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Abstract

Since the early 2000s, there has been a groundswell of research on terrorism and sports mega-events, including investigations into the impact of '9/11' on fear and risk management strategies at high profile sports events. In this article, we re-examine the case of the Salt Lake City Winter Games of 2002 around Baudrillard's (1995) concept of the 'non-event'. We compare the (largely British and North American) mass mediation and discursive framing of terrorism at the 2002 Games with subsequent discourses interwoven into accounts of terrorism, fear and security at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens and the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin. Of principal interest is the global framing of sports mega-events as targets of terrorism and the ways in which such events become fabricated zones of risk. To understand why there is a lingering media construction of the sports mega-event as an imagined target (and, in many ways, pre-constructed victim) of terrorism, we draw centrally on Baudrillard's work (1995, 2001, 2002a, 2002b). Specifically, we employ Baudrillard's concepts of the *hyperreal* and the *non-event* as a means of exploring terrorism's relationship with sport, and the potential usage of such theoretical ideas in the sociology of sport and physical culture more broadly.

Keywords

Baudrillard, non-events, Olympics, sport, terrorism

Introduction

Shortly after the attacks on the US of 11 September 2001, we started thinking about the potential impacts of the new 'war on terror' on imminent large-scale sports events.

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We wondered whether the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City might be cancelled outright, as relations in the international community and the global economy were reeling. Neither one of us had rigorously studied the sociological relationships between so-called 'terrorist' violence, risk, fear, surveillance and sport prior to the 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center towers in New York City. But the mass mediation of '9/11' as a global catastrophe and a watershed moment in international (read: ideological, religious, racial, ethnic, etc.) relations undoubtedly created cultural ripple effects in all corners of the globe. As sociologists of sport violence, crime and deviance we had reviewed major cases of military or protest-related 'terrorism' at the Olympics (such as Berlin 1936, Mexico 1968, Munich 1972 and Atlanta 1996) in our respective university teaching, but rarely paused to consider more substantial exploration of the topic.

To our surprise, prior to 2001, only a limited volume of research on terrorism and its inscriptions within, or impacts upon, sport existed, certainly in the sociology of sport literature. Criminology seemed to represent the sociological home of much of the existing mainstream work on 'terror' (see White, 2003). In sport studies, work by Bairner (1999), Charters (1983), Palmer (2001), Redhead (1994), Richards et al. (2009) and Sugden and Bairner (1986), illustrated tentative and fleeting links between the global practice of organized sport and its interface with terror politics. So, in late 2001, we paid close attention to media discourses about terrorism and security at the (then) upcoming Salt Lake Games, tracking how emerging discourses regarding terrorism, fear, risk and surveillance dominated popular media coverage.

In the process of analyzing North American and Western European media coverage of the Salt Lake Games, we quickly found that following the 2001 attacks on the United States, the 2002 Olympic Games were inserted into a broader context of social, cultural, and ideological struggle, as was also the case with earlier Olympic Games experiencing their own real or threatened political violence (Atkinson, 2008; Atkinson and Young, 2003; Richards et al., 2009; Roche, 2002). Concerns about security at the Olympics closely paralleled American fears about terrorism and the degree to which systems of civil protection could be breached by 'foreigners'. For these reasons, Olympic security issues, reported and debated widely in the Western media, evolved into a metaphor of Western societies' abilities to defend their social institutions, cultural practices, ideological systems, and, of course, citizens from what President George W. Bush, in public speeches throughout 2002 and 2004, infamously labeled 'the axes of evil'.

We published our original research on the mass mediation of terrorism through the Salt Lake Games in the journal *Olympika* in 2003 ('Terror games: Media treatment of security issues at the 2002 Winter Games'). The article adopted a primarily figurationalist theoretical tone in the process of explaining how geo-political axes and allies were virtually (re)affirmed through the event. We critiqued how the popular coverage of the Olympics became an integrated, tactical media campaign to align particular ideas about global insiders and outsiders in the 'war on terror', and how the 21st-century world of global sport might become a veritable land of 'innocence lost' with respect to terrorist violence. Falcous and Silk (2005, 2010) and Silk and Falcous (2005) arrived at similar conclusions in their analysis of the 11 September 2001 events in America, demonstrating how media coverage of the 2002 Olympic Games was peppered with aggressively pro-American discourses. Here, the emergent literature drew attention to how sport-related

discourses and mediated symbols about 'securing' the Games were tied to, and products of, broadscale geo-political relationships and antagonisms between nation-states.

Since the early 2000s, there has been a groundswell of research on terrorism and sports mega-events, including investigations into the impact of '9/11' on fear and risk management strategies at high profile sports events. Research on the impacts of terrorism on sport and physical cultures may be slotted into one of two main analytic camps. In the first instance, a vast majority of the burgeoning research focuses on the mass mediation of terror discourses, frames and images through mega-events as a means of promulgating dominant geo-political ideologies (Boyle and Haggerty, 2009). Prior to 9/11, Bairner (1999) points to the ways in which state authorities utilized the media, for example, to depict the behaviors and identities of social 'undesirables' (such as Irish football hooligans) as *quasi-terrorist* in the process of maintaining conservative social hegemony. Consistent with Bairner (1999), the bulk of research in this area confronts and critiques how preferred Western ideologies and discourses regarding the local and international faces of terrorism are privileged in sports media (Malcolm et al., 2010). Research on the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, the NFL Super Bowl and the NCAA Final Four tournament in the United States, and the World Cup of Cricket points to how media coverage of the 'threat' of terrorism at major games consistently promotes concern (and at the same time, ironically, promotes sport as a site of public *healing*) about Western cultural ways of living posed by fundamentalist (Islamic) terrorists (Brown, 2004).

In the second instance, sport management researchers and others have assembled a working empirical understanding of how the threat or perceived threat of terrorism has altered the ways in which mega-events are lobbied for, staged and policed (Miller et al., 2007; Richards et al., 2009; Zekulin, 2009). In particular, Kristine Toohey's corpus of research on terrorism and risk ideologies in sport (Kennelly and Toohey, 2007; Taylor and Toohey, 2006, 2007; Toohey, 2006, 2008; Toohey and Taylor, 2006) attests to how the organization and management of sports-mega events like the Olympic Games has been realigned by fears of violence and political aggression in and around fields of competition. For Toohey, there is a significant disconnect between what organizers and promoters of events fear will happen at mega-events and spectators' and public constructions of such risk (Toohey and Taylor, 2008; Toohey et al., 2003). Consistent with other scholars working in the field of terrorism studies, Toohey contends that the media are often responsible for hyperbolizing the risks associated with staging major games. Others have followed Toohey's lead by addressing the gulf between public perceptions of terrorist threats at sports mega-events and perceptions held by event organizers (Baker, 2007).

