

Heroes at the Push of a Button: The Image of the Photojournalist in Videogames

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Abstract

The impression left on the popular consciousness by every iteration of cinematic technology, from silent movies to talkies to big-budget special effects to IMAX to IMAX 3-D, is impossible to match. However, videogames are able to offer experiences that are incapable of being duplicated, while at the same time never threatening film's significance in popular culture.¹ Both media are made stronger by the presence of the other, and because of that, they often employ similar approaches to genre and narrative technique.²

It is the goal of this discussion to examine the techniques, styles, designs and narrative devices that videogames employ, specifically in games featuring journalists as their heroes, so that we might have a clearer understanding of how videogames are shaping the image of the journalist in popular culture. In a time in history when the credibility of journalists and the news media is threatened regularly, and in a time when rapidly changing technologies are allowing audiences to experience stories in new ways, the potential for a drastic shift in the image of the journalist by way of new technologies, such as next-generation gaming systems, is more possible than ever.

In order to get a better understanding of how videogame journalists/heroes relate to other forms of fictional journalists/heroes, we will examine the common characteristics of both heroes and journalists, specifically character design, location and the methods by which hero journalists acquire information, transmit the truth to the public, and ultimately the impact journalists and their stories have on their worlds. These characteristics will also be examined in terms of how they have been defined by movies, videogames, comic books and other media.

The Games and Their Heroes

This discussion limits the examination of the image of the photojournalist in videogames to those that allow gamers to play as photojournalists and employ photojournalist skills, mainly the ability to take pictures and have the pictures count toward the building of a story that will eventually expose some large-scale corruption. The two games that most adhere to this standard are Capcom's *Dead Rising* and Ubisoft's *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Dead Rising was not only a massive financial success when released in 2006,³ it is also one of the very few games in which the player can assume the role of an actual journalist. In *Dead Rising*, the outbreak of thousands of zombies prompts the quarantine of a small town in Colorado called Willamette, and it is up to Frank West, veteran war correspondent/freelance photojournalist, to get the scoop. Little is known about West, except that he has a history of covering wars as a freelance photojournalist, and he prefers to work on his own whenever possible. He is a smug yet determined journalist who will do anything to get a story. Most of West's duties in the game include rescuing survivors

who are trapped in the mall and snapping pictures of the carnage he encounters, most of which is caused by his own hands, as the game encourages nonstop brutality against the hordes of zombies. West is a typical manly hero figure who must single-handedly save the world. West is assigned cases throughout the game that map out the progression of the plot. In addition to the main cases, West also will receive “Scoop missions,” which primarily involve rescuing civilians from danger. The main mode of the game is called 72-hour Mode. Over this three-day period, West must discover the story behind the zombie infestation, rescue as many civilians as possible, kill as many zombies as it takes to get from one point to the next, battle “psychopaths,”⁴ collect a series of bombs so the mall won’t blow up, avoid being killed by elite Army forces that arrive to eliminate all traces of the outbreak and, finally, be on the roof in time to be picked up by a helicopter and flown to safety where he can report what he has found to the world. The game blends a heavy dose of survival-horror with action-adventure and many familiar trappings of war-correspondent films to create a unique yet familiar gaming experience.

Beyond Good and Evil was not a massive hit when it was released in 2003, but it attracted a large cult following and is now considered by many people to be one of the most underrated games of all time.⁵ The story follows a 20-year-old woman named Jade as she struggles to expose the truth behind a conspiracy that has enslaved her planet of Hillys.

Her biography, as it appears on the Ubisoft.com website, is as follows:

Jade is an action reporter/photographer. She owns Jade Reporting and earns her living by producing various photographic reports of commission. Jade is a lively, strong and sassy woman with a subtle femininity. She has a marked taste for adventure and justice, and wants to bring about change. She’s very attached and attentive to her Uncle Pey’j and the orphaned children she has taken in. She’s a

top-notch photographer, known for her keen wits, investigative skills and uncanny stealth abilities. She's also a master of martial-arts – her Dai-Jo stick skills are unmatched in combat and she's got a perfect aim using her gyro disc glove. Jade was orphaned as a young child and doesn't know who her parents are or where she comes from. She grew up in the poor area of Hillys, where she quickly acquired defensive abilities, street smarts and a strong sense of human solidarity. She lives on a small island in Hillys with her adoptive uncle Pey'j and many children who have lost their parents during the recent night attacks (or rather children whose parents have mysteriously disappeared). Her prized possession is her camera – the one and only thing she received from her parents as a child – Jade's only real memory of her family. After being contacted by IRIS, she becomes the lead action-reporter for the rebel cause. She fights against prejudice and propaganda in the name of her people and for the right to know the truth beyond the typical perceptions of good and evil.⁶

Jade is eventually recruited by a rebel movement called the IRIS Network, which publishes an underground newsletter to spread anti-government ideology. With the help of her uncle Pey'j and a few friends she meets along the way, Jade and company must battle through expansive environments, solve puzzles and collect photographic evidence that proves there is an alliance between the Alpha Sections, the military dictatorship that allegedly protects Hillys, and the “enemy” alien forces, the DomZ. Jade's photographs are eventually published in the IRIS Network's newsletter, which ultimately leads to the ousting of the Alpha Sections and once again brings peace to the planet of Hillys.

Heroes at the Push of a Button

A journalist makes himself the hero of a story; a reporter is just a witness.
- Alex Barris, *Stop the Presses: The Newspaperman in America Films*⁷

Chapter 1: Character Design

*Most readily definable of the iconographic elements of the genre are those related to costume and setting. The battered hat with a press tag stuffed in the band, the rumpled suit and jacket with patches on the elbows are familiar identifiers... The traditional costume of the journalist seems a perfect reflection of the character itself, at once indicating a level of professionalism while at the same time demonstrating a degree of independence in the refusal to conform to current requirements of fashion or even to socially accepted notions of proper appearance.*⁸

- Richard Ness

There is little doubt that the image Richard Ness describes is due in large part to the films of Frank Capra and the subsequent generations of films Capra's work inspired.⁹ And while the specifics of the journalist's costume develop in step with changing times, the changes, as Ness points out, are merely functional rather than fashionable. Because movie journalists were often seen in plain dress¹⁰ rather than in outfits that put them in a class about the average moviegoer, they were able to attract a broader range of the audience.¹¹

Videogame developers share the same goal when they design game characters.¹² Tim Schafer, president of Double Fine Productions and creator of two groundbreaking computer games, *Full Throttle* and *Grim Fandango*,¹³ believes "people want to be a hero. If ultra-famous, superstar Hollywood actors wouldn't kill to play the role, then more work is necessary."¹⁴ The more emotional investment a character can evoke from the player,

the more successful the gaming experience will ultimately be. In terms of specific character types like the journalist, game developers are not as tied to history as filmmakers are, since videogames have only relatively recently become an entertainment medium capable of rivaling motion pictures. Developers, therefore, are able to approach traditional character types/styles from a nontraditional perspective. Because of this, videogames are able to create unique, while still historically conscious, images.

West and Jade deviate in many ways from the fast-talking, sharp-tongued “hard-drinking, cynical newspaperman” image created by Frank Capra and others in early twentieth-century film.¹⁵ However, these characters, with their cameras swinging around their necks and individual approaches to fashion, are quintessential journalists and, subsequently, heroes.

