educators -- and yet we don’t clean up our own house,” Harkness said. “We are supposed to be the voice of truth when we don’t look like the community we serve.”

An editor reached out and asked her, “What are the Black staffers thinking? What should we be doing?”

Harkness is now leading a diversity team within the newsroom -- remotely.

“We’re getting Black staffers together, do mental health check-ins and talk about how to move forward,” she said. “We brainstorm about concrete things to do and how to change habits. So yeah, I have two jobs now!”

Harkness is now leading a diversity team within the newsroom -- remotely.

“It’s about knowing your staff, hiring and retention, Harkness noted. As leaders, we need to develop relationships with those who are new to this business no matter their path to become a photojournalist.

“When we’re in crisis and we need to fill a position that is diverse, who is in the pipeline? Think about those who are coming to our industry late,” she said. “We know our jobs will be an uphill battle and when we look around the room -- what is there to see?”

And it is also personal. Harkness has a 10-year-old son who is now understanding what is happening and what happens to people who look like him.

“Telling the full story is important to me because he has to live in it. This is very, very real to me,” she said. “I took him to the site where George Floyd was killed. He needed to see it on TV and it was important to me that he does not lose sight of helpfulness. George Floyd was the moment when all things changed. We can move forward.”

Kyndell Harkness made this picture of her son, William, 10, at George Floyd’s memorial site. “It was important to me that he does not lose sight of helpfulness. George Floyd was the moment when all things changed. We can move forward.”

■
June 2, 2020: A few thousand protesters gathered at various intersections in Hollywood under the watchful eye of the National Guard and the Los Angeles Police Department. During the peaceful protests, people marched through the streets chanting, honked in support from nearby cars and passed out water, masks, hand sanitizer and snacks to the crowd. Police blocked off several streets, not allowing the crowds to gather together most of the time and sometimes making it difficult to access nearby public train stations.

Photo by Tara Piecley, freelance visual journalist, Los Angeles

ASMP + NPPA
The Movement: Photographs of the racial justice protests for Black lives
The NPPA and ASMP collaborated on a panel – The Movement: Photographs of the racial justice protests for Black lives – that was held via Zoom on July 22, which was recorded and can be viewed [here](https://www.nppa.org). Amy Tierney, ASMP national board director, Sue Morrow, News Photographer editor; and Akili Ramsess, executive director of the NPPA, organized the panel. Ramsess was the moderator.

We invited two picture editors and four photographers to discuss their editing processes and their experiences covering the protests. Maia Booker, senior multimedia editor, Time, reviewed work by independent photographers Tara Pixley, Los Angeles, and Malike Sidibe, New York City. Marcia Allert, director of visuals, The Dallas Morning News, reviewed work by Yoshi James, San Francisco Chronicle, and Michael Santiago, Getty Images.

This panel of visual leaders and front-line photographers brought their insights to the discussion about the Black Lives Matter movement: what photographs are assigned versus what is captured in the moment; when being a Black photographer affected their access to certain jobs or coverage in a positive way and when it was denied; how the editing process and deadlines impact their coverage; and why certain stories may be disseminated by some media outlets but not by others.

This portion of the panel, edited for News Photographer, discussed three images from each photographer and has been edited for brevity and space. Each photographer sent a selection of 10 images to the editors.

**WORDS BY MAIA BOOKER, TIME**

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY TARA PIXLEY**

From the 10 pics from Tara, I looked at them as a whole. I had been scrolling through hundreds and hundreds of wire photos, and her photos show a different side of the protest: not so much the confrontation, destruction of property or arrests, but more community care and people helping each other. Also a sense of intersectionality. Pride Month was also focused on supporting the movement for Black lives. In June you saw people from many different generations and backgrounds protesting together and peacefully, and that’s what I saw in her pictures: more quiet moments and multilayered moments.

**Booker:** (Page 68)

“I love the layers in the photos. I wonder what (maybe) the mother and daughter are thinking. And raising a child right now in this climate and this context, this photo makes you think about that right now too. Also, the line of protesters sitting and kneeling behind them acts as a marker that this movement is in people’s consciousness and is not going away, and I think there is something really dignified and ceremonious in this image that I was drawn to, and it’s just a nice moment of reflection.”

