Dedicated to Jonathan Kahana

VIRALITY IS VIRILITY

Viral Media, Popularity, and Violence

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This chapter is constructed from reworked snippets of writing culled from four discrete albeit conceptually linked publications about online video, social media, and critical internet studies from the past ten years.[1] It builds from a much longer career devoted to thinking about, making, and teaching activist media that usually takes the form of documentary. Most recently this has transformed into a project experimenting with radical digital media literacy, one that engages both within and about social media.[2] Given the compulsions of the current presidential regime, I have become particularly committed to better understanding the uses and abuses of media that are at once seemingly—while also uncertainly—peddling in mimetic-based truth claims. All the while, I have been a consistent critic of the dastardly functions of popularity within online video and culture, again, particularly as this relates to the movement, power, and abuse of ideas and images made about history, identity, and truth while making use of reality-based records.

I attest that I come to my own scholarly and production work (often about deception and fakes) honestly, through my many engagements with activist media around a changing set of political concerns, connected to differing social movements and activist communities, and making use of shifting technologies and formats.[3] I have called this my "media praxis," an integration of theory, practice, politics, and teaching, that

> theorizes and makes media towards stated projects of world and self-changing.
> This ongoing project, as old as cinema itself, links culture, theory, and politics,
> in the 20th century, through mediation technologies and indebted to Marxist
> theories. . . . Unlike [media projects] that might focus upon cinema aesthetics
> or narrative [here, on mediapraxis.org] analyses of realism, documentary, and

truth are primary. I have found that most theory-writing producers attempt to prove that realist or documentary cinema is the ideal medium for this work and that the artist/intellectual is the worker best suited for this labor towards the struggle . . . how do ideas exist in action, and how is this related to the project of radical pedagogy?[4]

My work—like and connected to that held in my website mediapraxis. org quoted here—theorizes, teaches about, and makes media bent on making radical change for people with AIDS, feminists, African American lesbians, prisoners, antiwar activists, women, people of color, and queer and trans people online. While all of my own work has focused on and uses documentary (or fake documentary), my praxis has developed to understand and make best use of reality-based media in light of the stunning affordances of access to production and distribution most recently allowed by digital tools and the corporate internet. I initially moved from activist video to the internet, as did many radical media practitioners, with the advent of YouTube. I went there (accompanied by several years of students taking my class Learning from YouTube) to better understand how or if the corporate internet's "free" platforms could be useful to everyday people and in particular those involved with the radical media praxis tradition to which I was and am devoted.[5] When working on and in YouTube with others, I very much wanted to consider why, when access to media production and distribution were becoming more democratic, more free, and more accessible, the revolution many of us had anticipated did not occur.[6] An early theorist of and interloper within YouTube, and later of social media production and experience more generally, I was deeply suspicious about popularity and virality as logics antithetical to many of the queer and feminist activist goals of critical importance to me: context, solidarity, local experience, embodied theory, enduring commitment.[7] While watching videos of all sorts on YouTube, nearly all made in the form of ironic fakes and thus nearly all trading in some relation to documentary or realism, I also needed to make sense of my earlier commitments to fake documentary (in my linked projects the fake documentary *The Watermelon Woman* [dir. Cheryl Dunye, 1996] and scholarly anthology, edited with Jesse Lerner, *F Is for Phony: Fake Documentary and Truth's Undoing*[8]). In the 1990s, I thought of fake documentary as a productive site for the interrogation of truth, history, and identity. With the dawning of YouTube, I saw that this form was being radically distorted through a corporate (and later governmental) manipulation of people's love of play, uncertainty, and unknowing, turning these pleasures into new modes of capture and control, albeit ones that we all made, wanted, and enjoyed together (online).[9]

Thus, my current work on internet and social media is not about documentary per se, even as it depends on my evolving thinking about and deploying of reality-based, once-indexical media. Across my extensive body of work—from *AIDS TV* to mediapraxis.org, from *F Is for Phony* to *Learning from YouTube*—I have looked to documentary theory, history, and practice to understand the good uses, and many abuses, of truth claims buttressed by mimetic practices seeking to stand and move as evidence, authority, and power. In one of my recent online works (ev-ent-anglement.com), I think about and try to produce justice for the reality-based fragments we now so readily give, willy-nilly, to the man so that he can use these pieces of ourselves to sell us to others and then also to sell us products we have never wanted and needed, including the corporate internet's versions of ourselves.[10]

In this piece, I demonstrate how my earlier, more benign but already deeply suspicious, critique of the dangers of popularity on YouTube built toward what I now see as our deeply unethical and delightfully questionable reality-based popularity practices and now-defunct president, unscrupulous outcomes that ultimately (and continually) culminate in violence. Attempting to produce these interventions within usually invisibilized online logics, I write about, with, and in the vernaculars of the internet, naming them as I go. Hence, I begin this chapter with ten "superhardtruths" (SHiTs) in the form of a listicle originally written on my blog as one citizen's intercession—engaging and connecting with many online others also participating in their own related projects—during the first one hundred days of the Trump administration. There I was focusing on uses, abuses, and remedies to fake news, an exceedingly popular preoccupation and practice of that moment. Here, I grapple with alternative viewing ethics and practices that might occur along and outside of virality, virility, and popularity.

