

CUTLINES

It's a typical morning. You're browsing through the newspaper. Suddenly, you come face to face with a photo that looks like this:



You look at the pig. You look at the men. You look at the bulldozer. You look back at the pig. You wonder: *What's going on here?* Is it funny? Cruel? Bizarre? Is that pig *doomed?*

Fortunately, there's a cutline below the photo. It says this:

Highway workers use a loader to lift Mama, a 600-pound sow, onto a truck Monday on Interstate 84 near Lloyd Center. The pig fell from the back of the truck on its way to the slaughterhouse. It took the men two hours to oust the ornery oinker.

Ahhhh. Now it makes sense.

Sure, every picture tells a story. But it's the cutline's job to tell the story behind every picture: *who's* involved, *what's* happening, *when* and *where* the event took place. A well-written cutline makes the photo instantly understandable and tells readers *why* the photo — and the story — are important.

CUTLINE TYPE STYLES

Cutlines are quite different from text. And to make that difference clear to readers, most newspapers run cutlines in a different typeface than text. Some use boldface, so cutlines will "pop" as readers scan the page. Some use italic, for a more elegant look. Some use sans serifs, to contrast with serif text. (This book uses a serif italic font — Minion — for its cutlines.)

**SERIF
BOLDFACE,
JUSTIFIED**

President George W. Bush greets Yasir Arafat at the White House on Thursday as the two leaders met for a new round of Mideast peace negotiations.

**SERIF
ITALIC,
RAGGED RIGHT**

President George W. Bush greets Yasir Arafat at the White House on Thursday as the two leaders met for a new round of Mideast peace negotiations.

**SANS SERIF,
JUSTIFIED, WITH
BOLDFACE LEAD-IN**

SUMMIT BEGINS — President George W. Bush greets Yasir Arafat at the White House on Thursday as the two leaders met for a new round of Mideast peace talks.

CUTLINES

How long should cutlines be? Long enough to describe, briefly, all significant details in the photo. Some photos are fairly obvious and don't require much explanation. Others (old historical photos, works of art, photos that run without stories) may need lengthy descriptions.

And what about photos of clubs or teams? Should every face — all 19 of them — be identified? Most newspapers set guidelines for such occasions, so it's hard to generalize. But remember that readers expect cutlines to offer quick hits of information. So don't overdo it.

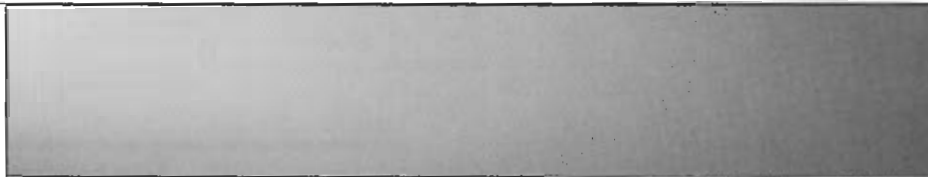
Where do you dummy cutlines? On news pages, they generally run *below* each photo. But for variety, especially on feature pages, cutlines can also run *beside* and *between* photos, as shown below:

MORE ON ►

• **Mug shots:** *They've got their own style of cutlines..... 46*

• **Photo spreads:** *Cutline treatments and placement 119*

BELOW



The Bugle-Beacon/PAT MINNIEAR

Cutlines below photos usually align along both edges of the photo. They should **never** extend beyond either edge. Some papers set extra-wide cutlines in two legs, since they can be difficult to read. (For more on this, see page 39.) Another rule of thumb: In wide cutlines, be sure the last line extends at least halfway across the column. This line barely makes it.

BESIDE

This cutline is set **flush right** along the edge of the photo. (Notice how ragged left type is somewhat annoying to read.) Try to dummy sidesaddle cutlines along the outside of the page. That way, the cutlines won't butt against any text type, which could confuse your readers and uglify your page.

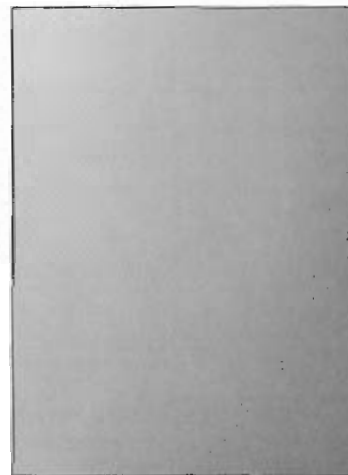


This ragged right cutline is **flush left** against the photo and flush to the bottom. And it's too thin. Cutlines usually need to be at least 6 picas wide. If they're narrow, they shouldn't be very deep.

BETWEEN



Ideally, every photo should have its own cutline. But photos can also share one common cutline, as these two do. Just be sure you make it clear which photo (at left or at right) you're discussing. And make sure the cutline squares off at either the top or bottom. Don't just let it float. (Notice how this cutline is justified on both sides.)



DRAWING A DUMMY

How can you show your colleagues, in advance, where stories will go on a page? Or what size headlines should be? Or where the photos go?

Mental telepathy? No. You draw a dummy.