**Above left:** In solidarity with the movements for Black lives and against police brutality, several LGBTQIA organizations joined forces to host an All Black Lives Matter march on June 14, 2020. Hundreds gathered to march from Hollywood and Highland Avenue to Sunset Boulevard as a show of solidarity. “Thousands of protesters filled the streets on and around Hollywood Boulevard in one of the more exultant protests I experienced,” Tara Pixley said. “Few police were visible or apparent at this rally for Black lives as the movement was clearly beginning to take effect across the country, inciting change and progress toward police reform in America.”

**Above:** Several people climbed the side of a building to access a higher vantage point for photographing and filming speakers at a June/Black Lives Matter protest in Hollywood. “I was drawn to this photo because you see this woman laughing with the girl in the front of the car, protesters from different backgrounds holding signs in the back of the truck. From this photo, you get a sense of joy and kinship, and it felt kind of like a breath of fresh air in terms of the masses and masses of other kinds of photos we have been seeing.”

**Booker:** “I thought this was interesting because of the way it is composed. It’s kind of split in half between the protesters and the media or other protesters — people who are filming and shooting and covering the protests. It’s also an image I hadn’t really seen before. Like an image of who are the image-makers and the importance of who’s telling the story and kind of like a nod of what’s going on in our industry right now. It also brings up questions of informed consent in covering the protests. But in big groups it’s almost impossible, but for smaller groups or one or two people, the importance of that.”

Continues on the next page
May 29, 2020: Near Barclays Center in Brooklyn, police pulled on a protester from the crowd and the crowd pulled back.

Photo by Malike Sidibe, independent photographer, New York City
WORDS BY MAIA BOOKER, TIME PHOTOGRAPHS BY MALIKE SIDIBE

These three photos we featured in Time magazine along with a firsthand account Malike wrote for us. The photos as a whole show a different side from Tara’s photos. They are immediate clashes of violence from police in relation to the protesters.

**Booker:** (Page 72) “I love it because it kind of looks like a living revolutionary painting. You see this man with the shirt, and it says, “Please stop the violence,” and he’s being pulled by all sides — by protesters or maybe counterprotesters and also cops. It’s a photo that raises a lot of questions about what’s going on, who is who, and you want to find out more.”

**Above:** Demonstrators damage a police car on 13th Street near Union Square on May 30, 2020. A few minutes later the police arrived and began pepper spraying everyone that was there.

**Booker:** “These are protesters destroying a police car. You can really feel the outrage of the protesters, and there is violence in the image. Ironically, in Malike’s piece, he talked about feeling safe among the protesters and that the police were looking for any excuse to go after protesters to pepper-spray and arrest them. Another aspect of the image is that you can’t see the faces of the protesters and can’t identify them. This raised for me: Was this a conscious choice in order to protect the identity of the protesters? We live in an era of mass surveillance right now; how do we protect those we’re covering in certain situations?”

malikesidibe.com

**Above:** A demonstrator spray-paints a poster of Derek Chauvin’s knee on George Floyd’s neck on May 31, 2020.

**Booker:** “This photo has different layers to it. You kind of have to sit with it to try to understand what is happening. You have an anonymous person defacing a photo of the officer who killed George Floyd, which is a screenshot of his death and two women looking on to see what he’s writing. What are his motives? And there’s dramatic tension because we don’t know that the intention is exactly. It’s a photo that keeps the viewer engaged. I had not seen the screen grab of the video as a poster, and it’s clearly a traumatic image, so it made me think also of who are we triggering with our choices of what we photograph and, as editors, what we choose to publish?”

Continues on the next page
May 30, 2020: Police officers confront protesters during a protest demanding justice for the death of George Floyd on Sixth Street in downtown Pittsburgh.

Photo by Michael M. Santiago, Post-Gazette
It was really interesting that Michael Santiago and Yoshi James gave me in their wider edits COVID photos and protest photos. And if you stop and think about it, I do not think we would have had the scale of protests that we’ve had if we didn’t have COVID leading up to it. Jobless rates climbed, and people were home and unemployed and had the ability to go out and protest. People were home or at least in a stationary place where they were watching the George Floyd murder video and watching all of it and feeling all of it. As a result of that, people were wanting to come out and then came out.

