

NEWSBLUEZETTE

A DAILY INSIDER NEWSLETTER FOR TV NEWS PROFESSIONALS

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Comment

THE ART OF DECEPTION



Remember "Health Specialist" Katie Wilson, [the fake news reporter at the fake TV station "News 3, Sacramento"](#) website who pimped the anti-aging nutritional supplement Resveratrol? Wilson, on orders from her fake news director, John Beamer, "investigated" the new "miracle product," as seen on "Oprah, Barbara Walters, CNN, and 60 Minutes."

Katie and her boss [later moved to "KLMT News3,"](#) where they "investigated" how to make money with Google.

Then Katie found work as a "health investigator" for "News9Today," where she did a fake "Special Health Reports" that linked to a real YouTube video from WFAA-8-ABC in Dallas. According to Katie, you can "Smoke SAFELY TODAY." The website, now gone, even had "Comments" from 183 people on the bottom of the page, all praising electronic cigarettes.

Now Katie is back. But she's changed her name to Julie, and she's an "investigator" for something called "Consumer Tips Digest," which is "not affiliated with any newspaper publication," although [a link to the website appeared in yesterday's USA Today](#).



Katie...uh, excuse us...Julie...reports on how the penny auction website QuiBids.com can save "consumers up to 95% off retail." There's even a link to a legitimate news report on KWTU-9-CBS in Oklahoma City (Market #45).

But that seems to be the modus operandi of the folks behind the various schemes that build on the already shaky reputation of local media by trying to appear as if they represent legitimate news organizations. They even mimic the ungrammatical and sloppy writing that is so prevalent on local TV news websites. The strategy is as interesting as it is slimy. At a time when public faith in local news is at an all-time low, why would advertisers link themselves to a marketing strategy built on faith in the media?



And when these scams are eventually uncovered, does that further erode public confidence in similar "consumer reports" on local news?

In an ad now running on the websites of ABC, CNBC, CBS, CNN, USA Today, and Consumer Reports, a blondifull young fake news anchor, sitting in front of what appears to be a bank of TV monitors, seems to be reporting on a "Consumer Alerts: SPECIAL REPORT: Apple iPads are being auctioned for an incredible 80% off on QuiBids.com!"

The fake news anchor is actually Melissa Theuriau, a reporter for French television. Her likeness is being used without her permission.

Theuriau regularly appears as "Julia Miller" or "Karen Simpson" on acai berry scam websites.

And, of course, Apple iPads are **NOT** being auctioned for an incredible 80% off on QuiBids.com! It's a classic bait-and-switch scam. But the blondifull anchor seems to tell us so. So, who do we believe? And how do we know our local anchors aren't lying to us, too?





Barbara Walters, who was framed to appear as if she were endorsing the nutritional supplement Resveratrol, took action to have her likeness removed from the ads. Oprah Winfrey, who was also linked to the product, filed a federal trademark-infringement suit in August 2009 against 40 peddlers of dietary supplements. Spurred on by Winfrey's company, Harpo Inc., the Illinois attorney general brought three additional lawsuits against makers and marketers of dietary supplements made from acai berries.

There are also ads featuring Megyn Kelly and a Fox News medical correspondent. Morley Safer is shown reporting on Resveratrol for "60 Minutes." *The New York Times*, Fortune magazine, WebMD, and CNN are also quoted...all in a way to imply their endorsement.

Republican strategist Lee Atwater and, later, his disciples, Karl Rove and Fox News Chairman Roger Ailes, perfected the technique of creating "whisper campaigns." They would circulate rumors, and when mainstream media would repeat the rumors, the spinmeisters would quote the news outlets as fact, thus creating the impression of truth and lending authority to the story...effectively creating fact from fiction.

Is it illegal to pose as a legitimate news operation? We hope not.

We do it every day.

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THE ART OF DECEPTION - Part 2

Earlier this week, we told you about James Pearce, a young reporter for the BBC, who flew to Augusta to cover the Masters only to discover that he lacked the proper credentials to get inside Augusta National.



So he watched the tournament on CBS...then drove to the Augusta Country Club, which backs up to the Augusta National golf course, and shot his standups.



Now we learn that he was not alone. Rajesh Mirchandani, a DC-based BBC reporter who does pieces for ABC News Now, also shot standups using a freelance photog.