Frank West – The New Face of Photojournalism in a Classic Mold

*If the profession of photojournalism ever needed a poster boy, Dead Rising's Frank West is it. He doesn't just cover stories on location. He splatters the story's brains across a movie theatre floor, kicks it while it's down, then drop kicks the next story in the chest.*¹⁶

– Charles Onyett, *IGN.COM*

Frank West is a stud. As far as fictional creations go, West is about as physically flawless as they come. In this way, he carries on the tradition of attractive film journalists that includes such famous figures as Cary Grant (*His Girl Friday*), Clark Gable (*It Happened One Night*), Bing Crosby (*Here Comes the Groom*), Kirk Douglas (*Ace in the Hole*) and Robert Redford (*All the President's Men*). While not immaculately dressed and

presumably achieved on the cheap, journalists on film show enough fashion sense to dress appropriately for their times and surroundings. These fashions range from the classic suit and hat combination of the 1920s–1940s as seen in such films as *The Front Page* and *It Happened One Night*, to the jacketless, shirt-tie-slacks combination seen in newsrooms in films like *All the President's Men* and *Broadcast News*.

For West, fashion traditions are not entirely applicable. His somewhat unconventional outfit consists of a black leather jacket, white Polo shirt, jeans and a stylish haircut, none of which would be considered a violation of “socially accepted notions of proper appearance.”¹⁷ West’s outfit appears to be more expensive, despite its casual appearance, and more fashion-conscious than his fictional journalist brethren. Still, West satisfies enough of Ness’s requirements to be categorized among other famous fictional journalist. Judging solely on appearances, West is a classic “tall, dark and handy,”¹⁸ hot-shot figure, and looks like the stereotypical hero journalist, only slightly updated to mirror the styles of the 21st century.

Jade – Just Another Pretty Face?

Like West, Jade is another attractive journalist.¹⁹ Even though Jade is from the fictional planet of Hillys, her green leather jacket, loose-fitting cargo pants, hip haircut and green lipstick are style choices that one might run across any day of the week on modern-day Earth. As far as fictional journalists are concerned, Jade is a new breed, in that she challenges the traditional image of the female journalist established in early 20th century film.²⁰

Jade violates the physical aspect of the “newspaperman” image in a few interesting ways. For one, her name literally means “a disreputable woman, or a flirtatious girl.”²¹ Even though Jade is innocent and respectable, the name is still decidedly feminine. Also, her clothes, mainly her tight, midriff-bearing t-shirt, are used to accentuate her femininity, and since she remains in the same clothes throughout the course of the game, her image never changes. Jade is also a freelance photojournalist, which means she does not have any requirements of fashion to satisfy. Jade is free to present herself in whatever way she wants, thereby demonstrating her independence, individuality and prerogative to operate beyond the established newsroom standards and setting that confined her female counterparts in early Hollywood films.²²

Unlike the traditional image of the newspaperwoman where female reporters had to constantly prove their worth in the eyes of male colleagues,²³ Jade is never deemed unworthy simply because she is a woman. In fact, at one point in *Beyond Good and Evil*, the blind hotel manager/IRIS member, Peepers, says of Jade, “You’d have to be blind. That kid is bursting with talent.”²⁴ When Jade meets up with the IRIS Network’s “best” reporter, Double H, a spoof of meatheads from 1960s science-fiction films, there is never a sense of competition between them. They both have their strengths and weaknesses. Double H is able to use brute force to smash open doors and dispose of guards, but he can’t fit into small spaces as Jade can. Similarly, Jade is more agile, physically and intellectually, and can use stealth to maneuver around potential confrontations, but she needs Double H to open doors and to kill guards. With teamwork, they are able to

achieve success in the end, dismissing the classic image of the female journalist as someone incapable of gaining equality in a male-dominated profession.

Chapter 2: Location, Location, Location

The journalism angle afforded an opportunity to place characters in exotic settings and it was not uncommon to find American correspondents involved in exciting feats of derring-do in fantasy locales. The war correspondent enabled filmmakers to exploit situations that were currently in the public eye... On a more fanciful level, films such as the Italian-made War Correspondents (1913) found a journalist overseas involved in thrills worthy of a serial and the climactic race to get in a big story provided a perfect structural device for the silent era.²⁵

– Richard Ness

Videogames tap into the deepest traditions of film, fiction and other media, and use that inspiration to expand and advance the experience in ways no other medium can. *Dead Rising* and *Beyond Good and Evil* are in many ways replicas of Hollywood war correspondent/conspiracy films. Both games place their narratives in “fantasy” locales and both games exploit those locales and the journalistic profession to achieve exciting ends. It is helpful to understand some of the filmic influences shared by the games regarding how they handle setting and the role setting plays in the making of a hero and a journalist.

Malls, Zombies, Photojournalists, Oh My!

The cover of *Dead Rising* says it all.²⁶ George Romero’s cult-classic *Dawn of the Dead*, in which a group of townspeople find themselves trapped in a mall full of zombies, clearly influenced the game developers at Capcom. Not only did Romero’s decision to place his zombie movie inside a shopping mall serve as an ingenious critique of

American consumerism, it also broke cinematic ground in that it turned one of America's most recognizable and comfortable settings into the seventh circle of hell.²⁷

Dead Rising revisits Romero's idea, but makes war correspondent/freelance journalist Frank West the main character, and a camera is added to the arsenal of weapons used to battle the zombie hordes. West's surroundings, specifically the tens of thousands of flesh-eating zombies that inhabit the Willamette mall and encompassing grounds, are reminiscent of those in which film war correspondents must navigate. *Dead Rising* owes much of its success to such films as *Under Fire* (1983) and *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943), which sought to highlight the brutality and harsh reality experienced by war correspondents in treacherous and life-threatening situations.

Guadalcanal Diary, based on journalist Richard Tregaskis' book, was close to a last-stand film...Critics praised *Guadalcanal Diary* for the documentary feel of the invasion itself, and as one of the few films which did not use Hollywood motivations (love, bitterness, etc.), but simply had the soldiers [sic.] driven by the will to stay alive.²⁸

West finds himself in a last-stand situation as well, one that requires him to find out the truth behind the zombie outbreak and survive until help can arrive. Instead of struggling to survive on a battlefield, West battles to survive in a mall.

The Willamette mall also represents an important fixture found in some of the most well-known journalism movies of all time. "The roll top desk in *The Front Page*, the cave in which reporter Chuck Tatum finds Lee Minos in *Ace in the Hole*...This physical manifestation of concealment or revelation reinforces the concept of truth which provides

the motivating force in the genre pattern.”²⁹ Somewhere in the mall lies the key to unlocking the mystery surrounding the events that are unfolding around West. The inhabitants of the mall, mainly the zombies, but also the stray psycho-killers that West must battle over the course of the game, represent motivating factors as well, in that they are bringers of death to anyone who crosses paths with them. Like traditional war correspondents who must maneuver on the battlefield and protect themselves against warring factions, West is a journalist in a tough situation that requires constant awareness, unwavering physical strength and unrelenting devotion to exposing the truth. In this way, Frank West establishes himself nobly among other great fictional journalist heroes.

Beyond Earth, Good and Evil

Similar to West, Jade is a character of her time and place. Even though *Beyond Good and Evil* takes place on a fictional planet, Hillys is a completely realized, densely populated and complex world. Michel Ancel, the creator/director of the game, said “having an action reporter as the central character means that you can create an interesting mixture of various game-play styles – investigative journalism, travel, dangerous encounters and a close relationship with the population of Hillys, the planet where the game is set. How the people react to Jade's articles is also an interesting aspect of the game and original to *BG&E*.”³⁰ Ancel echoes those made by Thomas H. Zynda regarding why journalism fit so well into the medium of film. “The press is...clothed with an aura of importance and some mystery that lends it well to the dramatic requirements of popular art.”³¹ In this way, *Beyond Good and Evil* differs greatly from *Dead Rising*.

