



HUSSMAN SCHOOL  
OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA

# **Investigative Journalism**

## **MEJO 390.1**

Stephen Stock

[smstock@email.unc.edu](mailto:smstock@email.unc.edu)

ZOOM LINK FOR CLASS EVERY MONDAY 11AM <https://unc.zoom.us/j/92893466154>

[www.stephenstock.tv](http://www.stephenstock.tv)

[stephen.m.stock@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.m.stock@gmail.com)

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### Quiz on *Writing for Story*

1. According to the author what are 3 fundamental and critical elements that make up any good story?
2. According to author Jon Franklin in his preface: "Stories are nothing. The \_\_\_\_\_ is everything."
3. According to the author Franklin, what should you be able to do with any of your stories to sum up the story? The answer also is a grammar description used to describe each element of a story (complication, development and resolution)?
4. According to the author, what is an outline statement?
5. What type of types of words/speech make up a good outline statement? Hint: List 3 of them.
6. What type of verb is critical to making a good outline statement... Or as Franklin put it..."must, absolutely and without exception must be..."
7. According to author Franklin in Chapter 4, what is one fundamentally important characteristic of a good story?



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### Quiz on *Writing for Story*

8. Once you've identified complications and resolution (conflict and tension) and action Franklin says writers can move on to another important elements in creating a good story. What is at least one?
  9. According to author Franklin "Using three words forces you to \_\_\_\_\_"
  10. If your statements don't describe action what should you do?
  11. According to Franklin, by "using three-word active statements, you should be able to form a chronological chain of actions that lead..." from what to what?
  12. Which of the short stories Franklin used as examples was your favorite?
  13. What happened to Mrs. Edna Kelly at the end of the story?
  14. What did Doctor Ducker do at the end?
  15. What happened to Old Man Wilk Peters at the end of the story?
- EXTRA CREDIT for 10 points:** What is your IRE number?

11:30am

PART B





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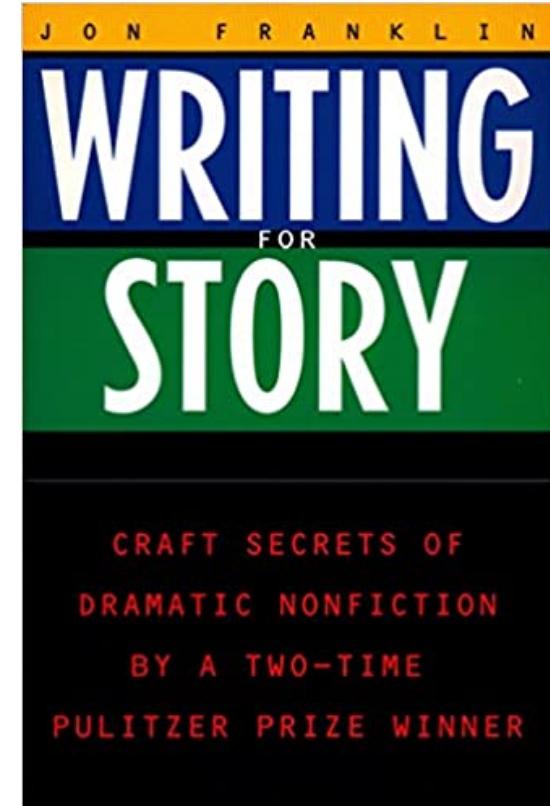
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## *Writing for Story*

- Use the 3-word exercise to focus
- What did you find the most useful?
- What was least useful?
- Did you learn anything about structuring your story?
- Are you convinced an outline is good or worth the effort?
- Name passive verbs to avoid?
- Did you just go back and read Chapter 4?