SHiTsticle[11]
- Superhardtruth #1: the corporate-state-media muscle of the internet hides in plain sight below a sea of participatory good-'n'-plenty only to manifest as real power, violence, and control on demand.
- Superhardtruth #2: clown time is over.
- Superhardtruth #3: short, fast, and fun will be the death of us, or at least some of us.
- Superhardtruth #4: virality is virility.
- Superhardtruth #5: our tiny contributions cascade into the mother of all bombs.
- Superhardtruth #6: #fakenews r us.
- Superhardtruth #7: internet self-reflexivity leads to corrosive mimicry.

- Superhardtruth #8: people need time to ponder so they can be truly ethical and thoughtful.
- Superhardtruth #9: people need people.
- Superhardtruth #10: people need art and complexity.
- Superhardconclusion: people make the internet. and bombs. and #fakenews. and poetry and song and community. Only we have the power to know and do better.

Virality Is Virility

With Superhardtruth (SHiT) #4, I voice in twenty characters the brutal, self-evident outcome of the not-so-innocent logics of popular digital media and their internet home. While this anthology may make good use of its academic muscle to better understand and value the popular reality-based media that regular people like, watch, and share in great number, I will use my contribution to consider how the flurry, fun, or tomfoolery of our engagements with texts that seek and find approval also make it easier to overlook the lived destruction that these popular products can propel when linked with the institutional power of governments, corporations, and their macho front men: "clown time is over" (SHiT #2). As we consume the many cynical viral falsities that effervescently move across our screens—fake news, fake Freds,[12] tricky witty aphorisms—we also enjoy how for many things on the internet a statement and its opposite can both be true (and false): clown time is our time. Here, I attempt to unearth the connections between popular clowns, distortions of truth, state-sanctioned violence, and our favorite internet pastimes.

As is true of much on the internet, my pithy adages in the form of SHiTs use compression and doublespeak to shine a light on complicated, weighty, worldly concerns with real consequences well beyond any clever wordplay and its social recognition and digital relay. I wrote "virality is virility" on April 17, 2017, as part of the cascade of private shitty contributions referenced previously and reused throughout this effort. On that day, I was responding in kind to Donald Trump who had also preened on Twitter[13]—albeit displaying his signature manly chest-beating—about unleashing the "mother of all bombs" in Syria.[14] At that earlier date, writing the SHiT "virality is virility" felt like my own smart-ass comeback, respectfully played out by me taking up the rules of his game. In a dense alliteration, I expressed at once my dismay and also my larger analysis as a citizen and a feminist scholar of the internet who was trying to make sense of the crisis of fake news in the real time of its (re)invention, deployment, escalating popular attention, and mounting power. But nothing so important, so brutal, so damaging should or can be explained
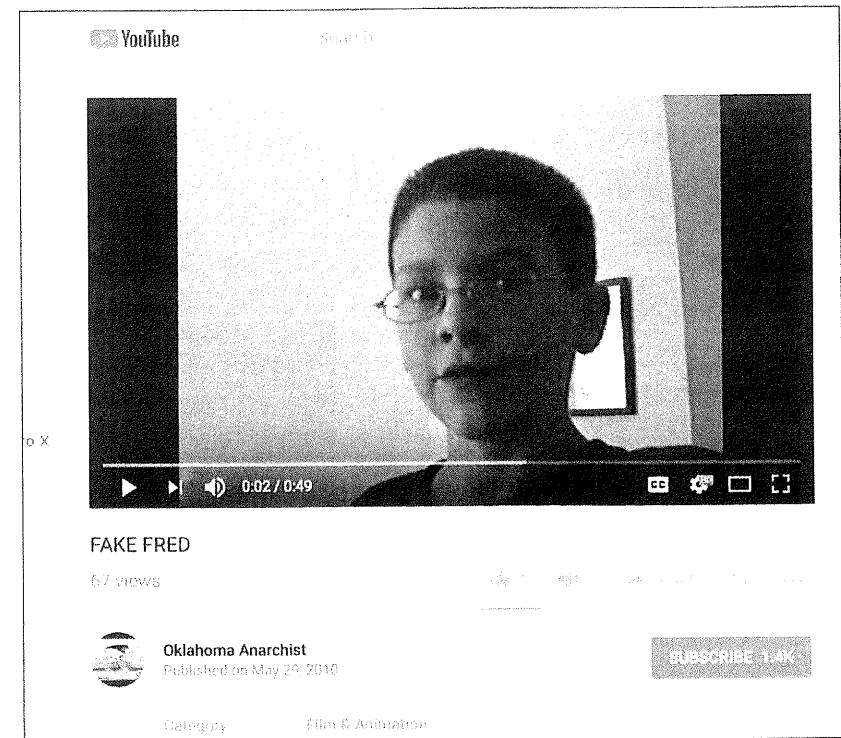