While *Dead Rising* is somewhat limited in scope, it also understands the type of game it is and pulls it off with spectacular results. *Beyond Good and Evil*, however, is a bit more ambitious in that it wants to provide the player with the experience of unraveling a conspiracy on a geographically large scale. However, similar to *Dead Rising*, *BG&E* allows players to traverse the world in whatever manner they wish.³² Of course, the plot will not unfold unless certain goals are met and information is acquired,³³ but if the player wishes to, he/she could spend all their time in the Akuda bar playing a Hillyian version of air-hockey and never expose the truth behind the Alpha Sections' supposed conspiratorial relationship with the DomZ. And while not every game encourages as much freedom as *BG&E*, the very nature of videogames is that the player and the character he/she controls become active participants in the action of the story.³⁴ This is one of the key areas in which *BG&E* shines brightest, because it ingrains the sense of freedom that one would expect to find in the real world.

BG&E revels in the idea of concealment spaces being metaphors for the need to expose hidden truths. In both West and Jade's cases, the only way to uncover that truth is to descend into the darkest regions of the story's universe and risk life and limb in the process.³⁵ For Jade, the answers can only be found inside various DomZ facilities scattered around the planet, and it is up to the player to figure out how to gain access to them and how to maneuver inside them without being captured or killed.

Jade lives on an island in a lighthouse just outside the city proper³⁶ with her Uncle Pey'j (a humanoid pig) and a dozen orphaned children (many of whom are also mixed species) whom Jade has adopted. The lighthouse serves as a safe/save point that the player can return to at any time throughout the game.³⁷ More importantly, it gives the player a place to call home, which in turn lends a sense of humanity to Jade that would be lacking if the player only saw Jade in the context of a newsroom or a single location for the entire game.³⁸

Similar to *Dead Rising*, the truth behind the conspiracy threatening Jade's world resides somewhere beyond the security of her home. Unfortunately for Jade, this means traversing various military facilities and factories, and since all these facilities require special keys to access them, it becomes part of Jade's responsibilities to discover ways to acquire them. These facilities serve as traditional concealment spaces, which the journalist must carefully navigate in order to expose the truth being housed within them.

Chapter 3: The Price of Bringing the Truth to the People

*The discovery (or in some cases the concealment) of the truth also has implications for the profession itself and becomes the motivation for examining ethical issues or conflicts in the practice of the profession...The journalism film is defined by recognizable elements of mise-en-scene that establish this pattern as the product of a set of determined icons or codes and of a definable social order.*³⁹

– Richard Ness

So far, this discussion has examined two crucial aspects of any story involving a hero and/or a journalist: character design and location. Frank West and Jade are physically outfitted to adhere to as well as distance themselves from the classic image of the

photojournalist, and they both find themselves in environments and situations that require equal amounts of bravery, dedication, intelligence and journalistic skill. The third, and final, element involves the methods by which Frank West and Jade employ their journalistic abilities to expose the truths behind the conspiracies that threaten the existence of their respective worlds, and the ultimate impact those truths have on their worlds.

Sledgehammer, Chainsaw, Camera: Strong, Stronger, Strongest

Dead Rising opens with Frank West being flown into the small town of Willamette, Colorado by helicopter. Along the way, he engages in a crude but composed conversation with Ed, the pilot. When West says he received a tip about a big story supposedly taking place in town, Ed says, “In a nowhere little town like that? They sure didn’t mention anything about it on TV,” to which West smarmily replies “Yeah. Well, I’m freelance, pal. I don’t make my living waiting for the TV to tell me what to cover.”⁴⁰

This exchange serves two clear purposes. First, it is a harsh, if brief, critique of the television news media, which Frank apparently considers ineffective and inefficient, relying entirely on the work of the individual news gatherer without whom there would be nothing to report during the evening broadcast. Second, it provides a sliver of insight into what West’s role is in the game. Before the player even takes control of him, it is clear that West is the hero of the story. However, it isn’t clear what kind of hero he will become. Over the course of West and Ed’s exchange, and the entire opening sequence,

West comes off as a brash, go-getting “derring-do” who is good at his job and has the experience to back it up.

As the sequence continues, the player takes control of Frank’s camera and uses it to take pictures of random acts of carnage and destruction that unfold on the streets below.

Vehicles are seen surrounded by zombies, pedestrians are pulled out of their cars and devoured, and a gas station explodes, sending fire and debris into the sky. During one scene, a woman is seen fighting off a surrounding horde of zombies on a rooftop. She frantically waves to get the helicopter’s attention, but before she can be saved, she is tackled by a zombie, sending her plummeting off the building to her death.⁴¹ At various points during this scene, Frank’s pictures earn different amounts of experience points according to their framing, composition and whether or not they satisfy genre specifications.⁴² Each of these scenes represents another opportunity for Frank to earn prestige points, which are then put toward unlocking special abilities and increasing current ones.

This section of the game offers an interesting commentary on the profession of photojournalism. Ethically, West is in the right. He does not violate, at least in the opening section of the game, any of the rules set out by the National Press Photographers Association’s code of ethics.⁴³ But stepping back from the reality of the game world in which West has no control over the events that transpire around him, the ethical discussion becomes more complicated. The NPPA’s second code of ethics states, “Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.” In the game world of *Dead Rising*,

West could never be accused of violating this code since he is simply a character involved in an unfolding drama. However, the player understands that the events that transpire on the screen have been staged by game designers and animators who strategically placed the sequences to allow the player the opportunity to feel like a “real” photojournalist who is able to capture actual events at the moment they happen. Adding to the realism is the fact that the events only play out for a short amount of time, and if the player fails to take the picture in time, the opportunity is gone. Through this simulation, the player is given the chance to experience the intensity, the terror, the immediacy and, in the case of photos involving death and destruction, the nauseating reality that comes with being a photojournalist in the middle of a war zone.

According to Howard Good, the image of the hero photojournalist/war correspondent can be traced to “Rudyard Kipling’s *The Light That Failed* and Stephen Crane’s *Active Service* (both 1899). Anglo-American fiction also contributed its just share to the glamorization of war correspondence.”⁴⁴ Thanks to their portrayals in early American memoirs and novels, the war correspondents became fantastical figures in the public consciousness.⁴⁵ “But it wasn’t until *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), directed by Alfred Hitchcock and co-scripted (without credit) by the ubiquitous Ben Hecht, that he was finally and firmly established as a popular film hero.”⁴⁶ This image suffered greatly during the Vietnam War as most of the glamour that had surrounded the image of the war correspondent during World War I and especially World War II was stripped away in favor of an image that was “less colorful, more coldly professional than his predecessors.”⁴⁷ The migration from novels to film in the early twentieth century is

similar to the migration from films to videogames in the late twentieth century, and with that migration, came the genetic material of characters and images from the previous media that inspired it.