In a recent review of the existing work on security, risk, terror, and technologies of surveillance, Giulianotti and Klauser (2009) set a broad agenda for sociological research in the area. The authors point to a pressing need for diversifying theoretical readings of sports-related terrorism, broadening cultural analyses of the intersection between sports processes and global politics, and contextualizing how sports-related terrorism, risk and surveillance is signified in particular cultural contexts. We agree with Giulianotti and Klausner (2009) and, in this spirit, understand the mass mediation of fear and risk around sports-mega events as what Baudrillard (1995, 2001, 2002a, 2002b) refers to as the social fabrication of *non-events*.

Departing substantially from our original analysis, in this article we re-examine the case of the Salt Lake City Winter Games of 2002 in terms of its discursive framing and cultural significance around Baudrillard's concept of the non-event. We compare the mass mediation and discursive framing of terrorism at the 2002 Games with subsequent discourses interwoven into accounts of terrorism, fear and security at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens and the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin. Of interest to us is the global framing of sports mega-events as targets of terrorism and the ways in which such events become *fabricated* zones of risk. To understand why there is a lingering media construction of the sports mega-event as an imagined target of terrorism, we draw centrally on Baudrillard's work (1995, 2001, 2002a, 2002b).

Baudrillard and the non-event

For Baudrillard, a *non-event* is something which is, in a concrete material sense, something that actually occurs, but neither lives up to its projected definition (or purported social significance) nor is proportional to its assigned status in the media. In other words, a non-event justifies neither the meaning nor significance attributed to it through media representation. According to Baudrillard (2001), there is ultimately no 'real' event in the media, only the simulation of real events. Why? To Baudrillard (1993a, 1993b, 2001, 2002a, 2002b), there are no longer shared, organic, collective experiences around events that are mass mediated, even when people throughout the world claim meaningful connection or understanding of them (think of the death of the Princess of Wales in 1997, the Haitian earthquake of 2010, or the Japanese earthquake/tsunami/nuclear disaster of 2011). For the most part, 'participants' in such events experience no contact or exchange with one another, and the meanings attached to the events are heavily prescribed by media framings of them. There is no homogeneous or shared reality of the 'event', and there are no enduring collective results stemming from the event – only the endless consumption of multiply fractured signs by individual viewers. Thus, there are only singular, isolated viewers to global mega-events, culturally connecting with one another ephemerally via technological conduits and networks. Baudrillard proposes the non-event as an indicator of how organic, collective cultural meaning implodes in contemporary Western cultures. In short, the events have no enduring cultural meanings or consequences for most consumers, and thus any social connection, *communitas* or empathy facilitated through them is ultimately tentative and artificial (Baudrillard, 1993a, 1993b, 2001, 2002a, 2002b).

Baudrillard's (1993a, 1993b, 1995) provocative description of non-events shifts somewhat in response to the events of 9/11. Prior to 9/11, Baudrillard argued that the Gulf War was an archetypal case of a non-event. For him (1995), the Gulf War was a weak cultural successor to both the meaning of violence and conflict in the Second World War, or the palpable threatened terror of the later Cold War. In 1990 (p. 13), Baudrillard wrote that 'America, Saddam Hussein and the Gulf powers are [now] fighting over *the corpse of war* [emphasis added]'. He further claimed that 'The Gulf War is . . . a place of collapse, a virtual and meticulous operation which leaves the same impression of a non-event where the military confrontation fell short and where no political power proved itself' (1990: 15). To this end, he (1990, 1995) refers to the conflict in the

Gulf as an 'empty war'; it reminded him of World Cup football matches that are 'decided by penalties (a sorry spectacle), because of the impossibility of enforcing a decision'. In his study of the Gulf War, Baudrillard (1994: 21) was certain that the real event of war had been killed as 'The prodigious event, the event which is measured neither by its causes nor consequences, but creates its own image and its own dramatic effect, no longer exists.' After 9/11, Baudrillard extended his critical assessment of the non-event even further, claiming, in his highly controversial article, 'The Spirit of Terrorism' (2001), that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 did not occur as *terrorism* at all but as the most anticipated and pre-ordained simulation of terrorism the world has ever seen.

In this article, we offer a re-reading and extension of our analysis of terror discourses and simulations at sports mega-events. We argue that the mediation of terror around sports mega-events is part of what has become a *non-event*; or, in other words, the sort of 'sorry spectacle' (Baudrillard, 1990, 1995) felt was so pervasive in postmodern society. While a decade has lapsed since the events of 9/11, and a dozen or so global sports mega-events have been staged *without* significant incident of terror-related violence, media frenzies promoting fear and caution regarding terrorist threats at sports events persist. In the wake of media fear-brokering and catastrophe-forecasting about terrorism and sports mega-events (like the weather reporter who constantly warns of impending tornadoes or hurricanes), the selling of terror no longer requires reference to any concrete empirical trends, patterns or realities of violence at these events to justify the discourses used to frame news accounts. The selling (mediation) of the threat and social mobilization of related 'necessary' precautions has *itself* become the spectacle, and triumphed over the event of war – the former no longer requires the latter any longer. Indeed, the display of 'real world' suicide bombers, machine gun-armed militants, crashed planes, fallen buildings or bloodied bodies has become almost irrelevant in the signification of sports mega-events as zones of terror.

Research approach

Data for this article were collected from miscellaneous print and electronic media sources in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom between July 2001 and April 2011. Essentially, media accounts of security issues at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic Games, in addition to similar reports surrounding the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin, the 2006 and 2010 World Cups of football (in Germany and South Africa), the 2010 Commonwealth Games and 2011 World Cup of Cricket in India were sought out as a means of exploring discourses about possible violence in and around sports-mega events. Most notably, news accounts of the threat of terrorist attacks and the constructions of risk related to terrorism were examined. Although no rigid selection criteria guided the sampling process (except for the fact that each of the media accounts had to consider some aspect of terrorism, risk or security at the respective events), priority was given to newspaper and magazine articles ($n = 683$), World Wide Web postings ($n = 701$), and television programs ($n = 28$) detailing security matters at the sports events under study. Therefore, the sampling procedure employed in this study would best be described as a blend of purposive and convenience sampling. The bulk of our collated media stories about security and terrorist threats at the

Games (70% in our sample) emanated from American, British or Australian sources. Therefore, we do not present our 'reading' of the data as a totalizing representation of security and terrorism discourses at mega-events, nor do we claim that our understandings are the only, or most autonomous, audience deconstruction of these discourses.

