

## INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM PART II: THE INSIDE SCOOP FROM KEVIN DONOVAN

Kevin Donovan has worked at the Toronto Star for more than 35 years. He is one of Canada's best-known and most respected investigative journalists.

Unlike general news reporters, who write about current events, investigative journalists uncover serious crimes and misdeeds by companies and political leaders. Their investigations may take weeks, months or even years, as they do research and conduct interviews to find and write about the truth.

Donovan gained international fame in 2013 when he and former Star reporter Robyn Doolittle wrote a series of articles about Toronto's then-mayor Rob Ford. They confirmed that Ford was taking illegal drugs, even though he had denied it many times, and was associating with people who allegedly did illegal things. Ford later admitted to smoking crack cocaine and he entered drug rehabilitation.

While Kevin Donovan was investigating that story, he and Doolittle received many threatening phone calls. Someone even threw eggs at his house.

Donovan always has his eye on business and political leaders including Rob's brother Doug, who is now the premier of Ontario. Donovan watches powerful people to make sure the decisions they make aren't unfair or harmful to people.

Donovan spent years as a general news reporter. In the 1980s, he and reporter Dale Brazao covered the fatal police shooting of a 16-year-old youth. He went on to investigate the issue of police rules over using deadly force.

Publishing articles shines a spotlight on what is wrong in society, meaning the issues are more likely to be fixed. For instance, in 2011 and 2012, Donovan investigated an air ambulance service owned by the Ontario government, called ORNGE. His articles, showed that the service was not

He'll ask the person, "I've heard this about you. I'm now going to investigate you. Why don't we talk about it?" Most often, the accused person has an appropriate reason for having done what they did, and that may mean there is no story. However, if the person won't speak with him or give him a good reason why something happened, he will likely keep digging.

He'll talk with other people who have also been wronged by the accused person or organization. And he'll try to find out why it's happening. To do that, he often needs to do a lot of research on the Internet, using special databases and archives of old documents.

He also tries to understand how the industry he's investigating works. When he was doing the air ambulance story, for instance, he needed to learn how they're licensed, what their pilots do and the role of the paramedics that fly with them. Understanding how the system works allows him to ask smart questions and find the problem areas. He says most of the information he uses can't be found by just looking on the Internet.

Another important part of his job is knowing how to talk to people to get them to open up, whether it's victims or people who have done something wrong.

"The reason that journalists have to exist is that (in) governments and businesses there tends to be secrecy. Their automatic reaction is not to be transparent, it's to be secret. That's a human reaction—no one wants to air their dirty laundry. Our job is to lift the veil of that secrecy."



**Kevin Donovan**

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*"I'm trying to effect change," says investigative reporter Kevin Donovan. "A journalist (helps) the public, who see something wrong and want to fix it but do not have that voice."*

being well run, and eventually prompted the government to rework the entire company.

### HOW IT WORKS

Donovan says most of his investigations begin with someone contacting him about a big problem. They tell him about something they believe is unfair or illegal and ask him to look into it.

Once he has an issue he wants to investigate, he goes straight to the person who is being accused. That might seem like a scary thing to do, or even the last thing you'd want to do. But Donovan says it's the best way to find out if there is any truth to the issue and get their side of the story.

Be sure to also read *For the Record's Investigative Journalism Part I: Exposing Crime & Corruption*



# WORD SEARCH

Find the people and tools that investigative journalists use to uncover the truth. Words can run in all directions – horizontally, vertically, diagonally, backwards and letters can be used more than once.

Q	E	S	O	B	S	R	E	C	I	F	F	O	E	C	I	L	O	P
A	P	L	W	Z	D	I	S	N	A	I	R	A	R	B	I	L	S	N
I	K	N	C	X	C	G	N	Z	J	S	Q	X	S	U	V	T	R	U
D	H	D	V	I	W	A	O	E	M	E	Y	G	B	Q	N	X	E	X
Z	T	E	L	N	T	R	I	N	T	I	C	E	R	E	B	W	Y	S
F	X	S	T	C	A	R	T	N	O	C	K	S	M	P	N	Y	W	X
M	I	T	U	X	I	X	A	X	O	I	U	U	R	X	A	E	A	X
E	X	N	Y	B	J	Z	L	F	E	L	C	S	F	O	I	R	L	N
O	V	E	N	G	T	A	U	L	X	O	X	H	N	V	T	X	W	X
H	R	M	X	X	W	X	G	Y	D	P	J	X	R	I	C	I	O	J
C	K	U	T	S	Y	D	E	T	Z	F	W	E	C	A	O	X	D	V
W	X	C	E	B	P	Q	R	T	K	Z	T	L	X	R	T	U	H	E
L	M	O	N	F	N	U	Z	S	I	N	E	X	P	C	C	I	X	M
U	V	D	R	U	O	T	H	D	I	S	W	L	R	H	X	A	L	R
J	R	X	E	C	S	G	V	X	H	O	N	K	Q	I	P	T	X	B
J	D	A	T	A	B	A	S	E	S	Y	G	M	Z	V	D	S	N	Q
Q	N	U	N	N	A	R	O	U	D	Z	R	S	X	E	L	G	B	E
M	H	P	I	E	N	K	W	E	B	S	I	T	E	S	I	M	T	D

DATABASES

INTERVIEWS

INTERNET

ARCHIVES

DOCUMENTS

WEBSITES

ARTICLE

CONTRACTS

LAWS

REGULATIONS

POLICIES

LIBRARIANS

COURT DOCUMENTS

LAWYERS

EDITORS

POLICE OFFICERS

See answers at: [classroomconnection.ca/puzzle](https://classroomconnection.ca/puzzle)



## HELP THE INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST DO HER JOB BY PUTTING THESE STEPS IN THE RIGHT ORDER.

Select the correct order number from 1 to 9 in the box on the left.

Talk to sources such as: governments, companies, associations to find out how the system you are investigating works.

Talk to the people who are alleged to have done something wrong.

Find out about an issue (often as a tip from a source).

Research it to find out who to speak with.

Talk to the people who had say they had something happen to them.

Find out about others who have had the same thing happen.

As feedback comes in from the articles, new articles are written to give the reader more and updated information.

Write up the first of possibly a series of articles.

The articles are published in the Star, and posted on social media.



See answers at: [classroomconnection.ca/puzzle](https://classroomconnection.ca/puzzle)