

December 2011 Newsletter

Jeff Ansell News & Views

Since my last newsletter in June, I've been travelling the world promoting my new book, "When the Headline Is YOU: An Insider's Guide to Handling the Media" Released in late 2010, it is now in its 3rd printing. I'm very grateful to everyone who has helped make it such a success. Thank you!

Topics for this newsletter:

- 1.) BOB COSTAS, A SKILLFUL JOURNALIST, JUDGE . . . and JURY
- 2.) HERMAN CAIN IS NO BILL CLINTON
- 3.) WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . . OFF THE RECORD?
- 4.) SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE NEWSROOM – BLOGS, FACEBOOK & TWITTER
- 5.) WHO IS BEHIND YOUR NEWS? – TRANSPARENCY
- 6.) HOW NEWS COMPANIES WRITE HEADLINES
- 7.) POLITICIAN CALLS 911 ON AMBUSH REPORTER
- 8.) STAYING ON MESSAGE KILLS CAREERS
- 9.) TO CATCH A JOURNALIST – AMBUSH TACTICS
- 10.) FAKE NEWS – EDITORIAL, ADVERTORIAL, and now . . . PROMOTORIAL

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**\*\* PRACTICE NEWS INTERVIEWS \*\*** is our NEW service designed to help you deal with crisis situations, or help you prepare prior to actual media interviews, whether TV, radio, or print.

For 30-60 minutes, we interview and record you over the phone and provide instant playback so you have immediate feedback on the quality of your responses and effectiveness of your messages.

PRACTICE NEWS INTERVIEWS offers Skype & Face Time training too.

Learn more at <http://www.jeffansell.com/Services/Practice+News+Interviews.html>

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- 1.) BOB COSTAS, A SKILLFUL JOURNALIST, JUDGE . . . and JURY

Sports journalist Bob Costas literally does it all. Costas, a well known and very much liked and revered sports reporter skyrocketed to even higher superstar status recently when he interviewed former Penn State assistant football coach, Jerry Sandusky, a man accused of pedophilia and raping a child.

In less than ten minutes Costas turned the spontaneous interview into a trial and conviction.

Costas used common interview tactics, albeit in a very skilled manner, to get Sandusky to talk openly about his alleged criminal actions.

Almost everyone who saw the interview cannot help but now believe Sandusky is a child rapist.

Costas, in his trademark cool, calm, and collected journalistic style acted as accuser, judge, jury and hangman. In the hearts of many people who saw the interview, a formal trial is no longer necessary.

In a very calculated way, Costas led Sandusky into saying exactly what the public wanted to hear.

Costas did not trick Sandusky or manipulate him. All he did was ask the right questions using the correct order and tone, and then watch as Sandusky placed the rope around his own neck. Costas did however, know exactly how to skillfully tighten the noose to prevent it from slipping off.

While we watched through the MSNBC lens, Costas carefully led Sandusky into a dark place from which the beleaguered assistant coach will never be able to return.

These exact same journalism tactics are used every single day in a myriad of circumstances by thousands of reporters to get executives, politicians, and all types of spokespeople to say things they know they should not be saying, but are seemingly powerless to stop.

It is obvious Sandusky did NOT have adequate media training, because if he did, Costas would not have been able to so easily cause Sandusky to incriminate himself. The former coach's misguided responses will no doubt be introduced as evidence in his trial.

Watching the interview underscores the suffering of the child victims, but steel yourself and watch it (link below) until you can clearly see why talking to a journalist is not just a regular conversation.

Pay careful attention to Sandusky's silence and also how he repeated one particular question asked by Costas. Repeating a negative question asked by a reporter is a common and foolish way to buy time while you plan what to say. It leads people to believe you are making something up, which implies you are lying. Regardless of what the facts may be, much emotion surrounds this story.

