Visualizing Terror:

The Visual Construction of Terrorism in Newspaper Media

Marieke Wannet, 4134419

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Radboud University

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Frank Mehring

Abstract

This thesis examines the complicated relationship between terrorism and the media. Specifically, it contains an analysis of the ways in which American newspaper media construct terrorism, with a focus on visual representations and the manner in which the imagery is framed through headlines and captions, and looks at how and why the media label something as terrorism. The case studies included in this research are the Boston bombing, and the Charleston church shooting. While both case studies can be regarded as domestic U.S. terrorism, only the former was labelled as such by the media. Based on an iconography of terror, a set of five categories (chaos, bombs/explosions, blood/bodies, heroization/victimization, and the Muslim "Other"), this thesis makes an analysis of the visual representations of these two case studies in four prominent U.S. newspapers. Grounding the analyses in W.J.T. Mitchell, Stuart Hall, and Udo Hebel's theories on imagery, and Gabriel Weimann's research on mass-mediated terrorism, it becomes clear that the Boston bombing was visually more reminiscent of other terrorist attacks, such as 9/11, than the Charleston shooting, while the attacks' nature and media framing also played a large role in the label that they received.

Key Words

Terrorism, Boston bombing, Charleston church shooting, 9/11, media framing, newspapers, picture theory, interpictorial clusters, encoding/decoding, theater of terror.

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Introduction

Terrorism is aimed at the people watching, not at the actual victims. Terrorism is theater.

Brian Jenkins p. 4

In our contemporary society, the media are important sources when it comes to our understanding of terrorism. They help shape our views of what should be seen as terrorism and what should not, when we should be afraid, and what exactly we should be afraid of. While the media might be instrumental in aiding us to define terrorism, they are equally as important in constructing terror itself. The relationship between terrorism and the media is complicated, but is of vital importance if we are to understand the contemporary workings of both terrorist and counter terrorist efforts. It is thus not surprising that the influence terrorism has on the media and vice versa is a topic that is well researched and documented. As Paul Wilkinson has argued: "[w]hen one says "terrorism" in a democratic society, one also says "media." For terrorism by its very nature is a psychological weapon which depends upon communicating a threat to a wider society. This, in essence, is why terrorism and the media enjoy a symbiotic relationship" (177). Even though media in the Western world generally do not adhere to terrorist ideologies, their position in a competitive market system always pressures them to be the first with news reports, "and to provide more information, excitement and entertainment than their rivals" (Wilkinson 177). This thus prompts them to cover terrorist activity, and in doing so, they aid terrorists in carrying out their message.

Influential terrorism scholar Gabriel Weimann has researched the effects that terrorism media coverage has on the public. In his article "The Theater of Terror: Effects of Press Coverage," Weimann discusses the ways in which the media can influence the public's perception when it comes to terrorism. He argues that because terrorism is aimed at inspiring fear in a person or a group of people, the attacks carried out by terrorists must be visually impressive and dramatic, almost like a theater show. This theater, Weimann argues, only becomes a viable reality "when the media provide the stage and access to a worldwide audience" (38). He further states that this theater portrayed by the media has the power to greatly influence their audiences. He argues that through the media's choice of phrasing (positive or negative), the audience is influenced into seeing the event and the terrorists themselves in a certain way. In any case, Weimann concludes his research, the people "who were exposed to media coverage of a terrorist event tended to consider the event more

important and noteworthy and to call for a solution. Press attention appears to be sufficient to enhance the status of the people, problem, or cause behind a terrorist event. Terrorists' success in attracting media attention may then guarantee worldwide awareness and recognition" (44). Judging by Weimann's research, the public opinion of terrorism is thus influenced through media coverage in multiple ways; both in opinion of the terrorists themselves and in the importance they contribute to the terrorists' demands.

Aside from researching the impact of terrorism media coverage on the public, Weimann has also written about the importance of mass media for terrorists themselves. In his article "The Psychology of Mass-Mediated Terrorism," Weimann notes a considerable increase in media orientation by terrorists carrying out attacks between the 1960s and the 1990s (71). He states that "terrorist theory was gradually realizing the potential of the mass media. Acts of terrorism were more and more perceived as means of persuasion and psychological warfare" (71), the target of which are not the actual victims, but the audience watching through the media. As terrorism scholar Brian Jenkins argues, many terrorist groups do not have a central and strong following, and the media thus provide them with a way to spread their message and demands internationally, especially if their attacks play into the theatrical aspect the media seem to pick up on (4). Weimann calls 9/11 "the most powerful and violent performance of the modern theater of terror" (71) to date, impacting both national and international audiences with its "perfectly choreographed production" (71). Through mass media, terrorists have the opportunity to empower themselves. With the rise of the internet and social media, this becomes an increasingly complicated situation: free access to information and communication enables small terrorist organizations to carry out a big message. Mass media have the power to provide terrorists with the exact tools they need: a means to spread their message, and a way to instill fear in their target audience.

It now seems clear that the media play a vital role in modern day terrorism, both for terrorist organizations themselves, and for the people at whom terrorism is aimed. Before getting into the purpose of this thesis, it is important to understand why it is so easy for the media to manipulate, either consciously or unconsciously so, the public's perception of terrorism. When looking at terrorism in the field of academics, one must keep in mind its complicated workings, causes and effects. An important facet of understanding the workings of terrorism is understanding the concept itself, but in the case of terrorism, this might be easier said than done. The definition of terrorism as described in the United States Code of the FBI is as follows: activities that "involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law; Appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian

population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping" (FBI, par. 2). It also seems to be widely accepted that in the case of terrorism, "the victim may be totally unrelated to the terrorist's cause. Terrorism is violence aimed at the people watching. Fear is the intended effect, not the by-product, of terrorism" (Jenkins 1), a feature that distinguishes terrorism from common crime.

In spite of the many articles written about terrorism, its causes and its cures, there is no universally accepted definition of the concept. Most of the different definitions that are used are similar, but there is no consensus, neither legally, nor academically. As Brigitte Nacos points out in her book *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, this lack of a universal definition is not so surprising. She states that "[t]he definitional difficulty is rooted in the evaluation of one and the same terrorist act as either despicable or a justifiable means to political ends, as either the evil deed of ruthless terrorists or the justifiable act of freedom fighters and/or warriors of god" (16). Conflicting interests, morals, and ideals always stand in the way of finding a definition of terrorism that is accepted internationally. Add to this the notion that terrorism changes over time (with regards to its methods, goals, and perpetrators), and it is easy to understand why it is so difficult to reach a common consensus on terrorism's definition. Different institutions all have different definitions of terrorism, and international institutions like the United Nations struggle to come up with a universal definition that will be legally binding, out of fear that this definition would be subject to "profiling and targeting the followers of one religion" (United Nations, par. 4). On the other hand, it is also recognized that unity is needed because "[u]ntil all countries agreed on the enemy they sought to defeat, there would always be loopholes and safe havens for those criminals to escape justice and the rule of law" (United Nations, par. 2). However, in spite of this statement, an internationally recognized definition of terrorism still has not been established.

The lack of a universally accepted definition of the term terrorism complicates the ways in which the topic is dealt with greatly, both in legal terms, and in academic terms, but also in the way we interact with the term in everyday life. Because the semantics of terrorism are in a grey area, it is easy for institutions to influence our perception of what terrorism is, or should be, either consciously or unconsciously so, and the media are no exception to this rule. Both due to confusion over the actual definition and a more active effort to manipulate public opinion, media play an important role in defining terrorism for the public.

This thesis will make an analysis of the ways in which the media, for the purpose of this thesis newspapers in particular, construct their audience's notion of what terrorism is. The

media's role in our perception of terrorism is something that is already widely researched, as is mentioned in this introduction, but something that is underrepresented in current research is how and why the media choose to label something as terrorism. What causes media to define something as terrorism, and in what ways is it portrayed to its audience? How are events framed, what narratives are created by the media, and what are the implied effects on the audience? In short, what factors contribute to the media labelling some acts of violence as terrorism, while others are merely crimes committed by mentally unstable individuals? In order to answer these questions, we need to develop a better understanding of the mechanics at play that help both us and the media define something as terrorism.

This thesis will look at two case studies which are exemplary for United States domestic terrorism, i.e. terrorism committed by U.S. citizens targeted against U.S. citizens, and within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S. (FBI, par. 2). The first case study is the Boston Marathon bombing of April 15, 2013, in which two pressure cooker bombs exploded during the Boston Marathon, killing three civilians, and injuring many more. The second case study is the Charleston church shooting of June 17, 2015, in which a gunman killed nine people during a prayer service at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. While both can be considered terrorism by most general definitions of the concept (this thesis will use the FBI definition in the U.S. Code mentioned above as its standard definition), only the first, the Boston bombing, was labeled as such. By analyzing the ways in which four prominent, national, U.S. newspapers framed these events, this thesis will aim to find insights into the reasons for media to identify certain events as terrorism, and the ways in which they attempt to do so. The main focus of this thesis will be on the visual construction of terror, and thus mainly focus on the imagery accompanying the newspaper articles, as well as pay attention to the way in which these images are framed by the four newspapers, and the way in which the media establish the narratives that enter into the dominant discourse surrounding these events. By making an analysis of the visual construction of terrorism by the media, this thesis will aim to answer the research question: why was the Boston marathon bombing immediately regarded as a terrorist attack by mainstream media, while the Charleston church shooting was not, and what are the larger implications for way in which media influence our perception of terrorism?

The theoretical framework used for this thesis will depend on several of W.J.T. Mitchell's theories on visual culture, which help to analyze how terror is created visually, Udo Hebel's concept of interpictorial clusters, to analyze the images accompanying the news reports, and Stuart Hall's theory of encoding and decoding, which will assist in the analysis of

the way media embed messages in their news reports, and the way in which their audiences translate these messages. Other concepts included in this thesis pertain to media framing, the "Other," and Gabriel Weimann's theater of terror. In order to analyze the newspaper articles regarding the Boston bombing and the Charleston shooting, this thesis provides an iconography of terror consisting of different categories that are able to constitute and instill fear. Based on these categories this thesis will conduct an analysis of the two case studies, judging whether or not the newspapers adhere to this iconography.

Chapter 1, Theoretical Framework & Methodology

1.1 The Power of Images

Because this thesis will look at the visual aspect of constructing terrorism, it is important to understand the effects that visuals have on an audience. Images never exist on their own, they are never just an image. One of the leading scholars in the field of visual culture is W.J.T. Mitchell, professor of art history and English at the University of Chicago, and author of numerous books and articles that look at the way in which an audience interacts with images. As Mitchell argues in his book *What Do Pictures Want?,* images have a tendency "to absorb and be absorbed by human subjects in processes that look suspiciously like those of living things" (2). Even though images are still representations of reality, Mitchell argues that the imitations of life which images represent start to "take on "lives of their own"" (2). Images have the power to conjure up whole stories in the minds of their audience; stories that connect images to different images, different events, and different stories. As Mitchell argues in his book *Cloning Terror*, every history consists of two different perspectives: "[t]he first kind of history focuses on the facts and figures; the second concentrates on the images and words that define the framework within which those facts and figures make sense" (1). It is exactly this second history that this thesis will focus on. An audience needs images in order to make sense of an event; images that connect different events, conjure up memories, and give meaning to the circumstances.

In order to understand an image, and the effects an image can have on an audience, it is not only important to understand the image itself, but also the historical and social circumstances in which an image appears. As Winfried Fluck has stated in his article "Poor Like Us: Poverty and Recognition in American Photography," "[t]he meaning that we attribute to the image is the result of a narrative context that we bring to it and weave around it" (91). This need to understand the larger context of an image in order to make an analysis leads Udo Hebel to his envisioning of mapping interpictorial clusters, which he describes as "the implicit or explicit interplay between pictures" (404), a theory which can help us to describe the power, impact and function of certain images. Images have a way of entering into dialogue with other images, because they look similar in setting and framing, thus connecting different narratives with one another. Images have the ability to connote powerful social and political messages and conjure up feelings and memories in their audience through the power of association. Because terrorism related images are so striking and impressive, they have a

tendency to stay with us, and thus, interpictorial clusters are easily formed with regards to this kind of imagery.

In 1973, influential cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall developed his theory on the encoding and decoding of images, a theory that is still applicable in contemporary society. According to Hall, images in the media are encoded with a message from the creators, and it is up to the audience to decode this message. Encoding constitutes the creation of a message within a certain type of media, an image in this case. The creator of the media implements this message through verbal or non-verbal communication, using meaningful discourse to make this message comprehensible to the public (30). As Hall argues, an event, such as a terrorist attack, can never be transmitted in its "raw format" (29), only first-hand witnesses can experience the raw format of something they see. Events can, however, be transferred to an audience through the use of media discourse: "events can only be signified within the aural-visual forms of the televisual discourse. In the moment when a historical event passes under the sign of discourse, it is subject to all the complex formal 'rules' by which language signifies" (29). This discourse that Hall indicates needs to be meaningful in order for an audience to make sense of what they are seeing. Whereas many theories assume that media consumers are passive, a disempowered group that just takes in what is presented to them, Hall argues that the audience plays an active role in the decoding of an image, where different people have different interpretations depending on their personal, social and cultural background. The same image can be interpreted differently by different people based on knowledge that they already possess.

While Stuart Hall's theory of encoding and decoding mainly focuses on the discourses within the realm of television, his theory is equally relevant when it comes to still images. If we look at Hall's theory within the framework of this thesis, we can see how the processes of encoding and decoding can provide us with meaningful insights into both the motivations for media creators (or encoders) and the influence an image has on the audience (or decoders). Just as Mitchell argues, an image is never just an image. It was created with a purpose, one that is not necessarily just to represent the audience with a raw format, but more likely is encoded with a certain message. It is then up to the audience to make sense of this message though the process of decoding, and the audience will bring their own knowledge and experience to this process. With regards to terrorism imagery, which is at the center of this thesis, previous experiences like 9/11, which not only changed the United States, but the world as a whole, attribute to the way in which audiences decode a terrorism related image.

In his book *Cloning Terror,* Mitchell argues that since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, we have not only entered into the War on Terror, but also into a war of images: "this war has been fought on behalf of radically different images of possible futures; it has been waged against images . . . and it has been fought by means of images deployed to shock and traumatize the enemy, images meant to appall and demoralize, images designed to replicate themselves endlessly and to infect the collective imaginary of global populations" (2-3). This war is fueled by today's modern media such as the internet, in which images, with their viral, infectious character, have the ability to spread all over the world. Due to relatively recent developments in the field of images and media studies, like photography, film, television, and the internet, in short, mass-media, we have come to a point of saturation when it comes to image circulation in our contemporary society, to a degree that was unimaginable a few decades ago. This has prompted some scholars in the field of media studies to point out that we find ourselves in the time of the pictorial turn, which Mitchell describes as "a qualitative shift in the importance of images driven by their quantitative proliferation" (*Critical Terms* 37). This pictorial turn thus emphasizes the critical importance of visual material in our modern society.

If we take the image theories of Mitchell, Hall, and Hebel as our starting point, we can begin to analyze the ways in which images accompanying news stories have the capability to influence public opinion. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 largely function as the frame of reference for the way we view terrorism. Being the first large-scale mass-mediated terrorist attack, the visual impact of the event was, and remains huge, and has provided the public with a demarcation for our awareness of terror. As Mitchell argues, "the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York has provided the most memorable image of the twenty-first century so far" (*Cloning Terror* 78), becoming the symbol of modern terrorism, and setting a precedent for the public's expectations, beliefs, and fears.

Gabriel Weimann started his research on terrorism and the media in the 1980s, and has continued working on this topic up until the present, showing the developments in the field since 9/11. While Weimann and other scholars like Brian Jenkins already noted the spectacularly dramatic character of terrorist attacks in the media before the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, Weimann stresses that 9/11 changed the relation of terrorists and the media through its immaculately thought out and choreographed execution. It took the previous concept of the theater of terror to a new extreme. Because the September 11 attacks were so unique in their theatrical execution, this resulted in an unprecedented amount of media coverage dedicated to the event. According to polls, all Americans followed the news

surrounding the 9/11 attacks (99%-100% of the American population), and globally it became "the most watched terrorist spectacle ever" (Weimann "Theater of Terror" 72), a title previously held by the terrorist attack on the Israeli Olympic team during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

1.2 Iconography of Terror

The term terrorism automatically conjures up certain words and images because of the precedent of previous media coverage of attacks like 9/11. What then, are the images we associate with terrorism in contemporary society? If we do take 9/11 as our frame of reference, which, due to its unprecedented mass-mediated nature is advisable, what kinds of images are conjured when we think about it? Categories like chaos, devastation, explosions, blood, and dead bodies come to mind, as does the identity of the perpetrators, who are often characterized as the "Other." These categories, depicted in imagery, have the power to connote terrorism. When images pertaining to these categories appear in the media, tied to certain events and within the context of our post-9/11 society, they conjure up memories, and connect to narratives of past terrorist attacks. Some events, through the framing of their media coverage, will thus automatically be associated with terrorism, while others, framed in different terms, might not.

