Reviewed Episode 3\_ We Killed Pull Quotes

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**SPEAKERS**

Mariana, Michal Stein, Laura Howells, Lidia

00:06

Hello, and welcome to the very first episode of pullquote podcast from the Ryerson review of journalism. I'm Laura Howells. I'm Jacob McNair. Thanks for joining.

00:24

Welcome to pull quotes, I make Feldstein.

00:28

This year the review of journalism turns 40 Welcome to reviewed Welcome to reviewed Welcome to reviewed where we go through the past 40 years of the review of journalism to understand if the stories are still relevant and impactful today. Join us as we ask, are the issues too relevant? Is the reporting controversial? How has journalism changed over the years? After four decades on assignment? It's

**Mariana** 00:52

time for the review to be reviewed. I'm one of your hosts today. Mighty administrates him.

**Lidia** 00:58

And I'm Lydia right John, in today's episode of reviewed we're talking podcasts

**Mariana** 01:04

before there was reviewed and do journalists. The podcast the review of journalism is publishing this year there was pull quotes.

01:11

pull quotes was the review of Journalism's first venture into podcasting. Since its release in 2017. pull quotes has had six seasons each produced by a different group of students from every year's class. Over the six seasons, pull quotes put out 66 episodes and brought discussions on topics like the legalization of marijuana, global politics, journalism, writing guidelines, student newspapers, objectivity in journalism, and many other relevant issues in journalism. As you might have noticed, in 2023, we killed poll quotes. This year, we were presented with the opportunity to move away from pull quotes mostly because this year is the 40th anniversary of the magazine. And we wanted the opportunity to look at what the review has done in a different format. Hence, our podcast reviewed.

**Mariana** 02:02

Today we are joined by two previous Bogles producers who talked to us a bit about their experience producing the podcast for the review and about their work in the podcasting industry. First, let's hear a conversation with Laura house. She was a producer for the first season of bull quotes in 2017 2018, alongside Emily Pardo and Jacob McNair.

**Laura Howells** 02:25

Yeah, so. So I had worked a bit at CBC Radio and online before coming to former Ryerson when I was there, but now Tmu and we started Paul coats with the RJ as it was called at the time. After that in podcasting, I worked on a few different shows. As a freelancer. I worked for Yahoo, Canada, I worked with the Huffington Post freelance editing for Althea Raj podcast follow up. And I worked with Canada land media on some of their podcasts. As a freelancer, and for a season I was the producer for oppo, which was the politics podcast, with Justin Lang hosting at the time. And then I really started to get more into live radio working with CBC and then Metro Morning, the morning radio show. And that's where I currently have my position as a producer on Metro Morning when we went, so when I was going into that year to do to be on the review, we came into it with the instructors knowing they wanted to make a podcast and so we applied for the position for podcast producers. And it was myself, Jacob McNair and Emily Pardo and the three of us were part of the podcasting team. But we were part of kind of developing what we wanted that podcast be and sound like and sort of the, the the mission statement for it, if you will. And I think we basically wanted to be able to I mean, the review is an amazing magazine, but it only is able to come out once a year. And at that time, there was more of a push for more frequent online publication of the review and having pieces go up every week. And the podcast was kind of part of that I think trying to be more on the pulse and and responding to issues in more real time. I think at the time more Canadian news organizations, were starting to get into podcasting in a bigger way. And it was just felt really exciting to want to be in that space. So yeah, that's sort of what motivated me to get in. I loved listening to podcasts, and I and I really wanted to start making them

**Lidia** 04:37

so we just wanted to ask what it is about podcast and now radio for you that makes people go back to it all these years.

