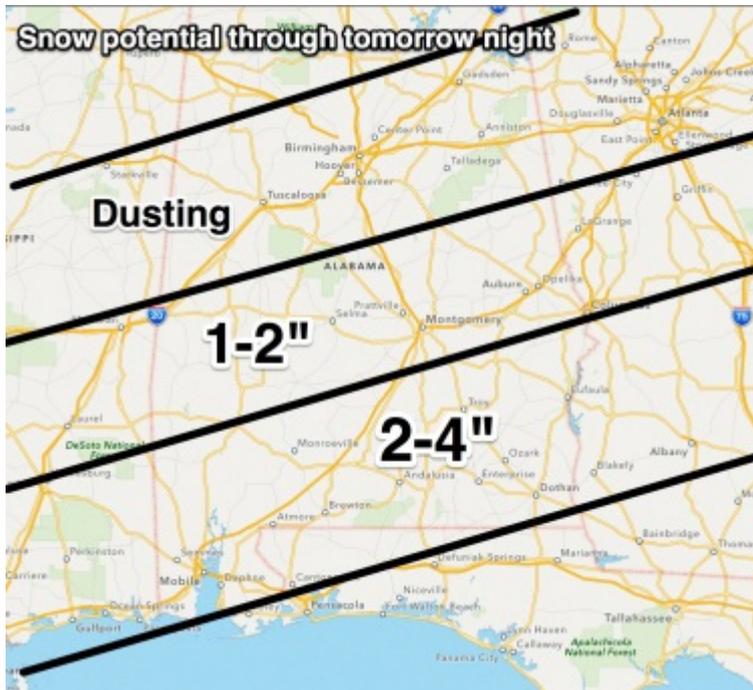


Mr. Roker:

Pardon the formality, but the folks at Mt. St. Michael Academy in the Bronx would be upset with me if I didn't maintain it to a certain degree while writing this note. The previous sentence would suggest correctly that I'm a native of New York City, one who can claim to have grown up watching your forecasts on WNBC-TV until heading off to college in Georgia in 1993. I've been a fan for a long time and have appreciated the frankness over the years (I'm specifically thinking about our freak snow storm in early March 1993).

I'm writing not to question your comments about the recent handling of the winter storm in Atlanta - that seems fairly spot on given the information at hand - but to question the generalizations made during the start of the 9 a.m. ET hour of Today on January 30 that while probably not intended, lumped many Southern cities together in a broad characterization of the situation. I'm particularly interested on how those comments reflect on what happened in Alabama, where I've lived since late 2004. I only wish I could link to a video of the segment in question - it only seems fair. I'll just write from the heart though and see how it goes.



The image to your left is representative of the graphics used by many media outlets in north central Alabama on Monday evening. As you can see, Birmingham and the majority of its surrounding area was only forecast to see a "dusting" of snow. The area that was predicted to receive the brunt of the storm was the southern portion of the state (mostly areas south of Demopolis), [one that received a state of emergency declaration by Gov. Bentley earlier Monday](#). Most of the resources needed to tackle what would normally be a minor mess were sitting well to the south of the state's largest city - the area that was eventually most affected. It was an area that was still expecting less than an inch as late as [the 5:35 a.m. graphiccast post made to the](#)

[NWS Birmingham's page](#) on Facebook.

Are there things that could have been handled differently? Yes. But, in our case, it was a case of Mother Nature making a last minute change and everyone being caught flat-footed. That would be [what the folks at USA Today reported yesterday](#), about half way down the page in their wrap-up. The meteorologists at our television stations have been taking it on the chin - more than they probably should considering part their job is to predict something that isn't always easy to understand. Among them:

- [The post written by our ABC affiliate's James Spann](#) on January 29;
- One Fox affiliate's [J-P Dice made this post to his fan page on Facebook](#);
- [The interview CBS affiliate's Mark Prater did this morning on The Matt Murphy program](#).

Considering the circumstances, it went about as well as could be expected. Those parts of the state originally scheduled to receive snow were able to cope with the change in forecast, [most notably Mobile](#). Those areas up here responded admirably considering the circumstances, demonstrating what Birmingham News columnist John Archibald properly described a chance to "[marvel at the](#)

[human spirit](#)." It's something still on display today as we await the thaw.

Perhaps we'll figure out a way to do staggered releases from school and work in the future. Maybe the opportunity to look at how sprawl played a role in the large numbers of cars stranded on interstates and highways will be taken advantage of as we recover. I live in the southeastern United States, but I specifically live in the state of Alabama. It handled it as well as it could.

I saw on your Twitter timeline that you like it when articulate points are presented. I only hope you'd consider this one as we continue through what's already been a crazy winter across the country - the need to measure the use of words carefully and not to lump folks without recognizing the weight that comment may carry. I'd just say Georgia, and not "the South," but that's just me.

Anyway, have a safe trip to the Olympics, and thanks for taking my comments into consideration.

[André Natta](#) *started* The Terminal *in* 2007.