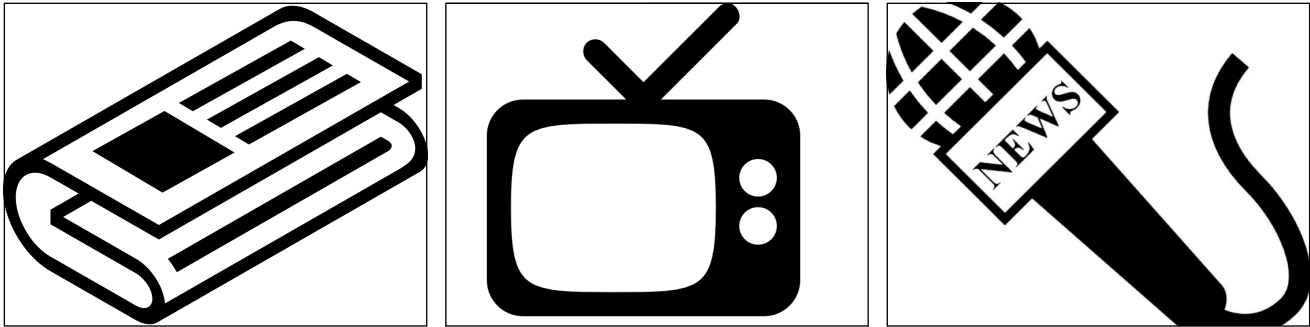

VOCAL Angel House

Working with News Organizations



And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side?" - II Kings 9:32

Understanding News Organizations



For victims of violent crimes, the press can be your friend or foe. We've seen them hinder investigations as well as help them. This guide was produced with the intent of helping the family and friends of homicide victims better understand and work with the media. In some cases, you may even decide to reach out to the media and ask for their assistance. If you do not want or need media coverage of your loved one's homicide that is okay. Our goal is to provide you a basic overview on working with the press in hopes of making the nightmare you are going through a little less stressful.

Story Selection Process

First, it is important to understand how reporters cover homicide cases. News organizations learn about homicides in a variety of ways: reading crime reports, tips from people in the community, social media, and sometimes directly from police departments. Some news agencies even have police scanners to monitor dispatch calls (which explains why news crews sometimes arrive at crime scenes the same time as first responders). Basically, there is not one method journalists have for learning about homicides and other crimes and emergencies. Cases can fall through the cracks. If an announcement about the death of your loved one has not appeared in the news, it is most likely because the newsroom has not yet heard about it. Don't be afraid to call newsrooms and ask if they are aware.

Most news agencies do not cover suicides, as suicide is not a crime. Murder/suicides are covered, however, because homicide is a crime. If your loved one's death was ruled a suicide by law enforcement, that would explain why it hasn't appeared in the news (even if you believe it was a homicide).

Daily newspapers and television news outlets make an effort to publish an initial story about a new homicide, listing the basic facts of the case. Weekly, small-town newspapers don't usually cover crime. Continued coverage of the case, after the initial report, is not guaranteed. Some cases are never reported on again, while others become national news sensations. The reason one victim is forgotten and another is on the cover of *People* magazine is the subject of much debate. Studies have shown there is media bias favoring certain demographics over others during the story selection process.

Media Bias

Tune in to CNN Headline News or Fox News Channel and there will often be an image of a beautiful young white woman from an affluent family who is missing or has been murdered. For every missing person case that gets reported in the national news, there is often a similar case of at least one less privileged person who has also disappeared in the area.



For example, in 2002 – the year Laci Peterson was murdered – the Federal Bureau of Investigation recorded 14,054 homicides in the U.S. Of these, 809 were, like Peterson, White women aged 25-29.¹ Yet, Peterson was the only one who appeared on the cover of *People* magazine 17 times.² There was little to no mention in the news of Evelyn Hernandez, a pregnant Salvadoran American woman who had also gone missing in the same area a few months prior to Peterson's disappearance.

What makes one homicide case worthy of national news coverage?

That is the source of much debate. Scholar Rebecca Wanzo identifies the phenomenon as a “Lost Girl Event,” which she defines as a media spectacle in which a missing or murdered girl or young woman comes to represent the ideal citizen that the government has failed to protect.³ These stories, she argues, contain messages that emphasize innocence as a precondition of worth. Such stories idealize the victim and label her life a “disrupted fairytale,” while at the same time marginalizing those of different backgrounds and demographics: people of color, the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and boys/men.

What makes one homicide case worthy of national news coverage?

This guide was created in hopes of leveling the playing field. We have known families that have been able to use the press to make the investigation of their case a priority of law enforcement. VOCAL exists to serve all victims of violent crimes. This guide is presented in hopes of educating the diverse families we work with and to provide them the tools they need to use the press to advocate for their loved ones.

If your loved one was African American, we suggest connecting with the Black & Missing Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 2008 to bring awareness to missing persons of color, provide vital resources and tools to missing person's families and friends, and educate the minority community on personal safety. Learn more at www.blackandmissinginc.com.

¹FBI, Uniform Crime Reporting Index, <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr>

² *People* magazine archives, www.people.com/people/archive/covercollections

³ Rebecca Wanzo, “The Era of Lost (White) Girls: On Body and Event,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 19.2 (2008): 99-126.

Media Ethics

There are industry standards that guide reporters to produce fair, balanced and ethical news. There are also laws that protect private citizens from damaging, untrue information attacking their good name and character. The following is an overview on media law and ethics so you will know your rights.



Reporters are guided by the principles outlined by the Society of Professional Journalists, which claims to be “the nation’s most broad-based journalism organization, dedicated to encouraging the free practice of journalism and stimulating high standards of ethical behavior.”⁴

Principles

The Society declares these four principles as the foundation of ethical journalism and encourages their use in its practice by all people in all media:

1. **Seek Truth and Report It:** Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.
2. **Minimize Harm:** Ethical journalism treats sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.
3. **Act Independently:** The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.
4. **Be Accountable and Transparent:** Ethical journalism means taking responsibility for one's work and explaining one's decisions to the public.

