

An Overview of Crime News Reporting and Investigative News Reporting

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ABSTRACT

News reporting is a vital cog in the news industry. People always show a great interest in reading and listening to Crime News. Investigation plays an important role in Crime News. As readers and viewers of Crime News, one has to know the difference between Crime News Reporting and Investigative News Reporting. No one can deny the roles of these reporting in the enhanced circulation of newspapers/ magazines and viewership in visual media. There are many different kinds of crime news, including fraud, blackmail, kidnapping, rape, murders, blazes, accidents, robberies, and burglaries. To purge the element of criminal behaviour from society, reporting crimes helps in pursuing justice, and social reform. In a significant way, it benefits the community by serving as a vigilant watchdog and alerting individuals about potential crimes and criminal activities. This paper enumerates and analyses the roles of reporters involved in reporting these.

Key terms: Crime News, Investigative News, Journalism, Mass Communication, News Reporting

Introduction

News reporting is presenting news stories on television, radio and in newspapers. News stories cover varied topics, including education, the environment, politics, war, business, etc. Many people show a lot of interest in reading crime news. Many investigative news stories end as a scoop.

Crime Reporting

Any violation of the law is considered a crime. It is ethically any wrongdoing. Reporters write about crimes committed and communicate with the police regularly. "Covering" police news is recognised as an excellent training ground for aspiring journalists worldwide.

FOUR Types of Crimes

- (1) Against a person (assault, homicide, kidnapping, rape)
- (2) Against property (arson, theft, robbery, forgery, burglary, embezzlement)
- (3) Against public welfare (bigamy, riot, illegal strikes, sexual crimes)
- (4) Against legal authority (obstructing a government officer from performing his duties, bribing a government servant)

Ethical or Unethical

Whether it is ethical or unethical for a newspaper to publish crime stories is the question asked and debated.

The Arguments against Publishing Crime News

1. Newspapers give criminals undue publicity and unwittingly make them heroes.
2. By publishing details of how crimes are committed, the newspaper furnishes valuable ideas to criminals.
3. Newspapers thwart police attempts at investigation by premature publication.
4. Crime stories project the seamy (disreputable) side of life.
5. Publishing sordid details of crime violates basic decencies and good taste.
6. Publication of pictures or cartoons of scantily clad girls or boys in connection with crime stories offend public morals.

The Arguments in Favour of Publishing Crime News

1. Newspapers should reflect the environment and its activities.
2. Suppression of news is dishonest.
3. Publication of police news may help to keep policemen more alert and informed
4. Crime news makes people turn up with vital clues to the police.
5. Publication of crime stories helps to keep people guard against crimes.
6. It is extremely doubtful that criminals get ideas for their crimes from newspapers.
7. Standard newspapers do not publish sordid details of sexual crimes. They do not mention the name of the poison used for suicide or the instrument used for the break-in.
8. It is wrong to say that newspapers glorify criminals. In fact, many reporters glorify the action of the police officer in apprehending the culprit.
9. Newspapers generally do not publish crime news prematurely and thwart (to obstruct) police investigations and actions.
10. Generally reporters of standard newspapers maintain good taste or use euphemisms in writing crime stories.
11. Popular newspapers feel, with reasonableness, that crime news boosts circulation.

Qualifications

1. A reporter must have a full knowledge of the police system from top to bottom. He must understand how the department operates and what type of news he can expect from the various sections.
2. A reporter must know as to what legally constitutes a crime.
3. A reporter must have familiarity with the topography of the place. If a fire accident occurs in a particular area, he must rush straight there. If he is unfamiliar with the place, he may go in the opposite direction and miss the news.

4 A reporter must be capable of presenting news objectively, without offending the law.

Effective and Constructive Move

To move effectively and constructively against crime, the police and press should cooperate and coordinate. While the police help the newsmen with information about various crimes the press can help the police by turning out clues and also by enlightening them on the developing political trends.

Investigative Reporting

Investigative reporting is a system of journalism in which reporters intensely examine a single topic of interest, such as heinous crimes, political corruption, or corporate wrongdoing. An investigative journalist may devote months or years to investigating before preparing an investigative report.

Nature of IR

Investigative reporting is revelatory by nature. It follows the old dictum that the press lives by disclosures. It deals with political misdeeds and uncovers causes and remedies for many social and economic maladies. Investigative journalism is the process of discovering, reporting, and exposing information that other people are attempting to conceal. There is a lot of overlap between this and traditional news reporting, with the exception that the people who are at the core of the story will typically not assist the reporter and may even attempt to prevent the reporter from completing their job.

Other names for the Investigative Reporting

The investigative reporter starts off with a hunch, that there is more in an event than that meet the eye. Other terms for investigative reporting are “depth reporting”, “watchdog journalism” or “accountability reporting”.

Watergate Scandal

Investigative reporting became famous after the famous Watergate scandal in 1970s. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the *Washington Post* made a valiant effort in investigating the Watergate scandal to the point where President Richard Milhous Nixon finally had to resign.

Investigative Reporting in India

Tehelka (Hindi: Sensational) played a vital role in bringing the investigation into focus in India. This Indian news outlet is well-known for its sting operations-based investigative reporting. In 2000, Tarun Tejpal and Bahal launched it as a website. In the year 2000, with the assistance of an editor named Aniruddha Bahal, captured almost forty hours of discussions on tape. In this sting operation, a former Indian cricketer was involved. These conversations were utilised as evidence by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in their investigation into match-fixing in the sport of cricket. Ajay Jadeja, Ajay Sharma, and Muhammad Azharuddin were named by the CBI as the cricket players involved. In 2001, Tehelka conducted a covert investigation that was referred to as “Operation West End”. During this investigation, two reporters, namely special correspondent Mathew Samuel and Aniruddha Bahal, filmed themselves posing as arms dealers in order to bribe several defence officials and politicians from the Indian government that was led by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the time. These days, nearly all newspapers and news networks contribute to investigative reporting.

Functions of IR

The term investigative reporting can be applied to a story that (a) deals with a serious subject (b) involves hindrances that make collecting information on the subjects challenging (c) and fully explores the significance of the subject. Investigative reporting deals with issues and conditions rather than incidents and events. The investigative report should not confine itself to exposure. It is not always reporting of official corruption and scandal, it is more than that. Good investigative reporting may examine the bad conditions of the road or the mismanagement of an institution.

Useful Guidelines

The following guidelines may help an investigative reporter.

1. Do not overlook a tip from any source.
2. Stay within the law.
3. Keep track of every move you make as well as of the mistakes you have committed.
4. Keep your editor informed of every development only he has the final say.
5. Keep going even under pressure.
6. Suspend your findings until you are absolutely certain.

7. Find some ending.
8. Check for the climax of your story.
9. Do not allow your story to drag on, once the major points are made.
10. If some parts are dull, add some interesting anecdotes.

Variety of Styles

Several different approaches can be taken when writing investigative pieces. The story can be written as if it were pure news when the subject matter is well known. If it addresses complex topics with a significant amount of interpretive content, then a unique and creative style can be followed. It is imperative to bear in mind that the writer needs to maintain composure, self-control, and objectivity.

Conclusion

Crime news reporting and Investigative reporting are almost similar in many ways and dissimilar in many ways. Investigative reporting takes all the curiosity, creativity, courage and endurance that a reporter can muster. He has to face threats of genuine danger. The work demands of him more patience and perseverance. They have to tackle one source after another.

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