Fig. 16.1 YouTube screenshot: one Fake Fred, "Oklahoma Anarchist," among so many.

in any tweet-seeking retweets, including any of my SHiTs. For, "internet self-reflexivity leads to corrosive mimicry" (SHiT #7). We join in this game to our moral decay. Whenever we unpack, condemn, or inoculate against fake news or self-aggrandizing tweets—politics by any memes necessary—we are lowered accordingly, becoming part and parcel of these processes and their outcomes: "#fake news r us" (SHiT #6).

For instance, on August 8, 2017, our president said, "North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen."[15] Trump's saber-rattling may have reflected his gonzo belief that nuclear weapons can be used to solve regional conflicts, or perhaps it was just another puffed-up effort to deflect attention from his plummeting political support. But whether his threats are authentic, spontaneous, or ruse is really of no matter. In the time of fake news, small manifestations of viral internet-backed expression can produce volumes of
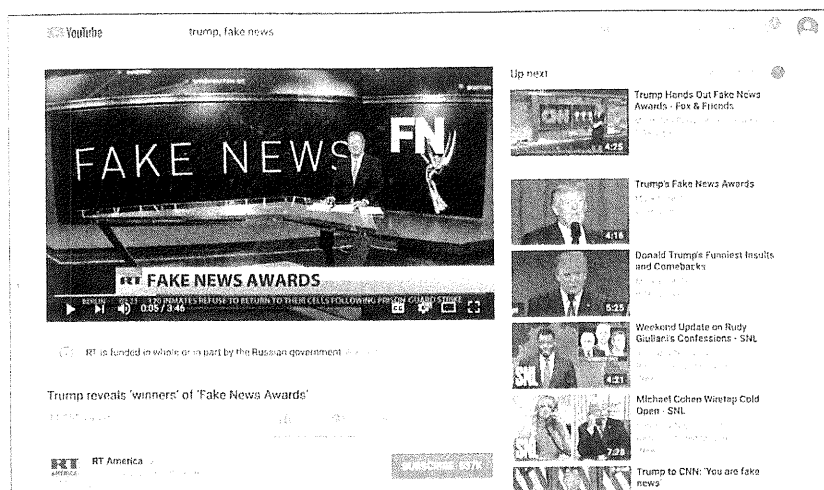
Fig. 16.2 YouTube screenshot: fake news site funded in whole or in part by the Russian government.

Fig. 16.3 YouTube screenshot: together we build support for and drop the mother of all bombs.

attention, fear, and also very real-world results. "Whether that message was mainly a bluff or an authentic expression of intent," wrote Peter Baker and Choe Sang-Hun in the *New York Times* about that latest round of presidential bombast, "it instantly scrambled the diplomatic equation in one of the world's most perilous regions."[16]

How can something so small, a few words, produce something so big, the scrambled relations of a highly militarized zone? How can one man so insecure fabricate results so substantial? With the pairing of our president and social media, we witness how the rules of sexism, networked technologies, pursuit of approval, and state violence align. Bombs and brutality are the logical outcome of gendered formats of heightened digital attention. As we have seen, this internet-fueled aggression can and has been aimed at immigrants,[17] Dreamers,[18] civil rights protesters and champions,[19] the nation of North Korea,[20] and the people of Syria.[21] This definitive mix of internet-fueled numbers, masculine grandiosity, and real-world hostility is what I mean by "virality is virility." Trump's nuclear threats or racist tweets enact a macho posturing central to his political persona and operations—virility[22]—rooted in sanctioned if often despicable forms of male aggression. However, his word choices are inspired by another familiar logic, that of the internet and social media—virality[23]—and its blind faith in power built from attention that grows through networked technologies.

Let me spell this out. Popularity contests (virality), rooted in self-esteem and optics, aggrandized through feeling, accruing capital for some while building might for others, are inevitably patriarchal and thus phallic (virility)[24] and, ultimately, necessarily weaponized. Brutally, the results do not stay online but become material in the form of violence.[25] While I would never argue that every massively popular video on YouTube, insanely trending tweet on Twitter, or immensely likable picture on Instagram is itself an act of war or even aggression, I do contend that they support and fuel a logical progression from popularity to physical force by way of the phallus.[26] This is a definitive, structural cycle into which we are all pulled in, albeit as bit players: "#fake news r us." When we stop and look, when we consider and share, we contribute to a particular, definitive breed of chauvinist escalation rising from a male gaze built for and by today's technologies.[27] When we choose to produce in our own right (as I do here and as I did there), "our tiny contributions cascade into the mother of all bombs" (SHiT #5).

