

# LISTEN VS. LOOK

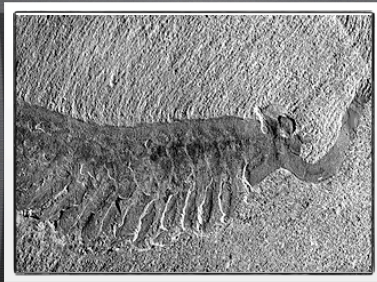
GETTING SCIENCE/HEALTH STORIES ON THE RADIO

1

## LISTEN VS. LOOK

- Which stories are covered and why
- Getting your story covered
- Elements of a story for radio
- Before you talk to a reporter
- What reporters look for in a relationship

2

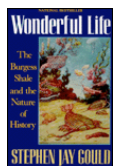


SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

## WHICH STORIES ARE COVERED AND WHY

3

“The new view trickled forth, tentatively at first but with more confidence later on, in a series of highly technical taxonomic and anatomical monographs, published mostly in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, London*, the oldest scientific journal in English (dating back to the 1660s), but scarcely an item on the shelf of your corner drugstore, or even your local library, and not the sort of publication scrutinized by the journalists responsible for selecting the tiny part of scientific activity destined for public notice.”



4

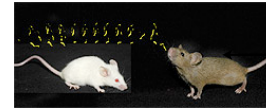


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Richard Miller

Yoda: an old mouse

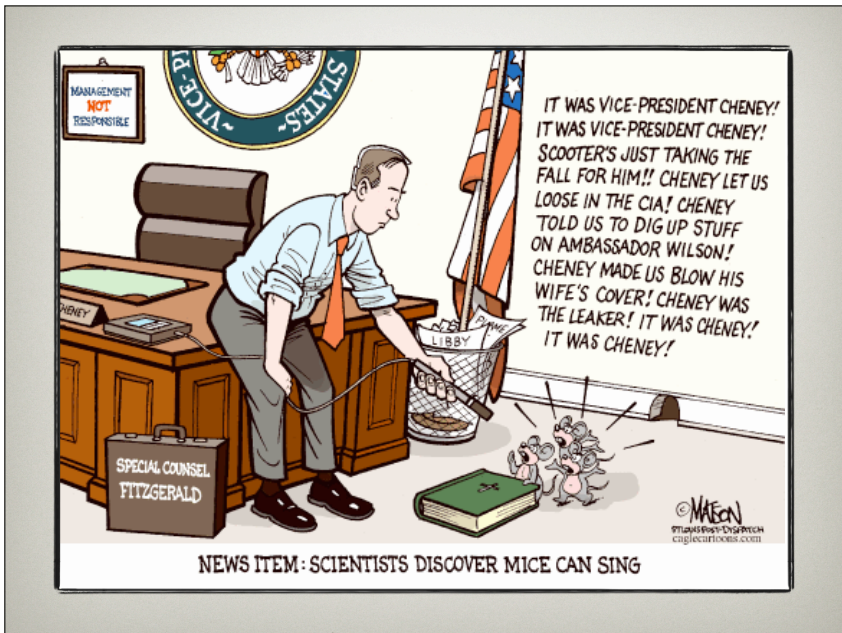


Washington University

Singing Mice

Strong PR important, but not too strong.

6



NEWS ITEM: SCIENTISTS DISCOVER MICE CAN SING

7

## WHICH STORIES ARE COVERED AND WHY

- Peer-reviewed publication
- Clear reason for story (or research)
- Strong PR (but not too strong)

8

## GETTING YOUR STORY COVERED

- What's the story?
- Different sides? Outside comment?
- Practice telling it (more on this later)
- No one likes a deadline



9

## GETTING YOUR STORY COVERED

- Introduction
- Background
- Methods
- Comment

**Structure:** SNOWs adhere to a 4-paragraph

**Introduction** - creative/eye catching  
**Background** - what has been done  
 significance of the study + what b  
**Methods** - what experiments were  
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AAAS ScienceNOW

10

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**How to Handle a Hungry Caterpillar?**  
 By Robert Frederick  
 ScienceNOW Daily News  
 31 March 2006

Take a bite out of a living mammal and it bleeds. But take a bite out of some plants, and they send poison to the wound. Now, scientists have discovered the biological mechanism of one such defense in corn that thwarts even the hungriest of insects: the caterpillar.