Read the entire SPJ Code of Ethics online at www.spj.org.

Media Law

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution established the freedom of the press. It states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, **or of the press**; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Journalists are protected from censorship by the government because they have the same rights and privileges as any citizen. You are protected from malicious, untrue statements that defame your character (libel and/or slander), however deceased persons are not protected by law from defamation. The missing are presumed to still be alive and, therefore, protected.

⁴ The Society of Professional Journalists, www.spj.org

Working With News Organizations



Getting Coverage

Some tools for getting media coverage include:

- ❖ Calling the newsroom and telling them your story
- ❖ Distributing a press release (samples and contact information included below)
- ❖ Hosting a press conference and inviting reporters to attend
- ❖ Hosting a special event, such as a candlelight vigil, and inviting reporters to attend
- ❖ Writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper to be printed in the opinion/editorial section.

Giving News Interviews

There's no magic formula for giving a successful news interview, as your experiences will differ among news organizations and reporters. Here are a few tips we hope will help you get your message across and avoid negative press.

👤 Identify a spokesperson to serve as the main point of contact for reporters. The spokesperson is the official liaison between news organizations and the family. Select someone well-spoken, trustworthy and even-tempered. A long-time friend of the family or a distant relative are great options. Immediate family members – particularly the spouse or parent of the victim – are already dealing with enormous stress and grief. The spokesperson needs to be a more neutral figure who is able to function clearly and keep their composure.

👤 Decide whether it is appropriate for the parent or spouse to provide interviews to reporters. The news media and the general public like hearing from a victim's loved ones, however, that is not always ideal. Spouses are almost always the initial suspect in a murder investigation and the public knows this, which leads to greater scrutiny of their interviews with the press. Therefore, the spouse should consider avoiding interviews until law enforcement has removed them from the suspect list. Decide whether they will speak to the press and under what terms and conditions.

👤 Determine, before an interview, what is off-limits. You may be privy to information that investigators do not want disclosed yet to the general public. The last thing you want to do is hinder the investigation and your relationship with officers working the case. If possible, give the investigators a

heads-up that you will be giving an interview and ask if there's anything you should avoid discussing.

👤 Have a goal for the interview. If you don't know why you are giving an interview, then you probably shouldn't be doing it. Know what you want the end result of the interview to be and steer your responses in that direction. For example, if your goal is to get the community to volunteer to search for your missing loved one, focus on why you need help, how people can sign up to help, when you will be doing the search, etc. If the reporter begins asking questions you are not comfortable discussing, redirect the interview back to the topic at hand.

👤 Research the reporter, if possible, before giving an interview. Look for patterns of unfair coverage. Do they have a reputation for being aggressive with those they interview? A quick internet search should tell you what you need to know.

👤 If you are ambushed by reporters who have not pre-arranged an interview, feel free to decline their requests and tell them to set up a time to talk to you. It's better to wait until you are prepared to give interviews.

🗨️ Think before you speak. Be careful of your word choices and remember you don't have to answer every question. If you don't know the answer to a question do not attempt to guess - simply say you don't know or can't answer and, if possible, refer them back to law enforcement or someone else more equipped to answer. A common trick among reporters is to ask a question and wait for you to answer, even if you have no response. They have been trained that people are uncomfortable with silence and will offer up information they didn't plan to share just to fill the awkward silence. Don't fall for this. Change the subject or wait for them to ask another question.

🗨️ Be honest. A good reporter will verify the facts. The truth will eventually come out and, if you have been dishonest, will make you appear untrustworthy or as though you are hiding something.

🗨️ Do not publicly criticize law enforcement. You will likely become frustrated, at some point, with law enforcement. An investigation is routine for them but life-altering for you, so it's understandable if you become frustrated. Make them your friends. Just because they do not behave how you expect does not necessarily mean they are not doing their best to see that justice is served. Even if there are tense moments behind closed doors, do not criticize them in the news. The public doesn't want to see in-fighting between the family and law enforcement. However, if you suspect the case is being mishandled, contact the District Attorney or State Attorney General.

🗨️ Do not identify suspects. Let the police announce suspects. You do not want to open yourself to possible legal action for ruining the good name and character of private citizens (libel/slander). Play it safe – let the police name names. Keep the focus on the victim, who is often lost in all this. Once a suspect has been charged, work with your spokesperson to make an official statement.

🗨️ Own the interview. Here's an insider tip that most people don't understand about reporters: you hold the power in the interview. You are not obligated to talk to them, so you don't have to discuss anything that makes you uncomfortable. Decide, beforehand, what topics are off-limits. When being interviewed on camera, go ahead and tell the reporter – before the camera is rolling – what you would like to discuss and any topics you would like to avoid. Be polite and remain positive.

🗨️ Be careful going “off the record.” There may be some background information you want to share with a reporter to give him/her context for their story but don't want made public. If you trust the reporter, you may decide to go “off the record” with some information. This is tricky. A reporter is never obligated to withhold information from their story, but many will comply if you make it clear up front that what you are about to share needs to be “off the record.” Get them to agree to this before sharing the information. Don't call back later and ask them not to print information you shared on the record (this is a pet peeve for reporters). Generally, it's better not to go off the record. If you decide to do so and the reporter goes back on his/her word, you have no legal recourse. You can complain to their editor and cut them off from future interviews (which usually is enough to prevent them from burning sources to begin with) but the damage has already been done. Also remember that, even when the interview appears to be over, everything you say is fair game until you are out of the reporter's presence.