The majority (nearly 85%) of the newspapers drawn upon to create the sample were daily and national publications (such as *The Globe and Mail* in Canada, *USA Today*, and the London *Times*), and the magazines tapped into were weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly publications (such as *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, and *Maclean's*), all of which published special reports on security at the respective mega-events close to their staging. These sources were identified through a Lexis-Nexis database search and cross-referenced with a Google News database search. Of central interest were the ways in which particular attitudes or opinions about security/violence at the events were framed and portrayed in media reports. As the study developed from 2003 to the present, we focused on how discourses about and approaches to terror and the risk of terrorism at mega-events evolved throughout the 2000s, with a keen interest directed toward the question of whether such discourses changed as mega-events were documented over the period of inquiry (roughly a decade). Broadcast news on major television networks (such as NBC, CBS, and ABC in the US, BBC and ITV in the UK, and CBC and TSN in Canada) were also explored, as were specialty television programs or segments of programs solely devoted to security at mega-events such as *Extra* and *60 Minutes* in the US, and *The Sports Journal* or *The Business of Sport* in Canada. Each of the media sources utilized in the sample was critically analyzed for both latent (connotative) and manifest (denotative) themes relating to security, violence, terrorism, and fear.

In our original study of anti-terrorism discourses in and around the 2002 Salt Lake Games, we engaged a constant comparative process to openly code and hermeneutically interpret the emergent data. In this iteration of our research on the mediation of terrorism through mega-events we adopted a different approach to reading data. Here, we followed the process of *concept elaboration* outlined by Atkinson (2011). Concept elaboration shares affinities with the method of guided theoretical exploration of qualitative data earlier advocated by Stebbins (2001). Concept elaboration is the methodological tactic of selecting or privileging one or several main conceptual drivers at the forefront of a qualitative study before data are collected in order to facilitate (but not determine outright) the interpretation of data. In this process of reading qualitative data, researchers are fundamentally guided by concepts as *sensitizing* in Blumer's (1969) sense, as a means of interpreting data. Thus, a concept is loosely applied and its parameters are potentially redrawn in the literature through a reading of data. Here, the goal is to examine whether or not a concept (or even a larger theoretical framework) applies cross-contextually and generically; or, whether a concept/theory requires expansion/contraction across empirical case-to-case analyses. It is important not to conceive of concept elaboration as a process of hypothesis- or theory-testing but, rather, as a technique for exploring the empirical parameters of existing sociological ideas. However, no claims are made that one's theoretical reading is *grounded* in emergent data or *sui generis* in the research process itself. In this study, we employ Baudrillard's concepts of the hyperreal and the *non-event* as a means of exploring terrorism's association with sport, and its potential usage in the sociology of sport and physical culture more broadly.

Fear and loathing in the sociology of sport: Baudrillard's apocalypse

Despite a flurry of interest in Baudrillard's work in the 1990s, sociologists of sport and physical culture have generally under-utilized his ideas in their work. Perhaps a lingering skepticism exists over Baudrillard's dour outlook on social life; perhaps his persnickety style of cultural critique, or his 'fatalistic' theory leads to his under-use. Or perhaps there is a general disregard for his labyrinthine prose or his seemingly untenable theoretical conjectures. It is also possible that his two most lauded early offerings to social critique – *simulation* and *hyperreality* – which were once *de rigueur* in the discipline, have become banal? In some ways, Baudrillard's 'day' might have already passed in the sociology of sport and physical culture. Yet Giulianotti (2004) presents a strong case for a re-examination of Baudrillard as a much-neglected theorist of bodies and physical cultures (Redhead, 1994, 1999). In particular, he argues for a greater appreciation of Baudrillard's concepts of fatal theorizing and his position on the state of symbolic exchange in the late modern West.

Baudrillard might have developed into a central figure in the sociology of sport and physical culture quite some time ago if his theoretical work had, dare we argue, a clearly progressive development or internal coherence. At times, Baudrillard's theoretical and philosophical ideas are difficult to pin down in concrete terms, and shifts in his sociological interests over time (let alone his personal politics) render his theories both tricky to describe and apply. Baudrillard is likely best known in sociology for his early critiques and analyses of the political economy of signs and signification processes, and then his later reflections on modes of mediation and technological communication. However, the full scope of his writing spreads across far more diverse subjects from consumerism, to gender relations, to the social understanding of history, and then journalistic commentaries on AIDS, cloning, the (first) Gulf War and the attacks on the World Trade Center. Baudrillard developed theories around the notion of seduction, simulation, hyperreality, and the end of history. Even his most vitriolic critics must surely agree that his work is both impressively diverse and deeply provocative.

The majority of Baudrillard's early work focuses on the application of structural semiotics through the lens of a Marxist political economy. Drawing on other scholars including Roland Barthes and Georges Bataille, Baudrillard argues that an individual necessarily, in purchasing and consuming goods in a capitalist society, places him or herself within cultural 'system of signs' and processes of signification. The development of Baudrillard's work throughout the 1980s saw him move away from these rather economically based theories of consumption and sign-values to broader considerations of mediation and mass communication. Baudrillard increasingly turns his attention to ideas regarding the forms of communication that societies employ. In *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993a), he argues that Western societies have undergone a precession of simulacra (the simulacrum being that 'truth' which hides the fact that there is none) via a global preoccupation with the mass mediation of everyday life. Using this line of reasoning, Baudrillard characterizes late modernity or postmodernity as hyperreal – where real life is superseded by fake or distorted mass mediations of the real. Such a provocative assertion is typical of Baudrillard's self-described 'fatal strategy' approach to social

theorizing, wherein he pushes (his own) theories of society to extreme ends – see *Fatal Strategies* (1990). Rather than arguing, for instance, that the contemporary hysteria surrounding pedophilia helps to blur our understanding of childhood today, Baudrillard, as ever, takes it one step further and argues in *Screened Out* (2002b) that the child no longer exists because of such mediated hysteria. To be fair, one can understand how using hyperbole to explain hyperbole hardly helps Baudrillard win friends. But this does not mean that he is wrong or that his ideas lack perspicacity, accuracy, or significance.