For the purpose of this thesis, I have set up an iconography of terror: a set of categories that, through the power of association, can be linked to terrorism, especially when we look at the 9/11 attacks. There are five categories that will be discussed in the light of the two case studies: chaos, bombs/explosions, blood/bodies, heroization/victimization, and the Muslim "Other". The significance and relevance of these categories will be briefly explained within the scope of this research.

Chaos

The word chaos is routinely used by many people when recounting the imagery from the 9/11 attacks: hordes of people fleeing the burning buildings, aimlessly running along the streets of lower Manhattan, doing anything to get away from the scene, nobody knowing exactly what is going on, and why it is happening. In an essay written by Jean Baudrillard, influential sociologist and philosopher, Baudrillard calls the World Trade Center attacks of 2001 an excellent example of chaos theory: "an initial impact causing incalculable consequences" (23). Baudrillard claims that "we have to face facts, and accept that a new

terrorism has come into being, a new form of action which plays the game, and lays hold of the rules of the game, solely with the aim of disrupting it" (19). Terrorism thrives on chaos, because it inspires anxiety and fear, which is why terrorists will do everything to provoke chaos.

It is also important to note that the chaos that was a part of 9/11 was not entirely new to its audiences. It might have been new in the context of terrorism and reality, but this kind of chaos has been premediated countless times in big Hollywood disaster movies. As Stephen Keane argues in his book *Disaster Movies: The Cinema of Catastrophe*, the images of 9/11 that were broadcasted on television bordered the hyperreal, as it was hard to distinguish reality from fiction. The attacks played out like a movie. He argues that "[w]here contemporary Hollywood cinema has worked in convincing us of the reality of its spectacle, television and documentary reconstructions of the events of 9/11 have presented us with as form of reality *as* spectacle. From the images themselves to the ways in which the events were to be conveyed through the sort of narrative and grammar found in disaster movies, the most mediated disaster of all time was also to become the most cinematic in terms of its initial scope and subsequent re-construction" (91). Previously mediated, disaster movies help us to make sense of what happened "in visual forms – and in overall 'language' – that we are familiar with" (Keane 91). Take for instance the 1998 movie *Armageddon*, in which a meteorite threatens to wipe out a large part of planet earth, and one scene shows the destruction of New York City (Appendix 1). When comparing an image from the movie, to the image of the 9/11 attacks (Appendix 2), it becomes strikingly clear how, through interpictorial clusters, we connect the kind of chaos and devastation from disaster movies to terrorism and 9/11. Both pictures are similar both in framing and subject matter, showing the destruction of the Twin Towers from a similar far away perspective, as beacons of American technology and prosperity, with the smoke billowing from the massive towers.

Bombs/explosions

While no conclusive research has been done on this topic, it is safe to assume that bombs are more easily associated with terrorism than guns are. Indeed, many of the notable acts of domestic terrorism committed in the United States involved bombs, such as the Wall street bombing (1920), the Unabomber attacks (1978-1995), the World Trade Center bombing (1993), and the Oklahoma City bombing (1995). Because bombs are not readily available to buy in store (and guns are, in the United States), an attack involving a bomb indicates considerable premeditation from the perpetrators. Premeditation in its turn is often more

associated with carefully thought out motivation, and consideration. Because the term terrorism connotes political and ideological motivations rather than impulse, and its goal is to try and influence policy is some way, the premeditated nature of bomb use causes us to connect it to terrorism faster than we would with a gun shooting. Those who commit crimes with guns, could do so acting from impulse, and are thus less easily associated with terrorism. This is not to say that shootings cannot be premeditated, but they are not necessarily so. Additionally, the United States is involved in a complicated gun debate, with the right to bear arms being protected under the second amendment, and it is easy to see why gun violence is not immediately regarded as terrorism. Bombs also play into the idea of terrorism as theater. Their spectacular nature draws media attention, whereas guns are less overwhelming in that area. If a terrorist's intention is to intimidate and coerce a population, bombs are certainly more effective. Furthermore, the image of explosions is premediated in Hollywood blockbusters and thus imprinted in the collective imaginary. Similar to the disaster movie, many Hollywood action movies promote violence and let their audiences see the excitement of devastation.

Blood/bodies

As previously established by Gabriel Weimann, terrorist attacks, especially since 9/11 have become increasingly spectacular and graphic. While the theatrical nature of the attacks themselves are already a cause for horror, it is often also the display of actual victims that causes audiences to grasp the full terror of an attack. I will exemplify this with the *Falling Man* image, a photograph taken by Richard Drew of a man falling (or jumping) from the north tower of the World Trade Center after being trapped on one of the top floors on 9/11 (Appendix 3). The image was published in *the New York Times* the day after the attacks. The image was highly controversial, because many people felt it was an insult to the dead, and, maybe more importantly "an unbearably brutal shock to the living" (Linfield, par. 1). Images of people jumping to their deaths became a taboo, which took a very long time to break. The issue is addressed in a novel by Don DeLillo, aptly titled *Falling Man*, which came out in 2007. This example illustrates how images showing the tragedy for the actual victims of terrorism have the power to create more fear and trauma than images of the attacks themselves. It shows the full impact of an event on actual human lives, and thus emphasizes the reality of a terrorist attack. As Mitchell's theories underline, audiences need visual confirmation in order to fully make sense of the reality, and to construct narratives around an event.

On top of this, there is the notion that imagery of blood or victims always has a certain allure to their audiences. As Susan Sontag established in her essay "Regarding the Pain of Others," which analyzes the attraction of audiences to imagery of war and suffering, when looking at these kinds of images, we all become voyeurs, "whether or not we mean to be" (34). Sontag argues that gruesome images have the ability to allure: "[e]veryone knows that what slows down highway traffic going past a horrendous car crash is not only curiosity" (75), and that to some degree, it is human to find a certain amount of "delight in other people's suffering" (76). Above all, Sontag argues, we live in a "society of spectacle," in which "each situation has to be turned into a spectacle to be real – that is, interesting – to us" (85). We have become desensitized to suffering to a certain degree, which is why imagery always needs to be more graphic and more spectacular in order to be interesting and impacting. This notion, of audiences in some way seeing beauty in, or longing for imagery of suffering and devastation, becomes less abstract when, again, thinking of popular blockbuster films. Think for instance of the successful horror movie franchise *Saw*, in which the Jigsaw killer submits his victims to a number of tests, meant to torture them physically and psychologically. The success of these films underlines the human fascination with seeing other people's pain and suffering.

Heroization/victimization

When we look at 9/11 imagery, something that reoccurs is the theme of heroism. One of the most iconic images in the aftermath of the attacks is that of firefighters raising the American flag at Ground Zero (Appendix 4), a photograph taken by Thomas E. Franklin of *The Record*. This is a very powerful image, because it represents the very spirit the American people wanted to embody in the wake of 9/11. The firefighters are depicted as the American heroes, who, despite the injustice that has been done, will remain strong and unified. The picture has also been compared to the American flag raising at Iwo Jima, an iconic photograph from 1945 taken by Joe Rosenthal (Appendix 5). This is an excellent example of Udo Hebel's interpictorial clusters. Both pictures are incredibly similar in their mise-en-scène. Both pictures feature an American flag at the center of the frame, slightly tilted to the left, being raised by the American heroes. The staging, framing and historical circumstances of the pictures are very much alike. Both images are a "visualization of the moment of attack and defeat with the prospect of victory and national glory" (Hebel 13). There were certainly setbacks during the Battle of Iwo Jima, but the Americans were eventually victorious in World War II. By recreating the Iwo Jima image within the context of 9/11, the image tries to

communicate a similar spirit: as long as we have American heroes fighting for us, we will triumph. The United States is simultaneously depicted as the victim and the hero in the story. Images that encode heroism, especially in circumstances of (temporary) defeat, thus have the ability to conjure up images of 9/11.

The Muslim "Other"

A large part of the reasoning behind our defining of terrorism has to do with the perpetrator. In the 18th century, philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel stated that in order to define the Self, and reach self-consciousness, a counterpart was needed, the so-called "Other." This concept has since been applied by many great scholars and theoreticians, for instance by Edward Saïd, who, in his book *Orientalism*, describes how the process of "othering" justified the domination of people during the colonial and imperial era, and established the superiority of the colonists. According to Saïd, the Orient Other was depicted as "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different"' (40), and by default, this makes the Self "rational, virtuous, mature, "normal"" (40). Through the process of othering, we juxtapose ourselves to the "Other," to those who are different from ourselves, in order to define superiority and inferiority. The practice of othering has been applied to many different categories, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.

Since the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the wars that followed the events, the Western world has become steadily more apprehensive about Islam, and this seemed to initiate the Clash of Civilizations that Samuel Huntington predicted almost a decade earlier. In their book *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy*, Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg try to explain how and why the Western world has developed the view of "Muslim intolerance and Islamic Otherness" (2), dedicating this view to the imaging of Muslims by the media, for instance through their depiction in cartoons, that establish and confirm stereotypes and create an "American norm." They are "distinguished from "us" by characteristics that "they" have (and implicitly, "we" do not; e.g., disunity, wickedness, irrationality). Or they may be distinguishable by characteristics "they" lack (e.g., civilization, restraint, morality) that "we" presumably have" (63). Gottschalk and Greenberg also criticize the media for their "consistent disinterest in nonviolent Muslim perspectives" (2), thereby only strengthening the stereotypical norm in the United States. The image of the Muslim "Other" has become so powerful in contemporary media, that it has become a marker for terrorism.

In his book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, Jack Shaheen illustrates how films have created a villainous stereotype for Arabs in the United States, how this

stereotype was present way before 9/11, and how the attacks have only worsened Hollywood's representation of Arabs. Shaheen argues,

> "[i]t's not easy to face the fact that Arab-as-villain images have been around for more than a century, reaching and affecting most of the world's six billion people. From the earliest silent films of the 1880s, damaging portraits have become so prevalent that viewers of film and TV shows demonstrating these stereotypes may come to perceive reel Arabs as real ones. Constantly repeated, these stereotypes manipulate viewers' thoughts and feelings, conditioning them to ratchet up the forces of rage and unreason. And even persecution" (1).

This tendency to portray Arabs and Muslims merely in stereotypes (Shaheen mentions "Villains, Sheikhs, Maidens, Egyptians, and Palestinians" (19) as the five main categories), these movies "routinely elevate the humanity of Westerners and trample the humanity of Arabs, sometimes while also denigrating Islam" (2). This dehumanization is again underlined in the absence of "images of ordinary Arab men, women, and children living ordinary lives. Movies fail to project exchanges between friends, social and family events" (19). Arabs are reduced to one of the stereotypical categories, none of which represent the everyday reality. This confirms Edward Saïd's theories of the "Other." Arabs and Muslims are depicted as villains or other negative stereotypes in order to affirm the 'righteousness' of the self, who lives in the Western world.

By analyzing the two case studies in the light of these five categories; chaos, bombs/explosions, blood/bodies, heroization/victimization, and the Muslim "Other", this thesis aims to make an assessment of how the media defines and constructs terrorism. Under what circumstances do these categories appear in the media, and is it correct to assume that an event is more likely to be defined as terrorism when these categories are in play? In order to answer these questions, two case studies will be included in this thesis, the Boston marathon bombing, and the Charleston church shooting.

1.3 Case Studies

The first case study this thesis will analyze is the Boston marathon bombing of 15 April, 2013. During the Boston marathon in 2013, two pressure cooker bombs exploded near the marathon's finish line, as a large number of participants were yet to finish. The explosions killed three people, and injured an estimated 264 more. The FBI lead the investigation that

followed and two suspects were named: Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, two Muslim-American citizens, aged twenty-six and nineteen at the time. Following a shooting (in which a MIT police officer was killed) and an unprecedented manhunt, Tamerlan was killed by law enforcement, and Dzhokhar was taken into custody. A little over two years after the attacks, Dzhokhar was sentenced to the death penalty. He is currently being held in United States Penitentiary, Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX), in Florence, Colorado.

The brothers' motives for committing the attacks were partly rooted in their Islamic belief. The last place the Tsarnaev family lived before migrating to the United States was Dagestan, a largely Islamic, southern region of Russia. Tamerlan travelled back there for six months in 2012, a period during which he radicalized, in part due to his inability to fully integrate in American society (Greene, par. 7). According to Dzhokhar, his older brother was the one who masterminded the attacks (Pearson, par. 43), and he has also said that the U.S. driven wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were the driving motivation for the bombings. The brothers had no official affiliations with terrorist groups, and instead found the information on how to make bombs through the internet, on a website managed by Al-Qaeda. While Tamerlan radicalized quite some time before the attacks took place, Dzhokhar seemed to be recruited by his older brother only shortly before the attacks (Siddique, par. 7).

The second case study this thesis will examine is the Charleston church shooting, which took place in a church in Charleston, South Carolina on the evening of 17 June, 2015. During a prayer service at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, nine people were killed by a twenty-one-year-old gunman named Dylann Roof. The victims were all African-American. Roof sat in on the prayer service for about an hour before opening fire. When asked why he was doing this by the churchgoers, he replied: "you rape our women and you're taking over our country. And you have to go" (Sandoval et al. "Dylann Storm Roof," par. 7). After the shooting a manhunt ensued, and Roof was captured by law enforcement the following morning. He is currently still awaiting his trial, facing federal hate crime charges.

Roof's attack was motivated from a white supremacist viewpoint. A few days after the shooting took place, a manifesto surfaced in which he explains why he targeted African Americans and why he chose to carry out his attack in Charleston:

> "I am not in the position to, alone, go into the ghetto and fight. I chose Charleston because it is [*sic*] most historic city in my state, and at one time had the highest ratio of blacks to Whites in the country. We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me" (Robles, par. 3).

Roof's interest in white supremacist movements allegedly sparked when Trayvon Martin, an African American teenager was shot and killed by a neighborhood watch volunteer, an incident that caused major protests around the nation. Roof was not able to understand why people were so aggravated about the crime, and he started looking up other similar cases, which increasingly radicalized him. Roof believes in the absolute superiority of the white race, and according to a friend, said that he believes "blacks were taking over the world" (Silverstein, par. 2).

These two case studies were chosen to illustrate the ways in which the media in our modern, terrorism-focused society look at certain events, and determine to what extent they adhere to our preconceived notions of what terrorism is. Both case studies are recent, and we can thus try to determine what impact earlier events like 9/11 have had on our perceptions of terrorism, and the way in which the media handle these perceptions and preconceived notions. Both case studies meet the criteria to deem the event an act of domestic terrorism. Both attacks were committed by U.S. citizens, were targeted against U.S. citizens, and were committed within the jurisdiction of the United States, and both attacks were meant to intimidate a group of people, had political or ideological motivations, and caused destruction. However, in the media coverage that followed immediately after the attacks took place (even before any concrete details surrounding the perpetrators and their motivations were known), only the Boston bombing was labeled an act of terrorism, whereas the Charleston shooting was labeled a hate crime. This shows an interesting phenomenon, and makes these two case studies particularly interesting to analyze in order to assess the way in which the media and their audiences view terrorism.

1.4 Methodology

In order to analyze the two case studies, this thesis will look at articles from four prominent national newspapers in the United States: *the New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Daily News*, and *the Washington Post*. These newspapers were chosen because they all rank among the highest nationwide circulation, and represent both middle market newspapers (*USA Today* and *Daily News*), and upper market newspapers (*the New York Times* and *the Washington Post*), headquartered in different parts of the United States. By choosing large, national newspapers rather than smaller local newspapers, one can more easily assess the effect on the larger public and attempt to rule out any geographical bias. This thesis will focus on initial responses to both case studies and thus will look at articles published the first couple of days

after the events took place, in order to keep the frame of reference as small as possible. The articles used for this thesis are taken from the websites of the respective newspapers, and the images included within the articles constitute the visual archive from which I will draw (see appendix).

