

WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE:
STORYTELLING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

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ABSTRACT

Fifty years ago, a scientific advisory committee informed President Lyndon B. Johnson about the threat of climate change, writing, “Man is unwittingly conducting a vast geophysical experiment,” and we’ve been grappling with how to talk about climate change ever since. Here, science writers and reporters share insights, strategies and tips for covering anthropogenic climate change — perhaps the ultimate communications challenge. Focusing on the utility of narrative devices and the uncertain process of pinning down a diffuse global phenomenon, this paper serves as a blueprint of sorts for reporters writing about the wickedest problem of them all.