

AP REPORT

Investigating claims around 'The Terror of War' photograph

January 15, 2025



The world-famous AP photo of Kim Phuc — “The Terror of War,” known popularly as “Napalm Girl” — was taken on June 8, 1972, and credited to Nick Ut¹, a young Vietnamese AP staffer working in the Saigon bureau.

The image is among the most recognized and celebrated works of photojournalism of the 20th Century.²

The photo was shot during a well-documented attack on the village of Trang Bang witnessed by many journalists for competing news organizations who, at no point over the past half century, publicly called into question Ut’s authorship of the photo. Many have written, reported and publicly spoken about their time in Vietnam, while never disputing the provenance of perhaps the most famous photo of the war.

For the past six months, aware that a film challenging this historical record was in production, the AP has conducted its own painstaking research, which supports the historical account that Ut was the photographer. In the absence of new, convincing evidence to the contrary, the AP has no reason to believe anyone other than Ut took the photo.



The famous image, formally titled “The Terror of War.” On the left is the original image. On the right is a tighter crop, placing Kim Phuc in the center of the frame, which was published to AP’s members and customers. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

While several key witnesses are deceased, the AP spoke with seven people who witnessed events on the road at Trang Bang or in AP's Saigon bureau when the picture was first developed and printed. None of those AP spoke with were interviewed on camera for the film. Those who were approached declined to take part, either because they disputed the thesis that Ut did not take the photograph, or because they were wary of the filmmakers' demand they had to sign a non-disclosure agreement, which is not standard journalistic practice. One witness said he spoke to one of the documentary producers by telephone more than a year ago and told her what had transpired that day. She told him he was wrong but would not provide any details to support her assertion. The filmmakers never reached out again.

AP scrutinized negatives in its possession and sought out every image available to it from other photographers and film crews at the scene that day. It has compiled a visual timeline of the day's events in Trang Bang, including a review of smoke patterns over the village, and detailed the known procedures for handling rolls of film^{3 4} brought into the AP darkroom. It has gone through oral histories in the AP archives touching on the "Napalm Girl" photo as well as written accounts from others involved.

The broad narrative around the image has been consistent for decades, even as some specifics have blurred over half a century and amid the traumatic fog of war: Ut brought his eight rolls of film back to the bureau after the "friendly fire" bombing of the village by South Vietnamese forces in which Kim Phuc was badly burned. AP darkroom editor, Yuichi "Jackson" Ishizaki, in on temporary assignment from Tokyo, then developed the film as Ut stood by.^{5 6 7}

Horst Faas⁸, AP's two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning chief of photos in Saigon, was away at lunch when the negative was first processed. Summoned back to the bureau, he recognized the image's power and ordered it sent to AP headquarters in New York, overruling the photo editor on duty, Carl Robinson, who believed that the nudity of the subject would render it unacceptable under AP policies.⁹ Editors in New York, led by the AP chief of photography, Hal Buell, agreed with Faas that the image should be shared because of its honest depiction of the horror of war.¹⁰

AP distributed the photo to its membership and customers, and the image instantly drew worldwide attention and acclaim. It has remained one of the most recognizable photos in AP's long history. In 1973, it won Ut a Pulitzer Prize.¹¹

Aged 21 when the photo was taken in 1972, "Nick" Huynh Cong Ut had already been working for the AP for six years, first as a darkroom assistant and eventually as a field photographer. Ut was born in the province of Long An in the Mekong Delta. Two of his brothers were killed in the war, which made him exempt from the draft. AP hired him as a young teenager¹² to help support his family after another brother, Huynh Thanh My, died in combat on assignment for AP in 1965. Ut was known then to colleagues in Vietnam as energetic and scrappy, and according to Faas, he had developed a keen instinct for news photography working in the busy Saigon darkroom.¹³

Ut would remain with AP for 45 more years until retiring in 2017. He left Saigon in 1975 during the Communist takeover of South Vietnam and eventually settled in Los Angeles. He covered the O.J. Simpson trial, photographed Hollywood icons like Marlon Brando and shot sports events.¹⁴ He remained best known for the "Napalm Girl" image. He has spoken about his work extensively and been regularly featured in articles and documentaries. At no point over the last half-century has his credit for the famous image been seriously challenged.

In February 2024, the AP was told that Gary Knight, co-founder of the VII photo agency, was involved with a documentary questioning Ut's authorship of the photo. Shortly after, an associate outlined the allegations to the AP. In June, the filmmakers shared additional information with AP during a meeting in London.