Little in the correspondents' previous experience has prepared them for their sudden descent into the underworld. Their orthodox brand of journalism can't cope with the rush of darkness. Stumbling through the valley of the shadow of death, they are tossed between their professional duty to report events objectively and their wakening impulse to intervene in disaster.⁴⁸

What the player sees in Frank West is a combination of traditional hero journalist folklore and the disturbing reality portrayed in such films as *Salvador* and *Under Fire*. These two images combine to create a character that is strictly in line with his fictional brethren while at the same time representative of a new brand of hero journalist. West is, at least evolutionarily, more prepared for the insanity that awaits him on the battlefield than the journalists who went before him. But even West, who has cut his teeth covering wars independent of official news outlets⁴⁹ and has the lessons of history on his side, shows disgust at some of the carnage he witnesses over the course of the game.⁵⁰

Fortunately for West, the kindred spirit of Russell Price (Nick Nolte), the veteran war-photographer torn between ethics and humanity in the film *Under Fire*, lives on inside him.⁵¹ Throughout *Dead Rising*, West references his past as a war photographer, but it does not impress people the way it might in any situation other than one where zombies have overrun a mall and are eating people.⁵² Early in the game, a group of survivors is barricading the entrance to the mall. When West tries to take pictures of the massive zombie crowd just beyond the doors, a man named Ryan gets in West's way, completely

unsympathetic to West's journalistic pursuits. He says, "Feel like making yourself useful? Take a look around the mall and bring anything we can use for the barricade back here."⁵³

Because the player understands the purpose of the game (take pictures to expose the truth behind the zombie outbreak), and because West understands his role as a hero journalist who must survive long enough to safely escape and file the story, there is no hesitation when West is told to stop taking pictures and to help with the barricade. In this situation, West clearly satisfies the image of the journalist as someone who does whatever it takes to get the story. However, West's actions are shown in a favorable light, as he is seen putting aside his journalistic glory to help his fellow man. This is not to say that West lacks the desire for self-preservation, but if he had decided to follow rule number five of the NPAA's code of ethics – do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events – not only would there be no story to tell, there wouldn't be anyone left to tell it.⁵⁴ Consequently, this conflict complicates the image of the journalist presented in the game.

While West commits countless acts of violence in the pursuit of his report, the warlike environment in which he operates makes the player more sympathetic to his actions.⁵⁵

The image presented in the game depicts one of journalism's greatest challenges: the struggle between objectivity and journalistic attachment.⁵⁶

Under Fire's evaluation of objectivity is important to note in the current debate on journalism of attachment and detachment. It represents the journalist acting on a higher moral cause, to try and save lives, at the expense of his commitment to

impartiality. However, the film also represents that his abandonment comes at a great sacrifice, both personally and professionally. *Under Fire* warns that while objectivity may not always be appropriate in the war zones of the world, its abandonment can have grave consequences.⁵⁷

While West's photojournalism is an integral part of the game in terms of how he will expose the truth behind the outbreak, it doesn't play as significant a role in the actual progression of the game as it does in *Beyond Good and Evil*. At its heart, *Dead Rising* is a survival horror game, with the emphasis on survival.⁵⁸ With the exception of one photo challenge mission,⁵⁹ West is never required to take photographs of specific events or pieces of evidence. The only requirements that matter to the plot involve the survival of key characters and a few scattered missions involving the transportation of characters from one area to another.⁶⁰ However, the fact that West risks his life in pursuit of a story is enough to make up for the lack of journalistically motivated missions in the game.⁶¹ And the fact that West's camera is listed among his weapons carries enormous contextual significance in terms of how West relates to the classic image of the photojournalist.⁶²

Over the course of the game, West encounters characters who have definite opinions about journalists and the news media. During one mission, West is sent to provide backup for a Homeland Security agent named Brad. Afterward, West asks Brad about the zombie outbreak. Brad says, "Sorry, I've got nothing to tell you. I don't know what Jessie told you but as far as I'm concerned we're through working together. So you cover your zombie story and leave the rest to us." West quickly sees an angle and asks, "You guys are looking for someone here, aren't ya?" West holds out his camera so Brad can see the image displayed on the camera's video screen. Brad grabs for the camera and asks, "Who

is that? Where did you take that?” Frank pulls the camera out of Brad’s reach and calmly replies, “You help me. I help you.” Brad is visibly upset, and finally he lets loose on Frank. “You’re one hell of a journalist aren’t you, Frank? A hotheaded, underhanded, hotshot paparazzi with nothing better to do than to invade people’s privacy.” Frank, again, smoothly replies, “I try. You got a point?”⁶³

In this moment, West’s place in the lineage of fictional journalists is solidified. As Loren Ghiglione states, “People love to hate the journalist.”⁶⁴ However, the player’s disdain for West is somewhat tempered, since any ill will felt toward West must in some way be directed back at the player, since the player dictates the majority of West’s actions. Also, the player is fully aware, and the countless pictures of slain zombie corpses are proof, that West is much more than a typical paparazzi figure. By agreeing with Brad, West plays up Brad’s stereotypical view of the photojournalist as a selfish, conniving member of a corrupt press by agreeing with him. But given the fact that there are several different endings to the game depending on how successfully West operates in his limited time frame, it is clear that West is far from a cookie-cutter character⁶⁵ and is, in fact, quite a successful hero journalist.

Beyond Gore and Evil Zombies

*‘This is going to be one hell of a story.
Remember don’t try to be a hero.’⁶⁶*

–Beyond Good and Evil

The first sequence in *Beyond Good and Evil* is a television news broadcast by the Hillyian news network, HTV. The anchor informs viewers of an impending attack by alien invaders, the DomZ, followed by an address by the Alpha Sections’ Supreme

Commander, General Keck, who informs the viewers that any threat posed by the DomZ will be repelled by the Alpha Sections.⁶⁷ Then the sequence shifts to Jade and one of her animal friends meditating on a cliff, overlooking a serene ocean. Unlike Frank West, Jade isn't immediately associated with the profession of journalism. Whereas the player's first action with West involves taking pictures of vicious zombie attacks from the doorway of a swooping helicopter, the first actions performed by the player as Jade are physical and heroic.

A dozen DomZ attack Jade's lighthouse and several children in the area after the security laser grid surrounding the lighthouse shuts down due to insufficient funds. Jade repels the attacks with cinematic grace and agility, aided in part by her uncle Pey'j, who comes to her rescue when she gets trapped by one of the creatures. After these feats of heroism by Jade and Pey'j, HTV cameras and broadcaster arrives on the scene to interview Jade about the attack. However, instead of acknowledging Jade's actions, the reporter jovially asks Jade to comment about the courageous efforts of the Alpha Sections. This sequence not so subtly establishes that the media on Hillys have been corrupted by the government and has become a mouthpiece for the Alpha Sections' propaganda machine to keep the civilians of the planet ignorant and in constant fear of the DomZ and the IRIS Network, which the government claims is a terrorist organization working with the alien invaders.

When Jade wakes up the next morning, she is immediately given an assignment that can help her pay the power bill and give her company, Jade Reporting, some much-needed income. A scientist asks Jade to photograph every species of animal on the planet in

exchange for money. Pey'j objects, saying "Who would want to take pictures of that? We're in the middle of a war!"⁶⁸ Nonetheless, bills have to be paid, and so Jade does what she must. Soon afterward, Jade receives an email requesting her for an assignment at a place called the Black Isles. Accompanied by her uncle, Jade meets with a man who claims he is a courier for an unknown person. Jade's assignment is to get photographic evidence of an alien life form believed to be residing in an abandoned mine shaft. After a series of puzzles, minor scuffles and a boss battle, Jade delivers the pictures to the courier. The man turns out to be a recruiter for the underground rebels, the IRIS Network, and the assignment was her initiation test. During a brief scene the man informs Jade of the conspiracy involving the DomZ and the Hillyian government.⁶⁹ Jade expresses genuine surprise and even skepticism when she hears this claim, displaying a fully functioning journalistic mind at work. The man asks Jade to join their cause and to "fight the good fight" by "bringing the truth of the conspiracy to the people."⁷⁰

Jade soon joins the IRIS Network as their "action-reporter,"⁷¹ under the pen name "Shauni" after it is revealed that their star reporter "Double H" has been missing for several days. It is Jade's responsibility to pick up the investigation where Double H left off, and ultimately get the story of her career.