As I was looking through all of the images and narrowed them down, it comes down to scale. It comes down to color. It comes down to looking for moments and looking for ways in which you are seeing people and amplifying them and sharing their stories.

And this is why diversity matters. Diversity matters because depending on where we are from in this world, that’s who we see about who we amplify. When you have a photo team, it’s important to have diverse voices envisioned within those teams so you can see your community as a whole and really start to amplify everybody within your community.

**Allert:** (page 76)

“What I was looking for in Michael’s images, it’s the color pops, it’s the layering. I tend to think of the still image and still frame as a paragraph in a story. So I’m looking for as much information as I can give to the readers.

The protest image, it’s that layering, it’s that sense of understanding what was happening, understanding that there is a line of protesters, understanding that there is a line of officers and what that was like on the street in that moment.”

**Allert:** “The roller skater is a moment of whimsy to me. And it’s almost impossible to say the word whimsy in 2020, but here we have it. We know that it’s COVID because the basketball net in the background is sort of boarded up. But what I love is that motion spin; I love the fact that they’re two-by-two skates and one of them is slightly off the ground.”

**Above left,** Dauna “Ms. Pittsburgh” Biggs spins as she dances while roller skating on May 2, 2020, at Kennard Park in the Hill District. With the closing of the skating rinks due to COVID-19, skaters took to the outdoors to exercise and keep Pittsburgh roller skating alive.

By Michael M. Santiago, Post-Gazette

**Allert:** "This image of the birthday party is a moment where you understand that it’s a celebration. You understand that you’re marking something special in a person’s life. You get the reaction of the woman, but also the layering of her family, the pink colors, the flowers, the historical photo of her that’s leaned up against the house. I might not know this family’s name, but I get a sense of their family, and I get a sense as to what’s unfolding. And I start to learn from the details that they’re Steelers fans. There are so many little words that are dropped in there for me to start to pick up on and start to pull out.

Ultimately when I am editing photos, I think of cameras as empathy-makers. They are powerful tools by which people come to you to share their stories with you. And so when I’m looking at work, I’m looking to find ways where photographers are highlighting and amplifying voices and showcasing stories.”

**Above,** A surprised Virginia Flickinger walks out of her home as her son and daughter-in-law, Tom and Debra Flickinger, of Washington, bring her cupcakes to celebrate her 100th birthday on April 11, 2020, at her home in Mt. Lebanon. The family planned a surprise birthday party with family from various locations, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic they had to cancel their plans. Instead, they decorated her yard and sang while maintaining social distancing. Virginia is a survivor of the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Michael M. Santiago/Post-Gazette

**Allert:** “What I was looking for in Michael’s images, it’s the color pops, it’s the layering. I tend to think of the still image and still frame as a paragraph in a story. So I’m looking for as much information as I can give to the readers. The protest image, it’s that layering, it’s that sense of understanding what was happening, understanding that there is a line of protesters, understanding that there is a line of officers and what that was like on the street in that moment.”

[msantiagophotos.com](http://msantiagophotos.com)
June 4, 2020: Nuri Nusrat, 40, left, of Oakland, Alysa Wilson, 31, of Oakland, and Minerva Arias, 38, from Washington Heights in New York City, prepare an ancestral altar in front of Cece Carpio’s “We Got Us” mural at 14th and Broadway during a protest for George Floyd at Frank Ogawa Plaza in Oakland, Calif.

Photo by Yoshi James, San Francisco Chronicle
Allert: "Ultimately I narrowed it down to these three because if I'm looking at quick takes, I'm looking for what is the greatest amount of information we can give to the reader? A woman is leaving, and there's a vigil that's been set up. Again, I really liked the layers. And I liked the fact that there was sort of a triangle that was being created with my eye. And I liked the fact that Yoshi is using the camera as a way to show people, as a photographer, that you like people. Looking at Yoshi's photos, you're using your camera as a tool of openness. And so what's really interesting is that you see people and you want to share with the world, the people you see."

Above: Civil rights icon Angela Davis pumps her fist during a Juneteenth protest against police brutality in Oakland, Calif. as longshoremen shut down the Port of Oakland and 28 other ports along the West Coast on June 19, 2020.
Allert: "We have this image of Dr. Angela Davis and the fist raised, and it's the reflection. It is being able to read and see that crowd, and my eye is moving through that frame, and ultimately it sort of anchors back on Dr. Angela Davis, but my eye is really curious about all the faces and all the people that are in that crowd."

