

## Tips for Interviewing

Prepare. Prepare. Prepare.

Read the clips. Nothing irritates a source more than realizing that the reporter is expecting the source to provide them with information that already has appeared in the newspaper. Do your homework before the interview.

- Write down key questions before the interview.
- It's easier for a source to hang up a telephone than slam a door in your face.
- Avoid ambush interviews.
- Don't start out by antagonizing your source.
- Start by asking easy questions and get tougher as you go.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Don't talk too much.
- Let the source fill the awkward moments.
- At the end of the interview, check your list of questions to ensure you asked them.
- Be honest. Don't mislead your source -- that can be more trouble than it's worth.

Good sources are difficult to find. When you find one, cultivate it. Ten years from now, the obscure county attorney you deal with now could be U.S. attorney -- and you'll probably still be in search of your next story.

— Dick Thien