In order to make an assessment not only of the images accompanying the news reports, but also of the way in which media outlets frame their images through their use of language, mainly in headlines, it is important to also have an understanding of the concept of media framing. As Kirk Hallahan explains in his publication "Seven Models of Framing: Implications for Public Relations," news framing is the process of "how news stories are portrayed or framed by the media in an effort to explain complex or abstract ideas in familiar, culturally resonating terms" (221). The frame of a news report has the ability to alter its audience's perception of certain events, encouraging certain definitions and interpretations by emphasizing certain aspects of an event, while discouraging other interpretations through underexposure. As Hallahan argues, news framing is "essentially a tool of power that can be used in the struggle to define whose view in the world will predominate" (223). Seeing as the media create the dominant narrative around any news event, because they choose both the imagery and the frame that enter into the dominant discourse, it is extremely important to keep in mind that the media are able to alter or manipulate the course of a narrative through their choice of framing.

With the rise of the internet, researchers, especially within the field of media studies, are faced with certain challenges. Social media have vastly increased the number of people who can circulate images (think of amateur photographers and witnesses of an event) and the ease with which the images are distributed. While this is a development that poses new and exciting questions within this field of research, I have chosen not to put the main focus on any of these responses to terrorism, but to focus on the more regulated national newspapers in order to narrow the scope of my research. Additionally, the influence of more "conventional" media is much easier to quantify than for instance an image on Facebook, and thus, the analysis of newspapers is more appropriate within the scope of this thesis.

The following two chapters of this thesis will look at the case studies, the Boston marathon bombing and the Charleston church shooting, respectively. Each chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the media coverage in the four newspapers mentioned above, with an emphasis on the images included in the articles. Using the theoretical concepts on the power of images by Mitchell, Hebel, and Hall, the concept of media framing, and Weimann's theories on the power of mass mediated terrorism, we can start to assess the influence these

pictures have. Using the five categories in the iconography of terror and drawing on the images from the newspapers, I will analyze to what extent they can be applied to the case studies.

The fourth and final chapter of this thesis will provide a comparative analysis in which I will look at the similarities and differences between the two case studies. How do they differ in terms of design and choreography, and what implications does that have for my research question? What are the fundamental differences between the two case studies with regards to visual representations? How does media framing contribute to the dominant narrative that is created around an event? By looking at these questions, the last chapter will provide an answer to the main question at hand: why was the Boston marathon bombing immediately regarded as a terrorist attack by mainstream media, while the Charleston church shooting was not, and what are the larger implications for way in which media influence our perception of terrorism?

Chapter 2, The Boston Marathon Bombing: "Terror Returns."

On April 15 2013, the 117th annual Boston marathon, an event that had over 23,000 participants, was disrupted by the detonation of two pressure cooker bombs, killing three civilians and injuring another 264. The bombs left the Boston marathon in extreme chaos, with some people fleeing the scene, while others tried to help the hundreds of wounded. In his address to the nation immediately following the attacks, president Obama was cautious to refer to the attacks as terrorism, saying that we did not know the full story yet. However, the day after the attacks took place, Obama addressed the nation again, exclaiming that, because there were bombs involved, it had to be an act of terror. The media were also quick to respond to the attacks, and as this chapter will argue, they were also quick to label the attacks as terrorism.

The day after the attacks, major newspapers all headlined with articles and photos describing what had happened. *The New York Times* chose to stay away from explicitly calling the attacks terrorism in their headlines, and giving a more neutral account of what happened: "Blasts at Boston Marathon Kill 3 and Injure 100." *The Washington Post* was somewhat objective, in that it used words spoken by president Obama in its headline, but used the word terror nonetheless: "An 'act of terror' in Boston." The middle market newspapers however, chose to explicitly include the label of terror in their headlines from the very beginning (*USA Today*: "Terror Returns," and "That post-9/11 quiet? It's over," and *Daily News*: "Marathon Massacre: Terror Blasts Rock Boston"). While some newspapers may have been more outspoken than others, none of them denied the fact that these attacks were terrorism, or questioned this fact until more details are known. Even *the New York Times*, which included Obama's statement that the media should not jump to conclusions based on incomplete information (Eligon and Cooper, par. 6), exclaims that "any event with multiple explosive devices — as this appears to be — is clearly an act of terror, and will be approached as an act of terror (par. 6).

This chapter will attempt to analyze the ways in which the imagery accompanying these articles and headlines has the ability to influence their audience's perception of an event, and through the power of association, conjure up other images of terrorism, related to recent catastrophes such as 9/11 and American warfare. The most important questions that need to be answered are: what kind of images are featured in these articles, and do these images correspond with our preconceived notions of terrorism formed by previous attacks such as 9/11, and if so, how? In order to answer these questions, this chapter will analyze the five

categories that make up the iconography of terror: chaos, bombs/explosions, blood/bodies, heroization/victimization, and the Muslim "Other," which will help to explore the discourses and strategies that are at work when audiences process media imagery regarding terrorism.

2.1 Chaos

Upon the detonation of the two bombs near the finish line of the marathon, utter chaos and panic broke out. All newspapers report witnesses who exclaimed that due to uncertainty over what happened and the sheer amount of people who were present at the time of the attack "pandemonium erupted" (Eligon and Cooper, par. 3). As *USA Today* reported one day after the attacks, "[r]unners, their loved one [*sic*] and race workers described a scene of chaos, smoke and blood that is reminded some of war zones far away across the world" (Dorell, par. 4) recalling how "[c]heers turned to terrified screams as panic swept over the crowd" (Hampson and Raasch, par. 3). Immediately these descriptions are linked, either explicitly, or implicitly so, to other terrorist attacks and likened to war zones. The imagery accompanying these articles and eye witness accounts, helps to reinforce these similarities.

First of all, the imagery regarding the chaos of running will be examined. Several images accompanying an article in *the New York Times* show a panicked crowd disparages and runs away (Appendix 6-7), headlined "pandemonium erupted as runners and spectators scattered." An image in *the Washington Post* shows the explosion of the second bomb, which happened some twelve seconds after the first explosion (Appendix 8). The photo shows the explosion in the background, with in the front, people trying to escape the spectator stands and run onto the street and away to safety. These photographs, portraying crowds running away, scared for their lives, are not a new image. Right after 9/11 there were countless pictures and videos of crowds aimlessly running through the streets of New York, trying to avoid the cloud of dust and debris coming at them, and people trying to flee the scene, trying to escape from the Twin Towers (Appendix 9). While the picture of 9/11 displays more of a close up of the chaos, and the picture in *the Washington Post* gives more of a zoomed out overview of the scene, the two have a very similar mise-en-scène with regard to their subject matter, framing, and setting. Both display the smoke of the attack in the background, while the foreground shows a panicked crowd that tries to get away from the smoke or explosion. Both images are framed by buildings on either side of the image, while a street runs through the middle, on which the crowd of people tries to escape. These similarities did not go

unnoticed as one eyewitness remarks in an article in *USA Today*: "[l]ike a scene from 9/11, everyone started running down the street" (Dorell, par. 13).

When comparing the image from 9/11 to the images of the Boston Marathon, many similarities can be found. Both photographs show people panicking, running away from a cloud of dust, which is caused by an explosion. The chaos is captured in people's panicked response to flee the scene. As discussed in the previous chapter, pictures that connote chaos and devastation like this are often likened to Hollywood blockbusters. In the wake of 9/11 it was said that the event mimicked scenes of big budget disaster movies. The associable nature of these images thus has the power to influence the way we view them. Where 9/11 was often likened to a scene from a disaster movie, the Boston bombing was like a scene from 9/11. Through the concept of Udo Hebel's interpictorial clusters, the images of the Boston bombing thus not only become linked to the 9/11 attacks, but also to the idea of a disaster, as previously mediated through popular culture.

Another theme that needs to be explored within the larger context of chaos is the notion of uncertainty. As the pressure cooker bombs detonated, it was unclear what had happened exactly. In the chaos that ensued, with some people fleeing the scene and others being rushed away to be given medical care, many people lost track of each other. *The Washington Post* published a picture of a woman holding up a sign "near Copley Square in Boston as she looks for her missing friend, April, who was running in her first Boston Marathon" (Appendix 10). The picture's mise-en-scène is meaningful here. The photograph is taken in such a way that the woman holding the sign is in focus, while all the other people around her are out of focus, illustrating the chaotic facelessness of the panicked mass of people, and underlining the uncertainty of the situation. Another picture shows the emotional release after runner John Ounao finds his friends (Appendix 11). The chaos created uncertainty in many ways, raising questions like who did it, and who survived? These are the same questions that were among the first reactions to 9/11. However, there is a big distinction between the two. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 created uncertainty mainly because it was an unprecedented attack. The United States had never witnessed a terrorist attack that was carried out on this scale, with such sophistication. It is exactly because of the precedent set by 9/11, that the reaction of panic and chaos during the Boston bombing was all the bigger. While the same questions of uncertainty raised in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 could be applied to the Boston bombing, there was more certainty over the nature of terrorism at the time, because of the country's previous experiences. This is a fact that is both illustrated in the

articles and their headlines, as previously mentioned, people likening the attack to a scene from 9/11.

Lastly, it is important to note that many newspapers likened the chaos of the Boston Bombing to that of a warzone, a statement that is supported by the photographs published in these newspapers. In the post-9/11 society we live in, war has become so intrinsically linked to terrorism that this kind of comparison is a very powerful one, as it has the ability to automatically connect terrorism to these attacks. The pictures published in newspapers show the site of the attacks as a battlefield, a mix of law enforcement, medical personnel, panicked crowds of people, and blood. The picture published on the front cover of *the New York Times* illustrates this warzone chaos. An injured woman is pictured in the front, who is being tended to by two men trying to stop her bleeding. The sidewalk she lies on is covered in blood, and in the background a clutter of people helping the wounded is pictured (Appendix 12). One of the subtitles on the cover page reads, "War Zone at Mile 26: 'So Many People Without Legs.'" The image is thus enhanced by the newspaper's choice of headline. *The New York Times* decided to frame the Boston bombing by connecting its imagery to a war narrative. Since the attacks of 9/11, and the United States' involvement in the War on Terror, war has become a big part of our understanding of terrorism, and the associations we have with the term. Saying that the site of the attack is like a warzone, especially when accompanied by such explicit visual representations thereof, thus creates a connection between these attacks and terrorism.

Looking at Stuart Hall's theory of encoding and decoding, it is possible to deduce the way in which these images carry messages onto their audiences. By explicitly comparing the site of the attack to a warzone, and publishing pictures that display certain imagery that we associate with war (i.e. blood, chaos, etc.), the newspapers encode their articles with this notion. Audiences in their turn, decode these articles and images based on their previous knowledge and experiences. The attacks of 9/11 initiated the War on Terror, a conflict that has dragged on for over 15 years, and in many ways has changed the idea of conventional warfare. Through the audience's years of experience with this kind of warfare, war and terrorism thus become so related, that during their decoding of media messages, audiences connect the dots between their experiences with war, which are so often related to terrorism, and the attacks in Boston.

2.2 Bombs/explosions

One day after the attacks took place, Obama gave a speech proclaiming that "any time bombs are used to target innocent civilians, it is an act of terror" (Landler, par. 4). Even

though the president also admitted that they had little more information than the day before about the circumstances of the bombing, and he refrained from using the term terrorism the previous day, he was positive that this was an act of terrorism. This, as Landler discusses in his article, "attests to the lack of reliable information in the chaotic aftermath of the attack and the extreme sensitivity of any president invoking the notion of terrorism" (par. 2). This highlights the pressure on both media and politics to label an event. Even before there was any information at all about the perpetrators and their motives, there was a need to establish whether or not this event should be called terrorism. Immediate media coverage of possible terrorist attacks, or any other event for that matter, rests more on initial assumption rather than on fact. The media report on issues they are able to deduce from the little information that they initially have. For the media, as well as for president Obama, an attack involving explosives has a high likelihood of being a terrorist attack, simply because it indicates premeditation. Indeed, there is no such thing as a store bought bomb.

When looking at imagery with regards to this category, a reoccurring notion, once again, is the notion of the attack site as a war zone. Explosions, smoke and devastation are inextricably linked to our perceptions of modern warfare. The nature of the attacks thus plays an invaluable role in how we perceive or label them. As previously illustrated, the explosions of the pressure cooker bombs at the Boston marathon are not unlike the explosions audiences have gotten used to seeing on the news in the light of the War on Terror, or even the smoking World Trade Center in 2001. This association is not just constructed through news coverage of non-fictional events, but also perpetuated in the countless movies and television shows that mediate images of war and destruction. Through its presence in the media, we are conditioned to connect imagery of bombs to war, just as we have started to associate war with terrorism. As Mitchell argues, pictures never exist on their own. Although they might be a representation of reality, audiences only make sense of this reality through a series of other images and previous experiences; they define the framework audiences use to make sense of facts and figures. Previously mediated representations of both a fictional and non-fictional nature constitute this framework. The images that came out of the September 11 attacks, of explosions, smoke and destruction have reached an iconic status. Just as the Twin Towers themselves were icons for globalization and capitalism, pictures of 9/11, of the two towers with pillars of smoke rising from them, have become equally as iconic, illustrating horror, fear and destruction. Images regarding terrorism were "designed to replicate themselves endlessly and to infect the collective imaginary of global populations" (Mitchell *Cloning Terror* 2-3). Through other attacks, like the Boston bombing, these images, which show similarities to

their 'original' are further replicated, and they help to spread and inspire the same kind of fear and horror.

While the attacks in Boston were executed on a much smaller scale, and were a lot less sophisticated and well planned than the 9/11 attacks were, they still became a media spectacle. Bombs have a certain overwhelming, dramatic, theatrical effect. Assuming that terrorism is not targeted at the actual victims but at a much larger group, intending to instill fear in everyone who witnesses it, it is easy to understand why perpetrators want their actions to be mass-mediated. The image of an explosion is not only tied to our notion of warfare, but also has the ability to trigger a kind of fascination and excitement within its viewers, because we link it to forms of entertainment such as blockbuster movies. Look for instance at the movie poster for the movie *White House Down* (2012), produced by Roland Emmerich. On the poster we see the two heroes of the movie, played by Channing Tatum and Jamie Foxx, while in the background the White House is under attack, with explosions dotting the background of the poster (Appendix 13). This is exactly the kind of imagery that attacks like the Boston bombing are able to conjure up, and through this, trigger our fascination. When we think about contemporary action movies, we automatically think about the hero being just in time to get away from an exploding building, a wild car chase, a police shootout, all of which happened as the events of the Boston bombing enfolded. The dramatic nature of the bombing drew people in, and in the days that followed, the story that played out in the media, in newspapers and on television, was not unlike a movie plot. This again underlines the idea of modern day terrorism as theater.

2.3 Blood/bodies

What is striking and most unsettling about the photographs published in the newspapers after the bombings, is the amount of victims and blood that are displayed. The newspapers chose to publish these photos, instead of only verbally reporting on the bombs and their victims, and in doing so, they actually visualize them for their audiences. Through this visualization, they once more emphasize the notion of the attack site as a warzone, and underline the spectacular and dramatic nature of the events. Especially *Daily News* and *USA Today*, the middle market newspapers, report more on the explicit visual nature of the attacks as opposed to objectively giving an overview of what happened. *Daily News* reports that "[t]he twin bombs packed a killer punch that sent spectators and racers flying, ripping through flesh and tearing limbs from bodies, staining street and sidewalk in blood" (Ford et al., par. 5),

and an eye witness account that testifies "[s]omebody's leg flew by my head" (Ford et al., par. 6). *USA Today* reports of an eye witness saying "[o]ne guy had no legs. The bones was [*sic*] just sticking out. ... It was horrible" (Dorell, par. 6). These statements are illustrated by the graphic photographs of blood and victims.

These images, especially in relation to their captions and the articles themselves, again invoke the idea of Boston being transformed into a battlefield, or a movie set. As a professional Boston marathon race photographer notes in *USA Today*, "I'm not a war correspondent … I'm not used to seeing people blown up with injuries" (Dorell, par. 18). Yet these are exactly the kinds of injuries that people are faced with. A picture published in *Daily News* shows a man being transported in a wheelchair, missing his lower left leg (Appendix 14). His actual injury is blurred by the newspaper. This is the only image that was published in one of the newspapers that was actually censored, because of its extreme shocking content. All other images, no matter their graphic nature, were all published in full. By publishing these kinds of images, the newspapers consciously project the visual representations of the statements of eye witnesses onto the imaginary of their audiences. Showing the distress and reality of the victims influences the emotional reaction of the audience.

