



THE SATANIC TEMPLE

CONFIDENTIAL

Media Training

Before the Interview

Do you need an approval from National Council?

If an interview is related to an approved event it does not require an approval as long as the person doing the interview has gone through TST Media Training.

If an interview is not directly related to an event, it must go through the approval process.

Example: The Chapter held a Menstruatin' With Satan event 1 week ago. A journalist contacts you to discuss the work TST does and is particularly interested in discussing Menstruatin' with Satan.

Prior to submitting an approval:

Interview the interviewer.

Learn as much as possible about the story they're working on, as you'll be able to prepare for the interview with greater precision as you learn more about it. Most journalists are willing to share at least the basics about the stories they're working on, and some are willing to go into great detail about their stories.

Acquiring the following information that will help in expediting the NC approval process.

- The Interviewer's name. Obvious, but people often forget to ask.
- The organization they work for.
- What's the format for the interview? For broadcast or taped interviews, what are the logistics:
- Dial in - Are they calling you or do they have a number for you?
- Video - In person or remote?
- Does that organization a specific agenda? Research the organization online and interviewer online.
- The name of the show/site/channel/paper/podcast the interview will be appearing on.
- How large is the audience?
- If possible do a little research on the audience that will be seeing, reading, or hearing the interview.
- Also ask how long the interview will last.
- Ask about the story they're working on. Feel free to ask follow-up questions and to clarify any points you don't fully understand.
- Is anyone else being interviewed for this topic? Who?
- Is there anything else I can help you with? Ask the reporter if you can provide them with any press releases, graphics, photos, videos, etc. You can often expand your presence in a news story if the reporter chooses to use your supporting materials.
- When are you publishing or airing the story?

Look at the story as soon as it comes out. If it's a positive story, share it with your online and off-line networks. If it's a negative story, consider contacting the reporter or editor, or issuing a response.

Homework

- Watch/Listen/Read every interview you can by Lucien and other TST leadership about the topic of the interview. This will help you have your answers ready so you don't fumble in front of a camera. Also your answers will be consistent with leadership.
- Watch/Listen/Read every interview you can by Lucien and other TST leadership about TST. You never know what questions about the past will be asked.
- You will notice leadership answers questions the same way. This includes certain phrases. Many are intentional since they represent a legal standing or other specific message. If you hear a phrase repeated like, "arbitrary tyrannical authority" or "undue burden" it is good to commit that to memory but also the context they are used in so they are used properly.
- You don't have to answer question exactly as everyone else but answers often reflect our positions or beliefs and must be consistent.

- Either memorize the tenets or keep them handy in case you are asked about them.

The Interview

The two most important parts this training are understanding:

1. The basic concepts of how to participate in an interview.
2. You are there to discuss TST's talking points and deliver our message.

Basic Concepts To Keep in Mind

- An interview **is not** an interview. You aren't there to answer questions.
- An interview **is** an opportunity to introduce TST's talking points to a large audience.
- Never act apologetic or insecure about TST. We have a right to our beliefs.
- You are not there to defend TST. You are there to talk positively about TST.
- If someone says something derogatory about TST, there is a strong urge to defend us or yourself. Never do this. It comes across as very insecure. Instead respond with something positive about TST that contradicts whatever question was asked.
- It is not your job to convince someone to like us.
- Remember to Pivot if asked a difficult question.
- Be concise - The more you say, the more opportunity you give yourself to fuck up.

With these concepts in mind, read the TST Media Primer included as part of this media training is required reading.

Talking Points

As of September, 2019 **every interview should discuss** (ordered by importance):

1. Religious Reproductive Rights Fundaiser
2. How to donate (donate.thesatanictemple.org)
3. That we are the only Satanic religion officially recognized by the US government.
4. Hail Satan? - what it is and that it is streaming

Other Facts about TST that are good to mention:

- We don't proselytize or recruit.
- We believe everyone should think for themselves.
- We have over 100,000 members
- Note before the interview how many FB followers we have.

Types of Questions and How to Respond:

Once you are familiar with the concepts and have committed TST's current talking points to memory, the next step is understanding more specific ways to answer questions:

It is easier to realize that most questions can be categorized under three areas:

1. Questions that are repeatedly asked.
2. New questions that fall under common categories.

3. Questions about the topic at hand that may also fall under area 1 or 2.

1. Common Questions and our Answers

How can you be a real religion if you don't worship Satan?

The view that religion belongs to only those that believe in the supernatural is very short sighted. There are many religions that do not worship a diety, not Just the Satanic Temple.