🗨️ Respect deadlines. When reporters call to request an interview, get back with them right away – even if it is to say no. Ask what their deadline is and try to accommodate it. If you can't, let them know as soon as possible.

🗨️ Look good on camera. This does not mean you have to buy an expensive new outfit or have your hair professionally styled. Viewers want to see normal people like themselves in the news. You should dress in a manner that is appropriate for the occasion. For example, if you are being interviewed while participating in a search for a missing person, it would be odd to wear a business suit. If you are leading or participating in a press conference, you might want to consider wearing a business casual outfit although it is not necessary. In general, wear something that you feel comfortable in that is not flashy or distracting. Be mindful of how logos on your apparel will be perceived. Simply wear something modest and neutral. Make sure your face is free of sweat, as this can lead the audience to thinking you are dishonest and “sweating” the questions. If you want to wear makeup, be sure to apply it yourself as local TV crews do not provide stage makeup, contrary to popular belief. Avoid wearing solid white, as it makes you look washed out on camera. If you have a dark complexion, be sure your face is lit - turn your face to the light or ask to move into the light.

🗣️ Try to avoid being misquoted by newspaper reporters and other writers by speaking slowly. Reporters rarely misquote sources intentionally, but rather mishear what was said. If you speak slowly and stay on topic, it is less confusing. Some newspaper reporters may ask if they can voice-record your interview to ensure accuracy. Those tapes are usually transcribed and used for the story but rarely distributed elsewhere or shared with others. However, they may be used for future stories. Remember that TV reporters will edit your interview down to an approximately one-minute story, therefore much of what you say won't get used. Speak in short sentences and answer in full sentences to avoid getting cut off mid-thought.

🗣️ Keep your temper. If a reporter is being aggressive or rude - especially on camera - do not lose your temper. Remember that TV reporters typically edit out the questions and just air your answers on TV. Therefore, if a reporter is rude they can edit that out and the viewers at home will think you are being defensive, rude, etc. The reporter is

your vessel for talking to the outside world. Speak to the audience, not the reporter.

🗣️ Don't be offended when they reach out to the defense. Reporters have an ethical obligation to "get the other side of the story," which could mean interviewing a suspect or their lawyer. Don't take it personally - it doesn't mean they don't believe you or support your quest for justice. They are trying to be fair to all parties involved.

🗣️ Cut yourself some slack. You have probably never been interviewed by the press before, yet you are doing so in a situation more stressful than most media relations professionals will ever experience. The viewers and readers at home are people like you. They don't expect you to sound like the White House press secretary. Just be yourself. Be honest, down-to-earth, and real.



Be Cautious About Sharing Photos

You may be asked by the press to provide photos of your loved one to run with the story. Be cautious about providing original prints that can't be replaced. Even if the reporter has every intention of returning the photo, it can easily get lost in a chaotic newsroom. A TV news station or digital journalist should be able to use a low-resolution photo emailed to the reporter. Newspapers need high-resolution, print quality photos. If you don't have one you can email to them and they want to scan an original image, you may want to consider scanning it yourself or meeting the reporter at the newsroom and waiting for it to be scanned and returned. Photo labs (Walmart, Walgreen's) and print shops (FedEx Kinkos) should be able to scan a photo for you for a small fee.

Press Releases

Press releases should be emailed to the newsroom. A list of contacts is included in this guide. When in doubt, search for additional contact information online or even call the newsroom and ask which email address should be used for sending press releases. After emailing the press release, feel free to call and follow up within a few hours to see if it was received.

Sample Press Releases

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE: ASKING FOR HELP

Friends and Family of [NAME] Seek Answers

[CITY], Ala. – The family and friends of [NAME] are working with law enforcement to seek answers in the investigation of [HIS/HER] untimely death. The public is asked to please come forward with any information that may be important to the case.

[LAST NAME'S] life was ended on [DATE]. The [POLICE DEPT/LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY] is currently investigating the case and the public is encouraged to call [INVESTIGATOR'S PHONE NUMBER] with any information. Sometimes the smallest tip can crack a case – please do not hesitate to come forward, even anonymously.

[INSERT investigation information, but refrain from mentioning suspects or criticizing law enforcement. If the investigation is ongoing, provide contact information for the agency in charge of the case. If an arrest has already been made, include contact information for the District Attorney's Office.]

MEDIA CONTACT: For interview requests, the media should contact [NAME] at [PHONE] or [EMAIL].

###

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE: VIGIL

Friends and Family of [NAME] to Host Candlelight Vigil on [DATE]

[CITY], Ala. – The family and friends of [NAME] are hosting a candlelight vigil in [HIS/HER] honor on [DATE], [TIME], at [LOCATION]. The public is invited. In the event of inclement weather, the vigil will be moved to [LOCATION].

[LAST NAME’S] life was ended on [DATE]. [HIS/HER] loved ones are joining hands with their neighbors to honor [HIS/HER] memory and shed light on violence in the community. Special guests will include: [INSERT names of any special guests who have agreed to attend, if applicable, such as elected officials and representatives from agencies like VOCAL.]

[INSERT a paragraph of biographical information about the victim, to include: age, workplace or school, interests/hobbies.]

[INSERT investigation information, but refrain from mentioning suspects or criticizing law enforcement. If the investigation is ongoing, provide contact information for the agency in charge of the case. If an arrest has already been made, include contact information for the District Attorney’s Office.]

MEDIA CONTACT: For interview requests, the media should contact [NAME] at [PHONE] or [EMAIL].

###

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE: ARREST MADE

Friends and Family of [Name] Respond to Arrest

[CITY], Ala. – The family and friends of [NAME] are relieved that law enforcement has made an arrest in the murder investigation of their loved one. They would like to make the following statement:

[Insert a comment agreed upon by the family stating their feelings about the arrest, their desire for justice to be served, their gratitude toward investigators, law enforcement and others.]

