

**MASTERING
THE INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW:
Questioning the way that
you take on your targets**



With Julian Sher



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What makes a good interviewer?



Three characteristics of the good interviewer:

- 1. YOU HAVE TO BE **FIGHTER** 
-  2. YOU HAVE TO BE **CURIOUS, CARING**
- 3. YOU HAVE TO BE A **STORY-TELLER** 

YOU CAN BE **CURIOUS**
SOME OF THE TIME ...
AND A **STORY-TELLER**
OTHER TIMES...



**BUT YOU HAVE TO BE
A FIGHTER ALL THE TIME --
THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW**

**BECAUSE EVERY INTERVIEW IS
A CONSTANT FIGHT FOR CONTROL**



The challenge of every interview:
Who is in control of the ball?






AND HOW DO YOU SCORE IN SPORTS?

In sports, you are lucky if you control the ball
50% of the game...

In interviews you need to be in control **100%**
of the time



**How do you prepare for
the tough interview?**



We focus on research, facts...




**but too often we ignore
strategy**




THE GOAL TODAY IS TO GET YOU TO:

- > THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX
- > RADICALLY CHANGE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT INTERVIEWS
- > SHOW YOU HOW TO ALWAYS KEEP CONTROL OF THE BATTLE




MASTERING THE INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW:

- **1. THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVIEWS**
- **2. THE FIVE RULES OF GOOD INTERVIEWS (AND HOW TO BREAK THEM)**
- **3. WHAT TO DO TO WHEN YOU GET INTO TROUBLE**
- **4. STORY-TELLING WHEN YOU ARE INTERVIEWING**
- **5. STRATEGY AND TACTICS**

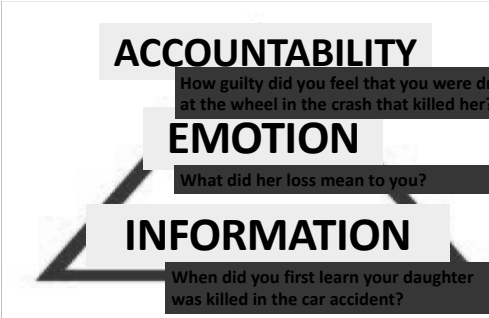


A TEST: ASK ME ABOUT THIS COURSE



YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT NOT JUST THE QUESTIONS, BUT THE TYPE OF INTERVIEW YOU ARE DOING...


1. The Three Types of Interviews



ACCOUNTABILITY
How guilty did you feel that you were drunk at the wheel in the crash that killed her?


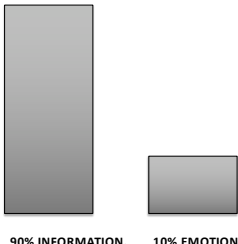
EMOTION
What did her loss mean to you?

INFORMATION
When did you first learn your daughter was killed in the car accident?




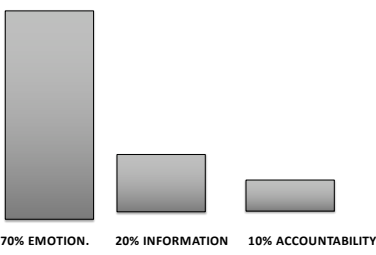
You get into trouble if you, the guest and the audience don't know where you are going...

Some interviews are **mainly information** [for example, experts]


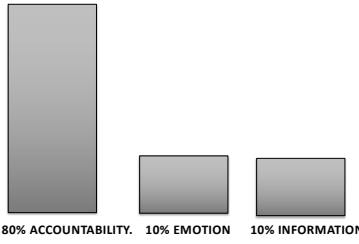
90% INFORMATION. 10% EMOTION

Some interviews are **mainly emotion, with some information** [usually your main character, the victim, the protagonist]

70% EMOTION. 20% INFORMATION 10% ACCOUNTABILITY




Interviews with the powerful are **almost all accountability**


80% ACCOUNTABILITY. 10% EMOTION 10% INFORMATION

So you have to know:


- > what **kind of fight** you are in...
- > or **where** you are in the fight

- Exploring, gathering info 
- Probing for emotions 
- Moving in for the killer punch 

SO REMEMBER: Three Types of Interviews



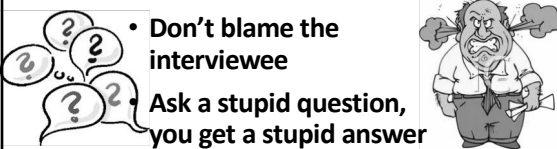

2. The Basic Rules for Good Interviews



You get the answers you deserve

- Don't blame the interviewee
- Ask a stupid question, you get a stupid answer

So how can we ask smarter questions?