And a crew from CBS News Path used the Augusta Country Club as the backdrop for its "parking lot standups" as well.

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THE ART OF DECEPTION - Part 3

Christiane Amanpour, who officially ends her employment at CNN today and will soon begin collecting paychecks from ABC, [plays the role of a "TV journalist" in the film "Iron Man 2."](#)

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BRING IN THE CLOWNS

It's the second day of May sweeps, and you know what that means. Time to pull out the special reports and the special investigations and the special packages that have been rolling around in the back of a news director's brain for the past few months. And we're not just talking local TV here.

ABC's new "Good Morning America" crew [will spend May sweeps fulfilling their personal wishes](#), because...well, because someone upstairs at ABC must think that's a good idea. Next week, morning viewers will see George Stephanopoulos playing a game of poker with some of the world's best at an Atlantic City casino.



Robin Roberts will get into the cockpit of a Beechcraft King Air with...*drum roll, please*...retired U.S. Airways Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger. Newsreader Juju Chang visits the New York Yankees, where she'll get baseball advice from Alex ("Never cross the mound") Rodriguez. Weatherman Sam Champion will explore the ocean with the grandson of Jacques Cousteau, and weekend host Bill Weir will skydive from various aircraft, including a hot air balloon.

And don't worry about the economy, the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They'll still be there after May sweeps. And morning shows aren't *really* about news, anyway, according to some. They're about lifestyle segments and cooking tips and

pointless interviews with reality show starlets. Oh, and *pay-to-play* **EXCLUSIVES** with Octomoms and accused child murderers.

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Just in time for sweeps, Maria Neider, a news anchor at KYTV-3-NBC in Springfield, MO (Market #74), [rode a zipline](#). And this, we are led to believe, is news.

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YOU SAY JISUM, I SAY JIZZUM



Rosanna Scotto, veteran morning news anchor at "Good Day New York" on Fox flagship WNYW-5, yesterday described soy milk as not really "milk" but "Soy jisum," or, as the always-polite [New York Post](#) quoted her in print, "**Soy ji---um!**" [The New York Daily News](#) quoted her as saying, "**Soy ji--um.**"

The always-reliable [Urban Dictionary](#) describes "**jisum**" as "A slang term that relates to ejaculation or seamen [*sic*]." Seamen? You mean sailors?

Or perhaps Rosanna was referring to "**jizzum**," [which is described as](#) "sweet secretion from the male reproductive organ [*sic*] used in college games, cooking and facial art."

No matter. It got a laugh at home and stunned silence in the studio.

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DERBY DAY

Tom Durkin, who calls about 1,600 races a year at tracks in New York, [will have his hands full tomorrow in Louisville](#). The 136th Kentucky Derby on NBC has the maximum field of 20 horses. And that's a lot of horse in one place at one time.



Your Surly Editor®, who dabbled briefly (and unsuccessfully) in the sport of race-calling, can attest that it is one of the most difficult tasks in all of broadcasting...trying to remember the names and colors of dozen of horses, then following and describing the action from a half-mile away through powerful binoculars, while the animals fly around the track at

nearly 40 mph. It's mind-boggling.



"You memorize the colors of jockeys' silks and associate them with jockeys' names," says Durkin. "And since there are a finite number of colors, you'll have colors that look alike. This year four will wear some kind of yellow. Plus, it's more difficult to see when there's three or four horses across a track — you only see bits of the silks — and just getting through naming all the horses in the field takes longer."

Durkin, who is actually *afraid* of horses, knows that The Derby attracts viewers who don't otherwise follow racing. He knows that Saturday's coverage will make an extra effort to go beyond the sport itself. "NBC has discovered

that most of the people who watch the Derby are women who are into the event — the fashions, celebrities, the foods, the whole experience — so we're trying to bring in more of that, particularly early in the show."

Translation: Women tune in for the hats. NBC will show plenty of hats. Coverage starts at 11:00 a.m. on ESPN. NBC kicks in at 4:00 p.m. The two-minute race starts at 6:15 p.m.

UPDATE: NBC's trackside reporter Donna Brothers shows why everyone wears helmets, [getting thrown from her mount while doing a live interview](#) on Friday's "Today."

