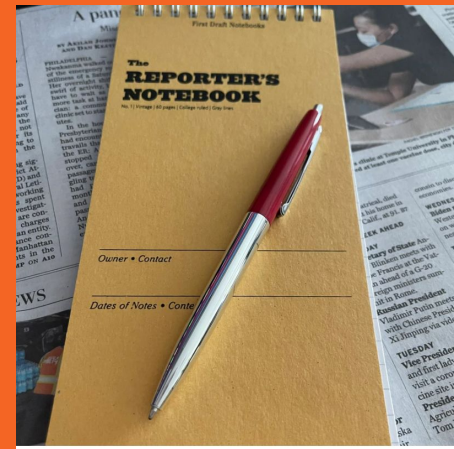

How to Build a Beat



An intro to specialized reporting

Who Am I?

Veteran law enforcement beat reporter...

Started as a police reporting intern for outlets such as Newsday + The Washington Post.

Covered city cops in Philly and the New York Daily News.

Moved onto national law enforcement, first for The Marshall Project.

Now I am at NBC News Investigations

What is a beat?

Specialized reporting made up one or more related topics.



Let's name some beats

Have any ideas?



You are assigned a beat, now what?

Know the main players:

Government agencies and their spokespeople

Former officials who aren't shy

Academics who study the topic

Community activists pushing for reforms

Lobbying organizations

Government agencies

Rule #1 – Don't rely on the agencies you are assigned to cover for accurate information. Make sure to verify what they tell you.

Don't be lazy. Cultivate sources outside the spokesperson's office.

Learn local public records law to access documents and data.

Be persistent. Keep asking questions.

How to build sources

Attend public events: School board meetings, city council hearings, police departments hold community meetings.

Find officials to take to lunch who can speak to you “on background.” Make sure to get usable details “on record.”

Seek out former officials no longer working in government.

Give out your contact information like it's candy.

As you grow, so do your sources



FOIA and local public information acts

FOIA = Freedom of Information Act is a federal law


Then there are local versions in cities and states

How do you write a request?

[EXTERNAL] New Request Created :: D004220-022422



DALLASTX Support <dallastx@govqa.us>

To  Weichselbaum, Simone (NBCUniversal)

Retention Policy MBX INBOX (60 days)

Expires 4/25/2022



Reply



Reply All



Forward



Thu 2/24/2022 3:43 P

 Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

**“Hello,
Per Under the Texas Public Information Act I am making the following request:**

- **The dollar amount of settlements, jury awards, and similar payments paid out by the city of Dallas pertaining to the Dallas Police Department from January 1, 2017 through the date on which this request is filled regarding Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and/or Texas Labor Code Chapter 21**
- **Please include each paid amount, name of plaintiff or person receiving the funds, the date of payment, date of claim, and the case category and subcategory.**

Please send these records in an .XLS file or similar electronic format.

If you deny any portion of this request, please cite the specific statute that you feel justifies each exemption

1 On 12/08/2017, a Corporate Investigator with the Home Depot, Adam Konesey, reached out to Detectives and requested assistance with an
 2 investigation into an organized retail crime group. Adam stated they have been watching the group for several months and requested the Volusia
 3 County Sheriff's Office adopt the case.
 4
 5 On 01/03/2018, Detective Paul was assigned this case. Adam Konesey provided the following information;
 6
 7 In April of 2017, Home Depot stores began to contact Adam Konesey, in regards to large amounts of well and effluent pumps being refunded
 8 however they were not being sold, indicating they were being stolen at some point. The store managers stated they did not know where they were
 9 being stolen from however they knew for sure it was Home Depot's merchandise as they were marked as such.
 10
 11 Area stores began to notice and report large shortages of well and effluent pumps from their inventory. Many of the stores do not have Loss
 12 Prevention making it very difficult to determine where the thefts were taking place.
 13
 14 Throughout the investigation, two primary suspects were identified as Steven Proctor and Amelia La-Polla, who seem to recruit other suspects to
 15 commit the thefts and do fraudulent returns.

