

market tabloid might do.

*Time*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times* are among the many newspapers and magazines that use the digital technology. Publishers are buying the computerized systems not for their photo-altering capabilities but for their cheaper, faster, higher quality photo reproductions. Many publications (now including *National Geographic*) ban any sort of tampering at all. But as the tools of the trade evolve, Lasica fears, so will the rules of the game.

The digital technology reduces images to computer code, then reconstitutes them on an electronic monitor, where they can be shrunk, enlarged, or otherwise altered. In some systems, film has been entirely

eliminated. The camera records computer-coded images directly on a microchip. Since there is no photographic "proof," there is no way to know if the image has been tampered with.

Eventually, this technology will also be used to doctor video images. As one specialist put it, "In 10 years we will be able to bring Clark Gable back and put him in a new show." Wonderful. But what if a terrorist group fabricates a news bulletin about an impending nuclear attack—delivered, say, by a synthetic Dan Rather?

Defenders of the technology argue that machines are not unethical; people are. True enough, says Lasica. But the fine line between what is ethical and what is not is already beginning to blur.

## *Racial Hypocrisy*

"Danny Gilmore, RIP" by Ted Joy, in *The Quill* (May 1989), 53  
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On the night of July 17, 1988, 23-year-old Danny Gilmore and two friends were driving in his pickup truck through Cleveland's East Side slum, searching for the expressway home to Warren, Ohio. A young black man on a moped pulled away from the curb without looking and hit the truck. No injuries. But a crowd of 30 to 50 young black men gathered and soon a fight broke out. Gilmore's two friends, both black, escaped. Gilmore, who was white, did not. He was beaten and run over by his own truck. He died early the next morning in a Cleveland hospital.

A year earlier, the murder of a young black man by white youths in Howard Beach, New York, provoked great soul-searching in the national news media about racial hatred in America, recalls Joy, a freelance writer. Gilmore's case "occasioned a great silence."

Why?

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (circ.: 478,000) did not even report Gilmore's killing until two days later, when an arrest was made. And then it buried the story in the back of the paper. A reader would have had to read to the end of the brief report to discover that Gilmore was white and his

assailants were black. Later coverage of arrests and trials was equally skimpy. "The *Plain Dealer's* editors have consistently deleted any references to the matter of race," writes Joy, even though Eric Stringfellow, a black reporter covering the case, is said to have protested. Local TV news broadcasters followed the *Plain Dealer's* lead.

Print and broadcast editors alike simply deny that there was a racial component to the murder. They also say, as a *Plain Dealer* editor put it, "You have to be very, very careful" in a racially tense community. Yet, Joy notes, the *Plain Dealer* has not shrunk from putting white assaults on blacks on page one.

He does not doubt that a double standard is at work. In Cleveland and elsewhere, news organizations that have increased hiring and coverage of minorities in laudable efforts to compensate for past neglect, Joy says, have also turned a blind eye to unpleasant facts.

Ironically, black residents of the East Side slum where Gilmore was murdered have not. They identified the killers and testified against them. "These people had their priorities straight," Joy writes. Cleveland's journalists did not.