THE PROCESS OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING IN 2018:

INVESTIGATING INEQUALITIES THROUGH DATA AND

INTERVIEWS

by

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This thesis explores the history and current status of investigative reporting in the United States, introducing the connection between investigative reporting and a concept of psychology called psychic numbing. Psychic numbing explains that humans have difficulty with the comprehension of statistics of death and genocide. Data are a crucial part of investigative reporting, and this thesis develops newsroom guidelines on how to use data and alleviate the impacts of psychic numbing. The central research question explores how psychic numbing and investigative reporting intersect, and if it is possible to create more compassion in readers by pairing data with narrative and multimedia. This is done through the analysis of literature and the application of an original investigative story. The document includes methodology of the investigative story, weekly memos outlining original contributions and thought process, as well as an original podcast script of the findings. Finally, based on the analysis of these materials and the original investigative reporting, this thesis ends with suggestions for future academic research and newsroom practice, based on the connection between the use of data in investigative reporting and psychic numbing.

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Introduction

Investigative reporting is a form of journalism that is used to uncover wrongdoing, hold people in power accountable, and to create policy reform in communities that are not functioning according to laws and social standards. Investigative reporting is defined by specific qualities such as original reporting that reveals information kept from the public. Additionally, the story must be in the public interest and yield results for the community (Investigative Reporters & Editors).

Data are the foundation of many investigative stories. Looking at trends in public data can inform an investigation with statistics on what is happening in a community, in addition to displaying the larger trends of the issue.

This thesis explores investigative reporting through literature analysis, original investigative reporting, and development of newsroom guidelines for the use of data in investigative reporting. More specifically, this thesis introduces the connection between data journalism and psychic numbing. Psychic numbing is a psychological concept explaining that humans have a difficult time comprehending large statistics of death and genocide (Slovic). Analyzing and presenting trends in data can be crucial for reporting on an investigative story. When doing so, however, there can be a lack of comprehension in the reader due to psychic numbing. Additionally, instead of humans showing a linear model of compassion, the compassion for death and suffering starts to decline at two people (Slovic). Psychic numbing is relevant in investigative reporting and data journalism, because in order for an investigative story to create impact, it must also present information in a way that creates compassion among the reader. Using data to inform a story and present the reader with big picture trends must also use caution to

not create a psychic numbing effect in the reader. In order to do this statistics can be accompanied with narratives of characters from the community and multimedia (Slovic).

The central research question, then, explores how psychic numbing and investigative journalism intersect, and whether it is possible to create more compassion in readers by pairing data with narrative and multimedia. This is done through the analysis of literature and the application of an original investigative story.

A brief overview of the original investigative story follows. I worked on a team that analyzed data about arrest rates in Eugene compared with race and population. The data are not being analyzed elsewhere in Eugene and have not previously been reported to the public. My team and I used data that is annually reported to the FBI by individual police departments. The data are reported through a program called NIRBS, which stands for National-Institute-Reporting-Based-System. The data provide information about the top 24 crimes that people are arrested for. By linking two tables together we were able to match incident numbers of arrests with information on race. The data used in this story informed the larger picture of disparities in police arrests in Eugene, and supplemented narratives from community members who are working at agencies and community groups to report and decrease racial profiling. Although the NIRBS data that we analyzed from 2015 and 2016 showed small numbers statistically, each percentage represents real people in the community being affected.

Regarding research and process, each week I wrote memos to my team to show my original contributions to the project and inform them of what my goals and questions were for the week. The memos work through my personal struggles, findings,

and curiosities with the investigation, including my understanding that data are not enough to present a story, and that we must include community perspectives. Lastly, I created a podcast script based on the findings from the investigation. The podcast script works to combine statistics with voices from community leaders to combat psychic numbing.

Finally, based on the analysis of these materials and the original investigative reporting in consideration of the balance between data and the negative effects of psychic numbing, this thesis ends with suggestions for future academic research and best newsroom practice.

Investigative Reporting Story: Disparities in Arrest Rates Within the Eugene Police Department: Background on the Investigative Story

The investigative story used NIRBS data to show trends of racial disparities regarding arrests in Eugene, Oregon, and talk with public agencies and community groups about the trends shown in the NIRBS data. The overall findings in the data show the Eugene Police Department arresting African-Americans at a rate that is disproportionate to the population of African-Americans in Eugene. We analyzed data in 2015 and 2016 that show a ratio two times more than population data suggests and 2.14 times more in 2016. We also analyzed data from the Lane County Jail that shows patterns aligning with the NIRBS data.

After analyzing data trends we reached out to members of the Eugene community, starting with groups such as the NAACP and Eugene Human Rights Commission. We also reached out to the police auditor in Eugene **whose** job it is to oversee the Eugene Police Department and analyze the use of excessive force and racial profiling complaints.

