

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Jan. 26, 2015

To the Judges of the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography:

On Saturday, Aug. 9, 2014, a tweet was sent to St. Louis Post-Dispatch photographer David Carson. It showed an image of a man holding a cardboard sign with a few scrawled words, "Ferguson police just executed my unarmed son!!!" A message directed to David was also attached, "Here's a story that needs to run in the Post."

Earlier that day, an unarmed African-American 18-year-old, Michael Brown, was shot and killed by white police officer Darren Wilson. As his body was left on a street in Ferguson, Missouri, for more than four hours, crowds gathered and tweeted out their anger.

Members of the Post-Dispatch photography staff responded. They covered the story from Day 1 through November's grand jury decision not to indict Wilson. As the protests fueled a debate over race and policing tactics, the staff's compelling images from months of demonstrations, vigils and police actions have made an impact nationally and worldwide.

The photo team provided poignant, striking and even shocking photography. From Huy Mach's image of Michael Brown's mother dropping rose petals over the blood stains at the site of her son's shooting just hours after his death to David Carson's uncomfortably close look at an armed looter inside a store, the photographs capture moments of intimacy in a chaotic atmosphere.

Some of the images have become symbolic of the protests. Robert Cohen's picture of a dreadlocked man wearing an American flag T-shirt throwing a flaming tear gas canister can be seen painted on the sides of buildings in Boston and included in a four-story high mural in New Orleans. Some men have tattooed it onto their bodies. This image of an African-American man, not running from tear gas, but taking matters into his own hands resonated deeply. Protesters even gave the photo a name, "The Patriot."

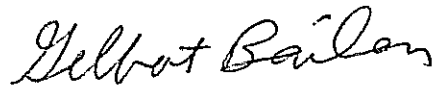
On the other side of the police line, David Carson's provocative image of police firing tear gas while under gunfire illustrates the issue of police militarization that has led to debate across the country.

The many long days and coverage from dangerous or unpredictable circumstances was a grueling challenge for the staff. Post-Dispatch photographers endured physical assaults, tear gas and many threats.

Despite these obstacles, the staff still had to make deadline. The photographers took a page from their sports coverage and used remote wifi technology to transmit photos directly from their cameras. This approach kept photographers mobile and safer than working on laptops in the field. It also gave newsroom editors the ability to post breaking news to our online site and social media for months, in real time.

The photography staff's tireless dedication led the industry in covering the biggest domestic story of the year. I am proud to nominate them for the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gilbert Bailon".

Gilbert Bailon
Editor
St. Louis Post-Dispatch