At the London meeting, Knight provided an overview of the documentary's allegations. However, he declined to provide the AP full and detailed evidence of the claims to be made unless the AP agreed to a non-disclosure agreement, which would restrict its ability to discuss the claims. AP declined to enter an NDA about its own image, reasoning that if the image needed to be defended or corrected, the AP should retain the freedom to act on such information. AP would also need the ability to research the claims in an unfettered manner.

At the meeting, Knight asserted that another photographer was the true author of the photo, that the photographer's film had been dropped off at the AP bureau by a relative on the day of the bombing, and that Faas made a snap decision to falsely credit Ut. The allegations, according to Knight, sprung from an account by Robinson, the former AP photo editor, and was supported by the other photographer — “the stringer” — who they said they found living in California. Knight said that neither Robinson nor the photographer had previously met.

For decades, neither Robinson nor the other photographer publicly challenged Ut's credit for the photo. There is no reference to the allegations in Robinson's own book about his time in Vietnam. AP photos also show Robinson holding a bottle of champagne in one hand and drinking from a glass in the other as colleagues apparently toast Ut's Pulitzer win in May, 1973.¹⁵

Robinson worked for AP in New York and later Australia after being evacuated from Vietnam and was described as disgruntled by former colleagues inside and outside of the company. He was dismissed from the AP in 1978. He later described his anger and frustration at how AP forced its staff's families to evacuate before the fall of Saigon and then forced him to evacuate while leaving a skeleton staff on the ground that he felt was not as deserving of covering the story as he was.¹⁶ “He has a grudge of some kind, but I could never tell what it was about,” said Fox Butterfield¹⁷, the former New York Times Saigon bureau chief.

The photo itself was a point of contention for Robinson, though not because of its authorship. His initial refusal to transmit the photo was overruled by his boss, then by AP's photo chief and finally by posterity. In a 2005 interview with AP's Corporate Archives, he said he thought AP “created a monster”¹⁸ when it distributed the photo, because much of the world's sympathies focused on Kim Phuc specifically, rather than more broadly on all the war's victims.

At the London meeting AP assured the filmmakers it would look fully into any questions around the photo, and, if the credit was indeed incorrect, would take appropriate remedial actions.

AP remains committed to a truthful history of the photo, in keeping with its news values and principles.

AP has conducted an extensive review of available evidence, including witness interviews, a review of materials in AP's photo and corporate archives and a visual analysis. Some details are difficult to confirm given that two of the key witnesses in the bureau that day — Faas and Ishizaki — have long since died.

The review shows that Ut was on the road outside Trang Bang that day carrying four cameras, that he was moving around relentlessly shooting high-quality news photos of the village, soldiers, the moment of the napalm bombing and of civilian victims running away, and that he was in the vicinity of where Kim Phuc and other children and adults emerged from the devastating scene. His photos showed he was on every part of the road, close to the village and back at the bridge where journalists originally assembled. ^{19 20 21 22 23 24}



A selection of other photographs taken by Ut on the day of the attack show a particularly strong body of work from a wide area around the village. His range of photos shown here and held in AP's photo archive cover a significant length of Highway 1, showing both the military and human side of the story. He photographed South Vietnamese soldiers on patrol, scenes of the village as fighting was underway, ordinary people fleeing before and after the attack, and the suffering of those caught up in events. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

An overview of AP's research

- The AP spoke to seven eyewitnesses to events on the road or in the AP bureau that day other than Ut, as well as four others with detailed knowledge of AP's operations in Vietnam and the history of the photo:
 - Six were on the road that day in Trang Bang, none of whom worked for AP in any capacity. Of these, two went to AP's Saigon bureau later that day and were there as the image was processed in the cramped darkroom and seen for the first time by Faas.
 - One AP correspondent who was also in the bureau as Faas first laid eyes on the famous photo.
 - Two AP Saigon staffers who were not in the bureau that day, but were familiar with the bureau operations of that era.
 - Two others who have studied the photograph or the people involved, who had no direct involvement with the contemporaneous events in Trang Bang.

None previously questioned Ut's authorship and they had not changed their positions when speaking to AP, though they have yet to see the filmmakers' evidence. Most had not been contacted by the documentary makers and those who were declined their interview request. A statement from Kim Phuc given to AP also confirmed Ut's authorship of the photo.²⁵

However, Butterfield, who was part of The New York Times reporting team awarded the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for their work on revealing the "Pentagon Papers" a year earlier, spoke to the filmmakers. He had been on the road and witnessed the attack and recalls being near Kim Phuc when she was photographed. He was also in the AP Saigon bureau hours later when the photo was being processed. He told AP both in a conversation and in a further email exchange, that he spoke by telephone to one of the documentary team and recounted what happened that day. She told him his account was wrong, Butterfield said. The filmmakers never contacted him again. He said:

"More than a year ago I was contacted by Fiona Turner, one of the film producers. She asked me what I saw and remembered, and I told Fiona what I had seen at Trang Bang on June 8, 1972 with my own eyes and

reported it in the New York Times. She told me that wasn't right. I asked her what proof she had and she said she couldn't tell me. She then asked me to sign an NDA, which I thought was ridiculous. At the time I didn't think much of it. I told them what my memory was and they didn't like it, but they just went ahead anyway."