The reporting of this story showed that investigative stories could take much longer than regular journalistic stories, and often require a team of people to be working on the story. For this reason, reporters will write memos to their team each week about their progress and where they see the story going the next week. While working on the story about disparities in arrest rates, I wrote memos to my team, samples of which I have included in this document.

An important aspect of working on an investigative story is to anticipate the reaction that the story will receive from the community. The job of a reporter writing about racial inequalities, is not to call the police department racist. The job of the reporter is to report on the issue and state what is happening different than law and community standards say.

The investigative process of this story used both data and narratives to report on the story. Again, the central research question being asked here is whether investigative reporters can use a combination of data and interviews to alleviate psychic numbing in the reader and evoke more compassion and response.

Literature Review

Qualities of Investigative Reporting

Investiagtive reporting is journalism done to reveal information that is being kept from the public, and ultimatley hold people in power responsible for their actions. Due to available resources and the amount of time and rigor needed to produce an investigative story, many news outlets lack a big investigative presence. An article by Jesse Abdenour titled, "Inspecting the Investigators: An Analysis of Television Investigative Journalism and Factors Leading to Its Production," outlines studies done to assess the amount of investigative work present at television outlets. The study found that many media outlets advertise their work as investigative reporting when it does not adequately meet the qualifications that define such a story. The article defines investigative reporting as original work that reveals concealed information to the public and is in the public interest (Abdenour 2-3). The results of the study found that 45.7 percent of all news stations aired one or more investigative stories, but only 11.6 percent of them contained all three of the defining qualities (Abdenour 10). These results indicate that some stations are falsely labeling investigative work (Abdenour 3). The article says, "The general low quality at branded investigations in this study gives weight to charges that local television has abandoned its obligation to serve the public" (Abdenour 13).

A large reason that more investigative work is not done is because of its economic costs. When it comes to the business interests of a station, investigations can

be costly and exhaust resources for a long time before yielding a publishable story. Due to this, studies have found that larger-owned journalism stations will produce more investigative work. "As firms get bigger, power and decision-making become decentralized" (Abdenour 4). In contrast, smaller-owned news outlets face tighter budgets and closer management from the top, often leading to limitations in the output of investigative work.

Even though investigative reporting is not as economical as regular journalism on the surface level, it is valued by viewers and gains public interest. "The Investigative DNA: Role Conceptions of Local Television Investigative Journalists," presents a 2013 study about media consumers who were asked to rate news categories, and the results show that investigative reporting was ranked as the second most important category. This study shows that media consumers are looking for investigative stories to be produced by the media outlets they subscribe to. The issue with this for news outlets is not the desire to do investigative reporting, but rather the cost. "Investigative journalism symbolizes the tension between an organization's news values and business concerns" (Abdenour, Riffe 227). The economic concerns of investigative reporting, especially at small outlets, can get in the way of desire to produce more investigative work.

The high costs that can be associated with investigative reporting are due in part to public record laws. In Oregon specifically, public records from all public bodies are supposed to be accessible to citizens who request them. The reference book for Oregon's public record laws classifies 'public body' as all departments, agencies, officers, school districts, bureaus, commissions, municipal corporations and special

districts (open-oregon.com 5). Since Oregon's public record law was passed in 1973**;**
however, the law has developed many exemptions that allow for information to be
withheld (Open Oregon 4).

In requesting public records in Oregon, public institutions are allowed to charge
a fee, "To reimburse the agency for its "actual cost" in summarizing, compiling, or
tailoring a record to meet the person's request - and no more" (Open Oregon.com 15).
Sometimes this law has the ability to create high costs. In a personal experience, public
records were requested from a District Attorney in Oregon and their fees included their
hourly wage, which was much larger than the minimum wage.

In order for investigative reporting to have lower costs, a citizen can request a
fee waiver for the public records, if the use of the records are in the public interest.
Even though one of the qualities of investigative reporting is to appeal to the public
interest by holding people in power accountable, the request of a fee waiver can easily
be denied because the implementation of a fee waiver is in the hands of the agency that
you are requesting records from (Open Oregon 16).

High costs of investigative reporting can come from more than just public record
fees. Investigations often require a team of people, and an extensive time frame. Paying
teams to work on long-term investigative stories can create high costs. A team of three
people working on an investigation can cost around $500,000 per year (Abdenour 30),
making it more of a financial commitment to media outlets than traditional journalism.

Despite the high costs associated, one of the largest aspects of investigative
reporting is that it can bring about change in a community. *Democracy's Detectives* by
James Hamilton, outlines three different types of impacts that an investigative story can

produce. It can spur debates and investigations into a specific issue. Additionally, it can bring about change on an individual level in the form of resignation and firing of people in power. Lastly, a story can bring about substantive reform in policy change and community development (Hamilton 83).

The History of Investigative Reporting

The above qualities of investigative reporting show where we are now. I will now discuss how we got here through history. The history of investigative journalism dates back to the beginning of time and fluctuates based on the political sphere of the era.

