

Paper 18: POWER WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY THE AUSTRALIAN MEDIA

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(The views expressed in this paper are entirely personal and are not in any way those of the Department)

Synopsis

The Australian media are one of the toughest in the world. **They** give and therefore expect no quarter. This paper will attempt to explain why and give brief hints on how to deal with the media if required. From a background of the workings of the media, details will be given on how to prepare for an interview with the electronic **media**.

Background

~~In a democracy, citizens claim one right thought to be the foundation of their way of life -- freedom of~~ the press. In this phrase is embodied ~~the~~ hope that ~~the~~ voice of the masses represented by the **press** could raise a protest on your behalf and **make** sure something was being done.

That constitutes a major **misunderstanding** of ~~the~~ media and most of those involved with any branch of it.

Freedom of the press was a slogan invented by politicians. Put simply it is the unquestionable liberty to publish the likes and **dislikes** of ~~those~~ who control ~~the~~ **press**.

What is disseminated in the **media** is not ~~the~~ 'truth'. Originally politicians controlled the media. But as the authority of politicians **continued** to diminish **they attempted** to re-establish their power by revealing non-attributable secrets (leaks, off the record **quotes**). The great modern conspiracy had begun. The media claimed to be ~~the~~ guardians of the public **interest** - but only the media had the means to broadcast their opinions, their **likes** and dislikes, and to **debate** what they **liked**.

~~The media owners and~~ **journalists**, without any authority from the people, have taken on the democratic right to speak directly for the **masses** and at the same **time decide** what people should be told each day.

Media people thrive on **unhappiness** and disasters - not on good news.

In a young journalist ~~the~~ excitement of ~~the~~ power without responsibility produces frantic enthusiasm.

As maturity and world weariness sets in, scepticism from realising that the power is empty produces cynicism and usually alcoholism.

Most journalists are too irresponsible **to realise** what they are doing to modern society • they are too busy looking for a 'good story which is all too often negative,

Television News

The story will be shot on lightweight portable videotape gear ENG (electronic news **gathering**) • usually a self contained Sony **Betacam** or high band **U-Matic**. No lights will be required unless shooting indoors. You will tend to look thinner and paler than in real life although the effect varies.

Unless the story is a major lead the reporter will hope to shoot for a maximum of five minutes and select 2 short sound 'bites' of about 30 seconds. In a fast breaking news story the reporter will be looking for a rapid response from **the experts** but will wait several minutes while you collect your thoughts.

In a major story it is possible that the transmission could be live. The advantage of this is that it cannot be edited • but there will be no chance to correct errors of fact or presentation.

In any interview there are important points to remember:

- i. Be yourself • if you are not comfortable with **that** underact.
- ii. Be brief and precise
- iii. Take the interview **seriously** • you are addressing millions of people.
- iv. Do your homework • you must know more than the interviewer.
- v. Keep on-side • the **interviewer** will edit **the** tape so don't alienate.
- vi. Speak spoken English.
- vii. When you have made your point • SHUT UP.
- viii. Keep cool, **remember** you are being watched • don't pull faces, pull your ear or move your hands around.
- ix. Don't respond to rhetorical questions.
- x. Decide the main point you want to get across and convert that to a quotable phrase.

An average news story will last for a maximum of 1 minute 20 seconds and will consist of:

Introduction	0.15 secs
Background	0.15 secs
Grab No 1	0.15 secs
Grab No 2	0.15 secs
Wrap up	0 . 1 5 secs

NB They are looking for a snappy entertaining line, not a speech. but don't worry if you are boring but accurate.

In a current affairs program more time will be available ■ more time to get over your point of view or dig **yoursel**f in deeper.

Preparations

- i. What will I be asked?
- ii. What is the main message I wish to convey?
- iii. What are the best phrases?
- iv. Can I provide visual material ■ maps, statistics, photos or video?
- v. How do I look?

FINALLY- DONT SPEAK OFF THE RECORD