

Yes of COMMENT!

Ethics and Best Practices for Dealing With the Media

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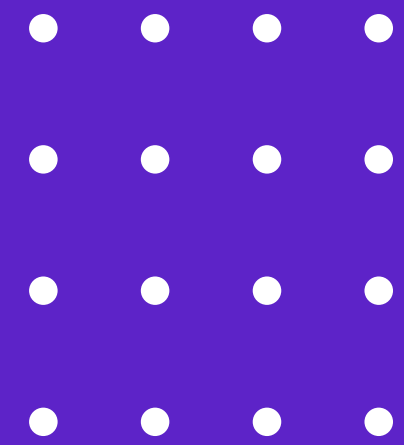
Public Information Officer | City of Lake Jackson

Sylvia Borunda Firth
President
State Bar of Texas

Bojorquez Law Firm, PC

Texas City Attorneys Association June 17, 2022

TAKEAWAYS

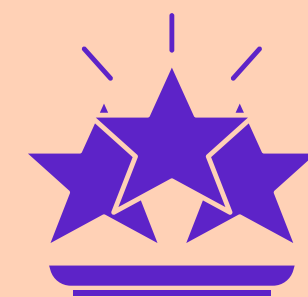


Legal issues
& "No
Comment"

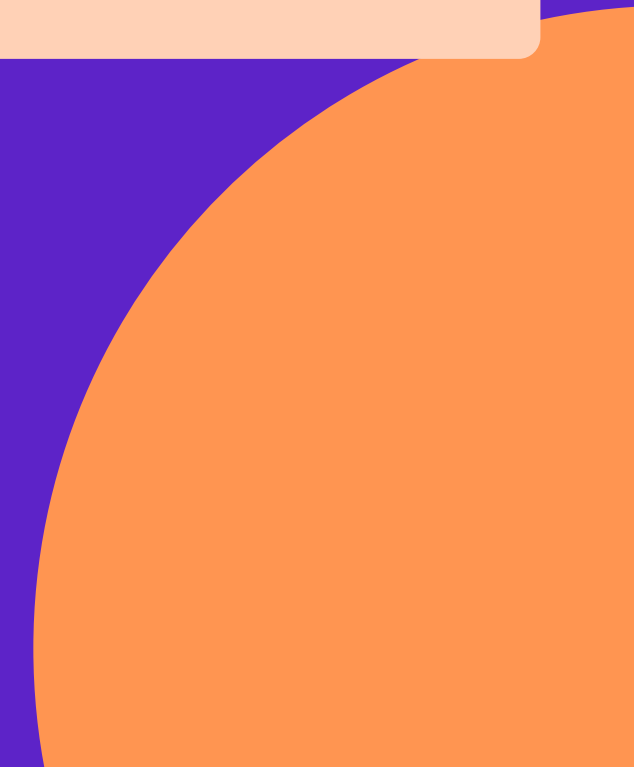
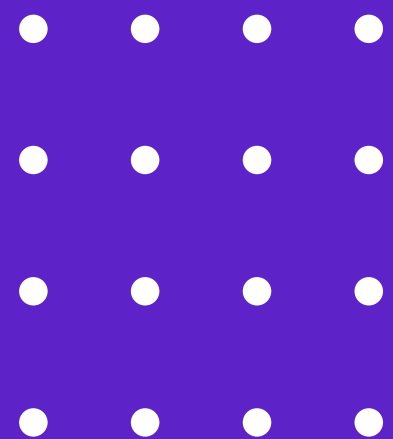
Reporters &
The "No
Comment"
Response

