



THERE IS SUCH A THING AS BAD PRESS

In navigating the perilous and often harrowing terrain of Public Relations for the world's most controversial religion, one is certain to regularly encounter the foolish assurance that "no press is bad press." Inevitably, these are the words we so often hear from those who think that securing a spot in the limelight, however temporary, is a legitimate goal in and of itself, regardless of any greater goal beyond the vanity of recognition. In fact, for an organization like The Satanic Temple, with narrowly-defined campaigns, yet easily misunderstood organizational goals, "bad press" comes not only in the form of disparaging calls-to-arms issued against us by fanatical bloggers and faux-zeal flouting talking heads, but in any press that confuses our statements, mission, capabilities, and/or message. In that regard, even "good press" can be bad press.

As an active organization striving to effect change in the real world, The Satanic Temple often relies upon press releases, interviews, public appearances, social media, and other publicly consumed media outlets and platforms in order to draw attention to the issues that are meaningful to us. Public understanding -- if not support -- is vital to the success of our various campaigns, and even one bad interview among hundreds can haunt our collective reputation, as bad quotes from unprepared media liaisons and spokespeople will inevitably be revived again and again in efforts by our opponents to discredit The Satanic Temple and marginalize our work. This manual should serve as a primer for your public representation of The Satanic Temple.

YOU'RE NOT OBLIGATED TO ENGAGE WITH THE PRESS

First and foremost you should remember that **you don't have to speak to the press**. If you're called upon as a member of TST, or even as a media liaison for your chapter, and you feel unprepared or uncertain regarding the topic-at-hand, you can always defer the inquiries to somebody else. In such cases, please just direct any press inquiries that you don't feel confident with to media@thesatanictemple.com, and general inquiries to info@thesatanictemple.com.

MEDIA OUTREACH

Any and all media outreach must be approved by The Satanic Temple National Council. Proposed Press Releases originating from a chapter should be approved by the Chapter Head and the chapter's Media Liaison, then submitted to National Council for approval.

The Satanic Temple never seeks press for the mere purpose of “exposure.” We do not proselytize and we have no interest in actively confronting unwitting potential converts. Those who are drawn to us will come to us on their own time, when the time is right for them. Never, in any circumstances, do we reach out to press suggesting general interviews for the sole purpose of raising the profile of the organization, a chapter, or an individual.

The Satanic Temple only seeks press when it serves a clearly defined goal in supporting a TST campaign or event. A TST campaign or event is any campaign or event directly sanctioned by, and on behalf of, a TST chapter or the organization at-large. Just because an event or campaign is officially sanctioned, this does not mean that any media outreach regarding those events or campaigns are also approved. Each and every press update must be met with approval before release.

REQUESTS FROM MEDIA

We're not interested in being “humanized.” Friendly press often seem to feel they'll be doing us a favor if we allow them to explore the lives of some of our membership for the purpose of demonstrating the Satanist's (presumed) overall normalcy and everyday mediocrity. Many writers for publications that cater to the general reader love to point out the “shocking” reality that Satanists don't ritually murder babies and cannibalize their neighbors. We've seen some publications go too far and further claim that we don't engage in Black Masses or orgies. Of course, we often engage in Black Masses and other rituals, and we reserve the right for our members to organize and participate in orgies. While some of our members do live mainstream lives outside of TST, many of us do not, and we simply have no interest in placating the common fool's sense of indignant uproar against the mere existence of Satanists by demonstrating our normalcy. We are unapologetic for who we are. Don't fall into the trap of normalizing, or “humanizing,” The Satanic Temple at the prompting of a journalist who wishes to make us palatable to those who feel threatened by unconventional lifestyles.