Just as Frank West uses his camera to document the carnage and destruction he encounters/causes in *Dead Rising*, Jade must also capture significant moments with her trusty camera and report the truth behind the conspiracy that threatens her planet. Each major revelation comes after complex sequences of puzzle solving, combat and stealth in

which Jade must maneuver around laser beams, collect missing fuses to open doors or power-up elevators, sneak past guards and sometimes even fight them in order to gain access to privileged areas of major Alpha Sections facilities. Each new facility Jade investigates requires the adoption of a new set of strategies on the part of the player. This constant adaptation to changing environments is a requirement of heroes and journalists alike. Heroes are routinely faced with challenges that require creative solutions and quick intellect. Journalists encounter all manner of barriers, such as unresponsive sources or bureaucratic interference, in the pursuit of stories, especially explosive stories involving governmental wrongdoing.

Ultimately, there are five photographs that establish the foundation of Jade and the IRIS Network's story against the Alpha Sections.⁷² Each time Jade acquires a new photo, it is instantly emailed back to IRIS headquarters where it is then published in the IRIS Network's underground newsletter. As Jade's investigation progresses, more civilians become aware of the government's corruption. When Jade walks through the Pedestrian District at the beginning of the game, she overhears conversations between civilians in which the civilians praise the Alpha Sections for protecting Hillys against the DomZ invasions. Over the course of the game and as more of Jade's photos are released, these conversations turn progressively more anti-Alpha Sections, eventually reaching the point of outright protest, with people holding signs that read "Shauni + IRIS= Peace!" and "Alpha Sections Murders!" Unlike her spiritual ancestors from 1950s comic books, Jade's journalism skills are essential to her success as a member of an idyllic watchdog media.⁷³

When Jade and company make their final report from the Alpha Sections' moon base, the perspective shifts to Hillys, where civilians crowd around one of the countless televisions scattered around the city (a la Big Brother in George Orwell's *1984*) and watching the same propagandizing broadcast heard throughout the game. Suddenly, the broadcast is high-jacked by Jade and company. "Look at these photos that we have taken," says Pey'j. "The Alpha Sections are the accomplices of the DomZ forces. The Alpha Sections are the ones that have been kidnapping the Hillyians and taking them to the DomZ...Hillyians, we've been manipulated and deceived. Stop listening to the lies that the Alpha Sections are telling you."⁷⁴ Instantly, the crowds begin chanting, "Down with the Alpha Sections! Revolution!" The crowd begins rioting, toppling over the enormous television screen in the process.

Once the entire story is revealed to the inhabitants of Hillys and the Alpha Sections are ousted from power, the government's control over the media is lifted and for the first time in the game, television and radio broadcasts praise the efforts of the IRIS Network. "The truth has finally been revealed by our trustworthy colleagues from the IRIS Network...Once again, the honorable journalistic profession was able to show that it had a preponderant role in history."⁷⁵

Conclusion

Ultimately, the image of the journalist in *Dead Rising* and *Beyond Good and Evil* is a favorable one that propels the fictional hero journalist into the next generation while at the same time holding on to the conventions and images of the past.

Frank West is a likable, talented and intelligent, if sometimes smug and ambitious journalist who is determined to risk his life to get the story. The creators of *Dead Rising* infuse West with similar characteristics found in classic movie journalists,⁷⁶ but the creators advance the image, making West as much of a physical threat to the corrupt and infected world around him as a journalistic one. West is physically capable of slaying thousands of undead to get the story. If given the same opportunity, every great journalist should want to do the same, both literally and figuratively.

Jade is infused with all the classic traits found in some of film's most famous female journalists, such as Torchy Blane, Hildy Johnson and Babe Bennett. Jade also represents a new generation of individualistic woman who exist in a world beyond the good and evil of, among many other things, gender grudges. Similar to her videogame colleague, Frank West, Jade's journalistic ability is complemented by physical strength and a willingness to sacrifice herself for the good of humankind. If their adventures are an indication of anything, it is that the role of a hero journalist is not an easy one to play. Only those with enough skill and power can overcome the difficulties that come with being pursuers and protectors of the truth.

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Broadcast News, 1987 (running time 133 minutes), color, 20th Century Fox. Written and directed by James L. Brooks.

Dawn of the Dead, 1978 (running time 126 minutes), color, Laurel Group. Written and directed by George Romero.

The Front Page, 1931 (running time 101 minutes), black and white, The Caddo Company. Directed by Lewis Milestone. Screenplay by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Based on the play "The Front Page" by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur.

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Here Comes the Groom, 1951 (running time 113 minutes), black and white, Paramount Pictures. Directed by Frank Capra. Script by Virginia Van Upp, Liam O'Brien, and Myles Connolly. Based on the story by Robert Riskin and Liam O'Brien.

His Girl Friday, 1940 (running time 92 minutes), black and white, Columbia Pictures. Directed by Howard Hawks. Screenplay by Charles Lederer. Based on the play "The Front Page" by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur

It Happened One Night, 1934 (running time 105 minutes), black and white, Columbia Pictures. Directed by Frank Capra. Screenplay by Robert Riskin. Based on the *Cosmopolitan* magazine short story "Night Bus" by Samuel Hopkins Adams.

Salvador, 1986 (running time 123 minutes), color, Hemdale Film Corporation. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Oliver Stone and Rick Boyle.

Under Fire, 1983 (running time 128 minutes), color, Lions Gate Films. Directed by Roger Spottiswoode. Screenplay by Ron Shelton and Clayton Frohman.

Gameography

Beyond Good and Evil, 2003, Ubisoft. Directed by Michael Ancel.

Dead Rising, 2006, Capcom. Directed by Yoshinori Kawano.

Full Throttle, 1995, LucasArts

Grim Fandango, 1998, LucasArts.

Endnotes

¹ “It is no secret that videogames are becoming a force in mass entertainment with which few other media are able to compete. Even films, once considered the premier choice of entertainment and bringing billions of dollars each year to the United States, recently gave way to the lucrative gaming industry. In 2000, videogame software and hardware sales reached \$8.9 billion versus \$7.3 billion for movie box-office receipts (Poole citing the Wall Street Journal, 2000: 7). However, for the most part, films and videogames do not appear to take part in any competitive scrambles resulting from or spawning such comparisons. In fact, they often exist symbiotically, promoting and remediating each other and each other’s stars and themes through cross-media and trans-media campaigns, financing endeavors (for example Sega and Cronenberg’s *eXistenZ* (1999)) and adapting each other’s stories and characters to film and game screen.” Margit Grieb, “Run Lara Run,” *ScreenPlay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces*, edited by Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska (Wallflower Press, London, 2002), p. 160. Just for some perspective on how quickly the game industry is moving, consider that in just five years, the industry went from \$8.9 billion per year to \$30 billion per year and growing.
<http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story_id=8903398> Accessed February 2007.

² In his review of *Beyond Good and Evil* (2003), Gamespy.com contributor, Benjamin Turner, commented that, “Experiencing *BG&E* is like interacting with a really good movie.” <<http://xbox.gamespy.com/xbox/beyond-good-evil/6488p2.html>> Accessed February 2007.

³ Armin Siljkovic, *Dead Rising Breaks US Sales Record* (2006).
<<http://digitalbattle.com/2006/08/30/dead-rising-breaks-us-sales-records/>> Accessed February 2007.

⁴ These boss battles are plentiful in the game, and each one is disturbingly unique from the other. Battling them is essential to West's progress in the game, and if too much time is spent fighting them, West could potentially miss out on case missions or scoop missions. The psychopaths range from a manic, chainsaw-wielding clown (Adam), to a family of crazed snipers, to a sadistic security guard (Jo Slade) to a man pushing a shopping cart full of spikes (Steven), to fellow photographer turned sadistic killer Kent to the main baddie Carlito, who the player must fight on three separate occasions.

⁵ A quick read through some of the player reviews on the popular gaming website Ign.com shows a clear pattern of agreement that *Beyond Good and Evil* did not receive the appreciation it deserved. <<http://rr.xbox.ign.com/rrobject/xbox/object/482232/>> Accessed February 2007.