Save your
interview

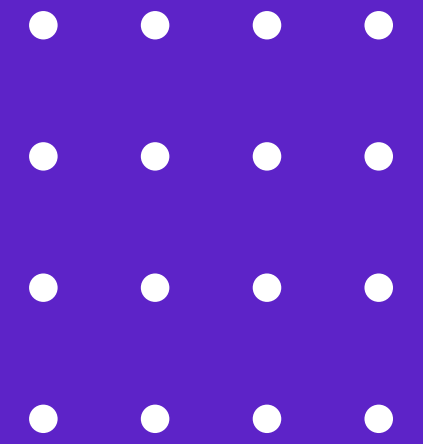
Banish "No
Comment"
from your
interview



Interview
Framework



LEGAL | RULES

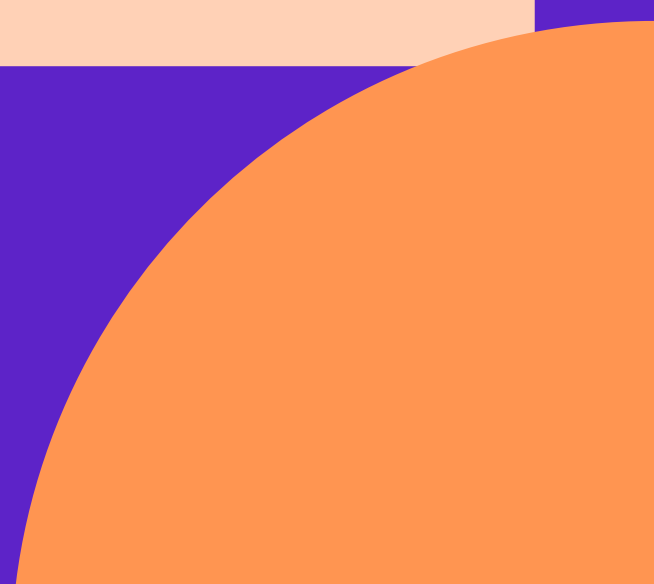


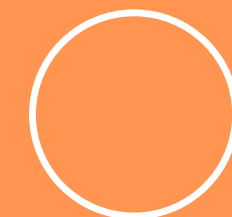
Rule 3.07
Trial Publicity

Rule 1.05
Confidentiality

Rule 4.01
Truthfulness in
Statements

Rule 1.08
Conflict of Interest

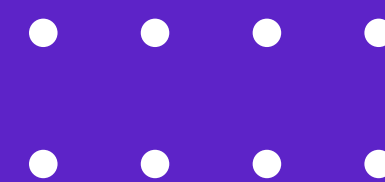




CITIZEN JOURNALISTS & FREEDOM AUDITORS



Treat them exactly the way you would any journalist.



REPORTERS

3 Types

National | Visiting
State | Visiting or Invested
Local | Always invested

Each has a different reaction to no comment



REPORTERS

- They want to get through the day
- They need to get their work done
- They really do want to get it right
- They need to present a "hook" in their story
- They need to make sure everyone who needs to be interviewed gets interviewed



They don't think they are "creating a narrative."

REPORTERS

What they hear

“Ugh!”



After they go

Scared | Useless | Hiding something |
Wasted time &
MORE WORK

REPORTERS

Mainly Why?



Reporters expect legal to be more sophisticated than other city departments

WHAT NOT TO DO

DON'T ARGUE

Or slam the door

Or hang up the phone

Or stick your tongue out



WHAT NOT TO DO
THINK YOU ARE MORE
IMPORTANT THAN YOU
ARE



Reporters can call anyone. They chose to call you.

WHAT NOT TO DO

LIE!

Call back!
Use your PIO/Com staff to help you



Banish "No Comment"

PROCESS

Everything legal does has a process. Talk about that.



Banish "No Comment"

THE TIMELINE

Different from the process

Discuss how the event/lawsuit unfolded



Banish "No Comment"

YOUR ROLE

Discuss how you will perform your job



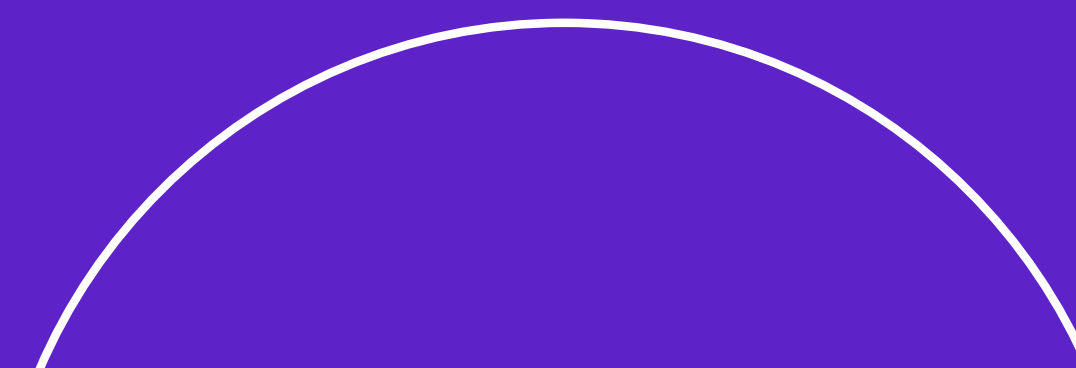
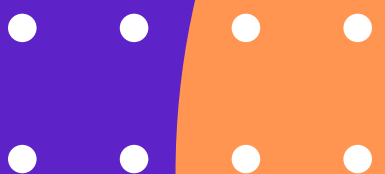
Banish "No Comment"

THE COUNCIL

Discuss how this event or legal process will make it to the agenda

Discuss why the council makes the decision.

Reporters know less about how government works than you think.



Banish "No Comment"

WHY YOU HAVE NO COMMENT

You absolutely can discuss privacy, legal positions and other reasons you are not trying the matter in the press.



TIP: If you use this, tell them you give them they will be the FIRST to receive the information



PREP YOURSELF

The Diamond Method

Make your own news bite

PREP YOURSELF

The Diamond Method

OPENING STATEMENT

Reframe the question posed as a statement

Comment on what you think of the question (It's always a good one.)

OPENING

MEDIUM POINT

BIG POINT

THIRD POINT

RAP UP

PREP YOURSELF

The Diamond Method

CENTER STATEMENT

3 parts

Start with a **medium sized point** | refer to past developments or what has been reported already

Make the **big point** | the new information or development you want to make sure the public knows

Finish with **final point** | a "tease" or something the public or media might want to look for

OPENING

MEDIUM POINT

BIG POINT

THIRD POINT

RAP UP

PREP YOURSELF

The Diamond Method

RAP UP

- What you can do next
- Where they can go for more information
- Ask if you spoke plainly enough
- Tell them you are happy to answer any other questions

OPENING

MEDIUM POINT

BIG POINT

THIRD POINT

RAP UP

**AFTER YOU
ARE DONE**

Stop!



Keep Trying!





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Thank you!

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