Media: Asset or Liability? An Argument in Favor of Holding the Media Liable for Invasion of Privacy

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MEDIA: ASSET OR LIABILITY? AN ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF HOLDING THE MEDIA LIABLE FOR INVASION OF PRIVACY

INTRODUCTION

As the world grows more crowded, an individual’s right to privacy becomes increasingly more valuable.1 This right, however, constantly conflicts with the First Amendment,2 which guarantees the freedoms of speech and press.3 The Fourth Amendment protects “the right of people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects.”4 While the scope of the Fourth Amendment’s

1 See U.S. v. On Lee, 193 F.2d 306, 315-316 (1951) (Frank, J., dissenting) (stating “A sane, decent, civilized society must provide some such oasis, some shelter from public scrutiny, some insulated enclosure, some enclave, some inviolate place which is a man’s castle.”); Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis, The Right to Privacy, 4 HARV. L. REV. 193, 196 (1890) (stating complexity of life renders some retreat from the world); see also Melvin Guttermann, A Formulation of the Value and Means Models of the Fourth Amendment in the Age of Technology Enhanced Surveillance, 39 SYRACUSE L. REV. 647, 665 (1998) (stating scope of amendment’s protection has been reduced); G. Beatco, CULTURE WATCH: Why Reality Based Entertainment Is Bad for Reality, NEWSDAY, May 17, 1998 at B6 (discussing increase in reality television and its effect on society).

2 U.S. CONST. amend. I. The First Amendment states in full:
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;
or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or
the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to
petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Id; see also Ayeni v. Mottola, 35 F.3d 680, 683 (2d Cir. 1994) (recognized tension between public's right to information and individual's interest in privacy); Rebecca Porter, Media 'Ride-Alongs' Violate the Constitution, Supreme Court Rules, 35 JUL. TRIAL. 120 (1999) (stating amicus curiae brief on behalf of 24 news organizations).


protection is not entirely clear,\textsuperscript{5} the Supreme Court has stated that its purpose is to protect the privacy and security of an individual from invasion by government officials.\textsuperscript{6}

The conflict between the Fourth Amendment's right to privacy and the First Amendment's freedom of press was recently addressed by the Supreme Court in Wilson v. Layne.\textsuperscript{7} In Wilson, the Court decided the issue of whether a media "ride-along" with police during an execution of a warrant was constitutionally permissible.\textsuperscript{8} This issue had been addressed by several of the Circuit Courts,\textsuperscript{9} but not resolved until Wilson, where the Supreme Court concluded that law enforcement officers had violated the Fourth Amendment by bringing media members into a home during the execution of a warrant.\textsuperscript{10} The Court, however, did not resolve the issue of whether the media itself had also violated the defendant's right to privacy.\textsuperscript{11}

Historically, one's right to protect information\textsuperscript{12} has been weighed


\textsuperscript{8} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 608; see also Kowalczyk, supra note 7, at 353 (discussing holding in Wilson v. Layne). See generally Mitchell, supra note 5, at 962 n67 (1999) (discussing constitutional issues raised in Wilson).

\textsuperscript{9} See Berger v. Hanlon, 129 F.3d 505, 510 (9th Cir. 1997) (holding search of residence with media violated Fourth Amendment); Parker v. Boyer, 93 F.3d 445, 446 (8th Cir. 1996) (reasoning reporters are not under color of state law when entering homes); Bills, 52 F.3d at 600 (supporting conclusion of Fourth Amendment violation); Ayeni v. Mottola, 35 F.3d 680, 686 (2d Cir. 1994) (finding media's presence during warrant execution violated Fourth Amendment).

\textsuperscript{10} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 613 (holding that Fourth Amendment violation had occurred specifically when media members were not aiding officers).

\textsuperscript{11} See Ayeni, 35 F.3d at 683 (recognizing tension between public's right to information and individual's interest in privacy); see also Kowalczyk, supra note 7, at 353 (stating extent of Court's holding).

\textsuperscript{12} See Hill v. National Collegiate Athletic Ass'n, 865 P.2d 633, 654 (Cal. 1994)
against the rights afforded by the First Amendment.\textsuperscript{13} The constitutional privilege of freedom of press, which ultimately may violate an individual's right to privacy, has not been given a great deal of attention by the Supreme Court.\textsuperscript{14} This has resulted in confusion by the state courts in attempting to address the issue.

The Supreme Court's decision in \textit{Wilson} raises several interesting questions: whether the Court was correct in not finding the media liable for invasion of privacy that occurs during a ride-along; whether the media's intrusion into an individual's life in general, violates the right to privacy; and to what extent the media can shield itself behind the First Amendment. Another important issue is whether the Supreme Court should define the exact boundaries of the First Amendment's freedom of the press in publishing private facts, or whether the Court should continue to allow states to utilize their own interpretations.

Part I of this Note will balance the purposes of the First and Fourth Amendments and discuss the genesis of the search warrant. Part II will analyze the \textit{Wilson} decision and demonstrate how the Supreme Court should have held the media liable for violating an individual's privacy rights. Part III will examine media interference with the right to privacy and discuss the possibilities of establishing proper tort standards. Part IV will examine an approach state courts have used to hold the media liable, concluding that the Supreme Court should adopt a similar standard as a clear test to determine the issue of media liability for invasion of privacy.

\textsuperscript{13} See Warren & Brandeis, supra note 1, at 214 (stating "privacy does not prevent publishing matters of public interest while acknowledging law should protect matters of no legitimate concern from undesirable publicity"); \textit{see also} \textit{Sidis v. F-R Publishing Corp.}, 113 F.2d 806, 809 (2d Cir. 1940); \textit{Gill v. Curtis Publishing Co.}, 38 Cal. 2d 273, 277 (1953) (weighing privacy interests); \textit{Melvin v. Reid}, 112 Cal. App. 285, 290 (1931) (stating people, willingly or unwillingly, can become actor in occurrence of public interest).