At the same time, these newspapers satisfy the kind of fascination modern day audiences have with blood, gore, and graphic violence, as theorized by Susan Sontag. As she argues, audiences take a certain delight in watching the pain and suffering of other people, even if it is an unconscious delight (76). In the same way the image of explosions feeds into our fascination with action movies, the image of blood satisfies a similar interest that has been displayed in modern day Hollywood blockbusters. Take for instance the example of recent movies *Django Unchained* (2012) and *The Hateful Eight* (2015), directed by Quentin Tarantino. While both movies display extreme violence, featuring scenes with excessive amounts of blood, they were both hugely successful. The vast majority of the plot of *The Hateful Eight* takes place in a stagecoach lodge, which, by the end of the film has been transformed into a bloodbath, the whole lodge being covered in blood and corpses. Tarantino leaves very little to the imagination when it comes to graphic violence. By the end of the movie, character Daisy Domergue's face is covered in her brother's blood, after he was shot right in front of her (Appendix 15). Although it is true that movies let us explore our fascination with blood from the safety and comfort of our own home or the movie theater, and that the blood-stained sidewalks of the Boston bombing represent a more uncomfortable reality, movies, such as Tarantino's, do encourage their audiences to see the excitement of blood and devastation.

The media know that sensationalist pictures and headlines do well with their audiences, and thus will be more inclined to publish pictures to feed into this. Take for instance the image on the front cover of *Daily News* after the Boston bombing took place. It shows a dazed and confused woman, covered in blood, sitting on the blood stained sidewalk at the Boston marathon (Appendix 16). This cover shows some implicit similarities with Hollywood movie sets, not unlike the ones in Tarantino's films. The media know they have to compete with one another for their audiences, and thus try to make their covers as appealing and interesting as possible. As Sontag points out, we live in a "society of spectacle" (85). Every situation needs to be turned into something spectacular in order for our desires and fascinations to be satisfied, and the visual representations of the Boston bombing really play into this notion. The media respond to the modern day fascination with spectacle and gore, with stories and pictures that correspond with this fascination.

2.4 Heroization/Victimization

As stated before, terrorism is not aimed at the actual victims of an attack, but more so at the people watching. As terrorism's main objective is to coerce a group or population in order to achieve a political or ideological goal, it needs to instill fear in its target audience. It is important to understand the framing of 9/11 in the United States as an attack not just on the World Trade Center, not just on New York City, but an attack on the nation as a whole and on the American people. In the address George W. Bush gave to the nation on September 11, 2001, this framing becomes excessively clear:

> Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. … Our country is strong. A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. … America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining. Today, our nation saw evil -- the very worst of human nature -- and we responded with the best of America. With the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could (Bush, par. 1-2).

Bush's speech simultaneously treats the American people as the victims of the attack, as well as the heroes who will overcome. He explicitly states that this was an attack on the nation and its people, their freedoms and their opportunities, and even links back to the very foundations

of the nation and echoing John Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity*, by referring to the United States as the brightest beacon. In this way, Bush frames the American nation as the victims in this situation. At the same time, the American people are the ones who will be able to overcome this tragedy and become the heroes in the story, by aiding others, and rebuilding what was destroyed.

This simultaneous heroization and victimization of the nation and its people in the wake of 9/11 is illustrated in the iconic picture of firefighters raising the American flag at Ground Zero (Appendix 4). It shows the devastation inflicted by the terrorists, and the American flag underlines the American nation and its people as the target. At the same time, the raising of the flag signals hope, and the firefighters represent the American people as heroes, who refuse to be defeated by the terrorists. The interpictorial cluster this photograph forms with the picture of American soldiers raising the flag at Iwo Jima (Appendix 5) further grounds the story of American victory being rooted in initial defeat and setback in the audience's imaginary. The American flag becomes a symbol of hope after being attacked. It represents the notion that although there might be fear and destruction, the American people are strong enough to overcome anything.

If we look at this analysis in the light of the Boston bombing, we can see how again, through imagery, this attack is framed as an attack on the American people. Several newspapers published pictures of American flags on the attack site. A photograph published by *Daily News* shows the American flag in the foreground, waving in the wind, while the out-of-focus background of the photograph displays the chaos of medical personnel and law enforcement running around at the attack site (Appendix 17). Another picture published in *USA Today* shows a number of American flags hung at makeshift memorials commemorating the victims (Appendix 18). While these kinds of displays underline the fact that the American nation is once again the victim and the target, it also exemplifies the kind of solidarity Bush talked about in his post-9/11 speech: America cares for other Americans, making these people into the heroes who fight against the terrorists in order to preserve America's future. The most striking example that illustrates this simultaneous heroization and victimization of the United States is one of an injured woman lying on the ground, covered in blood, while a man is comforting her. Next to them, on the ground, lies a bag with a blood-spattered American flag on it, and another American flag, which has fallen to the ground, with a man standing on it (Appendix 19). The photographer likely made an active effort to frame the picture in such a way that both the victim, the man comforting her, the blood, and the two American flags were displayed together, in order to construct a narrative. The picture shows the devastation, with

the victim of the attack being the American people, illustrated by the blood stained American flag on the ground. At the same time, it shows the heroism of the American people, "the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors" (par. 2) as George Bush pointed out in the wake of 9/11.

By framing the Boston bombing as an attack on the United States as a whole, not just aimed at the people who were present at the attacks, the media make a conscious effort to bring back memories of 9/11. Law enforcement and medical personnel are pictured rushing victims to safety, such as a young child in a wheelchair, depicted in an image in *Daily News* (Appendix 20), similar to the countless hero stories of people saving lives during the events of September 11. The 9/11 terrorist attacks were so grounded in the idea of America as a victim and a hero, that framing the Boston marathon bombing in a similar way automatically links the two events together even further.

2.5 The Muslim "Other"

While it is definitely crucial to not understate the importance of racial and religious stereotyping in the case of terrorism, it is also imperative to underline that in the case of the Boston bombing, both news media and politics exclaimed that the attacks were terrorism before anything was known about the perpetrators. As soon as the day after the events, when the brothers Tsarnaev had not yet been located or even identified as possible suspects, all four newspapers included in this analysis, as well as president Obama, were already clear on the nature of this attack: it was terrorism. While strictly speaking it is impossible to determine whether an action can be classified as terrorism when the perpetrator's motives are unknown, the categories previously discussed in this chapter were among the reasons compelling politics and the media to make assumptions and statements nonetheless. The Islamic identity of the Tsarnaev brothers did seem to affirm the terrorist nature of the attacks for the media, but for the initial reaction to the events, in the days where the Tsarnaev brothers were not yet identified, this plays no role, and thus, for the sake of this analysis, it is only of secondary importance. However, as we will see, even before Dzhokhar and Tamerlan were captured, the media already reported on the Muslim "Other" in their coverage of the Boston attacks. Because we have become so accustomed to stereotypes of Muslims, in part because of events like 9/11 and the War on Terror, and in part because of the kind of villain images portrayed in Hollywood for many years, this kind of profiling incites us to sooner think of terrorism in the case of any event.

The stereotyping of Muslims in the media has a profound effect on how possible terrorist attacks are reviewed. The effects of this can be seen in the reporting on the Boston bombing. As *the New York Times* reported on the day of the attacks, "[i]nvestigators said that they were speaking to a Saudi citizen who was injured in the blast" (Eligon and Cooper, par. 11). "The Saudi man … had been seen running from the scene of the first explosion … A law enforcement official said later Monday that the man, was in the United States on a student visa and came under scrutiny because of his injuries, his proximity to the blasts and his nationality — but added that he was not known to federal authorities and that his role in the attack, if any, was unclear" (Eligon and Cooper, par. 16). As *Daily News* reported a day later, the man had nothing to do with the attacks, but he was simply "in the wrong place at the wrong time" (Marcius et al., par. 4).

Even though this man, Abdulrahman Ali Alharbi, was a victim of the situation, like countless others, he was singled out in a crowd because of the way he looks, and based on preconceived notions and stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims. What is striking, is that *Daily News*, instead of preserving the anonymity of this man, who is merely a victim of the attacks, chooses to include a number of photographs in their article of Alharbi, in which he dresses in traditional Saudi garments (Appendix 21). In the photo he wears a kuffiyeh, a traditional Middle Eastern headdress, held in place by an agal, a black headband. Alharbi is also seemingly wearing a thobe, an ankle-length robe like garment. As Jack Shaheen argues in his book *Reel Bad Arabs*, this kind of clothing is prominently featured in stereotypical portrayals of Arab villains in Hollywood movies, as for instance in the movie *The Ambassador* (1984): "in *The Ambassador* and in other movies, the kuffiyeh is linked with the stereotypical Palestinian Muslim terrorists attacking innocents" (72). Even though the headdress has nothing to do with villains or terrorists, as they are used to protect from the sun, as a symbol for Palestinian statehood, or even just as a fashion statement (72), Hollywood has created certain associations for its public. Although the article in *Daily Mail* states Alharbi's innocence, by publishing a photo of him that so overtly underlines his Arab identity, the media automatically connect him to this mediated villain identity.

To put this in context, the newspaper could have also chosen to publish a picture of Alharbi happily posing in front of Cinderella's castle in Disney World (Appendix 22), in which he wears clothes the Western world deems 'normal.' This however, would totally undermine the idea of this young boy as a villain. The picture of him at Disney has the same symbolic connotations for Americanism as the one published in *Daily News* has for Arab or Muslim identity. Disney is so quintessentially American, that Alharbi posing in front of the

pink castle completely negates the idea of him as an Arab villain and affirms his affinity with the United States. Instead of showing this photograph, or preserving his integrity and confirming his innocence by not publishing pictures of him at all, the newspaper chooses to publish the picture of Alharbi that portrays him within the trope of Arab stereotyping discussed in Shaheen's book, hereby perpetuating this stereotype. As stated in the previous chapter, the media play a large role in our understanding of Muslim stereotypes, and it is especially the media's reluctance to portray nonviolent Muslim perspectives that perpetuates the violent, villain stereotype. This example shows how the media again, decide to go for the more villainous approach. Even though this man was completely innocent and nonviolent, the pictures published, through association, tell a different story. Alharbi is reduced to an Arab stereotype, just like Shaheen argues Hollywood has done to Arabs since the late 19th century, instead of showing him as an ordinary young man[1].

2.6 Media Framing

There was a notable difference between the coverage of the four different newspapers discussed in this analysis. While the upper market newspapers tried to represent a more objective account of the attacks, the middle market newspapers lead with much more sensationalist headlines and eyewitness accounts, automatically playing into the idea of terrorism as a spectacle, the theater of terror. While there is of course a need to receive an objective report on the facts, the media also know that spectacular stories do well among their readers. The media give their audience the kind of sensation that they want, and in doing so, they become complicit in spreading the message of fear. They give their audience the kind of sensation that they want, while trying to preserve their edge in the competitive news business.

What is important to note, however, is that while the newspapers' way of framing of the imagery through language and headlines may vary, the pictures published in the newspapers largely overlap. Many of the pictures that were published in the large national newspapers were taken by photographers of local newspapers, such as *the Boston Globe*, or by Associated Press, simply because these people were present at the marathon event. There is thus not so much a difference in imagery, as there is a fundamental difference in the language that is used. The middle market newspapers lead with sensationalist headlines that

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[1] Writing about Alharbi's story, I became somewhat ethically conflicted, on the one hand wanting to preserve his integrity, but on the other hand wanting to make a point and tell his story. By publishing Alharbi's pictures in this thesis, it seems that I am replicating what I am arguing against. Note that I am aware of this fact, however, for the sake of my argument, and the academic value I feel that it adds to the discussion, I have chosen to include them in their original form, without blurring them.

immediately remind the reader of terrorism. *USA Today*'s headlines read "Terror Returns" and "That Post-9/11 Quiet? It's Over," both extremely indicative of terrorism, and even explicitly likening the attacks to what happened on September 11 (Appendix 23). *Daily News*'s headline, spread across the photo of an injured woman that takes up the entire cover reads, "Marathon Massacre." This headline, especially coupled with the picture is clearly meant to shock audiences (Appendix 24). The upper market newspapers on the other hand, lead with more objective headlines, that display the current state of affairs at the time. *The New York Times* reports "Blasts at Boston Marathon Kill 3 and Injure 100" (Appendix 25) and *the Washington Post*'s headline reads "An 'Act of Terror' in Boston," reporting on the statement president Obama made after the bombing (Appendix 26).

In spite of the differences in sensationalist language and framing, all four newspapers labeled the attacks as terrorism, and through their choice of imagery and phrasing, solidified this classification. As this analysis of the coverage of the immediate aftermath of the Boston bombing aims to illustrate, much of the imagery that was published by newspapers can in some way or another be tied to our perception and preconceived notions of terrorism. While the middle market newspapers may have explicitly and consciously made an effort to underline the terrorist nature of these attacks, because they know that sensation and terror sell more newspapers, the upper market newspapers, too, contributed to the fact that the Boston bombing was seen as a terrorist attack from the very start.

Since the attacks, newspapers have also published counter-messages to the dominant responses to the Boston bombing. For instance, *the Washington Post* published an interview with Abdulrahman Ali Alharbi over a month after the bombing took place. In this article, Alharbi is described as an "easy-going, good humored Saudi Arabian student" (Dewey, par. 1). He reacts to the accusations made saying "I don't know if I'm going to continue my studies. I came in to study my bachelor's, I have full scholarship from my country, I don't know if I am gonna be safe from other people. Because, I lost my privacy. So that's why I am really scared. So it's not [an] easy thing to just forget" (par. 12). The article, instead of dehumanizing Alharbi, or reducing him to a stereotype, sheds light on his side of the story. The absence of any imagery depicting him is also notable. Whereas the article published in *Daily News* days after the attack took his privacy away, *the Washington Post* tries to give him his integrity back. However, as Alharbi states, the damage is already done. The initial coverage of the event was mostly based on assumption, rather than actual fact: assumptions about the perpetrators themselves, assumptions on their motives, and assumptions on the

terrorist nature of the attacks. These assumptions are carried out by the media, and they have a profound influence on the way the public perceives an event, or even looks at a person, as Alharbi emphasizes.

In conclusion, the media encode their images with certain messages, while their audiences use their previous experiences and knowledge to decode these images and link them to certain discourses. This knowledge is in turn based on other images, which are again based on other images and experiences. In order to make a grounded analysis of the photographs included in the articles, and the headlines that manipulate or enhance these images, it is thus vital to understand the interplay between different experiences and visualizations of terror. Through the formation of interpictorial clusters, much of the imagery published in the aftermath of the Boston bombing, of chaos, explosions, blood, and the heroization and victimization of the American nation, can be explicitly linked to imagery of 9/11 or the War on Terror. A reoccurring theme within this discourse is the similarity between the attack site and a warzone. The articles and their headlines describe atrocities only seen in times of war, and the images accompanying these articles only seem to reaffirm this idea. Since the War on Terror, our perception of terrorism has become so intrinsically linked with the notion of war, that this kind of imagery is especially striking. At the same time, Hollywood movies have also played an important role in our perception of terrorism imagery, for instance through the likening of terrorism to disaster or action movies, the fascination with blood and gore, or the mediated stereotypes of the Muslim "Other." It thus becomes clear that the imagery published in the newspapers in the aftermath of the Boston bombing corresponds to the five categories of the iconography of terror. Whether or not the newspapers made a conscious effort to frame the bombing as a terrorist attack, due to the theatrical nature of the attack, and the way the newspapers created a narrative through their use of language and headlines, the Boston bombing was reminiscent of our conventional notions of terrorism.

Chapter 3, The Charleston Church Shooting: "Hate in America."

On June 17 2015, a 21-year-old white male walked into the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. After sitting in on the prayer service for about an hour, he opened fire, using a handgun, killing nine African American worshippers, including the church's pastor and South Carolina senator, Clementa Pickney, and wounding one other. Prior to the shooting, gunman Dylann Roof was reported saying "I have to do it … You rape our women and you're taking over our country" (Sandoval et al. "Dylann Storm Roof," par. 7). Roof's crime was motivated by hate and white supremacist sentiment. The morning after the attack, the police captured Roof in Shelby, North Carolina. He stated that with his attack on the church, he wanted to incite a race war.

