[BREAKING NEWS](http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/category/breaking-news%22%20%5Co%20%22View%20all%20posts%20in%20Breaking%20News), [STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA](http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/category/state-of-the-news-media), TV NEWSER

[Canada’s CBC News Shows What Thoughtful Breaking News Coverage Really Looks Like](http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/canadas-cbc-news-shows-what-thoughtful-breaking-news-coverage-really-looks-like_b243081)

By [Mark Joyella](http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/author/markjoyella) on October 22, 2014 1:55 PM

For hours this afternoon, Canada’s CBC News covered the breaking news of at least three shooting incidents in Ottawa. Led by veteran anchor [Peter Mansbridge](http://www.mediabistro.com/Peter-Mansbridge-profile.html), the rolling coverage was smart, careful, and absolutely un-American.

As [Andy Carvin](http://www.mediabistro.com/Andy-Carvin-profile.html) noted, Mansbridge set a respectful, careful tone, calling out interview subjects who had unconfirmed or contradictory information. “So much we could learn from his delivery today,” Carvin told me on Twitter.

On screen, CBC News kept a ticker scrolling, a “Breaking News” bug in the corner, a “LIVE” bug at the top right, and three boxes showing video and live pictures. Mansbridge rarely appeared on camera, even as he took pains to ensure information was correct before reporting anything–particularly the news a soldier shot at Ottawa’s War Memorial had died of his injuries.

As I watched via the network’s live stream in New York, I never heard a second of dramatic music, never saw a full-screen wipe with a catchy graphic like TERROR ON PARLIAMENT HILL, and never, ever heard Mansbridge or any of the CBC’s reporters dip even a toe into the waters of self-promotion.

Compared that to the American cable news networks, where we’ve come to expect that *every*prime time newscast will begin with urgent music and BREAKING NEWS–complete with multiple on-screen reminders that this is BREAKING NEWS of great importance. CBC’s coverage was, well, very Canadian. And to the nervous system of an American observer of TV news, it was decidedly strange to experience.

Mansbridge, in sharp contrast to the frenetic, breathless delivery we’ve come to expect from American news anchors in times of breaking news (including stories of far less significance than the attacks in Canada), was thoughtful, took his time, and seemed at times to pause, and to consider his words before speaking. *Just. Imagine. That.*

Around 1:30 ET, three-and-a-half hours into his coverage, Mansbridge paused to update viewers. “What do we know *with certainty* right now?” There was no place for exaggeration, rumor, or mistakes. It was like watching grown-up news. And suddenly, seeing it, I was struck by how often we *don’t* see it here in the U.S. It’s been a long time since American anchors like [Frank Reynolds](http://www.mediabistro.com/Frank-Reynolds-profile.html) said “let’s nail it down…let’s get it right.”

Even if it means letting someone else report it first.

CBC News was soundly beaten by various journalists on Twitter with word the War Memorial soldier had died, but when time came for Mansbridge to bring this sad fact into his coverage, he warned he had “bad news” to report, and then very carefully explained how CBC came to believe this information was correct. It wasn’t loud and urgent. It was quiet and somber. And as such, it felt very, very important. It felt *proper*.

On a very frightening and horrific day for Canada, Mansbridge and his CBC colleagues did their jobs with dignity and respect. Andy Carvin is right. We could learn from their example.