Above: An employee wearing protective gear peeks from a window after a patient was picked up by Falcon Critical Care Transport at Gateway Care and Rehabilitation on April 15, 2020, in Hayward, Calif. At the time, the facility had 11 COVID-19-related deaths and dozens of staff and patients infected.
Allert: "What I think is really interesting is when we get to the last photo, you see people, but she's also seeing you. And this to me is an image we're in. She's behind a window, she's peeking out; I'm starting to see that there is an exchange that's occurring. And it's an equal curiosity that I'm seeing. She is not looking at you or peeking at you with hostility or anger or annoyance; it's genuine curiosity. And I feel like that's when we have cameras with us, we approach people with genuine curiosity, and I feel like she's approaching you with the same curiosity."

The recording of The Movement: Photographs of the racial justice protests for Black lives
"I wanted to show what was actually happening"

Independent photojournalist Kevin Mohatt works to counter skewed protest narrative in Denver.

Bethel Boateng, 16, left, and Natalie Boateng, 13, yell “I can’t breathe” for eight minutes while lying down on Peña Boulevard during a youth-led Black Lives Matter demonstration in Denver, on June 6, 2020. Photography by Kevin Mohatt.
I taught a course this spring on journalism’s role in a democracy. It was in a large lecture hall, and it felt rewarding sharing the noble aspects of journalism with eager students. Part of this journey included defining journalism. It’s something I hadn’t thought about in academic terms until then. Throughout the semester, a working definition emerged, consisting of two parts. One, that it’s news which is verified; and two, that it’s given context so citizens in a community can be more truthfully informed. I thought about these two a lot during recent news events, some of the most critical of our time.

And what a time to be a photojournalist. It harbors a role in our citizenship that is crucial in our democracy. It’s not only a chance to bear witness but to shape conversation. A conversation that threads throughout our country and our communities, and one that should start with better representation from a more diverse perspective. Without this, it can be difficult to represent the news with a journalistic truth.

A key example was in my home city of Denver and was sparked by a friend of mine and photojournalist, Kevin Mohatt. A father of three, Mohatt, 40, recently quit his job as head of marketing for the largest technical college in Colorado to pursue a freelance career. It’s a big move, for sure, but one for which he had meticulously prepared for years. But when the protests began, he, like many, was a little unsure if he should work in a pandemic, given the uncertainty of health risks.

“It’s understandable. You not only don’t want to get the virus, but you don’t want to be responsible for spreading it, either,” Mohatt wrestled with the idea. “There’s a sense that if you don’t have an assignment, it’s irresponsible to be out there shooting,” Mohatt said. He stayed home at the start of the protests and, like myself, watched as some of the events unfolded in Denver around us via clips from local television stations.

“I kept seeing violence, tear gas, dumpster fires,” Mohatt said. “I started wondering, ‘Is this really what’s happening on the ground?’ I decided that I’m going to go see for myself.”

He went out to document the first night of the curfew in Denver. “It was just so dramatically different from what I was seeing on the TV.” It didn’t match the reality on the ground. A classic act of journalism, in search of news events through verification. Mohatt describes the scene as peaceful until the police moved in on the protesters before curfew.

“They moved in hard and were very heavy-handed, shooting rubber bullets and firing tear gas. It turned so chaotic when the police moved in.” He describes his images: “They tell a story of police violence and chaos. They tell the story of people who were angry but also just passionate and peaceful.”

Hearing Mohatt relate this, it reminded me of the second part of the definition referenced in the class: journalism’s responsibility to add context to events. Though some events on the ground may have reflected some violence, without the context of why, it’s not as robust of a journalism act as possible.

Mohatt shared the images first on Instagram, then later to Facebook. The reaction was quick, with many of his friends stating they had no idea of the reality in Denver. What they were seeing in other outlets wasn’t reflecting what Mohatt was witnessing.

“It was eye-opening to me. People thought it was all about violence, a bunch of angry Black people smashing windows and stealing things. And that’s not what was happening on the streets.”

Mohatt continued, “I wanted to show what was actually happening.” There were some dumpster fires and some violence, but that was happening late at night and by a small group of agitators compared with the massive number of people who were peaceful. Mohatt worked to focus on this representation.