In 2007, I was just beginning to seriously study YouTube, still in its adolescence.[28] For my class and related "video-book," *Learning from YouTube*, my students and I produced volumes of videos and linked writing (sometimes getting viral attention of our own.)[29] There, I goofily maligned popularity as the organizing structure for YouTube's promotion of the hegemonic under the guise of the democratic.[30] These early YouTube-based interventions were

Fig. 16.4 YouTube screenshot: Popularity seeks the unoriginal, uncritical, and uniform.

wry but sweet send-ups that now seem to serve as a setup for the decline into madness that quickly would follow: "Like high school cheerleaders, the popular on YouTube do what we already like, in ways we already know: they are interchangeable and indistinguishable. Entertaining but not threatening, popular YouTube videos speak to a middle-of-the-road sensibility in and about the forms of mainstream culture and media . . . While we can all attest to whether popularity (or its reverse) worked for us in high school, I'll end by suggesting the obvious: It is not the best way to run a forum of knowledge/culture/art production and distribution."[31]

As a critic of digital culture, how did I, in such a short time, go from making sarcastic digs whose humor was situated in the hallways of junior high to dire warnings about global annihilation, that is, SHiT #4, "short, fast, and fun

will be the death of us, or at least some of us"? As users of social media, how did we get from playfully or perhaps selfishly choosing the things we prefer over others—popularity—to the potential demise of much of what we most admire in our democracy (immigration, ecological health, reproductive and press freedoms, the fourth estate)?[32]

Let's start with popularity contests. While certainly fun, this juvenile system is best suited for pastimes like picking top models, chefs, or bachelors. But engorging numbers based on up- or downvotes are inadequate to determine a good many of the truly critical decisions in our culture. When we vote quickly with little to guide us but superficial traits or artificial challenges, dominant systems of value override other concerns or qualities, thereby perpetuating familiar beliefs and obvious winners.[33] The overt sexism, racism, and homophobia underwriting the contests referred to earlier are examples of just some of the comfortable viewpoints that fuel and are fueled by today's winner-take-all celebrity matches. A quick vote effectively silences those who have other points of view. Sure nay-sayers can and will continue their gripes on other internet forums. However, critics sidelined, the victor propels forward and the contest continues building momentum and visibility. Contrary contributions, necessary for the robust, informative conversations we need to circulate around the world's most pressing problems, are moved off-screen and efficiently delegitimized like so many (millions on millions) of pussy hats.[34]

Popularity contests, because of their speed and simple organization must be rooted in optics. How something or someone *looks* is an easily manipulated and often false indication of what that thing or person is, believes, does, or will do.[35] And looking itself becomes an increasingly difficult ethical project in a visual regime dominated by viral media.[36] We typically come upon popular media content as part of a larger onslaught experienced alone while engaging in acts of momentary and innocent pleasure, boredom, or curiosity. But when we look with interest at spreadable media,[37] we also engage in much deeper and less pleasurable unseen regimes: complex networks of power, ownership, and access that frame our viewing, knowing, and doing.[38] This nexus of personal vision and systems of power is what I describe in SHiT #1: "the corporate-state-media muscle of the internet hides in plain sight below a sea of participatory good 'n' plenty only to manifest as real power, violence, and control on demand." Accounting for our place in the face of viral videos of cats, top chefs, police brutality, email caches, or threats of nuclear attack—as well as the place of those who make and use viral media to enact or build to destruction—is one within a constellation

of necessary ethical and political acts called forth by the real-word weight of social media.

Ethical Looks at Masculinist Video Violence

Considering our ethical stake in making, sharing, and looking at popular media is particularly important at this moment in history because it often feels like our current condition of visual onslaught and abundance allows us no alternatives. Our "choice" to look or not at any viral video is both paradoxical and imperative. Much of my career as a media scholar and activist has been in service of a commonsense "politics of visibility," where showing and seeing the experiences of underrepresented people and points of view is the obvious goal.[39] Recently, the personal and political ramifications of visibility have proven more nuanced. We find that the gaining of familiarity comes with its own, often irrevocable and irrational consequences.[40] For instance, there is an abundant and significant body of critical race scholarship currently developing about the psychic and political ramifications of seeing and sharing viral images of Black death.[41] In a recent editorial, Sherri Williams sums up this body of thinking: "As a Black scholar I want the injustices against Black people to be recorded and shared in the interest of justice and history. But as a Black woman I'm also worried about the mental and emotional health of my people as we continue to consume these videos. I'm equally concerned about the system that creates the violence that leads to these images."[42] As a white scholar and viewer of contemporary internet culture, I support and supplement these concerns from my standpoint in this visual economy: privileged while horrified witness to injustice against Black friends, family, and fellow citizens. But following Susan Sontag, we need to consider not only the pain we might be personally subjected to by witnessing viral brutality but also its possible impending opposite: the deadening effects of overexposure to images that were meant to move or at least enrage us.[43]