[LAST NAME'S] life was ended on [DATE]. [INSERT a paragraph of biographical information about the victim, to include: age, workplace or school, interests/hobbies.]

All questions and comments about the case, including possible evidence, should be directed to the District Attorney's Office [include phone number for DA's office or other agency trying the case.]

###

ALABAMA NEWSPAPERS



Each newsroom is structured differently. When contacting larger newspapers, ask for the news/metro editor. Smaller weekly newspapers usually just have one editor who oversees the newsroom. When in doubt, ask for the newsroom when you call a newspaper and, when transferred, tell the person you are speaking with that you would like to pitch a story idea.

ABBEVILLE

Abbeville Herald

Box 609
Abbeville AL 36310
334-585-2331
Editor: J. Edward Dodd, III
heraldnews@centurytel.net

ALBERTVILLE

Sand Mountain Reporter

Box 1729
Albertville AL 35950
256-840-3000
<http://www.sandmountainreporter.com>
Editor: Jonathan Stinson
jstinson@sandmountainreporter.com

ALEXANDER CITY

Alexander City Outlook

Box 999
Alexander City AL 35011
256-234-4281
<http://www.alexcityoutlook.com>
Editor: Mitch Sneed
mitch.sneed@alexcityoutlook.com

ANDALUSIA

Andalusia Star-News

Drawer 430
Andalusia AL 36420
334-222-2402
<http://www.andalusiastarnews.com>
Editor: Michele Cox Gerlach
michele.gerlach@andalusiastarnews.com

ANNISTON

Anniston Star

Box 189
Anniston AL 36202
256-236-1551
<http://www.annistonstar.com>
Editor: Bob Davis
bdavis@annistonstar.com

ARAB

Arab Tribune

Box 605
Arab AL 35016
256-586-3188
<http://www.theArabtribune.com>
Editor: Charles Whisenant
tribnews@otelco.net

ASHVILLE

Clarion

P.O. Box 1093
Ashville AL 35953
205-594-4433
Editor: Art Segers
art@countrybulletin2.com

ATHENS

News Courier

Box 670
410 W. Green St.
Athens AL 35612
256-232-2720
<http://www.enewscourier.com>

ATMORE

Atmore Advance

P.O. Box 28
Atmore AL 36504
251-368-2123
<http://www.atmoreadvance.com>
News Editor: Blake Bell
blake.bell@atmoreadvance.com

Atmore News

128 S. Main Street
Atmore AL 36502
251-368-6397
<http://www.atmorenews.com>
Owner: Sherry Digmon
sherry@atmorenews.com
Owner: Myrna Monroe
myrna@atmorenews.com

AUBURN

Auburn Villager

P.O. Box 1633
Auburn AL 36831
334-501-0600
<http://www.auburnvillager.com>
Editor: Rachel Morand
rachel@auburnvillager.com

Opelika-Auburn News

2901 Society Hill Road
Opelika AL 36801
334-749-6271
<http://www.oanow.com>
Editor: Wayne Snow
wsnow@oanow.com

BESSEMER

Western Star

Box 1900
Bessemer AL 35021
205-424-7827
Editor: Matt Bryant
editor@thewesternstarnews.com

BIRMINGHAM

Alabama Baptist

3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham AL 35209
205-870-4720
<http://www.thealabamabaptist.org>
Editor: Bob S. Terry
news@thealabamabaptist.org

Alabama Messenger

205 N. 20th St., Ste. 706
Birmingham AL 35203
205-252-3672
<http://www.alabamamessenger.com>
Editor: Traci A. Smeraglia
alamsg@bellsouth.net

Birmingham News

PO Box 2553
Birmingham AL 35202
205-325-2222
<http://www.al.com>
President Matt Sharp
matt@al.com

BREWTON

Brewton Standard

Box 887
Brewton AL 36427
251-867-4876
<http://www.brewtonstandard.com>
Editor: Kerry Whipple Bean
newsroom@brewtonstandard.com

CAMDEN

Wilcox Progressive Era

Box 100
Camden AL 36726
334-682-4422
Editor: Glenda Curl
progressiveera@mchsi.com

CARBON HILL

Corridor Messenger

P.O. Box 290
Carbon Hill AL 35549
205-282-4500
<http://www.corridormessenger.com>
Managing Editor: David Lazenby
news@corridormessenger.com

CARROLLTON

Pickens County Herald

Box 390
215 Reform St.
Carrollton AL 35447
205-367-2217
<http://www.pcherald.com>
Editor: Doug Sanders, Jr.
pickenscnty@centurytel.net

CENTRE

Cherokee County Herald
1460-E West Main Street
Centre AL 35960
256-927-5037
<http://www.cherokeeherald.com>
Editor: Terry Dean
tdean@cherokeeherald.com

CENTREVILLE

Centreville Press
Box 127
Centreville AL 35042
205-926-9769
Publisher: Lorrie Bean
lorrie@centrevillepress.com

CHATOM

Washington County News
Box 510
Chatom AL 36518
251-847-2599
<http://www.washcountynews.com>
Publisher: Willie Gray
williegray@thecallnews.com

CITRONELLE

Citronelle Call News
7870 State St.
Citronelle AL 36522
251-866-5998
<http://www.thecallnews.com>
Editor: Jimmy Wigfield
editor@thecallnews.com

CLANTON

Clanton Advertiser
P.O. Box 1379
Clanton AL 35046
205-755-5747
<http://www.clantonadvertiser.com>
Managing Editor: Stephen Dawkins
stephen.dawkins@clantonadvertiser.com

CLAYTON

Clayton Record
Box 69
Clayton AL 36016
334-775-3254
<http://www.theclaytonrecordonline.com>

