

Queer Eye for the News Guy

You are the Features Editor for the daily newspaper in a midsize town in the deep south. For your Father's Day issue, you are running a contest for kids to submit entries explaining why they think their father is the best dad. The top family gets featured in a big profile in the Father's Day issue.

You and your staff have gone through the stack of over 200 entries, and it is up to you all to vote on the winner. But one of the best entries is also your most controversial entry. An African American sister and brother explain how they had been bounced around foster homes after their mom died, and they had not thought they would ever have a happy home again until they were adopted a few years ago by a loving couple. The only controversial aspect is that the couple is gay. You had not anticipated having two gay dads as possible winners of your "best dad" contest. However, their story is very compelling, and the little girl wrote such an eloquent and touching story on behalf of her and her brother.

This prompts a heated conversation around the board room table as to whether or not you should choose this gay couple as the winner because it would probably upset many of your paper subscribers. After all, this is the "Bible Belt" and many people are conservative. You invite your executive editor in for the discussion. He too is concerned that the newspaper will receive many complaints if they choose these gay dads as the "best dads" in your town. But is it fair to avoid addressing the reality of gay parents who are also a part of your community, even if a minority?

The editor brings up the fact that they just published a story on a gay person last week – the one who died of alcohol poisoning at the gay bar. However, several staffers around the table point out that that representation of the promiscuous gay male is stereotypical and negative. You all agree your paper does not do a good job counteracting that stereotype and including the LGBTQ culture in everyday, positive feature stories.

However, due to the largely conservative nature of the local community, you aren't sure how your readers will react to a more inclusive stance on gay representations. How many subscriptions is it worth losing to be more progressive?

QUESTIONS:

1. Using Ross's list of obligations, define your moral claimants in this case? In what ways are you ethically obligated to each? (Use a bulleted list that includes claimants and obligations.)
2. What would you do and why? (Limit your answer to a short paragraph of no more than 150 words.)