\textsuperscript{14} See \textit{Cox Broad. Corp. v. Cohn}, 420 U.S. 469, 491 (1975) (declining to address question of whether truthful publications may be subject to civil liability consistent with First and Fourth Amendments); \textit{see also} \textit{Florida Star v. B.J.F.}, 491 U.S. 524, 533 (1989) (limiting constitutional protection of press to narrow holding); \textit{Time Inc. v. Hill}, 385 U.S. 374, 383 n.7 (1967) (avoiding addressing private rights issue).
I. OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST AND FOURTH AMENDMENTS

A. The First Amendment's "Right to Know"

The First Amendment includes a public right of access to court documents and other types of information. This right stems from the idea that it is necessary to a self-governing democracy for the public to have access to such information. In *Grosjean v. American Press Co.*, the Supreme Court recognized this right to information, describing it as "the natural right of the members of an organized society, united for their common good, to impart and acquire information about their common interests." The Court emphasized the importance of the press and its dissemination of information to the public for use against "misgovernment."

B. Scope of Fourth Amendment Protection

An individual's right to privacy has long been revered as a fundamental right. "No right is held more sacred, or is more carefully guarded by the common law, than the right of every individual to the possession and control of his own person, free

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16 See Globe Newspaper Co. v. Superior Court, 457 U.S. 596, 604-05 (1982) (discussing that public right of access "serves to ensure that the individual citizen can effectively participate in and contribute to our republican system of self-government"); Thornhill v. Alabama, 310 U.S. 88, 95 (1940) (stating that abridging freedoms of press and speech "impairs those opportunities for public education that are essential to effective exercise of the power of correcting error through the processes of popular government"); Blumberg, supra note 15, at 435 (analyzing right of access); see also Richmond Newspapers, Inc. v. Virginia, 448 U.S. 555, 579-80 (1980) (holding public has constitutional right to attend criminal trial); Lieutenant Colonel Denise R. Lind, *Media Rights of Access to Proceedings, Information and Participants in Military Criminal Cases*, 163 MIL. L. REV. 1, 18-19 (2000) (discussing media right of access to certain information).

17 297 U.S. 233 (1936).

18 *Grosjean*, 297 U.S. at 243; see also *Globe Newspaper*, 457 U.S. at 604-05 (discussing importance of public right of access to information); Thornhill v. Alabama, 310 U.S. at 95 (stating that freedoms of press and speech are "essential").

19 See *Grosjean*, 297 U.S. at 250 (stating "informed public opinion is the most potent of all restraints upon misgovernment" and press is "vital source of public information"); see also *Globe Newspaper Co. v. Superior Court*, 457 U.S. at 604-05 (discussing that public right of access ensures effective participation in government); *Thornhill*, 310 U.S. at 95 (emphasizing importance of freedoms of press and speech in correcting government error).
from all restraint or interference of others, unless by clear and unquestionable authority of law."\(^\text{20}\)

Although the United States Constitution does not specifically enumerate a privacy right, the Supreme Court has acknowledged that it grants a general right to privacy, which is found by examining several of the amendments.\(^\text{21}\) Under the Fourth Amendment, for instance, an individual’s right to privacy is protected by limiting governmental searches and seizures “to prevent arbitrary and oppressive interference by enforcement officials.”\(^\text{22}\)

Not all searches and seizures are prohibited by the Fourth Amendment.\(^\text{23}\) The Amendment limits its protection to preventing searches and seizures that are unreasonable.\(^\text{24}\) A search that takes place without a warrant is not automatically deemed unreasonable because a warrant is not always necessary to conduct a search. If the existence of probable cause can be established, a search that takes place without a warrant is considered reasonable.\(^\text{25}\)

Probable cause has been defined by Justice Washington as “a reasonable ground of suspicion, supported by circumstances sufficiently strong in themselves to warrant a cautious man in the belief that the Party is guilty of the offense with which he is charged.”\(^\text{26}\) This definition led the Supreme Court, in Stacey v. Emery,\(^\text{27}\) to adopt language that describes when probable cause exists: “[i]f the facts and circumstances before the officer are such as

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\(\text{20}\) Union Pacific R. Co. v. Botsford, 141 U.S. 250, 251 (1891); Warren & Brandeis, supra note 1, at 196 (arguing for privacy right). But see Minnesota v. Carter, 525 U.S. at 83 (discussing limits of Fourth Amendment).

\(\text{21}\) See Griswold v. Connecticut, 381 U.S. 479 (1965) (describing right to privacy as "penumbral" and discussing "zone of privacy" found in various Constitutional amendments).


\(\text{25}\) See Morgan Cloud, Searching Through History; Searching for History, 63 U. CHI. L. REV. 1707, 1722 (1996) (discussing reasonableness of probable searches); see also Carroll, 267 U.S. at 147; Deborah F. Barfield, DNA Fingerprinting — Justifying the Special Need for the Fourth Amendment’s Intrusion into the Zone of Privacy, 6 RICH J.L. & TECH. 27, 27 (2000) (stating search and seizure conducted with probable cause is “unquestionably reasonable”).


\(\text{27}\) 97 U.S. 642 (1878).
to warrant a man of prudence and caution in believing that the offence has been committed, it is sufficient."

The existence of probable cause is often used as a justification to search without a warrant when the delay caused by obtaining a warrant would allow the escape of a suspect, destruction of evidence or endangerment of the public. Allowing the search of an automobile without a warrant is an example of one such exception to the warrant requirement.

To determine whether a search is reasonable, the Supreme Court has developed a balancing test. A search is "judged by balancing its intrusion on the individual's Fourth Amendment interests against its promotion of legitimate governmental interests."

C. Historical Background of the Search Warrant

Use of the search warrant began in England in the sixteenth century. British monarchs used what was known as a general warrant to search a person's property. These warrants eventually became regarded as "overbroad and oppressive" because the authority that they granted was abused.

