

# You're On! Manage Media Interviews Like A Pro



# Gumbo Media Relations

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# The 3 C's of Media Relations

- Control
- Competence
- Concern

# Overview

- Preparation
  - Before you get on-scene
  - Before you begin the interview
- During the interview
  - Responding to questions
- After the interview

# Preparation:

## Before you get on-scene

- Format (live or taped)
- Reporter/news agency
- Other sources
- Deadline



# Preparation:

## Researching the questions



- Reporter's questions
- Your own questions
- Focus on topical issues
- Be the devil's advocate
- Elements of news
- 5 x 5 x 5

# Preparation:

## Developing responses

- Information + message = good response
- Response vice answer
- Command messages      or Talking Points
- Labels

# Preparation:

## Find the Information

- Tell the Truth!
- Nothing but the Facts (Staff)
- SAPP

# Command

## Messages/Talking Points

*Command messages -- statements or information that you work into responses that explain the command's position on a particular issue or event.*

- Explain what you want the audience to remember
- What are we doing about a problem/issue?
- What is our position/angle on the matter?
- Command messages are not generic

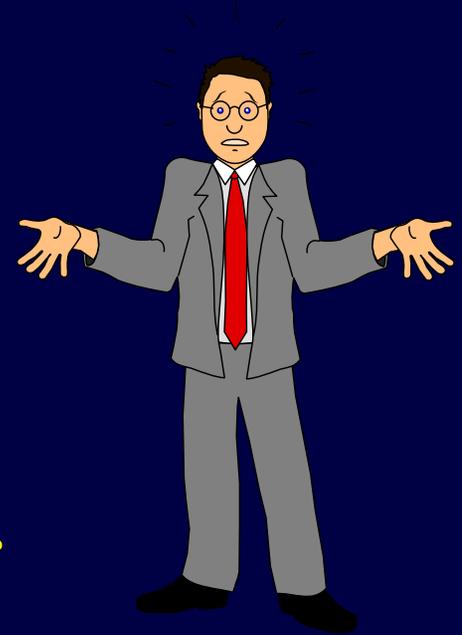
# Command Messages

- **Where do they come from?**
  - Boss' guidance
  - Public affairs guidance
  - You develop your own

# Labels:

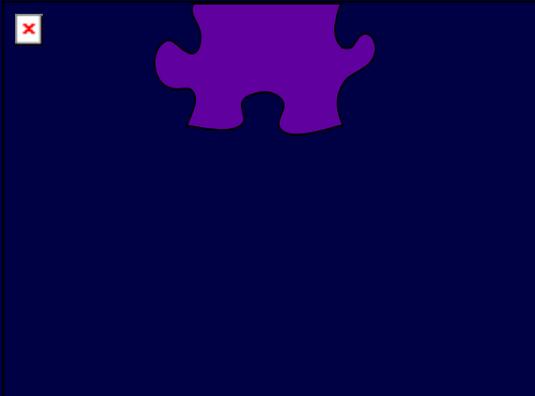
What are we calling this?

- Tragedy, incident, disaster
- Crash, accident, mishap
- Criminal, suspect, murderer
- Terrorist, guerrilla, freedom fighter



# Putting it all Together

- Short (...but not too short)
  - Sound bite (10-12 seconds)
  - Avoid Jargon
- Clear
- Honest
- Simple
- Info + command message



## *Is the worker going to die?*

- ↓ That would call for speculation, and I can't do that.
- ↓ I don't know.
- ↓ Right now, we are providing her with the best medical care available. We are hopeful that she will recover, and are focused right now on helping his family through this difficult time.

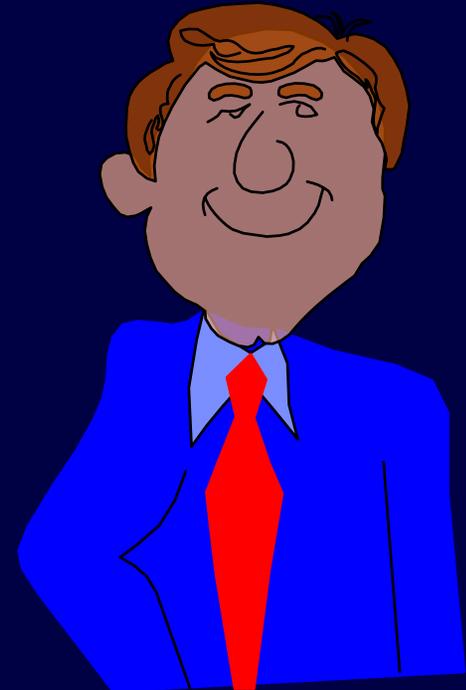
# Do you know what caused the explosion?

