

3. Evaluate the level of proof that the *Globe* reporters amass to make their story believable. Do you think this is a new standard of “proof” for journalists reporting instances of sexual assault and abuse?

Macro Issues

1. Does this film trivialize the harm of childhood sexual abuse for the sake of profitable entertainment?
2. At one point in the film, one of the characters urges Robinson to look around: “Robbie, this is the church . . . these are good people.” Evaluate this rationale as a reason to curtail reporting on this story. Which philosopher would support your decision?
3. Evaluate how community shaped this story? Was it right for the journalists involved to tell their sources they “cared”?

CASE 6-E

CINCINNATI ENQUIRER’S HEROIN BEAT

CHAD PAINTER

University of Dayton

Heroin-related overdose deaths have more than quadrupled since 2010, with nearly 13,000 people dying nationwide in 2015 alone. Some of the greatest increases have occurred among women, the privately insured, and people with higher incomes—demographic groups with historically low rates of heroin use (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). In response, the CDC added overdose prevention to its list of top public health challenges, and President Donald Trump created the Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis to study “ways to combat and treat the scourge of drug abuse, addiction and the opioid crisis” (White House, 2017). This designation focused on raising national awareness about the severity of the problem but stopped short of providing additional funding for treatment and research about the opioid crisis.

News media also have responded with new initiatives. Specifically, the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, a daily newspaper covering Cincinnati and its Northern Kentucky suburbs, established the nation’s first heroin beat in January 2016. While the heroin and opioid epidemic is a national

problem, Ohio—more specifically, southwestern Ohio—is considered its epicenter. Heroin is thought to be the most accessible drug in Ohio (Ohio State Bar Association, 2017), which leads the nation in both opioid and heroin overdose deaths (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2014).

Terry DeMio, the *Enquirer* reporter who heads the heroin beat, said in an interview with the author that the *Enquirer* really is just responding to the community's need for information:

There's a recognition that, not only is this a crisis, it's a crisis that, even now, is not well understood. I have easily more than 100 and probably well over 100 individuals talking to me, reading my work, people who have families who are addicted or people who are in recovery. In Northern Kentucky, which is where I started, one in three people knows someone addicted to heroin. So, these are our neighbors, and we want to be responsive to our community's needs.

DeMio covers the heroin and opioid epidemic from a public-health angle, not as a crime beat. She often discusses issues such as the need for first responders to carry naloxone, a drug that can block an opioid overdose; medication-assisted instead of abstinence-based treatment; and needle exchanges to help prevent HIV and Hepatitis C in both addicts and non-addicts who can accidentally step on improperly discarded needles. DeMio wants her reporting to help provide solutions to a community that is facing a public health crisis:

I think the urgency is pretty obvious as far as the fact that this is a public health crisis. I mean, we want to stop the dying and then turn it around. That's my primary focus, which is a public health issue.

In DeMio's coverage, she routinely talks to a wide variety of sources, including addicts and their families, doctors and health-care experts, police officers, and local and state government officials. She said the key to doing this kind of beat is credibility and trust:

They have to trust you and understand that you care. I think through the work of doing this it shows that we as a newspaper care and that I personally care. I report objectively by, just like any reporter, introducing both sides, being fact based, telling a story which shows the compassion and hopefully gives people clarity about what this really is like for someone to go through. But I don't hesitate to provide resources to people.

The *Enquirer* coverage gained widespread national attention when it published "Seven days of heroin: This is what an epidemic looks like" on Sept. 10, 2017. The 20-page special section, which was supplemented

with additional online content, included contributions from more than 60 reporters, photographers, and videographers from the *Enquirer* and colleagues from 10 other news sites affiliated with the Media Network of Central Ohio. (Versions of “Seven days of heroin” appeared in those newspapers as well.) The special section focused on one week in July 2017, a week that included 18 deaths, at least 180 overdoses, more than 200 heroin users in jail, and 15 babies born with heroin-related medical problems.

Micro Issues

1. Evaluate the *Cincinnati Enquirer's* decision to cover the heroin and opioid epidemic as a public health instead of a criminal issue.
2. How might the *Enquirer's* reporting influence how the community understands and addresses the heroin and opioid epidemic?
3. How can a newspaper cover the heroin and opioid epidemic consistently without sensationalizing coverage or publishing “addiction porn”?

Midrange Issues

1. The *Enquirer*, like many medium-market newspapers, has made tough budget decisions, including newsroom layoffs and shuttering beats. How should a newspaper balance necessary beats (crime and courts, education, etc.) with important community issues in a time of shrinking newsroom budgets?
2. How should a reporter balance objective reporting with showing compassion and sharing treatment and other resources with sources and their families?
3. This ambitious series was labeled as being financially sponsored by a local hospital. Could this funding in any way have affected the coverage?

Macro Issues

1. In Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, the majority of heroin and opioid users and overdose victims are middle-class, suburban Whites. How would you respond to criticism that news organizations and other institutions began treating heroin and opioid addiction as a disease instead of a crime once the racial and class demographics changed?

2. Projects such as these often win prizes and even sabbaticals for their authors. Prizes help quality storytelling get recognized, but they also have been the occasion for scandal. On balance, are awards good for the profession?
3. How might the *Enquirer's* coverage serve as a template for other news organizations that want to start doing the same type of beat coverage in their communities?

CASE 6-F

GOLDIEBLOX: BUILDING A FUTURE ON THEFT

SCOTT BURGESS

Wayne State University

For more than 100 years, boys' toys have included Legos, Erector Sets, and Lincoln Logs—toys that help them build math and engineering skills. Girls, by contrast, played with tiaras, Barbies, and ballet shoes. Debbie Sterling, the founder of the Oakland-based toy company GoldieBlox, sought to change this dichotomy. Sterling started GoldieBlox in 2012, the first girls-only toy company that also develops computer apps and publishes books that focus on keeping girls interested in science (GoldieBlox, 2017).

GoldieBlox wants to “disrupt the pink aisle in toy stores globally” and challenge gender stereotypes “with the world’s first girl engineering character,” according to the company’s website. The company began with \$280,000 raised in a Kickstarter campaign after many people were inspired by the company’s mission (Sterling, 2013). For the next year, GoldieBlox received a small amount of favorable press as a fun, feminist-oriented business with strong ideals.

That changed in November 2013, when the company released the YouTube video “Girls.” In the video, three girls get bored watching a television show in which girls in pink taffeta dresses dance on a sofa. So, with a revised version of the Beastie Boys 1987 song “Girls” playing in the background, they grab work belts, safety goggles, and tools and build an elaborate contraption using many of the pink toys in their house.

The video received more than 8 million views on YouTube and 100,000 shares on Facebook in a few days. The company and its founder were featured on news programs, magazines, and newspapers around the world. While the privately held company does not release sales reports, some estimates suggest that sales tripled immediately following