Toward the end of his career, Baudrillard employs a poetic, irreverent and increasingly curmudgeonly analytic/fatalistic style. He increasingly argues against the potential for semiotic logic in society, and assigned all meanings, signs, significations, and commodity exchanges to the symbolic realm: that of gift exchange, potlatch (the practice of sumptuous destruction), and analyses of the principle of evil. His last works are dark and ominous and geared toward his explanation of the end of history. Baudrillard presents the idea of history as an illusion that to all intents and purposes vanished toward the end of the 20th century – brought about by the speed at which society now moves and the destabilization of the concept of a linear historical progression.

Genevieve Rail's edited collection *Sport and Postmodern Times* (1999a) is relatively unusual in its showcasing of papers clearly influenced by Baudrillard's theories and concepts in the sociology of sport. Still, neither the diversity in, nor breadth of, Baudrillard's contributions to social theory is explored in the volume. Contributions from Andrews (1999), Pronger (1999), Rail herself (1999b), Redhead (1999) and VanWynsberghe and Ritchie (1999) individually and collectively identify Baudrillard as one of most influential theorists of the 20th century. Rail (1999b), in particular, lauds Baudrillard for his contribution to (sports) media studies and examination of entertainment spectacles. *Sport and Postmodern Times* continues to be among the most read edited volumes on sport studies from the 1990s and, as such, it is again surprising that while Baudrillard's insights are stamped across that volume, subsequent sociological research has been slow to follow suit.

David Andrews (1996, 1998, 1999, 2001) has regularly mined Baudrillard's work in his studies of physical culture. Andrews's analyses of the mass mediation of highly commercialized sport spectacles dovetails with Baudrillard's critique of hyperreality and the implosion of meaningful social exchange. Andrews's usage of Baudrillard is underpinned by his interest in deconstructing the highly fabricated nature of sports spectacles. To this end, Baudrillard's work is tailor-made for Andrews's research. Bale's (1998) musings on the relevance of Baudrillard for understanding mediated global football fandom and Sydnor's (2000) analysis of sport celebrity culture also contribute to our understanding of the potential gravitas of Baudrillard's thought on matters related to sport and physical culture. But, while many in the sociology of sport cite Baudrillard in passing, or quote pithy phrases from any number of his tomes, few utilize Baudrillard's thought as a master frame for empirical data analysis.

What puzzles us further about Baudrillard's under-use in the sociology of sport and physical culture is that he, unlike so many other canonized theorists, regularly took interest in, and reflected on, sports, fitness cultures and bodies. For example, in *The Transparency of Evil* (1993a), he illustrates the implosion of meaning in contemporary life and the magnitude of simulacrum in Western culture with sport examples and

metaphors. Baudrillard (1993a: 86), for instance, examines the interrelationship between driver and race car in his critique of Formula One racing, connecting his analysis of the implosion of the 'real' in late modern life with the televisual aspects of sport spectacles:

... at 180 mph, there is calm. This is the equivalent of the eye of the storm, the stasis of speed, the trance-like state: you are no longer in the same world (more modestly, you can achieve this same sensation in a normal car at over 125 mph). The background becomes definitively televisual, the physical perception of the other cars fades; you are in the pure event of speed; the perception of space becomes a tactile, reflex perception – (in McLuhan's sense: the car becomes a tactile, tactical extension of the human body). There is no longer any reference here to a real landscape, or to competition or prestige: you pass into virtual imagery. You approach real time, the instantaneity of motion – but also, of course, catastrophe.

Further still, in *America* (1986: 37), Baudrillard broadens his interest in fitness and physical culture, by describing the limit-experience of the runner who hurtles forward in agony as a means of self-escape, and as an emblem of postmodern isolation and the death of meaning:

Decidedly, joggers are the true Latter Day Saints and the protagonists of an easy-does-it Apocalypse. Nothing evokes the end of the world more than a man running straight ahead on a beach, swathed in the sounds of his Walkman, cocooned in the solitary sacrifice of his energy, indifferent even to catastrophes since he expects destruction to come only as the fruit of his own efforts, from exhausting the energy of a body that has in his own eyes become useless. Primitives, when in despair, would commit suicide by swimming out to sea until they could swim no longer. The jogger commits suicide by running up and down the beach. His eyes are wild, saliva drips from his mouth. Do not stop him. He will either hit you or simply carry on dancing around in front of you like a man possessed.

For Baudrillard, the postmodern experience is understood as an immersion into a grey zone of identification and reflection where one encounters the endless possibilities of the self.

But where Baudrillard ventures closest to the sociology of sport and physical culture to illustrate his event/non-event is through his analysis of football violence; and, in particular, in his analysis of the 1985 Heysel Stadium tragedy – one of the pinnacle episodes of fan violence throughout the troubled 1980s (Baudrillard, 1993a, 1993b; Young, 1986, 2012). Here, Baudrillard (1993a: 71) critically assesses media coverage of the event as if it set up and exemplified a proto-typical model of terrorist behavior: 'What no police could ever guard against is the sort of fascination, of mass appeal, exercised by the terrorist model [displayed at Heysel].' To Baudrillard, the construction of the tragedy as a form of lawless terrorism is an entirely fabricated account of a real event. Baudrillard (1993a) claims that such risks or signified outcroppings of 'terrorism' at modern sports spectacles like European Cup matches, the 1936 Games in Berlin and 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles, are discursively framed by state authorities as 'real' terrorism. These constructions become simulated, virtual and non-referential understandings of terrorism, and thus obfuscate a social understanding of terrorism that is state-sponsored and inevitably media- distorted. In *The Transparency of Evil* (1993a: 73), Baudrillard further

reflects on the usage of sports violence to help frame terrorism as hyperreal by arguing that 'sport itself . . . is no longer located in sport as such, but instead in business, in sex, in politics, [in terrorism] in the general style of performance'. In these ways, Baudrillard became one of the first recognized social theorists to directly address the insertion of 'terror politics' into (mega) sport practices. And vice versa.

