

DEMAN Live: Pen, Page & Podcast: Journalism/Media Industry

This episode brings together alumni from New York to Los Angeles, working in journalism, creative writing, and media industries, moderated by [The Chronicle's](#) Sarah Derris '21 and Eva Hong '21.

Panel

- Ken Bensinger '97, [BuzzFeed News](#), Investigative Reporter; Author
- Maureen Farrell '01, [The New York Times](#), Business Reporter
- Danielle Genet '12, [Good Morning America](#), Producer
- Mangesh Hattikudur '01, [iHeartMedia/HowStuffWorks](#), former SVP, Podcast Development
- Erica Henry '94, [CNN](#), Vice President, News
- Sarah Krueger '12, [WRAL TV](#), Reporter
- Maria Kuznetsova '08, [Author](#); Fiction Editor; Auburn University, Assistant Professor
- Marc Lieberman '92, [CBS 60 Minutes](#), Producer
- Marco Werman '83, [The World/PRX](#), Host/Executive Editor
- Winston Wilde '08, [NBC News](#), White House Producer

INTRO: Dave Karger

Welcome to DEMAN Live. I'm DAVE KARGER, Duke alum and host on Turner Classic Movies. DEMAN is the Duke Entertainment, Media and Arts Network. And it's the University's hub for the creative industries. On this show, you'll hear a past episodes of DEMAN live, which includes panels and one on one chats with alumni. Thanks so much for listening and enjoy.

Sarah Derris '21

The first question is for Danielle and for Maria. Let's talk about your journey from Duke to your current career. What are some ways that you applied your Duke experience to your current job? What opportunities do you suggest that students take advantage of at Duke both virtually and one back on campus?

08:46 Danielle Genet

Sure, so I'll take this one. So I did the Duke in New York program. I don't know if any of you are you planning on doing it or have done it, but I highly recommend it. Especially if you're interested in the arts and media world. It's really good. For me, it was a really good introduction, because part of your education is to have an internship and so that was the first opportunity I had in television.

So I'm sure you'll hear hear it throughout the panel tonight. But internships are really key in this world. Oh, Hi, Jane. Um, and so I interned at Inside Edition, and you know, started to think okay, maybe I could do this. And I when I got back at Duke, I had another internship at a local affiliate there at ABC affiliate.

So again, internships but also on campus on campus. Also give a shout out to Duke Student Broadcasting. That was really instrumental, the Chronicle, anything you could do to get hands on work, wherever you are, you know, especially now however, you can contribute, writing, shooting, whatever you can do. I would really encourage that.

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And then post college, I started at the assignment desk at ABC News where I worked the overnight shift in the breaking news department, which is a really good overview of what it looks like to work in the breaking news world. And from there, you know, networking is also very key talk to people start figuring out, what are you interested in?

So another thing you could do now is, of course, take calls, call people learn about what they do. And from there kind of, you know, figure out, can I evolve? Can I raise my hand? Can I help out? It's very much, uh, yes, I could do it. What can I do? How can I help? How can I contribute? And so from there, I just kind of worked my way up to producer. So in a nutshell.

10:51 Maria Kuznetsova

Yeah, so one important thing I did at Duke was, I did do study abroad in St. Petersburg program and as an immigrant from Ukraine, that really got me just interested in my heritage and, and writing about it. And so that kind of complemented all the creative writing classes that I took at Duke. And just my mentors, there were really important to me, like Faulkner, Fox, one of my professors, she helped me get an internship at a literary agency in Manhattan over the summer. And that really kind of helped me see what the publishing world was, like, you know, just from reading submissions, it gave me kind of an insight into how things worked out there a little bit.

And then I also worked for voices magazine, it exists anymore, but it was a literary magazine kind of focused on women's writing. And, you know, that also helped me kind of get get an idea of, you know, what, what editors are looking for, what kind of writing is appealing to people and just working with other like-minded people was, was really important.

And and the thing I would say, is, is that being, you know, it takes a while to publish a novel. So all the traditional things like networking and meeting people that that can definitely help. But it's a lot of time alone in your room just working on your art. And so one thing, what advice I would give beyond, you know, pushing those mentors that you have it do, and, you know, doing The Archive, The Chronicle, all those things that I'm sure aspiring writers, you know, you're already doing is just find some friends in your classes that really can be be good readers for you and can be that network for you.

Like, for example, over the summer, right now, maybe you had some friends in your creative writing classes that you want to share work with, reach out to them. And don't be shy, because I was very shy, and I didn't, are about finding writer friends while at Duke. And I wish I had done that. And I think just building that community as early as you can. So when you're, you know, took me over a decade to publish a novel, when you're going on a journey, you have people who can support you on the way and be readers and just friends for you to turn to. Yeah...

12:50 Sarah Derris

For sure. I think I've come to learn during my time at Duke, that there are so many people who are willing to, you know, read over your work and support you. And just give you the kind of constructive criticism that you really need. Thank you both.

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13:07 Eva Hong

Thank you. Those are great advice. That kind of also leads us to the second question, which I'm going to direct to Erica, Marco and Sarah. We all know that getting your foot in the door in the media and journalism industry is very hard, especially at this time. So how did you get your head start? And what advice would you give for students and alumni trying to break into the industry?

13:34 Erica Henry

I can start. I was an NBC Page. And the Page Program is an entry level program for NBC and all of the network's they have something similar. You know, at CNN, we call it a cross platform program. And what the Page Program did was it allowed and afforded me the opportunity to look at the different Park departments in NBC. And I was a history major. And so I lucked up into the fact that I was a part of the NBC News Specials division. And that's whenever you see this is an NBC News Special Report with Lester Holt, there's a whole division and all they do is deal with breaking news.

And I know that I believe Danielle, you were the one that mentioned that you also started in breaking news as well. And so from there, that's when I realized that being in breaking news was you know, taking what I really enjoyed, which was history because everything that I do, I feel like is history, it's you know, it's going to be history at some point. But um, you know, any sort of an entry level program is very helpful and then finding I mean, as you've heard from the people on this panel, you know, I've heard ABC I've heard NBC I've heard CBS and obviously I work at CNN.

And I know a lot of a lot of current undergrads, they reach out to me all the time. And they asked me to help them to navigate them to put I had someone, and Amy knows who it is, it's a woman who's been trying to get a job in Korea. And those jobs are few and far between. And she reached out to me yesterday. And she said, Hey, Erica, would you mind reaching out to the HR person for me, and putting in a good word for me? And I said, Absolutely, because I'd met her at a DEMAN event on campus before. And I know her and I feel very comfortable, comfortable enough to reach out to someone.

But it is true, you know, getting that email inside the turner.com firewall goes a lot further than someone that's, you know, blind, and you know, calling cold with a deep duke.edu email address. And so I was happy to do it. And so I would just say, use DEMAN. Use your resources, use your network. And I'm sure that there's someone who knows.