Editor: Rebecca P. Beasley
claytonrecord@earthlink.net

COLUMBIA

Shelby County Reporter
Box 947
Columbiana AL 35051
205-669-3131
<http://www.shelbycountyreporter.com>
Editor: Jan Griffey
jan.griffey@shelbycountyreporter.com

CULLMAN

Cullman Times
300 4th Ave. SE
Cullman AL 35055
256-734-2131
<http://www.cullmantimes.com>
Editor: David Palmer
dpalmer@cullmantimes.com

Cullman Tribune
219 Second Ave. S.E.
Cullman AL 35055
256-739-1351
Editor: Delton Blalock
news@culltrib.com

DADEVILLE

Dadeville Record
Box 999
Alexander City AL 35011
256-825-2245
Editor: Mitch Sneed
mitch.sneed@alexcityoutlook.com

DECATUR

Decatur Daily

Box 2213
Decatur AL 35609
256-353-4612
<http://www.decaturdaily.com>
Editor: Don Hudson
Executive Editor
dhudson@decaturdaily.com

DEMOPOLIS

Demopolis Times

Box 860
Demopolis AL 36732
334-289-4017
<http://www.demopolistimes.com>

Publisher: Justin Averette
news@demopolistimes.com

DOTHAN

Dothan Eagle

227 North Oates St.
Dothan AL 36303
334-792-3141
<http://www.dothaneagle.com>
Managing Editor: Ken Tuck
ktuck@dothaneagle.com

ECLECTIC

Eclectic Observer

Box 99
Wetumpka AL 36092
334-567-7811
Editor: Mitch Sneed
mitch.sneed@alexcityoutlook.com

ELBA

Elba Clipper

Box 677
Elba AL 36323
334-897-2823
<http://www.elba-clipper.com>
Editor: Linda Hodge
clipper@troycable.net

ENTERPRISE

Enterprise Ledger

1110 Boll Weevil Cir., Suite D
Enterprise AL 36330
334-347-9533
<http://www.eprisenow.com>
Publisher: Jim Whittum
JWhittum@dothaneagle.com

Southeast Sun

Box 311546
Enterprise AL 36331
334-393-2969
<http://www.southeastsun.com>
Managing Editor: Kim Lewis
news@southeastsun.com

EUFULA

Eufaula Tribune

Box 628
Eufaula AL 36027
334-687-3506
<http://www.eufaulatribune.com>
Managing Editor: Patrick Johnston
pjohnston@eufaulatribune.com

EUTAW

Greene County Democrat

Box 598
Eutaw AL 35462
205-372-3373
Editor: John Zippert
jzippert@aol.com

Greene County Independent

106 Main Street
Eutaw AL 35462
Editor: Betty C. Banks
greenecountyindependent@gmail.com

EVERGREEN

Evergreen Courant

Box 440
Evergreen AL 36401
251-578-1492
Editor: R.G. (Robert) Bozeman III
courantpublisher@earthlink.net

FAYETTE

Times-Record

Drawer 159
Fayette AL 35555
205-932-6271
<http://www.mytrpaper.com>
Publisher: Horace Moore
trnews@watvc.com

FLOMATON

Tri-City Ledger

P.O. Box 1916
Flomaton AL 36441
251-296-3491
Editor: Joe Thomas
jthomas@tricityledger.com

FLORALA

Floral News

1155 5th St.
Floral AL 36442
334-858-3342
Editor: Gary Woodham
floralanews@fairpoint.net

FLORENCE

Times Daily

Box 797
Florence AL 35631
256-766-3434
<http://www.timesdaily.com>
Editor: Scott Morris
scott.morris@timesdaily.com

FOLEY

The Baldwin Times

901 N. McKenzie St.
Foley AL 36535
251-943-2151
<http://www.gulfcoastnewstoday.com>
Editor: Cliff McCollum
cliff@gulfcoastmedia.com

The Courier

901 N. McKenzie St.
Foley AL 36535
251-943-2151
<http://www.gulfcoastnewstoday.com>
Editor: Cliff McCollum
cliff@gulfcoastmedia.com

The Foley Onlooker

901 N. McKenzie St.
Foley AL 36535
251-943-2151
<http://www.gulfcoastnewstoday.com>
Editor: Cliff McCollum
cliff@gulfcoastmedia.com

The Islander

901 N. McKenzie St.
Foley AL 36535
251-943-2151
<http://www.gulfcoastnewstoday.com>
Editor: Cliff McCollum
cliff@gulfcoastmedia.com

The Times Independent

901 N. McKenzie St.
Foley AL 36535
251-943-2151
<http://www.gulfcoastnewstoday.com>
Editor: Cliff McCollum
cliff@gulfcoastmedia.com

FORT PAYNE

Fort Payne Times-Journal

Box 680349
Fort Payne AL 35968-0349
256-845-2550
<http://www.times-journal.com>
Editor: David Clemons
dclemons@times-journal.com

GADSDEN

Gadsden Messenger

Box 858
Gadsden AL 35902
256-547-1049
<http://www.gadsdenmessenger.com>
Editor: Chris McCarthy
cmccarthy@gadsdenmessenger.com

Gadsden Times

Box 188
Gadsden AL 35902
256-549-2000
<http://www.gadsdentimes.com>
Editor: Ron Reaves
ron.reaves@gadsdentimes.com

GARDENDALE

North Jefferson News

Box 849
Gardendale AL 35071
205-631-8716
<http://www.njeffersonnews.com>
Editor: Melanie Patterson
mpatterson@njeffersonnews.com

GENEVA

Geneva County Reaper

Box 160
Geneva AL 36340
334-684-2280
<http://www.genevareaper.com>
Editor: Moe Pujol

Hartford News-Herald

Box 160
Geneva AL 36340
334-684-2280
<http://www.genevapapers.com>
Editor: Jay Felsberg
hartfordnews herald@centurytel.net

