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## The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Soames Forsyte 2 - 05-04-2008 20:32

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This man from Whitley Bay seems to have rather more in common with wingco's spoof-scouser than with the admirably "glass-half-full" Tommy Sunderland.

So the airline's mistake was corrected "ten seconds later" - by his own frigging account - yet a complimentary plane ticket to Australia with no free cash bonus is apparently some kind of insult. If I were the Emirates, I'd renegotiate the stadium naming deal with Arsenal so that the Arse had to call one of their stands "The Chris Miller is a spongeing Jerry Springer audience level twat Stand".

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by dances with sheep - 06-04-2008 09:36

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To be fair, they were surely the worst 10 seconds of his life.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 06-04-2008 10:16

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In his position, I don't know that I'd want compensation, but I'd be fucking incandescent.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Soames Forsyte 2 - 06-04-2008 10:32

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Well, yes, I expect they were the worst 10 seconds of his life, but I don't think I'd be "incandescent". Badly shaken up and upset, for sure, but massively relieved, and pleased that they'd acknowledged the appalling nature of the error with a free ticket to Australia.

It's an inadvertent cock-up by one fuckwit employee, obviously corrected as quickly as possible ("ten seconds"), not some demonstration of insitutional callousness. Most large organisations employing thousands of people will probably have at least one junior bod capable of similar fuckwittery.

To even be thinking "cash cash cash" in response to those ten seconds of mental anguish, you need to be the kind of person with a very peculiar outlook on life which is probably rather more common in Britain than elsewhere in the world.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Pan Tau - 06-04-2008 11:58

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Soames is quite right. It's not like the airline was malicious in its error, or in the follow-up to it. I'd have asked them if that freebie ticket, and the return for the whole family, is first class, though.

I can imagine that these 10 seconds might have the worst of his life. But his whole world collapsed in the space of ten seconds because he had learnt that an unspecified family member had died. Clock it: in these ten seconds, the first three will have been spent absorbing the information, another three or four thinking which family member it was, with another two seconds used by common sense telling him that there might be an error because no name was mentioned. The remaining two seconds he would have been busy trying to consolidate these thoughts...and then the phone rang. I think a free ticket to Australia is adequate compensation.

When I've had news like this, I've spent at least a minute in disbelief before I would enter the various stages of torment.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 06-04-2008 12:04

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The ticket was to India to see the family ... not a freebie trip for all to Australia. To be fair I'd be fucking bouncing with rage - ten seconds or not.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by DohDohDoh - 01-05-2008 17:56

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Blimey, never thought I would be a topic of conversation in WSC!

Please think about this before you comment on any story published on a newspaper/tv media site:

Firstly can I start by saying that yes I am the person at the centre of the story. We had a perfect right to ask the airline for compensation based on the whole experience which you can see below. You should realise that going to the media will of course have ended any outside chance we had to get any compensation from the airline so we only went to the media because the attitude of Emirates was so appalling that we wanted to publicise how truly bad they were as a warning to other families.

We could only tell the full story to journalists, we cannot control how they present it and clearly they are putting their own spin on it. That is how the media works. The media like a straightforward story but this was not a straightforward story. Consequently they cherry picked the story we went to them with and presented two parts - one part about the phone call and one part that we had been offered no compensation. The rest of the story was ignored or referred to without detail to produce a clearer story. What you may have read is therefore not the full story and you cannot fully comprehend what happened without understanding the whole picture.

Emirates is a big multi national company that clearly thinks they can just do whatever it wants to its paying customers. We are an ordinary family that was thrust into exceptional events 1000's of miles from our home. We merely want people to be aware of what they did. We have no solicitor acting on our behalf, we are dealing with all the media ourselves in an attempt to show how any family could be treated by their incompetent staff. We have both travelled all over the world and used numerous airlines, we have never had cause to make a single complaint in all our years of travel. This was our first Emirates experience.

Just getting the story out to embarrass the airline is the start of us getting closure on all this.