- David Burnett, then a 25-year-old photographer working mainly for Time and Life, was among the journalists on the road in Trang Bang as the napalm attack hit the village. He said the journalists waited from a safe distance because they were unsure of where the napalm was. It took a few minutes for the victims to start fleeing the village. As they emerged from the smoke, Burnett saw Ut and fellow journalist Alexander Shimkin, a freelancer who had been covering the war primarily for Newsweek, sprint ahead of the others and start taking photos as Kim Phuc and other children emerged from the smoke.²⁶ A photo²⁷ shows Shimkin near Kim Phuc as she ran up the road. If Ut was with Shimkin, as Burnett recalls, that would place him close to her as well. Shimkin, a former civil rights activist, was killed in Vietnam just a month after the attack.²⁸

"There's nothing that ever has given me pause to think that Nick didn't shoot that picture," he said.²⁹ Burnett himself said he missed the precious shot because in that moment he was struggling to change the film in his camera.³⁰

- Butterfield witnessed both the attack from the road along with Ut and the scene in the AP bureau when the photo was being relayed. He says he was 10 to 15 yards from where Ut took the photo, though he too does not appear in the photos and footage from the scene, raising the possibility there were blind spots in the spotty visual record of those moments. He says he still has his notebook from that day with a written account of what happened. "It's ridiculous to think this could be the case that Nick didn't take the picture. It not only stretches credibility but gives stretching credibility a bad name," he said.³¹
- Ut returned to the AP hours later with eight rolls of film to be processed, two in color and six in black-and-white. He stayed in the bureau as the rolls were developed. The AP darkroom had careful procedures in place to ensure that developed film was properly credited to the proper photographer.³²

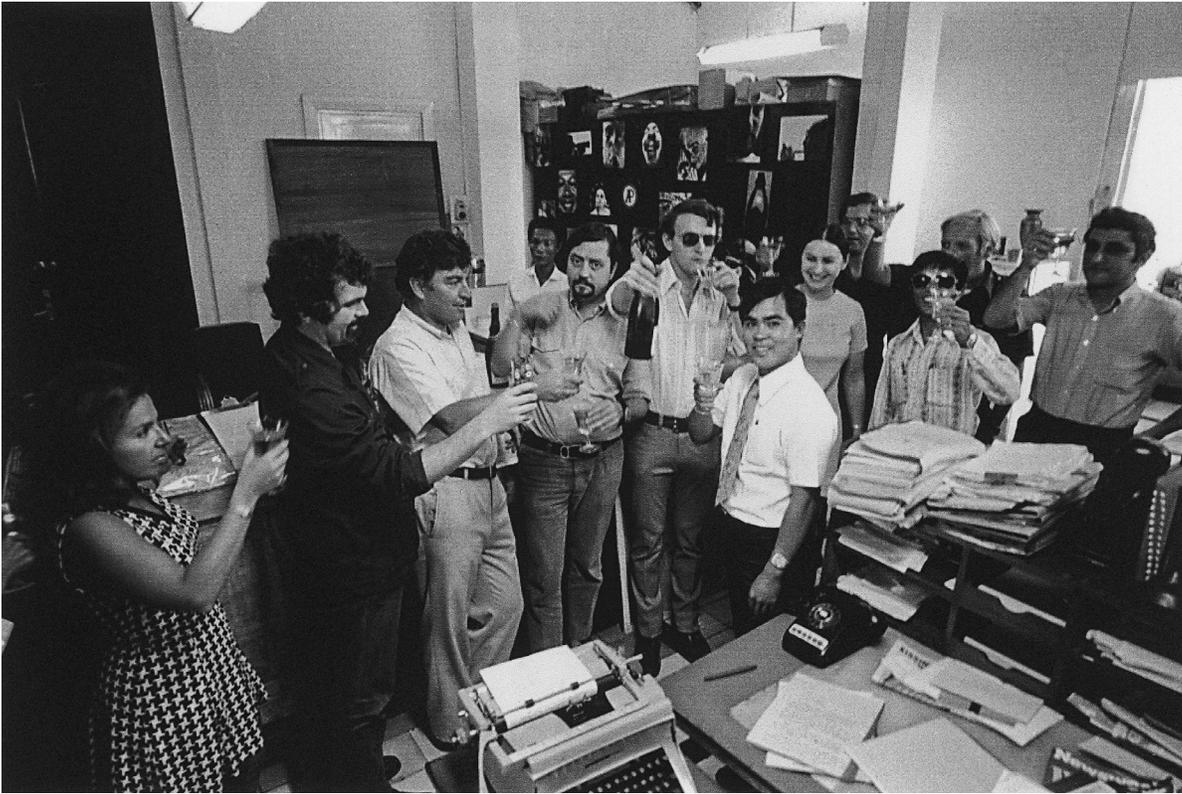
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- According to an oral history with Ut, conducted by AP Corporate Archives Director Valerie Komor and retired Special Correspondent Linda Deutsch in Los Angeles on May 15, 2016, when he developed the film, Ishizaki saw that Kim Phuc was naked, and asked Ut why she had no clothes and why he would take a photo of a naked girl. Ut explained to him that she had been burned by napalm and had removed her burning garments. Ishizaki recognized the significance of the image, and a disagreement ensued between him and Robinson on whether it should be sent to New York.³³