**Passive Verbs to AVOID**

***(Chapter 5)***

- ❖ is
- ❖ has
- ❖ be
- ❖ am
- ❖ are
- ❖ was
- ❖ were

- ❖ have
- ❖ has
- ❖ being
- ❖ to be
- ❖ will be
- ❖ been

- ❖ do
- ❖ does
- ❖ did
- ❖ could
- ❖ would
- ❖ should
- ❖ has been

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## The Deadly Choices at Memorial



Paolo Pellegrin/Magnum, for The New York Times

AUG. 1, 2009 Four years after Katrina, wheelchairs and equipment litter a walkway to the helipad at the former Memorial Medical Center, parts of which have not reopened. [More Photos](#)

By SHERI FINK  
Published: August 25, 2009

This article is a collaboration between ProPublica and The New York Times.  
For more information on this story visit [ProPublica](#).

Multimedia



Slide Show  
[Care During Crisis](#)

The smell of death was overpowering the moment a relief worker cracked open one of the hospital chapel's wooden doors. Inside, more than a dozen bodies lay motionless on low cots and on the ground, shrouded in white sheets. Here, a wisp of gray hair peeked out. There, a knee was flung akimbo. A pallid hand reached across a blue gown.

Within days, the grisly tableau became the focus of an investigation into what happened when the floodwaters of [Hurricane Katrina](#) marooned Memorial Medical Center in Uptown New Orleans. The hurricane knocked out power and running water and sent the temperatures inside above

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*What 3 words would you use for:*

*The Deadly Choices at Memorial*

By Sheri Fink

*The New York Times & ProPublica*

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## The Deadly Choices at Memorial



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Slide Show

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LINKEDIN COMMENTS PRINT REPRINTS SHARE

# 3 WORDS:

## The Deadly Choices at Memorial

Hospital abandons elderly  
 Hospital abandons vulnerable  
 Hospital abandons infirmed  
 Doctors kill elderly  
 Doctors kill patients  
 Doctors kill infirmed  
 Hospital fails patients  
 System fails hospital  
Storm ravages system



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# What 3 Words?

Kimberly King “American Zinc” – WLOS-TV

<https://wlos.com/news/local/dont-eat-the-fish-scientist-says-broad-river-being-poisoned-by-american-zinc>





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# What 3 Words?

Thousands of Foreign Students May Have Overstayed  
Visas Through Employment at Possible Shell Companies

<http://nbcbay.com/1sIVHEq>

12:15 pm

PART C





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# Investigative Journalism

**NOW**

IT GETS DIFFICULT



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## Good Investigative Journalism MUST

Seek Truth **NO MATTER WHAT**

Reflect Truth as best as the journalist can determine

Be ready to go wherever the facts lead (there are NO alternative facts)

Get at least two sources for every assertion of fact; preferably 3 sources (1 exception)

Question Authority; Question Everything (even your sources or “victims”)

Think Critically

Be fair

Be balanced

Seek to put into context (context over accuracy)

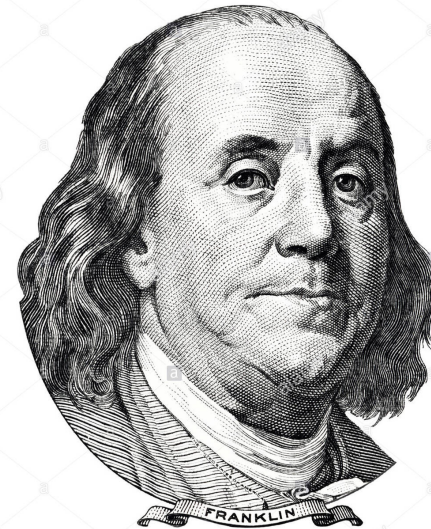
Minimize Harm



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“It is better than 100 guilty persons  
should escape than that one innocent  
person should suffer.”

--Benjamin Franklin





## HUSSMAN SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA



Former MSNBC anchor & reporter Ronan Farrow follows reporting by New York Times journalists Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey who in October 2017, break story on sexual assaults by movie mogul and big-time producer Harvey Weinstein. Farrow's stories in The New Yorker reveals interviews and details of Weinstein's assaults after years of rumors and counterattacks by Weinstein's team killed the story in other major media outlets. His and Kantor and Twohey's work kicks off #MeToo movement. Kantor and Twohey both win Pulitzer Prizes. Farrow also wins a Pulitzer Prize and George Polk Award for his work.