The full facts are as follows:

On arrival at Mumbai after a passenger became ill the airline removed my family from the flight as my son had developed a rash during the flight. They then put the safety of my partner and two young children at risk by driving them around Mumbai in a dangerous, old taxi without seat belts or doors that closed properly in the full sweltering heat of the day with no air conditioning. After 5 hours of suffering with these unacceptable conditions my Daughter also became ill (later that day it was diagnosed as a viral infection). If your child contracts chicken pox you might get a local GP to confirm it but instead of calling a doctor to look at him in the airport they took my partner and two young children (and of course very young children don't have fully developed immune systems and are always prone to picking up bugs), none of whom had any inoculations/anti-malarial protection across Mumbai to two municipal third world hospitals, exposing them to all kinds of potential diseases. The airline attempted to get our children admitted into a filthy third world hospital for 5 days as an adequate response to their condition (which we refused to agree to). They then had another two hours in a dangerous vehicle until they got into a hotel. As a consequence this caused both my young children to get additional severe respiratory infections which meant they were not well enough to return home even after my son had been cleared to do so over the chicken pox, and requiring both to have antibiotic treatments before they could fly.

I am sure you can appreciate how stressful it was for my partner to be on her own with two young children unexpectedly thrown into India and then come against bullying tactics which meant she was forced to travel across the city with strangers who she did not trust.

Yes, they called me up from India to tell me that one of my family was dead, in error. Instead of explaining that there had been a mistake they just put the phone down on me. 10 seconds or 10 minutes, 10 days does the time make any difference? If you are a parent believe me it makes no difference. Of course I was relieved to find out that they were alive. Emirates called me back but never explained to me about the first call or apologised. They called again I believe to see if they had made a mistake but certainly not to explain it, I had to work that out myself - they have never provided an

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explanation to this day. And they did not even say sorry at that point. I finally received an apology from UK staff after 4PM, 9 hours after the original call.

Yes they did fly me out (to India, not Australia, not that that is relevant) BUT THIS WAS NOT COMPENSATION. Had I fancied a week stuck in Mumbai for a holiday maybe it could be considered compensation. My insurance company had agreed immediately to fly me out to help get my family home. Emirates also offered to do so but this gesture of course does not compensate us in any way - it merely enabled me to fix all the problems that they had created and get my family home.

Staff blatantly lied, were uncooperative, were unhelpful, failed to call me back when they said they would, provided no method of actually getting to speak to a senior member of staff to deal with the case and unbelievably initially told me that in what was an immediate emergency situation they hoped to get back to me with a response possibly within eight days - providing I put everything in writing by email to them.

Local staff in Mumbai stuffed up my families emergency visa status meaning we had to drag our children across Mumbai (a two hour journey each way) to spend a day in a government office to pay a £50 "fine" for them overstaying their emergency visas (because the kids had been made ill by Emirates actions they were unfit to fly for a further 5 days).

On the return flight home things directly in the control of the airline went from one problem to the next. They provided no food for our children for the whole day when they flew back to the UK, a flight which lasted 12 hours. The incompetent airline staff failed to re-book the original food we requested and paid for our children on the flights back from Mumbai. It was little surprise that both children arrived back in the UK totally stressed and in my daughters case physically ill once again. They then expected my three year old daughter to sit by herself on the flight from Dubai to Newcastle, putting us through the stress of having to argue and refusing to board the flight until the staff reluctantly sorted the problem out (after they once again lied to us, saying that the flight was full yet there were plenty of empty seats when we boarded) right upto the plane almost leaving. After all that had happened as a final insult the airline left our luggage behind in Dubai, so we had to wait an hour and a half in Newcastle Airport with two stressed kids only to find out our bags were not on the plane. The bags eventually arrived the next day, finally at our door after 5PM.

In addition Emirates cabin Staff subjected my partner to abuse. Cabin staff vindictively harassed my partner and called her a bad mother as they mistakenly believed she had requested an upgrade to First Class for herself while flying to Australia in the first place!