Here's the MSNBC, Costas, Sandusky interview at the LA Times <http://tinyurl.com/c8pgs25>

How the interview came about <http://tinyurl.com/8axzb5c>

Jon Stewart's take on the Sandusky interview <http://tinyurl.com/6uyd7v8>

Who REALLY BROKE the Penn State Story? <http://tinyurl.com/bo9me88>

A short video where I discuss EMOTION vs. FACT  
[http://www.jeffansell.com/TIPS/V\\_Emotion+VS+Fact.html](http://www.jeffansell.com/TIPS/V_Emotion+VS+Fact.html)

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM MY BLOG

If you haven't been following my Blog, here's a short list of what you've missed;

Media Training TIPS for Rupert Murdoch <http://tinyurl.com/79aosku>

Politicians Are People Too <http://tinyurl.com/7k7d2vg>

Keynote Speaker Embroiled in Controversy <http://tinyurl.com/6pa2e9u>

You're Only As Good As Your Worst Quote <http://tinyurl.com/6qb3q5j>

RIM – FAIL Again !! <http://tinyurl.com/6lhrtn5>

Politician Claims Reporters are Lobbyists <http://tinyurl.com/3m3unyt>

President Obama Drives Off a Cliff <http://tinyurl.com/7nw2cos>

Flip Flop – or a Justifiable Change of Mind <http://tinyurl.com/43k4m6c>

Why Does Your Mind Go BLANK When You Need It Most <http://tinyurl.com/7twyfue>

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#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM MY RECENT TWEETS

Twitter is the fastest way to share news. Its popularity is growing rapidly.

Do you have a Twitter account? Follow me <https://twitter.com/#!/jeffansell>

A short list of some of the issues I've recently Tweeted.

Speaking to media is dangerous, even for experienced media trainers. Seems I'm no exception. <http://tinyurl.com/4ylacuh>

When I was a journalist I investigated 2 doctors who prescribed drugs that killed a young man. <http://tinyurl.com/3tu8ves>

Politician refuses to speak to reporters until they register as lobbyists. <http://tinyurl.com/3m3unyt>

News Has Changed, and the changes impact everyone, but not necessarily in a good way. <http://tinyurl.com/3bebu8a>

President Obama said Americans are not better off than they were 4 years ago. It's a sound bite that bites back. <http://tinyurl.com/4y8xnap>

When does changing our mind become a #FlipFlop? When you're a politician. <http://tinyurl.com/43k4m6c>

Media Training TIPS for politicians on Campaigns & Elections site. <http://tinyurl.com/7cjsrkv>

BBC interviewed me today and asked if I had any MEDIA TIPS for Rupert Murdoch. Oh the irony. <http://tinyurl.com/3lvnpf3>

According to Rupert Murdoch, News Corp handled the Milly Dowler murder/phone hacking crisis "extremely well." <http://tinyurl.com/6cy9g4p>

What do you do when your KEYNOTE SPEAKER becomes front page headlines in a sex scandal? Find out here <http://tinyurl.com/3bsh9yc>

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## JEFF ANSELL & ASSOCIATES TEAM

I'm very proud of the team we have in place at Jeff Ansell & Associates.

Richard Maxwell is a media trainer as well as a voice and presentation coach. Formerly, an award winning broadcaster, Richard has worked for large media outlets including Sirius XM Satellite Radio and the CHUM Radio Network.

Ben Steinfeld is a former award winning journalist, news anchor, and news director. He was also a segment producer for World Business Review, hosted by former US Secretary of State Alexander Haig. Ben now conducts interviews for our Media Strategies Radio Phone Tune-Ups program.

Greta Kirstein is our Office Manager. Greta sets up each training program and works closely with our clients to identify their needs and to ensure their expectations are met and exceeded.

Learn more about our team here <http://www.jeffansell.com/About-Us/Bio.html>

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## 2.) HERMAN CAIN IS NO BILL CLINTON

Sticky Cain could take a few lessons from Teflon Ron, Bill, and Tony.

All three powerful politicians had a reputation for getting into hot spots without getting scorched. The Teflon term was coined for Ronald Regan and moved through the Bill Clinton / Monica Lewinsky era all the way to Britain's Prime Minister, Teflon Tony Blair.

Former presidential hopeful Herman Cain was burned on all sides by a string of women claiming sexual harassment. Each time Cain opened his mouth to put out a fire, he ended up with third degree burns.

Cain made one public relations mistake after another, erroneously thinking he could harangue his way out of trouble. He underestimated how quickly reporters can turn one little spark into a raging forest fire.

Politicians, executives, and spokespersons often fail to recognize it's easier to douse a small flame than it is to fight a blazing inferno. Once the momentum starts, it's impossible to contain.

The words that leave your mouth at the very first flicker will determine your success, and that is why you have to be prepared and not think of media training only after the TV cameras and reporters show up.

Did Cain actually sexually harass those women as they claim? At this point we don't know for sure. What we do know however is that enough people think he did, leaving his war chest dry and forcing him to withdraw from the GOP contest.

