

1. **Name:** Casey Frank, Investigations Editor, Miami Herald

2. **Reporter:** Julie K. Brown, investigative reporter, Miami Herald; Visual journalist: Emily Michot, Miami Herald

3. **Brief description:** “Perversion of Justice” was a three-part series that examined how a wealthy, politically connected New York hedge fund manager – accused of molesting and sexually assaulting hundreds of underage girls – was able to manipulate a U.S prosecutor to help cover up the scope of his crimes and keep his victims in the dark – all in violation of the federal Crime Victims’ Rights Act.

4. **Conflicting values:** This project began before the launch of the #MeToo movement in an effort to find victims of Jeffrey Epstein, who had molested countless girls in Palm Beach, but had never been federally prosecuted. The federal prosecutor in the case, Alexander Acosta, had been nominated by President Trump as secretary of labor, yet he was barely questioned about the case at his confirmation hearing.

Epstein’s victims, who were 13 to 16, were now in their late 20s and early 30s. They had been traumatized multiple times – first by Epstein – then by the state attorney, federal prosecutors, Epstein’s lawyers and the jailers that gave him special treatment. Most of them had never spoken about their ordeal, believing that they had been betrayed by the very people who were supposed to hold him accountable, including the media, which they felt had contributed to their pain by sensationalizing the sexual aspect of the story around the famous people involved (Trump, Clinton, Prince Andrew) instead of focusing on how the criminal justice system failed them.

We therefore had to convince the victims (as well as two key law enforcement sources who participated in the project) that we were doing a story that had never been done before.

5. **Options considered to resolve conflicts:** Reporter Julie K. Brown took several months to track down the victims, who had been identified as Jane Does in public documents. She identified 80 possible victims and was able to reach out to nearly 60 of them. Most of them did not want to talk because they had never told anyone about the assaults, as they were shamed into silence after prosecutors characterized them as child prostitutes. Brown wrote them letters, explaining her desire to expose – not Epstein, who had been written about before – but the prosecutors who were complicit, working hand in hand with Epstein’s powerful lawyers to keep the scope of his crimes from both his victims and the public.

In order to tell their story, however, Brown had to research every court document in the case, which ultimately explored the relationships between the ambitious lawyers involved on both sides of the system and how these relationships tainted the case against his victims.

Some of the key sources in the story did not want to participate in the project until the Herald assured them that its editors would not kill the project should Epstein or others threaten the paper as was done with other media in the past. Several of these sources felt that the Herald would not publish this story for fear of a lawsuit.

6. **Resolutions/Rationale:** The investigations editor spoke to these sources, assuring them that the newspaper would not be bullied by either Epstein's wealth or by his attorneys. This assurance, however, meant that the story had to be bulletproof. To that end, the Herald spent a year examining every public document involving Epstein (amounting to more than 10,000 documents) so that the story was based on court records, law enforcement files and original interviews. Every single sentence in the story was backed up by research that had been thoroughly vetted, which made the story solid. The series was all the more powerful, however, when Brown and visual journalist Emily Michot put together three videos, one a longform, that featured the women talking about the case, as well as the police chief, who had never before spoken about how state and federal prosecutors tried to sabotage their investigation.