



The Sift[®] News Goggles

Tracking developing stories

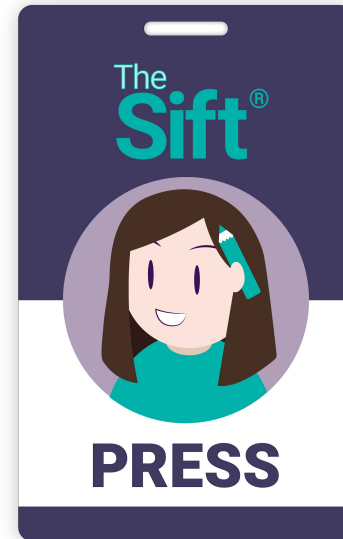
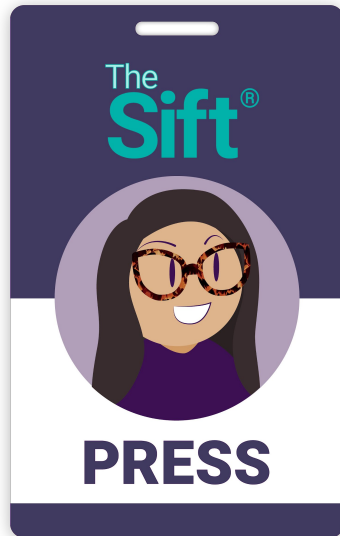
March 22, 2021

Warning:

This activity includes information about fatal shootings that some people may find disturbing.

First things first

- Be sure to view these slides in presentation mode.
- Suzannah and Hannah, former reporters who work at NLP, are going to help you examine this topic through journalists' eyes.



As the Atlanta-area deadly spa shootings showed, reliable information can be scarce and change rapidly when major stories first break. How do journalists handle newsgathering when stories are still developing? How is this fluid situation reflected in news reports?



News organizations have to weigh which sources are credible and work to verify information as it evolves – all under immediate deadline pressure. Sometimes, details may turn out to be incorrect, or new information emerges that makes the story more accurate and provides important additional context. (See [“Shooting coverage debates”](#) for more details on how this particular story was covered.)

This week, let’s examine how some news organizations label updates and show transparency in their newsgathering on developing stories. Grab your news goggles. Let’s go!



NPR



Here's one story.

NATIONAL

8 People, Many Of Them Asian, Shot Dead At Atlanta-Area Spas; Man Arrested

Updated March 17, 2021 · 2:37 AM ET ⓘ

JACLYN DIAZ



VANESSA ROMO



Let's take a closer look at the language that appears at the bottom of this news report ...




This is a developing story. Some things reported by the media will later turn out to be wrong. We will focus on reports from officials and other authorities, credible news outlets and reporters who are at the scene. We will update as the situation develops.

Correction

March 16, 2021

A previous version of this story said all of the people killed were women. In fact, one of those killed in Cherokee County was a man.



What do you notice about these sentences? “Developing” means that information can change rapidly as new details emerge. Often, “officials and other authorities” provide some of the first tidbits of information during breaking news events, but initial reports from official sources may later turn out to be incorrect or incomplete as new information comes to light. Remember: Official sources — such as police or investigators — are only one type of source that journalists use. (Eyewitnesses and experts are two other types.) With all sources, journalists work to corroborate and verify information as stories evolve.




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They warned us this could happen. Under the language explaining that this is a developing story, here is a correction that acknowledges an error occurred during the newsgathering process. Both the italicized sentences and the correction show transparency.



WRCB-TV

Here's another story. Do you see any clues that show this story is still developing?

NEWS

UPDATE: Officials identify victims of shooting at a spa in Acworth, Georgia

Cherokee County has released the names of the five victims who were shot during the Tuesday shooting.

Tuesday, March 16th 2021, 9:02 PM EDT

Updated: Wednesday, March 17th 2021, 12:21 PM EDT

Updated By CNN Newswire

We see at least three!

NEWS

UPDATE: Officials identify victims of shooting at a spa in Acworth, Georgia

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Tuesday, March 16th 2021, 9:02 PM EDT

Updated: Wednesday, March 17th 2021, 12:21 PM EDT

Updated By **CNN Newswire**

Time for a quick News Goggles review! WRCB-TV, an NBC affiliate in Chattanooga, Tennessee, credits “CNN Newswire” in this report. Remember: News organizations sometimes rely on reporting from bigger outlets with a broader reach, including wire services like this one. Wire stories help get information quickly to readers, as they are often among the first reports available during breaking news events.



UPDATE: Officials in Cherokee County have released names of the five victims who were shot during Tuesday's shooting at Young's Asian Massage in Acworth, Georgia.