⁶ Ubisoft.com, *Beyond Good and Evil* (2003). <<http://beyondgoodevil.com/us/main.php>> Accessed February 2007.

⁷ Alex Barris, *Stop the Presses: The Newspaperman in American Films* (A.S. Barnes and Company, New York, 1976), p. 95.

⁸ Richard Ness, *From Headline Hunter to Superman: A Journalism Filmography* (Scarecrow Press, Lanham, MD, 1997), p.2.

⁹ "Peter Warne is a prototype of the male newspaper reporter in motion pictures, an image of the newshawk, part of a gallery of journalists created out of past stereotypes and presented fresh and seemingly spontaneously by Frank Capra, one of the most popular American directors in film history, and his writers, who were responsible for much of what Americans thought they knew about their journalists in the twentieth century. Those familiar images still focus our thinking today – whether they be the energetic, opportunistic reporter who would do anything for a scoop; or the cynical big-city newspaper editor committed to getting the story first even if it means strangling his reporters to do it or the tough, sarcastic sob sister trying desperately to outdo her male competition." Joe Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film* (Norman Lear Center, University of Southern California, 2002), p. 2.

¹⁰"The well-worn appearance of the journalist's attire indicated an occupation that allows little time for consideration of appearance and a financial status that does not provide for continual concessions to changes in fashion." Ness, p.2.

¹¹ “A movie type consists of a collection of character traits. In incorporating these traits, the type must remain simple enough to have broad and continuing appeal, yet offer enough variety to keep from boring or alienating the audience.” Ness, p. 131.

¹² “As Scott McCloud famously put it in his non-fiction comic-about-comics *Understanding Comics*, you want to design your main character to be as abstract as possible, if you want the reader to identify with him/her/it. If you add a whole lot of specific detail to your main character, you are just adding differences between him and the reader. It also has to do with voice, and what the character says. Note that while Jade isn't completely mute like Link from *The Legend of Zelda*, she never says anything particularly controversial or extensive -- it's the other characters in the game that do most of the talking, and have the strongest personalities. The more details that define a character, the more you distance the player from it and the less engaged the player becomes.” Chris Kohler, *Jade Is Black?!: Racial Ambiguity in Games* (Wired.com, 2007). <http://blog.wired.com/games/2007/02/jades_black_rac.html> Accessed February 2007.

¹³ *Gamespot.com Presents: The Greatest Games of All Time* <<http://www.gamespot.com/gamespot/features/all/greatestgames/p-19.html>> Accessed February 2007.

¹⁴ Ryan O'Donnell, *Tim Schafer: Adventures in Character Design* (Gamespy.com, 2004). <<http://archive.gamespy.com/gdc2004/schafer/>> Accessed February 2007.

¹⁵ Pauline Kael, *Raising Kane: The Citizen Kane Book* (Limelight Editions, New York, 1984), p. 25.

¹⁶ Charles Onyett, *Dead Rising: Review* (IGN.com, 2006). <<http://xbox.ign.com/articles/440/440089p3.html>> Accessed February 2007.

¹⁷ Ness, p.2.

¹⁸ “‘You're marvelous - in a loathsome way!’ says Rosalind Russell to Cary Grant. That's something of an overstatement because the tall, dark and handy Cary isn't loathsome. But in manners, morals and monkey business he surely is setting the Earle audience up to a bunch of semi-horrified laughs in *His Girl Friday*, celluloid resurrection of *The Front Page*, one of the hottest opuses ever dashed off by Messrs. MacArthur and Hecht.” Mary Harris, *His Girl Friday: Review* (*The Washington Post*, February 10, 1940).

¹⁹ Once again, videogames and film find common ground in perpetuating the idea that successful journalists are equally appealing to the eyes.

²⁰ “Unlike other film heroines at this time, the female reporters were not as easily subjugated by the camera's gaze, since women in the genre are often responsible for

investigating the action. In their efforts to get the story, the female reporters become motivators, rather than objects, of the camera's gaze. They also often underwent a form of masculinization, with the female reporters adopting male-associated names and modes of dress designed to downplay their femininity." Ness, p. 72.

²¹ According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, Jade also means, "a broken-down, vicious, or worthless horse." Howard Good discusses the significance of one of film's most famous female journalists, Torchy Blane. "Torchy's very name recapitulates the conflict between work and love underlying her film series. On the one hand, the name suggests her brilliance as a detective-reporter. On the other, it suggests that loneliness and heartache wait for any woman who dares to stray beyond the conventional boundaries of marriage, home and family. Ashes, that's what's in a name." Howard Good, *Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism, and the Movies* (Scarecrow Press Inc., 1998), p. 12.

²² Since Jade is a computer-generated character, she has no real say in how she looks or how she is designed. However, the player is expected to accept her appearance as something she was responsible for putting together before the game began.

²³ "Never thoroughly welcomed in the city room, women felt continual pressure to prove they belonged there." Good, *Girl Reporter*, p. 48.

²⁴ *Beyond Good and Evil* (2003).

²⁵ Ness, p. 7.

²⁶ "This game was not developed, approved or licensed by the owners or creators of George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*." *Dead Rising* (2006).

²⁷ Scott Foundas, *Dawn of the Dead: Review* (Variety, 2004).
<<http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117923411.html?categoryid=31&cs=1>> Accessed February 2007.

²⁸ Courson Maxwell Taylor, *The Newspaper Movies: An Analysis of the Rise and Decline of the News Gatherer as a Hero in American Motion Pictures, 1900-1974* (University of Hawaii, 1976), p. 123.

²⁹ Linda K. Fuller and Paul Loukides, *Beyond the Stars: Stock Characters in American Popular Film* (Bowling Green State University Popular Press, Ohio, 1990), p. 4.

³⁰ Xequated, *Michael Ancel: Beyond Good and Evil* (Xequated, 2004).
<<http://www.xequated.com/articles/120.html>> Accessed February 2007.

³¹ Good, p. 5.

³² “Michael Ancel: We made *Beyond Good & Evil* like a real world; we built the planet system, the mountains, all the creatures... in order to let the player move freely in this world if he wants to. Personally, I've got a few favorite places in the game where I know that I will be able to enjoy a great sunset and where the sea and sounds are cool. I hope that every player will take time to look at the world and to find their own cool places!” (Xequoted, 2004). <<http://www.xequoted.com/articles/120.html>> Accessed February 2007.

³³ One of the essential traits of a hero is “he must possess a strong will to action.” Taylor, p. 8. In videogames, will to action is essential to the plot’s progression.

³⁴ “Players of a game are even more actively involved with the game’s characters; besides just observing, they actually control the onscreen character – their movement, what they look at, what they pick up, what they do. Insofar as the player is invested in the game, he or she is ‘hurt’ when the character is – the character’s injury or death punishes the player, who has to expend collected resources, spend time finding new resources or replay a difficult segment. While movie viewers certainly identify with on-screen character, game players are more strongly involved with their on-screen personae.” Sacha A. Howells, “Watching a Game, Playing a Movie: When Media Collide,” *ScreenPlay*, p. 116.