An article by Mark Feldstein titled, "A Muckraking Model: Investigative Reporting Cycles in American History," outlines the history of investigative reporting and strives to infer a reason for the way its supply and demand has flucatated throughout different time periods. Feldstein credits the start of a name for investigative reporting back to 1906 when President Roosevelt coined the term 'muckracking' to describe investigative journalists and people working to hold power accountable (Feldstein 106).

The history of investigative reporting also differs widely from country to country. Media history scholar, Professor Gretchen Soderlund from the University of Oregon, explains that the history of investigative reporting is very unique to each country and varies depending on the norms of the culture. For example, in France, exposing power was an individualistic responsibility, with philosophy having an

orchestrated role in investigative work (Soderlund). Different countries see rises and spikes in investigative reporting at different times.

Different time periods in history can provide a timeline of the rise of investigative reporting in the U.S. In the years leading up to the American Revolution, investigative reporting was used to challenge British Colonial leaders (Feldstein 107). Throughout and after the American Revolution, journalists used investigative techniques to report on disputes between rival political parties (Feldstein 108). During this time, investigative reporting was characterized as partisan news.

During the 19th century, investigative reporting was not very popular. It then saw a small spike after the American Civil War, when multiple important investigative pieces were put out by the New York Times.

The second half of the 19th century saw a large increase in technology and urbanism and in consequence a big increase in newspaper production and print journalism. The late 19th century saw big contributions to investigative journalism from Nellie Bly and Ida Harris. Bly became a well known investigative female journalist who went undercover at a mental institution to report on conditions of what was happening (Fledstein 109). Harris was an investigative reporter who wrote about the lynching that was being done to African Americans (Feldstein 109). Both of these women became well known investigative reporters to the American public and around the world.

Feldstein attributes the rise in investigative reporting to the rise of the industrial era. Feldstein writes, "Ironically, this proliferation of investigative reporting was made possible by the very industrialized capitalism that the muckrakers exposed" (Feldstein 109). Drawing on a strong correlation between an increase in industrialization and the

uprising of journalism, Feldstein hypothesizes when investigative reporting will rise or fall in American history.

Professor Soderlund from the University of Oregon, offers a different explanation for the rise of investigative reporting. Rather than attribute the rise and fall of investigative reporting to when new technologies met political unrest, Soderlund hypothesizes that investigative reporting became most popular with the creation of national magazines. Reporting on the national scale took the importance of place out of journalism, and gave investigative reporters more ability to report from afar, with less connections to the place they were reporting on (Soderlund).

A lull in the history of investigative reporting can be seen during World War I to the Vietnam war, in which it was referred to as 'the dark age.' The Great Depression then saw a small spike in investigative stories followed by the 1960's which was the age of counter culture and political resistance, resulting in an increase in investigative reporting (Feldstein 110).

Feldstein concludes with a model to explain the historical trends of investigative reporting in the context of history. The model explains why the amount of investigative reporting done changes during different time periods in history. "Investigative reporting reaches a critical mass when both its supply (stimulated by new technologies and media competition) and its demand (by and aroused public hungry for exposes in time of turmoil) is high" (Feldstein 113). The peaks in history were only possible when supply and demand were equal.

The history of investigative reporting can be used to understand the current political sphere and how it may be contributing to an influx in investigative reporting.

Feldstein states, "A critical mass of investigative reporting will once again occur in American society only if and when there is a confluence of two disparate historical forces: public demand, created by some combination of political, economic, and social turmoil; and media supply, most likely the result of new technologies and journalistic competition aided by a tolerant legal climate" (Feldstein 116). This analysis echos true in the current media climate, where President Trump has stirred up social and political turmoil, while the world is simultaneously at a forefront of new technologies such as open source data and virtual reality.

The availibilty at which data has become reported and availible has become a tool for investigative reporting, and what was once know as computer-assisted reporting has evolved into data journalism.

Computer-Assisted Reporting and Data Journalism

Computer-assisted reporting, also known as CAR, was the beginning of data journalism. CAR can be defined as a collection of data that involves analysis and research gathering using a computer (Coddington 334). CAR was thought of as a tool to aid investigative reporting, even being referred to as, "The new investigative reporting," when it began (Coddington 334).

Democracy Detectives explains that CAR was able to aid heavily in stories that were relying on anonymous sources. When reporters had sources who were not willing to be identified, the credibility of the story was often in jeopardy. With CAR, journalists

could back up their stories using data instead of anonymous sources, ultimately producing a more trustworthy story (Hamilton 144).

The Watergate story is used as an example to show how CAR might have changed aspects of the reporting. Hamilton writes that Watergate was reported on using 90 percent sources and ten percent reporters, but now it might play out with 50 percent being sources, 30 percent documents, ten percent databases and two percent social media (Hamilton 152). The difference in these breakdowns show how data can change the way that stories are investigated, reported and told.

