

Handout #7: Ethical Media Situations Worksheet

1. A high profile gubernatorial candidate in a hotly contested election is married to a high profile media correspondent for a national news network. The state gubernatorial election will receive nationwide attention and extensive media coverage by all networks. Is there an ethical problem?
2. A reporter encounters a source in a story on illegal drug use who maintains that he will not talk on the record if his name is used. The source is a drug dealer who has extensive knowledge about the local drug trade. What are the ethical issues at stake here?
3. A colorful source in a feature story is quoted extensively using incorrect grammar and poor word choices. What are the ethical dilemmas involved in editing this story?
4. A local man has been accused in a violent crime. Charges have been brought against him, and he is currently in jail awaiting trial. A news article has been written about the crime, with quotes from the victim, victim's family, and the victim's attorney. What are some ethical concerns here for the reporter and editor?
5. A regional newspaper has been writing profile stories of all candidates running for state office. The campaign manager for a candidate running for governor calls the newspaper and asks to see the article before it goes to print, citing concerns over accuracy and wanting to ensure that the candidate is portrayed accurately and fairly to the voting public. What are the ethical concerns here and what should the newspaper do?