³⁵ “Next to the war correspondent, the investigative reporter, who always works tirelessly to aid the public, is often the only other legitimate hero of journalism films. He or she usually risks life and limb to get the story that will help the public. They join a handful of editors and even publishers who do not let personal gain or safety stand in the way of running down a story that exposes crime or corruption (James Stewart as P.G. McNeal in *Call Northside 777* or Dustin Hoffman as Carl Bernstein and Robert Redford as Bob Woodward in *All the President’s Men*. They often end up dead – killed by a mobster they were trying to expose, or a crooked policeman, or a corrupt politician (Reporter Jerry McKibbon played by William Holden in *The Turning Point*). More often they end up beaten – but never broken. They are always threatened and show great courage in putting their lives on the line to get the story in the newspaper or on television. Many of the reporters who are killed in action are secondary actors whose deaths are avenged by the star reporters. These journalists are expendable in Hollywood because they give the hero a motive to go after the bad guys with a vengeance: Their pal has been murdered and nothing will stop the reporter from capturing the killers and putting their mugs on page one and their bodies in jail. Newspapermen and women are incredibly loyal to their publications and, most of all, to their colleagues.” Joe Saltzman, *Analyzing the Images of the Journalist in Popular Culture: a Unique Method of Studying the Public’s Perception of Its Journalists and the News Media* (IJPC Journal, Norman Lear Center, University of Southern California), p. 36.
<<http://ijpc.org/AEJMC%20Paper%20San%20Antonio%20Saltzman%202005.pdf>>
Accessed February 2007.

³⁶ Hillys is largely a water planet. The main modes of transportation are hovercrafts, flying cars and spaceships. Most of the traveling is done by hovercraft, but at the end of

the game, the player pilots a spaceship to the planet's moon. The downtown portion of Hillys, called the Pedestrian District, is bustling and vibrant, and traffic is heavy in the canals and thoroughfares that crisscross through the broken portions of the large island. The player is allowed to dock and explore the Pedestrian District by foot at any point. Most of Jade's missions either begin or end in the city, due in large part to the fact that the IRIS Network's secret headquarters is located in one of the rooms in the Akuda Bar, a popular club that doubles as a hotel.

³⁷ *Dead Rising* also includes a safe/save point in the form of a security control room that can only be accessed by West and his fellow survivors. There are various save points scattered throughout the mall, but the first one the player can access is in the control room. A similar system exists in *BG&E*, with save points available in random areas of Hillys, the first of which resides in Jade's lighthouse.

³⁸ Because *Dead Rising* takes place entirely in a mall, Frank West's development is limited to solely how he overcomes the obstacles that occur in that environment during the set amount of time he resides there. The sheer scope of *BG&E* gives Jade a level of context and complexity that exceeds West in terms of potential for development.

³⁹ Ness, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Dead Rising* (Capcom, 2006).

⁴¹ There is an eerie similarity in this scene between the pictures taken by the player of the woman just seconds from falling to her death and perhaps the most famous picture of the Vietnam War in which a prisoner is seen mere seconds before being executed. Eddie Adams, the Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist who took the photo, said of the picture, "I just followed the three of them as they walked towards us, making an occasional picture. When they were close – maybe five feet away – the soldiers stopped and backed away. I saw a man walk into my camera viewfinder from the left. He took a pistol out of his holster and raised it. I had no idea he would shoot. It was common to hold a pistol to the head of prisoners during questioning. So I prepared to make that picture - the threat, the interrogation. But it didn't happen. The man just pulled a pistol out of his holster, raised it to the VC's head and shot him in the temple. I made a picture at the same time." Horst Faas, *The Saigon Execution* (2004). <<http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0410/faas.html>> Accessed February 2007.

⁴² There are five genre categories for the pictures West takes over the course of the game: brutality, drama, outtake, horror and erotica. The computer determines the category for each picture based on their subject matter.

⁴³ The National Press Photographers Association website includes the following code of ethics: 1) Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects. 2) Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities. 3) Be complete and provide context

when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one's own biases in the work. 4) Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see. 5) While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events. 6) Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects. 7) Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation. 8) Do not accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage. 9) Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists. <http://nppa.org/professional_development/business_practices/ethics.html> Accessed February 2007.

⁴⁴ Howard Good, *Outcasts: The Image of Journalists in Contemporary Film* (Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, NJ, 1989), p. 30.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 30. "Because the war correspondent was such a larger-than life figure in memoirs and novels, as well as in plays like Richard Harding Davis' *The Galloper* (1906) and Bella and Samuel Spewack's *Clear All Wires* (1932), it was probably inevitable that Hollywood would discover the professional crisis-chaser by the early thirties."

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 30.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p 32.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 34.

⁴⁹ The first conversation West has when he arrives at the mall is with a man named Carlito. "You're the reporter aren't you?... You came alone?" Carlito says. "Yeah! I'm freelance," West replies. "You know... Go into the battlefield alone... No crew." *Dead Rising* (2006).

⁵⁰ In a game that encourages, and even requires, the player to dismember, behead, disembowel, shoot, stab, smash, run over, pummel and mow down tens of thousands of exquisitely rendered zombies that exude thousands of gallons of exquisitely rendered blood, it is difficult to believe that a character could be disturbed by photographs of the same ultra-violence. At one point, West meets up with another photographer named Kent, who invites West to participate in a photography challenge. Kent shows his pictures to West to demonstrate the desired subject matters. When he shows West his most violent photo, which depicts a zombie with his head exploding from a gunshot, West physically recoils and pushes the camera away with a disgusted, "Eh!" This is troubling because West shoots zombies and worse, on countless occasions without much more than a comical "yuck!" "Often news photographers shoot pictures of indescribable horror and

barely escape death to bring back pictures to the public (films that show the photojournalist in action include *Margaret Bourke-White, Salvador* and *Under Fire*).” Saltzman, *Analyzing the Images of the Journalist in American Film*, p. 38.

⁵¹ “Nick Nolte plays photojournalist Russell Price. He traipses between war zones with little concern for the people or politics involved: ‘I don’t take sides; I take pictures.’” Matthew Ehrlich, *Journalism in the Movies* (University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2004), p. 149.

⁵² “The undisputed journalist hero is the war correspondent, even if these journalists sometimes hide behind a patriotic and jingoistic script. During the 1940s, the war correspondent became a national folk hero. The war correspondent is the perfect movie hero, whose daily work involves patriotism, danger, violence, and drama. The war correspondents are where the action is, and a whole nation holds its breath while they risk their lives overseas to get the story back to the home front.” Saltzman, *Analyzing the Images of the Journalist in American Film*, p. 38.

⁵³ *Dead Rising* (2006).

⁵⁴ One of the recurring characters in the game, Otis, comments to West at one point, “You may have bitten off more than you can chew this time, Frank. I suppose it comes in the territory of your line of work though. I mean, if nobody's doing anything dangerous, you've got nothing to take pictures of and report on, right?” *Dead Rising* (2006).

⁵⁵ “The journalist could lie, cheat, distort, bribe, betray, or violate any ethical code as long as the journalist exposed corruption, solved a murder, caught a thief, or saved an innocent. Most films about journalism end with the reporter or editor winning the battle, if not the war. Some journalists – the war correspondents and investigative reporters – may have acted more like soldiers or detectives, but they usually lived up to good journalism standards, only to be killed at the end of the film” Saltzman, *Analyzing the Images*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ “One of the greatest challenges to any reporter striving to remain objective from their subjects is when their personal feelings of morality contradict their professional commitments to remain impartial. In the search for objectivity, journalists are asked to ignore their personal feelings. However, we should remember that Albert Henning, one of the fathers of American journalism ethics, argued that we have to do the ‘right action toward one’s fellows.’” Graham Fraser, *Whose Side Are You On?: Representations of Journalism of Attachment and Detachment in the Movies* (Napier University, 2006), p. 27.

⁵⁷ Fraser, p. 13.

⁵⁸ The initial game-play mode in the game is entitled 72-hour mode. The player must survive for 72 hours in addition to satisfying an extensive amount of requirements in order to unlock the true ending of the game.