“I felt it was important to show that the majority of voices were peaceful and not agitators.”

Protesters lie down on Peña Boulevard, blocking traffic and chanting “I can’t breathe” for eight minutes to call attention to George Floyd’s killing. The youth-led Black Lives Matter demonstration in Denver on June 6, 2020.
Soon, his images began to get picked up by outlets such as Reuters, The Denver Post and The Colorado Sun. I applaud Kevin, who, in an act of journalism, helped craft a more truthful representation of the events of the day.

I thought again back to the course and the core ideas of journalism: verification and sense-making of news events. I only saw more of the violent activity on local television; it skewed our perception of truth. Additionally, like Mohatt, I feel it’s imperative to have more diversity in acts of journalism to get to a better understanding of the truth.

“At the beginning of the protests, I read about how pretty much every major publication was running coverage only by white photographers,” Mohatt said. “I’m not against white photographers covering the demonstrations, but we need more perspectives represented in our news coverage. Why are we only showing one perspective, especially in this moment?”

His perspective and coverage are important. This was made even more evident to Mohatt in a social media post the next day by a local news outlet.

“It just seemed so biased. Whether they meant it or not, the bias was obvious, and that made me so angry I couldn’t sit down.”

He describes his frustration:

“There’s one image of a Black man; it’s nighttime and he’s got his arms straight up in the air. You can see him all lit up by the police in the background as if he’s just been caught. Then the very next image is of a white man during daytime standing in front of a large audience. His arms aren’t shooting straight up; they’re reaching outwards. It’s as if he’s wielding power over this large audience of people that are in the background. Why do you choose the image of the Black man looking guilty and the white man holding power?”

He also pointed out that the other images posted by the news outlets reflected more chaos and violence than were actually happening on the ground, but that the vast majority of the protests were peaceful. “I felt they needed to be aware of these biases so they could change their coverage. They’re owned by one of the largest news organizations in the state and have a responsibility to report the news in a timely and accurate manner.”

It’s tricky, though, as an emerging freelance photographer. He notes the risks of calling out a news organization, and he wrestled with the idea.

“Not just because that news organization may never want to work with me, but would other editors see my comments and not want to work with me either?” He mulled it over and bounced the idea off some fellow photographers — both Black and white.

Afterward, he decided to respond.

“I wrote my thoughts out, and I took the time to compile a message I thought was both respectful but direct in pointing out the blatant bias in their coverage.”

“I mean, I have a neighbor who was telling me he thought the National Guard should be here on the ground. It’s because they’re getting information that’s wrong. It’s irresponsible for news organizations to support a false narrative that focuses on violence and chaos when the protests are primarily peaceful.”

Mohatt also pointed out that the news organization focused more on coverage of white people and white people helping other people. Additionally, all the images of Black people were at night, whereas many of the images of white people were in the day.

“I’m glad Mohatt vocalized this concern. It’s a voice that needs to be heard, and he’s a photographer to watch. I admire his work ethic and his relentless pitches to editors trying to get the story out in Denver.”

“I recognize I’m not at the front of the line. But I also know I’m not going to sit and wait. I’m going to march forward,” Mohatt said. I couldn’t agree more with him.

Kevin Mohatt noted that images posted by news outlets reflected more chaos and violence than were actually happening on the ground, but that the vast majority of the protests were peaceful. “I felt it was important to show that the majority of voices were peaceful and not agitators.”
This is reflected in one of his strongest moments from a protest (in the lead pictures) that shut down the main highway leading to Denver International Airport called Peña Boulevard.

“The significance of Peña is that one, it was youth-led, and two, it was in the neighborhood where the community lived and had access to the protest, as opposed to downtown,” Mohatt said. They all laid down for eight minutes and 46 seconds, chanting “I can’t breathe,” in reference to George Floyd’s death.

“It’s a remarkable moment. More journalists could take Mohatt’s approach in coverage.

“To me, it was inspiring watching this. They’re 18 and 19 years old. There’s so much opposition to what they’re doing, and yet they motivated a large group of people to get out onto the streets. They took charge, and they sent a message,” Mohatt said.

It’s also a message that signals a time that calls out for better representation in journalism. I’m glad Mohatt is part of it all.

