

he EDITOR

THE PICTURE STORY

Photo captured depravity of the barbarians

BOB STEELE, ethics director of the Poynter Institute, advances an already worrisome trend in American journalism: failure to provide the public with crucial information in the name of a misguided sensitivity for victims. Many newspapers do not publish the names of child victims of crime or rape victims of any age.

Newspapers too often suffer court decisions to seal sensitive litigation files of obvious public interest. Now, Steele has told Globe media critic Mark Jurkowitz ("When horror makes news," City & Region, June 7) that publication by The Boston Phoenix of a photograph of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl's severed head "may heighten our anger against those who did it, [but] we don't, to my knowledge, learn anything new."

This disingenuous assessment flies in the face of long human experience. One just had to see photographs of the Nazi concentration camps to appreciate the fact that anyone working at, or merely seeing, such a place obviously understood precisely what was happening. A photograph of World War II Japanese relocation camps makes clear that these places were more like prisons than like relocated country clubs. Text is considerably less powerful, visceral, and direct.

Besides, fewer people seem to read these days, so a picture, more than ever, is

worth a thousand words. It is virtually impossible to avoid learning something new, and often important, from a photograph. Questions of taste being subjective, Steele is entitled to his view on the Phoenix's gentility quotient, but it cannot seriously be denied that that paper has made a major contribution to our understanding — or at least to mine — of precisely how depraved the barbarians are who propose to terrorize our society.

HARVEY A. SILVERGLATE
Boston

The writer is a civil liberties lawyer and an occasional columnist/contributor to The Boston Phoenix.

We must never forget

FOR YEARS Jews have made me weary droning on about the Holocaust. After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and other events leading up to and including the gruesome abomination I witnessed committed against Daniel Pearl, I have a different perspective.

It is now my mantra: Never forget!
ROBERT FALCIONE
Hopkinton

A ploy to boost readership

THE BOSTON Phoenix's decision to publish a picture of Daniel Pearl's decapitated head is far from an effort to galvanize outraged citizens who are not fully aware of the atrocities Muslim extremists are capable of. We don't need to be educated in that subject any more than we already are. It looks more to me like a poorly thought out marketing strategy aimed at increasing readership of a paper that can

best be described as a trendy fish wrapper. Why not publish a photo of John Wayne Bobbitt's private parts in an effort to galvanize battered women's groups?

For all I know, they probably already did that. I wouldn't know. I only read the Phoenix occasionally, and only when I can get it for free.

MIGUEL A. GUANIPA
Waltham

DOMESTIC DEFENSE

United States of seismic paranoia



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