



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 19, 2022

Newspapers Report Race of White Killers Far More Than That of Black Killers

Major newspapers across the country are skewing their crime reporting to downplay homicide offenders who are black while playing up those who are white, according to the [Washington Free Beacon](#).

“A *Washington Free Beacon* review of hundreds of articles published by major papers over a span of two years finds that papers downplay the race of non-white offenders, mentioning their race much later in articles than they do for white offenders,” writes Charles Fain Lehman. “These papers are also three to four times more likely to mention an offender’s race at all if he is white, a disparity that grew in the wake of George Floyd’s death in 2020 and the protests that followed.”



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This phenomenon was clearly illustrated by the coverage of last week’s New York City subway shooting. As [The New American](#) reported, the alleged gunman, a black man named Frank James, “is an advocate of black nationalism, black supremacy, and black separatism.” However, notes Lehman, “In a nearly 2,000-word [*New York Times*] article on the attack, James’s race is not mentioned. The same is true for the coverage offered up by Reuters; the *Washington Post* only mentioned James’s race in relation to his condemnation of training programs for ‘low-income Black youths.’”

The *Free Beacon* reviewed nearly 1,100 homicide articles from six major newspapers covering the years 2019 - 2021. For each article, they took note of the offender’s name and race and where in the article the latter was mentioned, if at all.

The results couldn’t be more damning.

When the perpetrator of a murder was white, the papers couldn’t wait to let their readers know, but they took their time mentioning the offender’s race if he was black. According to Lehman, “Half of articles about a white offender mention his race within the first 15 percent of the article. In articles about black offenders, by contrast, mentions come overwhelmingly toward the end of the piece. Half of the articles that mention a black offender’s race do not do so until at least 60 percent of the way through, and more than 20 percent save it until the last fifth of the article.”

Not every article mentioned the offender’s race, of course. Still, when an article did broach the subject, it was far more likely to do so if the offender was white. Twenty-three percent of articles about white offenders mentioned their race, while just six percent of articles about black offenders did so. Even after removing high-profile stories about white murder defendants such as Derek Chauvin and Kyle Rittenhouse from the mix, the race of white offenders was still mentioned two to three times as often as the race of black offenders.



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The death of George Floyd accelerated these trends. “Before May of 2020,” pens Lehman, “papers were roughly twice as likely to mention the race of a white (13 percent of stories) versus a black perpetrator (7 percent). After May of 2020, the numbers were 28 percent and 4 percent, a ratio of seven to one.”

Lehman suggests that this was driven by “journalists dramatically overhauling crime coverage to emphasize the view that the criminal justice system is racist at the root.”

He observes:

Newspapers across the country ... stopped publishing mugshot galleries in part because, two Florida newspapers wrote, they “may have reinforced negative stereotypes.” Others committed to overhauling their language, substituting phrases like “formerly incarcerated person” for “felon” to respond to what the Poynter Institute described as an “inextricabl[e]” link between reporting on crime and “race and racism.” And the Associated Press amended its style guide to discourage the use of the word “riot,” which allegedly has racist connotations.

At the same time, major newsrooms have prioritized “racial justice” coverage, part of a push for what the journalist-*cum*-activist Wesley Lowery called “moral clarity” over “objectivity”: writing news reports that take the sides on contested issues with the goal of advancing a political objective.

Unfortunately, reporters and editors don’t tell their readers that they are deliberately skewing their coverage, so many are left to believe that they are getting honest, objective news. In reality, quips Lehman, they are being subjected to “journalistic malfeasance ... in service of the greater good” — as the Left sees it.



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