During colonial times in America, British rulers used writs of assistance which allowed searches of property for the duration of the ruler's lifetime plus an additional six months. The writs

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28 See Stacey, 97 U.S. at 645; see also Brown, 460 U.S. at 742 (defining probable cause standard); Carroll, 267 U.S. at 147 (stating same).
29 See Cloud, supra note 25, at 1722; see also Warden v. Hayden, 387 U.S. 294, 198-99 (1967) (holding entry into home justified); Grossman, supra note 26, at 1332 (discussing when warrantless search allowed).
30 See Cloud, supra note 25, at 1722; see also Warden v. Hayden, 387 U.S. at 198-99; Grossman, supra note 26, at 1332 (discussing when warrantless search allowed).
31 See Delaware v. Prouse, 440 U.S. 648, 654 (1979); Cloud, supra note 25, at 1722; see also Texas v. Brown, 460 U.S. at 742 (defining probable cause standard); Skinner, 489 U.S. at 619; Martinez-Fuerte, 428 U.S. at 554-56.
32 See Delaware v. Prouse, 440 U.S. at 654; Skinner, 489 U.S. at 619; Martinez-Fuerte, 428 U.S. at 554-56; see also Blumberg, supra note 15, at 447.
33 See Blumberg, supra note 15, at 447; see also Donald L. Beli, Fidelity to the Warrant Clause, Using Magistrates, Incentives, and Telecommunications Technology to Reinvigorate Fourth Amendment Jurisprudence, 73 DENV. U.L. REV. 291, 301 (1996) (explaining writs and warrants during colonial times); Cloud, supra note 25, at 1725 (discussing searches under early English law).
34 See Beli, supra note 33, at 301; Blumberg, supra note 15, at 447; Cloud, supra note 25, at 1725.
35 See Beli, supra note 33, at 301; Blumberg, supra note 15, at 447; Cloud, supra note 25, at 1725.
36 See Beli, supra note 33, at 301; Blumberg, supra note 15, at 447; Cloud, supra note 25, at 1725.
generally were used to protect against smuggling. Customs officials could search any areas they believed to be used for hiding smuggled goods, which gave the officials immense power to search with little justification. The writs, unlike search warrants today, did not identify the subject, location, or items to be searched. Not surprisingly, Americans opposed this early form of search warrant. Many state constitutions later included warrant clauses restricting searches and seizures. These clauses became the foundation for the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

II. WILSON V. LAYNE

There has been a growing trend to allow the media to accompany police during the execution of a warrant. In the recent decision of Wilson v. Layne, the Supreme Court held that a media ride-along violates the Fourth Amendment.

In Wilson, three warrants were issued for the arrest of Dominic Wilson. The warrants cautioned that he was likely to be armed, to
resist arrest, and to assault police.\textsuperscript{45} During the early morning hours of April 16, 1992, in an attempt to execute the warrants, police officers and two members of the media mistakenly entered the home of Dominic’s parents, Charles and Geraldine Wilson. Charles Wilson entered his living room wearing only his briefs to find the officers in plain clothes carrying guns. He demanded to know why the men were there. Geraldine Wilson then entered to witness her husband being subdued by the officers. One of the media representatives snapped photographs during the entire incident.\textsuperscript{46}

In its decision, the Supreme Court held that law enforcement officers can no longer allow members of the media or other third parties to be present during an execution of a warrant, specifically when the third parties are not aiding the officers.\textsuperscript{47} The Court held this to be a violation of the Fourth Amendment.\textsuperscript{48}

The Fourth Amendment was designed to protect the sanctity of the home and an individual’s privacy rights therein.\textsuperscript{49} The police officers in \textit{Wilson} were authorized to enter the home because they had arrest warrants and a reasonable belief that the subject of the warrants was inside.\textsuperscript{50} The officers were not, however, permitted to invite members of the media to witness and photograph the incident merely for their own commercial use.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{45} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 606.

\textsuperscript{46} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 606-07.

\textsuperscript{47} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 614; see also Horne v. Coughlin, 191 F.3d 244, 249-50 (1999) (explaining holding in \textit{Wilson}); Berger v. Hanlon, 129 F.3d 506, 510 (9th Cir. 1997) (following holding in \textit{Wilson}).

\textsuperscript{48} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 614; see also Horne, 191 F.3d at 249-50 (explaining holding in \textit{Wilson}); Berger, 129 F.3d at 510 (following holding in \textit{Wilson}).


\textsuperscript{50} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 610; see also Payton v. New York, 445 U.S. 573, 603-604 (1980) (holding that officers are authorized to enter dwelling with warrant and reasonable belief that suspect is inside); Mitchell, supra note 5, at 949 (recognizing objectives behind authorized search warrants). See generally \textit{Agnello} v. U.S., 259 U.S. 20, 33 (1925) (stating probable cause alone does not justify search of dwelling without warrant).

\textsuperscript{51} See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 614; see also Horne, 191 F.3d at 249-50 (explaining holding in
The scope of a search must not exceed the terms of its search warrant. The Court stated in Wilson that the Fourth Amendment requires that police actions during the execution of a warrant be related to the objectives of the authorized intrusion. Since the media members were not involved with the execution of the warrants, their presence was a violation of the Fourth Amendment.

A. First Amendment Concerns

First Amendment arguments were also addressed by the Supreme Court in Wilson. The presence of the media during a warrant execution may be useful in preserving evidence, minimizing abuse by the police, or protecting officers against claims. The media’s freedom of press, however, more commonly serves to inform the public of law enforcement activities and procedures. It is essential under the First Amendment that the media have this freedom to provide useful and newsworthy information to the public. These are concerns that the First Amendment was designed to protect.

Wilson); Berger, 129 F.3d at 510 (following holding in Wilson).


53 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 612; Kowalczyk, supra note 7, at 353 (discussing connection of Wilson to television shows); Mitchell, supra note 5, at 953 (discussing implications of Wilson); see also Arizona v. Hicks, 480 U.S. 321, 325 (1987); Maryland v. Garrison, 480 U.S. 79 (1987) (stating that purpose of search strictly limits extent of search); Johnston, supra note 7, at 1527 (noting media presence cannot be implied).

