Introduction to the Series

The articles to follow address an important ethical issue that has rarely been discussed in the psychological literature. What actions do scientists wish to take, if any, to protect the confidentiality of the protagonists of case studies? Is it acceptable (and if so, when) for a psychologist to intentionally breach the confidentiality of a rival theorist’s case study (here, by hiring a private detective) to gather information necessary to present a competing view of the case? The series begins with a moving account written by an original case study protagonist, Nicole Kluemper, now a psychologist herself. The second article is written by one of the authors of the original case study, Erna Olafson. Following these moving accounts are three commentaries and a final discussion. The commentaries are written by a prominent trauma researcher (Frank Putnam), an expert in trauma treatment (Laura Brown), an expert on professional ethics (Gerald Koocher), and a professor of public policy (Ross Cheit). The final discussion of the commentaries is written by Constance Dalenberg, immediate past-President of Division 56 (Trauma Psychology) of the American Psychological Association, who includes a review of the perspective of the psychologists who made the decision to breach the confidentiality of the case study in this instance.

Constance Dalenberg
cdalenberg@alliant.edu