The New York Times

## *Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades*



Harvey Weinstein apologized for behavior that he said “has caused a lot of pain.” Jean Baptiste LaCroix/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

By Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey

A REPORTER AT LARGE OCTOBER 23, 2017 ISSUE

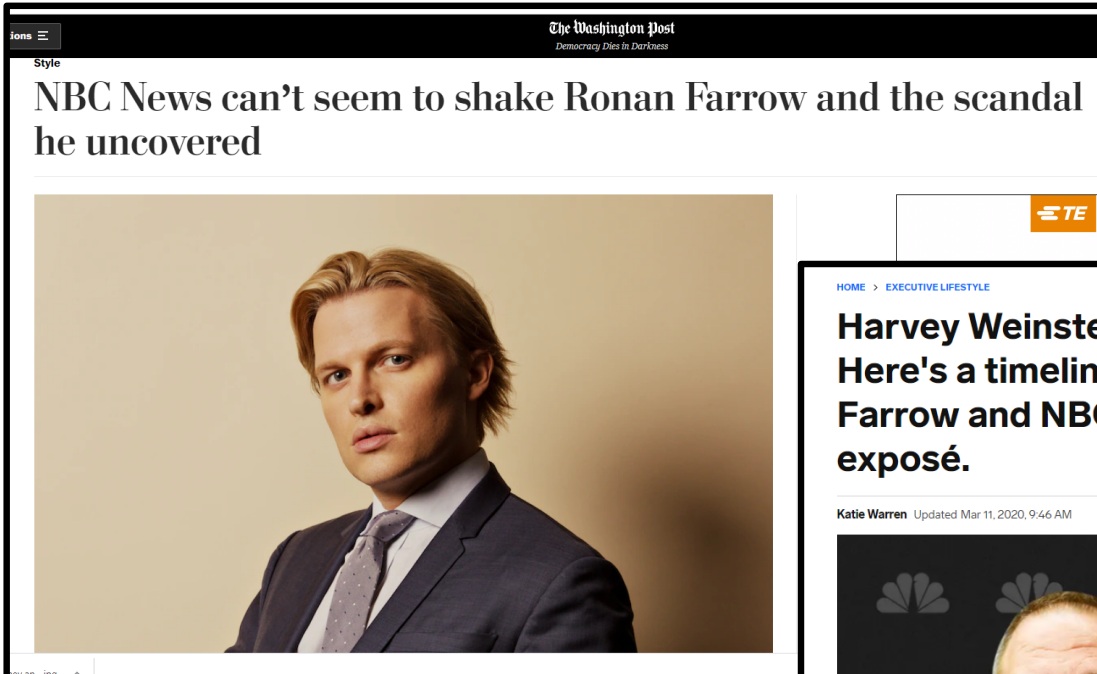
# FROM AGGRESSIVE OVERTURES TO SEXUAL ASSAULT: HARVEY WEINSTEIN'S ACCUSERS TELL THEIR STORIES

*Multiple women share harrowing accounts of sexual assault  
and harassment by the film executive.*

By Ronan Farrow  
October 10, 2017









## Los Angeles Times

BOOKS



# Ronan Farrow's critics are circling. Here's what you should know about his media war



Journalist Ronan Farrow is under fire for his reporting methods. (Peter Kramer / NBC )

BY CHRISTI CARRAS | STAFF WRITER

MAY 20, 2020 4:17 PM PT

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BOOKS

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# Objective Distance



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# Don't Abuse or Mis-Use Your POWER!!





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-Temperature Check-  
Questions?

How are we feeling?

1PM | 1:10 pm

PART D



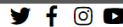
# UNC

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National  
Freedom  
Of  
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Coalition

30 YEARS

Protecting Your Right to Open Government



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North Carolina Sample FOIA Request

Search ...

