

# The Super Bowl Bugle

San Francisco Bay Area

2 February 2016

## *How the Sausage Gets Made*



Fox Sports host Jason Whitlock rehearses for his nationally televised "Whitlock's House Party by the Bay" show during Super Bowl week. Fans who visit the "NFL Experience" this week in San Francisco, which costs \$35 per person, can watch Whitlock and other TV and radio personalities while they work. Whitlock was a high school teammate of former NFL quarterback Jeff George and played two years of college football himself before getting his journalism degree at Ball State in Indianapolis. His first sports writing job was at the *Charlotte Observer*, and he later became a columnist for the *Kansas City Star*. On television he's worked for ESPN as well as Fox.



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Claudia Gestro (@claudiagestro) is a one-woman television production company, thanks to technology that allows her to light and video herself with an iPad as her teleprompter. A native of Miami and a graduate of Florida International University in broadcast journalism, she covers the NFL, NBA, NHL, Major League Baseball, college football and basketball, and boxing. The inset photo shows what her audiences in Venezuela saw when they watched PasTV Deportes' coverage of Super Bowl Opening Night in San Jose's SAP Arena.



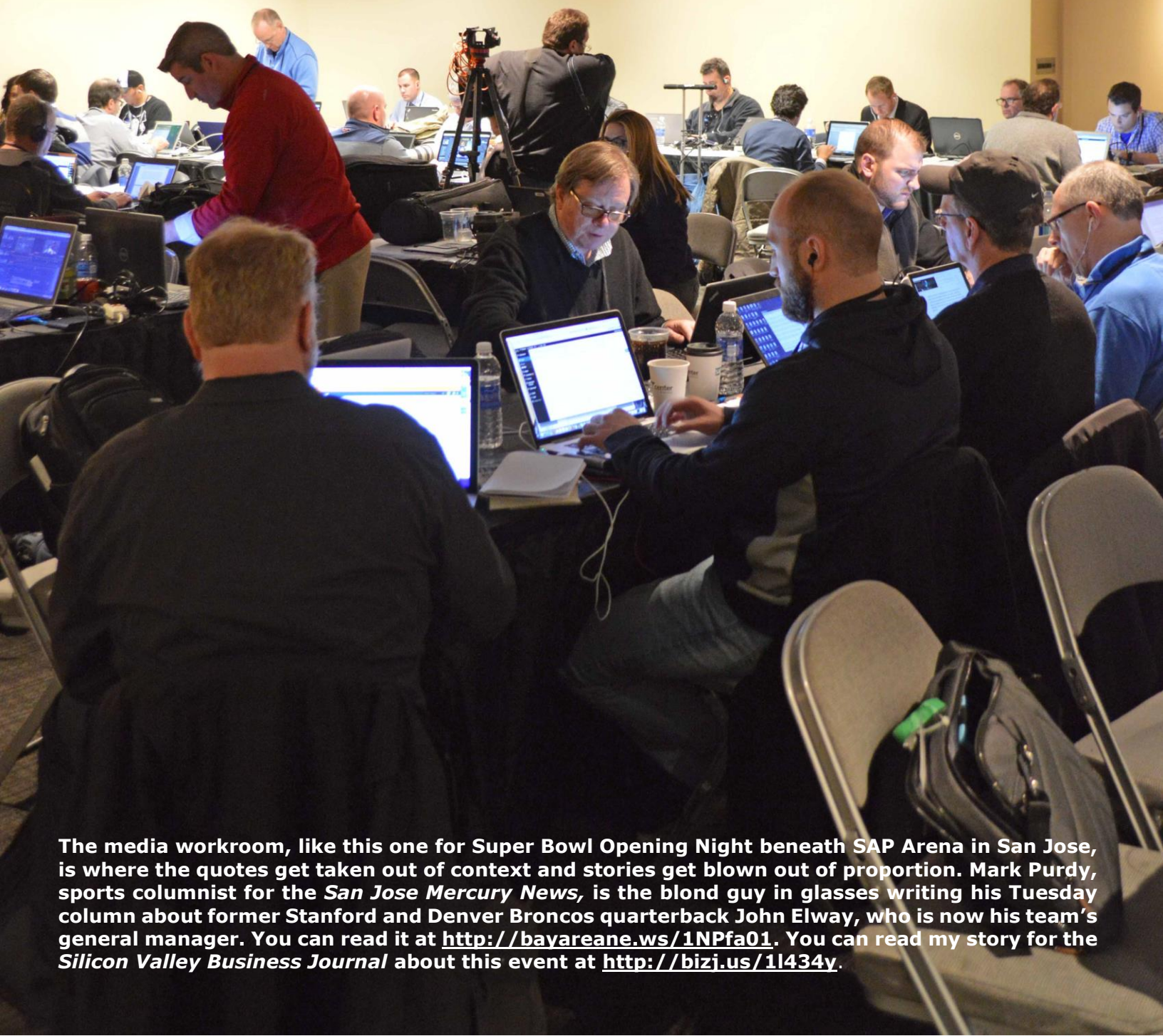
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Covering a Super Bowl is like the week before an Olympics when journalists attend one press conference after another all day long to write stories about things that haven't happened yet and collect material for the stories they will write when things do.

To be a sports writer or a reporter covering a political campaign you must be able to

transcribe and write without being distracted by conversations around you except when you can answer the question: "When was that other time (insert name) broke his leg/said he was quitting?" and other pertinent trivia.

Space is sparse in press boxes and workrooms, wireless is essential and the food tends toward church potluck pasta.



The media workroom, like this one for Super Bowl Opening Night beneath SAP Arena in San Jose, is where the quotes get taken out of context and stories get blown out of proportion. Mark Purdy, sports columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, is the blond guy in glasses writing his Tuesday column about former Stanford and Denver Broncos quarterback John Elway, who is now his team's general manager. You can read it at <http://bayareane.ws/1NPfa01>. You can read my story for the *Silicon Valley Business Journal* about this event at <http://bizj.us/1l434y>.



# *How the Sausage Gets Made*

A photograph of a busy press area at a sports event, likely a game between the Denver Broncos and the Carolina Panthers. In the foreground, a man with glasses and a striped polo shirt is focused on his laptop. He wears a red and white 'DAY PASS' lanyard. To his right, a woman with long dark hair is also working on a laptop. The background is filled with other people, some standing and some sitting, all seemingly engaged in their work. The floor is covered with a blue carpet, and various pieces of equipment like cameras and bags are scattered around.

If you don't take advantage of the break as the Denver Broncos are escorted out of the arena and the Carolina Panthers are brought in for their interviews, then you're going to have to write your story on batteries in the dark on the hour-long bus ride back to your hotel in San Francisco. Take your pick.





Doing local sports in the Denver market is the most humiliating job in television. The numbers on the video board surrounding the SAP Center gave football fans attending Super Bowl Opening Night the audio channels on which they could hear the media interviews with their favorite players. Fans paid \$30 apiece to watch players they could barely see, except on giant TV screens, in interviews they could only hear on radio. P.T. Barnum would love it.