

## **Tips and Tools For Covering Murder**

- Preoccupation with the accused and the grisly details of the crime can romanticize the crime and the killer and can make your coverage one-dimensional.
- Focus on the life of the victim and the effects of the murder on the victim's family and friends.
- During trial and sentencing, even though the courtroom events are the "news," don't ignore the victim's family and friends.
- When crafting the lead of your story, consider putting the victim's name first.
- Sensitivity in your reporting and writing can help build trust between you and your sources. The victim's family and friends may be reluctant to speak with you in the weeks following the crime, but months later they may feel like sharing their stories with a reporter who treated them respectfully.
- Provide context for your readers. How common are murders in your town or neighborhood? Avoid letting stereotypes drive your writing and reporting.