1. ASK OPEN-ENDED NOT CLOSED QUESTIONS:

- ALWAYS ASK THE 5 Ws:

WHO?
WHAT?
WHERE?
WHY?
WHEN?

- **AVOID YES/NO ANSWERS**




The Bad Sports Interview




Watch bad sports interviews: <http://tinyurl.com/y9wh75ah>

The Bad Sports Interview 

- **QUESTION:** IS THERE EVER A POINT AT WHICH YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN COME BACK? **AND WHAT'S YOUR MINDSET?**
- **PLAYER:** NO.
- **QUESTION:** SO TELL ME ABOUT THAT –
- **PLAYER:** THANK YOU

2. DON'T GIVE PEOPLE EASY ESCAPE ROUTES: 

- ASK **ONE** QUESTION ONLY
- DON'T GIVE THEM **EASY CHOICES**
- WATCH FOR THE UNNEEDED ADJECTIVE
- OR PHRASE OR THE UNNEEDED FACT



The Firing of James Comey – Letting the White House off the hook:



The Firing of Comey -- Letting Spicer off the hook: How many questions do you need?




Since you were involved in this Tuesday night as well -- giving a blanket answer, saying at the time 'It was all him' regarding deputy AG Rod Rosenstein

- 1/ Why did you come out with information that was later contradicted by the President two days later ?
- 2/ ... Could you explain the tick-tock?
- 3/ ... When were you brought in?
- 4/ ... Who else was involved?
- 5/ ... Why were the American people given incorrect information that night?

Giving Putin a choice



WATCH FULL HELSINKI PRESS CONFERENCE: <http://tinyurl.com/vbpose3o>
 WATCH HIGHLIGHTS: <http://tinyurl.com/y7wzhtco>




QUESTION: Did you want President Trump to win the election?
 And did you direct any of your officials to help him do that?

ANSWER:


Giving Putin a choice – He answers the easiest question: the first one:

➔ Did you want President Trump to win the election?
 ✕ And did you direct any of your officials to help him do that?



Putin: Yes I did, yes I did. Because he talked about bringing the U.S.-Russia relationship back to normal.


Why didn't Obama arm the Syrian rebels?
 We'll never know with this question that gives him an escape... by adding just seven unnecessary words at the end



Obama gets an easy escape:

- CHARLIE ROSE: You do not accept the idea that if you do what the rebels want you do, the Free Syrian Army wants you to do and what Arab governments want you do that it would turn the tide and lead to Assad leaving ... which has been, I think, your objective.

BARACK OBAMA: Well, my objective, understand, is Assad leaving because he delegitimized himself.



WATCH VIDEO: <https://charlierose.com/videos/17754> (TIMECODE 15:02)

When a question mark comes out of your mouth...



- STOP TALKING!!!!

3. BASIC IS BEAUTIFUL - KEEP IT CLEAN AND SIMPLE


AVOID LOADED OR CONTROVERSIAL WORDS...




Mr. Mayor – have you not become the **most hated and corrupt politician** in town?

Isn't that what all **climate change deniers** say?

Are you doing enough to stop **radical Islam** in your mosque?






OBAMA IS QUESTIONNED ABOUT HOSTAGES IN IRAN:

QUESTION: As you well know, there are four Americans in Iran - three held on trumped up charges according to your administration, one, whereabouts unknown. Can you tell the country, sir, why you are content, with all of the fanfare around this [nuclear] deal to leave the conscience of this nation, the strength of this nation, unaccounted for, in relation to these four Americans?

OBAMA SEIZES ON ONE WORD:




OBAMA SEIZES ON ONE WORD TO ESCAPE:

QUESTION: As you well know, there are four Americans in Iran - three held on trumped up charges according to your administration, one, whereabouts unknown. Can you tell the country, sir, why you are content, with all of the fanfare around this [nuclear] deal to leave the conscience of this nation, the strength of this nation, unaccounted for, in relation to these four Americans?