Ross Taylor is an assistant professor at the University of Colorado Boulder. He’s on the board of directors for NPPA and is also the chair of the quarterly multimedia. Website: rosstaylor.net.

Kevin Mohatt, above, is a freelance photojournalist based in Denver and ready for hire. He is a husband and father of three beautiful children.

To see more of his work, visit KevinMohatt.com or find him on Instagram @kevin.mohatt.

“I am a proud product of parents who come from two completely different worlds. My mother grew up in the projects of the Bronx while my father grew up on a farm in rural Nebraska. My mother is Black and my father is white.

Growing up biracial, in a largely segregated society, was not easy but it taught me the importance of learning how to connect with people and building relationships.

I’ve found that my ability to connect with others is vital to my photography. As photojournalists, we are taught to be a fly on the wall, and although I am careful to limit my influence on the situations I am photographing, I’ve found it’s really important to make a connection with my subjects. Simply putting down my camera and having a face-to-face interaction often disarms the awkwardness of having a lens pointed at you. This ability to connect with others has had the biggest influence on creating images that show people in their natural state.

Each of our three children came into our family in different ways: an unplanned cesarean operation, a planned homebirth and adoption through foster care. Each day was special in its own way. The picture of my son’s first breath, my daughter raising her hand in front of the judge and my wife, pregnant with our first son, are photos I will hold dear forever.

Our experiences shape who we are as individuals. Photography allows us to document important moments to preserve those experiences and share our memories. Documenting important moments is what motivates me as a photographer.” – Kevin Mohatt

Protester and violinist Jeff Hughes plays music to honor Elijah McClain during a vigil in Aurora, Colorado, on June 27, 2020. When alive, McClain would play his violin at animal shelters because he thought the kittens were lonely.
Protesters with sign boards holding messages and names of Columbus police officers aimed to encircle the exterior walls of City Hall. On the reverse side, reflective material was used. I was asked by a participant to "stop taking pictures for people's safety," and politely refused to stop since we were on public grounds. The use of multiple CCTV surveillance cameras can be seen in addition to attendees using their cellphones, or other devices. I too was being recorded/photographed.

At one point, the organizers assigned a couple of people to watch over me — minders, if you will — who followed me everywhere. Eventually, I was encircled and trapped by some pretty aggressive people, and had to force my way out.

July 4, 2020: Photographers are blocked from making pictures of protesters by signboards intended to encircle City Hall during a Black Lives Matter protest and violin vigil held in honor of Elijah McClain in Columbus, Ohio.
June 6, 2020: A woman chants from her apartment window as marching protesters pass by in Brooklyn, New York. With the city still on lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic many did not join the marches but watched and participated from their windows, cars, or even from a distance of six feet on the sidewalk as the protesters walked down their street.

Sideline participation
By Demetrius Freeman
For The New York Times
Drive-In graduation

By Marie D. De Jesús
Houston Chronicle

May 15, 2020: Paul Stewart, right, high-fives fellow graduate Reggie Dodd as they arrive and get ready for their graduation as students affiliated with The FAITH of NW Houston, which is a parent-led organization that provides academic education and support. The commencement ceremony took place at the Showboat Drive-In Theater in Hockley. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, the graduation organizers changed the event to the outdoor venue.
As public Mass was called off across the archdiocese and people were encouraged to stay home, Father Matt Guckin learned that his parishioners at St. Francis de Sales missed personal connection. So a couple times each week, he and Sister Alice Daly visit the homebound with the golden monstrance, for prayers and a blessing. They don’t go into homes. Instead they stand a few feet away, speaking through storm doors and window screens.

“I’m afraid we’re losing our humanity,” Guckin said. “By nature we’re social beings, and when we’re forced to practice social distancing, it can lead us deeper into isolation. So we can easily forget that this is not normal or healthy.”

May 13, 2020: Stephan Jamaine Alford kneels in prayer as Father Matt Guckin gives a blessing at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Philadelphia, Pa. Alford had been sleeping in an alcove outside the church. Guckin visited homebound parishioners with Sister Alice Daly for prayers and a blessing while the church was shut down during the coronavirus pandemic.
This photo reflects two major issues happening: COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement. The coronavirus has been life-changing for all of us on this planet, and what we once knew to be normal has slowed down. However, I am glad to see that people are trying to return to normalcy.