And I heard you guys mentioned it before, it's like, even if I went on, I worked at NBC before I came to CNN. And I've been it's been at CNN for a long time. But I know people at NBC so I you know, if I can help, you know, I could, I could reach out to someone for you. So, avenues and forums like DEMAN are priceless. And use it because we didn't have DEMAN, as you know, DEMAN is 10 years old. And we didn't have DEMAN when I was here. And I wish that we did.

16:33 Sarah Krueger

What can happen next, talk about how I got started. So senior year, I was fortunate enough to be ahead in my credit, so that I could be a part time student, second semester of senior year. And that is something I would highly recommend if you all are in a position to be able to do that. That enabled me to take a job at the Duke News Office that paid was a paid position, which was nice, I think it was like

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15 hours a week. And then I also was able to do two different internships at local TV stations. And that was very helpful in learning a lot. I was a Spanish and International Studies, double major, journalism certificate, but I only had one class and TV journalism. So I really needed some on the ground experience. And that was super helpful.

And what that also led to that was the most helpful of all was I was working with her for one day, and he said, Oh, you want to be a TV reporter you want to move to New York City, because I think, at least back then most Duke students wanted to move to New York City. I don't know if y'all all still want to move to New York City? And so he said, You should reach out to Josh Chapin. He graduated a couple years ago, and now he's a reporter at a cable station in New York City. And he went to Duke, too, and so I just sent Josh, you know, a totally random email and said, you know, I'll come up to New York City over spring break to visit my boyfriend, and can I, you know, come meet people at your station. And so I give him all the credit for getting me in the door.

I ended up you know, meeting a ton of people that day applying to that station, getting a job at that station right after graduating. And that was just huge for me. And, you know, the first job is definitely the hardest to get at least it was for me. So once I was there, I started off as a freelancer. So just keeping my phone on loud at all times, like sometimes I would get called in at two in the morning, sometimes I would get called in at 8pm. It was a crazy lifestyle.

But that's how I started out and then moved from there to a station in Greensboro and then now landed here at this station in Durham or in Raleigh, but I work in the Durham office of it. And so I also just want to give a plug as you all are considering you know what jobs you might be looking for. There are a lot of great positions at network levels. But I also want to give a plug for local news, because we need you all in local news. It's so important right now and always, and we are hiring for entry level positions. So reach out to me if you're interested.

19:11 Marco Werman

I guess I have a kind of a somewhat different foot in the door story. I started I grew up in Chapel Hill and Raleigh and worked at the News and Observer through high school as a copy boy, kind of knowing that I wanted to go into journalism, went to Duke, wrote some for The Chronicle on Tobacco Road and then went to West Africa to Togo in the Peace Corps.

And right after kind of on a lark, I went through Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to the Associated Press Office, and they were looking for two stringers one in Burkina Faso and one in Cameroon and I said okay, I'll go to Burkina Faso. I'm going to stop I'm not going to not go back to the States. I'll just stay here and spend two years freelancing, first for the AP, and then I picked up a string for the BBC, and I'd never done radio. But it fascinated me. And it was a real kind of seat of the pants learning experience.

But it led to a pivot to working as a producer for the BBC World Service in London for a year and a half, which in turn led me to meet the National Public Radio correspondent at the time, Mike Schuester, who worked at Busch house, which is where the BBC was based and where I was working. So one connection led to another and that led me back to the States after being six years abroad, and working in public radio for the first time in the US.

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But it was my previous connection at the BBC, my editor there, who was hired to start The World, which is where I work today where I've been since 1995, since the program started. So it's been kind of an odd kind of progression. But it's been a step by step from West Africa to London to to Plattsburgh, New York, where I worked for four years running a small radio station to to Boston, where I've been since 1995, and hosting the show since pretty much since 2002, or so.

And I think I've been picking up a bunch of different threads, that I would say apply to my own story. But two things that I would take away from my somewhat unconventional path is that it really helps. Even today, the BBC Africa service doesn't exist anymore, so I wouldn't be working there. But I would say create a patch for yourself or some kind of specialty that sets you apart. In terms of what you cover, be prepared to be a generalist, and also be prepared to speak very specifically about one area, I happen to kind of be in West Africa, that suited me really well.

And I think there were two Americans that were working at the World Service, when I was there, I was one of them. So it was rare to be given a work permit to even work in the UK at the time. But you know, just having that specialty, got me there got me two work permits, and I could have gotten a third, but I decided to come back and start this little public radio station, which also is probably not something anybody would do today. I mean, the last month has seen a really kind of tragic collapse of newspapers, a lot of jobs have disappeared. And the expectation is that it's only going to get worse.

So just footnote, I would say, if you are kind of thinking about getting into journalism, at this point, be prepared to really see it as a calling and not just a job. Because I mean, I think just hearing what Erica was saying earlier, it's been an extremely tough, 10 weeks very hard story to be covering. And, you know, probably the biggest story of our lifetimes, probably the biggest story in the last century, since the 1918 Flu, maybe World War II.

So it's something at the level of, you know, medicine, or teaching and teaching elementary school, that kind of calling is necessary. I think at this point, I think the other thread that I would pick up on and certainly applies to my story is just, you know, remember the connections you made and be nice to everybody who can possibly do you a good turn sometime in the future. It was precisely my connection and my willingness to learn from people who knew more than I did at the BBC, that led me back to a program that was executive produced by my editor at the Africa service. So remember your connections, be nice to people, and, you know, make them your friends.

23:59 Sarah Derris

Thank you so much. I mean, just about everyone who answered mentioned something about keeping up with connections. Erica mentioned the Duke network. And I just like to echo how I think important that is, at least in my experience as a student, through the DEMAN network, and through various like Duke programs, I've been able to connect with alumni and a lot of times you'll find alumni are very willing to help out whenever you need, if you have any, any questions or want career advice, so I definitely encourage people to take advantage of that.

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I think that also brings us I mean, it allows us to smoothly transition into the next question for Mark and Maureen: How can students and alumni find a balance between networking with alumni about career opportunities during this time, while respecting that people may be facing different challenges right now? In regards to COVID?

25:17 Marc Lieberman

Well, I guess I'll start. So, um, there's no doubt this is a really difficult, challenging unprecedented time as we're all experiencing, you know, for us at the networks, and in every newsroom. You know, we're reinventing how we cover the news on the fly in the midst of something that threatens all of us every time you go out. So it is it was chaotic in the beginning, I think things are starting to settle more into a rhythm, at least where I am. And I don't know if that's the case for the other other shops, but I imagine it is. So it's hard. And I think it's going to be a little challenging right now to get people's attention. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't keep trying.

I was surprised. I heard from a Duke student. Not that long ago, within the last month, I'd say, who was looking to see if CBS still had internships this summer. And you know, my initial thought was that there's no way that our internship coordinators even contemplating the future until things settle out right now. And when I reached out to her, I was surprised to learn that she's still taking applications.

