

Television Reporting and Package Producing Tipsheet

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- Research your story BEFORE heading out of the bureau.
- Know your story well.
- Prepare a draft script. It will help keep you focused. But remember, it's only a draft—not set in stone. It can be changed.
- If there's no time to write a draft script at least prepare the first, middle and end stages or topics of your piece.
- Prepare a shot-list. Think of the possible elements you may need to compliment the script you are thinking of.
- Make sure you have all the right and appropriate equipment. It's your responsibility to tell the cameraperson what to bring, how long you think you will be on the shoot (batteries), what type of lighting you might require (indoors or outdoors), whether you will be doing a sit-down interview or “man on the street” sound-bites (mics).
- Make sure you communicate well with your cameraperson about the story. Inform him or her of your ideas and needs -- ask for suggestions. It's all about team work. You need your cameraperson on your side!
- When you are out shooting footage, try to log and keep track of all the images and shots your cameraperson is taking. This will save you a lot of time when you get back to the bureau.
- Before you leave, ask your cameraperson what he or she shot so that you can then, and only at the end of the shoot, suggest what more you need and what may be missing.
- Do not interrupt your cameraperson when they are working unless it's really necessary.
- If you do need to suggest something, just tap him or her gently on the shoulder. Then speak up. Don't shake or surprise them. That will only ruin YOUR SHOT.
- Do not over shoot. It's a waste of your time and energy. Stay focused on your story line, on your elements, and what you need. Don't get side-tracked.
- As you are shooting elements, always keep your script in mind. You are writing for pictures.
- Also think of your first and end shots when you are out in the field.
- Shoot your stand-up at the scene of the action. The seminar, the protest, the airport, the market etc..
- If you are not sure whether to do a bridge or a stand-up, do both. You can choose your best one later in the bureau.
- When writing your bridge or standup, it's easiest to just mention the facts of what you know. For example, make an estimate of how many people attended a protest. Strive to be accurate. It's better to go with the lowest safe number than be wrong: “At least 500 people gathered here today in front of Martyrs Square,” or say “no one is exactly sure of the exact number of people gathered here today but as you can see behind me they are in the hundreds.” Do not say, “around 800 people gathered here today.” It may turn out to be less. Numbers are always changing. Be safe and accurate. You can always add the exact figure by the time you get to the bureau and have it in your toss.
- Your bridge should always be something that's factual yet flexible enough to be worked into a transition.
- Your stand-up, on the other hand, is your ending. It can either be a forecast of “what's next” or a simple summary.
- Back in the bureau, you log your tapes. Write your script, voice it. The End !