

[Citations](#)[Metrics](#)[Reprints & Permissions](#)[Get access](#)

Journal

Journal of Mass Media Ethics >

Exploring Questions of Media Morality

Volume 5, 1990 - Issue 2

6	0	0
Views	CrossRef citations to date	Altmetric

Original Articles

Cases and Commentaries

John V.R. Bull, Daniel Callahan, Richard P. Cunningham & Keith Moyer

Pages 136-145 | Published online: 17 Nov 2009

[Download citation](#) https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327728jmme0502_5

Select Language | ▼

[Translator disclaimer](#)[Click to increase image size](#)

Cases and Commentaries

The *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* publishes case studies in which scholars and media professionals outline how they would solve a particular ethical dilemma. Some cases are purely hypothetical, but most are from actual experience in the industry.

All cases and commentaries are designed to enhance the decision-making skills and moral development of students and professionals in the mass media. They provide the reader an opportunity to evaluate his or her reasoning process and to debate the difference between good and bad reasons in moral choice. They also show that reasonable people may arrive at quite different solutions to moral problems.

The case of the Norfolk Abortion Clinic reports a real situation that faced editors at the Norfolk papers. It was written by Cases and Commentaries Editor Lou Hodges, professor of journalism at Washington and Lee University.

The Norfolk Abortion Clinic

The doctors were telling women they were pregnant when they were not. Some women who were not pregnant were even receiving "abortions." Ellen Whitford, reporter for *The Virginian-Pilot* and *The Ledger-Star*, in Norfolk, VA, decided to investigate the American Women's Clinic.

Early probing showed that neither the clinic owner, Chris Simopoulos, MD, nor his colleague, Parviz Modaber, MD, had hospital privileges in the area. Evidence also showed that some women had been treated in local hospitals for infections caused by incomplete abortions performed at the clinic.

Reporters made repeated calls to authorities over a period of 6 weeks and concluded that no immediate official investigation was planned. The editors decided to conduct their own investigation.

Sixteen women, staff members, and representatives from the local chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), went to the clinic for a free pregnancy test. Fourteen were falsely told they were pregnant, including one woman who had been surgically sterilized 2 years earlier and one who substituted a man's urine sample for her own.



[Citations](#)[Metrics](#)[Reprints & Permissions](#)[Get access](#)[Log in](#)[Shibboleth](#)[OpenAthens](#)

Restore content access

[Restore content access for purchases made as guest](#)

Purchase *

[Save for later](#)

Online

Article Purchase

24 hours to view or download: USD 44.00

[Add to cart](#)

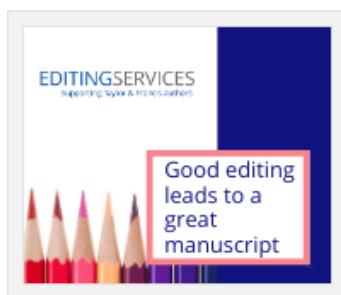
Issue Purchase

30 days to view or download: USD 302.00

[Add to cart](#)

* Local tax will be added as applicable



[Citations](#)[Metrics](#)[Reprints & Permissions](#)[Get access](#)

Information for

[Authors](#)[Editors](#)[Librarians](#)[Societies](#)

Open access

[Overview](#)[Open journals](#)[Open Select](#)[Cogent OA](#)

Help and info

[Help & contact](#)[Newsroom](#)[Commercial services](#)[All journals](#)

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email

[Sign me up](#)

Copyright © 2020 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#) [Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)

Registered in England & Wales No. 3099067
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG

Tandem Group
Tandem Online Journals Ltd