At this point, Ishizaki instructed an office employee to fetch Faas from the nearby Royal Hotel where he was having lunch with AP correspondent Peter Arnett, to tell him that Ut had returned from the field with photos that Faas should see. On returning with Arnett, Faas looked at the image, saw its power, asked why it had not been dispatched already, and ordered the image to be transmitted to New York. He also congratulated Ut on his work.³⁴

- Robinson, as photo editor and caption writer on duty, would have typed out the photo caption that credited the image to Ut. When he was interviewed for AP Corporate Archives on May 2, 2005, about his experience working for the AP in Vietnam, he made no mention of any dispute about the origin of the photo.
- Burnett was at the AP bureau where his and Ut's film from the day was being processed. "Then, out from the darkroom stepped Nick Ut, holding a small, still-wet copy of his best picture: a 5-by-7 print of Kim Phuc running with her brothers to escape the burning napalm. We were the first eyes to see that picture; it would be another full day before the rest of the world would see it on virtually every newspaper's Page 1," Burnett wrote in a column in the Washington Post.³⁵ Speaking to AP, Burnett recalled Faas then saying, "You do good work today Nick Ut."
- Kim Phuc, the subject of the photo, says that while she has no memories of the attack, her uncle, who was an eyewitness to the events on that day, confirmed that Ut took the photograph. In a statement given to the AP by Ut's lawyer, she said that Ut then took her and her 5-year-old brother to the hospital after her uncle begged him for help.³⁶

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- More than five decades later, recollections of exact details of some of the events of that chaotic and traumatic day differ in some ways from witness to witness. Ut has long said Kim Phuc’s grandmother, carrying Kim’s dead brother, came down the road first, before Kim.³⁷ Butterfield agrees with that chain of events.³⁸ Burnett and Chris Wain, a correspondent with Britain’s ITN television station who was there, say that Kim came down the road first, and only later did her grandmother come holding the child. Wain describes in detail how he gave Kim water when she reached him (which is shown in footage), then moved on with his cameraman when they saw, and filmed, the grandmother.³⁹ Burnett said the children ran out first and only after significant time passed — maybe 15 minutes or half an hour — were people walking, instead of running, out of the village.⁴⁰
 - AP has compiled a visual timeline of the incident using all the available photographic and film evidence it has managed to obtain. These visual fragments are incomplete in a film-dependent era before TV crews and photographers were able to record near continuous images with digital cameras. As such, they offer little evidence about the provenance of the photo. The photos in AP’s possession and others found from third parties only show a fraction of an event — mere snippets of time — that took as long as half an hour or more. However, they, along with Ut’s strong body of work from the day, show a scenario in which Ut, running around the scene energetically, had ample opportunity to capture the image.

Aware that the documentary filmmakers assert, contrary to the AP’s knowledge and contemporary accounts, that Ut did not take the photo, the AP stands prepared to review any evidence and take whatever remedial action might be needed if their thesis is proved true. AP requests the filmmakers provide any evidence without preconditions.