### North Carolina Sample FOIA Request

[Your Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Date]

[Name of Custodian of Records]  
[Title]  
[Company Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [custodian of records]:

Under the North Carolina Public Records Law, G.S. §132-1, I am requesting an opportunity to inspect or obtain copies of public records that [Describe the records or information sought with enough detail for the public agency to respond. Be as specific as your knowledge of the available records will allow. But it is more important to describe the information you are seeking.]

#### NFOIC

NFOIC works nationally and with its state organization members to promote laws, policies and practices that ensure expeditious access to state and local public records, proceedings and officials.

#### Quick links

- Knight FOI Litigation Fund
- National Open Government Survey
- Recent news
- Organizations Map
- Join mailing list
- FOI ListServ
- Donate

#### Recent Posts

- Connecticut requires police body cameras, but bill doesn't appoint overseer
- Exemptions to records laws allow authorities to stifle talk of police reform, paper says

If you're "go"... Do you need to file a public records request?



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# WHAT IS FOIA?

**F – Freedom**  
**O -- Of**  
**I – Information**  
**A – Act**

U.S. (**Federal**) Freedom of Information Act of 2016

(Public Law No. 114-185)

## US Code 552

552. Public information; agency rules, opinions, orders, records, and proceedings

(a) Each agency shall make available to the public information as follows:

(1) Each agency shall separately state and currently publish in the Federal Register for the guidance of the public—

(A) descriptions of its central and field organization and the established places at which, the employees (and in the case of a uniformed service, the members) from whom, and the methods whereby, the public may obtain information, make submittals or requests, or obtain decisions;

(B) statements of the general course and method by which its functions are channeled and determined, including the nature and requirements of all formal and informal procedures available;

justice.gov/oip/freedom-information-act-5-usc-552

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THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, 5 U.S.C. § 552

Below is the full text of the Freedom of Information Act in a form showing all amendments to the statute made by the "FOIA Improvement Act of 2016." All newly enacted provisions in boldface type replace the strikethrough text.

Full Text of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 (Public Law No. 114-185)

§ 552. Public information; agency rules, opinions, orders, records, and proceedings

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(B) statements of the general course and method by which its functions are channeled and determined, including the nature and requirements of all formal and informal procedures available;

(C) rules of procedure, descriptions of forms available or the places at which forms may be obtained, and instructions as to the scope and contents of all papers, reports, or examinations;

(D) substantive rules of general applicability adopted as authorized by law, and statements of general policy or interpretations of general applicability formulated and adopted by the agency; and

(E) each amendment, revision, or repeal of the foregoing.

Except to the extent that a person has actual and timely notice of the terms thereof, a person may not in any manner be required to resort to, or be adversely affected by, a matter required to be published in the Federal Register and not so published. For the purpose of this paragraph, matter reasonably available to the class of persons affected thereby is deemed published in the Federal Register when incorporated by reference therein with the approval of the Director of the Federal Register.

(2) Each agency, in accordance with published rules, shall make available ~~for public inspection and copying for public inspection in an electronic format~~

(A) final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, as well as orders, made in the adjudication of cases;

(B) those statements of policy and interpretations which have been adopted by the agency and are not published in the Federal Register;

(C) administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public;

(D) ~~copies of all records, regardless of form or format, which have been released to any person under paragraph (3) and which, because of the nature of their subject matter, the agency determines have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records; and copies of all records, regardless of form or format –~~

(i) that have been released to any person under paragraph (3); and

(ii)(I) that because of the nature of their subject matter, the agency determines have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records; or

(II) that have been requested 3 or more times; and





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# FOIA

*Different Federal Agencies have their own FOIA offices/departments*

- USDA <https://efoia-pal.usda.gov/>
- US Food & Drug Admin <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/freedom-information>
- FAA <https://www.faa.gov/foia/>
- TSA <https://www.tsa.gov/foia>
- US Dept of Justice <https://www.justice.gov/oip/make-foia-request-doj>
- US Forest Service <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/foia/contact-team>
- US Dept of Transportation <https://www.transportation.gov/foia>



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## What can you ask for under FOIA?

