

5 Questions For...Reporters in Arizona Covering Nancy Guthrie's Disappearance

A possible kidnapping or abduction story like the one involving **Nancy Guthrie**, the mother of NBC News' **Savannah Guthrie**, is always difficult to cover. But for TV journalists reporting on this story, it hits closer to home, as the victim is a colleague, albeit a prominent figure beloved by many.

As Nancy Guthrie's disappearance approaches the two-week mark, the circumstances that led to the kidnapping, the gradual revelation of credible leads, the ransom notes sent to various media outlets, and the Guthrie family using social media to plead for their mother's return add to the complexity of this story, which has also captivated the nation.

For our latest edition of 5 Questions For..., TVNewser reached out to two TV reporters on the ground in Pima County, Arizona, CNN's **Ed Lavandera** and NewsNation's **Brian Entin**, to get their perspectives on covering a story with an almost personal connection.

1. How long have you been in the Tucson area?

Lavandera: Our CNN team arrived in Tucson the day the news of Nancy Guthrie's abduction first broke. We have been reporting on the story every day since, so we're almost two weeks into this heartbreaking story.

Entin: I arrived in Tucson on Monday, February 2.

2. How does it feel covering this type of story, considering it directly affects a fellow TV journalist?

Lavandera: Like any tragic story, I never lose sight of the pain and fear the families at the center of the story are enduring. But this is different in the sense that we work in a small community of journalists who have direct connections to the Guthrie family. I have never met Savannah, but so many of my network news colleagues have known her a long time, and everyone, and I mean everyone, says she's the kindest person they've ever known. I can't even fathom what she's going through, but I suspect she would want us to report this story, as we would any story like this, with respect and always remembering that the fate of an 84-year-old mother is what matters here. And we want nothing more than to see Nancy brought back to her family.

Entin: It's heartbreaking to think about what Savannah and her family are going through. Several times a day, I can't help but think what this would be like if it were my mom. We all feel terrible for what she is going through.

3. What is the mood like on the ground among fellow journalists?

Lavandera: I sense a great deal of empathy for Savannah and her family. It's hard to wrap our minds around the fact that a fellow journalist has been thrust into this kind of nightmare. There are so many unanswered questions, but I think we also hope that our reporting and digging into what's happening will help end this ordeal.

Entin: Many of the reporters covering the story outside Nancy Guthrie's house know Savannah. The story is personal for them. There is now media from all over the world here. Sitting in my car outside Nancy's house right now, I can hear several live shots in different languages.

4. What is the one thing you can share from being on the ground in Tucson that has not been reported?

Lavandera: Someone put a sign next to Nancy Guthrie's mailbox very early, which says, "Dear Guthrie family, your neighbors stand with you." Since then, people have left flowers and candles. We have spent a great deal of time getting to know neighbors and residents in the area where Nancy Guthrie lives, and I've been struck by their kindness and patience. I get it, investigators and journalists swarming your neighborhood is stressful and can feel like an onslaught, but most of the people I've talked to believe news coverage is critical to finding Nancy Guthrie.

Entin: Even those of us who have covered major crime stories for years feel this case is different. There have been so many twists and turns each day—and there still seems to be no consensus about what happened to Nancy.

5. Why do you think this story has managed to capture the nation's attention?

Lavandera: I think there are a few factors to explain the intensity of this story. First, this is the stuff of nightmares. The video of a masked man, with a firearm, breaking into your mother's home and abducted in the middle of the night is as haunting as it gets. We all feel a connection to Nancy Guthrie and question why someone would put such a loving, charming woman through this torture. And of course, the fact that millions of Americans start their day by watching Savannah Guthrie and her Today show colleagues gives so many people a connection to this moment. I pray that Savannah and those around her find the peace and strength needed to get through this moment.

Entin: I think the story is capturing the nation's attention for two reasons. Of course, part of it is because this is Savannah Guthrie's mom. But for many people with aging parents, a situation like this is the worst imaginable nightmare. And the fact that it is still unsolved almost two weeks later has the nation on the edge of its seat.

Coincidentally, both Lavandera and Entin have specials this weekend on their respective networks, focusing on the search for Nancy Guthrie. Lavandera reports in What Happened to Nancy Guthrie? for The Whole Story with Anderson Cooper, premiering on Sunday at 8 p.m. ET on CNN. Meanwhile, Entin will be anchoring a NewsNation special on Saturday at 8 pm ET titled Missing: The Nancy Guthrie Mystery.

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