IT TAKES MORE THAN GOOD LOOKS
To Succeed at Television News Reporting

WAYNE FREEDMAN
Praise for

*It Takes More Than Good Looks*

“Wayne Freedman knows how to make a television news story memorable. He tells you how to do it by using as examples stories he told on the air. More than being a solid writer, he’s also a crackerjack producer, interviewer, on-camera talent, photographer and author.”

Mervin Block—Television Newswriting Workshop
Author, *Writing Broadcast News Shorter, Sharper, Stronger: A Professional Handbook*

“I wish more reporters captured the essence and emotion of a story like Wayne does. I have recommended his book to countless journalism students and young reporters I have met, mentored or hired. Hopefully they’ve learned the best stories are not a list of facts, but a well-crafted tale.”

Tracey Watkowski Silva—News Director
KFSN-TV/ABC30, Fresno, California

“This just might be the first “how to” book for television storytelling. It’s all about attitude. Watch TV in a few years and you’ll quickly see who hasn’t read this book.”

David Busse—News Photographer, KABC-TV

“As the industry changes and more journalists make the jump from print to television, this should be required reading. It was for me.

*What better teacher is there?”*

Cecilia Vega—ABC News Correspondent
Former Reporter, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“For TV reporters who want to find and tell better stories, Wayne Freedman provides a terrific road map. He’s one of those rare journalists who both produces excellent work and can explain how he does it. In other words, he’s a gifted teacher. Learn from him!”

Deborah Potter—President and Executive Director, Newslab
Former CBS News Correspondent
“Easy to read. Educational. And fun. Yes, fun. This should be given to all journalism
students—it’ll show them how good TV is done. Veterans will learn a lot too, like how
to shoot a thorough, creative story in 30 minutes.

Wayne makes it seem possible with his explanations and real-life examples.
This book made me realize how obsolete and lame my journalism textbooks were. If I had read this, then maybe I could’ve skipped that stint at a small TV station
located in a cornfield.

Even though Wayne has been in the business awhile, he’s not one of those jaded
journalists. He’ll teach you how to do more with less, and how to make each
day manageable. This world-class television writer might even teach some old
photographers new tricks.”

Anne Herbst—Multimedia Journalist, Denver Post

“Wayne Freedman is one of the finest storytellers in the field, masterfully weaving
video, sound and just the right words to tell stories that no one else seems to find.
More important, he has found a way to tell OTHERS how to do this. As a professor
of broadcast journalism, I can tell you, that is no small accomplishment. If you are
a serious student of television journalism (and no, that is NOT an oxymoron), you
need to have this book. You also need to read it.”

Judy Muller—Associate Professor
USC Annenberg School of Communication
Former Correspondent, ABC News
National Public Radio Commentator

“MTGL feels like you’ve bellied up to the bar for some brews and war stories that will
educate, illuminate and inspire the storyteller in us all.

My students love MTGL and often say they can’t put it down to do their other
assigned readings.

This smart, savvy, streetwise guide is seasoned with decades of experience and told
with the brutal truth, flair and humor we’ve come to expect from a Wayne Freedman
story. It’s an avalanche of nuggets of wisdom, gems of advice and tips of pure gold.”

Greeley Kyle—Assistant Professor
School of Journalism, University of Missouri

“I’ll bet when Wayne Freedman is hypnotized, we discover he was Moliere or
Shakespeare in an early life. He gets every little detail. No one living is better at telling
stories. He sees things mere mortals do not, and is truly gifted at conveying those
insights. This latest edition is as much a fun, intelligent read as it is instructive. If my
students internalize all of this, then I do not need to teach. Wayne knows everything
about broadcast news and it’s all in here. Read this, learn the skills, and you’ll be a
better electronic journalist. Period.”

David Hazinski—Head, Digital and Broadcast News
Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor
Jim Kennedy Professor
Grady School of Journalism, University of Georgia
“An excellent blend of great advice on storytelling and on the real world of television journalism. The book is inspiring and practical. . . . I plan to use it to teach aspiring television reporters, but it should also be required reading for producers, photographers, and news managers.”

