

Kent State

There has been a some heated back-and-forth discussion on the net >concerning an allegedly manipulated image in the May 1995 issue of LIFE magazine (John Filo's Kent State Pulitzer-winning picture). The original photo shows a fence post appearing behind the head of protestor Mary Ann Vecchio; the photo in the May issue of LIFE does not. As LIFE's director of photography, I wanted to respond directly, clearly and put the matter to rest: LIFE did not and does not manipulate news photos.



The photo we published was supplied to us by our photo library--the Time-Life Picture Collection, the second largest such repository of catalogued images.



Amazingly, the fence post had been airbrushed out by someone, now anonymous, in a darkroom sometime in the early 1970s. The picture had r numerous times--without the fencepost, and without anyone taking notice- TIME (Nov. 6, 1972, p. 23) PEOPLE (May 2, 1977, p. 37), TIME (Jan. 7, 1980, >p. 45), PEOPLE (April 30, 1990, p. 117), to name just a few publications.

On deadline, while closing our May issue, the LIFE photo department contacted photographer John Filo, hoping to secure a repro quality print, a customary at LIFE. Since we could not obtain a print from him directly in to make our run, we went with the photo we had, not realizing a pole had been removed. One can only wonder why the missing pole hasn't been noticed the previous times it has appeared, even though literally millions c people have seen the fence-post-less photo in publications dating back 23 years. At no time would LIFE's photo, art or production department intentionally alter a news photograph.

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