- Right now I can't comment on the cause.
- No, we really don't know yet.
- At this point, we are just beginning the investigation into the cause of the accident. Our goal is to find out as best we can what happened so that we can learn from it and prevent something like this from happening again.

What Will Pierre  
and Michelle Know  
and Think?

# Final Preparations

- Appearance (Women & Men)
- Printed materials (release, fact sheet)
- Location considerations
- B-roll suggestions



# Getting Started

- Take advantage of off-camera time
- Meet and greet
- Explain any restrictions (SAPP)
- Correct any mis-information
- Provide a starting point (hook)

# The Interview

- **Open with 25-40 second summary**
  - who, what, when, where and what we're doing about it
- **Listen, pause, think, answer**
- **Each statement stands alone**
- **Look at the reporter, not the camera**
  - importance of non-verbals

# Condolences in the Lead?

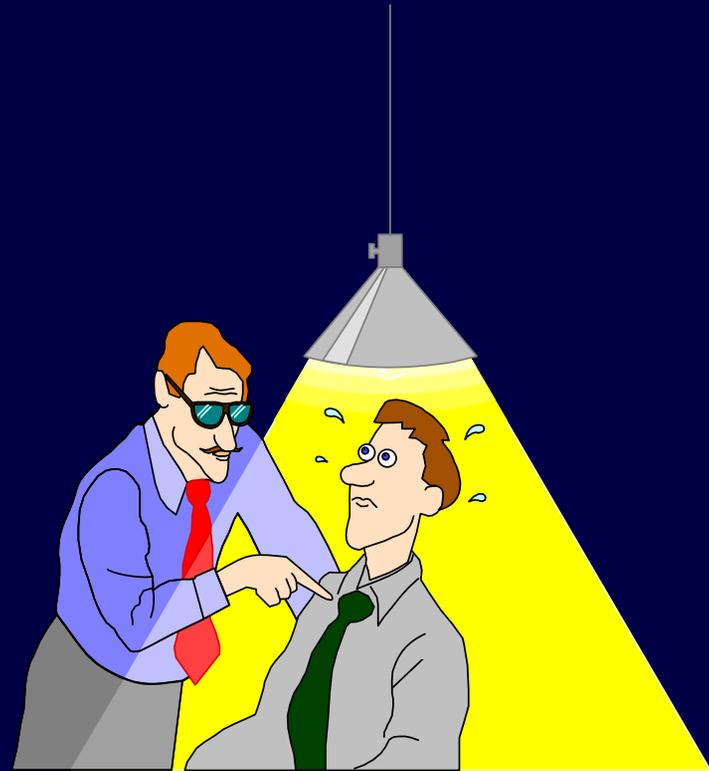
- Good if smooth and sincere
- Awkward if generic or nervous
- Best as part of “what we’re doing about it”
- Great as wrap up comment to “anything to add”

# Interview Techniques

- Always remain calm
- Bridging
- Flagging
- Bundling/packaging
- If you “choke,” ask to try again