04:46

I think like whether it's radio or podcasting, it's still like audio storytelling and the ability to have somebody in your ear speaking to you directly, is just such an intimate form of storytelling like Yeah, it's it's so conversational, right? Like, it just feels like you're part of a conversation, you don't have to like read a long text or, you know, sit down and watch the 60 minute show, you can go about your day with this voice in your ear speaking to you, and it feels like speaking to you alone. And I think like some of the best radio and podcasts feel like a real conversation. And you can kind of immerse yourself in that, like a there's that conversational element where it just feels like you're so close to the story. And you're just part of that conversation with a story. And I also think there's a real immediacy to audio, like, especially live radio in particular, like, it's right now it's live, it's out that's happening, but podcast, too. I mean, they're usually responding like the day after or the week after, to an event. And you tune in to sort of catch up with these people that you've cultivated this one sided relationship with where you feel this connection to them, and you want to hear what they have to say, and their take on an issue or you want to hear in the news from this voice that you trust in your ear, depending on what podcast you're listening to. So yeah, I think that that intimacy, and that immediacy really, really keeps bringing people back to audio or bringing me back at least. And on a personal level, I will always love audio just because I love to just go about my day with company and having a podcast or a radio on is honestly essential for my survival, because I don't think I'd be able to get anything done without it.

**Mariana** 06:28

Yeah, I agree. I think that more and more, I've been listening to podcasts and like audiobooks. And it's been really interesting to have someone in my ears all day, kind of like just talking me through the day. And I also agree with what you said that it's like, it's very immediate. It's something that it's happening right now. And it's an interesting experience, it's a different kind of experience to the person listening to it. Right. But what do you think, are some of the barriers to audio storytelling now that we're talking about it?

06:55

Yeah, I mean, I guess it is hard to sometimes convey detail in audio storytelling, just because of the nature, the nature of the medium. And that's something that I struggle with a lot when writing for radio and writing about, like serious news topics, or, or stories that have a lot of data or numbers in them, it can be really hard to get across that kind of detail. In, you know, a 32nd intro to a story or, you know, like a one minute news hit are usually it's shorter than that. So that's definitely a barrier. But at the same time, it's kind of a strength of the medium because it forces you to be concise and clarify your main points and just get across, like what really needs to be across instead of getting weighed down in the details. But I think the other thing is, I mean, I was just talking about how much I love to just like walk around the house and have a podcast on while I'm doing like the laundry or whatever. But that means you also get people when they're in half state of focus a lot of the time. So yeah, it can be hard to kind of capture people's attention and sustain that attention without just turning into, you know, kind of like a drone on the other end of the line. I mean, that can sometimes mean that that details or story points get lost along the way. And people coming flit in and out of your story, as opposed to if you're reading an article, you really have to sit down and read it and be with it. You don't need that in the same sense for audio. In terms of making it I think you were asking as well. I mean, I think that's one of the great things about like how podcasting has evolved is that there's such a low barrier to entry now, in terms of like what you actually need to make a podcast like you don't really need a Marantz or like a big recording studio, you can do it on your phone and get really amazing quality. And that's great. Yeah, thank

**Mariana** 08:55

you. And since this is called reviewed, it's fitting that we review ourselves. So what advice would you give us and other future podcast producers at the review?

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My advice would be just to have fun with it play as much as you can experiment as much as you can. Don't be afraid of not getting it perfect and yeah, use this time to take risks like yeah, you probably have an editor looking over your shoulder I'm not sure if it's if it's still Sonya but you don't have the pressures of like a you know a company or like a boss who's gonna like fire you if you if you make the wrong thing. So just like enjoy this time to like try to make it your own and try new things with it. It can. You can, you can do really cool stuff with audio and there's always room to experiment so so just try to play

09:54

we also talked to Season Two producer McCall Stein. Stein as a journalist, writer and podcast for juicer. She was part of the 2018 2019 masthead of the review of journalism, alongside classmate Lydia Avraham, Stein produced and hosted Season Two of the podcast pull quotes.

**Mariana** 10:10

Jaime has thank you so much for being here today. We're really excited to talk to you.

10:15

Thank you so much for having me. It's so fun.

**Mariana** 10:17

How does it feel to be back here? Your recorded here?

**Michal Stein** 10:20

Yeah, it's so funny because I forget how long ago it was like it was now four or five years ago. And I part of it, I think, is because I had about eight months of normalcy before COVID hit. So in a way, it was like the last one of the last things I did before COVID hit. So it's like four years ago, and I like a completely different decade of my life.