Dow Smith—Assistant Professor
Broadcast Journalism, Syracuse University

“From the very first day I saw Wayne's work in class at Mizzou, I could tell he was a special talent. So, it comes as no surprise to me he has written such a special book. I will recommend it to the pros, and my students could benefit from the insight he has gathered in his 30+ years of experience. Come to think of it, I should probably also recommend it to some of the experienced TV people I now. The pros could also benefit from that insight.”

Dr. Max Utsler
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Kansas

“For nigh on to twenty years, I've said Wayne Freedman “makes the best television” of anybody working in news in this country. Sometimes irreverent, usually witty, and always insightful with his storytelling, Wayne's at his best when he's looking at the ripples emanating from the spot story everyone else sees. If you want to succeed in this business, you should learn about the world, hone your basic skills, then dedicate yourself to such versatility and craftsmanship as Wayne Freedman displays every time he goes out on a story.”

Mackie Morris—Journalist, Educator, Consultant

“So often, TV news is just a breathless recitation of soon-to-be-meaningless facts. What Wayne Freedman does—and what his book explains—is how to go beyond that . . . to find and tell meaningful stories. From hard news to features, Wayne knows how to tell the kinds of stories that stay with people long after the news ends. And he figured out how to keep doing it after retooling himself to do his own shooting and editing.

If you want to be a great reporter, read this book.”

Bob Papper—Chair of Journalism
Lawrence Stessin Distinguished Professor
Hofstra University
“Wayne Freedman is the best story teller in television news. And in a highly competitive business it is rare to find someone so willing to share the secrets of his success. Every chapter is filled with practical and useful tips—not just for student journalists—seasoned professionals will also find much to take away from this book. The new chapters in this latest edition are timely and insightful. One of the many factors that make this book such a standout is that Wayne supports his writing in each chapter with real-life examples. Wayne practices what he preaches and everyone who reads this book will be the richer for it.”

Marty Gonzalez—Professor
Broadcast and Communication Arts Department
San Francisco State University
Weekend News Anchor, KRON-TV San Francisco

“Nobody—NOBODY—marries words and pictures like Wayne Freedman. I’ve been inspired by him and stolen from him. “Television journalism” is not an oxymoron in his hands, but his greatest gift may be as a teacher of storytelling. If you aspire to excellence, you ought to know what he knows.”

Ray Farkas—Independent News and Documentary Producer

“Live shots, jump cuts and wallpaper video. Ugh! Is this what’s become of television reporting? There is a better way and Wayne Freedman, a consummate video storyteller, shares the secrets that have earned him more than 50 Emmys. This book is a must read for those who aspire to tell stories with video.”

Randy Covington—Director
WAN-IFRA Newsplex at the University of South Carolina

When I read Wayne’s first book, I was a cub reporter. Now I work in a major market, and the book helped me to get there. I still refer to it. This is a must-read for anyone who aspires to tell stories that matter.”

Brian Kuebler—Investigative Reporter
WMAR-TV, Baltimore

“Inspiring and educational, but also fun reading. I took it on vacation and couldn’t put it down, even at the beach.”

Karen O’Leary—Reporter, KIRO-TV
“Landing a TV reporting job is not tough. Make a tape, be persistent and someone somewhere will put you on the air.

Leaning the craft of television news reporting is a different ball game. Wayne Freedman shows what it takes to become one of the very best.

This book offers practical, easy to use tips to anyone in the business. The challenges and frustrations Wayne describes will happen to you, count on it. Just as important, he explains ways to overcome those obstacles. Regardless of your experience level, this book is crammed full of useful tips that can improve your work.

But this is not only a collection of “how to” tips.

It Takes More than Good Looks to Succeed at TV News Reporting, inspired me. Those of us lucky enough to make a career of TV news have the best, most interesting jobs around. Thanks to Wayne we now have a playbook to make ourselves, and our work, even better!”

Robert Wilson

“Just finished the book this morning on the train ride in to work. I have to say that I enjoyed it from beginning to end! It was jam packed FULL of useful tips and great anecdotes that would help ANYONE to become a great news reporter or multimedia journalist PERIOD.

