

Title: Missing White Woman Syndrome: Journalistic Understanding of Disparities in Crime Coverage

Abstract: Missing White Woman Syndrome (MWWS) is the term coined to describe the phenomenon in which White and female victims of violent crimes are favored in media coverage. This research seeks to understand journalistic awareness of MWWS through the use of semi-structured interviews with eight participants. The participants were career journalists who have covered a variety of crime stories. The research showed that journalists are aware of MWWS and view it as a problem within the field of journalism. They reflected on issues of identity, privilege, and representation, but most stopped short of a direct confrontation with the intrinsic and systemic racism that exists within the field. They also acknowledged the limitations that exist in a capitalist system that prioritizes profit. This research provides a jumping off point for other researchers to continue working to understand MWWS. It is also a starting point for journalists to engage with their work and actively confront their place in a flawed system.