WATCH VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/ybl47zx4>

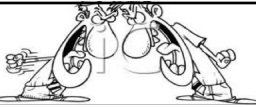
4. THE WORST QUESTION IS NOT ASKING ONE

- AVOID MAKING STATEMENTS, OPINIONS
- DO NOT GET INTO A DEBATE – YOU WILL ALWAYS LOSE



WHY WILL YOU WILL ALWAYS LOSE?

BECAUSE IT'S AN UNFAIR FIGHT. THEY CAN LIE, DEFLECT AND MAKE STUFF UP. YOU CAN'T

- DEBATES MAY BE FUN TO WATCH -- BUT WE DON'T LEARN ANYTHING
- STATEMENTS CAN KILL THE PACE OF AN INTERVIEW
- STATEMENTS BY YOU WILL ALLOW THE TABLES TO BE TURNED AGAINST YOU

4A. DEBATES: -FUN TO WATCH BUT WE DON'T LEARN ANYTHING:



- Shut up.
- You're telling ME to shut up?!

WATCH VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/mvuklfn>

A USELESS SHOUTING MATCH –
CNN'S CHRIS CUOMO VS. KELLYANNE CONWAY



#LETSGETAFTERIT
ONE-ON-ONE WITH WH COUNSELOR KELLYANNE CONWAY

WATCH FULL INTERVIEW: <http://tinyurl.com/yd7lvo3u>

STATEMENTS CAN ALSO KILL
THE PACE OF AN INTERVIEW



BLAH
BLAH
BLAH

The endless question that Obama never gets to answer



WATCH VIDEO: <https://charliecass.com/video/1775/>

STATEMENTS BY YOU WILL ALLOW
THE TABLES TO BE TURNED AGAINST
YOU




Morgan Freeman vs Mike Wallace:



Morgan Freeman On Black History Month

WATCH FULL VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/ztfk4u3>

A Prime Minister in Canada turns the table on a reporter



WATCH VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/q88gtgl>

5. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN



- GRAB THEIR WORDS, MAKE THEM YOURS AND THROW THEM BACK
- SHIFT THE WEIGHT BACK TO THE SUBJECT
- AND DON'T SOUND LIKE YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION...

LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN

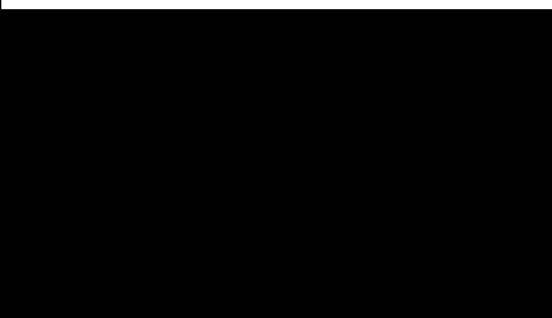


- LISTEN TO WHAT THEY ARE ***REALLY*** SAYING

Riots in Canada – A Police Chief Held to Account



What is this embattled police chief really saying... or not saying?



WATCH FULL SHOW: <http://tinyurl.com/ydk3r2ds>

CHALLENGING A POLICE CHIEF

POLICE CHIEF: I think it was very unfortunate that was necessary to do...

CBC: WAS IT NECESSARY TO DO?

POLICE CHIEF: ...We had to try to balance a very difficult set of responsibilities.

CBC: DID YOU GET THE BALANCE RIGHT? EIGHT MONTHS LATER, DID YOU GET THE BALANCE RIGHT?


POLICE CHIEF: Well I think eight months later we are still determining whether or not it was absolutely right. I think we did our best

CBC: IS THAT GOOD ENOUGH

POLICE CHIEF: Well that frankly will be for others to judge

RECAP: Five Basic Rules of Interviews

- 1. ASK OPEN-ENDED NOT CLOSED QUESTIONS
- 2. DON'T GIVE PEOPLE ANY EASY ESCAPE ROUTES
- 3. BASIC IS BEAUTIFUL - KEEP IT CLEAN AND SIMPLE
- 4. THE WORST QUESTION IS NOT ASKING ONE
- 5. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN



#3. ONCE YOU KNOW THE RULES, KNOW WHEN AND HOW TO BREAK THEM



REMEMBER RULE #1: DON'T ASK YES/NO QUESTIONS... EXCEPT TO FORCE A YES/NO ANSWER



WATCH VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/yaagptg>

REMEMBER RULE #4: DON'T MAKE STATEMENTS... EXCEPT WHEN THE CAREFULLY-CRAFTED STATEMENT WORKS:





WATCH VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/g5at7l>

PUTTING CANADA'S PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU ON THE SPOT FOR TAKING A FREE HOLIDAY FROM THE AGHA KHAN



#4: DON'T MAKE STATEMENTS... EXCEPT WHEN YOU CAN CAREFULLY CRAFT THAT STATEMENT IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION:





1. HOW COULD THAT **NOT** HAVE OCCURRED TO YOU, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT? YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE A **FREE** HOLIDAY FROM SOMEONE YOU CONSIDERED A **FRIEND**. HOW COULD THAT **NOT** HAVE OCCURRED TO YOU, THAT THAT MIGHT **NOT** HAVE BEEN OKAY?

2. AT ONE POINT **YOU DIDN'T SAY TO YOURSELF** THAT MAYBE THIS IS NOT THE BEST THING TO DO? YOU **NEVER THOUGHT** THAT?


➤ **A powerful statement laid out as fact**

➤ **Forcing him 5 times to answer a negative, putting him on the defensive**


WATCH VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/y78rdj8f>

#5: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET INTO TROUBLE

Because face it - you are going to lose more than you will win...



WHAT TO DO : WHEN THE INTERVIEW TURNS INTO AN ARGUMENT



Be Firm – By **Cutting it off**, By taking an **Aggressive Approach** or by using **Humour**

The Aggressive Approach:
Lebanese TV: Rima Karaki vs. Sheikh Hani Al-Siba'i



WATCH VIDEO: <http://tinyurl.com/yd56qf8o>

The Humour Approach:
PIERS MORGAN PUSHES A REPUBLICAN POLITICIAN ON HER BOOK




WATCH EXCERPT: <http://tinyurl.com/yafzqdk>

Defending your right to push:

- MORGAN:** Because right now, I'm curious -- right now, I'm curious about whether you support gay marriage.
- O'DONNELL:** You're borderline being a little bit rude. You know, I obviously ...
- MORGAN:** Why are you being so weird about this?
- O'DONNELL:** That's what I want to talk about. I'm not being weird. You're being a little rude.
- MORGAN:** I'm baffled as to why you think I'm being rude. I think I'm being rather charming and respectful. I'm just asking questions based on your own public statements and now what you've written in your own book. It's hardly rude to ask you that surely.
- O'DONNELL:** Well, don't you think as a host, if I say this is what I want to talk about, that's what we should address?
- MORGAN:** Not really, no. You're a politician.

WHAT TO DO :
... WHEN THE SUBJECT REFUSES
TO ANSWER THE DARN QUESTION!



WATCH INTERVIEW: <http://tinyurl.com/ySubj5ah>

Don't get distracted – don't lose focus:
 Brian Seltzer (CNN) vs Jill Abramson (ex-NYT) on Plagiarism



WATCH INTERVIEW: <http://tinyurl.com/ySubj5ah>

Don't get distracted – don't lose focus:
 Jake Tapper takes on candidate Trump about the "Mexican" judge



WATCH INTERVIEW: <http://tinyurl.com/y9kqktud>

Don't get distracted – don't lose focus:
 Tapper vs. Trump on the "Mexican" judge

- **TAPPER: What does this have to do with his heritage?**
 TRUMP: ...this judge is of Mexican heritage. I'm building a wall, OK? I'm building a wall. I am going to do very well with the Hispanics, the Mexicans
TAPPER: So, no Mexican judge could ever be involved in a case that involves you?
 TRUMP: Well, he's a member of a society, where -- you know, very pro-Mexico, and that's fine. It's all fine, but –
TAPPER: Except that you're calling into question his heritage.
 TRUMP: I think he should recuse himself.
TAPPER: ... if you're saying he can't do his job because of his race, is that not the definition of racism?...
 TRUMP: This judge is giving us unfair rulings. Now, I say why? Well, I'm building a wall, OK? And it's a wall between Mexico. Not another country.
TAPPER: But he's not from Mexico. He's from Indiana.
 TRUMP: He's of Mexican heritage and he's very proud of it.