In his analysis of the aforementioned and widely studied Brussels tragedy, Baudrillard (1993a) connects the behavior of English football supporters, blamed for attacking Italian fans before the collapse of a retainer wall led to injury and horrifying death, to seemingly unrelated social and political conditions of the mid-1980s in England – such as the 'state terrorism' of Margaret Thatcher's government that, in its crushing of miners' strikes in northern England in 1984 or staging of the Falkland Islands war of 1982, and whole-scale disregard for working-class life (including its cultural forms and systems of representation like football), created the pre-conditions for such violence. He writes (1993a: 74):

How is such barbarity possible in the late twentieth century? This is a false question. There is no atavistic resurgence of some archaic type of violence. This violence of old was both more enthusiastic and more sacrificial than ours. Today's violence, the violence produced by our hypermodernity, is terror. A simulacrum of violence, emerging less from passion than from the screen: a violence in the nature of the image.

For Baudrillard (1993a), events such as 'Heysel' led to terroristic hyperrealism, in which 'real' violent events occur only in a vacuum, with no witnesses or mass mediation. Terrorism that is showcased and framed as such by the media eventually slips into the category of the non-event as it becomes globally broadcast and re-broadcast. Baudrillard would later draw heavy criticism for applying a similar course of fatalistic thought to the Gulf War in 1991 that, he said, simply did not take place except as a media event. What is interesting to us is that Baudrillard's clearly provocative declaration that the Gulf War did not occur is grounded in his penetrating and insightful analysis of how sport violence becomes signified through the media as 'real' rather than 'fake' terrorism.

In 1994, Steve Redhead analyzed the World Cup in the United States through a Baudrillardian lens, seeing in it an event devoid of any meaning; a hyperreal instance of collective ritual and empty of any enduring impact or significance in the United States or elsewhere (Redhead, 1994). Here, Redhead connects the (sociological) dots and points to the emergence of sports mega-events as non-events. For the remainder of this article, we extend Baudrillard's (1993a) and Redhead's (1994) contentions that sports mega-events have become global non-events and rarely serve as globally significant forms of cultural exchange or practice. To this, we add the possibility that the hyper-simulation of sports mega-events as proto-typical zones of terror reveals the triumph of mass mediated imaginary over the empirical referent; that is, the simulated reality of risk, terror, threat and violence at international sports mega-events is far more interesting, lucrative, and socially consumable than the banal realities of actual behavior at these events. In analyzing how media circuses and simulations of terror have now taken over the real around sports mega-events, we revisit our original interpretations of the symbolic meaning/mediation of the 2002 Salt Lake Games and juxtapose those against news discourses surrounding the threat of terrorism at subsequent, and also massively mediated, sports

mega-events. In the analysis, we (perhaps fatalistically) argue, like the 'later Baudrillard', that sport-terrorism discourses and practices in the West conceal the fact that there is barely any sport-related terrorism at all.

Terrorism, simulacrum and electric friends: Salt Lake City 2002

In 2003, we argued that, as the first major international sports event held following 9/11, the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City understandably pushed sport mega-event security measures and media discourses about security, policing and safety matters to unprecedented levels (Atkinson and Young, 2003). This included spending in excess of US \$310 million on securing the event – approximately one-quarter of the overall event budget and the highest amount ever spent for an Olympic Games; a fact emphasized repeatedly in media accounts. The post-11 September context of the Salt Lake City Games also provided a unique media opportunity for the relationship between terror(ism), political ideologies, and sport to be played out in the eyes of the world. Segments of the Western media opportunistically framed the 2002 Winter Games as an international summit in which established and outsider relationships (Elias and Scotson, 1965) in the new war on terrorism became plainly evident. The media carefully but obviously constructed the process of securing the Games as a symbolic metaphor for the struggle to secure America and the rest of the 'free' world.

In looking back, however, we are reminded of Baudrillard's (1991: 96) comments that, rather than clarifying boundaries and identities in and through Games, the 'television [coverage] encourages indifference, distance and apathy . . . it anaesthetises the imagination'. Rather than being a watershed moment in the definition of the new 'face' of terrorism, the predominant style of media treatment of terror threats becomes only a virtual illusion, a fantasy or simulation of violence that *could* happen in and around sports spectacles. In this way, pre-emptive warnings about imminent terrorist violence at major Games are like movie previews or trailers that are aired constantly (stirring the emotions), but the final movie is neither eventually produced nor shown to audiences. Clearly, among participating nations in the event, not every nation was 'on side' with dominant American discourses regarding terrorism (Canada and France were among those offering conspicuously counter-hegemonic coverage), but this mattered little in the spectacle of Salt Lake City 2002. Indeed, arguably, the Games went on to eventually provide the discursive template for the media framing of subsequent sport mega-events of the 2000s as 'zones of terror'.

In helping to create such a template, a major discursive frame dominating media accounts of security at the 2002 Winter Games highlighted preferred Western constructions of the terms *terrorism* and *terrorist* and underlined the distance between nation-state groups in this connection. At the forefront of media coverage of security risks at the 2002 Games were concerns about the types of individuals who might exploit the event for the purpose of political terror; and a deeply and aggressively politicized posturing about what would be 'done' to such groups should they initiate a campaign of terror at the Games. Ingrained within such constructions were dominant understandings of the face

of terrorism, which at that point in time meant al-Qaeda or other so-called fundamentalist Middle Eastern or Asian groups. By attaching the Winter Games (held, ostensibly, in the spirit of peace, harmony, and cultural exchange) to the global struggle against forms of political violence like terrorism, the media coverage of the Games played a key role in simulating international axes and alliances following the tragic events of 9/11. Media analyses of security at the Games contained clear understandings of *virtual* and in some cases *hyperreal* or *imaginary* modern alliances (e.g. the US and UK) and their rogue enemies (e.g. the Taliban and al-Qaeda) in the simulated war on terrorism.

Participation in the Salt Lake City Olympics became promoted in the media as acceptance into American-led groups of mutually identified nations united in the fight against a faceless, yet ethnically specific, terrorist movement (Atkinson and Young, 2003). In reports of security at the 2002 Games, few alternative constructions of terrorism were offered in the Western media. In this case, outsiders to the simulated Olympic community of 'likes' were broadly conceived of as renegade political factions like al-Qaeda, military regimes such as the Taliban, or entire nation-states like Iraq or Afghanistan. Yet they were, at the same time, unidentified and unspecific. Naming them outright and rallying against them creates 'an event', but the mass mediation of a false brotherhood resilient in the face of ubiquitous (yet invisible) evil is the non-event in its most quintessential form.