When we got back to the UK I wrote to Emirates with a chronicle of all the events and appalling experiences they were responsible for. We pointed out that I had lost 8 days of work and we personally paid out over £900 in costs to keep my family in Mumbai and get them home - the delay in returning was after all the result of their local staff. We additionally asked for compensation for the stress, ill-health etc which all the family experienced. I can assure you there was no specific mention of the phone call in this request. The experiences of my partner and children in India were a lot worse. Our request for recompense was based on the whole of our experience on this journey, not one phone call.

The airline wrote back and apologised for any inconvenience caused but refused us any compensation for anything which had happened. The airline has suggested that the medical treatment provided when they were disembarked was more than adequate for the circumstances and in the context of cultural differences between India and the UK. How can dangerous transport and exposure to third world conditions be in any way adequate or acceptable? We had full medical cover via insurance but the airline insisted on taking them - against their will and on the basis of lies from the local staff - and ended up having to sign waivers when we refused any further medical treatment in a filthy municipal hospital and requested a doctor attend once they had been housed in a quality safe local hotel.

Emirates website boasts how wonderful the experience of flying with young children will be from "booking to disembarking". I certainly would not trust the care of my family in the hands of this airline ever again. I would also warn any other family to be extremely wary about booking a flight through Emirates based on what happened to us and how we saw other families were treated on their flights. As experienced travellers we were shocked by the utterly unbelievable series of events and the staggering incompetence. We put our family's lives in these people's hands when you fly and I would just not trust Emirates again.

Airlines are a law unto themselves, they can treat people how they like with very little recourse if things go wrong. I don't think we were being at all unreasonable to expect that Emirates would compensate us accordingly for what was an extraordinary set of blunders. Instead Emirates dismissed us and the refusal to offer even a penny of compensation is an insult as it shows that they clearly don't value customers and don't consider our experience acceptable. Some gesture of compensation would have represented closure for the whole episode, offering nothing has left us angry and we were left with no option but to try and get back at the airline with the one thing left to us - bad publicity via the media.

Perhaps none of you will understand what really went on in my head that night, nor in the weeks afterwards but the feelings I have expressed in the media were totally genuine, open and honest. I actually fully told my partner what really

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happened that night only a few days ago. I still feel anger at the fact my family were put in danger and that as a consequence my children were made ill by the airlines actions. Of course I have the utmost sympathy for the devastated family of the guy who actually died; it will have been utterly devastating. No dispute.

I repeat, the media will simplify stories, the Radio 5 interview was also subject to edit and the questioning was pointed to only one aspect of the whole story I was trying to tell.

Please don't jump to conclusions unless you have the facts.

If you still think we are unreasonable then that is your opinion, I won't agree with you. I just hope none of you ever have to experience your family being put through anything like this.

If you read this and think your comments are inappropriate in the light of the facts then please free to publish a retraction.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotye

Posted by DohDohDoh - 01-05-2008 17:58

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oh, and I don't like being associated with the Mackems in any way!

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotye

Posted by Pan Tau - 01-05-2008 19:49

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Bloody hell, that does sound like an ordeal. To begin with, the editors who ignored all the real meat of the story don't seem very bright (or they were warned that running everything DohDohDoh said might be contested by Emirates).

But, yes, the background DohDohDoh has provided, puts a completely different spin on things. While the references to "third world conditions" had my hackles raised a bit, I must also agree that there are hospitals in my part of the third world where I wouldn't prefer to be treated. Certainly there is no good reason why Emirates shouldn't have called a doctor to the airport.

Most damning for the entire aviation industry, there is nothing in DohDohDoh's account that had me think: "Oh come, this seems unlikely." I've experienced astonishingly good service by airlines as well as criminal dishonesty.

One a different note, DohDohDoh, what people discuss or say on this forum does not have WSC's implicit endorsement. This is a message board where all kinds of conflicting opinions are being expressed, as they were on this thread (based on information at hand). So inviting a printed retraction seems inappropriate. For my part, I'm grateful you took the time to fill us in on your experience, and sympathise with the stress and anger you are feeling.

Fuck airlines.

Oh, and are you going stick around on this forum?

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotye

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-05-2008 23:23

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What he said.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotye

Posted by DohDohDoh - 02-05-2008 14:20

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Pan Tau & Wyatt Earp - thank you for your comments.