In the initial reporting on the shooting in the four newspapers used for this analysis, the words terror or terrorism were not used once. Instead, all articles, as well as law enforcement officials, use the term hate crime, a prejudice-motivated crime, in this case targeted against the members of the African American community. Because South Carolina state law has no statutes that criminalize hate crimes specifically, Roof faces federal hate crime charges, as well as violation of a person's freedom of religion and nine counts of murder using a firearm. He is currently still awaiting his trial. Unlike some of the more emotional headlines of the articles reporting on the Boston bombing, the headlines for the Charleston shooting were generally more neutral and objective. The middle market newspapers again were somewhat more emotional and less objective with their headlines than the upper market newspapers, with *USA Today*'s headline reading "Hate in America," versus *the New York Times*'s headline "Charleston Massacre Suspect Held as City Grieves."

All four newspapers refrained from calling Roof a terrorist and his actions domestic terrorism, even though it was a politically and ideologically motivated crime that was meant to coerce and terrorize the African American community, and incite a race war. By looking at the imagery framing the event in the media, and the nature of the attack, an analysis can be constructed on why this attack received the label hate crime instead of being dubbed terrorism. In order to conduct this analysis, this chapter will once again look at the five categories in the iconography of terror: chaos, bombs/explosions, blood/bodies, heroization/victimization, and the Muslim "Other," as well as make an analysis of the way in which the newspapers use headlines and language in order to frame the shooting. Whereas the first case study was an examination of the presence of the categories of the iconography of terror in media imagery, this analysis will mostly make an analysis of the absence of these

categories, and discuss the implications these absences have on our perception of the Charleston church shooting.

3.1 Chaos

While most imagery of terrorism is characterized by chaos and devastation, the images accompanying the newspaper articles reporting on the Charleston shooting do not visualize any of this chaos. If anything, the photographs published in the articles project a calm, yet grief-stricken attitude. While there undoubtedly was chaos and devastation in the church at the time of the shooting, this is not replicated in the imagery surrounding the news coverage. Photographs that dominate are those of law enforcement officials at the church, people praying for the victims, and people grieving the loss of their families and friends. Considering that terrorism is aimed not at the actual victims, but at the people watching an event, terrorists aim to have their actions as widely projected in the media as possible, in order to reach and terrorize as large an audience as possible. In contrast to other terrorist attacks such as 9/11, in which every second of the event itself was captured, from the very moment the first plane hit the North Tower, the audience misses the kind of visualization of what happened in the historic church in Charleston. Because visuals are such an important factor in the formation our imagination, and we need them to define a framework in which facts and figures make sense (Mitchell *Cloning Terror* 1), it is much harder to explicitly connect the events in Charleston to a large scale theatrical terrorist attack such as 9/11, based on imagery alone, simply because we lack the visual representations that help us to connect the two.

Instead of the kind of theatrical chaos and devastation one would expect from a terrorist attack, the only thing visualized in the media is the image of grief. There is no panic, on the contrary, the photographs published in the articles all show a calm, yet devastated community. Pictures of people at memorial services at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (Appendix 27), or people at the makeshift memorial set up outside of the church (Appendix 28), all display the grief and sadness of the community. Even a picture that shows police cars with flashing sirens is still not of a chaotic nature (Appendix 29). While sirens flash in the picture, a man is hunched over a wall, grieving over what happened. Instead of visualizing the kind of chaotic, material devastation often associated with terrorism, these photographs merely visualize emotional devastation, trauma and mourning. The element of chaos is thus lacking in every photograph that is published.

3.2 Bombs/explosions

As explained before, bombs have much different connotations that guns do. While the use of explosives in an attack indicates considerable premeditation from the attacker, based on the fact that they are not readily available in stores, gun violence can be carried out on impulse. It is also important to note that there is a difference between the kinds of guns used in shootings. While Roof used a 'simple' handgun to commit his crime in Charleston, crimes carried out with for instance an assault rifle, which is a much bigger, military-style weapon, are often more deadly. Assault rifles, used in mass shootings such as Sandy Hook (2012), San Bernardino (2015), and Orlando (2016), have a larger magazine for ammunition, and thus have a larger capacity to hit more targets in a short amount of time.

Shootings are also often associated, both in the media and in courtrooms, with mental illness, as was also the case for the Charleston church shooting. The mayor of Charleston, Joseph P. Riley, Jr. stated in the media: "this is an unfathomable and unspeakable act by somebody filled with hate and with a deranged mind" (qtd. in Costa et al., par. 55). As Michael Rosenwalt argues in *the Washington Post*:

> [w]hile acknowledging that some of the country's worst mass shooters were psychotic
> — the Colorado theater gunman, James Holmes, with his orange-dyed hair; the
> Virginia Tech shooter, Seung Hui Cho, whom a judge ordered to get treatment —
> experts say the vast majority of such killers did not have any classic form of serious
> mental illness, such as schizophrenia or psychosis. Instead, they were more
> often ruthless sociopaths whose behavior, while unfathomable, can't typically be
> treated as mental illness. The oversimplification, experts say, is perpetuated by the gun
> industry and a society that assumes that the mentally ill are the only ones capable of
> deadly rampages" (par. 4-6).

So while the majority of mass shooters are not indicated to be mentally ill, it is a classification that surfaces every time such a shooting takes place. This classification is not only present in media coverage, but also among the American general public, with up to "63 percent blaming mass shootings on the failures of the mental-health system to identify sick people before they act" (Rosenwalt, par. 30).

Michael Rosenwalt argues that a large factor at play in our classification of shootings has to do with the American gun industry. The right to keep and bear arms is protected under the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. Adopted in 1791, it represents one of the fundamental freedoms of the United States, and to undermine this right would be to

undermine the freedom of the nation's citizens. The gun lobby in the United States is extremely large and well organized, and organizations such as the NRA (National Rifle Association of America) constantly fight to defend the Second Amendment. In the wake of the Sandy Hook elementary school shooting, the CEO of the NRA commented "[t]he truth is that our society is populated by an unknown number of genuine monsters — people so deranged, so evil, so possessed by voices and driven by demons that no sane person can possibly ever comprehend them. They walk among us every day" (LaPierre, par. 9). This image is perpetuated both by gun lobbyists and the media, and completely negates the idea that gun violence, and especially mass shootings, can and should be classified as terrorism in some cases. As professor of forensic psychiatry Reid Meloy argues, "[i]t's the human inclination to explain behavior that is frightening and tragic as the result of mental illness, because it's very hard to understand that individuals do not have to be mentally ill to do something frightening and tragic" (qtd. in Rosenwalt, par. 31), but to deny the fact that perpetrators might have very clear, thought-through motivations for their actions, and to blame everything on mental illness, detracts from the actual crime.

In conclusion, while imagery including bombs automatically becomes linked with the idea of warfare and terrorism, guns conjure up much different visual connotations. A mass shooting, especially when the public misses the visual images of the actual crime scene and victims, as was the case with the Charleston shooting, misses the element of theater that bombs represent. Mass shootings are often associated with the mentally ill, thus indicating that the shooter was not really thinking about his or her actions, which, by definition, rules out any possibility of terrorism. At the same time, gun lobbyists try to defend the right to keep and bear arms as a primary freedom of American citizens. In the United States, the image of a gun is connected to the notion of freedom, protected under the rights of the American Constitution, a document that also safeguards freedoms such as freedom of religion, and speech. It is thus much easier to classify all mass shooters as mentally unstable, instead of acknowledging that there is an underlying problem. Because the image of mental illness is so prevalent every time another mass shooting happens, it becomes hard to see the two separate, hereby distancing the phenomena of mass shootings and terrorism.

3.3 Blood/bodies

Reviewing this category within the iconogrpahy of terror, it is again its notable absence in visual material that is important to remark. As is the case for the category of chaos,

it is the lack of visual representations of the crime scene, the blood and victims, that influences the overall image of the shooting. Nine people were killed during the shooting, and another was badly wounded, so the category of blood and dead bodies was undoubtedly present at the actual crime scene, but the media only published photographs of the church's exterior. As *the Washington Post* reports, recounting one of the three survivors' experiences: "[s]anders remembers the blood on the floor, the whispers to her granddaughter to "be still." She remembers watching her son, Tywanza, 26, bloodied and clinging to life, crawling toward his dying great "auntie," Susie Jackson, 87" (Phillip and Brown, par. 3). While the theme of blood and bodies is described in words, any photographic evidence in missing. The audience thus misses the visual confirmation that would lead them to make the same connections with regards to this category as they would when they are present.

Illustrating the power of this visual confirmation, is an example from August 27, 2015. On this day, *Daily News* published a picture of a former TV reporter shooting two old colleagues in Roanoke, Virginia. The newspaper published pictures of the shooter and his victim, mere seconds before he guns her down (Appendix 30). While some people were outraged, and felt that this was disrespectful to both the victims and their families and friends, *Daily News* reacted that it published the images ""to convey the true scale" of the attack "at a time when it is so easy for the public to become inured to such senseless violence"" (Follman, par. 2). This echoes the notion Susan Sontag has that our contemporary society is one of spectacle, in which everything needs to be graphic and spectacular in order to be of any interest to audiences anymore. Instead of showing the kind of chaotic warzone that is represented in the pictures of the Boston bombing and its aftermath, or the cold blooded murder in Virginia, the only visual representation that we have of the victims of the Charleston shooting are the photographs that were later published by newspapers to memorialize them. Three out of four newspapers included in this analysis published pictures of the nine victims in their coverage, among whom Senator Reverend Clementa Pickney (Appendix 31). Instead of publishing the pictures of the actual bloodbath, the victims are represented in these In Memoriam pictures, which, while doing justice to the memory of the victims, do not shock or terrorize the audience.

3.4 Heroization/victimization

Most terrorist attacks in the United States, domestic or otherwise, are framed as an attack on the nation itself and the American people, consider Bush's address to the nation on

9/11, in which he declares "our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack" (Bush, par. 1). In the case of the Charleston shooting, the narrative that was constructed was much less displayed as an attack on the nation and its freedoms, but as an attack on the African American population and religious communities. This is not to say that the target of terrorism has to be an entire nation, on the contrary, terrorism can be aimed at a group of the civilian population. However, seeing as audiences have grown accustomed to view terrorism as an attack on the freedoms of an entire nation, this might indicate why we are more inclined to indeed dismiss an attack such as Charleston as a hate crime. When looking at the imagery of the Charleston church shooting, we can find the same kind of heroization and victimization we found in the Boston bombing, but instead of being framed in national terms, in which the heroes and victims are the American people, it is framed in terms of the African American community.

First of all, it is relevant to analyze the importance of the target of the shooting for our understanding of the framing of this attack. The Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church is a church with a rich cultural history that is deeply rooted in the African American struggle for freedom and equality and it has been a symbol for change and resistance ever since its founding more than 200 years ago. The church's congregation was founded in 1791, and its members consisted of both free African Americans and slaves. After disputes with the white religious community, the church was burned to the ground in 1822, but the community rebuilt the church, and it became an iconic structure during the civil rights movement, with Martin Luther King paying the church regular visits (Payne, par. 5-16). The Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church is a visual symbol for African American freedom, and it is exactly this freedom that became contested when Roof carried out his crimes. As *The Washington Post* reports, "[i]t's not just a church. It's also a symbol … of black freedom … That's why so many folks are so upset tonight, because it's a church that represents so much about the rich history and tradition of African Americans in Charleston" (Kaplan, par. 6). In a similar manner, the target for the 9/11 attacks, the World Trade Center was the visual symbol for American freedom. As Don DeLillo explained in his essay "In the Ruins of the Future," a response to 9/11, "[i]t was America that drew their fury. It was the high gloss of our modernity. It was the thrust of our technology. It was our perceived godlessness. It was the blunt force of our foreign policy. It was the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, home, life and mind" (33). By destroying the Twin Towers, Al-Qaeda attempted to tear down the very image of American capitalism, technological prowess, and confidence, just like Dylann Roof tried to tear down a symbol for African American pride and freedom.

By choosing symbolic targets, terrorists can enhance the message they try to carry out. As C.J.M. Drake explains it, "[i]t supplies terrorists with an initial motive for action and provides a prism through which they view events and the actions of other people. Those people and institutions whom they deem guilty of having transgressed the tenets of the terrorists' ideologically-based moral framework are considered to be legitimate targets which the terrorists feel justified in attacking" (53). By attacking such a historic African American church, Roof targeted the African American community specifically. His motives were clear; he wanted to punish the African American community for their alleged crimes, and to start a race war. As Drake argues, "[i]deology also allows terrorists to justify their violence by displacing the responsibility onto either their victims or other actors, whom in ideological terms they hold responsible for the state of affairs which the terrorists claim led them to adopt violence" (53). In the case of 9/11, this responsibility is projected on the United States, which, according to Al-Qaeda is guilty of many attrocities. In the case of the Charleston shooting the responsibility is projected on the African American community, which is exemplified by Roof's statement, "I have to do it … You rape our women and you're taking over our country" (Sandoval et al. "Dylann Storm Roof," par. 7). Roof has admitted to doing research into the church and its history, and choosing it as his target because of its iconic status (Paddock et al., par. 10). While 'only' nine people fell victim to the attacks, the actual target of the shooting were not these nine victims, but an entire community, a process helped along by the selection of an iconic target.

Looking at the framing of the Charleston church shooting, the same kind of analysis of the categories heroization and victimization applies as the analysis conducted on the Boston bombing, or 9/11 for that matter, but instead of seeing the American nation as the hero and victim in the story, it is the African American population, and the African American community in Charleston specifically. The pictures accompanying the newspaper articles unmistakably illustrate how the African American community is the victim of the crimes carried out by Dylann Roof. The majority of the pictures show the grief of members of the community (Appendix 32-33). At the same time, the articles also portray this community as the heroes in the story, the heroes who will overcome this tragedy, through their faith and their belief. One picture published in *USA Today* shows a man and woman outside of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church two days after the shooting takes place in a Black Lives Matter rally (Appendix 34). In contrast to all the pictures portraying grief and devastation, this picture illustrates a kind of euphoric optimism with the ability of the African American community to overcome the odds, and stand strong in the face of disaster. *The New*

York Times reports on the memorial service held in a nearby church the day after the shootings: "hands were joined, as they often were on this difficult day for this city, but heads were not bowed; they were lifted, as people swayed and sang the chorus of "We Shall Overcome," the music echoing throughout the Morris Brown A.M.E. church" (Corasaniti, par. 1). This illustrates the drive not to be beaten down by terrorism or violence, but to stand strong as a community, the same kind of sentiment projected by the entire nation in the wake of other terrorist attacks.

If the analysis of this category is so similar to other prominent terrorist attacks such as 9/11, how come it is not treated as terrorism in the media? Assuming that terrorism is supposed to intimidate and frighten a group of people, it might be fair to assume that the larger the targeted group, the bigger the impact of an attack, and the more likely an act will be labeled terrorism. Because the media frame Roof's actions as an attack on the African American people and not an attack on the American people and their freedoms as a whole (even though it is certainly arguable that Roof attacked these American freedoms), it is easier to frame these attacks as hate crimes, rather than to call them terrorism.

3.5 The Muslim "Other"

Seeing as the Charleston shooting was carried out by a white man, the Muslim "Other" is not present in the visual analysis of this case study. We can, however, link Dylann Roof's identity and the imagery conjured up in the media to this category, by juxtaposing his image in the dominant media messages to preconceived stereotypes of the cultural "Other." As Anthea Butler, professor of religion and Africana studies at the University of Pennsylvania argues in an opinion piece published in *the Washington Post*:

> [l]isten to major media outlets, and you won't hear the word "terrorism" used in coverage of Wednesday's shooting. You haven't heard the white, male suspect, 21-year-old Dylann Roof, described as "a possible terrorist" by mainstream news organizations … U.S. media outlets practice a different policy when covering crimes involving African Americans or Muslims. As suspects, they are quickly characterized as terrorists and thugs (if not always explicitly using the terms), motivated purely by evil intent instead of external injustices. While white suspects are lone wolves — Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley has emphasized that this shooting was an act of just "one hateful person" — violence by black and Muslim people is systemic, demanding response and action from all who share their race or religion (par. 2).