For 20 years, W. Paul Williams--a U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service geneticist at Mississippi State University in the town of Mississippi State--has been crossing exotic strains of insect-resistant corn from the Caribbean island of Antigua. His colleague Dawn Luthé, a plant biologist at Pennsylvania State University in State College, wanted to understand the mechanism behind the natural insect resistance. She found that when a caterpillar chomps on these varieties of corn, a previously unknown enzyme called Mir1-CP starts to accumulate at the site of the wound.

Further experiments revealed that the enzyme makes a part of a caterpillar's gut, called the peritrophic matrix, permeable, inhibiting digestion. As a result, the caterpillar larva remains small and more vulnerable to predators. The damaged gut also allows microorganisms and parasites to pass from the caterpillar's food into the insect's body and kill it, Luthé reported yesterday at the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society in Atlanta, Georgia.

Once Luthé and colleagues identified the mechanism behind the corn's resistance, they wanted to see how this natural defense compared with transgenic toxin. To do this, they fed caterpillar larvae pure *Bacillus thuringiensis* toxin. The Mir1-CP enzyme caused up to 4-times more morbidity than did the toxin. However, it took longer for those fed the enzyme to die because of how the enzyme works. Lastly, the team fed caterpillar larvae both the Mir1-CP enzyme and the *Bacillus thuringiensis* toxin. Luthé says that this combination was much more deadly than either one was alone. "When you mix two mechanisms of attacking a caterpillar, it's unlikely that they will develop a resistance to both mechanisms," she says.

Ulcer on the cob.  
 The peritrophic matrix in a caterpillar larva gut is perforated after eating both the Mir1-CP enzyme and a transgenic toxin (bottom). At top, the gut of a larva eating the transgenic toxin alone.  
 Credit: Courtesy of Dawn Luthé

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11

ME, FOR NPR

**ELEMENTS OF A STORY FOR RADIO**

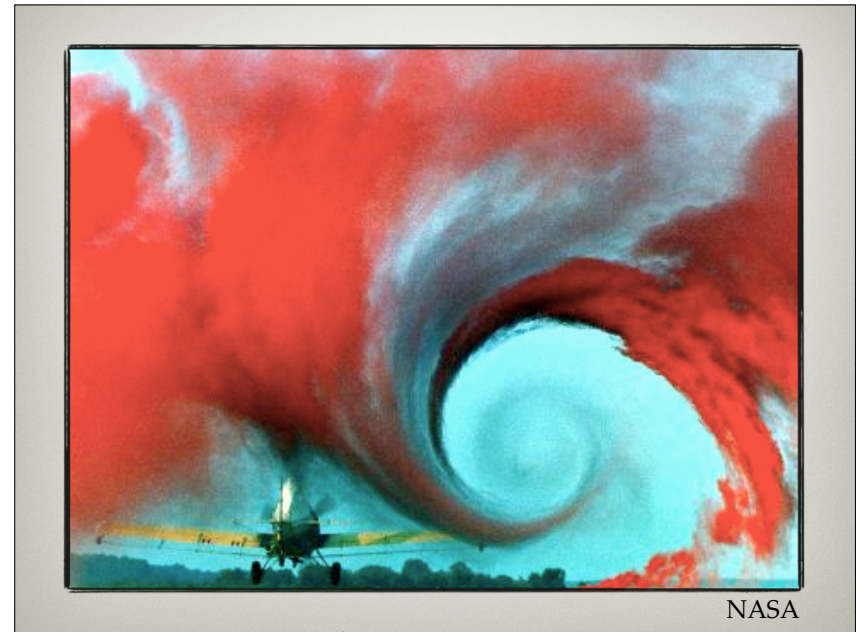
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## ELEMENTS OF A STORY FOR RADIO

