DEALING WITH THE NATIONAL MEDIA

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NEWS
PASTOR'S ASS
OUT FRONT


NEWS
BISHOP SCRATCHES PASTOR'S ASS


NEWS
NUN HAS
BEST ASS
IN TOWN


NEWS
NUN SELLS ASS FOR $10


NEWS
NUN ANNOUNCES HER ASS IS WILD AND FREE

The 9-1-1 Call

(0:04) Ave Marie Cantrell: Please! Please! Please!

(0:05-07) Murphy Police Dispatcher: Murphy 911 what's the address of the emergency?

(0:07-08) CANTRELL: Help, my son choked, My son choked!

(0:08) MPD: Ma'am, Ma'am, Ma'am, Ma'am --

(0:08)AVM: Oh my God! Please help me!

(0:12)MPD: Ma'am, calm down --

(0:12-13) CANTRELL: He's limp and he's cold --

(0:13-17)MPD: Ma'am calm down, are you at 404 Brookemere Lane?

(0:17)CANTRELL: Yes I am…Hurry, hurry, he choked!

(0:18-19) MPD: Okay and how old is your son?

(0:19-23)CANTRELL: Please hurry, he's not breathing, he's not breathing, and he's turning blue, his lips are blue --

(0:22-26)MPD: Ma'am, Ma'am, Ma'am, Ms. Cantrell

(0:27) CANTRELL: Hurry, Hurry!

(0:28-31) MPD: Ms. Cantrell, Ms. Cantrell,

(0:27-29) CANTRELL: He's dying! He's dying!

(0:31) MPD: Ms. Cantrell!

(0:31-37) CANTRELL: Oh God he's dying. Please! How do I…okay, okay, calm down, okay

(0:37-38) MPD: Is your name Ms. Cantrell?

(0:38-57)CANTRELL: Okay, his eyes, his eyes, his eyes are now dilated, his eyes are glazed, his eyes are dilated, he's pale, he's not breathing. What do I need to do? What do I need to do? What do I need to do? He's crapped all over himself, what do I need to do? What do I need to do?

(0:57-1:01) MPD: Ma'am calm down okay? Stay on the phone with me. I'm getting some medics en route, do not hang up.

(1:01-1:15)CANTRELL: He's choked. He got his neck…Oh my God, his whole neck – he, he, he got strangled on the…he got strangled on the… Oh my God he got strangled on the Oh my God! Oh my God! What do I do?

(1:15-1:19) MPD: Ma'am, Ma'am, Ms. Cantrell, calm down. Okay? I got medics en route.

(1:19)CANTRELL: Hurry, hurry.

(1:20-1:21) MPD: Okay, how did this happen?

(1:22-1:30) CANTRELL: Okay…he, he went outside – Oh my God he went outside - he got his neck caught in the soccer net, he got his neck stuck in the soccer net.

(1:31-1:35) MPD: Okay, Ms. Cantrell I need you to calm down, okay? You're doing fine, we've got the paramedics en route.

(1:35-1:55) CANTRELL: Oh my God! He's turning blue, he's not breathing! What do I need to do? What do I need to do? I mean, I can do CPR or something? Please tell me what I need to do! Please God – Please God –Oh God I'm gonna kill myself.

(1:55-1:59) MPD: Ms. Cantrell…Ms. Cantrell I need you to calm down so I can transfer you to East Texas Medical Center okay?

(1:59) CANTRELL: Hurry, please!

(1:59-2:03) MPD: I have officers and medics en route but you need to calm down so they can help you, okay?

(2:03) CANTRELL: He's not responding --

(2:04) MPD: Ms. Cantrell --

(2:05-2:10) CANTRELL: His eyes are dilated he's not breathing – What do I need to do?

(2:06-2:13) MPD: Ms. Cantrell, Ms. Cantrell you need to calm down so I can get you transferred to East Texas, okay?

(2:12-2:13) CANTRELL: I can't calm down, Oh my God!

(2:13-2:15)MPD: I need you to calm down so that I can get you transferred. Hold on…

(2:15-2:16)CANTRELL: He's slipping away…

Timeline

- **67 seconds** – dispatched 2 police vehicles, ambulance, and fire truck to the scene
- **2:14 seconds** – police arrive on scene while mother is on the phone with 9-1-1
- **2:45 seconds** – paramedics arrive on scene after police arrive

Hire A Media Consultant

- Hire promptly
- Counsel should hire the consultant in order to protect work product and attorney client communication privileges
- Review Rule 3.07 of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct re: trial publicity

Never Say “No Comment”



The Wallet Biopsy

The media is a business!
Kill inaccurate stories
by responding before
they have made a major
investment in the story.



The Preemptive Strike:
Try to Kill the Story

Discussions with NBC producer Robert Powell have indicated that NBC's interest in this story is based on misinformation that has been contradicted by sworn testimony and documents in this case. NBC mistakenly believes this case illustrates problems with 911 operators, when in fact it portrays a hysterical parent who cannot rationally interact with the 911 operators, police or paramedics. NBC has apparently selected this case for national attention and made the decision to travel more than 1,500 miles to Texas to interview the plaintiffs before it has spoken to anyone at the City of Murphy.