One of the few dissenting voices of the Salt Lake City Games came from Gerhard Heiberg, a Norwegian IOC member who remarked, audaciously in the eyes of the US media, that 'a country at war cannot organize the Olympic Games' (Wilson, 2001: E10). Heiberg's comment instantly appeared in news reports around the world, but such was the weight of critical media response that later he felt forced to apologize for his comments and to rescind them. Heiberg violated not only the unspoken code of deference to the anti-terror global alliance but also the simulation of the terror itself. With Afghanistan's exclusion from the Winter Olympic Games (on the basis of the ruling Taliban's prohibition of female participation in sport) there were few opposing viewpoints about terrorism offered by those described as the main enemies of the American state. Instead, when such outsider ideologies were reported in the media they were strategically described by state agents as outrageous, socially uncivilized and barbarous. Such, in Baudrillard's (1993a) terms, is not the practice of a genuine war. For example, members of the IOC such as Jacques Rogge were outspoken in their condemnation of the Taliban and its Olympic participation policies. In Rogge's words, '[Afghanistan's reinstatement] will only be possible when there is a stable government in place, and when all the conditions that are put by the IOC are fulfilled' (Associated Press, 2001: A12).

To create the façade of an event (in this case, an event of terror, risk and American resolve), media discourses also pandered to swirling fears, stereotypes and discourses about domestic terrorism in the United States and elsewhere. Matching simulations of terrorism and fear of terrorism in the Games with mediated fears about terrorism outside of the Games would be fundamental for creating public empathy for the war on terror, as Baudrillard (1993a, 1993b, 2001) might argue. As Kamalipour (2000) suggests, established representations of terrorism at the Games drew attention, often using racist stereotypes, to the cunning, surreptitious, and underhanded strategies typically employed by terrorists waging violence. In news reports, audiences were warned about rogue foreign

terrorists seeking to sully the message of harmony cultivated by the Games. For example, one particular bomb scare in Salt Lake City became discursively constructed as a surreptitious test of American security systems (Cantera, 2002). Other accounts, which exploited the newsworthiness of widely documented reports of how persons involved in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 had resided in ordinary American neighborhoods, warned citizens that terrorists might be living in isolated areas of their communities, hiding until the Games commenced (CNN News, 2002).

Through a clever intermingling of the Olympic ideals on humanity with American ideals about the appropriate responses to security and violence at the Winter Games, a consistent simulation of terrorism threat was formed. When the popular media substituted the American standpoint on terrorism and defense for the Olympic perspective, dominant American ideologies became signified as generic and widely accepted international sport discourses. Again, the influential views of IOC leaders like Jacques Rogge were frequently cited in media accounts as evidence of the ideological partnership between America and the rest of the world: 'Your nation is overcoming a tragedy, a tragedy that has affected the whole world. We stand united with you in the promotion of our common ideals, and hope for world peace' (Harasta, 2002: C2). Through such positions, the established American political views on terrorist threats or enemies of the state became absorbed, regurgitated, and simulated to sport audiences around the world at the hands of powerful sports organizations.

In reviewing preferred discourses on terrorism at the 2002 Games, we see how the mediation of terror, risk, and security emphasized (or created) only temporary rather than enduring and symbolically meaningful sets of alliances through the event. Within less than one year following the 2002 Games, international support for the American-led war on terror waned, global skepticism grew regarding the face of terrorism and empathies with the American military (including concerns over how the US government was treating and protecting its own troops both during and after tours of duty) experienced obvious peaks and valleys. The *friendships* and allegiances forged through the 2002 Games in unity against terror may in fact have only ever been 'electric', and the naively global *communitas* promised throughout and after them never crystallized.

The non-event re-mixed: Athens and Torino

The mediation of terror(ism), risk and violence at sports-mega events did not disappear after the 2002 Olympic Games. Globally mediated terrorist 'events' leading into the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens re-invigorated discourses about sports mega-events as potential war zones. Exactly 100 days before the opening ceremonies of the 2004 Summer Olympics, three bomb blasts outside a suburban police station threatened civil security in Athens. The event followed a string of terrorist bombings across continental Europe that started in 2001, including a spate of car bombings in Istanbul in 2003, the bombing of four commuter trains that killed more than 100 people in Madrid on 11 March 2004 (Geiger, 2004), and the 12 October 2002, nightclub bombing in the town of Kuta on the Indonesian island of Bali, which killed 202 people and injured 209 (widely considered the deadliest act of terrorism in Indonesian history). The Athens bombings occurred just one week following an announcement that, in an unprecedented demonstration of the

economic costs of terrorism, the IOC had purchased a US\$200 million insurance policy for the 2004 Summer Games (Wilson, 2004).

Following Debord (1967), Rail (1999b) and Redhead (1999) argue that the modern Olympic Games (and other sports mega-events) are essentially (post)modern spectacles. There is considerable affinity between Debord's construction of *spectacle* (or, his concept of the 'society of the spectacle') and Baudrillard's description of the *non-event*. Indeed, Baudrillard's career-long fascination with mediated spectacles is in large part rooted in Debord's work. As a major intellectual influence on the French neo-Marxist, Situationist movement of the 1960s, Debord famously wrote scathing critiques of the capitalist, bourgeois, middle-class hegemony in France. His 1967 essay, *Society of the Spectacle*, provocatively criticizes modern social order, demonstrating how so much of everyday experience is geared toward the reification of the capitalist status quo. He further contends that humans become unwitting drones to capitalist production and commodity fetishism (like the 'early' Baudrillard). The capital-S *Spectacle* of life is capitalist order, reason, and social organization (e.g. the form and content of our social structures and our cultural ideologies). Meanwhile, small-scale *spectacles* (i.e. the practices of buying commodities, showcasing them on our bodies, and mediating them through television) become the fabric of everyday life.

Using the separate and interrelated lines of thinking from Debord and Baudrillard, it is difficult to overlook how terror, risk and security have become integral aspects in the signification and performance of sports mega-event as a spectacle of the non-event in a post 9/11 world. Security at the 2004 Summer Games (dubbed by some Olympic critics as the 'Armed Camp Games' – Spencer, 2004) dominated pre-Olympic discourses. At a time when nations and their publics were openly criticizing the American crusade to locate weapons of mass destruction in Afghanistan and Iraq, the sports-mega event once again stepped in and served an important service in recreating virtual, electric friend networks. The spectacular financial and personnel commitment made to the Games was highlighted in media accounts, as news reports documented the US \$1.5 billion devoted to securing the Greek Games and the 70,000 security agents posted at facilities across Greece (Chang, 2003; Shipley and Whitlock, 2004). News accounts consistently emphasized the colossal North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military involvement, the missile defense systems covering Greek airspace as a part of Operation Active Endeavour (initiated in the Mediterranean following 11 September 2001), and the scores of counter-terrorism experts informing city and Olympic officials in Athens (Murphy, 2003). Of course, between the lines one reads that the sheer spectacle of expenditure, consumption and technology becomes the focus of the anti-terrorist discourse. As such, little attention is ever given to the actual fears, concerns, doubts, anxieties, or even pleasures of audiences participating in sports mega-event spectacles.