My favorite part? I could no sooner pick a favorite star in the sky. This book was sooo informative, interesting, and absolutely HILARIOUS. It's all you would ever want or need in a non-fiction book. It's like going on a ride through his MOST INTERESTING LIFE!!

While reading this book, I often paused and said to myself, “Wow, it's like he read my mind and answered my most pressing questions without me having to ask.”

What did I learn . . . ?

. . . That I'm in the right field! I read the bulk of the book on the train with people looking at me weird every couple of minutes as I laughed aloud, mumbled “NICE!” at his scripts, and sighed “awww” at his experiences. This book is an absolute Godsend—a true journalist's handbook. I cannot thank Mr. Freedman enough for sharing!”

Tilesha Brown—Journalism Student

“If you want to write television news stories that simply sing, this is a must-have book. I'm a reporter at a station in Allentown, PA, and I bought this book a while ago and have re-read it several times . . . each time I get something new out of it. More important, it's absolutely packed with “tricks of the trade” that are useful and creative.

If you’re serious about good reporting and telling people’s stories that will linger in the minds of your viewers long after the newscast has ended, I suggest you give this book a try.”

D. Parker
SECOND EDITION

IT TAKES MORE THAN GOOD LOOKS

To Succeed at Television News Reporting

WAYNE FREEDMAN
It didn’t seem right.
Not when original copies of *It Takes More than Good Looks* sold on the internet at obscene multiples of the original cover price.
Not when young reporters continued to contact me, asking for rogue copies.
Not when college professors asked if they could use pdf files because the book was out of print.
That’s when I knew it was high time for seat time, and a second edition. I secured the rights, found a good, new publisher, and went to work.
So, here it is, same as it always was—updated with more recent and relevant examples reflecting the changes in our business. Don’t worry. Most of the first edition remains. That first book drew from two decades of reporting experiences. This new edition draws from three.
In culling it together, I am reassured that even as our business models change, the fundamentals of solid visual storytelling remain the same. What worked in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s still applies in the new millennium.
Since the first edition, I have changed too, becoming older, wiser, more efficient, more newsy, and more jaded. I remain just as committed to telling stories well, and seeing them told well.
“Your writing this book is better than my listening to you shout at the television,” said my wife.
She’s right. This book is a brain dump. Everything I know about how to produce a quality television news story is in these pages.
The business has been good to me. I have been relatively successful. Maybe, after reading this, it will help you have a successful career, too.
To Susan and Lauren.

For my parents, Mike and Alicia.

And to the old schoolers, wherever you are. Pass it on.
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Part One

MINDSET
When news people look at clocks, they invariably wish the hands would move slower, not faster. If you report, you may have days, hours, minutes, or seconds to finish a story. It doesn't matter. You will always be aware of time's relentless forward march. You cannot help feeling hurried, and sometimes worried.

For television news crews, every day brings a new challenge. Some of those days are more trying than others, and none more so than a Wednesday in June, 2000. KGO-TV photographer Doug Laughlin and I had gone to Pebble Beach, California for general news coverage of the U.S. Open Golf tournament. Our troubles began early, when a security man stopped us near the first tee.

“That is only a press pass,” he said with authority. “Your press pass is not a photo pass. You need a photo pass to take that camera on the course.”

“Where do we get a photo pass?”

“It’s too late if you don’t already have one,” he said indifferently.

“But we need a photo pass.”

“Everybody needs a photo pass.”

Clearly, this man had perfected something in life—his imitation of a brick wall. We had planned to do a story about watching golf from the gallery at that scenic venue, but he cared only about rules and technicalities. “Your press pass grants access to the press tent, but nowhere else,” he droned with
the charm of a customs agent. “See here. Your press pass does not say ‘photo.’ It says ‘press.’”

What a predicament. I had begged for this assignment and promised to deliver one quality piece every day. With a deadline approaching, we could not get to our story.