So you know, that work is still going on. And so every network has people like that, you know, talent, recruiters, and people coordinate the internship. So I would definitely encourage everybody if you're interested to reach out, and I would echo what some of the other folks here have said about the importance of internships and networking.

I started as an intern at CBS News right out of college, right out, three weeks after I graduated from Duke. And I got that internship thanks to a Duke student. I mean, do graduate who is working at CBS, and was decided to leave at sort of a, she was working in the political unit in the middle of the 1982 presidential campaign. She had an entry level job, and she was going back to law school, she decided to leave to go back to law school. And so she was leaving the political unit in the lurch. And because we had a relationship from Duke, she got in touch with me and said, Get your resume ready. Because I'm going to be leaving, and they're going to need somebody right away.

So I would definitely use the Duke network. And my other piece of advice in terms of just managing how to contact people right now, is that you do need to be persistent, like the people that get noticed and get hired. Or the people who, you know, they have a real can-do attitude. They stay ahead of things they anticipate needs. Like Danielle was saying the raising their hand saying, What can I do for you, you exhibit that attitude in a plate, politely, as I say, politely, persistent way, you'll get noticed. And finally, I would say, don't just reach out to people for jobs, or internships, reach out for career advice, or just how'd you get how you got started? I just like to hear your path. So it's not just a conversation about can you get me a job

28:27 Maureen Farrell

To your point, what you're just saying is, you never know, when opportunities are gonna pop up and just kind of like having a rapport building learning from someone and vice versa. Like, you never know,

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when someone's gonna have something there. Like maybe it's not at that moment, they might have not have a job or there might not be an internship, but it's, you make the connection, and then keep in touch.

I mean, some of the students I've met over time, I love following their work. While you know, maybe they're they don't come to The Wall Street Journal, but we stay in touch. And it's like, you know, I start following them on Twitter. And it's inspiring to see kids students work, set that protocol, and then from there on out, they're just like, always on my radar, and I always just kind of want to see where they're going from there. So I feel like those connections, you know, people will try to help in the moment, but it's like a long arc.

I guess just to start off, though, what I would say is, I think, and I feel like a lot of people here I can kind of tell this already and I've had this experience like it's such a it's such a tricky career. And I think everyone felt like they had some sort of break to get their first job for sure. And then each one after that. It's a hard career and I mean, I love it so much. That I feel like people have just been so generous in like in such incredible ways with their time and you know, their introductions that I do feel like there's something in journalism maybe more than other places where like you really Do you want to pay it forward because you feel like people have just given you so much.

So I'd like to, I've noticed that throughout my career, and I feel an impetus to do that, too. That's said during, you know, this time is crazy. As I said, I'm on a sabbatical right now writing a book, which has its own time pressures. Also, like, you know, homeschooling a six and 10 year old, I'm sure that other people are doing things like that. Like, this is a whole nother level of juggling things, which, you know, teachers are also amazing. Now that we didn't know that before, but I can tell you that much, that much more than all of them.

So anyway, so please reach out. I think it's a good idea. And as Mark said, just be persistent. And maybe it takes a little while for people to get back to you. But check back in in a nice way, as I'm sure people will just stay on their radar. And you know, and then and then continue to stay on people's radar, like over the long term check back in in a year or so. Like, it's a lot. It's a long career.

And I like the idea of, you know, just the advice. And yeah, as I said, I feel like I always learned things from students, too. And The Chronicle is such an incredible place. Just segwaying quick back to what a few other people have said, I worked for The Chronicle my freshman, sophomore year, I did some internships junior and senior year. But it's incredible. I think once you go into a newsroom, how much The Chronicle mimics, one and not even mimics like it is a real newsroom. There's so much to learn. They're each internship, I think, if I had any regrets from Duke is like, you don't realize how I did two internships, one in New York at the local NBC station and one back in Raleigh at the local NBC station. And they're so amazing. I wish I did as many as I possibly could have, because you see different things. You see what you like to see what you don't like. Yeah, that's it's completely invaluable. All those experiences.

31:59 Sarah Derris

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Thank you both. I think it's definitely excellent advice. Yeah, I think it's all about building relationships, just as you guys said. And I guess Eva has the next question.

32:12 Eva Hong

Yeah, I just like to say that I really agree with the whole connecting with the alumni point. And I've definitely made connections with a long at DEMAN. Shout out to Amy for arranging all of that. And also, the Duke alumni directory is also a very good resource to connect with alumni who you who you might have similar interests with.

And also, is there an ad for The chronicle that we take students every year, and you don't need prior journalism experience to join if you are interested. And it is the whole thing is very mimicking a typical newsroom and you get really valuable relationships and experience. So yeah, come to The Chronicle.

And great, so diving into the next question, this one is for Winston and Ken. So you've all you both navigated a variety of media positions in journalism and in similar industries. But what drew you to ultimately pursued a direction that you finally did? And how does it compare to working other roles or industries? Winston - You want to start off, Ken?

33:30 Ken Bensinger

And, okay. Yeah, so I've had a lot of jobs over the years. And I've benefited from a Duke alumni alumnus to get my first internship. When I was when I graduated, I got a, I got a job at a publication. It's long, long gone called Swing Magazine, that was founded by a Duke grad. It was run by ??, I had internship there. And without that wouldn't have the opportunity to get my first job, which is at the Wall Street Journal. And then from there to freelancing in Mexico, and then worked at a different Dow Jones publication called Smart Money. And from there went to the Los Angeles Times now my current job.

And, you know, I can't speak for everyone here. But a lot of journalists, I think, particularly the ones in sort of the harder News area will tell you that. It's not always easy to to necessarily take exactly what beats or what things you'll cover or where you work, but you keep an eye open to opportunities to pursue either the kind of stories or the kind of newsroom you want to work in. And so I generally advise people to keep themselves keep their eyes open to opportunities and not to be afraid to move around.

Some people have long careers at one point application. But I find that increasingly that's not the rule. It's more and more that people be flexible and be willing to try out new beats or new geographic places to be. Obviously, that's a limited right now. But in general, being willing to move to a different city or state or even a different country for an opportunity can be really helpful.

And for me, it certainly was, you know, when I moved to LA, I had no intention of ever living in LA, I grew up in Seattle, and we used to, like, part of the culture of Seattle's hating LA. And so I never thought I'd end up here, but I had an opportunity to have a real hard news beat, which is something I'd really wanted for a long time. And so I took it and dragged my whole, my, my, my wife and dog across

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the country at the time. None of none of them wanted, especially the dog wanted to be in LA. But you know, it provided me like new opportunities I wouldn't have had if I'd stayed in the current job I had.

And of course, you don't know, to possibly know what what if you hadn't done something, but I'm, it was a very rewarding risk to take. And I think being open to career risks is important, probably in most fields. But I think media, particularly I think, jumping into into things that you're not sure about, can be really rewarding. That was certainly true for me, when I went to BuzzFeed, a lot of people, the LA Times thought I was nuts to go there. But I was, I'm really happy with the choice I made, it's also been really interesting, and provided me a lot of opportunities and experiences, they just would have been impossible to print paper. So taking those risks have been great, the best answer, but that's the truth is just kind of closing your eyes and jumping into the unknown. A lot has been been great.

