



# LOST IN THE FOG of NEWS

BEEN MISQUOTED IN THE MEDIA?

**ENSURE THAT  
YOUR MESSAGE  
GETS REPORTED!**

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO WINNING  
ACCURACY IN THE MEDIA

**By Russell Ruffin**

# Ensure that YOUR Message Gets Reported



This guide is part of our 2 day News Media Relations Training Classes presented in 40 cities around the US every year. Classes are conducted by Emmy Award Winning Broadcaster and News Veteran Russell Ruffin.

Ruffin has spent a career as an on-camera reporter for NBC and Fox News. For more than 10 years Ruffin has conducted this class for Law Enforcement professionals involved in crisis news management. He has kept his training current by going to the scene of some of the nation's major breaking news events such as the San Bernardino terrorist attack, the Ferguson, Missouri protests, the Columbine high school shootings as well as the rioting and unrest in Baltimore.

This class goes on-location to law enforcement training facilities and police agencies. During the on-location training, everyone goes before our live TV cameras for mock news conferences

and interviews. Some of the breaking news scenarios include everything from day to day events to terrorist attacks and school shootings.

If you would like to see video examples of some of our training, along with testimonials from those who have attended, please click the link below:

[News Media Relations Training](#)

To attend one of our exclusive training classes go to our website at: [www.Ruffin.TV](http://www.Ruffin.TV) or call us at our office in Denver, Colorado at 303-470-0716.

# Ensure that YOUR Message Gets Reported

What do you do when you get a call from a reporter who needs to schedule an interview with you for a quick sound bite or quote on some subject or event? You may be able to squeeze the reporter into your busy schedule for a face-to-face sit-down interview, but you probably won't have time to prepare a formal detailed press release.

Of course, not everyone who is interviewed by a reporter has to compose a press release, but handing the reporter some typed out facts that you have prepared will definitely provide them a better understanding of your answers or position.



I've had countless newsmakers tell me, "the reporter interviewed me for more than an hour, and when the story ended up in the paper it was completely wrong." Some tell of submitting to lengthy TV interviews only to have the least significant sound bites end up on the air. One of the biggest complaints from newsmakers is, "Reporters always misconstrue everything I say."

## They Are Not Making This Stuff Up

While it may seem that reporters are just “making up information,” the reality is that sometimes something just gets lost in the translation.

When newsmakers submit to interviews, they have to count on reporters to take accurate notes and have a sufficient understanding of what is being said. Often, when a reporter gets a story wrong, it isn't because they are being unfair or dishonest, it's because they were unaware of all the facts. But how can a reporter get a story wrong if you've answered every one of their questions?



Reporters only ask questions for which they feel they need answers or comments. Sometimes a reporter goes into an interview with a misunderstanding of one or more facts. They don't bother to ask you to verify information that they assume is correct. You don't know they have a misunderstanding of the facts, therefore you don't know to correct their misinformation. Hence, there is no meeting of the minds. The reporter writes the story based on what he or she believes to be the facts, only to discover they didn't have all the fact.



For television news, I once covered a Colorado avalanche in which my photographer managed to capture graphic footage of the giant snow slide coming down the mountain and then completely burying our news camera. One news outlet erroneously reported that my photographer had been buried alive while shooting the footage. In reality,

my photographer and I had actually managed to scramble to safety before the avalanche reached us. How could a reporter have made such a mistake? He assumed that because the camera that captured the amazing footage was buried, the photographer holding the camera must have been buried with it. He didn't realize we had left the camera mounted on a tripod before we made our escape. Some reporters just make false assumptions. Some reporters don't ask the right questions.

## The Fact Sheet

To reduce the possibility of falling victim to false assumptions, you should, at the very least, prepare a brief "Fact Sheet," for every single interview or news conference you submit to. This fact sheet should list the basic information regarding the event or news story, the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how*. Your list doesn't even have to consist of complete sentences, just basic information, almost like reporter's notes. You could even type out several of your own specific quotes related to the subject of the interview. Anything that you can do to make it easier for the reporter to more accurately quote you or report on you position or thoughts will benefit you, your organization or your objectives.



## A Road Map for Reporters

Reporters will appreciate that you have provided information without them having to quickly write down every single detail. You have become a media resource. You are actually helping the reporter take accurate notes. Your fact sheet will be something the reporter can refer to as he or she is preparing their news copy.



For reporters who may be unfamiliar with certain events or subjects, your fact sheet can become their road map. I would even suggest giving the fact sheet to the reporter before the interview, so that they will have a better understanding of your position before questioning you.

A simple fact sheet will ensure that both you and the reporter are on the same page.

# Are You Prepared for Breaking News?



## What Do You Do When YOU Are the Story?

This could be the most valuable training experience of your career

On the ground where News is being made



Instructors **Russell Ruffin** and **Penny Carter** - Award Winning TV News Veterans who authored two books on Media Relations, have traveled the country from **Baltimore** to **Ferguson** to **San Bernardino** for some of the nation's major Breaking News events to determine what can be learned to help avoid and manage a news media crisis.

## Media Relations & On-Camera Training

Simulated Breaking News Events: From the Routine to the Extreme

LIVE On-Camera Coaching with Free Video of Your Performances

While this is an Advanced class, it is designed so that those with limited experience can benefit by following along in our workbook and proceeding at their own level. Take home our free exclusive Media Relations Guide



### LESSONS LEARNED FROM REAL WORLD EVENTS

- Get Ahead of a Crisis Quickly
- Keep the Media Message On Track
- Become More Proactive and Less Reactive
- Handle Ambush Interviews and Investigative Reporters
- Write More Effective News Releases
- Create & Distribute Your Own Sound Bites & Interviews
- Use the Social Media to Your Advantage

For more information contact:  
Penny Carter, Training Coordinator  
Phone: 303-470-0716  
Email: [Russ@Ruffin.TV](mailto:Russ@Ruffin.TV)