



# **How to "Handle" the Media**

**Presenter: Karlyn Tilley**

**Tuesday, September 12, 2017**

**1:30 PM - 4:30 PM**





## How to “Handle” the Media

**Karlyn Tilley**  
**Communications Manager/PIO**  
**Golden, Colorado**



Previous Life: TV Reporter/Anchor  
15 years experience



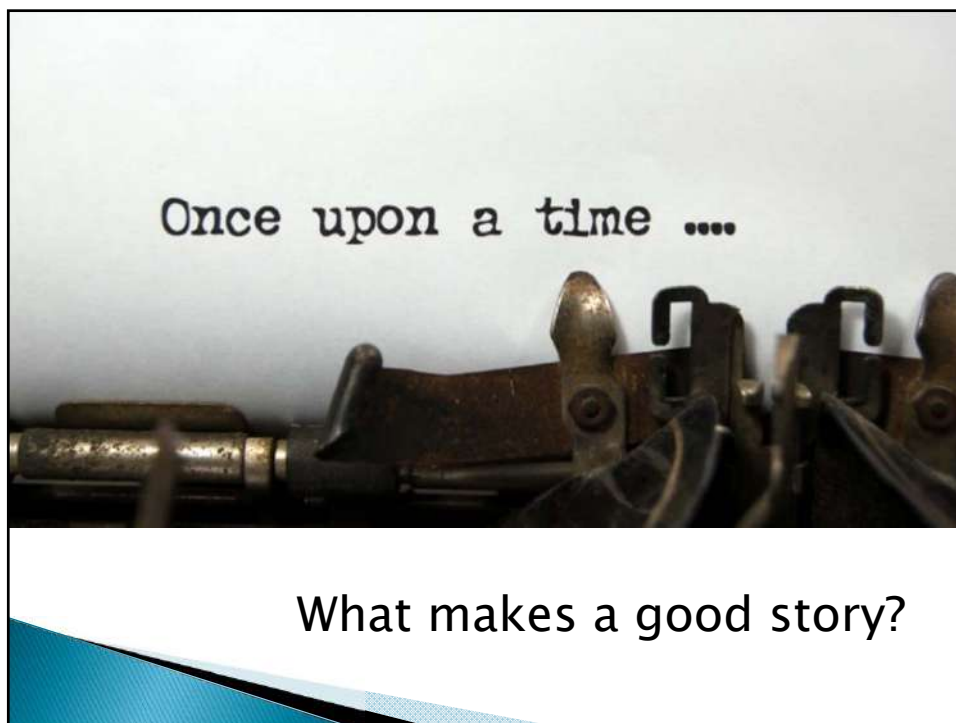




Tell us – Who are you?

You are:

- ▶ An expert
- ▶ An invaluable resource
- ▶ A way to legitimize a story
- ▶ A source of correct information and content

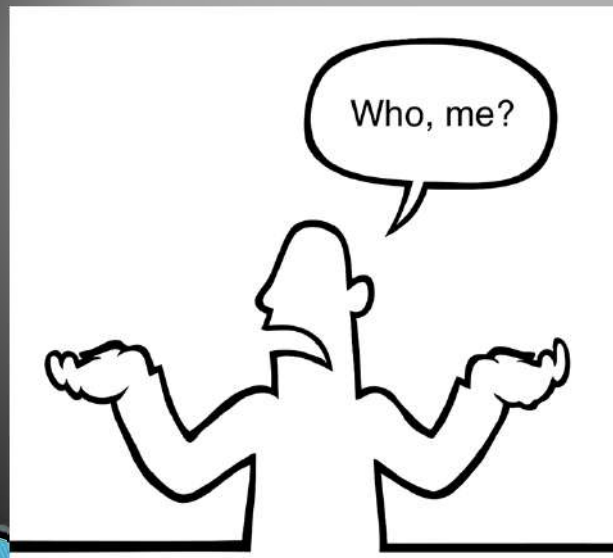


## What makes a good story

- ▶ Change – better or worse
- ▶ Something memorable – good or bad
- ▶ Conflict
- ▶ Simplicity
- ▶ Drama
- ▶ Wrongdoing
- ▶ Feel-good themes
- ▶ Concrete outcomes
- ▶ Good pictures or video



Think it can't happen to you?