NOTICE TO APPEAR		MANDATORY APPEARANCE <input type="checkbox"/>	YOU NEED NOT APPEAR IN COURT BUT MUST COMPLY WITH INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF YOUR COPY <input type="checkbox"/>	FINE, AND COST AMOUNT
I AGREE TO APPEAR IN COURT HEREIN TO ANSWER THE OFFENSE CHARGED OR TO PAY THE FINE INDICATED, I UNDERSTAND THAT SHOULD I WILLFULLY FAIL TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COURT AS REQUIRED, OR PAY THE LISTED FINE, I MAY BE HELD IN CONTEMPT OF COURT AND A WARRANT FOR MY ARREST WILL BE ISSUED.				
SIGNATURE OF DEFENDANT		Date	SIGNATURE OF JUVENILE PARENT OR CUSTODIAN	
			RELATIONSHIP TO JUVENILE	
Sworn to and subscribed before me, the undersigned this 23 day of <u>May</u> 2018		I swear/affirm the above statements are correct and true		RI Thumb
Name: <u>[Signature] #8065</u>		OFFICER'S/COMPLAINANT'S SIGNATURE		
Notary Public <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement or Corrections Officer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		PAUL, JAYSON		8070
Personally Known <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produced Identification <input type="checkbox"/>		NAME (PRINTED)		ID NUMBER
Type of Identification: <u>Det. G. Morris -8068</u>				
OFFICIAL USE ONLY		Inmate Number & Facility:		

2018 MAY 24 AM 8:14
 CLEARING HOUSE
 JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER
 VOLUSIA COUNTY FL

Dallas 2021 murder arrests



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A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
SuspLastName	SuspFirstName	SuspRace	SuspSex	SuspDOB	format	Current date	age	
Ellis	Raymon Lee	B	Male	15-Oct-01	10/15/2001	02/02/2022	20	
Ellis	Remon Denard	B	Male	12-Jun-00	6/12/2000	02/02/2022	21	
Nichols	Julius Ray	B	Male	06-Aug-83	8/6/1983	02/02/2022	38	
Scott	Joshua Emmanu	B	Male	21-Apr-99	4/21/1999	02/02/2022	22	
Wesley	William Edward	B	Male	01-Dec-94	12/1/1994	02/02/2022	27	
Trevino	Isaac Lee	H	Male	16-Aug-86	8/16/1986	02/02/2022	35	
Sowels	Shaquille	B	Male	06-Nov-94	11/6/1994	02/02/2022	27	
Persley	Terrell	B	Male	15-Mar-96	3/15/1996	02/02/2022	25	
Sibrian	Anthony Alexand	H	Male	19-Sep-03	9/19/2003	02/02/2022	18	
Austin	Mitchell Wayne	B	Male	30-Jan-93	1/30/1993	02/02/2022	29	
Casillas	Pedro Miguel	H	Male	20-Feb-97	2/20/1997	02/02/2022	24	
Tolbert	Jairus Laanthon	B	Male	24-May-96	5/24/1996	02/02/2022	25	
Iefferson	Raphael	B	Male	25-Sep-87	9/25/1987	02/02/2022	34	
Williams	Javius Devarius	B	Male	26-Jun-00	6/26/2000	02/02/2022	21	
Dixon	Demond	B	Male	07-Aug-78	8/7/1978	02/02/2022	43	
valdez	Timothy Kaylon	H	Male	22-Aug-02	8/22/2002	02/02/2022	19	

Other ideas

Talk to reporters in other cities who share your beat.

Join media organizations:

Education Writers Association

Religion Newswriters Association

Investigative Reporters and Editors

The Society of Professional Journalists

National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association

National Association of Black Journalists

National Association of Hispanic Journalists

Asian American Journalists Association

Any Questions....



Contact info

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NBC News Investigations

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