Here's a list of articles and videos documenting how Herman Cain handles news media.

Cain yells at reporter during press conference. <http://youtu.be/bFa6bz9jpEo>

The Cain interview that kicked off the sexual harassment frenzy. <http://tinyurl.com/3ftyh6o>

Cain eventually tries to buy his way out of trouble. <http://tinyurl.com/84c4sqe>

News company uses VOICE Stress Analyzer to determine if Cain is lying. <http://tinyurl.com/6tflmle>

Cain's attempt to use news media to undermine his accuser's character backfires.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9TLZ4p3e3M>

Cain's chief of staff spreads false media rumor causing confusion. <http://tinyurl.com/7s958pe>

According to Kelly McBride at Poynter, news companies withheld Cain harassment information.  
<http://tinyurl.com/87xmodm>

According to a PEW Research Poll, 39% of people think the sexual harassment allegations against Herman Cain are true. <http://tinyurl.com/7jyagbx>

CAIN announces he is "SUSPENDING" his race to be president. <http://tinyurl.com/bp2u5gn>

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### 3.) WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . . OFF THE RECORD?

Back in the day, OFF THE RECORD meant journalists "might" consider that the information you just told them would be kept confidential. Ethical traditional journalists endeavored to play by the rules as long as you both agreed upfront regarding what information could be considered off the record.

Today, for a number of reasons, little is off the record. If you say it, you will have to live with it.

Here's an interesting perspective from Johna Burke, senior VP of BurrellsLuce <http://tinyurl.com/cuofr2z>

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### 4.) SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE NEWSROOM – BLOGS, FACEBOOK & TWITTER

There is a right and a wrong way to use social media to mitigate media damage.

If you think you can simply grasp at Twitter straws while under attack you are mistaken.

You must be prepared and manage communication with news media properly from the outset.

Social media is not making it easier to handle news media. It makes it harder.

You have no choice but to become social media literate, but before you do, you first have to know the basics and have a good appreciation of the landscape and community before you engage.

This short list will give you an idea of what to do, or not do.

Penn State Drops the Social Media Ball. <http://tinyurl.com/c3vsudb>

In this social media world, exactly WHO is NEWS MEDIA? Maybe this will put it in perspective for spokespeople. HINT: EVERYONE! <http://tinyurl.com/6q5ld3m>

Twitter & Facebook for newsrooms - Traditional journalists, often the older experienced ones, regard social media as an encumbrance, while their younger colleagues embrace it as a welcomed tool. Use this knowledge to your advantage. <http://tinyurl.com/7qqt233>

News icon Brian Williams has over 67,000 Followers but not one Tweet <https://twitter.com#!/bwilliams> while BreakingNews.com comprised of young news hounds has over 3 million Followers and 62,000 Tweets. <https://twitter.com#!/BREAKINGNEWS>

4.74 Degrees of Separation Via Facebook to Your News <http://tinyurl.com/6t3zrmn>

Storify is moving from news aggregation to more of a social media BREAKING NEWS site. Every time a news company moves from regurgitating, to original production, it means there is a new voice on the block competing directly with CBS, ABC, NBC and all the rest. <http://blog.storify.com/>

The following link/article about Storify is overblown with hype, but from a spokesperson's perspective, when bad news is circulating about you, it doesn't matter where someone sees it. Recently, Storify has delivered huge numbers comparable to some established news organizations. As always, READ THE COMMENTS attached to media stories because that is where unreported mainstream information sometimes comes to light. <http://tinyurl.com/6s6bnuo>

Want to HANGOUT with Mitt Romney? You'll need Google+ Hangout - a relatively new social media tool being used by politicians to get close to voters. <http://tinyurl.com/8yw4nl7>

Citizen Journalism can no longer be easily dismissed. Yes, a large portion of CJ is biased and never gets fact-checked, but it is pervasive. The following link/story relates how the spin by mainstream news was revealed to be false. If the information you provide is inaccurate, or worse an outright lie, and mainstream news spins a story based on your alleged facts, there will be a group of people waiting in the wings to challenge you, and many of them will come armed with video from their smart phones. You might have very, very rarely gotten away with deceiving media in the past, but today social media will call you out quickly. <http://tinyurl.com/6tsmakd>

A newspaper in Texas includes Twitter accounts for each journalist. There is a big difference between putting a company Twitter address on your news site like most companies do, and placing the individual Twitter account of each reporter on each story like this news company <http://tinyurl.com/7zpcvw3>

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## 5.) WHO IS BEHIND YOUR NEWS? – TRANSPARENCY

The next time you get a call from a journalist for an interview, and you want a better understanding of the reporter's allegiance, you might want to check out a web site called NewsTransparency.com

According to FORBES it's a site where you can research a journalist's "personal background, political biases, interpersonal connections and more."