One way to "stay woke" when we watch is to look askance. "Images of war have always had an irresistible allure for the camera," writes Alisa Lebow in her essay about what she calls the "unwar film."[44] When any video, tweet, or photograph goes viral, this is in part because it is generically competent, satisfying familiar rules of production and reception inherited from cinema or other traditions while introducing noteworthy content. Given that we are comfortable, as well as titillated, with the pacing, tropes, and thrills of war cinema, Lebow looks to cinematic strategies that help to rupture "the generic spell that binds us" to such images: "we need to look to films that look awry,

Fig. 16.5 YouTube screenshot: Philando Castile? Look askance.

in the Zizekian sense of looking askance or even away from the action, as it were, to that which is happening just outside its purview."[45]

A looking awry from viral video would not be a closing of one's eyes to the actual and ongoing brutality against Black people in our society—and the many others now subject to sanctioned state violence—and its ever-increasing digital record. Rather this would entail looking carefully away from documents of the act of violence. Then we would aim to focus our attention on what Marta Zarzycka names as the critically unseen in war photography—"causality, responsibility, and impact"[46]—even as (or so that) violence is made increasingly visible and spreadable. In her book on the history of filmic representation of death, *Dying in Full Detail*, Jennifer Malkowski argues that only a small number of the internet's overabundant images of death actually go viral. In her analysis of two online activist videos of death (Oscar Grant's murder at the hands of Oakland transit police and Neda Agha-Soltan's shooting by Iranian government-allied Basij militia), Malkowski asks, "How did the Agha-Soltan videos from Iran generate such broad interest among the Western public while the Grant videos remained more nationally, and even regionally, bound?"[47] She details how both political and aesthetic dimensions allow some pieces of activist raw footage to gain and sustain popular appeal: "multiple angles, dramatic blood flow, immersive audio, and the subject's appearance."[48] In a similar vein, Jennifer Terry studies how some of the vast body of footage of war shot by American soldiers and shared on YouTube goes
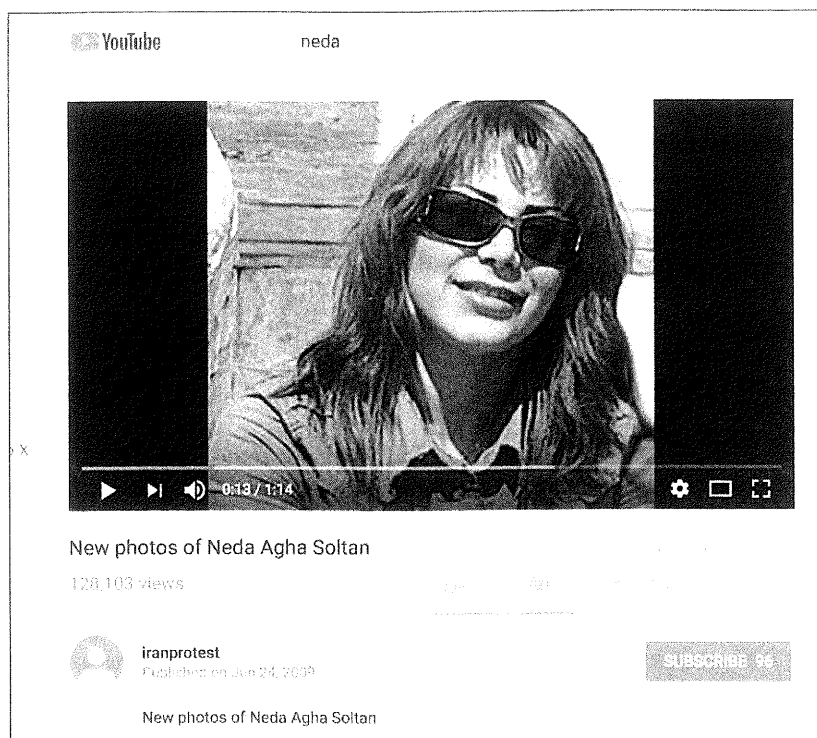
Fig. 16.6 YouTube screenshot: Neda? Look again.

viral. She argues that raw footage that takes on a first-person shooter logic of video games often "succeeds," at least if your rubric is audiences, rankings, and numbers.[49]

Accounts of Diamond Reynold's video of her boyfriend Philando Castile's murder suggest that it is the uncanny professionalism of her raw, unedited video, dramatically aligning with its record of the cruel force of police brutality, that produces its particular poignancy.[50] This explains some of the power and popularity of Reynold's video: it looks at, and away; it shows both violence and its contexts; and it does so in what is at once a new and also a familiar form (viral live feed video). Conventional genre expectations laced onto new uses of technology and critical content produce the contours of our current looking system.