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Pan Tau my references to "third world conditions" - please note I am fully aware that there are some fantastic private hospitals in Mumbai and elsewhere in India. Unfortunately my children were not taken there by the airline. And there are some really excellent doctors - including the one who came to see the children when they finally got to a hotel. In fact he was so good we employed him privately to see them when they both got the secondary infections. He was wonderful. So it is not meant as a slight at all but merely demonstrates how bad the airline was.

Regarding my comment about "printed retraction" this relates to some of the less than complementary comments which were published above – and as such I absolve both of you as your comments were actually pretty balanced despite not having all the facts. However, those making comments which were offensive (although I have to say that although being thought of as a “spongeing Jerry Springer audience level twat” is not very nice, I really object to being thought of and called a Mackem!) should as least post a response, hold their hands up, admit that they made the wrong assumption and withdraw the comments.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 02-05-2008 14:33

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We'll, we're in a position to reassure you on the Mackem front, anyway. "Tommy Sunderland" is a character, invented by a regular poster, who supports NUFC. (How his surname gets him into scrapes!)

The other thing is for the people concerned, I guess. Newspapers do talk shit though, and your post is a timely reminder of that.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by EIM - 02-05-2008 14:37

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I love it when stuff like this happens.

Erm, not the story, but someone from the story popping up on the board.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by WornOldMotorbike - 02-05-2008 14:48

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This is clearly an unfortunate series of events, and my best thoughts go out to you and your family. I'm a father of two, and I'd also have been a wreck after what you've been through.

However (big pause, like) the comments you've taken exception with were made based on the information provided in the original linked story. The authors may, indeed, not have had all the facts - but that was clearly not their fault. Therefor, admitting that they made a wrong assumption would be incorrect. Whether they want to withdraw their comments - in light of the new information - is a different matter.

Moreover, this is a fairly informal board where news and current-events stories are routinely posted and commented upon. I find it difficult to expect most reasonable people in such a forum to hold up their hands and say "Wait, wait, we might not have all the facts here. We shouldn't comment." Rather, if one reads a tale where (quite unfortunately) you've come off saying "Oi, I demand compo for me misery", the subject is likely to endure a bit of a shit-kicking. Unfortunate, but hardly incomprehensible.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by JtS - 02-05-2008 14:48

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I reckon there's some gooner involvement in this.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by DohDohDoh - 02-05-2008 15:13

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Wyatt Earp wrote:

We'll, we're in a position to reassure you on the Mackem front, anyway. "Tommy Sunderland" is a character, invented by a regular poster, who supports NUFC. (How his surname gets him into scrapes!)

The other thing is for the people concerned, I guess. Newspapers do talk shit though, and your post is a timely reminder of that.

OK, I retract my outrage at being tarnished with the mackem brush, I misunderstood the full facts....

Reminds me of a member of the NUFC Yorkshire supporters club who was arrested by the Police in the late 70's during the height of the Yorkshire Ripper case, which was going pear-shaped with the Wearside Jack diversion. He was living in Leeds and was lifted one morning and subjected to some rather forceful police interrogation.

Finally he cracked and told them "look, I am perfectly happy to be accused of being a mass murderer, but I find it offensive that you think I am a Mackem". Needless to say I don't think the Police appreciated the irony!

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by dogbeak - 02-05-2008 19:46

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my dad got questioned about the sutcliffe business; not the time to be a geordie living in sheffield it would seem.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by 1890 - 02-05-2008 20:18

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Well, I'll be the devil's advocate and point out that we still do not have a full picture of the story, comments by the airline staff involved in this story might be interesting to read. The media are really good at spinning the facts to suit them but truth to be told, we tend to spin facts to suit ourselves as well when relating a conflict we are having with someone else.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by DohDohDoh - 02-05-2008 22:33

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1890 wrote:

Well, I'll be the devil's advocate and point out that we still do not have a full picture of the story, comments by the airline staff involved in this story might be interesting to read. The media are really good at spinning the facts to suit them but truth to be told, we tend to spin facts to suit ourselves as well when relating a conflict we are having with someone else. Whether you believe me or not Emirates have never denied any of this. They investigated all of this and I have a written response from Emirates to everything we put to them where they admit all the things which I have said (although they claim the medical treatment/journey on arrival was adequate on the basis of "cultural differences" with the UK etc which I believe reflects how seriously wrong they were, legally I think they were advised to say it was all ok), and say sorry - and this even includes an investigation into what happened on the flight out to Australia, where they admit it was unacceptable behaviour by their cabin staff. So they have admitted guilt on every complaint we made.