As CAR evolved, the concept of data journalism was created. It is defined as a "contemporary CAR," and includes a broader definition of data gathering. It encompasses more fields than CAR, bringing together data analysis with coding, web design, visualization, and reporting (Coddington 334).

A unique aspect of data journalism in general, is that it offers a collaborative space of open source data. The open source movement is described as a collaboration of journalists and programmers (Coddington 332). It is a unique form of journalism because it promotes collaboration and sharing rather than secrecy and competition. "This wave of quantitatively oriented journalism has deep democratic roots; various forms of it are tied to open government advocacy and the public-service tradition of investigative journalism" (Coddington 332). Open source data can be utilized to create more transparency with the public. In addition, social media such as Twitter is a modern tool that can be used to aid in stories and story ideas (Hamilton 147).

Taking Topic to Story and Psychic Numbing

Starting with a data set, journalists can begin by looking for trends and patterns. Combing through data sets can identify trends in society that are not happening as they are supposed to. Once the trend is identified the reporting can begin. Data is crucial to confirming and often finding the story, but a topic can exist without an actual story.

A story has characters, a beginning, middle, and end. Data can portray numbers of real people and communities as purely statistics, when in reality people are much more than statistics. An investigative story cannot exist without characters, because people do not have the capacity to comprehend statistics and their significance (Slovic). The data are meant to be invisible within a story - something to be included, but downplayed so as not to detract from the stories core human elements" (Coddington 340). A similar concept in phycology addresses this concern, and is called psychic numbing. Psychic numbing can be defined as people not being able to comprehend the significance of large statistics of death.

Paul Slovic at the University of Oregon has researched psychic numbing in relation to the human comprehension of genocide, but the same idea can be applied to data being used in investigative reporting. Psychic numbing shows that humans are able to comprehend and therefore care about the death of one person more than two. The research done by Dr. Slovic confirms that people are much more likely to care and feel compassion towards an individual with a story rather than statistics of people (Slovic).

A study was done where participants were given the option to donate a small amount of money to an organization called Save the Children. The first part of study

presented the choice to feed Rokia, a seven-year-old African girl. In the second part of the study, participants were given the option to contribute to the larger issue of hunger and, save millions of people from hunger. The difference of the donations between the two options were twice as much when participants were presented with a specific person (Slovic).

This relates back to investigative reporting, because data reporting is being used more and more to inform stories. Dr. Slovic's article, "Psychic numbing and genocide," says, "The numbers fail to spark emotion or feeling and thus fail to motivate action."

One of the reasons for doing investigative reporting is to hold people in power accountable and create change in communities. Seeing action after an investigative story is published will be less successful if the people in the community reading the story and the people in power being held accountable do not have an emotional response towards what they are reading (Slovic).

Method and Data Collection: The Investigative Reporting Process

The data collection for this story started by making public record requests, but when those were met with resistence and high cost, my team looked elsewhere and found the NIRBS data availible publically online. We downloaded the data and realized that in order to see the trends we wanted regarding arrests and race among the Eugene Police Department we needed to combine two of the tables availible from the NIRBS data. After taking the necessary steps to analyze the data, the story took form through interviews, background research, and continuing to look at the data. My weekly contributions and questions can be seen through the memos that I wrote to my team each week.

The first and biggest lesson learned through my process of working on an investigative story, is that investigative journalism can be expensive, and the price may indicate information being withheld intentionally. I worked on an investigative story with two other team members, looking at data that shows disparities in police arrests for African-Americans in Eugene, Oregon. The story started in January, but was a continuation of a previous lede from the year before that had encountered setbacks.

The story was originally going to stem from data that had been scraped from the Lane County Jail booking website. The reason that the data needed to be hand collected, was because the public record requests were met with resistance. Records from the Lane County Jail and arrest data from the Eugene Police Department had been previously requested, and response to the public records request had large costs and resistance to provide the records. Some of the records were estimated at a 100,000 dollar cost.

After looking around the internet for research on police data, my team found open source data online through NIRBS, (National-Incident-Based-Reporting-System), which is available through the FBI. Departments around the state report to NIRBS annually starting in 2014. The data includes arrest data, as well as race. It shows arrest data for the top 24 crimes, which are specified along with the data.

In order to analyze this data, we had to combine two different tables, where one table identified the race of the arrested person and another that had the incident ID. The tables were merged through the software Filemaker Pro. Additionally, Jennifer LaFluer, a data analyst from American University looked over the NIRBS data to check our work and confirm that our numbers matched up. LaFluer also gave us a perspective on whether the statistics were significant, because they represent a small percentage of the population.

Once we had all of the available data in the same table, we were able to look at how many of the arrests were of African-Americans, specifically looking at Eugene PD but also briefly looking at the information for all of the Oregon police departments to understand where Eugene PD was situated among the state.