We have grown accustomed to media stereotyping (both in the entertainment industry and in news coverage) that leads us to make assumptions based on someone's religion, skin color, or race. Consider the countless times Arabs or Muslims are portrayed as terrorists, or African Americans as thugs and gang members. At the same time, the white criminal is often typified as the lone wolf. A lone wolf terrorist is someone who acts from ideologically motivated ideals, but has no direct ties to any terrorist organization, and operates with little to no coordination. However, as Evan Osnos argues in *the New York Post, "*the designation of "lone wolf" … glamorizes murderers, and, worse, some security specialists worry that it can obscure the importance of understanding the underlying pathways that lead up to these moments" (par. 3).

As Anthea Butler argues, victims of crimes committed by white people are often vilified in order to shift the blame from their perpetrators. The victims' "lives are combed for any infraction or hint of justification for the murders or attacks that befall them: Trayvon Martin was wearing a hoodie, which was "as much responsible for [his] death as George Zimmerman," Fox News's Geraldo Rivera concluded. Michael Brown stole cigars, and Eric Garner sold loosie [sic] cigarettes — "epically bad decisions" that New York Post columnist Bob McManus, and many others, used to somehow justify their deaths. And when Dajerria Becton, a black teenager who committed no crime, was tackled and held down by a police officer at a pool party in McKinney, Tex., Fox News host Megyn Kelly described her as "no saint either"" (par. 3). Even though this was not necessarily the case for the Charleston shooting, it does illustrate how the media have a strong hand in the narrative that is contracted around crimes and the images that accompany them, by stereotyping not only the perpetrators, but also the victims of crimes.

Looking at the imagery that was published of Dylann Roof himself, we can detect a number of trends. First of all, the pictures of his capture all display a certain glamorous aspect, as Osnos already indicated. In a picture published in *USA Today*, we see Roof being calmly "escorted from the Sheby, N.C., Police Department," wearing a bulletproof vest and shackles around his feet (Appendix 35). The framing of this picture is meaningful for the anaysis. The photograph's background displays countless news reporters trying to catch a glimpse of the Charleston shooter, almost fighting each other over who gets the best picture. The picture conjures up associations of movie stars being escorted across a red carpet by their bodyguards, as the paparazzi scramble to take a picture of them. Another image, published in *the Washington Post*, shows Roof exiting the Police Department, looking directly into the camera lens, smiling slightly, while he is escorted away (Appendix 36). The masses of media

reporters flocking around Roof, and the publication of the picture of him smiling at the camera both illustrate the attention he is getting; instead of vilifying him through the published imagery, he is being glamorized.

Secondly, the photographs published in the media seem more inclined to confirm Roof's racist convictions, rather than establishing him as a possible terrorist. One picture of Roof, published in *the Washington Post*, but originally from Roof's own website, shows him with a gun in his hand, posing with the Confederate flag (Appendix 37). The flag has a long history, and has become the image for the Southern United States, and has been known to connote either Southern pride, or racism (or both). While the flag is widely regarded as a symbolic image for racism, it does not immediately link to terrorism, even though the Confederate flag is often used by the Ku Klux Klan, a group formally known as a terrorist organization. The imagery published by the media thus seem to confirm the categorization of this shooting as a hate crime, rather than entertaining the possibility that it could be terrorism.

Looking at the FBI definition of the term domestic terrorism, we can conclude that the Charleston church shooting does fit within this category: "violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law; Appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping" (FBI, par. 2). The shooting was a violent act, in which nine people lost their lives, and was distinctly aimed to intimidate a civilian population (in this case the African American community). Roof also exclaimed that he wanted to incite a race war, clearly emphasizing that he certainly had political motivations for the crimes he committed. In spite of these observations, both the dominant media coverage and law enforcement did not speak of terrorism, but instead all labeled the attack a hate crime. Hate crime charges, rather than being separate charges, are merely an enhancement to existing charges (in this case the murder charges against Roof). Terrorism charges on the other hand, are separate. As Taylor Brown states in an article for *BBC News*, "many of the most successful US terrorism prosecutions have been against suspects prosecuted for support or actions for overseas groups like al-Qaeda and Islamic State. Domestic organisations and individuals, especially neo-Nazi and white supremacists, tend to be charged with conspiracy, organised crime and weapons violations" (par. 14-15). Roof is no exception to this rule. Islamic extremist terrorism, especially when connected to larger foreign organizations, are much more likely to be tried as terrorism, rather than being a hate crime. This does not mean however, that audiences should

rule out the possibility of a white gunman who is unaffiliated with any big terrorist networks being a terrorist.

3.6 Media Framing

As was the case for the Boston bombing, the headlines of the middle market newspapers that frame the images on the front covers following the Charleston shooting are more sensationalist than the headlines accompanying the images of the upper market newspapers. *USA Today*'s headline reads "Hate in America" (Appendix 38), and *Daily News* has the word "Massacre" printed across its cover (Appendix 39). The upper market newspapers again, try to convey a more factual, objective reality, *the Washington Post* headlining "Man Arrested in Charleston Killings: Reportedly Said He Hated Blacks" (Appendix 40) and *the New York Times* "Charleston Massacre Suspect Held as City Grieves: Races Unite for Nine Killed by Gunman at Black Church" (Appendix 41). Whereas the headlines for the Boston bombing were very indicative of terror and terrorism, the kind of language used in the headlines for the Charleston shooting is indicative more of hate, and racial dispute, which is enhanced by the kind of imagery that is supported by the headlines, all showing a grieving African American community. Unquestionably, Roof's actions were motivated from a racial standpoint, but that does not rule out the possibility of terrorism. By displaying these kinds of photographs however, especially using the headlines that they do, the newspapers underline the idea that this is merely a question of race, as opposed to framing Roof's crime as a possible act of terrorism.

As mentioned before, many of the categories of the iconography of terror are missing from the imagery that emerged after the Charleston shooting. Even though, undoubdedly these categories were present (there must have been blood and chaos at the church), there are no images to confirm this. This could have a number of causes. First of all, it is possible that the media consciously did not publish these pictures, in order to frame the attacks in the way that they did. Another possibility is that they did not publish any pictures out of respect to the victims and their community, following ethical guidelines and censoring the devastation of the actual attack (something they definitely did not do in the case of Boston). The last option, a more practical one, is that they simply did not have permission to come into the church after the shooting. Regardless of which of these options (or a combination of them) caused the lack of visual confirmation of the shooting, the fact remains that because of the absence of the kind of imagery that connects to the iconography of terror, it is much harder for audiences to

connect this shooting to conventional notions of terrorism. Whether this was an active effort by the media or not, it does influence our perception of the Charleston shooting.

Immediately following the attacks, all major newspapers reported on the Charleston Church shooting as a hate crime, not one of them mentioning the word terrorism or terrorist to describe the event or its suspect. In the days following the event, many newspapers started to cautiously give counter arguments in their opinion sections. All four newspapers included in this analysis, in spite of their reporting the previous day, publish an article that questions why the Charleston church shooting should not be called terrorism. This is most likely a reaction to the many outraged responses (mostly on social media) that surfaced because of the dominant media reportings' failure to mention the word terrorism even once. "A white supremacist massacres 9 black people in Charleston. It is a hate crime, it is terrorism, it is America 2015" says Palestinian-American Remi Kanazi on Twitter (Gladstone, par. 8). Civil rights activist Samuel Sinyangwe argues: "#CharlestonShooting terrorist wore an Apartheid flag on his jacket. If a Muslim man wore an ISIS flag, he wouldn't get past mall security" (Gladstone, par. 11). These responses are all based around the notion that it was due to the shooter's race that he was not called a terrorist. While it is undeniable that this is one of the most (if not *the* most) important determinant factors at play here, the nature of the attack, and the way it was visually constructed in the media also played a part in the formation of the narrative surrounding the Charleston church shooting, as this case study analysis aims to illustrate.

Because the media representations of the Charleston church shooting miss much of the visual confirmation of what actually happened in the church, and the imagery only depicts the grief and devastation of the aftermath of the shooting, audiences are less likely to make connections to mass mediated terrorist attacks such as the 9/11 attacks or the Boston marathon bombing. The categories of chaos and blood are completely missing from the visual archive regarding the images of the Charleston shooting. Even though these categories were undoubtedly present in the church, the audience misses the visual confirmation of what happened, because there are no pictures from the actual crime scene. The nature of the attacks also plays a big role in the public's perception. Guns have wildly different connotations than bombs, especially in a country like the United States where the gun debate is a sensitive topic. Shootings do not necessarily have to be premeditated, and because of this, shooters are often deemed mentally ill. This perpetuated stereotype of the mentally unstable mass shooter, is one of the main reasons why shootings are not deemed terrorism as often, which is dangerous, because by labeling someone as mentally ill, one rules out the possibility for any significant

underlying terrorist motivations. Moreover, the media represent the Charleston shooting as an attack on the African American community as opposed to an attack on the American people (as is the case for most terrorist attacks), and thus has a smaller target audience. The shooting is thus more easily conceived as a hate crime, aimed against a segment of the population, as opposed to a terrorist attack that is supposed to intimidate and frighten the entire nation, a notion that is further embedded in the narrative created by the media framing through their choice of headlines.

Chapter 4, Compare and Contrast

As the previous chapters have shown, both the Boston bombing of 2013, and the Charleston shooting of 2015 could be categorized as terrorism, but in spite of this fact, only the Boston bombing was immediately labeled as such by dominant media reporting, while the Charleston shooting was treated as a hate crime. Both attacks were violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violated federal or state law, were intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, and were politically motivated. It is arguable that Dylann Roof was even more motivated by political goals than the Tsarnaev brothers were, at least Dzhokhar, who was only recruited by his radicalized brother a short time before they carried out the bombing. Roof has said that he wanted to incite a race war, a goal that is clearly supposed to influence the nation's political conduct. Dzhokhar on the other hand seemed to be only loosely affiliated with radical Islam and anti-American ideology. Indeed, Dzhokhar's defense attorneys "described the 21-year-old Russian immigrant as a pawn of his radicalized older brother, saying the younger sibling was less interested in jihad and more focused on "Facebook, cars, girls."" (Serrano, par. 2). *Rolling Stone*, which published a piece of investigative journalism on how and why Dzhokhar could have radicalized so quickly, reported that Dzhokhar's friends described him as "just a normal American kid … who liked soccer, hip-hop, girls; obsessed over *The Walking Dead* and *Game of Thrones*; and smoked a copious amount of weed" (Reitman, par. 3). This is in contrast to Dylann Roof, whose friends indicated that his actions were not surprising, due to Roof's previous statements and actions. Yet the Tsarnaev brothers are considered terrorists, and Dylann Roof is not. In this day and age, it might be easy to attribute this to the fact that the Tsarnaev brothers are Muslims, and Dylann Roof is white, but as the previous chapters have illustrated, the Boston bombing was branded as a terrorist attack immediately, days before the Tsarnaev brothers were identified as the suspects. While it is undeniable that race and religion play a large role (if not the largest role) in our perception of terrorism nowadays, as terrorism has become so intrinsically linked with radical Islam, there must be other factors at play that can justify this phenomenon.

This chapter will compare and contrast the media exposure of the two events, and aims to analyze how and why the two attacks and their perpetrators are assigned different labels. The main questions that need to be answered are in what ways the attacks differ in terms of design and choreography, how does this influence the audience's perception, in what ways does the visual construction of both case studies create a different narrative, and how does the media frame this narrative? In order to answer these questions, I will look back to the analyses

of the media's visual representations of the attacks conducted in the previous chapters, and analyze the results in the light of the theoretical approaches outlined in the first chapter.

4.1 Choreography and Design: The Theater of Terror

One of the most important features that influences the divergence of the visual representations of the two case studies is the attack's difference in choreography and design. While in the Boston bombing, the Tsarnaev brother's used weapons of mass destruction in the form of two pressure cooker bombs, Dylann Roof used a handgun to carry out the Charleston shooting. The direct target of the Boston bombing was a large audience. The attack was carried out on a symbolic day, Patriots' Day, at a symbolic event, the Boston marathon, that traditionally draws a large audience, and is widely televised and covered in the news. The direct target of the Charleston shooting on the other hand, was the small group of churchgoers of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church during an evening prayer service. Given the fact that terrorism is not necessarily aimed at its direct targets, but more at target audiences, the Boston bombing also reached a broader target group, namely the entire nation, as opposed to the Charleston shooting, which was mostly targeted against African Americans. The scope of the Boston bombing thus was far greater than the scope of the Charleston shooting.

As Gabriel Weimann argues in his 2008 publication "The Psychology of Terrorism and the Mass Media," modern-day terrorists have become increasingly aware of the role the media has in the distribution of the political message that underlies a terrorist attack (69). If the media paid zero attention to any terrorist attack, its mission would be a complete failure. In order to reach the target audience, and strike fear into a civilian population, a terrorist attack needs to be mediated, preferably as graphically as possible. The bigger the visual threat, the larger the impact on the viewers will be, and the larger the probability of terrorizing the target audience. As Weimann argues, "[m]odern terrorism can be understood in terms of the production requirements of theatrical engagements. Terrorists pay attention to script preparation, cast selection, sets, props, role playing, and minute-by-minute stage management" (71), something he calls the theater of terror. The more elaborate and intricate the attack, the bigger the impact. Weimann also states that 9/11 set the precedent for these mass-mediated theatrical terrorist attacks: "[f]rom the theater-of-terror perspective, the September 11 attack on America was a perfectly choreographed production aimed at American and international audiences. … In the past, most, if not all, acts of terrorism

resulted in a great deal of publicity in the form of news reporting, but the September 11 attack introduced a new level of mass mediated terrorism because of the choices the planners made with respect to method, target, timing, and scope" (71). The World Trade Center, the target of 9/11, was a symbol of American affluence, capitalism, and technology, and its location in lower Manhattan, a densely populated and much visited area, made sure that there were plenty of people around who could capture the full extent of the attacks. Considering both the Boston marathon bombing and the Charleston church shooting from this theatrical mass-media oriented view, we can see some discrepancies between the two.

As the analysis in chapter two indicates, visually, the Boston bombing had a large impact. The Boston bombing, although far less sophisticated in its construction and execution than 9/11, still has a lot of the elements of the theater of terror. As Weimann argues, method, target, timing, and scope are all important factors in the construction of the theater of terror. With regards to method, the Boston bombing obviously impressed. The pressure cooker bombs that were used in the attack were one of the main reasons for the media and politics' quick conclusion that the attacks were terrorism. Bombs and explosions also have a large visual impact and underline the idea of a theater, because of premediated explosions in action movies and warzones. The target, timing, and scope were also important for the bombing's level of theater. The Boston bombing took place at a symbolic event, the Boston marathon, which is traditionally held on Patriots' Day, a state holiday, celebrated in Maine, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin, that commemorates the initial battles of the American Revolutionary War. Aside from the symbolic meaning of this day, which celebrates American independence, it also draws in large numbers of spectators every year. A lot of press was present, which ensured the mass mediation of the attacks, as there were plenty of people to witness and report on the event. While the Boston bombing in no way showed the same amount of sophistication as 9/11, it did demonstrate a considerable amount of preparation and premeditation when it comes to the theatrical aspect, and because it was executed successfully, the graphic imagery of the attacks was able to reach its target audience all over the United States.

The Charleston church shooting, as discussed in chapter 3, largely missed this theatrical aspect, especially compared to the effective visual representations of the Boston bombing. The Charleston shooting simply missed the visual confirmation of big theatrical terror attacks. When looking at the categories method, target, timing, and scope once more, it is easily deductible why the Charleston shooting is much less successful in the area of the theater of terror than the Boston bombing was. While Dylann Roof did choose a significant

and symbolic target for his attacks (the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church has been a symbol for African American freedom for many years), the method, timing, and scope of the shooting did not necessarily assist in constructing the theater of terror. The method employed by Roof, using a handgun to shoot his victims, is neither new, nor visually impressive, and while more people were killed in Charleston than in the Boston bombing, the scope of the shooting was much smaller. Only twelve people were participating in the Bible study at the time of the attack (excluding Roof), whereas there were thousands of people present at the Boston marathon.

