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[www.crisiscommunications.com](http://www.crisiscommunications.com)

## Crisis Comm & Media Relations E-Newsletter

March 1, 2012

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Our regular office number is 216-321-7774.  
However, if your situation is DEFCON 4 (critical and extraordinarily time-sensitive),  
please call our 24/7 Emergency Crisis Comm Hotline at 216-223-8771.  
If necessary, leave a voicemail and we'll get back to you within 30 minutes.



Hennes Paynter Communications, American Copy Editors Society,  
The Plain Dealer & Cleveland Scene

### Tragic School Shooting in Chardon, Ohio

By the time you read this, pundits across the country will be weighing in on the way officials handled the tragic school shooting the country watched unfold last Monday, February 27, in Chardon, Ohio when three high school students were killed and two others injured by a fellow student.

From everything we know so far, Chardon High School, the local police, county sheriff and other authorities performed admirably. Informed observers agree that was very much due to the fact there was an operational plan in place and that plan had been tested over the years. Teachers and students also knew exactly what to do in a lockdown situation, quickly taking cover and barricading themselves in darkened classrooms to wait for rescue.

However, our expertise is on the communications side: when it hits the fan, what do you say; how do you say it; to whom do you say it; and when do you say it.

When the stakes are high and events occur this quickly, as they did at Chardon High School, can any crisis communications plan prepare an organization for the horrendous experience it's about to undergo? A good plan will definitely give an organization solid footing to build on, but the reality is that no plan is comprehensive enough to anticipate all the ramifications an event of this magnitude generates. Here are some quick thoughts and observations.

It's a cliché at this point to say social media needs to be a part of any crisis communications plan. The nuance Chardon provided is the reality that social media will not play the same role in all crises. In some cases, Twitter and Facebook can provide platforms for engaging stakeholders in dialogue. In others, attempting to respond would be like trying to read a newspaper in a cyclone. There were thousands of Tweets and Facebook posts the morning of the shooting. Before officials held their noon press conference, the shooter and victims alike were named on social media sites. Some information was accurate, much of it was not. In a case like this, the best you can do is use these outlets as another broadcast vehicle and use your media briefings to correct

misinformation.

Crisis plans typically go to great lengths to include (and keep current) contact information for a range of stakeholders - everyone from the local beat reporter to the chamber of commerce. An event like Chardon will generate interest far beyond an organization's normal reach and influence. Plan B needs to go into effect immediately when that occurs in order to reach the broadest number of individuals in the most efficient way possible. Web sites may be viewed as passé by some, but they can be real workhorses in situations like this. Posting information promptly and guiding media to websites can lighten the workload for your team, allowing you to focus on other audiences that require direct communication.

We all know traditional media are in a fight to the death to remain relevant. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of breaking news. When Chardon happened, it was interesting to note which outlets broke the rules and which ones honored the boundaries. Because reporters have so many sources these days other than the "official" source, it makes responding honestly and forthrightly more challenging than ever before. Stick to your protocol. Don't let the media frenzy drive you to release information prematurely - even if it's already leaked out from other sources.

Are there lessons learned? Absolutely. Have a plan, practice the plan and make sure to update the plan. Just don't assume a plan will carry you through unscathed if - God forbid - your organization is struck by a catastrophic event. In those cases, good instincts, hard-won experience and solid teamwork can go a long way to bridge the gap between preparation and reality.

We offer our condolences to those in Chardon who lost loved ones and friends. We also offer our thanks to the school officials, teachers and first responders who all did their jobs in an admirable manner.

**Bruce Hennes**  
Managing Partner

**Barbara Paynter**  
Partner

**Nora Jacobs**  
Vice President

[How The Plain Dealer Covered the School Shootings](#) American Copy Editors Society

[Chardon High School Shooting - Complete Coverage](#) The Plain Dealer

In the mad rush to be first, a number of news outlets - and thousands of tweets - posted photos of the alleged perpetrator holding guns and a sign indicating the carnage about to unfold, insinuating that if only someone had paid attention to the web postings of this young man that the deaths could have been prevented. It's true - in the vast majority of similar situations, the young gunmen did in fact tip their hand. But in the case of this week's shootings in Chardon, the photos were bogus, with the media outlets clearly jumping the gun. Cleveland Scene (a local alternative newspaper) has a good story about this [here](#).