Go to FOIA.gov <https://www.foia.gov/faq.html>

### Records

- *Only applies to the executive branch of Federal Government ie, Federal Agencies*
- *15 departments and 73 federal agencies*
- *There are certain records that are exempt and listed as such by law.*
- *Technically there are 9 exemptions 3 exclusions listed in US Federal FOIA law.*
- *FOIA does not apply to Congress, Federal Courts or the President or his advisors.*
- *FOIA law requires that agency get back to you within 20 business days*
- *Agency can ask for 10-day extension; can charge for copies and research*
- *Your FOIA success depends on attitude of Administration and Attorney General*



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## **What can't you ask for under FOIA?**

Go to FOIA.gov <https://www.foia.gov/faq.html>

Non agency

Personnel records\medical records

National security\classified

Trade secrets

Artifacts

Scientific samples

Lists of questions

Interviews of officials

Create a record



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- 30 YEARS

## Protecting Your Right to Open Government

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## Sample FOIA Request Letters

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## Sample FOIA Request Letters

Below, you'll find examples of **Federal sample FOIA request letters**.

If you wish to submit an open records request to a state, county or local government, see these examples of [state sample FOIA request letters](#), to find sample letter templates that you can use for preparing and submitting your open records request under your state's public disclosure laws.

## FOIA Letters:

- Freedom of Information Act [Request](#) Letter
- Freedom of Information Act [Appeal](#) Letter
- Freedom of Information Act [FOIA Letter Requesting a Fee Waiver](#)

### Privacy Act Letters:

- Privacy Act Request for Access Letter
- Privacy Act Denial of Access Appeal
- Privacy Act Request to Amend Records
- Privacy Act Appeal of Refusal to Amend Records

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## Quick links

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- National Open Government Survey
- Recent news
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- Join mailing list
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- Donate

## Recent Posts

- Connecticut requires police body cameras, but bill doesn't appoint overseer
- Exemptions to records laws allow authorities to stifle talk of police reform, paper says

## Freedom of Information Act Request Letter

Agency Head [or Freedom of Information Act Officer]  
Name of Agency  
Address of Agency  
City, State, Zip Code

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

I request that a copy of the following documents [or documents containing the following information] be provided to me: [identify the documents or information as specifically as possible].

In order to help to determine my status to assess fees, you should know that I am (insert a suitable description of the requester and the purpose of the request).

[Sample requester descriptions:

a representative of the news media affiliated with the \_\_\_\_\_ newspaper (magazine, television station, etc.), and this request is made as part of news gathering and not for a commercial use.

affiliated with an educational or noncommercial scientific institution, and this request is made for a scholarly or scientific purpose and not for a commercial use.

an individual seeking information for personal use and not for a commercial use.

affiliated with a private corporation and am seeking information for use in the company's business.]

[Optional] I am willing to pay fees for this request up to a maximum of \$\_\_\_\_. If you estimate that the fees will exceed this limit, please inform me first.

[Optional] I request a waiver of all fees for this request. Disclosure of the requested information to me is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in my commercial interest. [Include a specific explanation.]

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Telephone number [Optional]

# Federal FOIA Sample Request Letter

<https://www.nfoic.org/sample-foia-request-letters/#foireq>



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## NC Open Records Law

### Chapter 132 – NC General Assembly

Under the North Carolina Public Records law , **records of government are presumed to be public records unless otherwise protected.** (A list of records considered confidential is outlined in the law.)

# Public Records in North Carolina

---

## Public Records Law Overview

North Carolina's public records law provides a broad right of access to records of public agencies. The main statutes that define the scope of the law are contained in Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes (hereinafter G.S.). Many exceptions and other laws that deal with public records can be found in other chapters. The School of Government publication *Public Records Law for North Carolina Local Governments* (2nd ed., 2009), by David M. Lawrence, provides a comprehensive guide to these laws and their interpretation by the courts.