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[Mark Rodgers](#) has resigned as sports director after seven years at Hearst Television's KOCO-5-ABC in OK City (Market #45). [He's been hired as marketing director for the Lucky Star Casino](#) and will continue to host a noon to 2:00 p.m. talk show on the Sports Animal radio network.



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Weekend morning meteorologist Jason Kelley is suddenly gone from Raycom Media's WBRC-6-Fox in Birmingham (Market #40), just seven months after arriving from Gray's crappy little WJHG-7-NBC in Panama City, FL (Market #151), where he was chief met for 10 years. Tipsters say he was fired Wednesday.

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Ashley McDonald, morning and midday weather guesser at WAKA-8-CBS in Montgomery, AL (Market #118), who left one year ago this week for the bright lights of Gannett's WXIA-11-NBC in Atlanta (Market #9), has returned to WAKA as chief meteorologist.



She replaces Chris Bailey, who had been with the station 17 years and whose contract was not renewed in March.

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[Chad Oliver](#), a former reporter and anchor at Waterman Broadcasting's WBBH-2-NBC in Ft. Myers (Market #64), has been hired across the hallway as the new morning news anchor at Waterman sister-station WZVN-7-ABC.

He replaces Stacey Deffenbaugh, who has been working split shifts the past few months, anchoring both the morning and 6:00 p.m. newscasts.

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SO LONG, GOOD B.....

We have a veteran news director friend who rolls his eyes every time he hears an anchor complain about "not being able to say goodbye to his loyal viewers," after getting canned.

"Viewers don't care," he insists. Anchors are interchangeable cogs in the news wheel. Get over it. Move on.

So we got a chuckle out of a report we heard from Meredith's KCTV-5-CBS in Kansas City (Market #32), where morning co-anchors Chris Pisano and Dana Wright were to officially sign off yesterday, to make way for their much younger co-anchor replacements.



"The producer mistimed the end of the show," according to an insider who shall remain nameless, "and as the anchors came out of a sweet 'farewell package,' there was ZERO time for a proper goodbye.

"Chris Pisano ends by saying, '*GOODBYE KANSAS Cl...*' cut to break.

"I swear, you could *NOT* have scripted it any better," laughed the tipster.

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CHEAPER THAN DEATH

Dear Ms. James:

The purpose of this letter is to convey our sincere apology for the difficulties you experienced when Flight 1511 from Charlotte was diverted on April 20, 2010. We understand this caused an extensive delay in your arrival into Phoenix.



A thorough investigation of this incident revealed the flight was delayed when it diverted to Nashville due to a maintenance concern *[the engine blew up]*. As the safety of our passengers and crew is our number one priority, we would not operate an aircraft that compromises this objective *[it would have been too hard to continue flying cross-country on one engine]*.

As a result of the inconvenience you experienced *[believing you were about to die]*, we have authorized a \$75.00 Electronic Travel With US Voucher for each *[surviving]* traveler. You may apply this voucher towards the purchase of travel on US Airways *[although we'd fully understand if you chose never to travel with us again]*.

We are grateful for the opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding your delay. Your business is appreciated *[and, thankfully, we didn't have to pay death benefits to the litigious survivors of the 182 souls on board. It would have ruined us, and I'd be out looking for work elsewhere]*.

Sincerely,

Barb Helms
Representative,
Customer Relations
US Airways Corporate Office

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MRS. BLUEZETTE'S GRAMMAR YAMMER

"A PBS mind in an MTV world." [MrsB @NewsBlues.com](mailto:MrsB@NewsBlues.com)

Athlete is two syllables and is pronounced ATH-leet. Mrs. B heard a KXTV reporter mispronounce it with three syllables: ATH-uh-leet.

It's common to hear nuptial mispronounced with three syllables instead of two. The correct pronunciation of nuptial is NUP-shul. To help you remember to say "shul," think of spatial and partial. Nuptial relates to marriage or to the wedding ceremony.

The same goes for prenuptial: pre-NUP-shul. Prenuptial relates to the events before a marriage, as in a prenuptial agreement.

Mrs. B waxes poetic to end today's lesson:

Love involves a peculiar, unfathomable combination of understanding and misunderstanding.--Diane Arbus, photographer (1923-1971)

And the photographer pronounces her first name DEE-ann.

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