54 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 613.

55 See Wilson 526 U.S. at 614; Ohio v. Robinette, 519 U.S. 33, 35 (1996); see also Johnston, supra note 7, at 1528 (stating reasons why media does not belong on searches); Eve Kindera, Qualified Immunity for Cops (and Other Public Officials) with Cameras: Let Common Law Remedies Ensure Press Responsibility, 67 GEO. WASH. L. REV. 399, 429 (1999) (arguing media presence may increase police responsibility); Ransom, supra note 5, at 356 (1995) (stating media access decreases effectiveness of officials).

56 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 614; Richmond Newspapers, Inc. v. Virginia, 448 U.S. 555, 579-80 (1980); Cox Broad. Corp. v. Cohm, 420 U.S. at 491-92; see also Dicke, supra note 15, at 1558-59 (discussing media’s roles). See generally Scheim, supra note 15, at 193 (discussing protection given to media).

57 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 614; Richmond Newspapers, 448 U.S. at 572-73; Cox Broad. Corp. v. Cohm, 420 U.S. at 491-92; Scheim, supra note 15, at 193 (stating courts grant great protection to media); see also Dicke, supra note 15, at 1558-59 (discussing roles of media).

58 See Dicke, supra note 15, at 1559 (discussing First Amendment protection for newsgathering); see also Geoff Dendy, The Newsworthiness Defense to the Public Disclosure Tort, 85 KY. L.J. 147, 152 (1997) (discussing type of speech protected). See generally D. Scott Gurney,
Although making information available to the public regarding police or other governmental activity is an important goal of the First Amendment's freedom of the press, the Wilson Court stated that "the possibility of good public relations for the police is simply not enough [. . .] to justify the ride-along intrusion into a private home."59 Officers, or third parties designated by the officers, are authorized to film or photograph the execution of a warrant for the purposes of preserving evidence or ensuring the safety of those involved. 60 When the media is present for reasons unrelated to the warrant execution, this exceeds the scope of the warrant, and there is a violation of the individual's Fourth Amendment rights.61

The issue which had previously divided the circuit courts62 has now been settled. Officers that allow an unauthorized member of the media to enter an individual’s home during a warrant execution will be held liable.63 The question that remains is whether the media will also be held liable for the actions it takes to invade an individual’s privacy.

B. Liability

Wilson did not address the issue of media liability. An argument should have been made in favor of holding the media responsible for its actions based on the claims of invasion of privacy and trespass.64


59 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 612.
60 See Wilson 526 U.S. at 614; Ohio v. Robinette, 519 U.S. 33, 35 (1996); see also Johnston, supra note 7, at 1528 (1997) (stating reasons why media does not belong on searches); Klindera, supra note 55 at 429 (arguing media presence may increase police responsibility); Ransom, supra note 5, 536 (1995) (stating media access decreases effectiveness of officials).
61 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 610-11; see also Johnston, supra note 7, at 1533 (stating media presence exceeding warrant as unreasonable); Kowalczyk, supra note 7, at 353 (discussing Court's holding in Wilson).
63 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 614.
64 See Berger, 188 F.3d at 1135; see also Eduardo W. Gonzalez, "Get that Camera Out of My Face!" An Examination of the Viability of Suing "Tabloid Television" for Invasion of Privacy, 51 U. MIAMI L. REV. 935, 939 (1997) (discussing liability for trespass); Klindera, supra note 55, at 429; John J. Walsh, Steven J. Selby & Jodie L. Schaffer, Media Misbehavior and the Wages of Sin: The Constitutionality of Consequential Damages for Publication of Ill-Gotten Information, 4 WM. & MARY BILL OF RTS. J. 1111, 1111 (1996) (stating media intrusiveness is rising).
Where information is already available to the public, there is no invasion of privacy. In Wilson, the information gathered by the media was not previously available to the public. Additionally, the media representatives were not exercising rights under the authority of state law to record the warrant execution. Instead, they were acting for the sole benefit of their employer, The Washington Post. Since the media did not obtain the consent of the Wilsons to enter their home, they should have been held liable for trespass.

Protection under the First Amendment is generally not a defense to trespass claims. In such situations, the media is not shielded under the pretense of freedom of the press. If there is an invasion of privacy, members of the media are not allowed to disregard state or federal law simply because they believe they are acting within the interests of the First Amendment.


68 See Wilson 526 U.S. at 607; see also Jason P. Isralowitz, The Reporter as Citizen: Newspaper Ethics and Constitutional Values, 141 U.PA. L. REV. 221, 232 (1992) (discussing conduct of reporters); Johnston, supra note 7, at 1527 (arguing media’s presence as per se violation of Fourth Amendment); Ransom, supra note 5, at 350-51.


70 See Klindera, supra note 55, at 417; see also Keeton, supra note 69, at 128 (stating media has limited rights); Walsh, Selby, & Schaffer, supra note 64, at 1113 (arguing material obtained illegally is not protected).

71 See Klindera, supra note 55, at 417; see also Keeton, supra note 69, at 128 (discussing limited rights of media); Walsh, Selby, & Schaffer, supra note 64, at 1113 (arguing material obtained illegally is not protected).

The government officials directly involved in Wilson were safeguarded from liability pursuant to the doctrine of qualified immunity. In the words of the Court, the immunity was "granted to the officers because they were performing discretionary functions and their conduct [did] not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known." The officers were awarded qualified immunity because the state of the law was unclear at the time the police allowed the media to enter the Wilson's home.

Holding the officers liable in this case would only serve to restrict future information from being freely disseminated to the public. For fear of liability, government officials might refrain from allowing the media to be present during any governmental activity, even when it is not clearly established whether media presence would be a violation of privacy. This, in turn, would prevent information from reaching the public and inhibit several First Amendment aims. Qualified immunity, however, helps to serve the purposes of the First Amendment. Under such an immunity, officers more readily allow media members to observe governmental activities, and the media is not prevented from informing the public about such events.