CBS Sports

### **LeBron Hires PR Strategist**

So maybe LeBron saying he'd consider returning to Cleveland last week wasn't just him answering a question. Maybe it was all part of a master PR plan. [READ MORE](#)



Columbia Journalism Review

### **Countering Misinformation: Tips for Journalists**

With eight months to go before Election Day, the political misinformation cycle is already in full swing as misleading super PAC

ads flood the airwaves.

Citizens and journalists alike are concerned that the prevalence of misinformation in our politics may pollute democratic discourse, make it more difficult for citizens to cast informed votes, and limit their ability to participate meaningfully in public debate. In particular, we know that many political myths are difficult to correct once they become established. So how can journalists most effectively counter the misleading claims that are made in the 2012 campaign? [READ MORE](#)



Amanda Ripley's blog

## Human Behavior on a Sinking Ship

We won't know for some time exactly what went wrong on the Costa Concordia off the coast of Tuscany a few days ago. But already, the survivor reports contain some clues as to what may have gone wrong with the evacuation.

In almost every disaster, predictable human distortions slow down the response. This is normal-which is not the same thing as inevitable. [READ MORE](#)



Hennes Paynter Communications, along with [Nighttown](#), is proud sponsor of a film at the upcoming Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF). Our film is *Under African Skies*, about Paul Simon's return to South Africa 25 years after releasing *Graceland*. We hope you'll join us for this special evening.

For information about the 36th Annual Cleveland International Film Festival, click [here](#).

See below for reduced prices for Friends of Hennes Paynter Communications.



2163 Lee Road  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Please join us on Thursday, March 29 for a special screening of UNDER AFRICAN SKIES at the Cedar Lee Theatre in Cleveland Heights.

You must have a Film Festival pass or UNDER AFRICAN SKIES ticket for admission to the pre-party and the film.

Sponsored  
by:



HENNES PAYNTER  
COMMUNICATIONS  
[www.crisiscommunications.com](http://www.crisiscommunications.com)

### Under African Skies

Directed by Joe Berlinger  
USA, SOUTH AFRICA 2012  
101 minutes  
(see page 127 for film description)

### Thursday, March 29

5:00 PM  
Pre-Film Reception at Nighttown  
(12383 Cedar Road, Cleveland Hts.,  
OH 44106)  
7:15 PM  
(please find your seats by 7:00 PM)  
Film Screening at the Cedar Lee Theatre  
Code CLEE29  
9:30 PM  
Dinner specials until 12 Midnight  
at Nighttown

Friends of Hennes Paynter Communications can receive a \$2.00 discount for CIFF ticket purchases by using the following codes:

Online: Use the code "HPCOMM" when purchasing tickets at [www.clevelandfilm.org](http://www.clevelandfilm.org) (available 24 hours a day).

Phone: Use the code " HPCOMM" when calling the Ulmer & Berne Film Festival Box Office at 877.304.FILM (3456).

In-person: Use the code " HPCOMM" at the Ulmer & Berne Film Festival Box Office in the lobby of Tower City Cinemas.

**Ticket prices (before discount):**

\$10 Cleveland International Film Festival Members

\$12 Non-members

\$10 Students and Seniors (day of show only)

This discount is good for any Festival film screening. Restrictions may apply.

## News From Hennes Paynter



## Hennes Honored

CLEVELAND, March 1, 2012 - Bruce Hennes, managing partner of Hennes Paynter Communications, has been honored as one of this year's winners of the Distinguished Sales and Marketing Award, presented by the Akron affiliate of Sales and Marketing Executives International. Hennes received his award February 28 at a gala hosted by SMEI and attended by more than 450 regional business executives and guests. You can see all the award winners [here](#).



Noted [Tim Dimoff](#), chapter president, as he presented the award, "Bruce absolutely loves what he does for a living, and he does it with passion and perfection."

Last year, Hennes received the Communicator of the Year award from the International Association of Business Communicators. He is also the recipient of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association's first-ever President's Award and serves on that group's executive committee. He also

has received the President's Special Award for Extraordinary Service from the Cuyahoga County Bar Association and two Vega awards from The American Red Cross.

Hennes Paynter Communications is one of the few U.S. firms focused exclusively on crisis communications. Hennes Paynter serves corporations, government agencies, law firms, education and healthcare institutions and non-profits.

## We Won

For the third year in a row, Hennes Paynter Communications won the top award for crisis communications work from the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. On December 2, the firm won the 2011 gold "Rocks" award for its work on behalf of Saint Joseph Academy, the only Catholic all-girls' school in the city of Cleveland.

In 2010, Hennes Paynter won a gold "Rocks" award for its work on behalf of The MetroHealth System, which faced public scrutiny when the organization's vice president of construction and his assistant were implicated in a bribery and kick-back scheme.