Samson Ledger

Box 160
Geneva AL 36340
334-684-2280
<http://www.genevapapers.com>
Editor: Jay Felsberg
news@genevareaper.com

GILBERTON

Choctaw Sun-Advocate

P.O. Box 269
Gilbertown AL 36908
251-843-6397
<http://www.choctawsun.com>
Editor: Dee Ann Campbell
choctawsun@millry.net

GREENBORO

Greensboro Watchman

Drawer 550
Greensboro AL 36744
334-624-8323
Associate Editor: John Allan Clark
gwatchman@bellsouth.net

GREENVILLE

Greenville Advocate

Box 507
Greenville AL 36037
334-382-3111
<http://www.greenvilleadvocate.com>
Managing Editor: Andy Brown
andy.brown@greenvilleadvocate.com

Greenville Standard

P.O. Box 186
Greenville AL 36037
334-371-9900
<http://www.greenvillestandard.com>
Publisher: Michelle Styron
thestandard@camelliacom.com

Lowndes Signal

Box 507
Greenville AL 36037
334-382-3111
<http://www.lowndessignal.com/>
General Manager: Tracy Salter
tracy.salter@greenvilleadvocate.com

Luverne Journal

Box 507
Greenville AL 36037
334-335-3541
<http://www.luvernejournal.com>
Publisher: Tracy Salter
tracy.salter@greenvilleadvocate.com

GROVEHILL

Clarke County Democrat

Box 39
Grove Hill AL 36451
251-275-3375
<http://www.clarkecountym democrat.com>
Editor: James A. Cox
Jimcox@tds.net
clarkecountym dem@tds.net

GUNTERSVILLE

Advertiser-Gleam

Box 190
Guntersville AL 35976
256-582-3232
<http://www.advertiser gleam.com>
Editor: Anthony Campbell
news@advertiser gleam.com

HALEYVILLE

Northwest Alabamian

Box 430
Haleyville AL 35565
205-486-9461
<http://www.mynwapaper.com>
Editor: Horace Moore
nwanews@centurytel.net
jrpaper@centurytel.net

HARTSELLE

Hartselle Enquirer

Box 929
Hartselle AL 35640
256-773-6566
<http://www.hartselleenquirer.com>
Managing Editor: Brent Maze
brent.maze@hartselleenquirer.com

HEFLIN

Cleburne News

Box 67
Heflin AL 36264
256-463-2872
<http://www.cleburnenews.com>
News Editor: Laura Camper
news@cleburnenews.com

HUNTSVILLE

Huntsville Times

Box 1487, West Station
Huntsville AL 35807
256-532-4000
<http://www.al.com>

Speakin' Out News

PO Box 2826
Huntsville AL 35804
256-551-1020
<http://www.speakinoutnews.info>
Publisher: William Smothers
wsmoth3193@aol.com

JACKSON

South Alabamian

Box 68
Jackson AL 36545
251-246-4494
<http://www.southalabamian.com>
Publisher: Jerry Turner
news@thesouthalabamian.com

JACKSONVILLE

Jacksonville News

P.O. Box 2285
Anniston AL 36202
256-435-5021
<http://www.jaxnews.com>
Editor: John Alred
jalred@jaxnews.com

JASPER

Daily Mountain Eagle

Box 1469
Jasper AL 35502-1469
205-221-2840
<http://www.mountaineagle.com>
Publisher: Jack McNeely
jack.mcneely@mountaineagle.com

LAFAYETTE

LaFayette Sun

Box 378
LaFayette AL 36862
334-864-8885
Editor: Michael Hand
news@thelafayettesun.com

LANETT

Valley Times-News

Box 850
Lanett AL 36863
334-644-1101
<http://www.valleytimes-news.com>
Editor: Cy Wood
news@valleytimes-news.com

LINDEN

Democrat-Reporter

Box 480040
Linden AL 36748
334-295-5224
Editor: Goodloe Sutton Sr.
dreporter2@yahoo.com

LINEVILLE

Clay Times-Journal

P.O. Box 97
Lineville AL 36266
256-396-5760
<http://www.theclaytimesjournal.com>
Editor: David Proctor
timesjournal@centurytel.net

LIVINGSTON

Sumter County Record-Journal

Drawer B
Livingston AL 35470
205-652-6100
<http://www.recordjournal.net>
Publisher: Tommy McGraw
scrjmedia@yahoo.com

MADISON

Madison County Record

Box 859
Madison AL 35758
256-772-6677
<http://www.madisoncountyrecord.com>
Publisher: Tim Prince
tim.prince@shelbycountyreporter.com

MARION

Marion Times-Standard

Box 418
Marion AL 36756
334-683-6318

MILLPORT

West Alabama Gazette

P.O. Box 249
Millport AL 35576
205-662-4296

MOBILE

Mobile Beacon

Box 1407
Mobile AL 36633
251-479-0629
Editor: Cleretta T. Blackmon
mobilebeaconinc@bellsouth.net

Press-Register

Box 2488
Mobile AL 36652
251-219-5400
<http://www.al.com>

MONROEVILLE

Monroe Journal

Box 826
Monroeville AL 36461
251-575-3282
<http://www.monroejournal.com>
Editor: Kermit P. "Bo" Bolton
news@monroejournal.com

MONTGOMERY

Montgomery Advertiser

Box 1000
Montgomery AL 36101-1000
334-262-1611
<http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com>
Editor: Tom Clifford
tclifford@montgome.gannett.com

Montgomery Independent

141 Market Place
Montgomery AL 36117
334-265-7323
<http://www.themontgomeryindependent.com>
Editor: Bob Martin
bob@montgomeryindependent.com