36:56 Winston Wilde

And the I think the fundamental question within your question was what what caused me to pursue the direction that I did think I always wanted to be in a profession that is, you know, suited to people who are communicators. But in what way, I had no idea. And I think it was Danielle, who kicked us off and talk about this, the just the process of trial and error, the fact that at Duke, and then immediately exiting, do try it all. You don't try the internships. I live in DC and DC does several things we do for profit work, we do nonprofit work, and we get the government sitting here.

So during my years of Duke, I actually didn't start looking for media jobs at all, I started working for a nonprofit advocacy group that dealt with, you know, clean water, because I care about that stuff. And I worked in their public affairs department. So it was communicating. And it was something I cared about. But after a summer of it, I just felt like let's try the next thing.

Segwayed over to the government. The next year, I worked for the FCC media, but within the government. And that didn't really suit me, it was a little too, too mundane there as well worked on the Hill where a lot of young people work here in DC. And by that point, I decided that government wasn't really the way to go. So you know, let's try media internships, because at the Sanford School at Duke, that's really kind of the only way you can pursue journalism as a minor.

Through the policy journalism certificate, started to build connections there. One of them was a former NBC White House reporter John Dancy, way, way back when. And he connected me with my first internship at NBC investigative unit work, lots of research, lots of hands on stuff, no, two days were the same. And after trial and error going through nonprofits and government, that's when I finally found the forum, and the love of the kind of communicating I wanted to do. And just to continue ruling stuff out my final year at Duke, I went to work at ABC 11, of the local station there in Durham, just to try to local news, too, because I don't know.

And now, you know, working in covering the President for NBC, you know, how did I engineer this whole plan to get to where I'm pursuing the direction I want to follow? I don't know necessarily that this is the direction I want to follow next, like I say, above all, when you're working in media, just to just kind of going flip off of what Ken just said, don't be afraid to take opportunities outside your city. Don't be afraid to take opportunities outside of kind of your line of work I'm producing now.

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But my first job out of out of working at NBC internships was to accept an assignment desk job down in Atlanta with the Weather Channel. Eva, when you asked your question, you talked about the variety of roles and hats we've all worn. Everyone on this panel has talked about it. Kind of the odd jobs and the opportunity that they seized when an opportunity presented itself.

Above all, in journalism, I say aim to be a Swiss army knife, aim to gain tools, trade skills, to make you more and more versatile. Because this business is changing every day, the model of kind of working with a network or a paper and just kind of climbing the totem pole for a whole career that that still exists. But it's exceedingly rare, and people hop around a lot. And I did not think for a second, that accepting a job on an assignment desk down south covering the weather for a living, when I received a degree out of Duke to cover politics as news out of the Sanford School, did I ever think that that was I was like, What am I doing here? But then, an old mentor of mine at NBC says that sometimes you don't pick the job that job picks you. And please just gain as much out of it as you can. And as you work in network news, local news on the TV side.

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Actually, any publication really, you learn the partnership that exists between any assignment desk and any any producer. It's like the assignment desk is out there gathering resources, kind of stocking the shelves at Costco, and the producers are the ones that put the cogent product, on television kind of taking stuff off the shelves as they need it, and putting it into the packages you see in the stories, right? And that you read. So everything, everything kind of adds a notch to your belt, everything adds a tool to your tool chest. And never be shy about even an opportunity that is it's it seems kind of off the beaten path in some way it will help you whether it be a person or a skill that you learn.

And I'll just say to close, that, you know, pursuing the direction in the job I'm in right now. There will be a life after President Trump and specifically for me, you know, do I want to cover you know, a Democratic president, a return to normalcy President, I've actually been thinking that maybe it's time to add another tool to the bill. In all the roles I've ever held, I've never worked in a control room. So maybe it's time to move to New York and get in the control room like Danielle gets in there every day. Like Mark sees his finished product with Bill Whitaker out of the control room. Maybe that's the next step. But everyone should kind of be asking those questions and continue to improve that versatility.

42:38 Eva Hong

Thank you so much. Those are great responses. Yeah, I definitely agree that I feel like as Dukies, we're all pressured to have this spreadsheet for like to map out our next 10 years. They're really just honestly, for me, I didn't think about doing anything in journalism before coming to Duke. And now I'm all a media person having done journalism, also film took Karen's and documentary class, I see you there. Yeah. But I really I think nothing ultimately goes to waste. Everything you learn is ultimately going to help you at one corner or the next. So yeah, thank you so much.

43:19 Sarah Derris

Yeah, definitely. I definitely echo all that you said. I guess shifting gears a little bit. I feel like a lot of people here are probably interested in how the current pandemic is sort of affecting the outlook of the

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industry right now. Or maybe even your like particular rules, how maybe your particular roles have been adjusted? So directing this question to Mangesh and Erica, both of you work in sort of different sectors of the media industry, in a sense, Mangesh you work in podcasting. And Erica, you're news director. But how do you both feel that or how do you think I guess the impact of the pandemic will affect the future of the industry? Sort of how you're experiencing it? .

44:13 Mangesh Hattikudur

Sure. I feel really lucky that I've stumbled into podcasting. And and it's, you know, it's a medium that only a third of Americans were listening to, you know, really indulging in so there was a lot of space to grow and, and a lot of audience to still come to this medium. But I think that I mean, we also have been lucky in that it's easy to podcast from where you are, it's, you know, a very democratic format, like it's, you can self publish pretty easily.

So, I think that, you know, our listening has been up, our advertising hasn't actually slowed and so it's a strange place to be. But I think that What we have noticed is that the shows that are doing best are the ones that provide a real surface, a real service to people and ends up being that provides real comfort.

And, and so I, I think people are either veering a lot to news or or they're doing the things that, that feel the real intimacy of this medium. And, and unlike a video or when I was on various things like, there were so many types of media that are just getting screamed at you constantly. And this is so intentional, that that the people who are here are not only like, figuring out where in their day to listen to a podcast, right? Like, it's like I listened while I walk my dog or I listen while I'm doing the dishes, but then, but it actually becomes a habit. And so for us, it's been a pretty great spot to be in despite the real difficulties in the climate.

45:56 Erica Henry

And for us, you know, everyone that knows about journalism and about news, it's all about collaboration. And it's all about, you know, like a working newsroom. I mean, I mean, we work, you know, two feet from one another. And so, on a Friday, we were told that we would be working home on a Monday, and that just changed everything.

