



“A Solemn Pledge to Refrain from Encouraging Criminal Behavior”

- We support the “Don’t Inspire Evil Initiative” and encourage journalists, editors and news media generally to: **Refrain from the gratuitous or repetitious use of mass murderers’ or jihadis’ names and images.**
- Law enforcement officials and social and scientific experts recognize that repetitious use of these criminals names and images encourages copycat behavior and has harmful, deleterious effects on public safety.
- Raising the images and names of society’s most ruthless criminals to iconic status is a perverse misuse of the public trust embodied in the First Amendment and does nothing to advance the news cycle or inform the public. It represents the worst forms of yellow journalism, sensationalism, and pandering to the lowest base instincts of society, all of which we condemn.
- The voluntary limits news media already wisely places on identifying information for rape victims, images of the dead, minors charged with offenses, details that might encourage suicide contagion, certain delicate matters of national security such as troop movements, invasion of privacy, personal financial data and other issues that require balancing the public’s right to know with a sense of propriety prove that everything that can be published is already subject to sensible limitations.
- Gratuitous or repetitious use of jihadi and mass murderers’ names and images belongs within this set of appropriate limitations. Failure to do so is equivalent to justifying the open release of every rape victim’s name and picture under the hopelessly specious rubric that it is news and the public has a right to know. Certain things are best left unsaid, as the media has already clearly and properly accepted. We can see how voluntarily embracing this reasonable ethical guideline will benefit and enhance respect for journalism from the public it serves. We see two paths here: either let “The Golden Age of Glorifying Villains” come to an end or openly acknowledge its perpetuation.

We urge and encourage all news media to adopt this ethical guideline in your existing set:

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of jihadis’ or mass murderers’ names and images.”**