



Lifting the curtain

■ WHAT IS IT?

A weekly Toronto Star [feature story](#) that takes readers behind the scenes in the newsroom to explain how journalists do their jobs. Examples: “How the Star decides when to publish a breaking story,” “[How the Star’s editorial board can be critical of governments it endorsed](#),” or “[Blue Jays beat reporter Laura Armstrong on filing after a late night game](#)” (the most popular so far.)



■ WHO'S BEHIND IT?

The [Toronto Star](#) launched the feature in 2017 as part of a [trust initiative](#), seeking to “bring readers closer to the reporting and decision-making behind our stories.” A staff committee looks for other ways to make the work more transparent, including [better labeling of news and opinion](#), with [glossary](#). The Star, a Canadian news leader, also has a [public editor](#) who regularly writes about journalism and reader feedback.

■ DOES IT WORK?

The stories have attracted an engaged readership that is offering suggestions for greater transparency, according to Jayme Poisson, an investigative reporter who is leading the staff committee. Research by the [Trusting News](#) project, including interviews with [8,728 news consumers](#), shows that news organizations can build trust by explaining their processes and humanizing journalists.



■ HOW TO DO IT

A dedicated reporter writes each story. That usually takes about two days a week. Ideas come from reader questions or staff members. One came from an editor who faced an ethical dilemma: [Whether or not to go off the record with Canada’s prime minister](#). Together, the weekly features create a library to which the staff can direct readers as questions about coverage arise.