In 2009, Hennes Paynter won the coveted "Best of Show" award from the Cleveland Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America for its work with another agency on the national peanut butter recall.

For more information on all of the above, please check out our website at [www.crisiscommunications.com](http://www.crisiscommunications.com)

## Hennes Comments on JFK

A new book offers salacious details of an 18-month affair John F. Kennedy had with a 19-year old intern. Last week, our local NBC affiliate asked Bruce Hennes to come to their studio where they posed this question to me: Does JFK need a reputation rehab?

You can see the video answer here.

Speaking of JFK, a hat tip to Vic Gideon over at University Hospitals for correctly catching the Secret Word: "vigah."

## We Moved

Hennes Paynter Communications is proud to announce we have a new home on the 32nd floor of Cleveland's iconic [Terminal Tower](#). We have panoramic views on three sides of the building, so we hope you'll stop by to visit our crisis management center and crisis/media training facility.

To all, a happy and healthy 2012.

But if things don't go as planned - call us.

**Please change your records to reflect our new contact information:**

**3200 Terminal Tower, 50 Public Square  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113  
office: 216-321-7774  
fax: 216-916-4405**



photo above taken with a cell phone camera from BP/Huntington Building

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[Hennes Paynter Communications](#) is one of the few agencies in the U.S. focused exclusively on crisis communications. Contact us at 216-321-7774.

Hennes Paynter is proud to support [WCPN-FM](#) ,  
Cleveland's National Public Radio affiliate.



ideastream®



The American Prospect

## It's a Wonderful Lie

At a time when legislators, consumer advocates and the Occupy movement batter big banks for their questionable business practices, J.P. Morgan Chase and Bank of America have gone soft and fuzzy. The nation's two largest banks are running saccharine television commercials that portray the massive multinationals as the Bailey Building and Loan Association. [READ MORE](#)



Molokai Advertiser News and National Lampoon

## Law of the Jungle

The Molokai Advertiser-News is honored to present for your edification and pleasure, the cases and foot notes, the humor and considered opinions regarding lex biologica by Henry Beard and John Weidman from their 1974 National Lampoon: "Law of the Jungle."

Be you attorney or not, this is a chance to read (or re-read) this now-classic piece of satire. [READ MORE](#)



Connect Institute

## Social Media Training

Cleveland's Connect Institute provides engaging education courses focusing on business, marketing, and professional development. Instructed by industry professionals, you will learn relevant practices adopted by the most innovative businesses today. Take a class to get ahead and discover your full career potential. Class sizes are limited to 30, so be sure to sign up today.

### **The Winter 2012 Series includes:**

**3/7 Blogging for Your Brand**

**3/14 LinkedIn: A Guided Tour of Features & Strategies**

**3/21 Intro to Online Advertising: Paid & Organic Search Strategies**

Faculty Director for the Winter 2012 Series is Geof Pelaia, well-known Cleveland social media specialist. Classes will be taught by a network of professionals associated with each topic who'll share their insights and expertise. All classes run from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. and take place at the offices of Hennes Paynter Communications, on the 32nd floor of Terminal Tower in Cleveland.

The cost for each seminar is \$29. However, readers of this e-newsletter will receive a 50% tuition reduction by using the discount code **HennesPaynter** when you register.

To register, or for more information, go to [www.connectinstitute.com](http://www.connectinstitute.com).



Curated by Hennes Paynter Communications

## Short Takes

[Unnecessary Journalism Phrases](#) Tumblr.com

[Reporter Tricks of the Trade](#) FishbowlDC

[Gay Talese Sounds Off on The New York Times](#) Vanity Fair

[Gene Weingarten Trashes Stetson Hats](#) Poynter.org

[How "Hybrid" Nonprofits Can Stay on Mission](#) Harvard Business School

[Terror Alerts by John Cleese](#) UCanGoTravel



Hennes Paynter Communications

## Check Out Bruce & Barb's Schedule

**3/16/12 American Bar Association Bar Leaders Conference, Chicago (1 hour)**  
Crisis Communications

**3/21/12 Contingency Planners of Ohio (1 hour)**  
Using Social Media During Crisis Situations Co-Presenter: Scott Juba

**3/22/12 Cuyahoga County Fire Chiefs' Association (2 hours)**  
Using Social Media During Crisis Situations  
Co-Presenter: Scott Juba