Our findings from analyzing the data found that in 2015 there were 4,433 arrests made by Eugene PD, and 211 of them were the arrest of an African-American. In 2016, we found that 207 of the total 3,534 arrests were African-American. In order to understand these statistics in the context of the population, we looked at census data to see that the population of African-Americans in 2015 was 2.5 percent. This included people who identified as African-American mixed with another race.

Once we had a solid understanding of the statistics, we talked to Topher Sanders, a reporter from *Pro-Publica* about a story he had written called, "Walking While Black." During our conversation we were able to run our story pitch by him and understand the methodologies that he had used to write his story. Topher suggested that we look for an African-American neighborhood in Eugene and compare the arrest locations to that, but we concluded that there is not one neighborhood in Eugene that is majority African-American.

Our next step was to reach out to Eric Richardson, president of the NAACP in Eugene. We did an off the record interview to gain some background information on the subject and understand how the NAACP felt about the disparities in arrests.

We then conducted an on the record interview with Mark Gissiner, the police auditor who oversees the Eugene Police Department. The interview helped us understand what kind of oversight the department has in place to field complaints. Gissiner told us that Eugene PD does not have adequate resources, and therefore does not respond to 22 percent of all calls. This helped us think about possible responses from Eugene PD when we presented them with the data.

The process also included talking to Robin Quirke from the legal redress board for the NAACP and Ibrahim Coulibaly from the Human Rights Commission in Eugene. Aditionally we have reached out to the Eugene Police Deparmtent and gotten a response via email that they do not analyze arrest data for race.

The biggest takeaway from the investigative process is that the process never ends. There are always more people to talk to and more information to understand.

Understanding the amount of time that investigative stories can take is crucial to doing

investigative work.

Discussion and Concusions

The central research question of this thesis explored how psychic numbing and investigative journalism intersect, and whether it is possible to create more compassion in readers by pairing data with narrative and multimedia. In the current world, investigative reporting has an important role to hold people in power accountable for their actions. It serves to check society and watch to make sure that people are being treated as the law and societal norms state. The role of investigative journalism looks different from country to country, but the press freedom in the United States gives reporters the chance to request public documents and uncover information that is being withheld from the public's view.

Through the process of my investigative reporting, I came to understand how the concept of psychic numbing could affect how readers perceive investigative reporting. This thesis led me on an exploration of data journalism, and understanding how useful data is in conjunction with how accessible it is today. While looking at this, I also saw the juxtaposition with psychic numbing and data. Data is readily available, but when it is used as evidence in stories, can readers comprehend it? I have concluded that psychic numbing should be a concern for reporters and newsrooms working with data journalism and investigative reporting.

As a way to combat psychic numbing, reporters should use data in conjunction with narratives of people in the community. Data should be used to inform a story and show a trend, but in order to reduce psychic numbing it should be paired with narratives of individuals as well as multimedia.

Historically, investigative journalism has surged and plundered, creating a pattern that can be partially attributed to historical context and rising technologies. The creation of computer-assisted reporting and development of data journalism has provided investigative journalism with a rising technology that has become instrumental in investigative stories.

As data informs the stories that are told by reporters, caution must be exercised not to disconnect readers by presenting large statistics that are incomprehensible by human feelings. Throughout the data analysis, our team had conversations about whether the small percentages were significant to report on. We then reminded ourselves that while they are small percentages, they represent real people. The lives of people can get lost in statistics, which is why the role of storytelling takes precedent to the data.

With this academic understanding, I now turn to professional journalistic practice through the development of a best practice for balancing investigative reporting, data and psychic numbing.

Best Practice for Balancing Investigative Reporting, Data and Psychic Numbing

As someone who has studied and done investigative reporting, I will now present recommendations for newsrooms on investigative reporting and psychic numbing. The recommendations will be broken into three parts: data, background research, and interviews.

The most important recommendation for data is based off of psychic numbing as outlined in the literature review above. When doing investigative reporting and data journalism, newsrooms must use caution to avoid or limit the amount of psychic numbing that readers will feel when consuming media. Psychic numbing can be reduced by using data in conjunction with community narratives to go along with the larger trends being presented. Another way to combat psychic numbing is to use multimedia to compliment a written story, or as I will be exploring further in the future, the possibility of using simulative media to help the reader comprehend statistics better.

When it comes to obtaining data there are many data sets available online. If public record requests are difficult to obtain or take a long time, searching for the data online can often yield data that is either exactly what was requested or similar such as the NIRBS data used in the investigative story I worked on. Finding and obtaining the data will take persistence and problem solving from reporters.

The point of using data is to identify trends that indicate a problem in society. Pattern recognition is crucial for investigative reporting and data journalism. The best way to identify and solidify these trends is to continue to look back at the data throughout the investigative process.

Lastly, data can become stronger and more relevant if situated among a baseline. For example, the story I worked on compared arrest rates to the population of African-Americans in Eugene. Creating some sort of ratio between data and census data gives the reader context.