According to a statement from the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office, four victims were killed at that location:

- Delaina Ashley Yaun, 33, of Acworth
- Paul Andre Michels, 54, of Atlanta
- Xiaojie Yan, 49, of Kennesaw
- Daoyou Feng, 44, unknown address

One victim was injured and is in stable condition:

- Elcias R. Hernandez-Ortiz, 30, of Acworth

The word "UPDATE" signals that this is new information. In this case, journalists have obtained the names and other details about shooting victims through "a statement from the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office." In breaking news events, victims' identities are often unknown or unavailable in initial news reports. While this sheriff's office has provided crucial details like name spellings, ages and current cities for those injured or killed, the reporting process isn't over. An important, typical next step is to try to reach relatives, friends or others who knew the victims to corroborate information and learn more about them.



PREVIOUS STORY: During a Wednesday briefing, Baker said the victim is in stable condition at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital in Marietta, Georgia.

PREVIOUS STORY: Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said today that police determined the Atlanta spa shooting suspect was on his way to Florida "perhaps to carry out additional shootings."

PREVIOUS STORY: Authorities in metro Atlanta are investigating whether shootings at three massage parlors that left eight people dead and one wounded are connected.



At the bottom of the story, WRCB-TV calls out previously reported information (excerpted here) with "PREVIOUS STORY" labels. We can see how information gets more specific as reporting progresses.



The four victims were female and appear to be Asian, Bryant said, adding it was too early to say what their connection was to the spas.

This story is developing. Check back for updates.

The-CNN-Wire

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Like NPR, this story includes italicized sentences at the bottom, flagging this as a developing story that will be updated.



WSB-TV

8 killed, 1 injured in shootings at 3 spas in metro Atlanta; suspect in custody



The latest victim in a wave of attacks on the Asian-American community sent her alleged attacker to an area hospital.

8 killed, 1 injured in shootings at 3 spas in metro Atlanta; suspect in custody

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By: [WSBTV.com News Staff](#)

Updated: March 16, 2021 - 11:56 PM

WOODSTOCK, Ga. – LATEST STORY HERE: [FBI joins investigation into deadly spa rampage; 8 dead, 1 injured](#)

Here's another story.

Let's see if we can find any labels on this report ...

By: [WSBTV.com News Staff](#)

Updated: March 16, 2021 - 11:56 PM

WOODSTOCK, Ga. LATEST STORY HERE: [FBI joins investigation into deadly spa rampage; 8 dead, 1 injured](#)

The man accused of killing eight people and injuring another person at three metro Atlanta spas Tuesday afternoon has been caught.



Have you ever noticed the name of a city in all capital letters at the beginning of a story? This is called a “dateline” and indicates that the story was covered by a journalist with feet on the ground there. This story from WSB-TV, an ABC affiliate in Atlanta, was reported from Woodstock, Georgia. The “LATEST STORY” label helps show it is still developing.



The Cherokee County Sheriff's Office said the suspect, Robert Aaron Long, 21, of Woodstock, was captured around 8:30 p.m. following a chase in Crisp County in south Georgia, about three hours away from the shooting scene.

Stay with [WSBTV.com](https://www.wsbtv.com) and watch Channel 2 Action News for updates on this developing story



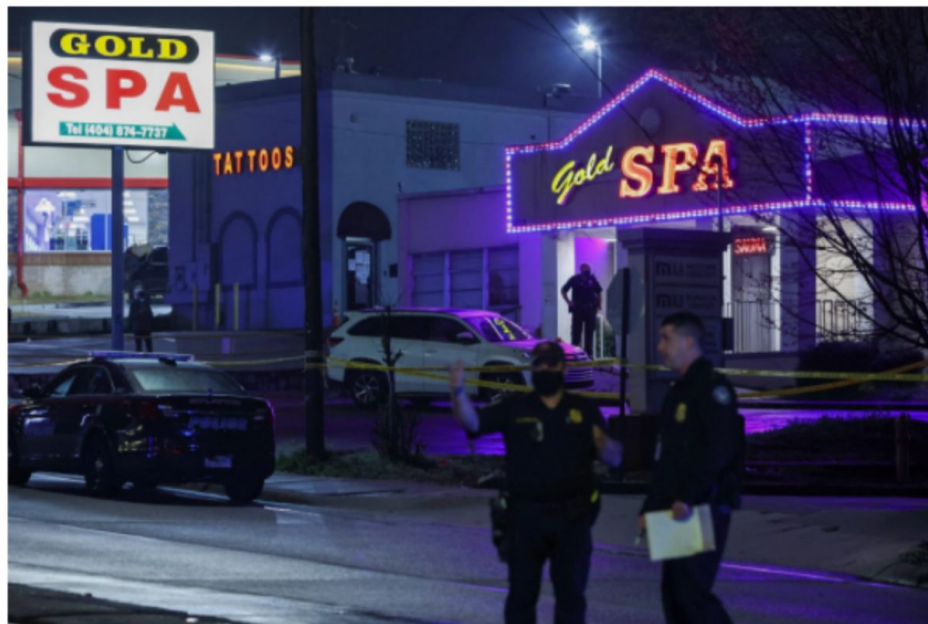
Here is another reminder telling us to look “for updates on this developing story.” While similar wording has appeared at the bottom of other examples, here it appears a few paragraphs into the story. In breaking news events, it’s a good idea to consult multiple credible news organizations to compare story developments.