And also, it changed technology. And so, you know, a lot of reporters who were used to being out in the field when we didn't know what this pandemic was, we told everyone that they will be working from home. And so they're basically doing live shots on WebEx, which is very similar to Zoom. So, you know, with tech technology had to change and technology had to catch up. And so now we have people who are line producing shows from home. We have people who are directing shows from home. And so that's just so a whole new way of thinking and never, when I when I signed up to be an assignment editor, when I signed up to be a segment producer. And now even in this role that I have now, never did I ever think that I would be doing my job working from home.

And you know, we're not going back and anytime soon into a building. So we've had to actually think of the way we work and collaborate with each other. And so, you know, with my team, I'm doing, um, WebEx meetings twice a day. So we can have pitch meetings, and so we can dole out assignments and things like that. So that's one of the things that have changed.

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And then also, just, and I'm sure you see it on when with reporters who are going out and covering the news, I mean, we have to social distance, and we have to pertain to the rules and the ordinances of cities of states. And you know, and it varies and place at a place like Florida, for instance, it varies from county to county. So you could be in Broward, or Miami Dade, where you have to wear a mask, and then you can go over to the county next door, and you don't have to wear a mask.

So it's it's constantly keeping current with all of the local, the local jurisdictions and what's going on there. And then, as journalists, everyone is looking at us, so you want to make sure that you are what you preach. And for journalists, that was really, really hard, because in order to get a motion, you want to get up close and personal. And now you see people, you know, conducting interviews with a boom mic, or you saw, you know, when ABC News was interviewing the President, and they were sitting like, you know, eight feet apart, or something like that, and so it's just changed the whole way in which we cover news, and now, you know, I'll share a secret with you guys, you know, sometimes, you know, we're doing live shots with our iPhone 11 because the camera is so good.

But um, you know, that's how we're shooting our live shots now, because, you know, we're sending people and when we have teams, with two and three people, we're now sending one person because we're trying to make our thumbprint a lot smaller when we are covering stories. And so it's just a completely different way of thinking about how you cover the news.

49:09 Mangesh Hattikudur

Yeah, but I mean, I I agree with that, like in terms of like, just the incredible ways a phone can be used for podcasting certainly, like it's remarkable what good quality you can actually produce from from the things right around you. The other thing that is that the pandemic is put a stress on, it's reminded people the worth of news right and, and, and the worth of quality. And after journalists have been under such attack for such a while you realize just from local to all types of news, how necessary all of it is.

49:44 Erica Henry

And just to jump on that point. It's so important because there's, you know, without naming names or saying anything, there's so much information that's getting out there, that's just not accurate. And you know, as journalists, we feel it's our responsibility to set the record straight, and to get to get the information out.

So what people were saying earlier is, you know, this is absolutely a calling. And I think people feel so even more now. And it's just so important that we do get the right information out there. And we tell people that it's not safe to, you know, I'm in Georgia. So I will speak for, you know, I will use Georgia as an example. You know, it was too early to open Georgia when they did when you know, for a fact that cases are still increasing.

So, you know, it is our duty to make sure people are aware with, you know, what reputable institutions like who and the CDC are saying, and to make sure that people are, they have all of the information, I'm not telling you to stay inside, I, you know, it's my job to make sure that when you go outside, and

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you go to Publix, or you go to Target that you have all the information so that you could make, you know, an informed decision that that, you know, not only is for you, but then ultimately is for your family.

And that's what was one of the things when you know, when governors were saying it's okay to open schools. Well, yeah, but schools are also you know, schools also employ, you know, maybe children are okay. But schools also employ people over 65. Schools also employ people with compromising position.. compromising immune systems. And then when these children go home, they're going home to their grandmothers, and they're going home to their parents who may have, you know, a compromised immune system. So you just can't open the school because children aren't getting Coronavirus, which is not true. You know. And so those are the things that we just have to make sure that everybody knows when they're making the decisions that they're making.

51:48 Sarah Derris

Yeah, yeah, thank you so much. It's definitely a really strange and kind of frightening time. But it has been really fascinating to see how news outlets have been adapting, as well as other media outlets have been adapting to this. We are sort of running low on time, but we do have a few more questions for our panelists. So to all of our guests, we do hope that you can stay with us. And yeah, we'll just keep going forward.

52:19 Eva Hong

Yeah, um, it's great to hear all your advice and responses. So shifting gears a little bit. The next question I'd like to direct to Ken and Maria, our two writers on panel. So looking back at your career have there been times where you have to look for a side hustle to make can't make ends meet? And if so, any tips for writers looking for these kind of side hustles? And also, how do you manage the time between doing these side hustles and also working toward your ultimate career goal? And also for aspiring writers? Do you need an agent to get published?

53:09 - Maria Kuznetsova

Yeah. So I would say most of my life has been a side hustle until very recently, until my book was sold like two years ago. So I started out of Duke, I went to a master's program for two years, and then in creative writing, and then for about six years, you know, I did SAT tutoring, adjuncting, you know, like reading essays, reading manuscripts, reading applications to things, I'm teaching creative writing summer camps. And then I worked at wikiHow, for two years, that how to article writing company, I did kind of all these things while, you know, with the goal of finishing a novel.

And so, you know, I just kind of treated that, like my real job, and everything else was just there to serve that even if I only got to do it, like one hour, every morning, I just kind of told myself that that's what I was doing the whole time.

And so while my, you know, other Duke friends were having, you know, more fancy jobs and moving to New York and kind of working for different publications like GQ, and Entertainment Weekly, and all those kinds of things. That's kind of the path that I took the dubious path that I took. And so I kind of, you know, to kind of get through that and to stay focused, I mentioned having a community earlier,

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that was really important. I had readers kind of read my work helped me along the way, I started submitting my work to publications, and so that kind of got the ball rolling, and I just tried to stay patient and then after a while, you know, like eight years of hard writing, I got accepted to the Iowa writers workshop, and that was kind of when people listened when I when I tried to, you know, submit my work.

Suddenly, it opened up this whole network of people that I kind of began at Duke, that who, you know, actually were interested in reading my novel. So between those points, I wrote two books that I couldn't get agent for and then came to Iowa with a third book. And that was kind of where I met my agent and where I sold a book and then was able to use that to become an assistant professor. So, so I kind of had basically all my 20s were a side hustle. And then to the question about getting an agent, I would say, if you could publish short stories, you know, in literary journals without an agent, and that can get an agent's attention. And you can go to an MFA program that can get an agent's attention. And you could, like, I have a friend who just she submitted a short story manuscript to, you know, a university press contest, and it will be published without an agent. But that is kind of the way to getting an agent, I think, it is important to publish a book.

55:48 Ken Bensinger

So, when I was, you know, in terms of side hustles, there was a time when I was in Mexico, freelancing where I was really had just minimal income. It was a bit of a struggle, I mean, Mexico City back back, this city is kind of glamorous. Now, I think there was a little bit gritty, not as popular place to live in like, 2001 to 2005 area when I was there, but it was also super affordable. And so I could make ends meet, but I was probably I mean, one year, I think I my entire income was like, you know, under a few \$1,000 for the whole year. So, and I was stringing for places that were paying 10 cents, 10 cents a word or less.