As for the Black Lives Matter movement, I am from China. However, being one of the minority ethnic groups in this country, I realize that every single individual should be treated equally regardless of ethnicity or gender.

July 12, 2020: Utah Royals FC players take a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter movement before a game against the Chicago Red Stars at Zions Bank Stadium in Herriman, Utah.
May 13, 2020: Dr. Andrew Moore, center, chief medical officer of St. David’s Medical Center, with other doctors, nurses, technicians and administrators who served in the military, salute as the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds fly over to honor front-line workers and healthcare professionals serving in the coronavirus pandemic. The air demonstration squad performed a 35-minute flyover in the Austin metropolitan area.
Over the last few months, Houston has seen a high increase in coronavirus cases, which led me to spend extended time in the COVID-19 Intensive Care Unit at United Memorial Medical Center. At the end of June and beginning of July, part of my coverage included overnight stays as hospitals reached capacity and struggled with staffing. Five months in, medical professionals continue to battle the virus and also the physical, mental, and emotional toll from their relentless work.

June 29, 2020: Medical intern Diego Montelongo kneels to adjust Denisse Moreno’s bed after she was transported to the COVID-19 intensive care unit from the emergency room at United Memorial Medical Center in Houston. Montelongo had been working for more than 20 hours.
Birth & hope

By Hannah McKay

May 17, 2020, Burnley, United Kingdom: Neonatal Nurse Kirsty Hartley carries premature baby Theo Anderson to his mother, Kirsty Anderson, in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Lancashire Women and Newborn Centre at Burnley General Hospital in East Lancashire during the outbreak of the coronavirus. Anderson gestured to Hartley to allow the baby to be placed under her blouse to allow skin-to-skin contact.

I was given access to an NHS hospital, a rare opportunity in the UK. The visit to the hospital, in the north of England, was during the third month of the country being hit hard by coronavirus. Up until that point, the few photographs that had emerged from the UK focused largely on the chaos surrounding Intensive Care Unit and frontline staff and patients fighting the infection. At this point, I felt as if the focal point of the story was shifting slightly and the world needed to see something new, something hopeful.

I gained access to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Lancashire Women and Newborn Centre at Burnley General Hospital, where I met mother Kirsty Anderson and her baby Theo, born at 28 weeks and weighing 2 lbs. 4 oz. (1kg). I approached Kirsty to ask if I could take a picture of six small bottles of expressed breast milk that were resting on the incubator that Theo was sleeping in; it was shortly afterward this photograph happened. The nurse scooped Theo out of his incubator and carried him over to his mother where she placed him on her chest for a skin-to-skin cuddle. It was the most natural and heartwarming moment I had witnessed during my visit to the hospital, and it was incredibly special to watch. The photograph became a symbol of hope: in the midst of the pandemic with tens of thousands of lives lost in the UK, new tiny lives, like Theo, were entering the world, and it put smiles on faces.
“Get in good trouble ...”

By Max Gersh
The Commercial Appeal

You can afford to take risks when working with a team. While covering the memorials for U.S. Rep. John Lewis in Selma and Montgomery, Alabama, I was part of a team of five photographers for USA Today.

On the morning of the Edmund Pettus Bridge crossing, I was teamed up in Selma with Jake Crandall, of The Montgomery Advertiser, and George Walker IV, of The Tennessean. I was positioned at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church to photograph as the casket was loaded onto the carriage. Crandall and Walker were stationed in different positions at the bridge.

As soon as the carriage left my view, I ran toward the river to try a third perspective to our coverage and I knew there was a chance that I wouldn’t make an image at all. I found a park on the east side of the bridge and worked my way as close to the water as possible. It was a quiet perspective. Only John Lewis and the bridge. It was a creative risk that I could afford to take because my colleagues already had other positions covered.

July 26, 2020: The horse-drawn carriage carries the casket of civil rights icon U.S. Rep. John Lewis across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. “Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America,” John Lewis said on March 1, 2020, during the 55th commemoration of Bloody Sunday on the bridge. Lewis was severely beaten by law enforcement officers during the 1965 civil rights march.
“When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something.”

— John Lewis, December 2019, during remarks in the House of Representatives on the impeachment of President Donald Trump