Remember though what I've always advised. When a reporter first calls, unless you are prepared and expect the call, never do the interview immediately. Tell the reporter you are busy and can't talk right now, and then ask for their contact information. They'll often say, "but I just have a quick question for you," and maybe even try to flatter you by saying "you're the best source for this type of information." Don't fall for it. Get their contact info and find out what the interview is about and how they think you fit into it. Call them back after you've had time to gather your thoughts, and now, also check them out on <http://www.NewsTransparency.com>

FORBES About Transparency <http://tinyurl.com/4yhd6ou>

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## 6.) HOW NEWS COMPANIES WRITE HEADLINES

Take 5 for a little humor about how news companies come up with those zany headlines.

WARNING – PROFANE LANGUAGE in the Highlights segment.

<http://www.jest.com/video/52363/where-occupy-wall-street-headlines-come-from>

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## 7.) POLITICIAN CALLS 911 ON AMBUSH REPORTER

It's probably not a good idea to call the police when a reporter shows up at your home, even if the reporter is dressed like a Princess Warrior.

Mary Walsh, brilliant comedian and political satirist who plays Marg Delahunty Princess Warrior on the CBC program, This Hour Has 22 Minutes, showed up at Toronto Mayor Rob Ford's house one morning to ask him a few questions, and instead of good-naturedly playing along like most politicians do, Ford went back into his house and called police.

Calling 911 wasn't the best political move for the beleaguered mayor who has a reputation for fighting with and refusing to talk to news media. Toronto Star <http://tinyurl.com/85dj63a>

This Hour Has 22 Minutes Facebook video of the event <http://tinyurl.com/7xmvrh>

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## 8.) STAYING ON MESSAGE KILLS CAREERS

Spokespeople who stay on message and will not deviate even when it is appropriate to do so look evasive. Way too many media trainers still mistakenly advocate that a spokesperson should pre-define their message, especially in a crisis situation, and stick to it regardless of the what reporters ask. They have one pat answer and that is all they offer during an interview, even when it sounds ridiculous.

Harry Bloy, newly appointed Social Development Minister in BC, is an experienced politician who instead of respecting reporters' questions during a media conference he called, decided to keep repeating the same tired mantra over and over. <http://tinyurl.com/7j8xmx8>

Next is former GOP presidential race candidate Herman Cain, who actually stated he is going to "stay on message." Probably not a good idea for someone accused of sexual harassment. Watch the video at the top of the link/page to hear Cain repeat his "stay on message" mantra. <http://tinyurl.com/3ftyh6o>

Last up is Vice President Joe Biden, who, when asked by a reporter if he used a rape reference when he was trying to make a point about economics, insisted on staying on message and angrily refused to admit he used the term in that capacity. <http://youtu.be/fxxotkX9ZOo>

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## 9.) TO CATCH A JOURNALIST – UNDERCOVER AMBUSH TACTICS

To Catch A Journalist is an independent group of self-described journalists who use social media tools like YouTube and Twitter to expose fraud, primarily in government agencies. They operate under the name, Project Veritas headed by James O'Keefe.

They use undercover ambush tactics, the same way Pulitzer Prize winning reporters do, to gain access to government officials and employees. It's similar in some ways to mainstream journalists in the popular NBC Dateline segment, "To Catch a Predator" or the ABC television show, "What Would You Do?"

The main difference however is that mainstream journalists go after individuals, while Veritas targets employees within large organizations that spend taxpayer money.

I don't agree with all of Veritas' strategies, but I do understand their process because when I was a journalist I went undercover to expose doctors who over-prescribed medication. I also exposed a nursing home that mistreated patients, in addition to investigating Nazi war criminals. <http://tinyurl.com/3tu8ves>

Ambush journalism waned for a number of reasons, one being liability, but with the advent of social media and economic struggle within the news media industry, undercover media investigations are making a strong return. Some also argue it fell out of favor because today news media is too closely aligned with big business to support this aggressive style. It steps on too many advertiser or political toes.