The next set of recommendations address background research. The most important recommendation for newsrooms is to look at other stories that have been written with similar methodology or data sets. Reaching out to the authors of those stories and asking about how they did the investigation and the response that they got can help newsrooms that are trying to use similar methodology.

Additionally, doing background research to understand the community that is being investigated is an important step in working on the investigative story. This can be done by researching laws and policies in the community, or understanding the geography and neighborhood dynamics. Understanding these parts of the community can guide the reporter to different community groups and organizations to reach out to for interviews.

After doing data analysis and background research, the next step is to conduct interviews. An important lesson learned from doing interviews is that snowball sampling employs itself, and interviewees will almost always present more people to talk to if asked. Secondly, reporters can use discretion about how many findings they should reveal to the interview subject. Lastly, there is always someone else in the community or beyond to talk to. To best alleviate psychic numbing, investigations should report on as many narratives as possible that accompany the data.

My final recommendation for newsrooms is that they should be doing more investigative work. The literature review finds that consumers appreciate investigative work, and that reading it from a media outlet will cause them to gain trust in the outlet. The viewership gained by subscribers who want quality investigative reporting outweighs the economic costs from the news outlets that they engage with.

Sample Memos 1 - 4

Memo 1

1)   In order for our story to continue, we must prove that people in the African-American community feel this is an issue. While we have data to prove that police are arresting African-Americans at rates three times higher than white civilians, the data does not matter if people in the African-American community do not feel strongly about the issue. In order to go forward with this, we need to talk to someone in the African-American community.

2)   Going off of the first one, the first step we should take is to reach out to individuals and groups in the African-American community. I was thinking a place to start might be on campus with the Black Male Alliance. We can reach out to them and tell them about the investigative work that we are doing and try and interview them. Another step that we should take is to continue looking at the actual data and understanding it. If we all want, we can try to look at the Hispanic community as well by going through the data and looking at last names. The third step that we should take is for the three of us to personally reach out to the Eugene Police Department. If we talk to them earlier rather than later, then I believe that their response may be more accommodating.

3)   This weekend I was looking at documents from the Oregon Department of Corrections about the racial breakdown of people incarcerated at the state level. I found it really helpful for understanding the larger issue that is at play. The Eugene Police

Department is part of a much larger issue in the state of Oregon and across the country where a disproportionate amount of African-Americans are arrested.

Since we are not being given access to the public records of the Eugene Police Department or the Lane County Jail, we could try and request records from Multnomah County and see what the response is there to compare the data we have on Eugene with Multnomah County and also use it as comparison to understand how the different police departments in Oregon respond to our public records request.

Lastly, it could also be helpful to see if there any previous cases against the Eugene Police Department for racial issues.

4)   We need to understand the police protocol for making arrests and citations. How are they trained? Do the racial disparities start from training or is it based more on the individual officers? Is there a culture of racism present at all at Eugene PD? I also would really like to understand better the public records request law and how they are getting around not releasing their records so that when we go talk to them we can have clear and strong evidence to back up why they should release their records to us. District attorneys or lawyers would probably be the best people to help us understand these rules.

5)   I am willing to reach out to the Black Male Alliance and also look throughout Lane County for other groups that could give us an African-American perspective on the issue. I also want to spend time with my team looking at all of the data that we have and understanding exactly how we can talk about it to portray it to the public. Lastly, I want to look more into the public records law and understand the loopholes that departments seem to find in not releasing their records and also talk to Brent more about

what kind of responses and excuses he has been given on why they will not release the records.

February 11, 2018

Memo 2

This week I will take the lead on contacting Eric Richardson, the president of the NAACP chapter in Eugene. By reaching out to him, I hope to make a strong connection to a leader in the African American community who can provide insight and potentially connect us with other people to reach out to.

My team also talked to Topher Sanders from the *ProPublica* story "Walking While Black," who not only provided many good pointers for what to further research for our story, but also suggested understanding where the African-American community lives in Lane County before reaching out to leaders.

Topher also recommended looking for people at the state level who may be in charge of data that we can use, and talk to them about the data. For "Walking While Black," Topher said that they did not go through the police department at all to request data. Instead they went to the state level and asked state officials for data that was reported to them.

As this week goes forward, I want to research and understand better what kind of arrest charges there are for African-Americans. Are many of the charges felonies? Or are they minor drug charges? These are very important questions to understand for going forward.

We will also be looking at what areas the arrests are happening and looking for African-American neighborhoods and churches in Eugene.

Going into last week, my goals for the week were different than what ended up being accomplished due to the finding of the FBI data by Morgan. Since that data was discovered early in the week, I got sidetracked a bit on other tasks and instead spent time looking at the data and working with Brent to figure out how to how put the data tables together to figure out which arrests went with which agencies.

After working on this, I looked at other stories that have used this crime data and saw that the *New York Times* did a story called "Violent Crime in the U.S. Rises For Second Consecutive Year." This story was only published on September 25, 2017, so they have used the data fairly recently.