This photo apparently shows members of AP's Saigon bureau team gathering to toast Nick Ut's Pulitzer Prize after it was announced on May 7, 1973. The exact date of this photo is unknown. Ut is at the front in a white short-sleeved shirt and tie. Next to him is Carl Robinson, wearing sunglasses, holding a glass in one hand, and a bottle of champagne in the other. Horst Faas is third from the left. (AP Photo)

Additional notes from the AP review

- AP routinely purchases images from photo stringers, occasional photographers and members of the public giving them full credit as per standard journalistic ethical practices.⁴¹ There is no shame attached to transmitting such photos, and there would have been no reason to award credit for a stringer's submitted photo to a staff member. Such celebrated photos from AP stringers include the Pulitzer Prize winning shot of a firefighter carrying a baby from the site of the Oklahoma City bombing.⁴² Faas' standing policy was to be generous with stringers in Vietnam to encourage them to keep bringing their best pictures to the AP in the future.⁴³ In an oral history with AP, Faas spoke of often giving budding freelancers small payments — even if their work was unused — and free rolls of film, seeing this as a small investment that would encourage them to offer AP future photos that might have news value. “I always compensated people in some way,” he said. Robinson himself, in an excerpt from his book he posted to his Substack⁴⁴ in November 2024, confirms that these small payments and free film were routinely given to “Horst's Army” of freelancers. Stealing credit and not paying for stringers' work would not only have been inconsistent with Faas' modus operandi, it would have made it nearly impossible for AP to compete with other photo agencies. Neal Ulevich, an AP photojournalist based in Saigon who won a 1977 Pulitzer of his own, said⁴⁵ intentionally miscrediting a photo would have gone against the ethos of the bureau's photo team. “There was a lot of respect for the person who took the picture [any picture], and there was never an inkling to misappropriate any film, that would have been a terribly dishonourable thing to do. I believe no one was interested in doing it and it never happened when I was there that I know of.”
- Even in a pre-digital era, the photograph had a near-immediate impact on audiences around the world within hours of it being transmitted from Saigon. There were numerous witnesses on the road when the attack happened, and in the AP bureau when the photo was processed and sent. Nearly all of them were journalists — many AP competitors — with storied careers built on skepticism and on revealing uncomfortable truths. It seems implausible that an alleged fraud not only remained unchallenged immediately, but was kept hidden for decades, which appears to be the

film's premise. Even assuming the worst of intentions on the part of those behind the photo, it strains belief that they would have taken such a risky move regarding an event that was witnessed by so many people who could have instantly challenged the attribution of the photo. During their lifetimes, both Buell and Faas discussed the image many times publicly and privately with AP colleagues, as well as in writing, and never showed any doubt it was Ut's. Buell, who died last year, wrote a 2021 biography, "From Hell to Hollywood: The Incredible Journey of AP Photographer Nick Ut."

- Ulevich was on vacation from the Saigon bureau at the time the photo was taken and only returned a few days later. He said⁴⁶ none of his colleagues, which included Robinson who went on to write several follow-up stories about Kim Phuc, ever suggested it was not Ut's photo. He reviewed journals he kept at the time and there was no indication in there of anyone challenging the provenance of the photo. Ulevich laid out the meticulous process they worked with in the bureau to ensure that not one frame was miscredited. Two adhesive labels with the same number were used for each roll of film. One was attached to the envelope it came in or to a piece of paper, which identified the photographer and other details. The other was applied to the film cassette itself. In the darkroom that label was put on the edge of the film itself, so the negatives were clearly labeled and corresponded to the envelope. "Since we live in an imperfect world, mistakes can be made. But there was no single instance of a mistake during the entire time when I was there. Not a single time did anyone claim that the darkroom process failed. That's why the system was set up and it worked," he said.
- Robinson, in his November 2024 Substack post⁴⁷, also credits Faas with creating a "precisely detailed operation" where every roll of arriving film was logged into a notebook next to the shooter's name before it was ever developed and the negatives reviewed. "He was fast, efficient and thorough. I was working under the best photo editor in the business," Robinson writes.
- In the pre-digital age, photographers themselves often did not know precisely what they would find when their photos were processed hours later. With several photographers shooting pictures of the same event,

it would be highly unlikely for one of them — even a seasoned professional — to know what was on their film roll before seeing the developed negatives. “You think you have a picture now ... Until you see a print, you don’t know what you’ve got,” Burnett said.⁴⁸

- The visual timeline pieced together by AP shows that the smoke patterns, on which we understand the filmmakers are placing some emphasis, are inconsistent and can be interpreted in a number of ways. The visual evidence shows smoke that billows and wanes repeatedly, with no clear pattern. Several factors could impact this: Smoke had been seen over the village from fighting earlier in the day, the area around the village included damp foliage and the weather was warm and humid with sporadic rain which can be seen in the photographs of the day as well as wind⁴⁹ about the time of the napalm attack. Our examination of the smoke patterns has not led us to doubt Ut’s authorship of the photograph.
- Arnett said⁵⁰ Robinson wrote to him, likely in 2015, after Faas’ death, making the allegation. Robinson told him he didn’t want to make the claim while Faas was alive because he wanted to spare Faas any embarrassment.

