What to do when Isis steals your photo

Dealing with a typical case if image theft is one thing, but what do you do when the worlds largest terrorist organization steals your work?

Photo: Brian McCarty   Infringement: ISIS
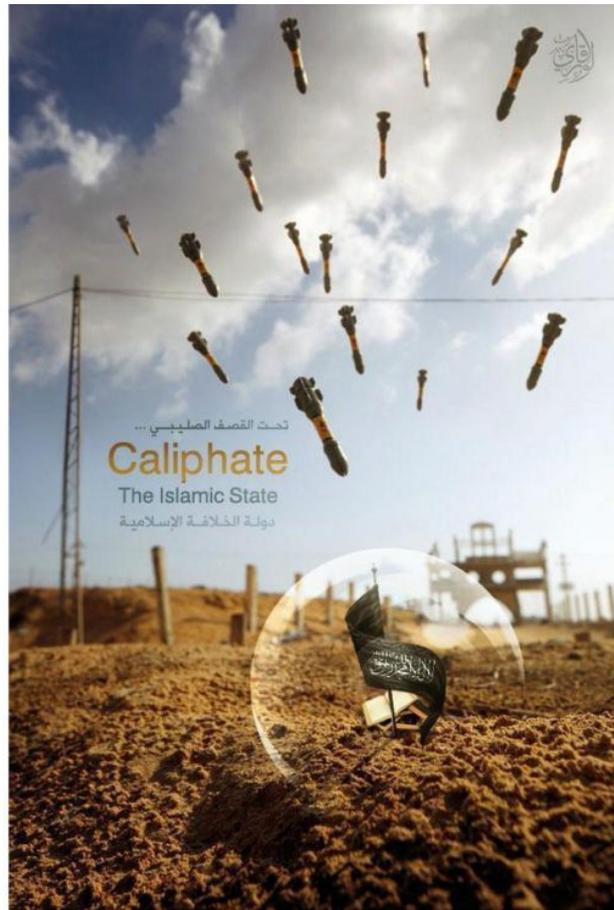
[July 21st, 2015, Walnut, CA] Brian McCarty is best known for his War Toys Project, a photo essay exploring war from the perspective of the children who face it every day. Brian shot the photo on the right in Gaza in 2012 just before Operation Pillar of Defense. Last week, Brian emailed Pixsy to let them know that their software had found his photo-manipulated and posted by ISIS on Twitter, bearing the caption "Crusaders under bombardment." This clearly isn't how Brian intended his work to be used. Dealing with the typical case of photo theft is one thing, but what do you do when the world's largest terrorist organization steals your work?

Pixsy can send invoices and take legal action on behalf of member photographers when their work is used without a license. With clear harm done to the photographer and a potential <u>net worth of over $2 billion</u>, the thugs at ISIS can and certainly should compensate Brian. As egregious as the infringement is, however, neither Pixsy nor the photographer can or would accept money from a terrorist group.

Pixsy consulted with an expert, with a background in international law who currently working at the United Nations. They agreed that while abhorrent, image theft isn't at the top of the list of ISIL crimes. Any legal action taken would be symbolic in nature but would unlikely result in proper compensation for the use of the image.

Pixsy also felt that any action taken through traditional channels would miss the point: **Brian created War Toys to document the effects of war on children, not promote it.**

The positive impact of photography

Great photographs are defined by the messages they convey, and focusing only on the negative impact of ISIS's misappropriation would unnecessarily detract from Brian's message. Why give so much attention to ISIS when there is a much more important issue to consider: the powerful impact of Brian's photos and the situation on the ground where the works were created.

This is a great lesson - we should not always focus on the negative when our work is used without permission. To help turn this situation into something positive, Pixsy would like to draw more attention to Brian's work and mission.

Here are three ways you can support Brian:

1. <u>Donate to the War-Toys project</u>. Brian would like to continue his work, return to Gaza, and also travel to new conflict areas such as Ukraine, Colombia, and South Sudan.
2. <u>Check out Brian's book</u>. His first print run has been very successful, and only 100 copies are still available.
3. <u>Follow Brian on Twitter</u>. Let's show our support for photographers making powerful work.

Since Brian frequently travels to dangerous parts of the world and requires a safe environment to continue his work, we kindly ask that you do not Tweet at ISIS. The goal of War Toys is to document conflict, not create it.

About Pixsy:

Pixsy is the leading copyright legal-tech service for online image protection. Founded in 2014 by photographer Daniel Foster, Pixsy is an award-winning startup with over 30,000 photographers & artists in its community. Pixsy has processed over 50,000 copyright infringement cases and works with more than 26 partner law firms across the globe to bring justice for creatives.

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Sources:

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