

The LA Times fires a photographer

Written by Pedro Meyer

We found that the photographer Brian Walski has been dismissed from the LA Times for no valid reason. It seems that the newspaper does not fully understand that the CONTENT of the image he sent in, was not altered in it's essence, even though he combined two consecutive images (images and the LA Times statement below).

The problem with this action by the LA Times news-organization, is that they use this sort of measure to cover up for what is in reality a much more profound issue, in particular in this war, and that has to do with the wholesale abdication of their responsibility in bringing to the public any news other than what the Pentagon or the White House wishes them to publish.

I did not see, for example, on the front page of the LA TIMES today, any of the images of the Iraqi children killed by US bombs plus the fact that the International Red Cross has denounced the war atrocities perpetrated by US bombs falling on a totally civilian population of farmers in the city of Hindiya. That in my book is the real omission of facts not what Brian Walski did.

Instead, they have fired someone for doing a professional job in trying to come up with a better picture, the same way that any of their journalists polish a text so that it reads better and is succinct. (why should a photographer be deprived of doing exactly the same that other professionals are doing on a daily basis as long as the information is not distorted?). The only explanation I can find, is that by accusing the photographer and attempting to portray themselves as publishing "unmanipulated" news, they are seeking to conceal the factual reality of their biased and one-sided presentation of the overall news. That seems to be the more important issue at hand.

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Editor's Note from The LA Times

On Monday, March 31, the Los Angeles Times published a front-page photograph that had been altered in violation of Times policy.

The primary subject of the photo was a British soldier directing Iraqi civilians to take cover from Iraqi fire on the outskirts of Basra. After publication, it was noticed that several civilians in the background appear twice. The photographer, Brian Walski, reached by telephone in southern Iraq, acknowledged that he had used his computer to combine elements of two photographs, taken moments apart, in order to improve the composition.

Times policy forbids altering the content of news photographs. Because of the violation, Walski, a Times photographer since 1998, has been dismissed from the staff. The altered photo, along with the two photos that were used to produce it, are below:

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<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/apr/04/iraq.iraq.iraq> The original photo of the US, d