In an email to the AP in August 2024, Arnett, who was in the Saigon bureau with Faas during the entire incident, wrote: “I don’t fully understand why Carl Robinson launched his failing attempts to discredit two of the great photographers of our time, Horst Faas and Nick Ut. But maybe it is jealousy... In a response to my own emailed question to him to explain himself, he replied that he was disturbed by Nick Ut’s growing reputation as a photographer with the Los Angeles AP bureau. ‘He’s gone all Hollywood, I don’t like that.’”

Arnett said he got in touch with former colleagues when he heard of the accusation. “I immediately notified [retired] AP photo Chief Hal Buell of Robinson’s claims who got in touch with Jackson Ishizaki, [former AP Saigon bureau chief] Richard Pyle and others in the Saigon Bureau at that time. Over the years I’ve checked with Vietnamese staffers in the Saigon Bureau, several of whom now live in the U.S. None could recall any questioning of the validity of Nick Ut’s authorship of the famous picture during the years that followed up to its end in 1975.”

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- In his oral history given on May 2, 2005, Robinson was interviewed by Pyle for AP's Corporate Archives. Robinson referenced the terms on which Ut was first hired in the bureau. Faas stipulated he should only work in the darkroom initially, then when he went out to shoot photos he was to remain in Saigon. Robinson said "he [Ut] was also a bit of a sneaky Pete, and he wasn't supposed to be doing any combat. That was the rule. Horst said very clearly ... that Nick is not to do any combat... He was always in a bit of trouble with me, because, like, I would just try to get him to abide by what the agreement was."⁵¹
 - AP attempted a forensic investigation of the physical negatives of that day in its photo archive in New York, to try to see if it was possible to ascertain any fingerprint-like markings showing which cameras they might have come from. However, no conclusive evidence was found from that investigation.

The images still in AP's possession that Ut took that day are incomplete because standard practice in the bureau was to send to New York only the negatives of transmitted photos and not outtakes. The remainder were either given back to the photographer, discarded or potentially saved in the bureau. However, whatever photo archive existed in the Saigon bureau was lost along all the contents of the bureau — except for some documents hand-carried out by fleeing staffers⁵² — when the North Vietnamese Army took over the city.

Endnotes

This report has been compiled with the involvement of several members of AP's news team with a range of skills working in standards, photography, visual investigations and production. This months-long review took place without the filmmakers responding to AP's request to view any substantive evidence behind "The Stringer" and without the benefit of watching the documentary.

1. [World Press Photo](#), 1973 Photo Contest, World Press Photo of the Year
2. [The story of the most important photo of the 20th century](#), The Independent, 26 September 2022
3. "The development solutions (Ilford Microfen developer and self-mixed fixative) were stored in large food jars. Since the temperatures of the chemicals were rarely below 30 degree (sic.) centigrade the processing time was relatively short and the film had to be slowly moved at all times, by hand, like slow-motion laundering. The films were then dried in a special cabinet with hairdryers rigged up and switched in a way as not to damage could the swelling emulsion." [How the Picture Reached the World Horst Faas and Marianne Fulton](#), Digital Journalist, 2000
4. "When someone came in with a roll of film it was in an envelope or not. The film roll was then taken by an editor or darkroom guy, and then twin check was applied – these were two adhesive labels with the same number on them. One was placed on the envelope or piece of paper recording the details of who took it, and the other attached to the film cassette itself. So in the dark, the label would be applied to the edge of film and stay on there, so everyone could see the film and it would correspond to the envelope. Since we live in an imperfect world mistakes can be made, but there was no single instance of a mistake during the entire time when I was there. Not a single time did anyone claim that the darkroom process failed. That's why the system was set up and it worked." AP conversation with Neal Ulevich, 28 August 2024
5. ['Napalm Girl' at 50: The story of the Vietnam War's defining photo](#), CNN, 9 June 2022