75 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 615; Harlan v. Berger, 526 U.S. 808, 808 (1999); see also Graham, 490 U.S. at 394; Malley, 475 U.S. at 340; Harlow, 457 U.S. at 818.

76 See Klindera, supra note 55, at 403; see also James L. Ahlstrom, McKnight v. Rees: Delineating the Qualified Immunity "Haves" and "Have-nots" Among Private Parties, 1997 B.Y.U. L. REV. 385, 389-90 (1997) (describing test court uses to apply qualified immunity); Ingall, supra note 73, at 205 (discussing reasons for qualified immunity).

77 See Harlow, 457 U.S. at 818-19 (holding that qualified immunity is issue of law to be resolved by judge); see also Mitchell v. Forsyth, 472 U.S. 511, 526 (1985) (reaffirming holding in Harlow). See generally Ahlstrom, supra note 76, at 389-90 (discussing test court uses in determining qualified immunity).


80 See Klindera, supra note 55, at 403; see also Saxbe, 417 U.S. at 862-63 (discussing function of First Amendment). See generally Mills, 384 U.S. at 218-19 (stating that function of press is to
The Supreme Court has held that members of the media are not entitled to the protection afforded by the doctrine of qualified immunity.\textsuperscript{81} The media therefore, could have been held liable for a trespass claim in the Wilson case.\textsuperscript{82} Trespass has been defined as an unlawful interference with one's person, property or rights.\textsuperscript{83} Since the media was not acting under color of state law when it entered the premises of Charles and Geraldine Wilson, its interference was unlawful.\textsuperscript{84}

When a claim of trespass is asserted, quite often a media defendant will argue express or implied consent as a defense.\textsuperscript{85} It is clear that in Wilson express consent was not given by the homeowners. In light of the Supreme Court's decision against media invasion into private homes during a warrant execution, implied consent based upon customary proceedings was also lacking.\textsuperscript{86} The Court's holding may result in liability of the media in similar future situations.

III. THE MEDIA'S INVASION OF PRIVACY

A. Historical Roots of Privacy Rights

The genesis of the right to privacy can be traced back to an article remedy abuses of power).

\textsuperscript{81} See Wyatt v. Cole, 504 U.S. 158, 168-69 (1992) (stating that qualified immunity "acts to safeguard government, and thereby to protect the public at large, not to benefit its agents"); Berger v. Hanlon, 188 F.3d 1155, 155 (9th Cir. 1999) (holding that media "are not entitled to assert qualified immunity as a defense"); see also Kunes v. Stone, 84 F.3d 1121, 1128 (9th Cir. 1996). See generally Malley v. Briggs, 475 U.S. 335, 335 (1986) (discussing distinction between public and private party claiming qualified immunity).

\textsuperscript{82} See RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS \textsection{158} (1976), which provides "To prove a claim for trespass, a plaintiff must demonstrate an intentional entry upon land that he possesses."


\textsuperscript{84} See West v. Addams, 487 U.S. 42, 49 (1998) (discussing what constitutes what is under color of state law); see also United States v. Classic, 313 U.S. 219, 326 (1941) (stating color of state law is where wrongdoer has authority of state).

\textsuperscript{85} See Klindera, supra note 55, at 416; see also Berger v. Hanlon, 129 F.3d 505, 516-517 (9th Cir. 1997) (discussing consent claim by media defendants); Florida Publ'g Co. v. Fletcher, 340 So.2d 914, 916 (1976) (discussing defense of consent); Anderson v. WROC-TV, 441 N.Y.S.2d 220, 223 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1981) (discussing media's claims of consent).

\textsuperscript{86} See Klindera, supra note 55, at 419; see also Branzburg v. Hayes, 408 U.S. 665, 684-85 (discussing media's liability for trespass); Prah v. Brosame, 116 Wis.2d 694 (1983) (stating that to determine whether there is implied consent, "the questions are whether the intruder ought reasonably to expect on the basis of custom that the landowner will not object to entry and whether there are other facts tending to show an objection"); RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS \textsection{330} (1976).
written by Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis in 1890, which articulated the need for recognition of such protection. When the Warren & Brandeis article was written, the general concern was that inventions of the time would cause private matters that were once "whispered in the closets" to be "proclaimed from the roof tops." These concerns led to the development of the tort of invasion of privacy. Eventually, this tort protection evolved into court recognition of a right to informational privacy, which has been defined as the right to control the dissemination of private and personal information. This right inevitably conflicts with the public's right to information, which is protected by the First Amendment. It has been over one hundred years since Warren and Brandeis voiced concern over the threat of technology interfering with our private lives. With technology advancing more rapidly than ever, privacy concerns are arguably greater now than they were in 1890.

87 See Warren & Brandeis, supra note 1, at 193 (calling for right to privacy); see also Ken Cromley, One Hundred Years of Privacy, 1992 W.S. L. REV. 1335, 1335 (1992) (discussing Warren and Brandeis article).
88 See Warren & Brandeis, supra note 1, at 193-196; see also Union Pacific R. Co. v. Botsford, 141 U.S. 250, 251 (1891) (stating that privacy right is sacred); Barfield, supra note 25, at 27-28 (noting that there is "deep-rooted expectation of privacy").
89 See Warren & Brandeis, supra note 1, at 195; see also Williams, supra note 12, at 216 (quoting Brandeis). See generally Union Pacific R. Co., 141 U.S. at 251 (describing importance of privacy right).
90 See James W. Hilliard, A Familiar Tort That May Not Exist in Illinois: The Unreasonable Intrusion on Another's Seclusion, 30 LOY. U. CHI. L.J. 601, 607 (1999) (stating that "courts conceived the independent tort of invasion of privacy around 1890" but that its current formulation did not develop until after 1960); see also Prosser, supra note 12, at 383 (examining tort of invasion of privacy); Warren & Brandeis, supra note 1, at 195 (calling for right to privacy).
91 See Whalen v. Roe, 429 U.S. 589, 599-600 (1977) (recognizing limited right to informational privacy); Hill v. National Collegiate Athletic Ass'n, 865 F.2d 633, 654 (Cal. 1994) (defining right of informational privacy); see also N.Y. PENAL LAW 250.00-250.35 (McKinney 1999) (prohibiting various invasions of privacy).
92 See Whalen, 429 U.S. at 599-600 (stating that there is interest in avoiding disclosure of certain personal matters); Hill, 865 F.2d at 654 (defining informational privacy); see also Williams, supra note 12, at 216 (discussing informational privacy).
95 See Williams, supra note 12, at 216-217; see also Berger, 129 F.3d at 505 (discussing use of wires and concerted microphones); Ayeni, 848 F. Supp. at 364-65 (discussing camera
B. Current Concerns