## "News" worthy??



## "News" Worthy??





Still think you could never be the subject of a news story?





A Great TV Story: Not Necessarily “Newsworthy”

Gerry George  
City of Golden Chief Building Official  
(Retired)  
KUSA 9 News

## What makes a good story

- ▶ Change – better or worse
- ▶ Something memorable – good or bad
- ▶ Conflict
- ▶ Simplicity
- ▶ Drama
- ▶ Wrongdoing
- ▶ Feel-good themes
- ▶ Concrete outcomes
- ▶ Good pictures or video



## Be the investigator first: Ask before you answer



- » -What is the story about?
- Who have you talked to?
- What did they say?
- Are you talking to anyone else?
- What is your deadline?

## Know your message

- ▶ Know your point
- ▶ Stick to your message.
- ▶ Audience is the public, not the reporter
- ▶ Focus on the positives
- ▶ No opinions or speculation
- ▶ Know when to say “I don’t know”



You can take it too far

Representative Mike Coffman  
9News



## Tips and tricks

- Anticipate and prepare for questions
- Keep it simple, no acronyms
- Personalize your point
- Respect deadlines, but don't get flustered
- Pause if necessary to collect your thoughts, or start over
- Be friendly, approachable, helpful, open
- Don't let your emotions get the best of you



Avoiding the problem doesn't make it go away

Dick Fleming  
St. Louis Regional Chamber Director  
KMOV, St. Louis

## Your Rights

- ▶ Interview on your schedule
- ▶ Decline live interviews
- ▶ Correct misstatements during interview
- ▶ Respond in writing (but use sparingly)
- ▶ Poker face
- ▶ Ask for corrections
- ▶ DON'T LIE



### They Already Know the Answers to Their Questions

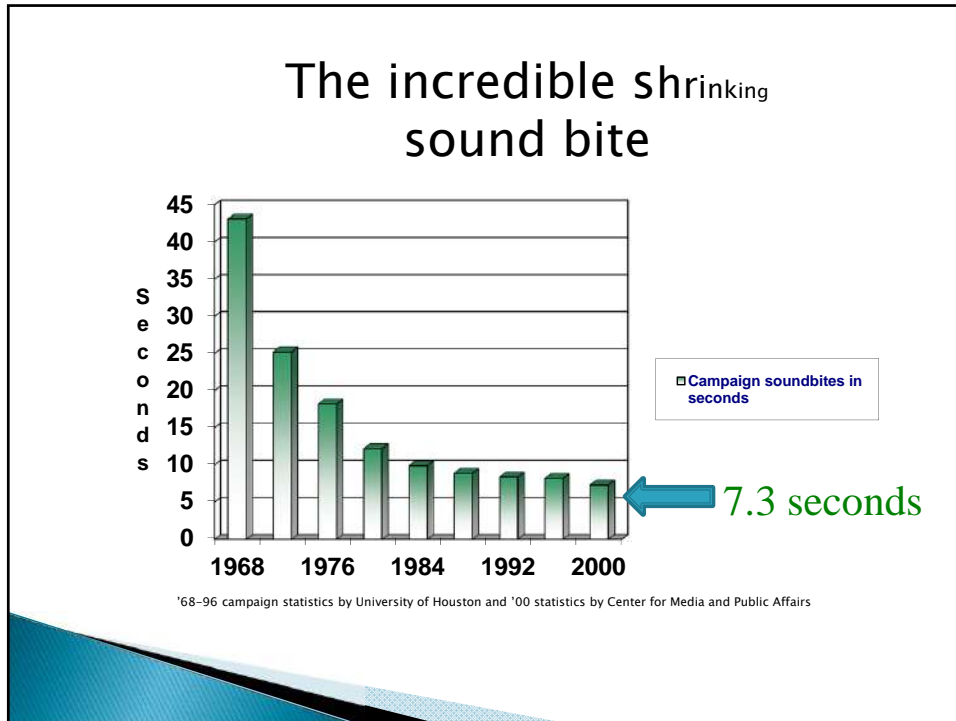
Patricia Core  
St. Tammany Parish Assessor  
KVUE, New Orleans