The international mobilization of an Olympic security brigade for the Athens Games was staggering. Led by American counter-terror experts, CIA officials, and the American-based Science Applications International Corporation, the Olympic Advisory Group of political delegates from established allies including Australia, France, Germany, Israel, Spain, Britain, and the United States spent the bulk of 2003 and 2004 allaying anxieties about terrorist problems in Athens (Chang, 2003). One of the group's toughest tasks was to quell threats of a withdrawal from the Games (ironically, by the United States, Australia,

and Israel) following widely publicized failures during security tests at Olympic facilities (Spencer, 2004; Vistica, 2004). Such threats potentially disrupt the stability of the simulation of terror around the Games and call into question the mediation of the non-event.

Perhaps surprisingly, many American media discourses about terrorism and risk in Athens argued that the 'security success' of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games may have lulled Olympic officials into a false sense of security. Because the 2002 Games were situated in an isolated area within the US that was relatively free from intense political turmoil and terrorist violence, the media (now) highlighted how securing the Games in 2002 proved to be achievable. The 2004 Athens Games, by contrast, were positioned within a region beset by political conflict. The budget for securing the 2004 Games was more than three times the size of the Salt Lake City budget, and perhaps for good reason. Concerns about the terrorist organization '17 November' – alleged to have committed in excess of 23 political assassinations since 1975, including that of US military official Stephen Saunders in 2003 – abounded in pre-Olympic discourses (Murphy, 2003). The same group was blamed for the 2002 and 2003 bombings of Olympic sponsor offices in Greece.

In February 2004, the terrorist group 'Phevos and Athena' (the names of the Olympic mascots for the Athens Games) claimed responsibility for the fire-bombing of two Greek environment ministry vehicles in Athens (Wilstein, 2004). Only one month later, the Athens-based terrorist group 'Revolutionary Struggle' claimed responsibility for a bomb disarmed outside a Citibank outlet situated blocks away from Olympic facilities. The media circulated reminders of the 1988 Abu Nidal killing and wounding of 108 passengers on a ferry in the Athens port of Piraeus, predictions of the presence of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Afghan Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and stories of rabid anti-American sentiment in Greece since the initiation of Operation Enduring Freedom (Gertz, 2003). Equally, they touted warnings about violent anti-World Trade Organization protests in Athens during the Games as yet another security headache (Murphy, 2003). Such local concerns about protesters' behaviors were partially fueled by memories of the anti-world trade demonstrations in Australia before the 2000 Summer Games. Therefore, in a dizzying representational flurry of threats, fears, connected events and warnings, the risk of war and violence in and through the Athens Games meant everything and nothing simultaneously.

Additional media accounts accentuated the problem of securing the Games in Athens in relation to the geographic and physical infrastructure of the city. Global critics of the Athens Games pointed to the notoriously poor security of the Athens international airport, the heavy traffic congestion in the city, the floating population of illegal Muslim immigrants in Greece, the relatively porous borders, and the degree to which the country had been an access point for terrorists seeking entry into Europe (Associated Press, 2003). Such criticisms were amplified by the tardy construction of the Olympic facilities, the limited and haphazardly successful security tests at the Olympic facilities, and the US Department of State's *Patterns of Global Terrorism Report* of 2002 that pointed to cities like Athens as ripe terrorism targets (Chang, 2003). However, despite these possible problems, the Games were deemed a security 'success', save for the disruption of a men's platform diving contest in which a Canadian spectator (Ron Bensimhon) wearing

a blue tutu jumped into the Olympic Aquatic Centre pool as a publicity stunt for Golden Palace online casino (www.goldenpalace.com), and for an unusual episode in the men's marathon in which an Irish protestor (Cornelius Horan) calling himself 'The Grand Prix Priest' tackled and dragged Brazilian runner Vanderlei de Lima into the crowd during the final stages of the event. These were hardly significant events in a security sense, though the media predictably cashed in on their newsworthiness, given broader sensitivities to security at the Games.

The spike in concern about security at the Athens Games and at the Olympics in general was never seriously reconsidered in relation to the relatively placid 2006 Games in Torino, but discourses about risk and security still peppered media analyses of the Games. However, several events leading up to Turin 'reminded' organizers not to become complacent with security matters. Only four weeks before the Games, new threats of terrorism surfaced after Muslim rioting broke out in several European cities. Muslims in cities including London, Paris, Rome, and Istanbul became enraged after several European newspapers published satirical cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad. The controversial cartoons first appeared in Denmark. In the days leading up to the Olympics, mobs attacked Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish embassies in several European countries. As a result, Danish athletes and five Danish officials in Torino received additional personal security during the Games. The Italian organizing committee had previously spent US \$170 million securing the Games and had anticipated civil disturbances by local extremist groups such as the Red Brigade. Italian protestors, disgruntled on a number of fronts ranging from the Games' presence in Italy to Coca-Cola's corporate involvement in sport, regularly disrupted pre-Olympic events including the torch relay into Torino.

The actual Torino Games were not without incident, and this again was highlighted in media accounts as a reminder of the potential for terror at sports mega-events. Minor incidents become crucial for legitimating the simulation of the real event. In the closing ceremonies, during a final speech by Valentino Castellani, the Chairman of the Torino Olympic Organizing Committee, a Spanish man sponsored by www.goldenpalace.com (their logo emblazoned across his t-shirt), invaded the stage. He shouted to the audience, 'Passion lives in Torino', which was the slogan of the Torino Olympics, just before security tackled him and dragged him away. A 20-year-old Polish adult film actress attempted a similar stage invasion, holding an Italian flag bearing the handwritten inscription 'Mi consenta' and wearing a drawing by Roman artist Ettore Wallemberg on her skin. Security officials managed to stop her before she reached the stage. Such events, while clearly different than media constructions of *real* terrorism, again served to remind spectators that no public sport event was entirely safe from attack, violence, or chaos.