⁵⁹ Fellow photographer/psychopath Kent challenges West to photography contest wherein the player must take pictures of various scenes (a tender moment between other survivors, a gruesome death, a sexy woman, etc.) and earn a certain amount of prestige points to move on to the next challenge. But these challenges have nothing to do with the overarching zombie conspiracy.

⁶⁰ West's cases mainly involve keeping Brad, the Homeland Security agent, and Isabella, the sister of the mastermind behind the zombie outbreak, alive, fighting Carlito and, collecting bombs he has planted, and transporting various characters to and from specific areas around the mall.

⁶¹ "The journalists immediately were defined onscreen by brashness and cunning. They were creatures of the city familiar with its fast pace, crowds, and the opportunities to get ahead. They often acted more like detectives than journalists. They embodied the myth of the self-reliant individual who pits nerves and resourcefulness against an unfair society." Saltzman, *Analyzing the Images*, p. 28.

⁶² "The camera is used as a crime-fighting tool as often as it is for photojournalism. Dagger's flash blinds a villain in one story, Rampart's secret "cigarette lighter camera" sees action in three stories and in one a "camera-gun" foils a would-be assassin. The three main journalists make use of a gun in at least one of their stories. In the first, non-Comics Code Authority-approved issue, Michaels kills three antagonists and Rampart one. In subsequent issues only the police or other authorities are allowed to shoot the villains. Hamilton holds two suspects at bay with a gun, but never fires it. In the five-issue run of EXTRA! Michaels is more apt to punch someone than conduct an interview or take a note. He gets into physical altercations in eight of his ten episodes, knocking out twelve adversaries and getting knocked out twice. Rampart drops his camera to use his fists in all five of his episodes, knocking out nine opponents. Even the older Dagger gets to bash an antagonist." Tom Brislin, *EXTRA! The Comic Book Journalist Survives the Censors of 1955* (1995), p. 5.

⁶³ One of film's greatest critiques of journalism was delivered by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur in *The Front Page*. Hildy Johnson calls out his colleagues and their "noble" profession by declaring, "Journalists! Peeking through keyholes! Running after fire engines like a lot of coach dogs! Waking people up in the middle of the night to ask them what they think of Mussolini. Stealing pictures off old ladies of their daughters that get raped in Oak Park. A lot of lousy, daffy buttinskis, swelling around with holes in their pants, borrowing nickels from office boys! And for what? So a million hired girls and motormen's wives'll know what's going on." Hecht and MacArthur, *The Front Page* (1931), p. 31.

⁶⁴ Loren Ghiglione, *The American Journalist: Fiction Versus Fact* (American Antiquarian Society, 1991), p. 1.

⁶⁵ There are actually seven different endings to the game, as outlined in the *Dead Rising* official game guide. If West fulfills all of the mission requirements, rescues every stranded survivor and is on the roof in time to be picked up by the helicopter, West gets stranded on the roof after the helicopter crashes. This is actually a cliffhanger ending as the story then picks up and West must survive an additional twenty-four hours to find an antidote after he is bitten by a zombie. After Overtime Mode is completed, the true ending of the game is unlocked, and West becomes the hero he was always meant to be. The true ending epilogue reads: “Frank West managed to escape the town of Willamette with information pertinent to the incident under his belt. The news caused a fervor throughout the world, leading to the U.S. government to admit at least partial culpability in the livestock research program. However, no connection to the Willamette incident was acknowledged and the events that occurred there were deemed the work of a fringed terrorist group. The people of [the] world, as could be expected from the modern culture of news saturation, soon let the Willamette incident fade from their minds. The authenticity of Carlito's chilling plan to utilize the orphans as his pawns has yet to be confirmed or proven false. And yet he complained that his belly was not full.” The other endings are as follows: 2) “As planned, the explosion sent the parasitic organisms responsible for the zombie outbreak high into the stratosphere. The contamination quickly spread far beyond the quarantined area, turning the once isolated incident into a nationwide epidemic.” 3) “Soon, the whole of the United States fell victim to a rash of zombie outbreaks. A Military Special Forces unit was dispatched to clean up the series of incidents in the locked down city of Willamette. However, the true story of what had occurred there remains unreported to this day.” 4) “The government issued an order for the absolute quarantine of the locked down city of Willamette, declaring the area a hotbed of an unspecified infectious disease. Ultimately, no one was able to report the true nature of what had occurred there.” 5) “Survivors indicated that their escape from the mall under siege was made possible through the assistance of a single journalist. However, his exploits after that point and his current whereabouts are unknown.” 6) “Although Frank West was able to escape with some headline-grabbing stories...The cause of the zombie outbreak remains shrouded in mystery.” 7) “The days following the incident ushered in a series of similar zombie outbreaks in cities all across America. For a time, the city of Willamette would find its place in the spotlight, remembered as the first city to fall to the zombie onslaught.” *Dead Rising*, 2006.

⁶⁶ Jade expresses her journalistic enthusiasm only to be warned by her uncle of the impending danger that Jade will have to face on the path to obtaining the story.

⁶⁷ “The war has arrived at the gates of Hillys. This peaceful mining planet in System 4 is now completely encircled by the DomZ armada. General Keck, Supreme Commander of the Alpha forces, would like to take this opportunity to address a final message to the

population. ‘Loyal Hillyians, the impending battle will be a difficult one. But thanks to the Alpha Sections...’” *Beyond Good and Evil* (2003).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ According to the IRIS Network, the Alpha Sections are kidnapping Hillyian civilians, transporting them to the DomZ moon base and murdering them.

⁷⁰ *Beyond Good and Evil* (2003).

⁷¹ On Ubisoft’s official *BG&E* website, Jade’s biography includes the following description: “After being contacted by the IRIS Network, she becomes the lead action-reporter for the rebel cause. She fights against prejudice and propaganda, in the name of her people and for the right to know the truth beyond the typical perceptions of good and evil. In the course of her adventure, she adopts the pen name ‘Shauni’ to sign her reports for IRIS.” <<http://beyondgoodevil.com/us/main.php>> Accessed February 2007.

⁷² The first of these moments is Jade’s discovery of the Alpha Sections’ civilian trafficking operation. After reaching an appropriate vantage point in an Alpha Sections factory, Jade snaps a picture of an X-ray machine monitor that displays the skeleton of a person, who is being transported inside one of the endless boxes moving along a lengthy conveyor belt. The second picture is of an Alpha Sections guard who is not wearing his helmet, therefore revealing his true identity. The third is of civilians being tortured and transported to Alpha Sections spaceships. The fourth is of Alpha Sections spaceships being loaded with civilians and flying to the moon. The final picture shows the leader of the Alpha Sections taking orders from the leader of the DomZ, and thereby cementing the conspiracy charge made by the IRIS Network.

⁷³ “EXTRA! relied on the clean-image ‘journalist as crimebuster’ popular in other comics (*Superman*), radio (*Big Town*), and movies (*The Big Tip Off*, *While the City Sleeps*). The stories, in fact, rarely show the journalists practicing journalism. The journalist’s news assignment is a device to get the characters close to the action, where they are more likely to solve or stop a crime than report on it. In four episodes the journalists stumble on criminal activity while on vacation, and in none of these do they indicate they intend to file a story or pictures.” Brislin, p. 5.

⁷⁴ *Beyond Good and Evil* (2003).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “A tough, fast-talking cynic who prowls about unchecked in a corrupt world, continually on the lookout for trouble and a good story, he moves with speed and assurance – immediately on the scene of a news event to scoop the other papers,” p. 8. Saltzman goes on to say, “Because real newspapermen created the movie prototypes, it

wasn't surprising that the movie journalist was, above all, loyal to the work of journalism, to getting the story, to informing the people no matter what the cost, personal or professional," Saltzman, *Frank Capra*, p. 10.