Another similar article that uses the FBI crime data is "America's Uneven Crime Spike" published in the Atlantic on September 25, 2017. This shows that big name publishers are relying on the FBI crime data to report.

Now that we know we can combine data tables, we will need to work as a team this week and meet often to crunch actual numbers to draft a query. I feel that this is important to do as a team, so that we can all be on the absolute same page about what the data is showing up.

Once we have our data set, we should start conducting interviews. As I said I got distracted with the data last week, but this week I will for sure contact community members who we think may be able to put a personal narrative to the data.

At this point, I think our team is in a good place to start meeting often and reporting hard on the data that we know to be true. It would be great to all try and talk to different people in the community, without giving away our story completely. I think that our story is headed in a direction that will aid the public in knowing more about how the police department arrests people according to race.

In terms of what I want to know but don't, is why is Eugene PD pushing back so much on releasing their records? What will they say about the data that they have reported to the FBI? I also think that we should define the limitations of the data as early as possible to understand the pushback that we might get.

February 18, 2018

Memo 3

What is the first thing we must prove for our story to go forward?

- In order to continue on with our story from here, we need to talk to the NAACP and other African-American leaders in the community. This week I reached out to the NAACP and specifically Eric Richardson, and they responded promptly saying that we will be able to talk early this week. In talking to them, I am going to ask them about if this issue is being talked about in the African- American community, and also see if there are communities leaders who they can recommend I talk to.

- Additionally, in our talk with Topher, it was suggested that we find an ex-cop to talk to from Eugene PD. While I think this might be challenging to find initially, I want to look into it this week.

What are the next steps we should take

- The next step to take is to talk to the NAACP this week. After that, we will hopefully be connected to multiple people that we can talk to and try and put a narrative to the story.

- Additionally, as Topher also suggested we should look deeper into the census data and determine areas where the arrests we are looking at were made. In understanding location we could hopefully determine if there were specific police assigned to specific areas.

What documents or records should we examine or find

- In terms of documents to look at, I think we should continue to look at the data set that we have from the FBI and write out step by step our findings. I know we have looked at numbers for specific kinds of arrests, but we should write it out so we can clearly articulate what our data says when talking to people in the community.

- I am also wondering if we are going to be using any of the scraped data that we have from the Lane County jail bookings? If so, we should take this week to understand that data more.

What laws or rules do we need to understand?

- I think we need to talk to members of the African-American community and figure out if there are black neighborhoods or specific places where we can cross reference with the location of arrests.

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- Additionally I think we need to look more at Springfield, and understand if the dynamics are any different than the Eugene area. We have been focusing a lot on Eugene PD, but we have data for all of the different areas.

What are you willing to work to do this week toward these goals?

- This week I will interview (hopefully) Eric Richardson from the NAACP. Once I've done that, I will reach out to any community members that are suggested for me to talk to. I am hoping that this will lead our story in directions that are important for it to go forward.

- I have also emailed Lee Van Der Loo and Nick Budnick for my "How'd They Do That Story," and I am hoping that speaking with either of them will help give us some insight into our story.

- I also think that we should make time as a group to meet together a few times this week

February 25, 2018

Memo 4

What is the first thing we must prove for our story to go forward?

After talking to Eric Richardson, I feel like the first thing we need to understand is how bi-racial census data could disrupt the ratios that we have come up with through our data. He pointed out that many people who would be identified as African-

American by police, would identify themselves differently. Richardson estimated that this could increase the population to 10 - 15 percent. That would create a big difference in our ratios for arrests disproportionate to population.

In order to try and understand this, we can start by looking at the census data more careful and understanding the population percentage in Eugene who identify as multiracial. Even though this will not be statistically correct as it will include people who are multiracial of all races, it will be a good place to start.

What are the next steps we should take:

For this week, our next steps are going to be getting help on understanding the data, and reaching out to many more people in the community. In order to understand the data, I am going to reach out to Jean Kjellstrand, who was recommended as someone who works with crime data and may be able to help us read it better. Richardson also suggested that we reach out to Sponsors, as they are helping combat recidivism which has to do with this story because the prison population is disproportionately African-American. I am talking to Sponsors for a solutions story that I am writing, so I will try to ask them questions relating to this issue as well.

What documents or records should we examine or find

We should look into the statistics from the John Serbu Campus, because Richardson said that about 50 percent of the children there are African-American. I am curious as to how this could play into our story.

What laws or rules do we need to understand

I still want to understand what the training looks like for Eugene PD, especially when it comes to profiling. Richardson talked a lot about profiling and I think that it would be beneficial to look more into how profiling works and how it fits into our story.

What are you willing to work to do this week toward these goals

As I mentioned earlier in the memo, I will contact Jean this week about potentially helping us with the data set.

I will also talk to Sponsors and hopefully as a group we can figure out what we want to find out from them.

I am hoping that we can meet as a group multiple times this week, and hopefully go from there. We can figure out who should call who because we got a big contact list from Richardson.

