



7 Alternative Leads

Exercise 1: Alternative Leads

Evaluating Alternative Leads

Critically evaluate the following leads, each of which uses one of the alternative forms discussed in this chapter. Select the best leads and explain why they succeed. Point out the flaws in the remaining leads. As you evaluate the leads, look for lessons—dos and don'ts—that you can apply to your own work.

1. Are you ready for a big change?
2. “I saw the train coming at us, and I knew it would never get stopped.”
3. No shirt! No shoes! No service!

Unfortunately, the 350-pound black bear that wandered into the city limits and pried open a window to break into the Oakhill Restaurant couldn't read. The bear was captured by wildlife officers after it had ransacked the restaurant's kitchen and helped itself to a variety of treats.

4. Amy Clauch sat beside the rough-hewn pine fence, her fingers rubbing the worn knuckles of the knots in the rope she held in her hand.

The sweet scent of clover hay wafted on the light breeze that blew through the barn. She sucked in a deep breath and held it. The scent lingered. She wished it always would.

The sun hung in the early morning cobalt blue sky like a spotlight in a theatre, illuminating her, the actor on this stage. This is where she wanted to be—free from the confines of the four pale beige walls that surrounded her in clinical sterility for months. She tugged at her jeans. Her lips pursed. “You can do this,” she whispered in prayer to herself. Clauch rocked the wheelchair to the left and reached for the stirrup hanging limply from the saddle. Pulling herself upright, she grimaced as she felt the braces tighten on her legs. The muscles in her arms clenched as she

pulled herself into the saddle. The chestnut mare flinched at the load, and Clauch grabbed the worn leather saddle horn to steady herself. Her smile stretched her cheeks to their limit. She was back where she belonged. It had been eight months since a riding accident left Clauch temporarily paralyzed from the waist down.

5. Too much work. Too many demands. Too many responsibilities. Not enough time.
Stress is killing Canadians, the Canadian Medical Association said in a report released Monday.
6. Should high school students have to take a competency test before receiving their diplomas?
7. The province's motorcycle riders won the right today to have the wind in their hair and bugs in their teeth. The provincial legislature passed a bill eliminating the province's helmet requirements for riders 18 and older.
8. How much would you pay for, say, a triple heart bypass? Or gall bladder surgery? As government officials struggle to rein in health care costs without sacrificing the quality of care, they find themselves confronted with the question of who should pay how much.
9. "If we can't solve the budget crisis today, the students of tomorrow will suffer the consequences," school superintendent Gary Hubbard said about the government's failure to pass a budget before the start of the school year.
10. Sajeel Goh pushes the blond hair away from his blue eyes, exposing the dusting of freckles on his forehead.

The 12-year-old sits in a chair that is a bit too adult for his small frame, his feet, clad in gleaming white athletic shoes, dangling several inches above the floor.

There is an air of innocence surrounding the boy that will make it hard for any jury to believe that he could have set the fire that killed his parents and baby sister. But that is what prosecutors will attempt to do as Goh's murder trial gets underway today.

Exercise 2: Alternative Leads

Writing Alternative Leads

Using techniques you studied in this chapter, write an alternative lead for each of the following stories. You may want to use complete or partial quotations, questions, descriptions, delayed leads, multi-paragraph leads, suspense, or chronological order. Or you may want to try a shocking lead, ironic lead, direct-address lead, or a word used in an unusual way. Correct any errors you find.

1. A group of ecologists and biologists at your university and other schools have come up with a unique idea. They want to transplant African wildlife to the Great Plains of North America. Julie Allen, of Lincoln Drive, is an associate professor of biology at your university. She had this to say about the idea, "I think it would be wonderful to drive across the Great Plains and see lions and elephants and giraffes roaming the prairie." The idea was developed by more than 30 scientists as a way to perpetuate species that are slowly facing extinction because of declining

habitat in Africa. The scientists say there is plenty of room left in the American West for these types of animals. Relocating the animals could help them increase their numbers. The plan is being criticized by ranchers, developers, and other scientists, who say that it would be difficult to introduce animals to a place they had never lived. Ranchers, such as Jim Smithson, who lives in North Dakota and is vice-president of the Western Stockman's Association, claims such a move would devastate the regions cattle industry. "How many steers or dairy cows can a pride of lions eat in a week?" Smithson said. Supporters of the idea say the animals they want to relocate would be held in large game parks or private reserves. They would not be allowed to roam free. Other critics say the transplanting of alien creatures could have devastating effects on native creatures. The animals being brought to places they have never lived could introduce new diseases or could destroy native wildlife. In addition, taking wildlife from Africa could hurt the tourist trade on that continent.