We don't care to focus on what we're not. Self-identified representatives of Satanism in the press prior to the appearance of The Satanic Temple benefited from the ludicrous, easily-debunked claims of the Satanic Panic era in that Satanic spokespeople merely had to

explain what we *don't* do (i.e. cannibalism and human sacrifice). Seldom was it asked what Satanists at that time *did* do, which was fortunate, because they mostly did nothing at all. If a journalist is primarily concerned in debunking the hysterical claims of conspiracists -- which shouldn't be taken seriously by sane, rational readers to begin with -- by way of interviewing an actual Satanist, the interview is likely of very little value. However, interview requests targeting this theme can be of value to Grey Faction, as Grey Faction representatives have a clear understanding of where anti-Satanist claims originate, how they are propagated, and the harm these libels have caused and continue to cause. Please direct any interviewers who express a primary interest in the amazing crimes and conspiracies Satanists don't commit to Grey Faction at GreyFactionTST@gmail.com.

We don't insert ourselves into conversations where we don't belong. If a media outlet is asking you to comment, as a representative of TST, upon an issue or event upon which TST has taken no official position, do not take it upon yourself to create a position for TST no matter how reasonable or self-evident the alignment of that position to TST values appears to you. Even issues of universal impact and vital importance can fall outside of TST's purview if they also fall outside of TST's ability to actively engage in tangible solutions toward the problem. We earn our right to speak upon issues by first actively engaging with the issues through campaigns and actions that offer coherent remedies. We do not grandstand to the public by way of facile expressions of uproar in indignant position pieces.

We don't do personal profiles. A preponderance of journalists have found it convenient to focus on the "who" of a story at the expense of the "what" and the "why." We do not want to see the issues we care most deeply about relegated to secondary status for the benefit of anybody's aggrandizement.

HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF

Always focus on our affirmative values. In cases where Religious Liberties are concerned, we are fighting firstly for our own *inclusion*, not anybody else's *exclusion*. In cases of TST events and activities that draw the ire of the superstitious, we must be clear that our activities are done to enrich our own lives and community, not to diminish those of others. We don't apologize for the offense taken by other religious groups and panicked conspiracists, and pointing out their sometimes obvious hypocrisies when they level projective criticisms upon us is appropriate in moderation, but it's important to focus on what we're *for*, rather than what we're *against*.

Assume "good faith" (within reason). Sometimes it can be difficult to discern journalists who believe themselves to be asking the "hard questions" from the journalists who are being intentionally obtuse and confrontational. As far as you can reasonably assume that the journalist

is a neutral inquirer asking on behalf of an ignorant and hostile public, do so. Answer questions politely and thoughtfully, but feel free to point out when certain questions or statements made toward you are absurd or nonsensical.

Don't engage in superfluous dialogue. Don't assume that friendly banter and last minute "just out of curiosity" questions are off-record. Everything you say in an interview can be published, either in full or in part.

Know your message before you engage. Know in advance what points you want to get across and be able to express them succinctly. Think about ways you can bring the discussion back to the points you set out make regardless of what the interviewer asks. Address the interviewer's questions the best you can, but try to frame your answers in the context of your particular message each time. It's best to have one strong, concise message in any interview and to have a few sentences prepared to summarize it. Don't be afraid to let a journalist know when you feel the conversation has gone well off-course.

Ask for clarification. Don't make any assumptions when a question is ambiguous. Ask the inquirer to define their terminology. Don't accept statements of "Satanism has a long history of [some unethical and/or criminal behavior]" without qualification. Don't accept assertions of "some people are saying [some disparaging thing about The Satanic Temple and its campaigns]" without clarifying whom exactly is allegedly saying these things.

Accurate representation is more important than a positive story. Sometimes, a friendly journalist *wants* The Satanic Temple to be nothing more than clever trolls spitting in the eye of religious zealotry rather than an authentic non-theistic religious voice. Sometimes, it's apparent that a journalist wants to laud TST for being brilliant atheist activists merely "using" religion to make a point *against* religion. When a journalist is looking for one story and ends up finding another, you may be able to detect disappointment and even hostility as the interview carries on. Don't allow this to compel you to underplay our sincerity or remanufacture our message. Don't allow The Satanic Temple's overall worth to be diminished for the benefit of any one journalist's support.

SELECTED ONLINE INTERVIEWS

[NEVER LET YOUR ACTIVISM BE ARTLESS - AN INTERVIEW WITH LUCIEN GREAVES](#)

[LUCIEN GREAVES EXPLAINS WHY THE SATANIC TEMPLE ISN'T JUST SOME PARODY](#)