The initial press release (if you google the story you will find it on the Journal website) when the story broke states "If our standards of service fell below our usual standards during this difficult time we can only once again apologise." Not exactly refuting our story. There has never been any denial from the airline over what we have said as we have been completely honest and open about the whole thing right from the start. We also have two witnesses to what happened on the flight back who would be willing to confirm any facts on that part of the journey.

Honestly I have never come across a more incompetent bunch of collective utter idiots and that is saying something.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Lord Mauleverer - 04-05-2008 16:54

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Well, that's a lesson learnt by me as regards taking news stories at face value and commenting on the basis of that.

DohDohDoh, I apologise unreservedly for my comments above in the light of the fuller version of events which you've shared with us. (Just spotted that, as I don't visit this forum very often these days.) As you have pointed out, the BBC website's account of events appears to be a totally misleading selective account which implies that your compensation request related solely to the distress caused by a mistaken phone call, corrected 10 seconds later. Needless to say, I wouldn't have dreamed of making that kind of comment if I'd had the full story or anything like it. It can't have been very pleasant reading my comments, so I'm very sorry for that. You have my sympathy with regard to what sounds like appalling behaviour by the airline.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Otto Katz - 05-05-2008 07:41

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DohDohDoh wrote:

Honestly I have never come accross a more incompetent bunch of collective utter idiots and that is saying something.

Well nobody's going to accuse you of being a Mackem anymore. I guess that's something.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by DohDohDoh - 05-05-2008 07:48

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Otto Katz wrote:

DohDohDoh wrote:

Honestly I have never come accross a more incompetent bunch of collective utter idiots and that is saying something.

Well nobody's going to accuse you of being a Mackem anymore. I guess that's something.

LOL, hopefully not!

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by DohDohDoh - 05-05-2008 07:56

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Lord Mauleverer wrote:

Well, that's a lesson learnt by me as regards taking news stories at face value and commenting on the basis of that.

DohDohDoh, I apologise unreservedly for my comments above in the light of the fuller version of events which you've shared with us. (Just spotted that, as I don't visit this forum very often these days.) As you have pointed out, the BBC website's account of events appears to be a totally misleading selective account which implies that your compensation request related solely to the distress caused by a mistaken phone call, corrected 10 seconds later. Needless to say, I wouldn't have dreamed of making that kind of comment if I'd had the full story or anything like it. It can't have been very pleasant reading my comments, so I'm very sorry for that. You have my sympathy with regard to what sounds like appalling behaviour by the airline. Thanks, you were not the only one to jump to conclusions.

I always kind of knew how the media worked but this experience confirmed everything about how bad they really are. I have personally seen this before.

As an aside by chance I came accross this story: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1530572.ece>

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If you read the story and then scroll down the comments you will see that the person in the story posts a reply and explains that what is in the published story is not what he said. I suspect this kind of thing happens all the time.

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## Re:The wrong regional stereotype

Posted by Pan Tau - 05-05-2008 08:20

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As a journalist, I'm wary of blanket criticism of my industry. As in any profession, there are slackarsed incompetents, cynical manipulators and meticulous writers who sometimes don't get things right.

It seems that whoever interviewed you fell within one of the former or a combination of both camps. It's not how the media works, but it is what often happens. I'd be offended if somebody presumed on the basis of my job title that my ethics coincide with that of a tabloid sensation seeker, just as the human rights lawyer would not like to be associated with an ambulance chaser.

Anyway, DohDohDoh, I think you've responded here with very good grace. Stick around.

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