The media's role in society is clearly beneficial.96 The primary goal of most media members is to uncover truthful information and deliver it to others.97 Ultimately, the question arises of how deeply the media can investigate individuals' private lives to achieve this goal. Today's media members have a variety of intrusive tools available to them, which include adopting false identities, using hidden cameras, and accompanying or following ambulances to and from accident scenes.98 These are common media practices and have given rise to much litigation.99 Yet the overwhelming majority of cases that have involved threats to individual privacy were resolved in favor of the media.100 Although the media is not shielded from all tort liability, the standards which support tort claims are vague and ambiguous.101

The media's invasion into individuals' private lives has caused much debate.102 While this controversy has not always involved the interviews despite objections).

96 See Houchins v. KQED, Inc., 438 U.S. 1, 8 (1978) (stating that 'beyond question, the role of the media is important; acting as the "eyes and ears" of the public'); Thornhill v. Alabama, 310 U.S. 88, 95 (1940) (discussing importance of freedoms of press and speech); Grosjean, 297 U.S. at 250 (emphasizing importance of informed public opinion against misgovernment).


100 See Lidsky, supra note 98, at 173 (stating courts concurrently resolve issues in media's favor); see also Nicholson v. McClatchy Newspapers, 223 Cal. Rptr. 58, 64 (1986) (discussing media's privileges).

101 Compare Deteresa v. ABC, 121 F.3d 460, 466 (9th Cir. 1997), cert. denied, 523 U.S. 1137 (1998) (holding that plaintiff's privacy rights were not violated by covert audio-taping and videotaping of interview by news media even though plaintiff expressly refused to be interviewed on camera), with Sanders v. ABC, 978 P.2d 67, 72 (Cal. 1999) (holding that plaintiff's reasonable expectation of privacy was violated by covert audio-taping by reporter, even though plaintiff's conversation occurred in presence of co-workers). See generally Nicholson v. McClatchy, 223 Cal. Rptr. at 64 (discussing extent of media privilege in newsgathering); Lidsky, supra note 98, at 190-93 (discussing confusion caused by courts differing interpretation and application of privilege for newsgathering techniques).

102 See Lidsky supra note 98, at 173 (noting that newsgathering techniques have created
law's deficiencies in offering protection of privacy, more and more individuals are finding it necessary to seek this protection. With a growing number of television programs airing that broadcast actual footage of events, the competition for newsgathering techniques has escalated.

The methods used to quickly gather desirable information have given rise to an increasing number of lawsuits. The media ride-along, now banned by the Supreme Court when there is an intrusion into a private home, has been one such technique. A traditional tort remedy is needed for those individuals whose privacy is violated by the media in other contexts.

The jurisdictions that have dealt with this issue and have sided more lawsuits); Scheim, supra note 15, at 185 (recognizing scrutiny of media for intrusive newsgathering); see also Howard Kurtz, Public to Press: just Play it Fair; They're Peed by Intrusiveness and Deception. But Are New Laws the Answer?, WASH. POST, Sept. 15, 1997, at B4 (listing events involving right to privacy that has held media's attention).


See Randall P. Bezanson, Means and Ends and Food Lion: The Tension Between Exemption and Independence in Newsgathering By the Press, 47 EMORY L.J. 895, 919-20 (1998) (noting that television is “experiencing dramatic competition from other media”); Lidsky, supra note 98, at 175 (discussing intrusive tools available to media because of market pressures); see also Paterno, supra note 98, at 40 (discussing tools journalists use to gather news).

See Fuson, supra note 103, at 663 (discussing recent California cases that expand privacy right); Lidsky, supra note 98, at 173 (reasoning intrusive newsgathering techniques have given rise to more lawsuits); see also Scheim, supra note 15, at 185 (recognizing scrutiny media has recently endured for intrusive tabloid journalism); Stephen M. Stern, Witch Hunt or Protected Speech: Striking a First Amendment Balance Between Newsgathering and General Laws, 37 WASHBURN L.J. 115, 116 (1997) (discussing new breed of competing interests which posed great threat to press and important speech).

See Lidsky, supra note 98, at 175 (discussing how media trails police into individual homes); Rodney A. Smolla, Privacy and the First Amendment Right to Gather News, 67 GEO. WASH. L. REV. 1097, 1104 (1999) (describing ride-along as partnership between press and law enforcement); see also Paterno, supra note 98, at 40 (discussing tools journalists use to gather news).

See Logan, supra note 103, at 161, n.12 (arguing that media should not be immune from tort liability for newsgathering); see also Bell, supra note 103, at 793-95 (discussing under-protection of privacy by courts); Litwin, supra note 103, at 1097-98 (discussing cases upholding invasion of privacy claims against media). See generally Lidsky, supra note 98, at 182 (discussing public opinion that media invades privacy). But see Fuson, supra note 103, at 663-69 (claiming there is too much protection of individual privacy rights at expense of need for newsgathering).
with the media based their decisions on the RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS, which in part provides that, "when the subject-matter of the publicity is of legitimate public concern, there is no invasion of privacy." If courts want to avoid privacy concerns, the news at issue may simply be deemed a matter of public interest. Whether information is newsworthy, however, is not always easy to determine.

