

# Summary of "the boston photographs" essay sample



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## Summary of “ The Boston Photographs” Essay Sample

In “ The Boston Photographs,” writer Nora Ephron writes about three very controversial pictures taken of a rescue attempt that failed. The photographs were taken by Stanley Forman of the Boston Herald American. He was using a motor driven camera, which allowed him to take three frames per second. The first shot showed a fireman that was rescuing a woman and a child. The next picture showed the fire escape breaking off the building. The third picture showed the woman and her child in the air falling toward the ground. The woman died on impact, but the child landed on the woman’s body and lived.

The pictures were in more than 400 newspapers across the United States. Reader reaction across the country was almost all negative. The newspapers received many negative letters from its readers. They all repeated the same thing. “ Invading the privacy of death.” “ Cheap sensationalism.” “ I thought I was reading the National Enquirer.” Many editors wrote and defended the pictures. One newspaper responded by saying they printed the article to show the dangers of fire escapes and about the slumlords.

Charles Seib, the former managing editor of the Washington Star believed that the editors should have censored what they published. Seib stated that the editors were not taking the readers into consideration when they show pictures of death. Ephron does not agree with Seib and writes, “ It is irresponsible–and more than that, inaccurate–for newspapers to fail to show it, or to show it only when an astonishing set of photos comes in over the Associated Press wire. Most papers covering fatal automobile accidents will

print pictures of mangled cars. But the significance of fatal automobile accidents is not that a great deal of steel is twisted but that people die." Ephron also states that the pictures should have been printed because they are " great pictures, breathtaking pictures of something that happened." She thinks that the fact that the pictures disturb readers just goes to show that photojournalism is often more powerful than written journalism.

### Response to " The Boston Photographs"

In Nora Ephron's " The Boston Photographs," it was rather simple to understand each side of the ethical issue. Ephron did a great job illustrating all sides of the issue. First she told about the event, but then went on and showed us the readers' reaction to the photographs. Next, she went on to tell us about the newspaper editors and how they felt about the situation. She also gave us an example. She told us about Charles Seib, the former managing editor of the Washington Star. She explained how Seib felt about publishing the pictures and showed us his point of view.

Finally, after covering the whole story and making certain that each side was heard, she explained her point of view. In her opinion, she backs it up by explaining why she feels the way she does. She describes how it's irrelevant as to where it happened, why it happened, or who it happened to, but that it did happen. In the end, she concludes very nicely by saying the pictures deserved to be printed because they were " great pictures, breathtaking pictures of something that happened. That they disturb readers is exactly as it should be: that's why photojournalism is often more powerful than written journalism."