Why not just call yourselves Atheists?

We have a set of beliefs that are religious. Those beliefs are Satanic.

When was the Satanic Temple established?

2013 and we became the only official Satanic religion recognized by the US government in April of this year which was great timing because the documentary about us "Hail Satan?" had just hit theaters. It's now streaming if you want to check it out.

Didn't TST start off as a joke?

Satan has always been a prankster.

There's nothing wrong with calling attention to an issue by using humor, but we have firmly held religious beliefs.

Do you have a bible?

We do have a canon which is a collection of literature that includes Anatole France's Revolt of the Angels along with works by Blake, Milton, and Shelly.

Do you have services?

We do. We have a service every Friday evening at our Headquarters in Salem, MA. That is also where the Baphomet monument resides. For now.

Is the Church of Satan and the Satanic Temple the same thing?

Answer: We are very different PIVOT to describing a short positive thing about TST and then to your talking points. There is never a reason to say anything negative about COS. They aren't our concern.

What does Satan represent to TST?

The short answer is "A symbol of rebellion in the face of arbitrary tyrannical authority."

Where do you draw the line on free speech?

The line was drawn long before TST. We support the constitution and laws that govern free speech.

2. Common Categories of Questions:

Questions you don't know the answer to.

Question: What happened to Lucien's eye? (Actual Interview Question)

Answer: Move to topic you want to discuss. "Im not sure but have you heard about our new fundraiser?"

Questions that call for speculation.

Question: Do you think TST will win the lawsuit against Missouri?

Don't take the bait! If you guess wrong, reporters will be able to use your quote against you forever, and your credibility with the public may take a hit.

Stick with the facts. Answer by saying something like: "Well, our case is strong, and we are more hopeful than ever that we will win."

If pressed again, you can follow up with: "Well, although I can't speculate, I can tell you that...."

Questions that ask for your personal opinion.

What if you're asked this question: One of TST's tenets is about compassion. Do you think more people should eat a vegan diet?

When you are identified as a spokesperson for a company, group, or organization, there's no such thing as a personal opinion. The media will identify you as a representative of your organization. Period.

Do not offer a personal opinion. Instead, say, "Well, I'm speaking for the organization, not myself, and what we believe is..."

Yes or no questions.

Question: "This is a simple yes or no: "Didn't Lucien illustrate a copy of Might is Right. Isn't that a white supremacist book?"

Here's why they're so insidious: They almost always have an obvious answer, and everyone watching the interview knows it. But if you answer with a direct "yes or no," the resulting quote will be awful.

Never say "Yes" or "No" to a question like this. It is always a way to trap yourself.

Let's say you answer the question by saying, "Yes" in any way. The resulting news story will almost certainly read, "When asked whether Lucien Greaves illustrated a White Supremacist book, the TST spokesperson said 'yes.'"

You don't have to answer on their terms. Instead, say something like: "I can't speak to something that happened almost 20 years ago. What we do know is that TST is incredibly inclusive and we welcome members from all walks of life."

Third-party questions.

"The Church of Satan says they're the only real Satanists. I've heard some people in TST have bashed CoS. Why do you think TST is better than CoS?"

Conflict sells. Reporters will often ask you to comment on third parties, usually your competitors or opponents. Instead of taking the bait, answer the question by focusing on your own attributes.

For example, you might say: "Well, let me talk about what we've accomplished. TST Chapter regularly raise donations for LGBTQ youth and women's shelters, we are working to ensure reproductive rights and bodily autonomy ..."

Occasionally, you might want your quote to address your opponent's flaws. But since that quote will inevitably be the one included in the story, make sure it's consistent with your overall communications strategy.

The repeated question repeated.

Reporters are notorious for asking the same question with slightly different words several times.

Remember these two things:

First, stick to your messages. You should alter the specific words of each response, but not the themes of your answers.

Second, watch your tone. You should be as calm the sixth time the reporter asks you a question as you were the first, since the reporter will inevitably use your least flattering response.

Remember: A reporter's job is to get you off-message and off-tone. If the reporter succeeds, this is what can happen.

Don't allow a truth to be established that is against TST's beliefs.

Question: If God represents a symbol of faith, what does Satan represent for your religion?

If you just answer the question you are agreeing that God is a symbol of faith.

Answer: God doesn't represent a symbol of faith to everyone. To TST Satan represents...(standard statement about rebellion against arbitrary tyrannical authority).

Don't go so far as to say what God does or does not represent, the topic is TST so clarify and then talk about what TST represents.



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](#)

