

PCNY Luncheon:

Hollywood on the Hudson: A Look at the National Entertainment Shows:

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Marie Hickey, New York Bureau Chief, Extra!

So when I got here Lisa said, "You're first!" I said, "Oh no!" and I was trying to copy off Chris' notes, she was scribbling something down but she covered her page. She said, "Look at your own notes!"

Anyway, I've been at Extra for 3 years. And if anyone has watched Extra over the years it certainly has changed. We've had many different re-launches, renaissances, mistakes, but we're pretty happy with the format that we have now. And for those of you that haven't caught up with the show lately we're an entertainment news magazine and everything basically has a celebrity angle to it. So, if you're pitching stories and it's something that might not be about a movie but if there is a celebrity connection, it's something that our show would be interested in.

To take a step back, to give you a little background on Extra, we're produced by a company called Time Telepictures, and that is the syndication arm for Time Warner. We also produce shows, Caroline Rhea, we're gonna produce the Ellen Show, The Sharon Osbourne Show next season, and The Bachelor and The Bachelorette are also 2 of our shows which you guys will all be watching tonight. At least the rose ceremony, switch back and forth between that and American Idol.

In New York, we have a small but a very hardworking bureau and I'm sure many of you have met some of our producers in the field. We have one full time correspondent in New York, Barry Nolan. We have 2 people who are on staff as regular contributors, one is Tyson Beckford and he usually covers our fashion/celebrity type thing, and the 2nd person, or the 3rd person, rather, who has just recently joined, as a regular contributor is Jumana Kidd. And for those of you who don't know who she is, she is the wife of Jason Kidd who plays for the New Jersey Nets.

One of the things that Lisa mentioned is to talk about how we like to take our pitches and what bugs us when dealing with publicists. Nothing bugs us, really, we love you all! So, one of the things that is very helpful, especially for those of us who work in a bureau, is to get our pitches on email, in the body of an email rather than have an attachment, because so much of the material that we have has to get forwarded out to the west coast or to run it by somebody else. And it's very helpful to have something that's very concise and quick just so someone else can read it and even though it sounds silly that they don't want to click on an attachment people really don't want to have to click onto an attachment if they have to go through dozens and dozens of different stories every day. So that's really helpful. We usually like to take our pitches on an email and then follow up by a phone call.

One of the other things I think is important for everyone to know is what our deadline is. Working in New York we kind of are responsible for getting the day started for Los Angeles. So we come in early, we watch the different shows, go through the papers, go over the night notes. So the mornings for us are quite busy. Then in the afternoon, once we get the day organized, it kind of calms down. If something really isn't time sensitive, if it's breaking news, something for that day obviously call us. But if it's not time sensitive and it can wait till the afternoon, for a phone call, that's pretty helpful. Because if you're in the middle of chaos and fighting against your deadline to stop and take a call, it can get a little frustrating.

But for things that are time sensitive, just so you know, we feed our show out nationally at 4:00 Eastern Time, our kind of drop-dead deadline for getting material to Los Angeles is around 3:00 in the afternoon. So for someone to call and say, "Y'know, I can get such-and-such for you at 2:30 or 3," that's not gonna work on our timetable. So even though the show is shown at 7:00 in New York, there are many markets that take it live at 4. So that's pretty helpful if you know that.

When we're getting press releases it's always helpful if they're truthful and sometimes we get very frustrated where we, y'know, it's not what it seems to be. And I appreciate, we all appreciate the fact that you want to get a crew or someone to your event or to get coverage of something that you're pitching or want to get on our show, and that's great and it's very flattering, but if it really doesn't turn out to be what it is, it's just not gonna get on the air. We'd rather just blow it off and it goes into the library as it is. So honesty kind of is the best policy when it comes to that, and the difference between invited and confirmed, you know, when we receive lists of people who are invited to an event, we call back and say, "Well, who's confirmed?" because the same 20 people are on event A, B and C for the same night and, you know, everyone isn't gonna show up everywhere.

That's kind of it for how we take our pitches. As far as our show, our host is Leeza Gibbons. Sometimes during the course of this past new season which started in September, the viewers have been seeing an awful lot of Dana Devin. And that's because Leeza is taking breaks here and there from her daily grind to work on her Alzheimer's Initiative. I don't know if you're all familiar with that, but she has a family history of Alzheimer's her grandmother died from it and now her mother is suffering from the disease. So this is kind of a personal mission and the company has given her this time off, so during the course of the year, yes she still is our host and she's on during sweeps and big occasions but she is taking some time off to work on that and she has a website and she does fundraising and a lot of really special, terrific things for anyone who has a family member who might suffer from the illness, her website is really terrific. And of course, I can't remember the address, but if you want it I could get it for you.

And, I don't know, do I take questions later, that's it? Well, that's it, I'm done. I don't know if Chris was taking notes from my speech, but? Thank you.