

AoW 3/13/2015

Read the following article. Mark Up the Margins (T4, marginalia, etc) as you read it a second time on your own. Pay close attention to the bias or lack of bias in the article. Identify the issues that occur when a real life event is made into a book or movie and it is publicized by the media.

**RDW#1:** Briefly summarize the article (1-2 sentences) and answer the following question: How do you know that the article is balanced (i.e. mostly unbiased)? Use text evidence. **Highlight transitions.**

## Controversy Surrounds New Tom Hanks Movie, 'Captain Phillips'

By Tricia Escobedo, CNN October 8, 2013

Ruthless pirates try to hijack an unarmed American ship. They seize the captain and, after negotiations fail, Navy SEALs stage a daring rescue. It reads like the plot of a Hollywood movie.

And now it is one. The real-life events that surrounded the 2009 attempted capture of the Maersk Alabama inspired the film "Captain Phillips," which will be released on Friday.

Phillips' crew members say the movie doesn't truthfully reflect the actual events, and they say he is not the hero the film will likely present him as. In the movie's trailer, Tom Hanks, playing Captain Phillips bravely yells at one of the armed Somali pirates, "If you want to shoot someone, shoot me!"

In reality, Phillips didn't consider the numerous warnings to stay farther off the coast of Somalia, the site of dozens of hijackings, which hit their peak in 2008 and gained international attention. Many of the Alabama's crew members are suing the shipping company, the Danish shipping line Maersk, in part because they say Phillips purposefully sailed the ship into harm's way to shorten the trip to Mombasa, Kenya, and save money.

On April 8, 2009, four armed Somali pirates boarded the Maersk Alabama about 380 miles off the Somali coast. After failing to take control of the ship, the pirates captured Phillips and held the captain on a small lifeboat for five days until Navy SEALs shot and killed three of the kidnappers and captured the fourth.

Before the incident, a private maritime security agency called Securewest International had sent e-mail warnings about piracy in the region to all ships in the area; one was sent specifically to Phillips.

Each e-mail was based on information from British and U.S. naval authorities and one urged the Alabama to stay clear of the shipping lanes where Phillips was heading.

"Vessels should consider maintaining a distance of more than 600 nautical miles from the Somali coastline," one of the Securewest messages advised.

Phillips said to CNN's Drew Griffin in 2010 and in a court deposition last year that he ignored the numerous warnings that urged him to go farther out to sea.

Phillips is a witness in the lawsuit between some of the crew and the shipping company, scheduled to go to trial in December. When asked last year why he decided not to take

the boat farther offshore, Phillips testified, "I don't believe 600 miles would make you safe. I didn't believe 1,200 miles would make you safe. As I told the crew, it would be a matter of when, not if ... We were always in this area."

After his rescue by U.S. Navy SEAL commandos, Phillips was called a hero and wrote a book about his ordeal, "A Captain's Duty." The publisher showed him as a sea captain who risked his life by offering himself as a hostage "in exchange for the safety of the crew," something Phillips later acknowledged was false information spread by media reports.

"I didn't give myself up," he told Griffin during his book tour in 2010. "I was already a hostage by then." He later said, "The media made everything out to be me. But that's the media. When I came home, I really didn't go and put myself in front of the media. A lot of my crew did. I didn't."

He said the real heroes are the Navy SEALs and his crew, who he said stayed calm, followed orders and instincts, and prevented a tragedy.

"They did a wonderful job," he said. "It's in the book. Everywhere I speak, I say what a great job they did."

**Critical questions:** (Think about these for your RDW)

1. Does this writing include multiple points of view?
2. Does the tone of this writing seem fair?
3. Are there words or phrases about Captain Phillips with strong negative connotations?
4. Does this seem mostly opinionated, or does it seem to try to relate the facts and opinions of others while staying balanced?

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