“Now what?” I asked of no one in particular. If you work in this business, you have probably asked that question, too. Angst comes with the job, and at that moment I felt buried beneath a mountain of it. “What do we do now?”

As if to answer my question, a golf cart pulled up and stopped a few feet away. Two tournament officials climbed out. One of them carried a small, ornate piece of silver. It looked familiar—very familiar. Doug caught my nod, grabbed his camera, and began shooting as we approached.

“Excuse me,” I asked, “But isn't that…?”

“It is, indeed,” the driver boasted. “This is the lid to the U.S. Open Trophy.”

Only the lid, mind you, disembodied from its much larger cup. “Where's the rest?”

“Back in its carrying case,” said the man, who identified himself as Rand Jerris, a librarian for the United States Golf Association. “We're taking the lid in for repairs.”

“You mean the trophy is broken?”

“Of course it's not broken. We certainly have all the parts for it. We're just going for a quick fix.” Rand Jerris appeared to be enjoying his moment in front of the lens. He even let me hold the lid, which features a famous winged, female victory figure. One of those wings was missing. Then he dangled a clear plastic sandwich bag. Inside—the severed appendage. Jerris had done everything but pack it in ice.

Clearly we'd struck, if not gold, then silver. The U.S. Open trophy, the holy icon of American golf, had been maimed, cracked, ravaged, savaged, or abused. Better yet for our purposes, the USGA would be taking it to a place beyond the hoopla and the press passes. Someone in the neighborhood would be fixing it, and that could make a good story. “So who's doing the work for you?” I asked innocently.

“We're not sure, yet. There have to be some silversmiths in town,” Jerris speculated. “We'll try one of them.”

“Mind if we go along?”

Rand Jerris, the mild-mannered, bookish USGA librarian, looked at us as if we were insane. “Why would you care about that? I'll check. Wait here.”
Jerris walked into the press tent and spoke with his superior. Doug and I held back. Five minutes passed. Then ten. We became anxious. No sign. No word.

We watched as Jerris showed the lid to his boss, who looked over at us. I smiled benignly. He scowled back.

All the while, countless golf writers sauntered past. They kept their eyes glued to pairing sheets, or glanced at the scoreboard, or spoke into mobile telephones. Amazingly, none seemed to notice or care about the broken lid of the U.S. Open Trophy. How could no one else be curious?

Finally, I couldn’t take it anymore. Doug and I approached Jerris and his boss, who gave me a disdainful once-over. “We at the USGA don’t believe this would be conducive to a positive image of the Open,” his superior said dismissively. “We won’t help.”

“But how did the trophy break?”

“It just did,” he replied.

“Who broke it? And when?”

“Now, really,” he tut-tutted. “This is an internal matter.”


“Not to us,” he said icily.

The official seemed determined to act like a jerk, so I followed his lead. “Okay, but, you should know, we already have nice tight shots of the wrecked lid and that wing in the plastic bag,” I said. “We already have enough for a story. But here’s a deal. Give us a photo pass with full access to the course for the next four days, and we’ll be happy to hold this.”

“Nice try,” huffed the boss. He marched off without even saying goodbye. Maybe he thought we were bluffing—and we certainly would have kept our part of the offer—but I was partly relieved. The man had been so snootily rude that he’d turned this into a contest between us and them. Besides, the broken trophy made a richer story, and I had an idea.

Find Small Stories in the Big Ones, and Big Stories in the Small Ones

At heart, I’m just like anybody else who enjoys spinning a good yarn. As a guy who does it for a living, I must deal with the added element of competition. Every reporter feels the same pressure. To excel and win, we search constantly for novel
angles, and develop our own methods of finding them. One of my techniques is to keep an eye on other reporters and, when possible, to work in an opposite direction. Note what they’re getting, and also what they’re missing.

It’s my philosophy that in most every story, large or small, we tell the news of the day. Taken at face value, that news is often fairly forgettable. By looking deeper into those everyday stories, however, you may find something simple, approachable, or telling about the world. That’s my joy in this business—finding stories within stories. There are big stories in the small ones, and small stories in the big ones. They reveal the meaningful truths about life.

