

# THE BASIC INTERVIEW

- Things to help you with the incredibly awkward part of being a journalist.

*“The most difficult thing I do  
is getting out of the car.”*

*-Jamie Frances, Tampa Bay Times*

# INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Katie Couric on conducting a good interview:**
  - <http://youtu.be/4eOynrl2eTM?t=10s>
- **What points did she emphasize?**

# INTERVIEW TIPS

- ❑ **First, interview more people than what you need. Just because you speak with them, doesn't mean you have to use them.**
- ❑ **Second, use experts as your primary source. There's nothing wrong with interviewing "Average Joe" individuals, but show restraint.**
- ❑ **Finally, you CANNOT have any personal connection to your sources.**

# INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Several interview formats are acceptable:**
  - **Telephone (OK)**
  - **Video such as Skype and FaceTime (BETTER)**
  - **Face to face (BEST)**
- **STOP WITH THE EMAIL INTERVIEWS!**

# INTERVIEW TIPS

## □ Preparation

- Find out how to pronounce names
- Read what's been written before
- Find an interesting point for small talk
- Figure out what you need from the person

## □ Making the appointment

- Don't misrepresent yourself
- Use a "sponsor"
- Explain subject and approximate time needed
- Nail down a specific time
- Remember, they are judging you

# INTERVIEW TIPS

□ How you look when you're not prepared:

□ <http://youtu.be/fcjinzlG-0cl?t=7s>

□ <http://youtu.be/5rt9tFjHaso>

# INTERVIEW TIPS

## □ Writing your questions

- Ask open-ended questions
- Put them in logical order (easy ones first)
- Recorder to inside of notebook
- Use as a guide and checklist
- Follow the conversation

## □ Beginning the interview

- Shake hands and make eye contact
- Engage in small talk
- Tell them you appreciate their time
- Ask your first question

# INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Conducting the interview**
  - Listen, listen, listen
  - Always ask for examples
  - Prod them to be specific
  - Ask them to repeat what they said
  - To record or not to record . . .
  
- **Taking notes**
  - Use your own shorthand
  - Try the star system
  - Ask a throwaway question
  - Keep writing



# INTERVIEW TIPS

## □ The bad interview

- Use an awkward pause
- Ask for real-life examples

## □ Asking the hard question

- Acknowledge that it's hard
- Blame your editor
- Blame your readers
- Remember: They probably expect it

# INTERVIEW TIPS

## □ Winding up the interview

- Stay on time
- Ask if you can call later
- Ask if there's someone else with whom you should speak
- Close your notebook and listen

## □ After the interview

- Fill in the blanks in your notes immediately

## □ Real people caveat

- Be careful about sources who aren't media-savvy, especially children

# INTERVIEW TIPS

▣ Finally the interview so bad, it's good:

▣ [http://youtu.be/hzuT\\_vhcQ7U](http://youtu.be/hzuT_vhcQ7U)

# THE BASIC INTERVIEW

▣ Questions?

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