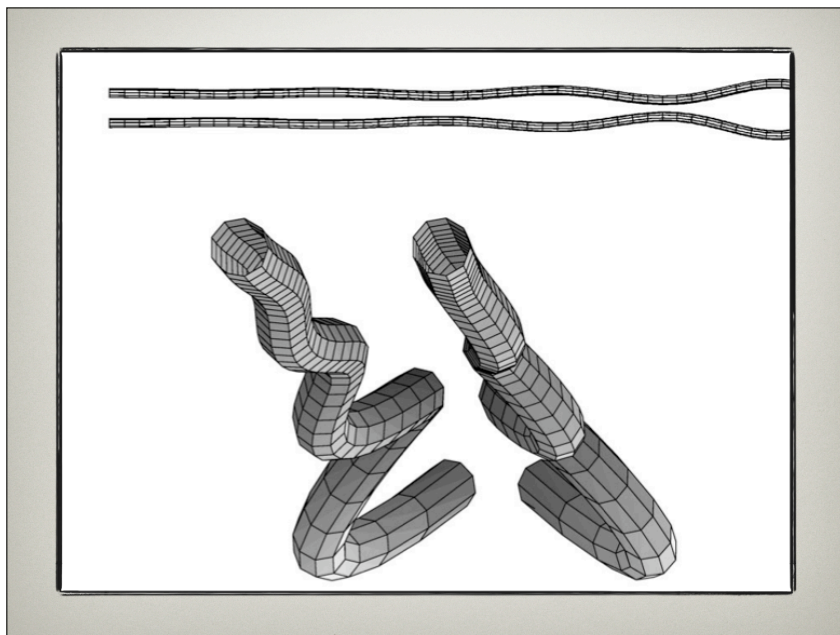
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- Scene: radio seeks to take you there
- Characters tell the story for the reporter
- Describable
- NLNA -- no lingo, no acronyms
- Only one or two new words

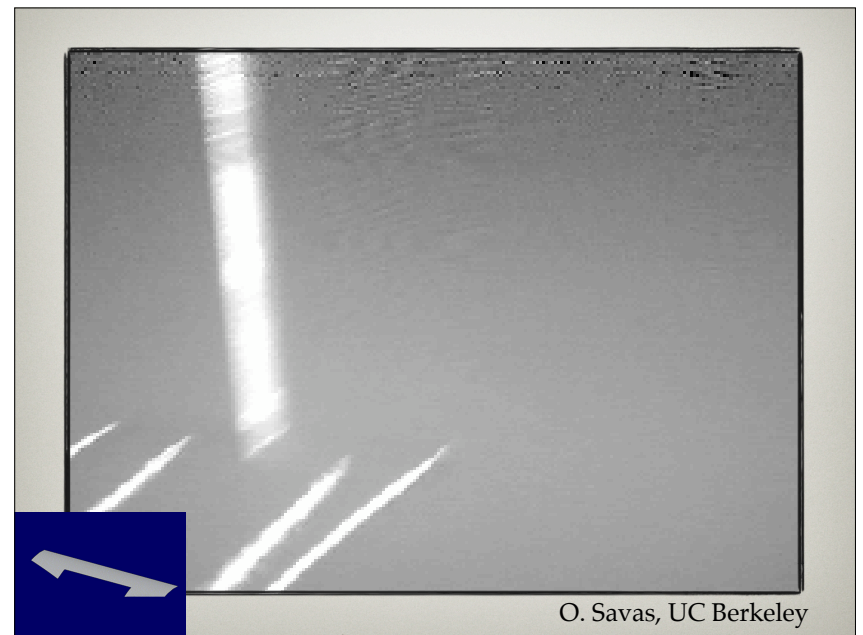
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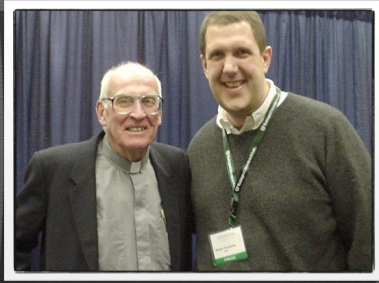
14



15



16



## BEFORE YOU TALK TO A REPORTER

17

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- What's the story?
- Different sides? Outside comment?
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18

## BEFORE YOU TALK TO A REPORTER

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- Introduction
  - Background
  - Methods
  - Comment
- What are others going to say?

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Just for primary researchers: Is the  
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19

## BEFORE YOU TALK TO A REPORTER

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- The Paper
- The Abstract
- The Lay Paragraph
- The Sentence

20

## BEFORE YOU TALK TO A REPORTER

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The Lesson from Betty Crocker

21



## WHAT REPORTERS LOOK FOR IN A RELATIONSHIP

22



## YOU'VE JUST HEARD IT

23

## WHAT REPORTERS LOOK FOR IN A RELATIONSHIP

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24

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26

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27

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28

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The Lesson from Betty Crocker

29



NO. IT'S NOT  
A PIECE OF CAKE....

30

## LISTEN VS. LOOK

GETTING SCIENCE/HEALTH STORIES ON THE RADIO

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31