Podcast Script

I created a podcast script as a portion of my thesis because audio is what I have specialized in during my time in the School of Journalism and Communication. The podcast script is a compilation of reporting and interviews from working on the story.

Lily: The University of Oregon *Catalyst Journalism Projec*t has analyzed nationally available data on the arrest rates of the Eugene Police Department in Eugene, Oregon. Although when asked, the Eugene Police Department said they do not collect data on race, all police departments in the state of Oregon are now using a system called NIRBS. NIRBS or National-Institute-Reporting-Based-System, is a program through the FBI where departments report data on the top 24 crimes. This data includes incident number, type of crime and information on the arrestee such as race.

When Professor Brent Walth from the *Catalyst Journalism Project* originally made a request for public records with arrest data, his requests were not fufilled. When he requested data from the Lane County Jail, he was told that it would cost around 100,000 dollars to obtain the data. More recently, he was given the records for a cost of 435 dollars.

Data analyzed from NIRBS, show that African-Americans in Eugene are being arrested at a rate that is disproportionate to the population. According to census data, the population of people who identify as African-American or as mixed race with African-American, is 2.5 percent in the Eugene area. When Eugene police arrest someone, the officer determines the race.

In 2015, police made 4433 arrests, 211 of which were African-American. In 2016 there were 3,534 arrests, amounting in 207 of them being African-American. These numbers present a 2 to 1 ratio of arrests, showing a disparity.

Eugene Police Department does not show the highest among the state of Oregon.

The Eugene Police Department has a police auditor who works separate from the department and oversees conduct. Mark Gissiner is the auditor in Eugene. His job is to look at trends of excessive force used by the department, and also receive and respond to complaints of racial profiling done by officers.

Mark: "One of the things they wanted to do was create an environment outside of the police department where people could come in and complain about things" 815

Mark: "We started in 2008, actually started taking complaints"

"And we struggled because typically the police department doesn't like the external oversight bodies" 202

Lily: Not all police departments in the country have an unaffiliated oversight committee such as a police auditor. The goal of the auditor according to their website, says, "To provide an accessible, safe, impartial and responsive intake systems for complaints."

The NAACP chapter in Eugene, Oregon also has a place where community members can report complaints, specifically of racially motivated issues.

Robin Quirke from the legal redress committee of the NAACP in Eugene spoke to Catalyst about her role and what the committee is achieving.

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Robin: "I volunteer on the legal redress committee, so basically we have an online incident report so people if they've had something happen, an altercation, they can fill out somebody will just oftentimes thing of the NAACP if someone is incarcerated or being held then what we do is we have a couple of lawyers who work with us and we will call the person if we can and it really helps if they have somebody to talk to if nothing else and then we pass that information along to the lawyers who work with us and then they let us know if they think that something that can be done and if they do think that then they will meet with that person and do a free consultation."

Lily: In addition to the police auditor and NAACP representatives, The Catalyst Journalism Project also spoke with Ibrahim Coulibaly, a member from the Human Rights Commission in Eugene.

Ibrahim: "The human rights commission, what we do is to advise the city council on any kind of human right issues. We have work groups so the commissioners create work groups with the community partners."

Lily: The commission will offer policy recommendations to the city regarding human right issues.

Ibrahim: "We also do a lot of support listening to people."

Ibrahim: "Sometimes people don't know where to go, who to talk to, should I call the police or not, should I report, sometimes people don't feel comfortable."

Lily: Eugene has a police auditor to oversee the police department, a human's right commission to recommend policy and support human right complaints, and groups such as the NAACP, but the NIRBS data involving race and arrests has not been analyzed by these groups to the knowledge of the Catalyst Journalism Project. The Eugene Police Department said in an email that they do not collect data on race and arrests.

Mark Gissiner uses software called Blue Team to track patterns of excessive force use.

Mark: "I get crime stats and I compare the use of excessive force with the number of arrests."

Lily: Gissiner also receives racial profiling complaints. When asked about them he reported to the Catalyst Project that Eugene police are low on resources and all of their policing is through responding to calls.

Mark: "In nearly every situation they're there because they are called"

Mark: "22 percent of calls there's no response."

Lily: The disparities in arrests found in data analysis by the Catalyst Journalism Project represent a larger national issue that also encompass the types of calls that police are getting from community members. Quirke comments on these types of calls.

Robin: "It's everywhere, so I wouldn't just blame Eugene. What's unique to us is that we think we're special and that we're above it and I think that's the problem. And I think that's why people who come from other states are like "wow it's even more racist here," and being a student at the u of o, and speaking of police officers, and I have talked with an African American male who did his undergrad here and now he goes to the law school and he said that he and his friends do not feel comfortable with the campus police officers. You know, they're nervous around them and I think if you were to ask around, and if you do dig into some of the hate crime and people of color do get pulled over more, they do, they just do, they are getting targeted. So those numbers are just the way it is."

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