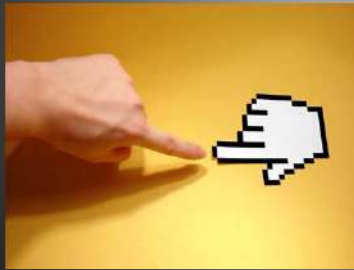
## Important Insight

- ▶ Investigative reporters typically already know the answers to their questions
- ▶ If you mess up, fess up. “Sorry” is a powerful word
- ▶ It’s ok to repeat yourself (within reason)
- ▶ The camera and microphone are ALWAYS on, and there is no such thing as “off the record”





Within seconds, what you say  
can go global. And you can't  
take it back.



**“ IN JOURNALISM,  
THERE HAS  
ALWAYS  
BEEN A TENSION  
BETWEEN  
GETTING  
IT FIRST  
AND GETTING  
IT RIGHT.”**

The Fresh Quotes





Have some fun!  
Humor is one of the best ways to reach social media users





## Know your limits



### Taunton woman arrested for OUI had a lizard in her bra

The lizard "faces no charges at this time," police wrote in a Facebook post that had some fun at the woman's expense.

With withering sarcasm — "Sorry Amy, we can't move the car right now. If we do, what will you use to hold yourself up?" — Taunton police taunted Rebello-McCarthy, who was eventually charged with drunken driving, driving to endanger, and lane violations.

"Let's recap for just a moment!!" the post continued. "Two very intoxicated people in a car crash, neither of them coherent, unsteady on their feet, slurring and drooling." The lizard, police added, faces no charges.

*Boston Globe article*

**Golden Police Department**  
Published by Kariyn Tiley · 9 · September 30, 2015 · 🌐

The scariest call of the night at Golden PD. Officers located a suspicious party hanging out in the hallway. After further investigation, it was discovered that not just one, but several black widow spiders were invading the premises. Decked out in full riot gear, Officer Carreno bravely exterminated the offending arachnids. For the safety of all of us, we are not posting pictures of the invaders.

35,513 people reached [Boost Post](#)

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

Joseph Russell, Deanna Angell and 230 others    Top Comments

126 shares

Write a comment...

Sean Michelle Yelton Meade Guardian pest management would love to pay back officers by offering our services to protect our people in uniform. Call Michelle to schedule a time. 303-348-7087  
Like · Reply · Message · 🌐 · October 2, 2015 at 9:05am

1 Reply

View more comments    1 of 57

## Media DOs and DON'Ts



### DO

- ▶ Be responsive and helpful
- ▶ Ask questions so you know what the story is about
- ▶ Prepare for possible questions and practice your message
- ▶ Give yourself time to collect your thoughts
- ▶ Speak simply and get to your point quickly
- ▶ Provide examples and video opportunities when possible
- ▶ ALWAYS tell the truth

## Media DOs and DON'Ts



### DON'T

- ▶ Speculate or give your opinion
- ▶ Ramble. Keep it simple and know when to stop talking.
- ▶ Be defensive or combative
- ▶ Insult the reporter
- ▶ Think that avoiding a reporter will make them go away
- ▶ Try to answer questions you to which you don't know the answer
- ▶ Use jargon or abbreviations
- ▶ LIE

## We are a Team!

- > The job of the Communications person is to protect the best interests of the organization
- > Work with PIO and strategize responses




- ▶ Is there anything you're not telling me?

Don't leave us out!

Ask for our help!



## What **NOT** to Wear

- ▶ White, black or red
  - ▶ Stripes, herringbone or small intricate prints
  - ▶ Checks
  - ▶ Vests
- 
- ▶ Light colored pants
  - ▶ No visible logos, companies or brands unless they are your own

## Wearing Wrong Logo



## What to Wear



- ▶ Pastel shirts work well
- ▶ Best TV color is blue
- ▶ Be wrinkle and pet hair-free
- ▶ Dress simply
- ▶ No more than one ring per hand
- ▶ Avoid hair products that add shine

## Questions?

