

Attorney General Eric Holder  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001  
[askdoj@usdoj.gov](mailto:askdoj@usdoj.gov)

Dear Attorney General Holder,

It has come to the attention of the Society of Professional Journalists that the FBI's actions in a 2007 criminal investigation could set an unhealthy precedent of undermining the press's credibility and violating the First Amendment.

Last week, it was revealed that in 2007 the [FBI impersonated the media](#) by using a fake article attributed to the Associated Press. The tactic was used to lure a 15-year-old suspect into clicking on a link which revealed the location and Internet address of the suspect's computer. This eventually helped the FBI confirm the identity of the suspect who had been making bomb threats to a high school near Olympia, Washington. Although SPJ recognizes that critical situations sometimes require investigative measures, we strongly oppose impersonating the press as a tactical approach.

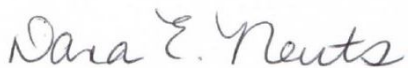
The FBI's impersonation of the Associated Press is a clear violation of the First Amendment, and its impact reaches far beyond AP. The FBI undermined the credibility of all journalists and news organizations by overextending its authority

SPJ supports the Associated Press and AP general counsel Karen Kaiser's letter to you, particularly this statement: "By creating false news accounts, misrepresenting the source of a news story, and falsely attributing it to the AP, the FBI undermined the most fundamental component of a free press – its independence."

SPJ would like the opportunity to discuss this incident with you, so that we can better explain our concerns and to help you understand how the FBI's impersonation of an independent news organization has damaged the media's credibility and impeded its ability to do its work.

If you or your designated representative are open to such a meeting, please call me at 360-920-1737 or email me at [dneuts@spj.org](mailto:dneuts@spj.org). I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



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