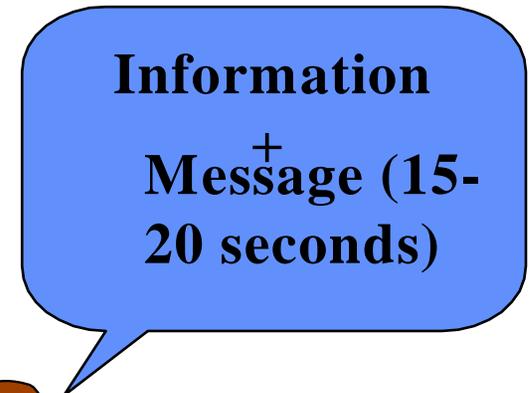
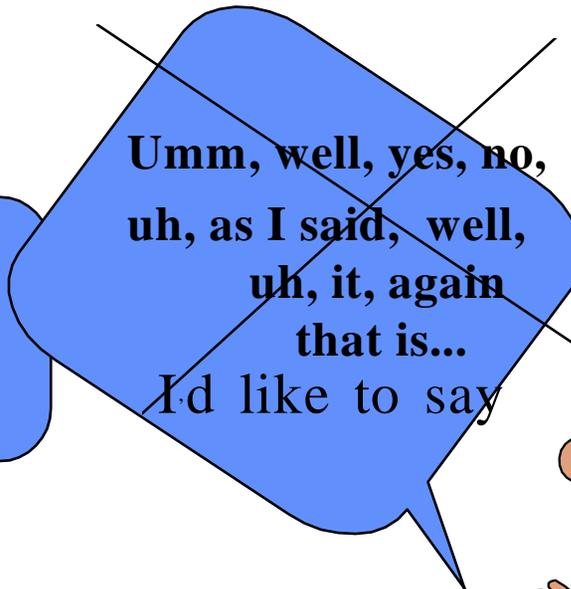
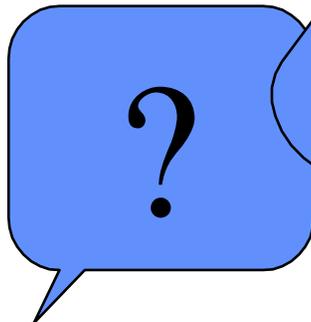
# Avoidance Questions

- Needling
- False facts
- Reinterpretation
- Words in your mouth
- False conclusions
- Hypothetical
- Baiting



# Stand-up T.V. Interview Ideal State

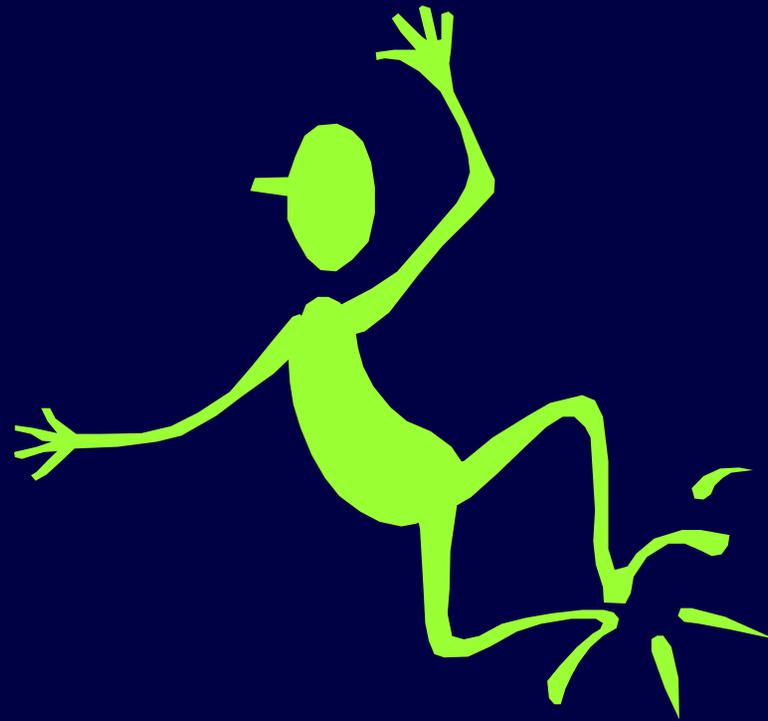
*Pause/Think . . . then self-contained statement = opportunity*





CONVERSATION

# Post-Interview



# Post Interview

- When will it air?
- Don't ask for copies
- Do get back to the reporter, if:
  - you owe him answers
  - he has “real” accuracy problem

# Review

- Preparing for an interview
- Conducting an interview
- Explaining the principles of media training

# Grading Criteria

- Credibility
- Bridging to Key Messages
- Believability
- Non-verbals/Accessibility



# Thank You! God Bless You and America!

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