As an introduction to this topic, the following list provides a summary of some of the most important basic concepts for understanding the law.

- The law applies to records made or received in connection with the transaction of public business.
- The law applies to all types of state and local government agencies, and all types of records, including paper and electronic records, recordings, films, videos, and photographs.
- A record that falls within the scope of the statute is subject to public access unless an exception provides otherwise.
- North Carolina courts have been unwilling to recognize exceptions to the law that are not found in existing statutes.
- The statutory exceptions to the right of access fall into one of two categories: (1) confidential records, which the public agency is *prohibited* from releasing except under specified conditions, or (2) nonpublic records, to which there is no right of access but which the public agency *may* release in its discretion.
- The status of a record under the law is determined based on its content, not its location.
- Personal records (not related to the transaction of public business) are not public records, even if they are created using government resources. Records related to the transaction of public business are public, even if they are created using private resources.
- The right of access includes the right to inspect and obtain copies (although a few specific provisions limit some element of access for particular types of records<sup>1</sup>).
- Anyone can request access; the right is not limited to citizens or constituents of the agency.
- State law limits a public agency's authority to charge for providing access to records, in most cases allowing a charge only for the actual cost of the paper or other medium, if any, on which copies are provided.
- Requirements for retention of public records are governed by rules promulgated by the State Division of Archives and History, Government Records Branch. These rules apply based on the content, not the form of the record. For example, there is no general rule for retention of email. Instead, the requirements for email records will vary depending on the content of the email.



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## **NC Chapter 132 Public Records Act**

Public records include both paper and electronic documents, emails, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data-processing records, artifacts, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics.

<https://www.nccourts.gov/services/request-a-public-record/about-north-carolina-public-records-law>





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## What is NOT covered under NC 132 Public Records Act?

**Confidential communications by legal counsel to public board or agency; State tax information; public enterprise billing information; Address Confidentiality Program information.**

*Public records, as defined in G.S. 132-1, shall not include written communications (and copies thereof) to any public board, council, commission or other governmental body of the State or of any county, municipality or other political subdivision or unit of government, made within the scope of the attorney-client relationship by any attorney-at-law...*

[https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bychapter/chapter\\_132.html](https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bychapter/chapter_132.html)

You cannot ask an official or agency to “create” a record for you.

Your success depends on approach. If agency or official wants to give it to you your odds increase.

# NC Open Records Law

While personal records made on government-owned devices are not subject to general public access, they may be subject to access by the employer (the government agency). Inappropriate or excessive use of email for non-work-related purposes may violate local policies and could therefore become the basis for a personnel action. Policies governing use of government resources may provide the governmental employer (though not the general public at large) with legal access to material created by local government employees using public resources. Government access to and use of this personal information is limited by constitutionally protected privacy rights, which in turn are affected by the policies and practices in place within each specific jurisdiction.<sup>6</sup>

## Records versus Information

The theory of the public records law is that when a government maintains records for its own operational purposes, the public enjoys a general right to inspect and copy those records (subject, of course, to statutory exceptions). But in general the public has no right to demand that a government maintain records that the government has no need for itself or to demand that a government maintain records in a way that facilitates use of the records by others if that use is unimportant to the government. Courts usually express this principle through the statement that the public records law does not require a government to create new records, and the General Assembly has affirmed this point in the statute itself.<sup>7</sup>

There are several important exceptions to this general rule. The first occurs when a government for its own reasons combines in a single document information that is exempt from public access and information that is not exempt. Simply because the document includes confidential information does not make the entire document exempt from public inspection. Rather, it is the government's responsibility to delete (or redact) the confidential information and then make the remaining information public. In a sense this is creating a new record, but the law requires that it be done, and it requires that the agency bear the cost of doing so.<sup>8</sup>

The second exception involves access to personnel information. As noted below, most of the information in

nfoic.org/north-carolina-sample-foia-request/

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North Carolina Sample FOIA Request

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North Carolina Sample FOIA Request

North Carolina Sample FOIA Request

[Your Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Date]

[Name of Custodian of Records]  
[Title]  
[Company Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [custodian of records]:

Under the North Carolina Public Records Law, G.S. §132-1., I am requesting an opportunity to inspect or obtain copies of public records that [Describe the records or information sought with enough detail for the public agency to respond. Be as specific as your knowledge of the available records will allow. But it is more important to describe the information you are seeking.]