**4/2/12 Cuyahoga County Emergency Management Agency (6 hours)**  
Crisis Communications, Media Relations & Social Media for Government Officials, Community Leaders, Nonprofits, Education, Business, Boards of Health, Medical Providers, Fire, Law Enforcement and Other First Responders  
Co-Presenter: Scott Juba  
Co-Sponsor: Cuyahoga Community College

**4/11/12 Lorain County Safety Council (1 hour)**  
How Media Manipulate the News

**4/20/12 Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association (3 hours)**  
Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press CLE

**4/23/12 Mansfield Economic Club (1 hour)**  
Crisis Communications

**5/10/12 Portage County Safety Council (1 hour)**  
How Media Manipulate the News

**5/15/12 Stark County Human Resource Association (1 hour)**  
How Media Manipulate the News

**6/28/12 Ohio Mayors Association (1 hour)**



## Crisis Communications

**10/16/12 Medina County Safety Council (1 hour)**

**How Media Manipulate the News**

**12/18/12 Akron Bar Association (4.5 hours)**

**Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press CLE**

Co-Presenters: Orville Reed, Buckingham Doolittle; Jim Burdon, Burdon & Merlitti

NOTE: Most of the above are open to the public. Some of the seminars are free; others require a fee, payable to the sponsoring organization. Please call or write us for further information.

## Did Someone Forward This E-Newsletter To You?

Don't miss a single issue. To get your own subscription, simply send your name, email and a few words about who you are and what you do to [info@crisiscommunications.com](mailto:info@crisiscommunications.com).

**Know someone who might benefit from this newsletter?** If you just forward using your own email program's "Forward" function and your recipient thinks they're being spammed, they can click on the Opt Out link and opt YOU off the list. So use this "[Forward This E-Newsletter](#)" link, please.



## Need a Presenter for Your Next Meeting or Conference?

Are you looking for an eye-opening, inspiring presentation for your next event? If your organization, company or association is searching for something different—a content-packed, entertaining, how-to customized seminar on how to manage the media - then we should talk. Don't just take our word for it. [See what other people say about our seminars](#) .



## Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press CLE

In today's world of high-profile litigation, law firms frequently retain PR consultants to help with media relations.

Numerous law firms have brought us in to do one of our seminars; some have used our seminar for a marketing opportunity, inviting a large number of corporate attorneys, as well as prospects for new business. Call us at 216-321-7774 to discuss particulars.



## Media Training & Coaching

**Your organization is in trouble...your CFO has been arrested...the company truck was in an accident...hackers hijacked your database...the pressure is on...the camera crew is at the door....**

Do you know how to handle a high-pressure TV interview? Will your messages survive the editing booth? Do you know where to put your hands? What to wear? Do you look at the camera - or at the interviewer?

It takes a lifetime to build a reputation and only a few seconds to destroy one. In a split second you could find yourself in a position where you need to know how to handle the media or be a public spokesperson. Would you know what to do or how to respond?

More important - do you have the necessary skill set to "manage the message" and advance the cause of your business, agency or nonprofit?



You can be certain the senior executives at virtually all of the Fortune 500 companies have been through media training, working with a media coach to learn how to handle adversarial situations with journalists and stakeholders. Perhaps it's time for you to learn this specialized set of survival skills?

We also offer spokesperson & presentation training and coaching, designed to improve your daily interactions with colleagues, employees, investors, journalists and other outside parties.

Call Bruce Hennes, Barb Paynter and the staff at [Hennes Paynter Communications](#) today at 216-321-7774 and talk to us about media, spokesperson and presentation training and coaching for you, your top execs -- or anyone who might have to hold the fort down with a reporter until the appropriate spokesperson can be located.

Ask us, too, about how we can help you create, implement and test a crisis communications plan.



## Our Permanent Collection of Links & Tips

If you're a new subscriber to this e-newsletter, our [carefully-selected list](#) of links and tips will help you prepare for, and respond to, crisis situations.



**When your organization or reputation is threatened, you need a specialist.  
A crisis communications specialist.**



CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS | MEDIA TRAINING | LITIGATION COMMUNICATIONS

**[www.crisiscommunications.com](http://www.crisiscommunications.com)  
216.321.7774**



### **Administrivia**

This email newsletter about Crisis Communications & Media Relations is generally published twice a month.

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OUR FAVORITE QUOTE: You simply can't communicate your way out of a situation you've behaved your way into (credit to Don Etling at Fleishman-Hillard for this insight).

WARREN BUFFET'S 4-STEP CRISIS COMM STRATEGY: Get it right. Get it fast. Get it out. Get it over.



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