

## An Imperative Voice

On August 19, 2014, the world saw images of a man dressed in black take a sword and sever a man's head from his body. The world mourned for this man who had been captured, tortured, and killed. This man, James Foley, was one of many journalists abducted and murdered for attempting to shed light on global crisis. Yet hundreds of journalists still venture into war zones, refugee camps, and other dangerous and unjust environments with their cameras and notepads in hand to seek news and report on the world so people can learn to empathize and understand one another without ever leaving the comfort of their homes thousands of miles away.

Ferguson, Missouri, Charlie Hebdo, Chapel Hill, The Dress, Boko Haram, ISIS, FCC. Each of these subjects bring an image to mind. They bring an image to mind because a reporter decided to document them. Journalism is the most powerful social force in the world. It dictates who and what society finds important, shapes how people see one another, and controls the way a person makes decisions in relation to the world. Therefore, the work of a journalist is vital in society. Without reporters, people would not know of prejudice or philanthropy; without investigators, they would not know of government scandal or scientific breakthrough; without photographers, they would not know of anything that occurred outside the periphery of their own vision or what they heard from those around them. Journalists provide a means of sharing experiences among people who have never met whose stories matter to one another.

In today's world, news is transforming from a public service and responsibility to a business venture. Slanted talking heads and subjective talk shows have taken over while objective investigators and unbiased watchdogs are left with a few minutes of airtime during tragedy. Nevertheless, they beat on and continue their work to tell stories and hold leaders accountable for their actions.

Before he was captured in 2012, Foley spent time in Egypt, Iraq and Syria. In regards to his responsibility as a journalist, amidst such danger, Foley said, "It's our job - I've been covering conflicts since Iraq in 2008. I am drawn to the drama of the conflict and trying to expose the untold stories but I am drawn to the human rights side." It is with that spirit that journalists must continue their work. Through the physical danger as well as the constant stress of deadlines and finding the next story, journalist's jobs are amongst the most important in the world. They are the silent messengers of the information that molds society and allows people to see not only the truth of the people who killed Foley, but the actions of governments like Jordan's who are speaking against them. Journalists, through their coverage of the news, are the voices of the unheard and oppressed, and they will be needed until all beings have a chance to speak and be heard themselves.

#### Works Cited

- Carter, Chelsea J. "Video Shows ISIS Beheading U.S. Journalist James Foley - CNN.com." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 20 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Feb. 2015.
- Rkaina, Sam. "James Foley's Final Reports from the Front Line: Inspiring Video and Quotes from Courageous Reporter." *Mirror*. Mirror Online, 20 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Feb. 2015.