



Our Hen House

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a place to find our way to change the world for animals



AN EMAIL FROM ELIZABETH CASTORIA, MANAGING EDITOR OF VEGNEWS MAGAZINE, TO ME (JASMIN SINGER) REGARDING A SUCCESSFUL PITCH SHE RECEIVED THAT LED TO A STORY IN VEGNEWS...

Hey lady,

I have an example that worked out really well—it's Will Potter's piece that's in the May+June issue! (Just a heads up, I checked with Will and made sure that it was ok to use this!)

So, here's what his original pitch was:

Hi Joe,

Hope you're doing well. As I'm sure you've heard, the first use of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act is moving forward. It's going to be a landmark case (arguably even more critical than the SHAC 7). The charges against the AETA 4, according to the government, stem from home protests, making fliers, and chalking slogans on the sidewalk. They are not accused of any property destruction, and they are not accused of running a national campaign that supports property destruction. It's quite ambitious for the government to make this case, and it looks like they are intent on taking it to trial.

I think this is an important story to share with Veg News readers. Unlike some of the other "eco-terrorism" cases, there is no question that this case is about First Amendment activity. I think this story really hits home how far this government campaign has strayed from what reasonable people consider "terrorism," and would be a good entry-point for the average Veg News reader into the broader "Green Scare."

I just wanted to float the idea with you, and see what you thought. I could approach it either as more of a straight news piece, or as an opinion piece, whichever you think would fit best.

PS: Any plans to be at AR in DC this year? We should carve out some time for a beer.

Best,
Will

What worked really well about this pitch:

1. It's short. Being concise is key when trying to get a pitch read. Take the time to think about exactly what you want the story to be, and convey that clearly and succinctly.
2. It's friendly. Being professional and courteous should be obvious, but you'd be surprised! Write to the editor as though you are already friendly with them (in this case, Will actually was already friendly with Joe), but maintain a level of professionalism. It's really helpful to strike a note that's not super-casual, but not so rigid that the editor will feel like you'll be difficult to work with.
3. Will is an expert in this area (and now has the book out to prove it!). Offer the editor something that few others will be able to deliver.
4. Know the outlet! Whether you're pitching a magazine, blog, or newspaper, it's crucial to understand that particular publication. For example, of course our readers will care about how the AETA affects them. As a (non-Will related) example, we're a vegan magazine, yet I receive tons of pitches for vegetarian recipes. Just that making the little extra effort to know the difference sets the freelancers who are likely to get gigs apart. On a related note, knowing the pub well enough to suggest where the story will fit (is it a travel story to a foreign country? For us that means it's a VegVacation) in the magazine will help the editor envision the finished piece, and see where it will fit best in their line up.

Let me know if you need anything else! Hope this helps!!

xo,
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Elizabeth Castoria
Managing Editor
VegNews Magazine