**Everyone tells stories - even journalists...**

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In today's ever changing society; labels, definitions, and boundaries are becoming ever more prevalent and (according to certain individuals) necessary. It seems as though, every aspect of ourselves, and our lives must be placed on a certain shelf, and in a certain box, just to fit it. When something does not coincide with the barriers we have created, we often struggle to define it as something else just so that that we can have that peace of mind we all desire. Whenever a dispute on issues of this nature occurs there is a common consensus that a definite answer must be found. Given, the emergence of online search engines, and our blind reliance and belief in them, people often agree to "wiki it" to find the answer. In keeping with this common consensus, I decided to follow suit...

Our "trustworthy" friend Wikipedia says that "Storytelling is the conveying of events in words, images, and sounds, often by improvisation and embellishment." Having studied storytelling as an undergraduate, I would agree (at least partially, although it is somewhat limiting as all definitions are) with this definition. When thinking of a person who carries out the actions described above the first person that comes to mind is a Journalist. Some may argue that this definition could almost be their job description.

Certainly, we are all aware that journalists have a duty to report truthfully and objectively. However the fact of the matter is, all journalists are human. And human beings at their core are subjective. Therefore, no matter how hard one may try to see events from opposing points of view, their in judgment of a situation will always be affected by a number of factors that make them human. Some of these include, their upbringing, morals, religious beliefs, age, gender, education, geographical location. People's (journalists included), inner judgment of a situation, guided by the factors mentioned above, will always be reflected in how they tell and receive a story. It is impossible for anyone to just tell a story, a human being will always tell their story, and it will always be slightly different from someone else's. That is the beauty of stories and in many ways human nature.

In his article, [Is journalism storytelling?](http://buzzmachine.com/2009/12/08/is-journalism-storytelling/) Jeff Jarvis, does not appear to share my view point. He believes that, because of the emergence of new mediums for the transfer of information such as images, statistics, and data, that journalists are not really storytellers any longer. In fact, he sees them more as enablers, community organizers, and teachers. I for one, never met a anyone who did any of those jobs well and wasn't a good story teller. I also think that the emergence of new media including the ones mentioned above, actually act as tools which help journalists to become better story tellers. When stories first began all we had was the spoken word, it then evolved to print and images. Now, we have all of those mediums and countless others to tell our stories. Therefore, we as the people, the journalists, the storytellers, have the power to inform and entertain in a way that was never before possible.

In another article, [Storytelling, classifications, and definitions](http://writelife.net/2010/12/04/storytelling-classifications-and-definitions/), Bill Wren, states that "*A story is people involved in events told by people to people."* Therefore, according to him "*Storytelling, then, is the telling of that story, regardless of the medium."* A recent visit to Belfast City, in Northern Ireland solidified this point for me. Journalists and people alike can use any medium they wish to tell their story; be it spoken word, video, images, data or a combination of any of these or other mediums. People can use paintings and murals tell a story too. Like I previously mentioned, a person's inner judgment and viewpoint of an event will always be reflected in how they tell the story of that event, regardless of the medium.

Belfast City, has been the center of debate and violence for many years. In a nutshell, the City's residents are divided between Catholics who are mainly Republican and would like to see Northern Ireland become united with the South, and Protestants who are mainly Unionists and want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom. Over a thirty year period, known as the troubles, tensions and violence from opposing sides were at an all-time high. Many of the city's murals now reflect this history, the same stories, from very different viewpoints. The divides are clear to see even today. The people have used the murals, as a way to tell their stories, and share their opinions of the same events in very different ways.

Here are pictures taken from protestant and unionist areas which depict the events how they see them.

Examine these images. Take from them what you may. The bottom line is. Journalists are people. People tell stories. It is part of being human. People's viewpoints of events are always reflected in how they tell their stories, whether they are journalists or not.