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6. [Forty years after ‘napalm girl’ picture, a photographer reflects on the moment that might have been his](#), David Burnett for The Washington Post, 15 June 2012
 7. [A Young Girl’s Cry for Help in Vietnam and the Photographer who saved her are Honored by the London Science Museum and Queen Elizabeth II](#) Horst Faas and Marianne Fulton, Digital Journalist, 2000
 8. [Parting Glance: Horst Faas](#) The Associated Press, published by The New York Times, 10 May 2012
 9. Photographer Who Took Iconic Vietnam Photo Looks Back, 40 Years After the War Ended, Vanity Fair, 3 April 2015
 10. [Hal Buell]: “So the picture came out by radio and we discussed it for 10 minutes or so around the desk. Nobody, we couldn’t even within our own ranks, we didn’t have any objection to the picture because it was not prurient — yes, nudity — but not prurient in any sense of the word. It was a horror of war. It was innocence caught in the crossfire. And it went right out, and of course it became a lasting icon of that war, of any war, of all wars.” [The Gift of One Picture: Nick, Kim and the Napalm Girl](#), AP, 15 November 2016
 11. [The 1973 Pulitzer Prize Winner](#) in Spot News Photography
 12. “A few days after the funeral, 14-year-old Ut turned up at the AP office in Saigon asking for a job. AP editor Horst Faas told Ut to go home, but Ut refused to leave, saying he had nowhere to go. Faas hesitantly put Ut to work in the darkroom, where he processed film and made prints of other photographers’ work. Ut began taking a camera home and practicing shots. Soon, he was out in the streets looking for photos. Ut never received any formal training in photography, but his time in the darkroom, printing pictures as taken through the eyes of veteran photographers, began to teach him about composition.” “Ut, Nick.” [Encyclopedia of World Biography](#) edited by James Craddock, 2nd ed., vol. 35, Gale, 2015, pp. 361–363. Gale eBooks

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13. “It was Nick Ut who was trained with the eye of his brother. He was trained by seeing so many excellent pictures, AP pictures in the dark room and later on the editing table. He participated in the production for six years, and he had an eye and that eye delivered this one photo.” Horst Faas Oral History Interview, The Associated Press, 1997, p. 75
 14. Ut, Nick.” [Encyclopedia of World Biography](#) edited by James Craddock, 2nd ed., vol. 35, Gale, 2015, pp. 361–363. Gale eBooks
 15. In the AP’s Saigon bureau in May 1973, staff apparently celebrate news of Nick Ut’s Pulitzer Prize, won for his picture of young Kim Phuc, severely wounded by a napalm strike. Left to right: Edith Lederer, Charles Harrity, Horst Faas, Dang Van Huan (in rear), Richard Pyle, Carl Robinson, Nick Ut, Toby Pyle, Lynn Newland, Dang Van Phuoc, Hugh Mulligan and George Esper. (AP Photo)
 16. Carl Robinson Oral History interview, The Associated Press, 2 May 2005, p. 34–36
 17. AP conversation with Fox Butterfield, 5 August 2024
 18. Carl Robinson Oral History interview, The Associated Press, 2 May 2005, p. 27
 19. [The roofs of the Cao Dai church](#) at Trang Bang are visible over the line of stalled traffic along Route 1, 25 miles NW of Saigon, South Vietnam on June 8, 1972. Two NVA battalions have invaded the suburbs of this district town and disrupted traffic on the road to Saigon. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)
 20. [Soldiers and journalists watch](#) as black smoke from South Vietnamese bomb strikes rise over the roofs of the Cao Dai church at Trang Bang, 25 miles NW of Saigon, South Vietnam on June 8, 1972. Two NVA battalions have invaded the suburbs of this district town and disrupted traffic on the road to Saigon. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)
 21. [Napalm bombs explode and spread](#) fire during fighting in Trang Bang, Vietnam, June 8, 1972. Strike by a Skyraider plane was misplaced and injured civilians fleeing the area, occupied in recent days by North Vietnamese forces. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

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22. [A South Vietnamese soldier crouches](#) beside his buddy who suffered severe burns from napalm bomb dropped accidentally on South Vietnamese troops and civilians in enemy-infested area of Trang Bang, June 8, 1972. Fire bombs hit South Vietnamese civilians and government troops, killing and injuring a score of them, in an attempt to flush out enemy. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)
 23. [Unidentified Trang Bang villagers flee](#) down Route 1 after a misdirected napalm attack by South Vietnamese pilots struck their village on June 8, 1972. At left a Vietnamese Army cameraman holding a camera. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)
 24. [Kim Phuc's grandmother Tao](#) carries her napalm burned, 3-year-old grandson Dahn moments after a misplaced napalm bomb strike on the outskirts of Trang Bang, 25 miles NW of Saigon, South Vietnam on June 8, 1972. Dahn died moments after this photo was taken. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)
 25. A statement supplied to AP by James Hornstein, Nick Ut's lawyer, on 6 January 2025
 26. David Burnett Oral History Interview, The Associated Press, 13 July 2016, P. 14
 27. [Vietnamese children flee](#) from their homes in the South Vietnamese village of Trang Bang after South Vietnamese planes accidently dropped a napalm bomb on the village, located 26 miles outside of Saigon." Bettmann Archive/Getty Images, 8 June 1972. Alex Shimkin on the far right side of the image.
 28. [Alexander Demitri "Alex" Shimkin](#) Memorial
 29. AP conversation with David Burnett, 9 January 2025
 30. David Burnett Oral History Interview, The Associated Press, 13 July 2016, P. 13–14
 31. AP conversation with Fox Butterfield, 5 August 2024
 32. Ibid.
 33. Nick Ut Oral History Interview, The Associated Press, 15 May 2016