NFOIC

NFOIC works nationally and with its state organization members to promote laws, policies and practices that ensure expeditious access to state and local public records, proceedings and officials.

Quick links

- Knight FOI Litigation Fund
- National Open Government Survey
- Recent news
- Organizations Map
- Join mailing list
- FOI ListServ
- Donate

Recent Posts

- Connecticut requires police body cameras, but bill doesn't appoint overseer
- Exemptions to records laws allow authorities to stifle talk of police reform, paper says
- NFOIC's newest member to focus



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## **FOIA & NC Open Records**

National Freedom of Information Coalition-

<https://www.nfoic.org/north-carolina-foia-laws/>

NC Legislature Definitions -

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Laws/GeneralStatuteSections/Chapter132>

Also -

[https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bychapter/chapter\\_132.html](https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bychapter/chapter_132.html)

NC Dept of Administration - <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/contact/public-records>

# **FOIA & NC Open Records**

North Carolina Judicial Branch:

<https://www.nccourts.gov/services/request-a-public-record/about-north-carolina-public-records-law>

UNC School of Government:

[https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/course\\_materials/public\\_records\\_overview.pdf](https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/course_materials/public_records_overview.pdf)

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press: <https://www.rcfp.org/>

Brechner Center for Freedom of Information at University of Florida:

<https://brechner.org/>

Digital Media Law:

<https://www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/access-public-records-north-carolina>



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## FOIA & NC Open Records

Who do I send the Public Records Request to?

- ❖ **Holder of the record**
  - ✓ Police Chief
  - ✓ Public Information Officer
  - ✓ Records Custodian
  - ✓ County or City Manager
  - ✓ Public Records/FOIA Officer

Send via email AND/OR snail mail. I always like to send a copy in snail mail. ALWAYS keep a copy for yourself.



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Homework for grade!

**NEXT CLASS 5% of final grade**

**Max 50 Points**

**TWO (2) STORY PITCHES FOR  
FINAL PROJECT DUE!!!**

*If I don't get them by the end of the class, then it will be a zero. I need proof you actually filed the requests... Ie, address and any response you got back.*



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Homework

**Next Class!!!**

**Guest Lecturer**

**Stephanie Willen Brown**

**Director of Park Library**





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**Homework**

- ❖ What is my wife's last\maiden name?
- ❖ What was her title at The Daily Tar Heel?
- ❖ Bring me a copy of an article she wrote in The Daily Tar Heel. In The Charlotte Observer.
- ❖ Bring me a copy of an article I wrote on an important development in UNC Sports world. Why would it prove to be important?
- ❖ Bring me a copy of any other article I wrote for The Daily Tar Heel.



UNC

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## Homework

- ❖ How do you find information about who owns what property in Orange County?
- ❖ Get me a copy of the criminal complaint for Carlton Charles Thompson. What is he charged with? Where is his case in the Orange County court system right now?
- ❖ What is PACER? How do you use it?



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## **Homework**

- ❖ What was address of Roy Williams first house and how much did he pay for it when he first came here to be assistant coach?
- ❖ What's Roy's middle name?
- ❖ What is his wife's first and middle name?
- ❖ What life event happened enabling to buy their latest house in Chapel Hill? What's its address? When? How much did they pay for it according to property records?



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# Investigative Journalism

MEJO 390.1

**ZOOM LINK FOR CLASS EVERY MONDAY 11AM**

**<https://unc.zoom.us/j/92893466154>**

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