

Where Do We Go to Get Our Reputations Back?

The urge to rush to print the picture of an alleged murderer must be mindlessly irresistible, how else would you explain The News' decision to print the picture even though the caption clearly stated the suspect would probably be released. The fact that articles in that edition of the paper practically exonerated the suspect puts the decision to run the picture in an even more unflattering light. Allegations, it has been said, are usually on Page One, exonerations are buried inside the paper (almost always after the damage is done).

Newspapers, and the media in general, should examine the value of the practice of brandishing alleged criminals on their front pages, in some cases destroying the lives of people who are ultimately proven to be innocent. Are we not all innocent until proven guilty? Does the prurient interest of the populace absolve the media from following the practice of common decency? Somewhere Richard Jewell is nodding in sober recognition. Where do we go to get our reputation back?