

Names - not real

Building Your Article · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

I notice you have noted that the names you use are not real names. To an editor this means you, the writer, have failed to sweet-talk your subject into agreeing to the use of their real names. No editor is impressed by the use of made-up names, especially if he loves the story and wants to improve it with photographs of the people concerned. A skilled, motivated journalist can coax a subject into allowing the use of a real name. Important stories like this have much greater impact on readers if you use real names, real suburbs or towns, real situations. And greater impact means the situation in our community CAN get better. In other words, you have a duty to give your story as much IMPACT as possible. It can't have top impact with false names (which automatically means no photos). And, editors being perennially suspicious, wonder if the freelancer is simply making the whole thing up (it's been done!). So, I ask you to go back to your subjects and talk them into allowing the use of real names, so that through greater impact, a sorry situation in our community can be improved. By the way, you should ask by email for my article on one of the journalist's major duties: knowing how to "sweet-talk" uncooperative people into being cooperative. See the article on Sweet-talk.

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