Arts & Humanities

The Decisive Moment

Spring 2016



“Photography,” wrote Henri Cartier-Bresson, “is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.” Cartier-Bresson understood that, with the click of a shutter, a photographer might not only capture a moment in time, but reveal a deeper truth about humanity.

This year, as Columbia marks the 100th anniversary of its Pulitzer Prizes and celebrates Graduate School of Journalism founder Joseph Pulitzer, we look back at some award-winning images that, in capturing a decisive moment, bore witness not

just to a single event, but to history in the making.

1942



Frank Noel

A sailor in a lifeboat adrift on the Indian Ocean pleads for water. These sailors (and the photographer) had been traveling on a freighter bound from Singapore to Burma when it was sunk by a Japanese torpedo.

1950



Max Desfor

North Korean refugees crawl over a bridge’s shattered girders as they flee south to escape the advance of Chinese Communist troops. The Chinese entered the Korean War as allies of North Korea; US troops battled on the side of South Korea.

1961



Paul Vathis

With their heads bowed, President John F. Kennedy, left, and former US and Columbia president Dwight D. Eisenhower ’47HON walk along a path at Camp David, near Thurmont, Maryland, on April 22, 1961. The two met to discuss the Bay of Pigs invasion.

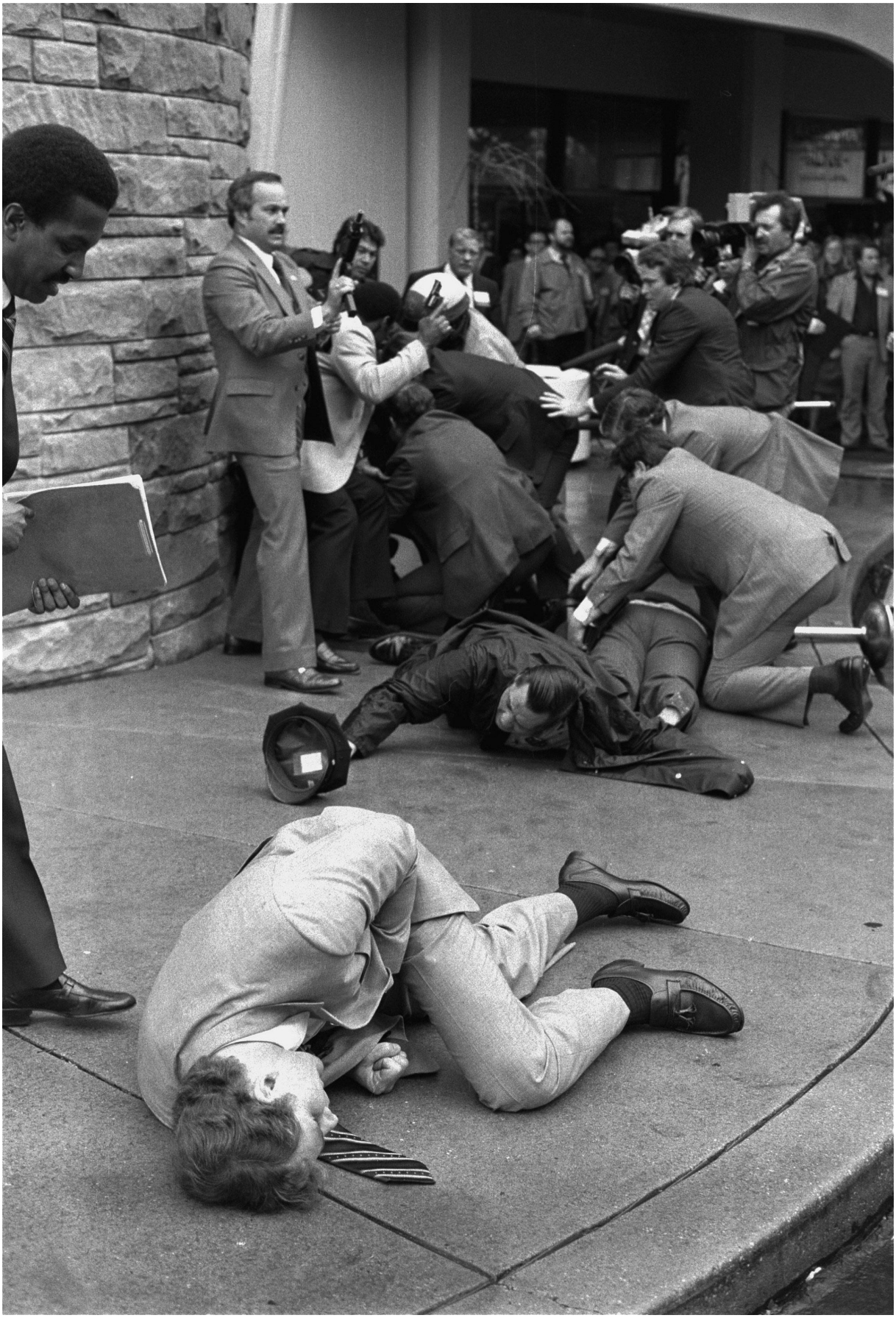
1973



Slava Veder

Released prisoner of war Lt. Col. Robert L. Stirm is greeted by his family at Travis Air Force Base, in Fairfield, California, as he returns home from the Vietnam War. Pictured, from left, are Stirm’s daughter Lorrie; his son Robert; his daughter Cynthia; his wife Loretta; and his son Roger.

1981



Ron Edmonds

Secret Service agent Timothy J. McCarthy, foreground; police officer Thomas K. Delahanty, center; and presidential press secretary James Brady, background, lie wounded outside a Washington hotel after John Hinckley Jr. fired six shots into a crowd on March 30, 1981, in an attempt to assassinate President Ronald Reagan.

1991



Alexander Zemlianichenko

People step on a statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky — the founder and chief of the Soviet secret police, later known as the KGB — which was toppled in front of the KGB headquarters in Moscow on August 23, 1991.

2004



John Moore

A detainee in an outdoor solitary-confinement cell talks with a military policeman at the Abu Ghraib prison, on the outskirts of Baghdad. This photograph is one in a portfolio of twenty taken by eleven different Associated Press photographers in Iraq throughout 2004.

2012



Manu Brabo

Syrian refugees cross into Turkey via the Orontes River, near the village of Hacipasa, Turkey.

All photos courtesy of AP Images.

Guide to school abbreviations

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