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Just in general, why audio? Why podcasting? Why is that how you want to storytel? Great

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question. So, you know, like cereal came out in 2014. That was like, so crazy to me that you could tell a story like that. And I was so gripped by it, there were more and more, it seemed like every couple months, some like crazy podcasts that would come out. And I would just get so absorbed. And then I would feel like I understood the story so much better than when I just would read it or something about it, or watch a documentary or something. There's something that like, encodes in my brain in a really good way, these people were so good at just telling the story in a way that connects.

**Mariana** 11:39

And as a Podcast Producer, you're rarely in front of the mic anymore. Like you're we're in the second season of pull quotes, how does it feel to be on the back side of things? How do you shape a story by producing and editing it. So

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it totally depends on what project I'm working on, and what they need. For me, one of the ways that I'm shaping stories is by doing a lot of the prep for an interview. So pulling in any reference materials, summarizing it, coming up with a cue line going over that with a host, sometimes I'm chasing guests, sometimes I'm figuring out, you know, the idea of actually what we're going to be talking about, again, it really depends on the needs of the show. And then on the back end. That's where I feel like the shaping really comes into it. So hopefully, if we've done enough on the front end, if we've really thought through, okay, how how does this flow is gonna get us where we need to go, then the Edit should be easy.

12:51

I just wanted to jump in and ask if you've noticed anything changing since when you were here in 2019? Because like you said, you the pandemic just started up after you finished. I

13:02

think that things have changed wildly since 2019. Because 2019, in many ways, to me, still felt like certainly in Canada. Not exactly the infancy of podcasts. But people were still figuring it out. There was only front burner like CBCs daily podcast, I think had started by then. I think the big story had started by then. Yeah, so the daily podcasts were kind of getting going. But they were certainly new. It felt like everyone was figuring out how to make it work, and figuring out how to monetize it. And the the monetizing of it all is really the thing that I think has changed the most. I think there was a lot of inflated expectations about the kind of money that podcasts could bring in. And it you know, it's easy to get excited about a shiny new thing. And certainly there were podcasts that could bring in millions of downloads per episode and get the kind of reach that could get a lot of advertising money and in COVID Everyone's stuck at home. Podcasting then becomes really appealing, where everyone can be at home and it's okay. And it reaches people at home too. So I think that there was this big swing towards podcasts are the answer to our problems like or an answer to some problems.

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Just about the review in general, what would you have changed? What do you think the review should be aiming to achieve as a publication?

14:45

I think the review is a really great place to kind of the word that's coming to mind as benchmarks but that's not really the right thing. The review is the magazine where that really holds At that moment in Canadian media, like I think about our year, we had our, maybe our editor in chief, Selena, who wrote a huge feature about BuzzFeed Canada. And it was in this like fun quiz format. And it was really interesting and felt very current. And but you look at it now and like there is no more BuzzFeed Canada. Same with HuffPost like, so there are all of these things happening in the Canadian journalism world that you maybe don't think are ever going to end. And then when they do, the review is kind of the place to put that down and mark where we're at. And then it's amazing to be able to come back to it a few years and and see how much has changed.

16:01

If you're interested in learning more about pull quotes and listening to some episodes, you can find all seasons on the review of journalism's page under the tab podcast. And while you're at it, don't forget to check out another one of the reviews new podcasts dear journalist, where we interview established Canadian journalists about lessons they learned in the field.

**Mariana** 16:21

If you want to learn more about Laura house's work, you can find her annex Elara house and L. If you want to learn more about McHale Stein's work, you can visit her website makeout stein.ca.

16:34

Thank you, Laura, and we call for talking to us today and special thanks to Angela Glover and Daniela Alario for technical support. Finally, thank you for listening to connect with us or suggest a story you can find us on tick tock and X at the review of journ or visit our website review of journalism.ca

**Mariana** 16:53

This episode of reviewed is hosted, edited and produced by Sahana. Ranganathan, Mariana shoots it and Lydia Origen