2. It was an intense situation for police Wednesday afternoon. It was an adventure for the six-month-old daughter of Michael and Ethel Perakiss of Collins Street. Everything ended OK, police said. Megan Perakiss, the daughter of Michael and Ethel, was in the back seat of a 2006 Ford Explorer sport utility vehicle when it was carjacked by a man who had just held up the convenience store where Ethel had stopped to get gas. The robbery of the Quik Shoppe convenience store where Ethel had stopped to get gas. The robbery of the Quik Shoppe convenience store on Michigan Avenue occurred shortly after 2 p.m., according to Police Chief Shelagh Zhan. Zhan said the suspect walked into the store and waved a handgun in the face of Edwin C. Jimenez, manager of the store. He ordered Jimenez to empty the cash register into a cloth bag he threw on the counter and threatened to shoot him if he did not. The thief made off with an undetermined amount of money. Megan was unaware of what was going on. Police said Ethel pulled into the convenience store to get fuel and had just finished pumping the gas when the robber ran from the store and pushed her away from the vehicle. Reports of the carjacking sparked a massive, multi-agency search for Megan that at one point included nearly two dozen units from the city's police force. Ethel Perakiss left her keys in the ignition while she was filling the fuel tank. Police described the armed robbery and carjacking suspect as a 6 foot 1 inch tall white male in his early to mid- 20s wearing a white T-shirt and long black pants. He had short, neatly cropped hair. "My baby's in the back seat," Perakiss shouted as the carjacker drove away. About 40 minutes after the ordeal began, Zhan said, police officers spotted the missing vehicle abandoned in the parking lot of a Chinese restaurant with Megan inside. The carjacker apparently had fled, leaving the vehicle unlocked and running with the air conditioner on. Police said they were shocked but pleased that the incident ended so quickly and without harm to the child.

Exercise 3: Writing Alternative Leads

Pro Challenge

Write an alternative lead for each of the following stories, correcting any errors.

1. Patricia Richards, 23, of Tusca Trail, got married Saturday. It was a lovely ceremony. Her new husband is Grady Smith, 22, of Peach Street. Richards was arrested Saturday night and charged with disturbing the peace, criminal mischief, simple assault, and resisting arrest. Police

handcuffed Richards and put her in jail. She was released Sunday and left for her honeymoon on Monday after posting a \$25,000 bond. Richards said it was all a misunderstanding. The reception was held at the Downtown Club at the intersection of Washington and Virginia avenues. More than 200 guests had been invited to the reception. When the reception dinner was served, it was discovered that the wrong meal had been prepared. Instead of having prime rib au jus and salmon almondine as entries, the reception party was served baked ham and stuffed chicken breasts. Richards said she had already paid the bill and wanted a refund. She got into an argument with Walter Morton, the manager of food service at the Downtown Club. Richards picked up a stuffed chicken breast and threw it at Morton, striking him in the face. She then grabbed a serving plate of ham and threw it at a waiter. The waiter picked up some of the ham and threw it back at Richards. The ham struck Richards in the chest. Grady Smith tried to stop Richards, to calm her down, and Richards struck him on the head with a serving platter. Richards began throwing food and wine glasses at other waiters and waitresses. By the time police arrived, Richards was throwing hunks of her wedding cake at Morton and staff members of the Downtown Club. Several officers were struck by cake when they tried to take Richards into custody. Richards kicked one of the officers during the struggle. Police said alcohol was a factor in the incident.

2. There was an attempted burglary at the Wendy's Old Fashion Hamburgers restaurant, on Huron Ave. The attempted burglary occurred between 2 a.m. and 8 a.m. Tuesday. Police said the burglary was discovered by the store manager, Jenna Adams, 31, of S. Highland Ave. Police said the burglar attempted to enter the fast-food restaurant through the drive-thru window on the north side of the building. Adams is the day manager. She usually arrives at work around 8 a.m. to begin preparations for the restaurants opening at 11 a.m. Police said her normal routine is to go directly to her office located behind the cooking and serving area of the restaurant. Adams told police she did not notice anything unusual when she first entered the restaurant. Nothing seemed to be missing. About 30 minutes after arriving at the restaurant, Adams heard a noise. She said it sounded like a whimpering animal. She began to look around the restaurant to locate the noise. What she found shocked her. A man was stuck in the drive-thru window of the restaurant. His belt and a belt loop of his pants were hooked on a metal peg used to open and close the window. The upper half of his body was inside the restaurant and the lower half was outside the restaurant, his feet dangling a foot off the ground. Adams said the man apparently had been hanging there for hours. Adams called police and officers managed to free the burglar. Police charged the suspect, Thomas C. Ahl, 19, of 6th Street, with burglary and indecent exposure. Ahl had torn the seat of his trousers while trying to free himself from his predicament. "I surrender. Now please get me out of here," Ahl said when police arrived at the restaurant.