So, and to those of you I mean, some of that, to me, that's gonna sound familiar, but for those of you who don't know, a lot of print outlets will pay you by the word as a freelancer. And so we would try to make ends meet by and this was it was internet, but not like it is now. So he would try to sell this same story to multiple outlets, right. So that was like a classic stringer overseas trick was to sell like, yeah, to sell an article to the Portland Oregonian and also to the Christian Science Monitor, and also to the Atlanta Journal Constitution. And that would be a way to, to, like, you know, turn a nickel into a dime. But things got pretty rough one year, and I started selling tequila in Mexico as a side hustle. So I started buying bulk tequila, bottling it and then selling it for a while, which ultimately was not a path to riches for me. Mainly because my my key salesman was giving it away. Like you'd take it to parties, and you're supposed to do now get people to want to buy it, but he was constantly giving it away. And I think, you know, getting high and his own supply, as they say.

So so that that's ultimately what worked was finding a staff job somewhere back in the states where I could, I could have a better income. And then writing a book became a side hustle for me to sense because I still had my job at BuzzFeed and had to take a leave as another panelist here Maureen mentioned, I took a leave of absence from BuzzFeed to write the book. And in the middle of that some big news happened that dragged me back into work.

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So I was balancing, reporting and writing a book with covering what I thought was the biggest story of my life at the time, although someone else pointed out now Coronavirus, probably has eclipsed that. So, so I couldn't tell what my side hustle and my real real hustle was at that point. But and since then the book has kind of continued to be a thing where every once in a while, there's there's opportunities to, to make a couple of cents here and there or, or to have career opportunities through the through the book through speaking or talking about it, and not getting rich by any means. But certainly meeting people and traveling and that's interesting.

As far as the agent goes, I don't think for me, it would have been possible to sell the book without it. I just think that for selling a book, it's a huge advantage. It's kind of a cliquish world, probably Maria would agree with me on this, that you know, book people know each other, most of them not all of them are in New York, and they have like lunch together all the time. And they're intensely aware of their universe and not like super open to like outside or just barging in and selling a book. So it's it's much more about getting an agent and having them do the work for you to sell, sell a book. It's frustrating because you know, they get 15% You're like 50% of all this sweat and effort and energy I put into this. And all they did was like have, you know, like lunch with two people and like, sit in a couple meetings. But unfortunately, that's kind of how it works.

And what's even worse is then if something if something great happens with your book and you you sell a movie option or something, they get some of that too, and they didn't do anything to do that. So that's sort of the world that's how that works. But that's why you can look for more side hustles a lot of journalists for what it's worth, teach as a side hustle. Some dude is a full time hustle. My former boss quit BuzzFeed to become a journalism professor at USC, and we just found out two days ago, he's coming back to now be the editor of all of BuzzFeed. So that's kind of a that's a thing that happens that people use what they pick up in journalism to teach other people. And it's also frequent that people do adjunct teaching for journalism.

1:00:28 My little last piece of wisdom on that is that every single person I know that has done an adjunct journalism class has sat down afterwards and done the math and figured out that they that it wasn't economically worth it.

And they would have been better off like driving an Uber in terms of the time commitment. But I think that that adjunct professor, professor, shed those tea, that teaching has other benefits that maybe are not measured in financial ways, and it's pretty cool to do. So that's another thing that a lot of people explore as a way to sort of stay keep their hands in the game and, and support support their passion in journalism.

1:01:07 Sarah Derris

I think that for anybody pursuing a job in media, it could very well be that having a side hustle is a reality. And I thank you guys for sharing kind of your experience with that. Our next question is for Mangesh and Marc, given the reduction of internship and job opportunities right now. What's your advice for students and alumni starting their own initiatives or creative projects to further their career development? Maybe for Mangesh specifically? How is the podcast landscape changed with more

Transcript

people recording podcasts from their closets and kitchens? It seems like everyone wants to have a podcast these days, what makes a podcast successful in such a saturated market?

1:01:53 Mangesh Hattikudur

Yeah, I can, I can only talk about podcasts. I will say that we started Mental Floss as juniors at college and then put our first publication on Barnes and Nobles as seniors and and, and I ran that company for like, 17 years, and, and we couldn't have done it without a lot of support from Duke and looking for where there was money on campus.

Like, there's, there's so much if you start talking about starting your own initiative, I do think that there's, like, we realized that every department at the time had little pockets of money to spend on things and so so. So we went to every head of every department said, like, you know, if you like chemistry, like it's gonna be represented in this magazine, you know, and, and could you give us a small amount and so the first both the first issue we did on campus and and half of what went to the first national issue where we're very supported by Duke, and I think there's so much money for like little grants and little things that you don't even realize, like and you have time, like, it's really worth taking the time to, like try to explore and pick your professors brains for for what is available.

But, um, but in terms of podcasts, I think that I, it is saturated, everyone's trying to hop in into the space, my inbox is flooded with pitches. Um, but that I think that it doesn't mean that I don't look for like, I'm always looking for something unusual a story I haven't heard or or, like someone else was saying, like the people who have unusual niches, they're occupying a different space.

And so um, there was a Duke grad, I think, '08, Rajiv Golla, who pitched me and, and, and he was in Uganda, and he was covering this Renee Bach story, which is about, like a missionary who, it's, it's a bit of a tragic story, but but it's really interesting. And, and, and he pitched cold, and we really liked it. And we saw that it was a story that could be optioned, we saw the potential in the story. And, and so even though he'd never done podcast before, that show will launch next Friday. And so, you know, it's, there are still opportunities. It's just you have to, I think both. And he came in asking, I think when you come in ask him for advice, and and but have a pitch in your back pocket, but that's really helpful.

And to Maureen's point, like, you know, those relationships, I've definitely followed students in their career as they've gone on. And when people have good ideas, I'm still willing to listen, you know, and so, I think that, um, the market is saturated, but people are always looking for good quality. So sorry, I realize I'm talking too much.

The other thing I'll say just before I get off, is that like, I think everyone's looking for instant success, and that isn't how it works. You know, like, I think that you can start a podcast and build slowly and and and it'll grow through word of mouth, you know, and, and feeding that relationship with the listener or the customer, you know, and and whether it's interacting with them or whether it's, you know, what, whatever it is, that can make them feel heard and make them evangelize your product. You know, and, and having a sincerity there, I think will, will ultimately grow a podcast

1:05:27 Marc Lieberman

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Well, I would pick up on something that Winston said a little while ago, which is the sort of the, the tool belt idea, which is, you know, right now you have an opportunity to really learn tools, if you don't know how to edit or you don't know, or you can learn how to shoot, you know, you've got a camera in your phone. You know, you can pick up on tools that if you do get into the workforce, when you get into the workforce, in a newsroom, you'll be able to use that. Or you can try to sell yourself with some of those things that you'll know, you know how to do some of these things, the technology is there for you to tell a story.