Keep asking the SAME question:
 Katie Couric pushes Palin on what papers she reads?



- WHAT NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES DID YOU REGULARLY READ TO STAY INFORMED?
- WHICH ONES SPECIFICALLY - I'M CURIOUS?
- CAN YOU NAME ANY OF THEM?

WATCH INTERVIEW: <http://tinyurl.com/y93n163>

Really, really keep asking the same question...
 BBC's Jeremy Paxman takes on a reluctant politician




WATCH FULL INTERVIEW: <http://tinyurl.com/ybnj628>

Really, really keep asking the same question...
BBC's Jeremy Paxman takes on a reluctant politician



WATCH FULL INTERVIEW: <http://tinyurl.com/ybnjg628>

4. STORY TELLING IS PART OF YOUR INTERVIEWING



Download the "STORYTELLING" slideshow at www.juliansher.com/training:

- > TAKING YOUR CHARACTERS ON A JOURNEY
- > ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE 4 Cs: CHARACTER, CONTEXT, CONFLICT, CONCLUSION

5. STRATEGY AND PLANNING – PREPARING THE INTERVIEW




STRATEGY AND PLANNING – PREPARING THE INTERVIEW

- > **DECIDE WHEN TO DO THE INTERVIEW:**
- > **DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF INTERVIEW IT WILL BE:**
 - > - INFORMATION
 - > - EMOTION
 - > - ACCOUNTABILITY
- > **COCOONING** – EYE CONTACT, CREATING A SAFE SPACE
- > **'SPYING'** – WHAT CAN YOU OBSERVE ON THE DESK, WALLS, HOME THAT YOU CAN USE TO DIG DEEPER INTO WHO THAT PERSON IS
- > **STORY TELLING:** MAKE YOUR INTERVIEWS PART OF YOUR STORY TELLING STRUCTURE

When to trip the wire?
When do you notify your target... and how?




WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE NO INTERVIEW ??????



WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE NO INTERVIEW ??????


- ◆ Be open, forthright. Don't lie or sweet talk
- ◆ Surround the subject (getting to friends, colleagues, enemies)
- ◆ Make it clear the story is quite strong without him/her
- ◆ Build the ladder of allegations, giving the subject more and more reasons to worry about your investigation



Get rid of the notepad!



The answers are in the eyes, not on your notepad



Double record
(always have a back-up)




A digital recorder... And the iPhone Voice Memo app

PREPARE YOUR NOTES



Make detailed, well-organized questions



- ORGANIZE YOUR QUESTIONS BY THEME
- USUALLY, YOU GO FROM SOFT, TO MEDIUM, TO HARD QUESTIONS
- USE A DIFFERENT PAGE FOR EVERY THEME SO YOU CAN EASILY SWITCH IF THE INTERVIEWEE MAKES THE SWITCH

OUTSIDE CRITICS

THE CRITICS SAY FIRE INVESTIGATORS LIKE YOU LEARNED THEIR STUFF FROM OTHER OLD TIMERS, PASSED FOLKLORE ALONG
HOW UPSET AT YOU AT THESE 'OUTSIDE' CRITICS'? ARMCHAIR?
 Fogg calls Beyer an "armchair quarterback" and riles at the accusation that Corsicana and state detectives used nothing more than folklore to come to their conclusions.
 "A lot of this stuff (in Beyer's report) is misspoken or misinterpreted," Fogg said.

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE WILLINGHAM CASE HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY NINE OF THE NATION'S TOP FIRE SCIENTISTS. ALL CONCLUDED THAT THE ORIGINAL INVESTIGATORS RELIED ON OUTDATED THEORIES AND FOLKLORE TO JUSTIFY THE DETERMINATION OF ARSON.

THEY HAVE NOT BEEN KIND:
 "characteristic of mystics or psychics..."
 "... wholly without any realistic understanding of fires and how fire injuries are created"


HOW DO YOU REACT TO THAT?
 DISPARAGING? INSULTING?
 "(Beyer) thought we were total idiots," Fogg said.

**"SPY" ON YOUR INTERVIEW SUBJECT:
 BE ATTENTIVE – LOOK FOR CLUES**




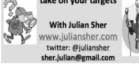


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KEEP IN TOUCH...



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