What is most important, is that the Charleston shooting was not mass mediated in the same way as the Boston bombing was. While the aftermath of the shooting got a lot of media attention, the audience misses visual confirmation of the shooting. The Boston bombing was mediated from the moment the first bomb went off, up until the suspects were identified and captured, and displayed the chaos, devastation, blood, and victims of the attacks every step of the way. The Charleston shooting on the other hand, was mediated in a completely different way. Although it got plenty of media coverage, the imagery surrounding the attack did not create the same narrative of chaos and devastation, but of grief and communal strength. If we compare and contrast images published in the four newspapers included in this thesis' analysis, the imagery of the Boston bombing graphically depicts the event itself, while the images of the Charleston shooting only represent the event's aftermath. While there undoubtedly was chaos, blood, and devastation in the church, none of this is represented in the imagery. Whether it was out of respect for the victims and the church community, or because the press simply did not get access to the inside of the church after the events, there is no graphic confirmation of what happened in the same way as there is graphic confirmation for the Boston bombing. In terms of the theater of terror, the Boston bombing was thus executed in a similar manner as other mass mediated terrorist attacks, while the Charleston shooting was not. It is undeniable that the media representations have a great impact on the narrative that is constructed around an event. Because of the mass mediated theatrical nature of the Boston marathon bombing, audiences are more likely to make connections to other terrorist events, than they would with the Charleston church shooting.

4.2 Fundamental Differences: Interpictorial Clusters

In his article ""American" Pictures and (Trans-)National Iconographies: Mapping Interpictorial Clusters in American Studies," Udo Hebel describes the interplay between

certain clusters of images based on their visual similarities, and the way in which these clusters are tied to interpretations of national identity, historical perspectives, and political ideology. By mapping these interpictorial clusters, one can explain the power and impact of an image. Images enter into a dialogue with other images, their connotations, and the narratives surrounding these images. With regards to terrorism imagery, these interpictorial clusters might explain why some attacks conjure up vivid terrorism related associations, while others do not.

Judging from the photographs of the Boston bombing, there are many more implicit and explicit connections to be made to other terrorism imagery than in the case of the Charleston shooting. It almost seems like pictures from earlier attacks such as 9/11 were unintentionally (or intentionally) remediated in the images that were published of the Boston bombing. Assuming that 9/11, having produced some of the most powerful and memorable imagery with regards to terrorism and destruction, has provided the public with a precedent of what to expect from a terrorist attack, it becomes clear why imagery mimicking the Twin Tower attacks are so effective and striking. Comparing the chaos of the Boston bombing, people running down the street away from the explosion (Appendix 8), to the chaos that ensued on the streets of lower Manhattan during 9/11 (Appendix 9), the pictures show undeniable similarities. Because the pictures are so similar, the picture of the Boston bombing, triggers a connection to the terrorism narrative that surrounds the image of 9/11. This narrative does not only indicate the label terrorism, but is connected to a plethora of different themes, such as the victimization and heroization of the American nation and its people, and the notion of warfare.

We can also map interpictorial clusters between the imagery of the Boston bombing and imagery of warfare. The articles make explicit references to the site of the bombing being like a warzone, and the visual confirmation of this is given in the form of images, showing the injuries, chaos, and devastation that portray a striking likeness to warzones all across the world. As W.J.T. Mitchell has argued in his book *Cloning Terror,* the War on Terror has been fought out as a war in terms of images: "deployed to shock and traumatize the enemy, images meant to appall and demoralize, images designed to replicate themselves endlessly and to infect the collective imaginary of global populations" (2-3). This war of images was initiated by the theatrical Twin Tower attacks, and followed up by "the televised "shock and awe" bombing of Baghdad and the destruction of Saddam Hussein's monuments," all of which were set up to be mass mediated spectacles. Because of the visual, image-driven focus of the War on Terror, imagery concerning both war and terrorism have become etched into our

mind, or, as Mitchell calls it, have infected the collective imaginary. Because war, and especially the imagery concerning war, have become so intrinsically linked to the narrative of terrorism in our modern society, these interpictorial clusters strengthen the connection between the Boston bombing and terrorism.

The Charleston shooting on the other hand, does not display the kind of imagery that can be mapped into clusters connected to terrorism as easily. Because the imagery of the shooting only concerns the aftermath, and not the actual event, the audience cannot make the same connections as they do in the case of the Boston bombing. The reoccurring theme of grief in the pictures published in the media could of course be connected to events such as 9/11, but just as easily could they be associated with any other forms of loss, such as an accident or a natural disaster. There is nothing in the imagery of the aftermath of the shooting that explicitly links the pictures to terrorism, or images that we relate to terrorism, as opposed to the chaotic, bloody imagery of the Boston bombing.

It is also important to note the significance of the two flags represented in the imagery concerning the two different case studies. The visual archive of the Boston bombing displays numerous photographs in which the American flag is prominent. Either waving in the background of the utter chaos that broke out as the explosions went off (Appendix 8), hung at makeshift memorial sites commemorating the victims of the attacks (Appendix 18), or in the form of a duffel bag lying on the ground, covered in blood (Appendix 19), the American flag is a reoccurring symbol in the visual representations of the Boston bombing. The American flag is the ever-present personification of the suffering of the American nation that is a consequence of the bombing. At the same time, it connotes the power of the American people to overcome tragedy, and end up victorious, a notion that is given power and meaning in the light of the cluster of images of the raising of the American flag at Ground Zero and Iwo Jima. What is undeniable, is that the Boston bombing is framed as a national event, something that affects all of the American people. At the site of the Charleston shooting, there were also makeshift memorials, but at these memorials, no American flags are present. Significantly, the only flag which is portrayed in the imagery regarding Charleston is the Confederate flag, held by Dylann Roof (Appendix 37), a flag that connotes racism, Southern pride, and white supremacy. The absence of any American flags at the scene of the crime, and the presence of the Confederate flag is symbolic; the Confederate flag helps to victimize the African American community in the same way the American flag victimizes the entire nation. This symbolism underlines the media's framing of this event as a racially driven hate crime,

targeted against a specific segment of the American population, as opposed to a national terrorist attack.

4.3 What Do Images Want?: The Role of the Media

The foundation of W.J.T. Mitchell's picture theory is to ask what it is exactly that pictures want from their audiences. While Mitchell does not deny that this question in itself is quite nonsensical, because pictures are not living organisms, he points out that they are attributed power and meaning by their audiences in a way that would suggest pictures take on a life of their own. As he puts it:

> to say … that pictures "want" life or power does not necessarily imply that they *have* life or power, or even that they are capable of wishing for it. … "Do you really *believe* that images want things?" My answer is no, I don't believe it. But we cannot ignore that human beings (including myself) insist on talking and behaving as if they *did* believe it" (Mitchell *What do Pictures Want?* 10-11).

Mitchell acknowledges the control or power that pictures have to influence our perception of the world around us, a power that is attributed to an image by the audience itself, but it is a power nonetheless. The consequence of this notion, is that we, as an audience, unknowingly attribute qualities to imagery that are akin to those of living organisms, wanting something from their audiences. In the case of terrorism, it is fairly easy to determine what pictures want: to terrorize their target audience. The more shocking and vivid the image, the larger the chance the picture succeeds in achieving its goal.

The media play a dominant role in deciding what kind of imagery the audience is presented with. Assuming that the goal of terrorism related imagery is to terrorize its audience, it is fair to say that the media plays a determinant role in this process. By publishing terrorism related imagery, graphic imagery in particular, newspapers become completely complicit in both carrying out the message of the terrorists, and spreading the fear and terror, thus aiding the terrorists' agenda. This is not to say that the newspapers analyzed in this thesis adhere to terrorist ideologies. However, all news media are under constant pressure to compete with one another, and to present the news as quickly as possible, and distinguish themselves from other media reports. This results in sensationalist headlines, graphic images, and, in some cases, downright fearmongering, all of which help terrorists to achieve their goals. While counter images can always be found on the internet, the big newspapers decide on the dominant narrative that is constructed around an event, both through imagery and

choice of captions and headlines, as I will try to illustrate at the hand of front covers of the four newspapers included in this analysis.

First of all, an analysis will be conducted of the front covers of the Boston bombing. All four newspapers dedicated most, if not all of their front pages to the attack. The most striking image can be found on the cover of *Daily News*, which displays a picture the size of the entire cover page of "a woman in tattered clothes" who appears to be in shock after the blasts went off. She is sitting on a blood covered sidewalk, while in the background, a man is helping another injured woman. The headline of the newspaper reads in a massive font: "Marathon Massacre," and one of the smaller headlines underneath says "Terror Bombs Rock Boston." Aside from these headlines, there is no text on the cover whatsoever, just the image (Appendix 24). The picture's framing, alongside the headlines, create a cover that immediately draws its audience in. If in this case, we ask Mitchell's question of what do pictures want, the answer is to shock and convey the brutal truth of what happened in Boston, without any censorship.

Both *the Washington Post* and *USA Today* have a picture on their front covers of a marathon participant who has been knocked to the ground because of the blasts, with three police officers in the center of the frame, and the chaos of the panicking crowd in the background. The pictures, taken at slightly different times, are very similar. The main difference between the narrative in these newspapers is thus not portrayed in the imagery, but in the way these images are manipulated and enhanced using captions and headlines. The massive headline in *USA Today* reads "Terror Returns," and below that, "That Post-9/11 Quiet? It's Over" (Appendix 23). Both these headlines immediately link the image to terror, and to 9/11, creating a narrative similar to the one in *Daily News*. Although the image published on the front page might not be as shocking, the headlines enhance the story and explicitly connect it to terrorism. *The Washington Post*'s headline reads, "An 'act of terror' in Boston," echoing the statement of Obama about the nature of the attacks, again referring to terrorism, but not in a way that is as sensationalist and explicit as the other newspapers (Appendix 26).

As mentioned in chapter 2, many of the images published in the newspapers were similar, or even the same, as the majority of them were taken by local photographers, and not photographers from the newspapers themselves. This is also the case for the images in *the Washington Post* and *USA Today*. Both were credited to John Tlumacki of *the Boston Globe*. In this case, the captions and headlines are what enhance and manipulate the narrative that is constructed by a newspaper. In the case of *USA Today*, the headlines decidedly push their

audience to connect the Boston bombing to terrorism, by creating sensationalist headlines such as "Terror Returns," that immediately catch the eye, and by explicitly likening the attacks to 9/11. The same goes for the shocking cover of *Daily News*. Both *the Washington Post* and *the New York Times* (headlined "Blasts at Boston Marathon Kill 3 and Injure 100" (Appendix 25)) tried to be more objective about the facts.

It thus becomes clear that media framing can have a major influence on the way a narrative is constructed around an image. In the case of *Daily News*'s cover, both the image and its headlines were clearly meant to shock, maybe even create fear. In the case of the covers of *the Washington Post* and *USA Today*, with images that are almost identical, it is the newspapers' choice of headlining that creates the terror and the fear. Whereas *the Washington Post* elects to be more or less objective in their headline, with a quote from president Obama, *USA Today* chooses to make explicit references to 9/11 and terrorism. While the images published by the newspapers were all shocking, simply because the Boston bombing was a very graphic, shocking event, newspapers can avoid becoming completely complicit in the terrorist agenda, through their choice of phrasing. While the upper market newspapers avoided shocking and fearmongering headlines, *Daily News* and *USA Today*'s headlines are directed at spreading sensationalism in order to attract audiences, while at the same time inspiring fear.

As Kirk Hallahan has stated, media framing can be described as the way in which "news stories are portrayed by the media in an effort to explain complex or abstract ideas in familiar, culturally resonating terms." At the moment of a (terrorist) attack, there always is a lot of uncertainty, an uncertainty not always explained just by imagery. A frame is needed in order to "construct social reality for audiences and thus give meaning to words and images" (222). The Boston bombing received a terrorism frame from the media, some even explicitly linking it to 9/11. The complex and abstract imagery published in the newspapers, especially the middle market newspapers, is explained in terms of terrorism and 9/11, terms that are both very familiar and have major cultural resonance. The reader is encouraged to interpret the imagery and thus the bombing itself as a terrorist attack.

In the case of the Charleston shooting, all four newspapers also dedicated most, if not all of their front covers to the event. *Daily News* again has a picture the size of the front cover, titled "grief-stricken worshippers embrace after mass shooting" (Appendix 39). Identical to their cover of the Boston bombing, the headline of the story reads "Massacre." However, there are some differences between the two. First of all, while the Boston cover's headline was enhanced by a shocking picture of blood, chaos, and devastation, the picture of the

Charleston cover portrays grief, but also a sense of tranquility. Secondly, Boston's "Massacre" headline was supported by another headline that read "Terror Bombs Rock Boston." The smaller headline on the Charleston cover reads "White gunman hunted in hate crime at historic Charleston sanctuary." Whereas the word massacre in the headline of the Boston bombing is framed to be connected to terrorism (both through the image and the smaller headlines), for the Charleston shooting, the word becomes connected to a hate crime, so while the covers may have identical headlines, they are framed in completely different ways, with different effects and outcomes. The other newspapers all had similar pictures of the grieving African American community on their front pages. *USA Today* leads with a headline that reads "Hate in America" (Appendix 38), again explicitly linking the word hate to this event, enhancing the idea of Dylann Roof's crime as a hate crime as opposed to a terrorist attack. *The Washington Post* also mentions the word hate, but again, as was the case for the Boston bombing and the word terror, it did so to give the reader objective facts: "Man arrested in Charleston killings: reportedly said he hated blacks" (Appendix 40). This objectivity also applies to *the New York Times*, which is headlined: "Charleston Massacre Suspect Held as City Grieves: Races Unite for Nine Killed by Gunman at Black Church" (Appendix 41).

Whereas the word "Terror" was the common denominator for the covers of the Boston bombing, looking at the front covers of the Charleston shooting, the reoccurring word is "Hate." It is true for both case studies that the middle market newspapers are much more sensationalist and outspoken in their choice of headlines (and in the case of the Boston marathon cover of *Daily News,* also in imagery) than the upper market newspapers, whose headlines were more objective and informative. This illustrates how media have the power to enhance and manipulate the message an image conveys. The question of what do images want, can only be answered if we know what their creators want, an idea underlined in Stuart Hall's theory of encoding and decoding of media messages. Hall states that the creators of an image (in this case the newspapers creating their front pages) encode their images with a message that the audience, in turn, decodes based on previous experiences. Headlines and captions have the power to construct a narrative around an image, encoding it with a message. By choosing graphic photos in the case of the Boston bombing, and using the words terror and 9/11 in the headlines, the media encode their images with a terrorism narrative, thus becoming complicit in the terrorists' agenda. This is a narrative that audiences are too familiar with in this day and age, and thus they will have no trouble decoding this message. Similarly, the audience is familiar with the narrative of racism against African Americans, and thus have no

trouble decoding the message embedded in the images and headlines on the front covers regarding the Charleston shooting. The photos of the Boston bombing are already much more indicative of conventional terrorist attacks than the pictures of the Charleston shooting, as has the analyses in the previous chapters have shown, but especially when coupled with their headlines, the story of what is terrorism and what is not, is constructed by the media.

Judging from the FBI definition of terrorism previously mentioned in this thesis, both the Boston bombing and the Charleston church shooting can be considered terrorism. While they might both be considered terrorism, judging from their politically motivated nature and aims to coerce a civilian population, only the Boston bombing was immediately branded as a terrorist attack, whereas Dylann Roof's crime in Charleston was branded a hate crime by the dominant media. Judging from the visual material published in the newspapers, this branding can be attributed to three different reasons. First of all, the different nature of the attacks contributes to the different labels assigned to the two case studies. The Boston marathon attack was a bombing, which was excessively mediated, every moment of it being captured on camera. It was a display of the theater of terror, and with this, it played into the public's expectations of what terrorism is nowadays. It adheres to our conventional ideas of terrorism. The Charleston shooting on the other hand, misses the element of theater, because only the attack's aftermath was mediated, and not the actual shooting or Roof's victims.

Secondly, it is important to note that the imagery that came out of the Boston bombing was way more reminiscent of other terrorist attacks such as 9/11, and the war that came out of it. The pictures show the kind of chaotic devastation we associate with terrorism, and do not censor blood or victims. Through these implicit and explicit visual connections, the public makes easy links between the Boston bombing and terrorism. The visual archive of the Charleston shooting on the other hand, only portrays grief and a sense of community, whereas the categories of chaos, blood, and victims remain absent.

Lastly, aside from the nature of the attacks, and the way they look in visual material, it is also important not to underestimate the role the media plays in the creation of a narrative when it comes to the labeling of these two attacks. The media's choice of visuals, and especially the way they choose to frame these visuals by using captions and headlines has the ability to decide the dominant narrative surrounding an event. *USA Today*'s Boston headline "Terror Returns" obviously has much more connections to the notion of terrorism than the Charleston headline "Hate in America." While the upper market newspapers try to give a

relatively objective overview of the facts, the middle market newspapers explicitly frame the Boston bombing as a terrorist attack, while framing the Charleston shooting as a hate crime.

