

December 1987

TO: Executive Addressed  
FR: James E. Lukaszewski, APR, Fellow PRSA Chairman  
RE: How Not to Go "Off-the-Record"

This October 4, 1987 story from the *The New York Times* illustrates that even the most proficient interviewee can sometimes be trapped by not paying attention to the rules of the game.

Read the last paragraph of this article first.

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## RUMORS ON FAMILY ASSAILED BY CUOMO

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### Governor Rejects Notion That He Shunned Presidential Bid Over a Misdeed

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By E. J. DIONNE Jr.  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 — Governor Cuomo of New York said today that rumors were being spread that he was not running for President because of past misdeeds by his family, including his wife's parents.

Mr. Cuomo, in a telephone conversation he initiated, emphatically denied any wrongdoing in his family's past. He declined to elaborate on the rumors themselves, saying he did not want to give them currency.

Mr. Cuomo reiterated that he was not running for President. But he said that "if anything could change" his mind about the race, it would be the

notion that he was not running because of past actions of his family.

"It would be the thought that they were using that Italian-American stereotype and that my not running was feeding it," he said. "That's one thing that would make me go out of my mind."

Mr. Cuomo said the rumors he had heard seemed to focus on his wife's family. "I keep hearing in-laws," he said. "Why would anybody say in-laws?" The Governor was apparently referring to gossip that an investigation could turn up something embarrassing. No such information has been published.

Asked if there was anything to the rumors, he replied, "Of course not."

My family would not only not be an impediment to my running, it would probably be my biggest asset," Mr. Cuomo said.

#### Question in Interview

Mr. Cuomo initiated the phone conversation with The New York Times, saying he wanted to know about the spread of rumors about his family after he was interviewed Friday by Leslie Stahl for the CBS program, "Face

the Nation." Portions of the interview will be broadcast Sunday. Mr. Cuomo said Ms. Stahl has asked him if anything in his own or his family's past were keeping him from the Presidential contest.

"I'm starting to think it's organized," he said of the rumors.

Mr. Cuomo said that if there had been anything damaging in his family's past, it would surely have emerged in the rough-and-tumble of New York politics.

"You can't run for office and win in New York, you can't live in New York politically without being analyzed and scrutinized," Mr. Cuomo said.

Mr. Cuomo said that he initiated the phone call not to spread the story, but to find out to what extent reporters were hearing such rumors.

**He said at the end of the conversation that he had intended for his remarks to be off the record and asked that an article not be written about them. But Mr. Cuomo agreed that he had not formally indicated that the conversation was off the record and that he regretted not doing so.**

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