Quite clearly, then, the global media played a significant role in simulating Athens and Torino as post-9/11 zones of terror and risk. The 2004 and 2006 Games became readily co-opted into the templated discourses and simulations of terrorism in sport established by the Salt Lake City experience. Much as in the case of the 2002 Games, security at the 2004 Games (and the assessment of its effectiveness) was dominantly framed by established American military experts, NATO members, and other globally recognized politicians. The security effort in Athens was led by American political and military agents, backed by NATO at the request of the United States, and aligned with

the framing of the war in Iraq promulgated in Western media. Despite the relative safety and calm of these Games, and indeed global sports mega-events for well over a century at this point, the media circus of signification and fear-mongering marched ever onwards in ways that theorists like Debord and Baudrillard would find predictable and illusory.

Discussion: Global complicity in the resuscitation of wars that don't take place

The notion of the fabrication of the spectacular, commercially lucrative and geo-politically masked non-event is persuasive. But we are not entirely compelled by Baudrillardian (1991, 1993a, 1993b, 2001) thinking on this and, in particular, dispute that 'non-events' simply emerge from thin air as they undergo virtual and opportunistic reconstruction in the popular media. Still, with respect to how the mediation of Salt Lake City, Athens and Torino unfolded, there is good cause to believe that their construction as political war zones figured prominently into the mass commercialization of them as mega-spectacles. Important is that participating nations are complicit in the framing of these simulations as real, pressing and anxiety-producing. Such complicity is apparent in the considerable material, social and cultural efforts involved in responding to (and thus reproducing) fear simulations. For example, in the lead-up to the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, nearly 300,000 security/military personnel helped to secure the playing venues. The protecting forces were viewed as part of the international 'coalition of the willing' to counter the threat of terrorism, and involved police personnel from at least 12 nations. Indeed, most countries traveled with their own police escorts or crews of private 'mind-ers'. Despite the impressive security infrastructure in place (as evidenced by the usual references to money spent and technology invoked), discourses of risk were nevertheless inserted into news accounts in order to place the security outcome in doubt (and, in part, to help justify the need for increased policing in the first place). Such reports came to a head in advance of Germany 2006 when two suitcase bombs were discovered on regional trains in the country immediately prior to the event (allegedly planted by Lebanese students outraged at the caricature of Muhammad in German media cartoons), and whose reports in the global media in turn became linked to bombings of the London transport system on 7 July 2005.

Terrorist bombings in Mumbai, India and Karachi, Pakistan in 2007 cast a long shadow of fear over the Commonwealth Games of 2010 and the World Cup of Cricket in 2011 – staged respectively in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Echoing discourses in Athens and Germany, media accounts of the events cited each region/event as a potential powder keg of radical/extremist Islamic tension and hostility. The 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa would also prove to be no exception, as media coverage pitched it as yet another potential setting for high crime, social instability and terrorist opportunism (Mulugeta, 2010). As in the case of Germany 2006, the non-event of terrorist risk and threat is partially, if only momentarily, made real by the detection and arrest of a 'terrorist' in the region before each event. Here, the abstract and simulated global war on terror is made real, whole and concrete for the upcoming events. Doubt about safety is firmly cast, terrorism is reported as 'highly likely' (and assigned an ominous color-code symbolizing amplified risk) during the events, and the events' potential to expose the

ubiquity of global uncertainty is both pitched and perceived as extreme. Such a sequence is, as Baudrillard (2001) contends, the act of threatening one's own population with the fear, not the actual practice, of terrorism.

It is possible that many people forget that the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta were the last two sports mega-events involving significant terrorist violence. Notwithstanding their inscription into mediated discourses of threat and risk around the 2006 World Cup in Germany, these two contexts rarely feature in contemporary media coverage of terrorism in sports mega-events. It seems as if there is a global amnesia regarding former iterations of terrorism at major games and, again, we ask, why? Clearly, Salt Lake City in 2002 is the simulated model preferred in contemporary terrorism/sport discourses, and it is ripe for reproduction. It is striking how the new 'non-event template' created through the Salt Lake 2002 Games is reproduced *so* homogeneously and almost entirely uncritically in and around every globally relevant games. Each and every context becomes a virtual frontline in the global war on terror, and any number of ideologically motivated collectives are presumed to be 'interested' in unleashing their politics of terror around the events. The potential injury toll is considered and even anticipated in news accounts, often gorily. As such, the events underscore every possible scenario, every possible meaning, and every possible terrorist 'event' – they are, indeed, hyper-polysemic images of risk, fear, and panic. The original simulation of terrorist threat (Salt Lake City) is now reproduced almost verbatim at global games. Whereas the mediation of terror at the Salt Lake City Games contained a relative balance of the selling of fear and the assurance of security through highly descriptive accounts, today what seems to be more commonplace is the simple reminder that everyone should be fearful of every possible threat, contingency and instance of violence imaginable.

If Baudrillard (1991, 1993a, 1993b, 2001) is correct in his assessment of how the dominant mass mediation of social events carries the potential to reconstruct them as *non-events*, then the axial moments of global sport culture represented by such occasions as the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games and the respective World Cups of soccer and cricket have become truly simulated spectacles, pre-shaped as battle zones in an imaginary, collective global war on terror. We, like Baudrillard, would never argue that global wars and political conflicts do not produce genuine victims of violence – that blood has been spilled away from the field at sports events cannot and should not be denied. But, to come full circle, sparked by our intuitive guess that 9/11 and the ideological divisions and allegiances woven around it would somehow stitch its way into contemporary sport culture, we now point to the palpable disconnect between incidents of persons injured or killed in local contexts and a far broader, indeed global, perception of risk of terrorism feverishly fabricated by primary definers in sensationalist and predictable media formations.

Throughout his writing on the simulated nature of mass mediated realities, Baudrillard consistently maintained that the simulacrum serves as a powerful tool of social control and a leukemia infecting all social processes and structures that bear shared, organic forms cultural meaning. We agree, and encourage consumers of sports media to more fully consider how the mediation of global terrorism in and outside of sport reflects what Baudrillard (2001, 2002a, 2002b) refers to as the salience of *image events* in our

societies – those events which are so defined, so arranged and so saturated with every potential cultural meaning (including fear) that they, in the end, mean absolutely nothing.

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