

CRIME REPORTING

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE (thanks to thenewsmanual.net)

Avoid using police lingo. Use everyday language.

The deceased struck his assailant a blow to the head before receiving a fatal stab wound in the chest.

- The impossibility of a dead man (the deceased) hitting anyone was missed by the reporter, who should have rewritten the sentence:

The man hit his attacker on the head before being fatally stabbed in the chest.

ATTRIBUTION (who says so)

Only report as a fact what you know to be true.
All the rest must be attributed.

Police believe (OR: say) the attacker used a large stick to beat Mr. Shazi several times before running off.

There is no need to put "police said" throughout your story, but you should include the words whenever there is any doubt (or possible dispute) at all.

“Innocent till proven guilty”

Because a person has been arrested, does not mean he is guilty.

It is best not to report the name of someone suspected of a crime until formal charges have been made.

If a person is charged with a crime, you should insert the word "alleged" (or a similar word) whenever you are describing any aspect of the crime which may be disputed in court. This is because the defendant will probably argue that he did not do it, that it is simply an allegation.

WRONG: James Green attacked retired carpenter Ahmed Shazi at his home on Mananga Street Wednesday.

CORRECT: James Green is alleged to have attacked retired carpenter Ahmed Shazi at his home on Mananga Street Wednesday.

If no one has been arrested and charged, you can say much more, always bearing in mind that you could be sued for defamation by anyone involved if you do not stick to the truth.

Be very careful with names:

[Aquib Talib](#)

Also, be careful of reporting names of persons involved in traffic accidents. In particular, be careful not to assign blame for the accident.

#13

:42

SLUG: GIRL DIES VOICE: CAMERON FAIRCHILD

LEAD: A LITTLE GIRL IS TAKEN OFF LIFE SUPPORT... AND DIES... AND NOW T-S-N'S CAMERON FAIRCHILD REPORTS A CROWLEY WOMAN ALREADY IN TROUBLE IN THE CASE COULD FACE MORE SERIOUS CHARGES...

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD OCTAVIA WATKINS WAS ONE OF SEVERAL CHILDREN RIDING ON THE TRUNK OF A CAR WHEN THEY FELL OFF AND WERE HURT. SHE SUFFERED SEVERE HEAD INJURIES.

POLICE SAY THE DRIVER, 38-YEAR-OLD KISHA YOUNG, HAD THE KIDS RIDING OUTSIDE THE CAR BECAUSE THEY WERE WET FROM A TRIP TO A COMMUNITY POOL. YOUNG ALREADY FACES CHARGES OF DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED, INTOXICATION ASSAULT, AND INJURY TO A CHILD, AND C-C MEADOWS WITH CROWLEY POLICE SAYS INVESTIGATORS ARE NOW DECIDING WHETHER TO PURSUE MORE SERIOUS CHARGES...

MEADOWS :08 "LOT MORE CLOSELY." ...

OCTAVIA'S MOTHER WAS A PASSENGER IN THE CAR AT THE TIME, BUT SO FAR HAS NOT BEEN CHARGED WITH ANYTHING. CAMERON FAIRCHILD, NEWSRADIO 1080 K-R-L-D.

#79

:33

SLUG: Mom KILL VOICE: AUSTIN YORK

LEAD: A PLANO WOMAN ACCUSED OF KILLING A 2 YEAR OLD...WILL NOT FACE THE DEATH PENALTY. TSN'S AUSTIN YORK HAS THE LATEST...
[CLIP]

POLICE SAY 25-YEAR-OLD MELINDA MUNIZ WAS CARING FOR LITTLE GRACE FORD IN THE APARTMENT SHE SHARED WITH THE LITTLE GIRL'S FATHER....WHEN THEY SAY SHE SUFFOCATED HER BY COVERING HER MOUTH WITH DUCT TAPE IN JANUARY. MUNIZ'S ATTORNEY ROBBIE MCCLUNG SAYS SHE AND THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE...WERE ABLE TO WORK OUT A DEAL:

CUT

POLICE SAY MUNIZ AND THE LITTLE GIRLS FATHER WERE IN THE PROCESS OF BREAKING UP. MUNIZ REMAINS IN JAIL UNTIL TRIAL.

When a person is convicted in court of a crime, only then may it be reported that "he did it:"

#62

:43

SLUG: Waxahachie Wacko VOICE: L.P. Phillips

LEAD: A self-admitted "doomsday-prepper" from Waxahachie has been sentenced to federal prison for a firearm charge. But as T-S-N's L.P. Phillips reports...that charge is only the tip of what authorities found.

[CLIP]

o/c soc

When 25-year old Clayton Earthman was pulled over by a Dallas officer last year....he had a gun under his seat. That caught the cop's interest....but then he looked further and found large pieces of PVC Pipe and end caps and some chemicals in the back seat. The officer notified federal agents....they searched Earthman's home and uncovered a cache of supplies...potassium nitrate, aluminum powder, ball bearings detonators. An arsonal. cart Former Dallas FBI chief Danny Deffenbaugh says the supplies look like stuff meant to hurt people....not just for self defense. Earthman was sentenced to 3and a half years in prison. soc