

Editorial Board Role-Play

You and the other students in your group are the editorial board for the weekly newspaper *Zeta*, based in Tijuana, Mexico. You regularly meet to discuss and determine as a group how the paper will handle its coverage of various issues, especially those that are controversial or put the paper or its staff and their loved ones at risk. You frequently refer to these nine principles of journalism to guide your decisions:
<http://www.journalism.org/resources/principles>

Context of *Zeta's* Reporting

Tijuana and the surrounding area have seen an increase in drug trafficking and related violence as rival cartels battle for territory. Each cartel protects its business interests by paying off corrupt police and government officials and by violently solving any conflicts.

Reporting on corrupt politicians and organized crime has been extremely dangerous for journalists in Mexico. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 25 journalists have been murdered since 1992. In 22 of those cases, the perpetrators of the crimes have not been brought to justice. (See <http://www.cpj.org/killed/americas/mexico/murder.php>)

In Tijuana, journalists have been threatened. Others have been targeted for assassination:

- Héctor Félix "Gato" Miranda, *Zeta* founder, assassinated in 1988
- Jesús Blancornelas, *Zeta* founder, attacked in 1997
- Benjamín Flores, *Siete Días* co-founder, assassinated in 1997

Today's Issue for Discussion

One of the paper's reporters, Francisco Ortiz, has evidence that a large number of hitmen from the Arellano Félix drug cartel are obtaining fake IDs through the attorney general's office. He wants to print the story, along with the ID photos of the men, in which they are all wearing the same coat and tie. Right now, these hitmen are anonymous and are able to go out in public. Printing their pictures will expose them and make them angry. It will also reveal corruption in the attorney general's office. Ortiz wants the article to run under his byline.

Decide: Should the paper publish the story? If so, should Ortiz have a byline?

Benefits:	Risks:
Board's Decision:	