The evidence contradicts the key issues upon which your story is based. Last week, we filed a motion for summary judgment seeking to dismiss the plaintiffs' case. I have included the motion for summary judgment to allow you to review the issues and the evidence in greater detail. This case clearly does not illustrate the premise of your story, but allows plaintiffs seeking monetary damages to defame public servants for doing their jobs professionally.

Accusing someone of being complacent in the death of a child is one of the most serious allegations one could make against an individual. The accusation must be held to the highest possible standards of fact checking and accuracy. Your request for the dispatcher's work records suggests to us that you have already made a determination that he did something wrong and should be accused of playing a role in the death of a child. We caution you again, in the strongest possible terms, not to make that false and libelous accusation.

"misinformation"

"contradicted by sworn testimony"

"defame public servants"

"fact checking and accuracy"

"false and libelous accusation"

The Preemptive Strike

Consequently, we again strongly caution NBC that any suggestion made by NBC that Mr. Williams or any other employee of the City of Murphy is responsible for the death of Matthew Cantrell will be considered defamatory.

On behalf of the City of Murphy and first responders across the nation, we look forward to your fair, true and impartial reporting of this matter.

Very truly yours,

Andy Messer

Wm. Andrew Messer

Confirmation Bias

Local News 5 p.m.	370,000
Local News 6 p.m.	450,000
Local News 10 p.m.	643,000
Dallas Morning News	263,000
Today Show Audience	135,726

The Local Media





National Media Bias

- Combining unrelated incidents to falsely portray a trend or problem.
- A local situation used to illustrate the perceived need for a national solution.
- Based on work by a Congressional committee.
- Need for a compelling 911 call and “victim.”

The Decisions

- The representative face
- The setting
- Containment by the governmental entity
- Providing pleadings, pictures, videos
- Prepare some talking points/key messages for responses to reporter’s questions
- Do not state “No comment”

The National Media Report



What the National Media Didn't Report

Proof of Bias

- Mother was twice CPR-certified, as recently as one month before the accident
- Mom fell asleep (for anywhere between 15-45 minutes) when the child wandered outside
- Back door to the home was not locked
- Police arrived on the scene within 2 minutes 14 seconds after dispatched; paramedics arrived within 2 minutes 45 seconds thereafter
- The boy was independently assessed by two police officers and two paramedics who all believed him to be dead
- The boy was kept alive only by machines for 3 days, he was already brain dead
- The soccer net was recalled by the manufacturer
- Mother admitted she was primarily responsible for son's death in her sworn deposition

The Viewers' Response

- "The ultimate blame lies on the mother for not keeping an eye on her toddler. Every one else is the scapegoat."
- "Anyone who has or had had a child knows they aren't afforded the luxury of taking a nap if they have a young one at home. I think we have all seen incidents like this where parents lash out at others."
- "Sometimes sad things happen. Sometimes they are just accidents. How have we [Americans] created this culture of finding someone to point the finger at, someone to blame, someone to punish for another's misfortune?"
- "You can't blame other people for an accident that could possibly have been avoided if the mother had supervised her child. I know the mother is grieving and didn't intentionally allow this accident, but the healing process won't begin until she is ready to take responsibility and not blame the City of Murphy and medical personnel."

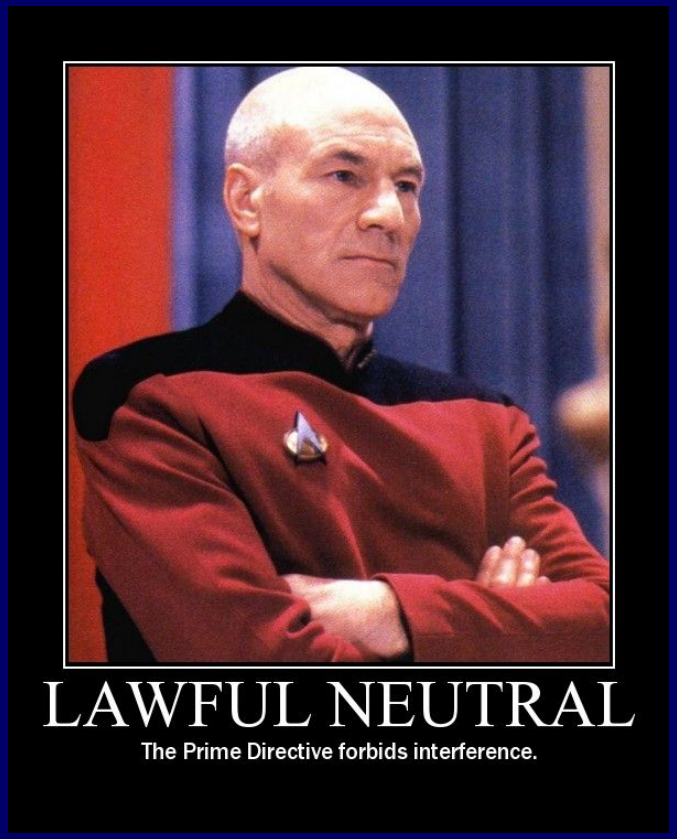
The End

- **Plaintiff's response to City's motion for summary judgment:**

[1] Plaintiffs do not assert that 911 operator Williamson's actions give rise to federal claims. I

Plaintiffs do not assert that 911 operator Williamson's actions give rise to federal claims.

The Prime Directive



Assemble legal and media relations team at the first sign of a crisis or problem.

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