In my own early writing on the Neda YouTube phenomenon in *Learning from YouTube*,[51] I worry that what I have also there called the "video slogans"

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of YouTube—"pithy, precise, rousing calls to action or consumption, or action as consumption"[52]—can function to produce quick and even strong affective responses, but may be counterproductive to the larger ethical and political needs of movements for social justice: for data, history, connections, and strategies.[53] Slogans, like images, bypass contemplation and rationality and get to us through emotion. The president's power, like much else on the internet, crescendos from bite-sized evocative morsels bearing high-impact feelings. But things whose best or only tendency is growth (like capitalism) are by definition single-minded, totalizing, and ruthless, even if or because they are emotionally resonant.

Why ruthless? Isn't our attention of this sort supportive and connecting? Not a one of us is above the yummy buzz felt from a whole bunch of metaphoric thumbs up. We feel momentarily seen and even liked, even as we anticipate the inevitable fast fall from digital attention and a linked search for more.[54] Our feelings aside, virality's primary function is something else entirely: the always-growing production, circulation, and attention to internet content monetized via eyeballs, clicks, and cookies.[55] The real value of our likes and all internet popularity is dollars for the select, monopolized corporate owners of our content and data. Today's internet has been built by successfully masking its true commitments to a fierce capitalism. A few corporations profit from the volumes of content that we produce and the endless trails we wend through it.

Our rather easy, routinized pastimes—posting pictures, sharing tweets, writing blog posts—are pasted over with the thinnest veneer of entertainment and mock democracy, itself a form of simulation that hides cold-blooded underlying structures. Our images and verbiage get eyeballs to a designated figurehead (pussy hats, Trump, no matter) and the corporations or governments for which they unintentionally or intentionally shill. But, as of yet—against our best efforts over decades of good work, unrest, and decent feminist living—the forces that gain most remain patriarchal. The media, government, corporations, police, and military are dominated by men or male points of view or practices of power.[56]

I want to be clear: when I discuss the *patriarchal* or *male* I am not talking about specific humans (men or those like them) or their personal, embodied choices about gender, sexuality, or sex. Many individual men are great; many women prop up patriarchy. Thus, the word *phallic* is key: a symbolic totem of male power, an icon that can be momentarily claimed and used by any person or institution driven to follow a cruel logic of supremacy buttressed by overt muscle or aggrandized size.[57] This unearned dominance is volatile because it

is rooted in binary difference (male/female, white/Black, straight/gay) and maintained through fear and sometimes violence. Ancient in their roots and traditions, adaptive, refined, and always buttressed by privilege, behaviors of patriarchal conquest are also, not in the least coincidently, sexualized and gendered. But masculinity propped up by artifice is always under threat. It needs to be continually, repetitively reexpressed, actualized in social structures and institutions, and operationalized in language and behavior: "I grab [women] by the pussy."[58]

But no one man—person as he is, president as he may be—can maintain the myth of patriarchal virility on his own. He needs sanctions and structures, clubs and schools, images and tweets, as well as money, to buttress his undeserved might. And even so, his virility remains open to challenge, as it should be, given that it is based on nothing more than unthinking biology (parts and bits and hormones with no real rationale other than to replicate a species).[59] And so, inevitably, historically, tragically, calls for a weapon will be the final addition to this nervous mess. Arms are requested to reinsure yet again his might, never big enough even with all the likes and associated ad revenues, the billions earned or stolen via internet viral sales. A bomb is needed, too. Popularity does not only reside online. It becomes material in the form of violence.

Better SHiTs: People/Ponder/Platforms

In my work on YouTube and the feminist internet, I have suggested that the technologies we have been "given for free," like Facebook Live, YouTube, Instagram, or Twitter, come with real albeit veiled structures and hidden costs.[60] People-made-media is relayed to us through corporate-owned platforms that frame our images within their own ethical and political concerns.[61] Corporate media function best for their owners via censorship, profit, ease, and pleasure of use, and other powerful forms of political and algorithmic control.[62] Thus, ethical viewing must be based not just in taking account of our own views of popular media but in looking at the broader political-economic and technological structures that produce, hold, and frame the images and words that we see and share.[63]

Looking at platforms not just content, looking at our use and needs within and from them, looking at how we sustain them, becomes one very necessary part of an ethical consumption of popular digital culture. And this work isn't easy or quick, cute or funny, even if it may start out as pleasing or popular. To look newly we need time and new spaces. We need to do
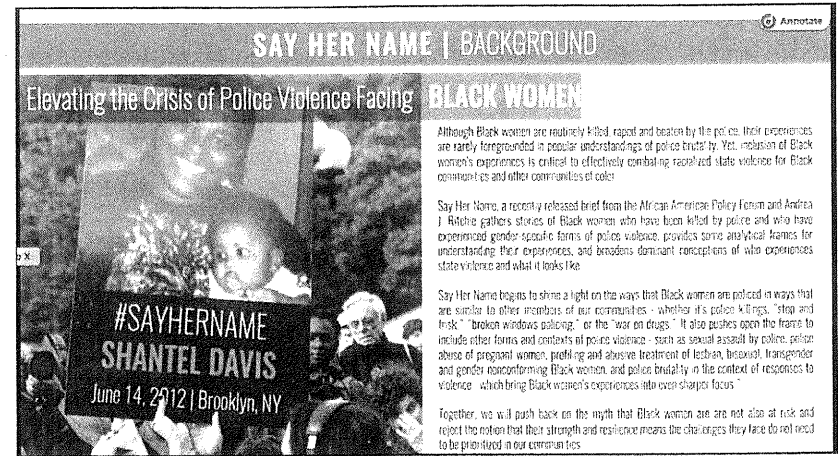