Project Veritas is responsible for having federal funding taken away from organizations allegedly operating fraudulently, and for having people fired from their positions – NPR and ACORN in particular. Many mainstream journalists openly criticize Veritas, as do many journalism professors at prestigious colleges and universities, especially those who have been targeted.

Veritas does not always go undercover. Sometimes they show up with a camera and microphone and ask executives extremely hard questions, some which Veritas claims mainstream reporters refuse to ask.

If you think it is difficult to handle mainstream journalists, social media takes it light years beyond.

This C-Span interview of James O'Keefe is a little long, but it will give you a sobering look at the type of journalist more politicians and executives will soon face. <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/JPr>

Project Veritas To Catch a Journalist Part 1  
<http://youtu.be/my4J8KPaliY>

Project Veritas To Catch a Journalist Part 2  
<http://youtu.be/qBFOMUXR080>

New Jersey Star Ledger - Are journalists biased?  
<http://youtu.be/pkp32YMoHbQ>

Here's another link to an undercover investigation about a puppy mill that sold dogs for human consumption to a New York City butcher shop. Stories like this would rarely come to light if journalists didn't go undercover. <http://tinyurl.com/8yg58yp>

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10.) FAKE NEWS – EDITORIAL, ADVERTORIAL, and now . . . PROMOTORIAL

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water.

Fake news, referred to in the communications industry as PROMOTORIAL, are stories written and distributed that have little basis in fact, and are funded by the parties with the most to gain.

One recent example is a story about water rights in the Los Angeles area. A mysterious reporter, known as Mike Adams, wrote a series of stories regarding issues in the Central Basin Municipal Water District. The PR company behind these stories was paid very well to manage the campaign – in the neighborhood of \$200,000. The campaign was slyly positioned to look like news.

Here are a few links to give you an idea of how fraudulent PR masquerades as NEWS;

LA Times – Reporter can't be found <http://tinyurl.com/76y49cp>

LA Times - Google wises up and cuts links to false stories <http://tinyurl.com/85tw2jy>

Gawker - \$200,000 in Tax Money Spent on Fake News <http://tinyurl.com/6cqs8rw>

That's it for this edition of News & Views.

I hope you found it informative and valuable.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Sincerely,  
Jeff Ansell

Be well . . .

P.S.

My book, "When the Headline Is YOU" can be ordered at a variety of places online and from your favorite bookstores, including Amazon, Borders, Barnes & Noble, Chapters, Indigo, & directly from also my publisher, Jossey-Bass.

It captures my decades of experience as a media coach and reporter, and is designed to help people understand and interact effectively with news media.

If you haven't purchased it yet and you're not even sure if YOU need my new book, check out our animated trailer to help you decide. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xhwd6tly1ao>

The excerpt below is from the introduction of my new book.

"Answering questions from reporters is risky business. Though a media interview may feel like a straightforward conversation, it actually represents a contrived and manipulative dynamic. Knowing how to talk to reporters is like learning a new language; a language that bears little, if any, resemblance to everyday conversation. It is a mistake for anyone to believe otherwise. It may seem as if speaking the truth should be enough to build credibility and trust, but that's rarely the case. Exposing oneself to media scrutiny requires more than simple candor and honesty. It requires knowledge, training, and a keen understanding of how reporters write the news." . . . end of excerpt

"When the Headline Is YOU" goes straight to the core of communicating with news media in our modern world. Communication has changed radically over the last few years, but there is still one constant humanistic dynamic; how a person or company delivers a message, and how others interpret it.

We are all subject to deeply ingrained behavioral traits, and no matter how much, or quickly technology grows or changes, the method of delivering a message, and how it impacts us is still the same. How we react is buried in our genes lurking at a reptilian level in our subconscious.

Contrary to what many people think, citizen journalism, blogs, and Twitter have not made it "easier" to be understood. New media has, in fact made it incredibly more complex and confusing, and that is exactly why clarity from the outset is so important. My book addresses clarity at a base level.

Now, more than ever, it is critically important how you sculpt your message, and how you interact with and deliver it to news media. It is a learned skill.

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My BLOG <http://jeffansell.com/wordpress/>

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<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=147796085245411&ref=ts>

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Check into my site for updates between Newsletters. <http://www.jeffansell.com/>

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I'm always interested in your comments and viewpoints.

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