MOULTON

Moulton Advertiser

Box 517
Moulton AL 35650
256-974-1114
<http://www.moultonadvertiser.com>
Editor: Ginger Grantham
ginger@moultonadvertiser.com

MOUNDVILLE

Moundville Times

Box 683
Moundville AL 35474
205-371-2488
Editor: David Miller
times@mound.net

NORTHPORT

Northport Gazette

P.O. Box 749
Northport AL 35476
205-759-3091
Publisher: L. Peyton Bobo
gazettenews@frontiernet.net

ONEONTA

Banner Herald

P.O. Box 1882
Oneonta AL 35121
205-594-7408
Publisher: Art Segers
art@countrybulletin2.com

Blount Countian

Box 310
Oneonta AL 35121
205-625-3231
<http://www.blountcountian.com>
Editor: Rob Rice
robriice@otelco.net

OPELIKA

Opelika Observer

P.O. Box 1515
Opelika AL 36803
334-749-8003
Editor: Fred Woods
opelikaobserver@att.net

Opelika-Auburn News

2901 Society Hill Road
Opelika AL 36801
334-749-6271
<http://www.oanow.com>
Editor: Wayne Snow
wsnow@oanow.com

OPP

Opp News

Box 870
Opp AL 36467
334-493-3595
<http://www.opppnewsonline.com>
Editor: Jay Thomas
oppnews@centurytel.net

OZARK

Southern Star

Box 1729
Ozark AL 36361-1729
334-774-2715
Editor: Joseph H. Adams
southstar@centurytel.net

PELL CITY

St. Clair News-Aegis

Box 750
Pell City AL 35125
205-884-2310
<http://www.newsaegis.com>
Managing Editor: Bill Morgan
evernon@newsaegis.com

PHENIX CITY

Citizen of East Alabama

Box 130
Phenix City AL 36868-130
334-664-0145
Editor: Denise DuBois
ddubois@citizenea.com

PIEDMONT

Piedmont Journal

P.O. Box 2285
Anniston AL 36202
256-435-5021
<http://www.thepiedmontjournal.com>
Editor: John Alred
jalred@jaxnews.com

PRATTVILLE

Prattville Progress

152 W. Third St
Prattville AL 36037
334-365-6739
<http://www.prattvilleprogress.com>

RAINESVILLE

Mountain Valley News

P.O. Box 765
Rainsville AL 35968
256-638-6397
Publisher: Nathaniel Ledbetter
mtnvalley@farmerstel.com

RED BAY

Red Bay News

Box 1339
Red Bay AL 35582
256-356-2148
Editor: Keith Ledbetter

ROANOKE

Randolph Leader

Box 1267
Roanoke AL 36274
334-863-2819
<http://www.therandolphleader.com>
Editor: John W. Stevenson
john@therandolphleader.com

ROCKFORD

Coosa County News

P.O. Box 99
Rockford AL 35136
256-377-2525
<http://www.coosanews.com>
editor@coosanews.com

ROGERSVILLE

East Lauderdale News

Box 479
Rogersville AL 35652
256-247-5565
Editor: James B. Cox
elnewsrog@aol.com

RUSSELLVILLE

Franklin County Times

Box 1088
Russellville AL 35653
256-332-1881
<http://www.FranklinCountyTimes.com>
Editor: Jonathan Willis
jonathan.willis@franklincountytimes.com

SCOTTSBORO

Daily Sentinel

Box 220
Scottsboro AL 35768
256-259-1020
<http://www.thedailysentinel.com>
Editor: Brad Shurett
dsnews@thedailysentinel.com

SELMA

Selma Times-Journal

Box 611
Selma AL 36702
334-875-2110
<http://www.selmatimesjournal.com>
Publisher: Dennis Palmer
dennis.palmer@selmatimesjournal.com

STEVENSON

North Jackson Progress

Drawer 625
Stevenson AL 35772
256-437-2395
Editor: Larry O. Glass
njprogresslog@aol.com

SULLIGENT

Lamar Leader

Box 925
Sulligent AL 35586
205-698-8148
Editor: Stephanie Wilson
news@lamarleader.com

TALLADEGA

Daily Home

Box 977
Talladega AL 35161
256-362-1000
<http://www.dailyhome.com>
News Editor: Denise Sinclair
dsinclair@dailyhome.com

TALLASSEE

Tallassee Tribune

301 Gilmer Ave.
Tallassee AL 36078
334-283-6568
Managing Editor: Ashley Vice
ashley.vice@tallassee Tribune.com

THOMASVILLE

Thomasville Times

Box 367
Thomasville AL 36784
334-636-2214
<http://www.thethomasvilletimes.com>
Editor: Arthur McLean
newsroom@thethomasvilletimes.net

TROY

Troy Messenger

Box 727
Troy AL 36081
334-566-4270
<http://www.troymessenger.com>
Editor: Stacy Graning
stacy.graning@troymessenger.com

TUSCALOOSA

Tuscaloosa News

Box 20587
Tuscaloosa AL 35402
205-345-0505
<http://www.tuscaloosanews.com>
Editor: Michael James
michael.james@tuscaloosanews.com

TUSCUMBIA

Colbert County Reporter

Box 969
Tuscumbia AL 35674
256-383-8471
Editor: Jim Crawford, Jr.
colbertcountyreporter@earthlink.net

Standard and Times

Box 969
Tuscumbia AL 35674
256-383-8471
Editor: Jim Crawford, Jr.
colbertcountyreporter@earthlink.net

TUSKEGEE

Tuskegee News

103 South Main St.
Tuskegee AL 36083
334-727-3020
<http://www.thetuskegeenews.com>
Editor: Guy Rhodes
guynrhodes@bellsouth.net

UNION SPRINGS

Union Springs Herald

324 Ellis Street
Union Springs AL 36089
334-738-2360
Editor: Johnny L. Adams
johnnyladams@gmail.com

VERNON

Lamar Democrat

Box 587
Vernon AL 35592
205-695-7029
Publisher: Tammy Bardon
democrat2@centurylink.net

WETUMPKA

Wetumpka Herald

Box 99
Wetumpka AL 36092
334-567-7811
<http://www.thewetumpkaherald.com>
Editor: David Goodwin
david.goodwin@thewetumpkaherald.com

al.com

The Alabama Media Group, otherwise known as al.com, is a news organization that owns the Birmingham News, Huntsville Times and Mobile Press Register. The printed editions of these publications are now released only three days per week. Content from across the state is placed on al.com continuously.