The New York Times

8 People Killed in Atlanta-Area Massage Parlor Shootings

Six of the victims were Asian, the authorities said, raising fears that there may have been a racial motivation to the crimes.



Officers outside Gold Spa, one of the three massage parlors in the Atlanta area where people were killed on Tuesday evening. Christopher Ahika Berry/Reuters

By Richard Fausset and Neil Vigdor

Published March 18, 2021 Updated March 18, 2021, 5:30 a.m. ET

[For the latest updates on the [Atlanta spa shootings](#), read our live briefing.]

Here's another example. First, let's look at the dateline.

By **Richard Fausset and Neil Vigdor**

Published March 16, 2021 Updated March 18, 2021, 5:39 a.m. ET

[For the latest updates on the [Atlanta spa shootings](#), read our live briefing.]

ACWORTH, Ga. → Eight people were shot to death at three massage parlors in the [Atlanta](#) area on Tuesday evening, the authorities said, raising fears that the crimes may have targeted people of [Asian](#) descent.

Richard Fausset reported from Acworth, Ga., and Neil Vigdor from Greenwich, Conn. Reporting was contributed by Sean Keenan from Atlanta; Azi Paybarah from Albany, N.Y.; Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio from New York; Derrick Bryson Taylor from London; and Choe Sang-Hun from Seoul.



The dateline tells us that the Times had an on-the-ground presence in Acworth, Georgia. Skipping ahead to the bottom of the story provides more details about which journalist reported from Acworth. We can also see where other journalists reporting this story were located. Looks like two were even overseas — all the way in Seoul and London!



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Reporting was contributed by Sean Keenan from Atlanta; Azi Paybarah from Albany, N.Y.; Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio from New York; Derrick Bryson Taylor from London; and Choe Sang-Hun from Seoul.

In the digital age, a lot of reporting can be done remotely through social media, phone interviews, emails and news conferences broadcast online. But many newsrooms still recognize the value of having someone gather information close to the scene and use datelines to show transparency in their newsgathering.



Here's The New York Times homepage on March 18.

World U.S. Politics N.Y. Business Opinion Tech Science Health Sports Arts Books Style Food

LIVE

Atlanta Shooting Suspect Was Customer at Spas He Targeted, Police Say

- The police are continuing to investigate motives for the attack, which has led to a wave of outrage and attention to violence against Asian-American people.
- House Democrats held the first hearing on anti-Asian discrimination in three decades after eight people, six of Asian descent, were killed. Here's the latest.



Mourning the victims of Tuesday's shooting at a memorial outside Gold Spa in Atlanta.
Chang W. Lee/The New York Times

The victims in the Atlanta-area shootings included a U.S. Army veteran and a patron in the line of fire.

How Racism and Sexism Intertwine to Torment Asian-American Women

Many viewed the shooting rampage in Atlanta as the culmination of a racialized misogyny that they say has long been directed at them.

This link takes us to a new page. Let's take a closer look.



During a major, quickly developing story, some news organizations set up live blogs or pages dedicated to updates. This can be useful for people (including journalists!) who are following a story closely and interested in monitoring developments in real time.

LIVE

Updated March 18, 2021, 4:53 p.m. ET

Atlanta Shootings Live Updates: Suspect Had Visited Targeted Spas Before, Police Say

The police said the suspect had previously been a customer of at least two of the businesses where eight people were killed. Also, the House held its first hearing on anti-Asian discrimination in three decades.

Here's what you need to know:

- The suspect had been a customer at the two Atlanta spas that were targeted, police say.



News Goggles: Next steps

Discuss: If news organizations report information from an official source that later turns out to be incorrect, how should they handle this? Why does misinformation often flourish during breaking news events? How did you learn about the shootings and follow news updates? How did you know whether the information was credible? Did you see any rumors or false information about the shootings?

Idea: Have students review coverage of these shootings. Are there labels for updates? Are there links to previous or related news reports? Is there a dateline (the name of a city in all capital letters, indicating an on-the-ground reporting presence)? Are there any signs that this story is developing and will be updated?

Resources:

- [“Practicing Quality Journalism”](#) (NLP’s Checkology® virtual classroom).
- [“The Breaking News Consumer’s Handbook”](#) (WNYC).



The
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This exercise originated in the March 22, 2021, issue of The Sift® newsletter from the News Literacy Project. You can read archives of the newsletter and subscribe [here](#).



Thank you!



A future founded on facts



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