

Jane Jones, a reporter for *the Big City Metro Times* learns that Annabell Truax, a leader and prominent spokesperson of the anti-abortion movement in Big City has recently accompanied her unmarried daughter to an abortion clinic out of State, where the daughter had an abortion.

Would it be morally unjustifiable for the *Big City Metro Times* to run a story disclosing this information? If so, why? If not, why not?

MODERATOR'S ANSWER: Annabell cannot reasonably claim a right of privacy in this situation in light of her status as a public figure in the abortion controversy. Annabell's daughter has such a right, however, or more precisely, the editors of the *Big City Metro* have a professional responsibility to proceed upon the assumption that she does, regardless of their personal views about abortion. The public has a right to information about important public issues. In this case, however, it seems that Annabell's daughter's right of privacy has greater weight than the right of the public to information. The information involved here -- that Annabell accompanied her daughter to an abortion clinic out of state-- conceivably could affect the views of some readers toward the abortion issue, but it doesn't have a direct logical relationship to the question of whether or not abortion is morally wrong.

Case from the February 3, 1996 Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. Copyright Robert Ladenson, Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions, Illinois Institute of Technology, 1995.