Send press releases to news@al.com.

Birmingham
1731 1st Avenue. N.
Birmingham, AL 35203
205-325-2211

Huntsville
200 Westside Square, Suite 100
Huntsville, AL 35801
256-532-4000

Mobile
18 South Royal St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-219-5400



ALABAMA TELEVISION STATIONS

When contacting television news stations, ask to speak to the assignment editor. You are better off pitching your story to this person, rather than an individual reporter you have seen on TV, as these editors are in charge of deciding what content will appear on the news and assign stories to the reporters.

BIRMINGHAM

WBMA, ABC-3340

800 Concourse Pkwy, Ste. 200
Birmingham, AL 35244
205-982-3970
Email: newstip@abc3340.com
www.abc3340.com

WBRC, FOX-6

P.O. Box 6
Birmingham, AL 35201
205-583-4333
Email: newstip@wbrc.com
www.wbrc.com

WIAT, CBS-42

2075 Golden Crest Dr
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-322-4665
Email: ReportIt@wiat.com
www.wiat.com

WVTM, NBC-13

1732 Valley View Dr.
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-933-1313
Submit press releases online at
www.wvtm13.com/tv/contact

DOTHAN

WDFX, FOX-34

2221 Ross Clark Circle
Dothan, AL 36301
334-284-5276
Email: mmctear@myfox34.tv
<http://wdfx34.revrocket.us>

WDHN, ABC-18

P.O. Box 6237
Dothan, AL 36302
334-793-1882
jhinson@wdhn.com
www.dothanfirst.com

HUNTSVILLE

WAAY, ABC-31

1000 Monte Sano Blvd
Huntsville, AL 35801
256-539-3131
Email: newsroom@waaytv.com
<http://www.waaytv.com>

WAFF, NBC-48

1414 N. Memorial Parkway
Huntsville, AL 35801
256-533-6397
Email: news@waff.com
www.waff.com

WHNT, CBS-19

200 Holmes Avenue
Huntsville, AL 35801
1-800-533-TV19
You must submit a news tip online at
<http://whnt.com/contact/send-a-news-tip-to-whnt-news-19/>

WZDX, FOX-54

1309 North Memorial Parkway
Huntsville, AL 35801
256-533-5454
Must submit a news tip online at
www.rocketcitynow.com/contact-news-form

MOBILE

WKRG, CBS-5

555 Broadcast Dr.
Mobile, AL 36606
251-662-3002
Email: producers@wkrg.com
www.wkrg.com

WPML, NBC-15

661 Azalea Road
Mobile, AL 36609
251-652-1238
Email: publicservice@local15tv.com
www.local15tv.com

MONTGOMERY

WAKA, CBS-8

3251 Harrison Road
Montgomery, AL 36109
334-270-9252
Email: news@waka.com
www.waka.com

WSFA, NBC-12

12 East Delano Avenue
Montgomery, AL 3
334-288-1212
Email: news@wsfa.com
www.wsfa.com



ALABAMA PUBLIC RADIO STATIONS

Local radio stations rarely cover news stories. When you hear radio personalities reading or commenting on the news, it is usually an article they have pulled from a newswire service or the local newspaper. National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate stations do, however, have news departments. The following is the contact information for these stations.

STATEWIDE

Alabama Public Radio

Headquartered on the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa (WUAL, 91.5 FM), Alabama Public Radio is an NPR affiliate that airs statewide in Gadsden (WGSN, 91.5) Huntsville (WQRP, 100.7 FM), Muscle Shoals (WQPR, 88.7 FM), Mobile (WHIL, 91.3 FM) and Selma (WAPR, 88.3 FM).

Contact:

The Digital Media Center
920 Paul W. Bryant Drive
Bryant Denny Stadium Room N460
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
800-654-4262
205-348-6644

News Director: Pat Duggins,
pduggins@apr.org

Troy Public Radio

Headquartered on the campus of Troy University, Troy Public Radio serves Montgomery and Troy (WTSU, 89.9 FM), Dothan (WRWA, 88.7 FM) and Phenix City (WTJB, 91.7 FM).

Troy University Public Radio
Troy University
Wallace Hall
Troy, AL 36082
800-800-6616

News Director: Buddy Johnson,
ekjohnson@troy.edu

BIRMINGHAM

WBHM, 90.3 FM

650 11th Street South
Birmingham AL 35233
800-444-9246
205-934-2606
www.wbhm.org

HUNTSVILLE

WLRH, 89.3 FM

University of Alabama at Huntsville
John Wright Drive
Huntsville, AL 35899
General Manager: Brett Tannehill,
brett@wlrh.org
256-895-9574
www.wlrh.org

NORMAL

WJAB, 90.9 FM

Alabama A&M University
PO Box 1687
Normal, AL 35762
News Director: Erica Fox,
erica.fox@aamu.edu
800-845-9746
256-372-5861
www.wjab.org

MONTGOMERY

WVAS, 90.7

Alabama State University
PO Box 271
Montgomery, AL 36101
News Director: Shedd Johnson,
sjohnson@alasu.edu
334-229-4708
www.wvasfm.org

NOTES