And so you can go in and try your hand at it. And you know, one of the things about this situation is that because the story is everywhere, you have an opportunity to cover it in your backyard. And I work before I got to 60 Minutes, I worked in breaking news, pretty much my entire career.

And before, right before I came to 60 Minutes, I was a producer in the Los Angeles Bureau for the evening news. For many years, and, you know, we we like Erica, like Erica's Bureau, we covered the western US, you know, it was like 14 states or something like that. And if news broke somewhere, we didn't have people in every state.

So if you happen, you know, if you're paying attention to the news, and you know, something pops in your area, and, you know, you can call an assignment desk and say, you know, I can get over there now. And I can find out what's happening, I can scope things out for you, you know, you can offer your services, we used to hire freelance producers all the time. So, you know, I guess my two pieces of advice would be, you know, try to jump on news, if it's happening in your area and offer your services to a place that you might want to work, you know, find an interesting angle or find an interesting story, and pitch it and, and then just sort of try to learn as many tools as you can, so that you have them at the ready.

1:07:29 Eva Hong

Yeah, I think that's a very important question, because a lot of people are probably facing the reality of a reduction of opportunities, or looking for something to do at home. The next question is for Danielle and Marie, and it's like a follow up with the previous questions. But aside from kind of individual, maybe reporting you can do in your backyard? What online resources, or books and films would you recommend that people check out during this time to kind of further develop, develop their career? And to just learn more? And specifically for Maureen, how have you acquired the knowledge and skill set to do more specialized reporting? For example, I know you do kind of initial IPOs and capital markets, and that requires specialized knowledge.

1:08:25 Maureen Farrell

So I was an English major at Duke. I was did art history, it was very liberal arts focused. My only, like, economics class at all was Marxism. Like, about as close as I got to economics and was like, I have no interest in like banking. No offense to anyone but I thought it was like kind of evil, that people wanted to go to Wall Street. So it's so it's weird to be covering it now.

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But I have very little background, and I basically worked for like a think tank for two years out of college really wanted to go into journalism, but couldn't find my didn't know how to get started even though I had these internships. So I went to Columbia for journalism school.

And then I basically got out and was looking at a lot of different things. And there's this new trade publication called Mergermarket. That had just started and it covered M&A. And I like, barely knew what a merger was. I had to kind of look it up as I went there. So I really kind of stumbled into the job. But I was my loans were coming due so I figured I should just get started. So I always thought I wanted to help cover politics, but I really completely stumbled into journalism into business journalism.

And on some levels, I think it was nice being a pure outsider because you can look, I felt like it opened, you know, looked at things differently, realized how fascinating it was to me and like how many different areas it kind of touched on, like, you know, following the money movements. So, I mean, it's it was just a very much on the job learning there's this book called Barbarians at the Gates.

I remember, one of my editors gave to me, and it was like the whole reading about like the takeover of Nabisco back in the 80s, or 90s 80s, I think. And anyway, I just read a lot of talk to people ask a lot of stupid questions, people are very nice. And talk to me anyway. So yeah, to cover it, it's been, you know, it's just been a lot of kind of trial and error, but you just build up the base of knowledge and taking a lot of time to read and just talk to people.

And I think there is a certain level whether it's in business or politics or anything, you know, you as a journalist, you need the guides, anyway. You know, you come in you're, you're armed with a certain amount of knowledge, but you need a whole lot of different types of people to guide you. You're always going kind of open-endedly asking questions, and you don't know where it's going to take you. So anyway, that's kind of how I got into business. And so far from anything I even could have imagined that I would have found interesting. When I graduated from Duke get, it's been such a fun ride. And just very quickly, in terms of what you could do online now, I mean, you've so much time to read, time to write, uh, but, you know, there's like, anything that I think you have a little bit of an interest in, whether it's I don't know, like photography, or even graphic design, there's so many different tools you could bring to the table, if you're interested in them that could benefit you. And there's like a million different resources, Coursera, or, I would say, sort of let that guide you.

1:12:08 Danielle Genet

Yeah, so I'm pivoting off of Maureen. When I graduated Duke, I didn't have a job, unlike my fellow peers, who are, you know, going into law or whatever it may be finance. And what I did was, you know, I took the time to really focus on the areas that I was interested in. So let's say I was, you know, interested in Good Morning America, I was watching Good Morning America, every single day, I was, you know, trying to, if you could find scripts, read scripts, see how people are writing.

So you can start to learn how people's writing styles are. So then you can start to figure out how you want to write how you want to craft your own writing style. So I would say just like really consume the content that you're interested in from a few different sources to reputable sources. And then, you know, prepare, if you have an interview, if you're talking to an alumni or a professor, prepare for those

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conversations like it was a final, so become very read in on the materials that you know who the anchors are, or the stories they cover so that you can come prepared with topics that are relevant to the stories that that show that podcast may be talking about. So I would just really say like stay informed, and also as part of being a journalist asking a lot of questions. So when you're around the dinner table, seeing what people are interested in, what are people talking about, it just makes you more informed when you go out for those interviews that you could bring to the table.

1:13:48 Sarah Derris

Thank you so much. This is absolutely a great time for individuals to continue reading from, I mean, not only the sources that they love, but maybe even the sources that you know, they heard from under other individuals and just continue building their, like skill set and knowledge.

Before we continue, I do want to say that we do have two more questions before we wrap thanks to everyone for sticking around. And thank you so much to our panelists.

For Winston and Sarah, we'd love to hear an example of a story you're currently working on. What does working from home look like for you during this time? How has it changed your day to day process in which stories or prioritize? Sarah, How do you build and maintain trust within your community as a local reporter, and Winston, as a White House producer, how does inherent partisanship affect your role as a White House producer additionally?

1:15:09 Sarah Krueger

So you all are looking right now at where I spend like 80% of my day now. This is where I do most of my interviews, I do probably 95% of my interviews on Zoom, and just screen record them. And then I email that file to the photographer and editor that I'm working with for the day. And he edits it together. And then we drive separately me from my house him from the office, to meet up at our live shot location and do the live shot and say goodbye.

So I never thought as a journalist, I would be someone who was able to work from home. And so while the circumstances are, of course, terrible circumstances, it's been an interesting perspective to start working from home and realizing that I still have no free time, like I had all these expectations of like, Oh, I'm going to do the laundry and like, cook all my meals all. No, I just ate a frozen pizza. I had to put my video on mute, because that's my life.

Um, but it's Yeah, so let me think back to the questions, how has it changed your day to day process? Yeah, so I do have to pitch stories every day. But in these times, there's just a wealth of stories. So that has not been an issue, what's been more of an issue is figuring out which ones to do, because there's just not enough time in the day to do all of them. But I operate very much on a day to day basis. So like, I don't know what I'll be doing tomorrow. And that's the norm.

