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## Media Ethics Alert: Should Chinese Journalists Have Snapped Photos of Dead Pop Star?

Posted by [Dan Reimold](#) on Wednesday, February 11, 2015 · [Leave a Comment](#)

By *Kelly Patterson, CMM correspondent*

**In an op-ed for *The Red & Black*, a University of Georgia student questions whether advancements in technology are giving journalists new platforms to speak or simply enabling them to exploit subjects without a voice of their own.**

As part of her debate, UGA sophomore Hannah Gray specifically targets the overzealous coverage of recently deceased Chinese pop star Yao Beina — flogging it as a blatant abuse of journalistic responsibility.

While she may not be known by many in mainstream America, Beina was [a big star in Asia](#). She died last month, four years after being diagnosed with breast cancer.

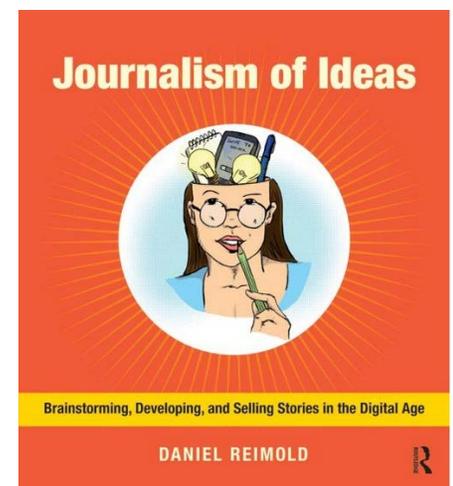
Upon her death came tabloid hackery at the most cringeworthy level. Journalists actually snuck into a hospital wearing medical uniforms so they could capture photographs of Beina's body. When confronted by an outraged public, they claimed they were acting in the spirit of free speech and transparency — apparently even citing Charlie Hebdo as a rallying cry.

### Contact

Send news tips to Dan at [dreimold@gmail.com](mailto:dreimold@gmail.com).



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## Chinese journalists violate privacy of dead pop star

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Posted: Thursday, January 29, 2015 12:15 pm

Hannah Gray | 0 comments



The advancement of technology has greatly influenced the way in which the profession of journalism is executed. Devices such as smart phones allow for instant coverage of breaking news, which can be immediately posted and consumed by millions of readers. While this growth in technology has many benefits for journalism, it also brings with it new moral and ethical issues.

The most recent instance of boundaries being crossed occurred in China. On Jan. 16, Chinese pop star Yao Beina passed away from breast cancer. The deceased's body was photographed by journalists who snuck into the hospital dressed as medical workers. Beina's family was understandably outraged and devastated, and public outcry caused the Shenzhen Evening News to apologize

membership organization for college journalists. To learn more, click on the ACP logo above.

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According to Gray at UGA, regardless of whether Beina was dead or alive, with their actions these journalists immediately violated her right to privacy — and created unnecessary controversy atop an already heartbreaking moment for her family and fans.

As she writes in her op-ed, headlined "[Chinese Journalists Violate Privacy of Dead Pop Star](#)":

*"By untruthfully and unjustly gaining access to photograph a dead woman who had no control over the situation, the Chinese journalists furthered the issues and grievances many have with the shape of the news media today. The facts and the truth are no longer the bread and butter of news because somehow it has become commonplace to push things too far. Exploiting sources just to piece together an enticing and alluring story ruins the point of journalism."*

Bottom line, as Gray writes about the Beina images, **"Just because the journalists could find a way to snap a picture does not mean that it was right."**

## What do you think?

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