I’ll take a story like that, anytime. Viewers tend to remember and appreciate them.

Back in the press tent, Doug and I knew we had such a segment within reach, but first we would have to find the person fixing that trophy. If the United States Golf Association didn’t want to cooperate, so be it. “Let’s get the story without them,” I told Doug.

We returned to town, killed some time with a couple of coffees, and then opened the Yellow Pages. They listed only one silversmith for all of Pacific Grove. I gave Jerris about a one-hour head start and then called the number for Colonial Silver. “Hello?” answered a pleasant man with an Italian accent.

I identified myself, and realized the next line would be crucial. Uncertainty might have given us away. “Are you the man who is single-handedly saving the U.S. Open?” I asked in a congratulatory manner.

Silence.

I dropped a name. “Has Rand Jerris stopped by with the trophy yet?”

“His trophy is right here.” The man on the phone identified himself as Carmelo Tringali, and said that he owned the place.

It felt like progress, but I still had to be careful. I rambled casually by using the few facts we knew. Remember, we had held the lid and seen the broken wing. Jerris told us he was taking it for repairs. Having established some semblance of credibility, I made my pitch. “Mr. Tringali, we want to do a report about the man repairing the trophy.”

“What about the golf people?” he asked.

“The USGA knows we want to do this story.” It was an absolutely truthful statement—enough for Mr. Tringali, thankfully. He invited us over.

In person, we found Carmelo Tringali to be a gentle, soft-spoken man with black glasses, a gray beard, and a tarnish-stained apron. Doug put a microphone
on him and quickly set some lights. Mr. Tringali led us to the back of his shop, where, on a table piled with family heirlooms, he unceremoniously lifted a soiled piece of denim, revealing the damaged trophy lid.

“What did the USGA tell you?” I asked.

“They said, ‘See if you can fix this thing.’”

A thing?

Clearly, Mr. Tringali did not play golf, and knew nothing of the trophy’s hallowed tradition. “To me, this is just a piece of silver,” he said with a chuckle. “It’s just another broken lid.” He saw no difference between the U.S. Open Trophy, grandma’s tea service, Billy’s first trumpet, or any of the other golf trophies around the room. “I fixed those, too.”

What a change in fortune. Two hours earlier, we had been despondent, but the fun of working in journalism is that, on any given day, you never know what you’re going to find, where you’re going to go, or whom you’re going to meet. Every new assignment is a learning experience. While this one wasn’t typical, our pursuit of that trophy exemplifies several of the themes and survival skills in this book:

1. Never give up.
2. Recognize opportunities.
3. Be willing to change plans at a moment’s notice.
4. If you identify a main character, you can always tell a story.
5. Layer your story. Speak to viewers at several factual and emotional levels.
6. A news report does not need to change the world to be memorable. A small story can make just as big an impression.

Our trophy segment fit all of those criteria. Carmelo Tringali gave us a wonderful contrast to the USGA’s pretentious pomp. That humble, unassuming craftsman would leave his mark on a crown jewel of golf and, in a world-wide competitive journalistic environment, nobody else even knew about the story.

Back at his shop, Mr. Tringali clamped the broken wing before torching it into place. Our piece needed an ending. He still wore a microphone as I asked off-handedly, “Mr. Tringali, did you ever consider how the entire golfing world will see your work, but never know you did it, and never hear your name?”

“That’s okay. I’ll try to do a good job,” he said intently. “When do they need this thing, again? Sunday?”
Yes. Of course. Sunday. And on that day, with millions watching, a young and seemingly innocent Tiger Woods hoisted the very same U.S. Open trophy. He would follow that victory with others at the British Open, the PGA Championship, and then the Masters—four consecutive majors.

No one knew it at the time, but that U.S. Open trophy became the first of what some writers called the Grand Slam, and others, the Tiger Slam. By any measure, it made golf history.

Imagine—four major championship trophies on Tiger Woods’s mantle, and if anyone looked closely, he would have seen that one of them had a broken wing.