It is important to take into account all these factors when thinking of the way in which media representations of events can influence our perception of terrorism. There is no one deciding factor, but it is a combination of the nature of an attack, visual associations, and media enhancement or manipulation that decides whether or not an event is labeled terrorism. Something that is undeniable is that, looking at the iconography of terror that was constructed to analyze the two case studies, the visual archive of the Boston bombing fits much better into conventional notions of terrorism than the visual archive of the Charleston shooting. The categories of chaos, bombs/explosions, blood/bodies, heroization/victimization, and the Muslim "Other" were all present in the visual representations of the bombing, while most of them were missing from the Charleston shooting. That is not to say that it is more befitting for the Boston bombing to get designated to the category of terrorism than the Charleston shooting. Quite the contrary: while the Charleston shooting might not represent the kind of conventional terrorism that we have grown accustomed to in our modern society, it is still important to realize the possibility for a crime like Dylann Roof's to be recognized as terrorism, instead of merely treating it as a hate crime. The media need to entertain the possibility that a mass shooting committed by a white man *can* be terrorism, not just a crime carried out by a mentally unstable lone wolf, because not doing so undermines the bigger narrative that is at play in an attack, especially in this day and age, when violence against African Americans is unfortunately still so common.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to attempt to understand the mechanisms that are at play when the media constructs narratives around events that may or may not be considered terrorism. The central question at hand was: why are some events immediately labeled as terrorism by the media, while others are not considered as such, and what implications does this have for the public perception of terrorism? In order to answer this question, this thesis focused on the visual material published in four major newspapers, with regards to the Boston bombing, which was immediately branded as a terrorist attack by the media, and the Charleston shooting, which the media labeled as a hate crime, even though by conventional definitions of the word terrorism, both can be considered acts of domestic terrorism. By looking at the imagery in the light of an iconography of terror, a set of characteristics that underlie our basic understandings of conventional terrorism based on association and precedent set by other attacks such as 9/11, this analysis has tried to establish what the differences between the two case studies were, and if these differences would account for the different label that they received.

In the case of the Boston bombing, it was clear that much of the imagery was tied to our conventional definition and perception of terrorism. All five categories within the iconography of terror were abundantly present within the visual representations of the bombing in the newspaper. Many of the images mimicked the kind of chaos and devastation of 9/11, immediately linking the two events together. At the same time, the site of the attack was, more than once, likened to a warzone, especially due to the graphic images of victims and blood. This likeness, in our modern day and age, has powerful ties to the notion of terrorism. At the same time, the nature of the attacks themselves was, not unlike 9/11, very theatrical and played into the concept of the theater of terror, as explained by Gabriel Weimann. The bombings took place at a public event, and due to this, both the detonation of the bombs themselves and their aftermath were mediated every step of the way, capturing all of the chaos, blood, and devastation. It is arguable that the fact that the Tsarnaev brothers' identity as Muslim Americans also played a role in the classification of the Boston bombings as terrorism, but the attacks were already called terrorism by both the media and by president Obama days before the brothers were identified as possible suspects. It is however undeniable that both the media and law enforcement were inclined to think that this was an act of Muslim extremist terrorism, as is illustrated by the story of Abdulrahman Ali Alharbi. By introducing this kind of a narrative to a story, the audience, very well acquainted with Muslim extremist terrorism, is inclined to make certain connections, even when Alharbi turned out not to be an

actual suspect, but just a victim of the attacks. This imagery, combined with the way it was framed by the four newspapers, with sensationalist headlines to support the dramatic photographs, created a terrorism based narrative around the Boston bombings.

The Charleston church shooting was a very different event than the Boston bombing. The nature of the attack, being a mass shooting, already has wildly different connotations than a bombing has, especially in a country like the United States, where shootings unfortunately are fairly frequent, and the gun debate is such a controversial topic. Judging from the images of the aftermath of the shooting, there are very little connections to be made to the categories in the iconography of terror. While there must have been chaos and blood in the church itself, all of the imagery that was published in the newspapers portrayed the grief of the African American community. The categories of chaos, bombs, and blood were thus largely, if not entirely absent. Whereas other terrorist attacks such as 9/11, and, indeed, the Boston bombing were portrayed and mediated as an attack on the United States as a nation and on its people, the Charleston shooting was framed as an attack on the African American community, reinforcing the idea of the shooting as a hate crime. However, the gunman, Dylann Roof, explicitly said that his intention was to start a race war, thus clearly emphasizing his politically driven ideology. In spite of this, the attacks' designated label of a hate crime was only questioned in opinion pieces published in the newspapers, but not in any dominant media coverage. For this particular case study, one driving factor might be the fact that the perpetrator was a white young man, instead of a Muslim. Audiences have been conditioned by the media (both news media, television, and Hollywood films), to think of Muslims as terrorists, while at the same time, white attackers are often considered mentally unstable individuals. All of these factors, combined with the ways in which the media framed their images using headlines such as "Hate in America," contributed to the narrative that was created around the event and the imagery that it produced, and the classification of the shooting as a hate crime as opposed to a terrorist attack.

The central aim of this thesis was to analyze how and why some events are labelled terrorism, while others are not, and what implications this has for the audience's definition of terrorism. The difference in classification between the Boston bombing and the Charleston church shooting can be contributed to several different factors. In part, it is simply due to the different nature of the attacks themselves. Bombs, as stated before, have different connotations than shootings, and the fact that the Boston bombing played into our conventional perception and notions of terrorism (linked to the theater of terror) reinforces the label the Boston bombing received. Another factor that varied largely was the imagery that

came out of the attacks. While the images of the Boston bombing were reminiscent of other terrorist attacks and were very explicit, the images of the Charleston shooting lacked the visual confirmation of what happened inside the church. Lastly there is the factor of the choices the media makes in order to frame these events. The media chose what pictures to publish, and what headlines to support these pictures with. The media chose to mediate the Boston bombing in a very explicit and sensationalist manner, showing all of the atrocities at the scene of the explosions, while the Charleston shooting's coverage was much more subdued, sober, and definitely much less sensationalist. Whether this was a conscious choice, or a more practical decision because there simply was no visual material from inside the church, the media's choice of imagery, headlines, and captions is what actually constructs the narrative that is projected onto an audience, and thus, the influence of the media cannot be understated and underestimated.

Since the attacks of 9/11, terrorism unfortunately has become more and more common. The public has become increasingly aware of the ways in which terrorism works and what it looks like, and the media play a significant role in our understanding of terrorism. Terrorists and the media enjoy a kind of symbiotic relationship; in which both need each other in order to be profitable. Terrorists need the media in order to instill fear in their target audience. They also employ media to spread their political ideology, to exert power and coerce civilians and governments, to reach groups of people who sympathize with their goals, or even to recruit new members into their organizations. The media on the other hand, are under constant pressure to produce news stories as soon as possible, using compelling headlines and attractive layouts, in order to compete with other media and news outlets. As philosopher Jean Baudrillard has put it in his essay "The Spirit of Terrorism," "there is no "good" use of the media; the media are part of the event, they are part of the terror, and they work in both directions" (31). Without the media, terrorists have no way of reaching their target audience and spreading the fear they want to, but if one news outlet chooses not to publish a terrorism related story, another will. It is a difficult dilemma, where on the one hand, the media becomes completely complicit in the terrorists' agenda by spreading their message and fear across the world, and on the other hand, it would be extremely difficult to stop the reporting on terrorism altogether.

On Thursday 30 June, 2016, the Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* published an article in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks at Istanbul Atatürk Airport that occurred on 28 June and killed 45 people, and injured another 230. The article tells the story of three Dutch friends who were present at the airport at the time of the attacks, two women, Danique Noorman and

Julia Otten, and a man, Mohamed Azarkane. The headline for the article reads "Met dood op de hielen" and it shows a picture of the two women featured in the article (Appendix 42). Immediately after this publication, the newspaper received a lot of questions and backlash on its Facebook and Twitter accounts which showed the same picture as was published in the newspaper, but in full, with the two blond Dutch girls, and with the Dutch-Moroccan Mohamed Azarkane by their side (Appendix 43). Many people asked *De Telegraaf* why Azarkane was cropped out of the picture. Some people argued that leaving him out of the photo creates a narrative that (Dutch) Muslims cannot be victims of terrorism, holding on to the idea that it is only Western people who are victimized by terror. Portraying this young Muslim man as a victim would undermine the stereotype of the Muslim villain and the Muslim terrorist. While *De Telegraaf* justifies its choice of cropping Azarkane out of the picture by saying that they only interviewed the two girls, and not Azarkane himself (whether or not this is a fair justification is beside the point), this example still aptly illustrates how the media have the power to create a narrative with the pictures that they publish, and to manipulate this narrative through their choice of picture framing.

The Dutch example mentioned above does not only function as a prime example of media manipulation, but it also illustrates that the problematic relationship between the media and terrorism is not just an American problem. While this thesis might have focused on the interplay between U.S. domestic terrorism and the media, the framework of this research can also be productively applied to media in other parts of the world. Similarly, it can also be applied to other forms of media such as television coverage (think of the sensationalist approach of news outlets such as *CNN*), or social media, in which images often play a dominant role. In our modern world of global digitalization, news travels all over the world, and it travels fast. Within the context of transnational American Studies, it is thus vital to have a firm understanding of the mechanisms that influence our perception and understanding of global events.

In a day and age when we get so much, if not all of our information from the media, be they social media, television, or newspapers, it becomes more and more crucial to be aware of the (either intentional or unintentional) ways in which the media manipulate the way we see and understand the world around us. Aside from the informative character of the media, they also have the ability to influence public perception and sway the audience's opinion. With regards to terrorism, we should always keep asking ourselves critical questions related to what we see in the media. For instance, why did the Paris attacks of November 2015 get all the media coverage and sympathy in the world, while the Beirut bombings in Lebanon that

occurred the day before got so very little? What role do the media play in the stereotyping of terrorists? How come the Orlando shooting of June 2016 sparked a much fiercer hate crime versus terrorism debate than the Charleston shooting did? All of these questions deal with the way in which media portray different forms of terrorism, and all of them have underlying causes. In order to understand the role the media plays in our perception of terrorism, it is important that we keep these questions in mind when looking at media coverage. While the media's informative qualities are indispensable to us nowadays, we must remain critical and not take everything at face value.

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Appendix

1.

Movie still (*Armageddon*).

2.

Photo by Corbis Sygma Agency (*The Daily Mail*).

3.

"Falling Man," photo by Richard Drew, Associated Press (Almond).

4.

"Firefighters Raising the Flag at Ground Zero," photo by Thomas E. Franklin, *The Record* (Almond).

5.

"Raising the Flag at Iwo Jima," photo by Joe Rosenthal (Rosenthal).

Boston Bombing

Chaos

6. New York Times

"Pandemonium erupted as runners and spectators scattered," photo by Kenshin Okubo, Associated Press (Eligon and Cooper).

7. New York Times

"The second blast was several hundred yards from the first," photo by David L. Ryan, *Boston Globe* (Eligon and Cooper).

8. Washington Post

"The second explosion near the Boston Marathon finish line," photo by David L. Ryan, *Boston Globe* (Loeb and Fisher).

9. *The Telegraph*

"The north tower collapsed just before 10.30am," photo by Doug Kanter, Getty Images (*The Telegraph*).

10. Washington Post

"Justine Franco of Montpelier, Vt., holds up a sign near Copley Square in Boston as she looks for her missing friend, April, who was running in her first Boston Marathon," photo by Winslow Townson, Associated Press (Loeb and Fisher).

11. Washington Post

"Runner John Ounao reacts after finding his friends," photo by John Mottern, Getty Images (Loeb and Fisher).

12. New York Times

"A woman was tended to at the scene of the first explosion," photo by John Tlumacki, *Boston Globe* (Eligon and Cooper).

13.

Fascination with action movies and explosions. Movie poster (*White House Down*).

Blood/bodies

14. *Daily News*

"Medical responders run an injured man past the finish line the 2013 Boston Marathon following an explosion in Boston," photo by Charles Krupa, Associated Press (Ford et al.)

15.

Fascination with blood, suffering and graphic imagery. Movie still (*The Hateful Eight*).

16. *Daily News*

"Victims are in shock and being treated at the scene of the first explosion that went off near the finish line of the Boston Marathon," photo by *Boston Globe* (Ford et al.).

Heroization/victimization

17. *Daily News*

"A flag flies over the finish line as medical workers aid injured people following an explosion at the finish line of the 2013 Boston Marathon," photo by Charles Krupa, Associated Press (Ford et al.).

18. *USA Today*

"A woman visits a street memorial near the scene of the Boston Marathon bombings," photo by Spencer Platt, Getty Images (Dorrell).

19. *The Washington Post*

"A man comforts a victim on the sidewalk at the scene of the first explosion," photo by John Tlumacki, *Boston Globe* (Loeb and Fisher).

20. *Daily News*

"A Boston police officer wheels in injured boy down Boylston Street as medical workers carry an injured runner following an explosion," photo by Charles Krupa, Associated Press (Ford et al.).

The Muslim Other

21. *Daily News*

"Abdulrhman Ali Alharbi seen in a Facebook posting. The Washington Post says he is being considered a witness, not a suspect," photo from Facebook (Marcius et al.).

22. Gateway Pundit

Photo from Facebook (Hoft).

Media Framing

23.

Front Cover of *USA Today* the day following the Boston bombing (Hampson and Raasch).

24.

Front Cover of *Daily News* the day following the Boston bombing (Ford et al.).

25.

Front Cover of *The New York Times* the day following the Boston bombing (Eligion and Cooper).

26.

Front Cover of *The Washington Post* the day following the Boston bombing (Loeb and Fischer).

Charleston Church Shooting

Chaos

27. *USA Today*

"Mourners hold a prayer vigil for the nine victims of the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston at the First African Methodist Episcopal Church: Bethel in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City," photo by Eric Thayer, Getty Images (Eversley).

28. *USA Today*

"Allen Sanders, right, kneels next to his wife, Georgette, both of McClellanville, S.C., as they pray at a sidewalk memorial on June 20, 2015, in memory of the shooting victims in front of Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C. "You can't have love and hate residing in the heart at the same time," said Georgette. "We're just going to have to love one another," her husband added," photo by David Goldman, Associated Press (Eversley).

29. *The New York Times*

"A man knelt across the street outside the Emanuel A.M.E. Church after a shooting on Wednesday in Charleston, S.C," photo by Wade Spees, Associated Press (Horowitz et al.).

Blood/dead bodies

30.

Front cover of *Daily News* following the murder of television employees in Roanokee, Virginia (Sandoval et al., 27 August 2015).

31. *Daily News*

State Sen. Clementa Pinckney, who was also the church pastor, was among those killed," photo by Grace Beahm, Associated Press (Sandoval et al., 18 June 2015).

Heroization/victimization

32. *USA Today*

"Worshipers embrace following a group prayer across the street from the scene of a shooting that left nine dead on June 17, 2015, in Charleston, S.C.," photo by David Goldman, Associated Press (Eversley).

33. *USA Today*

"Reverend Al Sharpton, right, visits a memorial outside the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston on Thursday," photo by Brendan Smialowski, Getty Images (Eversley).

34. *USA Today*

"Black Lives Matter activists hold a rally outside the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 19, 2015," photo by Richard Ellis, European Pressphoto Agency (Eversley).

The Muslim Other

35. *USA Today*

"Shooting suspect Dylann Storm Roof is escorted from the Sheby, N.C., Police Department. Roof is a suspect in the shooting of several people on June 17 at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C.," photo by Chuck Burton, Associated Press (Eversley).

36. *The Washington Post*

"Dylann Roof, a suspect in the shooting in Charleston, S.C., is escorted from the Shelby Police Department in Shelby, N.C.," photo by Chuck Burton, Associated Press (Costa et al.).

37. *The Washington Post*

"Dylann Roof, in an image on his Web site that included a racist manifesto," photo from Roof's website (Costa et al.).

Media Framing

38.

Front cover of *USA Today* in the wake of the Charleston church shooting (Jervis).

39.

Front cover of *Daily News* in the wake of the Charleston church shooting (Sandoval et al., 18 June 2016).

40.

Front cover of *The Washington Post* in the wake of the Charleston church shooting (Costa et al.).

41.

Front cover of *The New York Times* in the wake of the Charleston church shooting (Corasaniti et al.).

42.

Picture in Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Istanbul (Muller).

43.

Original of the photo above (Nieuws.Marokko).