Fig. 16.7 Screenshot: #SayHerName campaign, The African American Policy Forum. http://aapf.org/sayhernamereport

so in community, in the places that we live and work, and in forums and formats organized outside the cruel structuring logics of capitalism, patriarchy, and popularity.[64] Sure, it's shitty because it often feels downright impossible in these times to think outside the logics of the neoliberal corporate internet-military-industrial complex.[65] But think, speak, and share we can and must:

- SHiT #8: people need time to ponder so they can be truly ethical and thoughtful.
- SHiT #9: people need people.
- SHiT #10: people need art and complexity.

Like Reynolds, we, the everyday users of video technologies (some of us anti–Black racism activists, some of us peaceniks, some of us unwitting bystanders to atrocity), are the viewers and producers of the viral images of violence and death that saturate our screens. But it is critical that beyond accounting for our viewing of these images, we also ask for better accountability from the platforms that deliver and reframe these images for us.[66] Currently, the vast majority of us watch viral—and really almost all video—through platforms owned by corporate entities with for-profit mandates that have little to do with the ethical and political scrutiny that I have been suggesting is core to ethical and maybe even effective media practices in a time of viral Black death and increasing presidential media bellicosity.

Those who seek peace, those who have known war and rape and bullying, understand the grotesque logic of vicious unearned force.[67] Hence, we must speak our internet truths. Our truths about patriarchal violence and those who use it to feed their greed and dominance. Our truths about human goodness that manifests in the face of anti-Black violence, war and its bombastic lead-ups, willing cheerleaders, corporate beneficiaries, and technologies of expression and destruction. Our internet truths must not move blindly from popularity to visibility, money, and mayhem. I seek truths based on more decent logics than virality or virility. "People make the internet. and bombs. and #fakenews. and poetry and song and community. Only we have the power to know and do better." This was and remains my Superhardconclusion.

Notes

1. My earlier works linked together in this piece are (1) "Trump's Alpha Male Posturing Was Made for Our Media Age"; (2) #100hardtruths-#fakenews; (3) "How Do I (Not) Look"; (4) *Learning from YouTube.*

2. Since writing this piece, my project has taken a final turn, to thinking about and engaging in Fake News Poetry Workshops as radical digital media literacy. See fakenews-poetry.com and a related podcast, *We Need Gentle Truths for Now* (https://shows.acast.com/we -need-gentle-truths-for-now).

3. See my media, writing, teaching, and scholarly work at alexandrajuhasz.com.

4. See mediapraxis.org, *Integrating Theory, Practice and Politics*, where I have written and taught about this radical integration.

5. See my discussion of my movement to the internet in "You Get the Picture."

6. See Juhasz, *Learning from YouTube.*

7. Juhasz, "Feminist Online Activism," 20–21.

8. See Juhasz and Jesse Lerner, *F Is for Phony.*

9. See Juhasz, "Increasingly UnProductive Fake."

10. See the ev-ent-anglement website, http://ev-ent-anglement.com.

11. "#89, ten (more!) superhardtruths about #100hardtruths (certainly not) needed," Juhasz, #100hardtruths-fakenews.

12. See Juhasz, "Fred Rant."

13. Fuller, "MOAB."

14. Engel Rasmussen, "US 'Mother of all Bombs.'"

15. Sciutto, "Trump Promises."

16. Baker, "Trump Threatens."

17. See B. Williams, "Trump's Immigration."

18. See de Vogue, "DACA Judge Reading Trump's Tweets Carefully."

19. See Schwarz, "Obama's Charlottesville Tweet."

20. See Watson, "Twitter Says Trump's Threat to North Korea Was 'Newsworthy.'"

21. See Ward, "Trump Just Revealed a Covert CIA program."

22. Feminist and queer scholars have a lengthy and complex body of work on virility: the psychoanalytic and political imbrications of gender, sexuality, and power. See for instance, Ahmed, *Differences That Matter.*

23. Critical internet scholars have a recent but intricate body of work about virality and its connections to power, pleasure, disease, disorder, and digital infrastructure. See, e.g., Payne, *Promiscuity of Network Culture.*

24. One body of critical internet studies links virality and the closing down of our attention to the needs, interests, and expressions of the least known and seen in our culture, e.g., the disabled. See, e.g., Treviranus, "Value of the Unpopular."