One of the key elements in creating a "newsworthiness" standard is to determine which of two competing theories, normative or descriptive, should be applied. Under the normative theory, the information is only required to be of some contribution to society or


109 See Lucy Noble Inman, Hall v. Post: North Carolina Rejects Claim of Invasion of Privacy by Truthful Publication of Embarrassing Facts, 67 N.C. L. REV. 1474, 1477 (1989) (discussing Restatement requirement that plaintiff prove matter is of public concern); see also Robin L. Blume, Court of Appeals Leaves False Light Invasion of Privacy Issue Unresolved in Libel and Invasion of Privacy Case, 47 S.C. L. REV. 151, 152 (1995) (noting dispositive issue in such cases involves defining matter as public concern, and matters of public concern demand heightened judicial scrutiny); Williams, supra note 12, at 216 (stating that courts "dance" around First Amendment issues).


of general public interest to be considered newsworthy.112 This standard would give the media considerable leeway in determining newsworthiness.113 If the descriptive standard is applied, then the material would have to be of widespread public interest, which would result in sales and television ratings determining whether the information is newsworthy.114 In seeking a middle ground between the descriptive and normative theories, courts within each jurisdiction have varied considerably.115

The Supreme Court has recognized that freedom of the press extends beyond simple accounts of public proceedings.116 The Court acknowledged that exposure "to others in varying degrees is a concomitant of life [...] The risk of this exposure is an essential incident of life in a society which places a primary value on freedom

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112 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 481 (acknowledging different interpretations of newsworthiness); Anthony J. DeGirolano, The Tort Invasion of Privacy in Ohio: Videotape Invasion and the Negligence Standard, 52 OHIO ST. L.J. 1599, 1607 (1991) (discussing normative approach); see also Comment, supra note 110, at 725-26 (describing different interpretations); Joseph Elford, Trafficking in Stolen Information: A "Hierarchy of Rights" Approach to the Private Facts Tort, 105 YALE L.J. 727, 728 (1995) (discussing newsworthiness criterion which gauges contribution of speech to public debate); Williams, supra note 111, at 344-46 (discussing standards to determine newsworthiness); Woito and McNulty, supra note 111, at 196-97, 200-202 (discussing newsworthiness standards).

113 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 481 (discussing different standards); see also Comment, supra note 110, at 725-26; DeGirolano, supra note 112, at 1607 (discussing normative approach); Elford, supra note 112, at 728 (discussing newsworthiness criterion which gauges contribution of speech to public debate).


115 See Gonzalez, supra note 64, at 948 (stating newsworthiness standard is hard for judges to impose). Compare Gill v. Hearst Pub. Co., 253 P.2d 441, 443 (Cal. 1953) (holding no action for invasion of privacy would lie solely for publishing photograph of plaintiffs embracing) with Gill v. Curtis Pub. Co., 38 Cal. 2d 273, 277 (1953) (holding public interest did not require publishing photograph of plaintiffs embracing). Compare Sidis v. F-R Pub. Corp., 113 F.2d 806, 809 (2d Cir. 1940) (holding that publication of stories in New Yorker magazine describing present life of former child prodigy who had fallen into obscurity was matter of public concern and widespread interest, and therefore, not invasion of privacy) with Melvin v. Reid, 112 Cal. App. 285, 287 (1931) (holding use of plaintiffs true name in motion picture about her former life as prostitute was unnecessary and therefore actionable as invasion of privacy).

116 See Time, Inc. v. Hill, 385 U.S. 374, 388 (1967); see also Watters v. TSR, Inc., 715 F. Supp. 819, 821 (W.D. Ky. 1989) (citing Time decision as precedent in holding that publishing and distributing game board "Dungeons & Dragons" was protected under First Amendment); Farnsworth v. Tribune Co., 253 N.E.2d 408, 411 (Ill. 1969) (relying on Court's decision in Time to uphold lower court's decision that truthful publication of questionable medical practices of physician was not libelous); All Diet Food Dist., Inc. v. Time, Inc., 290 N.Y.S.2d 445, 447 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1967) (citing Time decision in holding that picture of plaintiff's store in which trade name was identifiable and caption read "FOOD FADS AND FRAUDS" was not libelous).
of speech and of press." Yet the Supreme Court has rarely dealt directly with the issue of whether the press has a constitutional privilege to publish private facts.

In *Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn*, an action was brought against a television reporter who published the name of a rape victim that had been acquired from a court proceeding. The Supreme Court held that because the reporter had published facts that were already available to the public, he could not be held liable, and to do so would hinder the dissemination of other necessary information. This holding has been reiterated by the Court in later decisions. Most jurisdictions agree, however, that the *Cox* decision does not establish a test for newsworthiness or provide useful guidelines for establishing such a test.

With no clear standard to assist in determining the extent of the media's liability with regard to invasion of privacy, and no sufficient guidance from the Supreme Court, many jurisdictions have been looking for alternate ways to hold the media liable for

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117 *Time*, 385 U.S. at 388; see also *Gielniak*, supra note 114, at 1222 (discussing balance between Fourth and First amendments); *Warren & Brandeis*, supra note 1, at 196 (arguing for privacy right).


119 See generally *Florida Star*, 491 U.S. at 536 (holding publication constitutional when obtained from government record).

