

Don't panic, it's just H1N1

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The media simply can't resist a good panic story, even when there is no panic to be found. *On the Media* interviews sociology professor [Eric Klinenberg](#) on [what happens when the media ask you to talk about the nonexistent widespread panic over H1N1](#). Klinenberg says to the reporter, effectively, "There is no panic." Undaunted by the lack of support for his thesis, the reporter places Klinenberg's remarks on the last page of the story, under the subhead *Not Enough Panic?*

Read the article to learn about the White House press conference where a reporter repeatedly asks whether the flu outbreak is a bioterrorist attack and won't take No for an answer. Or, my favorite, where one news agency sends out a reporter in a mask and has him cough on people to get their reaction. (The reaction was, basically, "What's up with this guy?") Meanwhile, another news crew spots the guy and interviews him. So you have one news crew interviewing what they think is a man on the street, but is actually another reporter trying to create a story. It's so absurd it's almost art.

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