**Tiger’s Trophy**
**June 2000**

*See players practicing*

**AMONG THE POSSIBLE HEROES AT THIS YEAR’S U.S. OPEN, HERE’S A NAME YOU HAVEN’T HEARD—CARMELO TRINGALI.**

(SOT)
Tringali: “I’m just a lucky person, I guess.”

WE WOULD NEVER HAVE MET HIM, IF NOT FOR TWO USGA OFFICIALS WHO TOOK A RIDE IN A GOLF CART WITH A PIECE OF SILVER IN THEIR HANDS. BUT WAIT…

(SOT)
*File tape, crowd cheers as past champions hold the trophy,* shots of trophy and lid

DOESN’T THAT PIECE LOOK A LOT LIKE THIS?

COULD IT BE?

(SOT)
Rand Jerris: “Yes, that is the lid to the U.S. Open trophy.”
JUST THE LID, MIND YOU, DISEMBODIED FROM THE CUP.
AND IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY, NOTE THE WING BROKEN OFF FROM
THE VICTORY FIGURE. THE USGA WRAPPED IT IN A PLASTIC BAG,
LIKE A SEVERED LIMB.

(SOT)
Wayne: “WAIT A MINUTE. YOU’RE TELLING ME THE U.S. OPEN
TROPHY IS BROKEN?”

Jerris: “Of course it’s not broken. We certainly have all the parts
for it. We’re just going to go for a quick fix on it.”

(WAYNE STAND-UP)
AND THAT IS ALL THEY WOULD TELL US. THE MORE WE
QUESTIONED USGA OFFICIALS, THE LESS THEY SAID . . .
NOT HOW THE CUP BROKE, OR BY WHOM, OR WHEN.
“NO BIG DEAL,” THEY KEPT INSISTING. “ACCIDENTS HAPPEN.”

*Exterior, the Colonial Silver*

AND ACCIDENTS GET FIXED. BUT, IN NEARBY PACIFIC GROVE,
THE YELLOW PAGES LIST ONLY ONE SILVERSMITH.

(SOT)
Wayne to Tringali: “WHAT DID THEY TELL YOU WHEN THEY
CAME IN?”

Tringali: “They said, ‘See if you can fix this broken thing.’”

Wayne: “THING?”

Tringali: “Yeah. Thing.”

*We see historical footage of famous golfers receiving the trophy*

THIS THING, ALSO KNOWN AS THE HOLY GRAIL OF
AMERICAN GOLF. THIS THING, WHICH HAS PASSED FROM HAND TO HAND OF GOLFING LEGENDS, LIVING AND DEAD, FOR ONE-HUNDRED AND FIVE YEARS. PAYNE STEWART . . . JACK NICKLAUS . . .

(SOT)
Wayne to Tringali: “BEN HOGAN HAD THIS TROPHY.”

Tringali: “Ben Hogan? Never heard of him.”

CARMELO TRINGALI NEVER HEARD OF MOST OF THEM. UNTIL TODAY, HE NEVER EVEN KNEW THIS TROPHY EXISTED. FIXING IT SHOULDN’T BE A PROBLEM, HE SAYS.

(SOT)
Tringali: “To me it’s just another piece of silver. It’s just another lid.”

. . . NO DIFFERENT FROM GRANDMA’S TEA SERVICE, OR ANY OTHER GOLF TROPHY . . .

_File of more victorious golfers_

EXCEPT THAT THIS ONE MEANS JUST A LITTLE MORE. AND NOW CARMELO TRINGALI CAN CLAIM A PIECE OF THE CUP’S ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY. MAYBE IT’S BEST THAT HE DOESN’T KNOW.

(SOT)
Wayne to Tringali: “MR. TRINGALI, DID YOU EVER CONSIDER HOW THE ENTIRE GOLFING WORLD WILL SEE YOUR WORK, BUT NEVER KNOW YOUR NAME?”

Tringali: “I’ll try to do a good job.”

HE SAYS HE’LL HAVE IT READY BY SUNDAY.
You can read the rest of the book when you order:

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by Wayne Freedman

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