# It’s always on the record!

As anyone who has been through media training knows, what you say to a journalist is always on the record, even if you think it’s not. When you talk to a journalist, he or she is gathering information, and whether you are quoted directly or not, you have been used as a source.

Recently, there have been two widely publicized media gaffes. The most recent involves comments made by General Stanly McChrystal and his staff to Rolling Stone magazine. Those comments, widely seen as being proof of insubordination, led to McChrystal’s resignation from his post as commanding officer of the war in Afghanistan.

It is hard to believe that McChrystal, a former head of Special Ops, would be so candid with a journalist not knowing his comments would make it to print. Anyone who has had as much exposure to the media would know that a journalist is always pursuing a story. In my opinion, McChrystal knew exactly what he was doing, and had his own motivations for getting on the record with his views of President Obama and the direction of the war in Afghanistan.

The other media gaffe also cost a job. I am talking of Helen Thomas and her anti-Semitic barrage, caught on video by a citizen journalist and blogger. Thomas, when asked on her views on Israel, did not hold back her contempt or her extremist views. Some have asked whether she understood the implications of talking to a non-journalist. In her fifty years plus of experience, Thomas must have come across a hand-held camera before. As a journalist herself, she knows that anything you say in front of other people can be quoted or at least, used as source material. Even if Thomas had not been captured on video, the Rabbi who interviewed her could have publicized her comments.

Because, as we said before, now more than ever, NOTHING is off the record. And all of us are going on the record all the time, on Twitter, Facebook, blogs and wherever else we are interacting. We need to be mindful that what we say can and will be used against (or for) us.

Your thoughts?

