

# Can the News Be Fixed? | The Atlantic

By Amanda Ripley

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A lifelong newsman, McLaughlin wears thick black glasses, shaves his head, and talks fast. He'd known he wanted to work in the business since eighth grade, when he shadowed a Minneapolis TV-news reporter for a school project. Gradually, he worked his way up from reporter to anchor to news director at stations across the Midwest.

But sitting in all those people's homes was a humbling experience. McLaughlin had to let go of a lot of his old ideas about what the news should look like. "We've been getting it wrong for a long time," he told me.

Still, the solutions were not obvious, even if the problems were. Just because people say they want higher-quality TV news doesn't mean they will really watch it, McLaughlin knew. So he decided to build a sort of test kitchen for TV news. He asked his boss for a couple of million dollars to set up a new digital-news outlet in Fort Myers, Florida. This time, he decided to hire people who knew how to be entertaining, above all—attractive, young people without a lot of journalism experience.

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