120 See *Coplin v. Fairfield Pub. Access Television Comm.*, 111 F.3d 1395, 1404 (8th Cir. 1997) (stating that “only in the ‘extreme case’ is it constitutionally permissible for a governmental entity to regulate the public disclosure of facts about private individuals” and citing *Gilbert v. Medical Econ. Co.*, 665 F.2d 305, 308 (10th Cir. 1981)); *Haynes v. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.*, 8 F.3d 1222, 1232 (7th Cir. 1993) (broadening interpretation of *Cox Broadcasting*, stating, “The Court must believe that the First Amendment greatly circumscribes the right even of a private figure to obtain damages for the publication of newsworthy facts about him, even when they are facts of a kind that people want very much to conceal”). See generally *Scott*, supra note 118, at 698 (noting *Florida Star* decision has been narrowly construed).

privacy invasion.124

IV. AN APPROACH TO HOLDING THE MEDIA LIABLE

In Wilson v. Lane,125 the Supreme Court found that police officers should be held liable for Fourth Amendment violations that occur during a ride-along, but did not impose liability on media members.126 The media, however, could have been held liable for intrusion into seclusion,127 as it was in the California case, Shulman v. Group W Productions.128

The facts of Shulman centered on a "reality show" that videotaped and broadcast the medical treatment of an accident victim.129 Specifically, the plaintiffs were involved in a serious car accident and were pinned in their car. A cameraman filmed the plaintiff's extrication from the car and transport to the hospital in a helicopter. The footage was then broadcast on the September 29, 1990 episode of On Scene: Emergency Response.130 The plaintiffs, who never consented to the filming or the broadcast, filed a complaint which included two causes of action for invasion of privacy, one based upon public disclosure of private facts and the other upon intrusion.131 The California Supreme Court concluded that First Amendment protection of the media outweighed the right to informational privacy, reasoning that the "broadcast was of legitimate public concern" and the public disclosure of private facts "[bore] a logical relationship to the newsworthy subject of the broadcast and [was] not intrusive in great disproportion to their

124 See Shulman v. Group W Productions, 955 P.2d 469, 469 (Cal. 1998); see also Bostwick, supra note 110, at 223-26 (stating that Shulman decision failed to clarify what constitutes newsworthy); Gielnak, supra note 114, at 1243 (discussing new precedent developed in Shulman); Klindera, supra note 55, at 423-24 (discussing implications of Shulman); Williams, supra note 12, at 217 (discussing court's holding in Shulman).
126 See Wilson, 526 U.S. at 614; see also Horne v. Coughlin, 191 F.3d 244, 249-50 (1999) (explaining holding in Wilson); Berger v. Hardon, 129 F.3d 505, 510 (following holding in Wilson).
128 955 P.2d 469 (Cal. 1998).
129 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 475-477 (stating facts); see also Calvert, supra note 114, at 275 (discussing facts of Shulman); Fuson, supra note 103, at 638-39 (explaining specific facts of Shulman).
130 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 475-477; see also Calvert, supra note 114, at 275; Fuson, supra note 103, at 638-39.
131 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 475-477.
Although the media prevailed on the public disclosure claim, the court sustained the cause of action for the claim based on intrusion, stating that the analysis for intrusion is far less "deferential" to the First Amendment. The court reasoned that an intrusion into a private place, conversation, or other matter would not be justified by the hope of getting a news story. One year later, California reaffirmed this holding in Sanders v. American Broadcasting Co., when an investigative reporter intruded upon an individual's privacy through the use of a hidden camera and microphone.

Privacy is highly valued in our society. A great deal of importance is also placed on the functions of the media. The Supreme Court, however, has been reluctant to define a clear standard for "newsworthiness." In our media-driven society, with technology advancing rapidly, the Court must protect the privacy of individuals by regulating newsgathering techniques. The First Amendment should always be carefully considered, but the Court must establish a decisive standard for holding the media liable for invasion of privacy. The media needs guidance to determine when its activities will be protected, and when it is merely promoting

132 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 478; see also Fuson, supra note 103, at 653-58 (discussing holding of Shulman); Williams, supra note 12, at 217 (discussing court's holding in Shulman).
133 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 497-98.
134 See Shulman, 955 P.2d at 497-98; see also Bostwick, supra note 110, at 225-26 (stating that Shulman decision failed to clarify what constitutes newsworthy); Gieniak, supra note 114, at 1243 (discussing new precedent developed in Shulman); Klindera, supra note 55, at 423-24 (discussing implications of Shulman); Williams, supra note 12, at 217-18 (discussing court's holding in Shulman).
135 978 P.2d 67 (Cal. 1999).
136 See Fuson, supra note 103, at 635 (discussing privacy); see also Galella v. Onassis, 487 F.2d 986, 995 (2d Cir. 1973) (finding photographers breached right to privacy); Randell Boese, Redefining Privacy? Anti-Paparazzi Legislation and Freedom of the Press, 17 COMM. LAW. 1, 3 (1999) (discussing claims against reporters).
138 See Comment, supra note 110, at 725-26 (discussing differing interpretations of newsworthiness); see also Bostwick, supra note 110, at 225-26 (noting what constitutes "newsworthy" is unclear); Dendy, supra note 58, at 148-49 (stating courts provide broad newsworthiness defense); Post, supra note 110, at 1007 (noting common law is confused about applying newsworthiness standard).
139 See Fuson, supra note 103, at 663 (stating California's approach focuses on newsgathering techniques).
voyeurism. By adopting the standard set in Shulman, and allowing the media to be held liable based on a tort claim of intrusion, the Court will achieve these goals.

Conclusion

It is essential that the media have freedom of the press in order to provide useful and newsworthy information to the public. The First Amendment is designed to protect these interests without hindering the media in its newsgathering techniques.

The right to privacy should ensure that a person in the sanctity of his or her home is free from invasion either by the government or the media. Individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy in this regard and a legitimate interest in protecting this right. If the media is allowed to have free range into private homes without the consent of the homeowner, constitutional protections are considerably weakened. The long-awaited decision in Wilson now prevents newsgathering techniques that invade an individual's home in this way.

Still, the Supreme Court must decide the issue of media liability in other contexts. The media's ability to make information available to the public is an important and legitimate function. The constitutional right to privacy, however, must be measured against the freedom of the press so that information will be made accessible to the public, while privacy rights are maintained. Valid tort claims are available and some circuit courts have relied on them to hold the media liable. The Supreme Court should establish a clear standard that will fairly balance the competing interests and allow greater liability of the media for invasion of privacy.

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140 See Calvert, supra note 114, at 296 (comparing voyeurism with mass-media).