25. See Prigano, "Days after Charlottesville Violence."

26. There is a long and complicated body of thinking by feminist scholars about gender, sexuality, masculinity, and power. See for instance, Jardin and Smith, *Men in Feminism.*

27. There is a long and complicated body of theory by feminist media scholars about the male and other gazes. See, e.g., Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures.*

28. See Juhasz, "Interview."

29. Juhasz, *Learning from YouTube.*

30. Ibid., "popularity" search results 1–31: http://vectors.usc.edu/projects /learningfromyoutube/search.php?sq=popularity.

31. Ibid., "TOUR #3": http://vectors.usc.edu/projects/learningfromyoutube/texteo.php ?composite=84.

32. Ryan, "Short History of the End of the World."

33. There is a long and rich tradition of scholarship in critical internet studies focusing on the perils and pleasures of participation. See for instance, Barney et al., *Participatory Condition in the Digital Age.*

34. There is a robust feminist, queer body of research and scholarship about the toxic worlds of internet commenting and participation. See, e.g., FemTechNet's resources available from its Center for Solutions to Online Violence.

35. There is a lengthy and meaningful body of scholarship on the interrelations of power, looking, visibility, and control. See for instance, Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking.*

36. The ethics of seeing, showing, and representing have long concerned documentary theorists, particularly those who work with disenfranchised communities (women, people of color, the poor, Indigenous people, the disabled). See, e.g., Danto, Hashimi, and Isabel, *Think/ Point/Shoot*; Rangan, *Immediations.*

37. See Jenkins, Ford, and Green, *Spreadable Media.*

38. Scholars in visual culture focus on the nexus of the look and larger systems of power and control. See for instance, Mirzoeff, *How to See the World.*

39. See, e.g., Juhasz, *AIDS TV* and *Women of Vision.*

40. The weaponized, militarized, violent dangers of being seen—such as torture, surveillance, or sexual abuse—are a significant focus of numerous essays in Juhasz and Lebow, *Companion to Contemporary Documentary Film.*

41. At the 2016 meeting of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, I attended the panel "Black Images Matter: Contextualizing Images of Racialized Police Violence," featuring the work of critical race and media scholars Safiya Noble, LaCharles Ward, Roopali Mukherjee, and Ellen Scott. A packed room of media scholars listened to, and then discussed, the ramifications, histories of, and contexts for looking at images of Black protest, violence, and death. See, e.g., Noble, "Teaching Trayvon."

42. S. Williams, "How Does."

43. See Sontag, *On Photography.*

44. Lebow, "Unwar Film."

45. Ibid., x.

46. Zarzycka, *Gendered Tropes*, xvi.

47. Malkowski, *Dying in Full Detail.*
48. Ibid.
49. See Terry, *Attachments to War* and "Killer Entertainments."
50. See Dewey and Ohlheiser, "How Live-Streaming Has Forever Changed the Way We View Violence."
51. See Juhasz, "On Iran Verite."
52. Juhasz, "Thoughts on Teaching."
53. See my work and that of many others thinking about the role of visual culture within contemporary activist culture in Bookchin et al., *Militant Research Handbook.*
54. Many scholars theorize from and beyond the momentary pleasures of internet sociality. See Lovink and Rasch, *Un(Like) Us Reader.*
55. There is a strong and important body of scholarly work on the economic underpinnings of social media. See, e.g., Vaidhyanathan, *Googlization of Everything.*
56. Feminist theory and history has much to tell us about patriarchy. See Lerner, *Creation of Patriarchy.*
57. Feminist thinking on the role of the phallus is legion. See Nicholson, *Second Wave.*
58. Mathis-Lilley, "Trump Was Recorded in 2005."
59. Feminist and queer theorists think long and hard about the performative rather than biological nature of gender, sex, and sexuality. See, e.g., Butler, *Gender Trouble.*
60. Juhasz, "Conclusion."
61. Critical internet studies looks to the very mixed lived results of internet activism. See, e.g., Morozov, *Net Delusion.*
62. Critical internet studies links state and corporate power to digital architecture and algorithms. See, e.g., Chun, *Power and Control*; Cheney-Lippold, *We Are Data.*
63. Much recent work in media studies looks not at images but at the technological, corporate, state infrastructures that move them. See, e.g., Parks and Starosielski, *Signal Traffic.*
64. The cruelty of neoliberalism affects most of our habits. See, e.g., Berlant, *Cruel Optimism.*
65. Feminist theorists contribute to rare and much-needed conversations about what might be possible outside of neoliberalism. See, e.g., Gibson-Graham, *End of Capitalism.*
66. Manjoo, "Mark Zuckerberg Follows a Familiar Playbook."
67. See decades of work by feminist peace theorists and activists, e.g., Confortini, *Intelligent Compassion.*

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