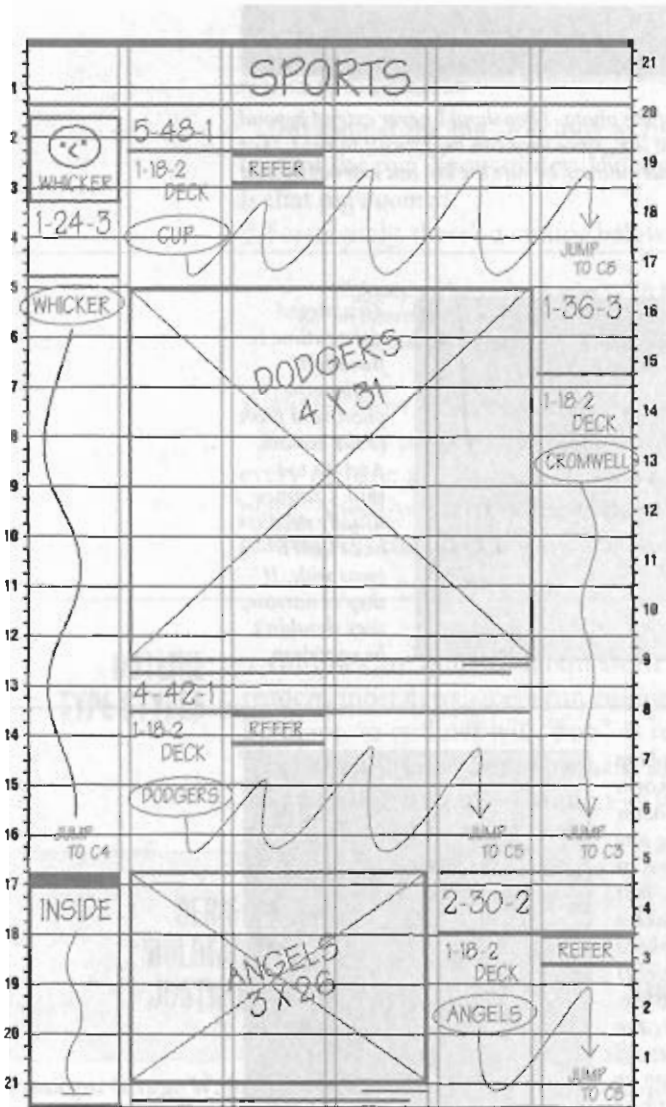
Now, you might be tempted (especially if you create pages on a computer) to bypass dummy-drawing and, instead, squat in front of a computer and noodle aimlessly for hours until you *discover the solution*. Wrong. Big waste of time. You might work more efficiently if you draw a page diagram in advance — a *dummy* — before you try to assemble the real thing.

Dummies are generally about half the size of actual pages but proportioned accurately (i.e., if your design calls for a thin vertical photo, it shouldn't look square on the dummy). For greater precision on complex pages, designers often draw life-sized dummies. But for most pages, a small-sized dummy like the one below is sufficient.

And often necessary.

MORE ON ►

Modular design:
Want to see how this page would look if the story elements were rearranged?
Turn to page..... 82



This is where pages begin. An editor or designer draws a series of lines and boxes to indicate where photos, cutlines, headlines and text will go. This page is pretty simple; not too many stories or extras.



And here's how that dummy translated into print. Note how every story jumps (continues on another page). That makes the page easier to build, since text can be cut according to the diagram on the dummy.

DRAWING A DUMMY

WHAT EVERY GOOD DUMMY SHOULD SHOW

Every newspaper has its own system for drawing dummies. Some, for instance, size photos in picas; others use inches, or a combination of picas and inches. Some papers use different colored pens for each different design element (boxes, photos, text). Some use wavy lines to indicate text, while others use arrows — or nothing at all.

Whatever the system, *make your dummies as complete and legible as you can.* Be sure that every dummy contains:

DAY SUNDAY SECTION METRO EDITION 4 PAGE C1

Page number, date and edition (if applicable)

Page or section headers, if any

METRO/NW header

21

Column logos, signs or bugs, clearly labeled

BOULE LOGO 4-48-1 bold

Liftout quotes or other secondary graphic elements (if typeset separately from the main story, include their name or slug)

Any rules, boxes or borders, clearly marked

1-30-3 m 1-16-5 DECK FRANCKE QUOTE

Jump lines, including page number where text will continue

Sizes and slugs for all art (photos, maps, charts, etc.), with cropping instructions, if necessary

crimeplan 24-pt. overline 4-pt. rule along top 1-30-3 reg 1-16-5 DECK

Headlines, clearly coded (with deck codes, if necessary)

Cutlines and credit lines for all photos

1-PT. rules RANCH 44 X 5 (crop from photo) killer

Story name (or slug) and column width, if it's in a bastard measure; slug can be circled for emphasis

4400-42-1 reg 3000-16-2 DECK

Arrows or lines to show position and movement of text

ranch 1406 RANCH MAP 12 X 4 JUMP TO C4

Any special instructions to the composing room (layout advice, late stories, trimming directions, etc.)

3800-30-1 reg 1200-16-4 DECK prayer 1200 May be short. Please air to fill. JUMP TO C5