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34. “There was a transcendent moment. Horst, a big rugby player of a European, and Nick Ut, a slight, unassuming Vietnamese, coming together again at a focal point of history. We all looked at Nick’s picture. “Well,” I thought, “that is way better than anything I have.” Horst paused a minute, and said in his most authoritative Germanic accent, “You do good work today, Nick Ut.” It was a profound compliment. Discussions ensued for some time about whether the picture could be put on the wire since it involved “nudity” though clearly no rule ever written had this picture in mind. And in a matter of 24 hours, the photograph went from being viewed by our dozen eyes in the AP office, to tens of millions around the world.” [Closing the Circle](#) by David Burnett, Digital Journalist, May 2009
35. Ibid.
36. A statement supplied to AP by James Hornstein, Nick Ut’s lawyer, on 6 January 2025
37. [Photographer Who Took Iconic Vietnam Photo Looks Back, 40 Years After the War Ended](#), Vanity Fair, 3 April 2015
38. AP conversation with Fox Butterfield, 5 August 2024
39. Chris Wain written statement to AP, 9 January 2025
40. AP conversation with David Burnett, 9 January 2025
41. “There was the son of a photographer we called Vinh Lo. He learned what his father, what his old father was doing, and then he saw what we were doing, and on his little moped he would race to Saigon and bring us demonstration photos and explosions and this man was worth his gold in the Tet Offensive because he knew Saigon, he traveled everywhere — a child, and he would just dump his film — dump his film on our desks, sometimes marvelous film. Sometimes he would stand behind professions like Eddie Adams. He did that once, and he saw that Eddie stayed around so he rushed to the office, the AP office, showed me the film, and I said, oh, very wonderful pictures today, Vinh Lo. I’ll buy this, and this, and this. Half an hour later, Eddie comes in and says, “Great pictures today,” and I said, “Sorry, I got it already,” and Eddie, I remember, said, “Do I have to compete with twelve-year-olds?” but this kid simply imitated what Eddie was doing and sold me his photos. Now, I wouldn’t tell him to go and get lost because he’s twelve years or because we have Eddie on the scene. Try to keep him happy, that’s all. It worked.” Horst Faas Oral History Interview, 1997, p. 37

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42. [Charles Porter IV](#), The 1996 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Spot News Photography
43. “Stringers — as a principle, as a principle, you never refused photos from anyone as long as we were convinced that the pictures aren’t phoned, that he is telling us the truth about the circumstances and that the pictures can be trusted. There were some instances where pictures were outdated and we would never buy anything from men like this again, but Saigon at the time was attracting so many foreign photographers that tried their luck to make a bit of money and to live through the adventure that was Vietnam, to get a professional foothold that was possible at that big story, and they came. I always compensated people in some way. When somebody would bring me five rolls of film from an action, I always gave him five rolls of film back. We had the budget to do that, so at least I felt that we appreciated their coming. We always bought more photos than we really needed, and if somebody went through an effort to bring us something and by sheer luck we had similar pictures before — let’s say a staffer had been in the same area and we didn’t really need it — I still made an effort to buy four, five pictures and depending on the economic circumstances of this person, if I knew he has to pay his hotel bill, we fiddled somehow and used some pictures. I made an effort that everybody — everybody went away happy, was what the — how the AP was treating him, and I think we succeeded on that.” Horst Faas Oral History Interview, 1997, p. 36-37
44. [An Outsider into the World of Journalism — in Saigon](#), Carl Robinson, posted 20 November 2024
45. AP conversation with Neal Ulevich, 28 August 2024
46. AP conversation with Neal Ulevich, 28 August 2024
47. Ibid.
48. AP conversation with David Burnett, 9 January 2025
49. Historical weather conditions, [WolframAlpha](#)
50. Email exchange between AP and Peter Arnett, 9 August 2024
51. Carl Robinson Oral History interview, The Associated Press, 2 May 2005, p. 21–22
52. Saigon Bureau Records, AP Corporate Archives



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