So I start my day at nine and I wrap it up by six and put a bow on my story. And then the next day is a new day. So I've been doing a lot of stories about you know, city stay at home orders, local stay at home orders versus state stay at home orders today I did a story about concert venues and how they're planning to reopen and what that will look like.

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And then to answer the last part of the question about building trust, I would say that, especially in local television news, there are a lot of people who are constantly trying to climb the ladder. So they'll go to one city for two years, and then move on and move on. And I think, you know, while that is something that is a reality, and that happens, I think it does show when there's someone who is actually invested in the community.

And I'm really invested in Durham, obviously went to Duke back at Duke again, my husband went to Duke, then he went to Duke again. And we love living in Durham, we bought a house in Durham. I've been working at my current station for about four years, which is a longish time, surprisingly, in local TV news for reporters. So I think that's how I've been able to work on building trust is just by showing like, Hey, I'm not just your reporter, like I'm your neighbor. And this is my home too. And I love it. And I'm looking out for you all and for the best for all of us. So if you can find a place you love to live and find a job you love, it's just ideal.

1:18:21 Winston Wilde

So part of me is actually kind of worried that, you know, executives of all types are going to start to see how we're working now and how we're doing a real yeoman's job, because news is being consumed a lot more than we're used to at least in terms of TV ratings.

NBC Nightly News is getting almost like 1.5 the viewership it used to averaging like over 10 million viewers newscast, as people are just really really digesting news, and we're doing this huge story. Basically, all from our homes. And, you know, the economy's kind of suffering all across the board and executives will start to take notice, I think of how we've been able to tread water in this way with the staffing where it is the furloughs and the hours cut down.

So you know, it's actually going to be kind of weird when stuff gets back to normal. And when there's not a need for me to be at the White House physically, or on a plane going to a campaign rally or something. The idea of going back to NBC's Bureau is going to be foreign to me, do I have to have to go all the way in or can I just continue to you know, watch everything from my pajamas. So I don't know what that's gonna look like afterwards, as people make those decisions way, way, way above me, but it's been a pretty it's been a pretty cool process to be able to have the functionality that I need to follow the President and everyone at the White House from my from my living room. Just...Maybe a helpful thing is to just kind of put it in perspective. Like we'll take a take a little example of, you know, Kellyanne Conway or something is on is on was on Fox today talking to Harris Faulkner about bunch of bunch of topics.

01:20:18

And, you know, hey, Winston, make sure that you can, you can tell everyone what went on in that interview. And then so that we know what's what's important and what's not. So I'm on my couch. I have my TV on. And I'm watching Kellyanne talk to talk on Fox, taking notes as it's going along. And I have one of my mobile devices, recording every word she's saying on Fox, so one device is kind of auto transcribing what she's saying, on Fox. And on the other phone. I have a video that's showing, you

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know, live stream on the stakeout camera outside the West Wing, to the one she's done on Fox, and she just walks right over to that camera. It's like she walks from Fox's screen onto my phone screen for the stakeout.

And then I take that other phone that I was using, and I just start auto transcribing from the stakeout. And I'm on my laptop, taking notes on everything she's saying that's noteworthy. And then I turn out the news so that people can take the, you know, 40 minutes of time on Fox and at the stakeout that Kellyanne just said and digested into what you need to know. And we did that for the President several times today. We were going to be doing it for Pence is on Hannity right now. I don't have to do that, obviously, because I'm here, but someone is in our team.

And just the functionality of being able to do this at all, all at home is it's been it's been pretty mind blowing. As for as for the second question about how, as a producer, kind of how does the inherent very partisan climate affect what I do? You just kind of have to what I have to remind myself of is that the relationship with the press in in past presidencies. It's, maybe in some ways, it was more simpatico, because even though no president likes a negative headline, at least when the negative headline comes out, and you read the you read the copy in the paper, you watch the report on television and you're hearing facts presented to you, you go well, can't argue with the facts. This is a different climate with a president who likes to disregard and disrespect the press, especially when he perceives a report to be negative or unfair.

01:22:46

You just kind of have to keep doing your job and kind of stay above all that. Because the second you start to say, you know, well, how can you get accusatory and say like, How can you say that our reporting is, you know, these anonymous sources are fake or they don't exist, then you start to inject yourself into the story. And that's, that's just not constructive for anyone involved. So you kind of have to just kind of call the balls and strikes, as you see them, present them as the facts, you see them, and the administration will dispute it. But, you know, that's that's the right. That's the prerogative.

But every news organization that I've I've worked with has a very rigorous process of checking and double checking with multiple people and not just relying on hearsay, or single hand information from a single source, I should say. And just keep in mind that every President's relationship with the press has been adversarial. This is just it feels like a slightly different time, but you were doing your job. If I had a producer colleagues tells me this, who works out of the Pentagon, you're doing your job, if you've put a story that you know, you've rigorously checked out there, and someone from your beat in an official capacity sends you a pissed off email afterwards, you've done your job, because you're holding them accountable. So the long and short of it is that's that's what I would say.

1:24:18 Eva Hong

Thank you. Yeah, I definitely think that journalists jobs are now more important than ever. Yeah. And so finally, our last question, sorry about the time over.

Transcript

This one is for Maria and Marco. So Sarah and I are working at The Chronicle know that, at least for the Chronicle. We're cutting a lot of printing days and mostly moving everything towards a digital first model.

And we're wondering if that's the general trend in this industry for a major news outlets, and because of that are media companies looking for it? A significantly different skill set involving more at this kind of digital production skills. And would you recommend Duke students, current undergrads developing those kind of skills to be a better candidate in the job market?

1:25:19 Marco Werman

We've had an interesting evolution with the digital first at the world because as a public radio program, we are kind of de facto, a radio show first. But we always had kind of the world.org as a website that was really kind of representing the show. But also, if you wanted to, you could listen to the show at theworld.org. A lot of that has changed.

With podcasting, we've been podcasting the show, in a kind of, you know, so that's slightly digital. But the challenge has been over the last 10 years to integrate both the the web team and the radio team into one single newsroom. And we occupy literally the same space, although we don't now, because everybody's off site.

We acquired through WGBH, an international newspaper called Global Post, which was based in Boston. For a number of years, we brought them they were they were digital only, and we brought them into the newsroom. So that kind of forced our hand and trying to figure out how to incorporate theworld.org. And the world itself as a radio show. That has become much more successful. And we have found kind of like the the website will pick up and do completely different stories from what we do on the radio. And that's just become more and more integrated over the past four years or so.

In terms of skill set, I mean, the the skill set for radio is simply you've got a really high quality tape recorder, which these are all digital recorder flash recorder these days, which is, you know, 200 bucks, a decent microphone is 200 bucks, and you're off and running. Since COVID-19.

Just a side note, all the radio reporters I know in the Boston area, have done a rush on a hockey sticks, they take the mic to the end of the stick, and that's about six feet. So that's where all the hockey sticks have gone. And in the Boston area.

The skill set, you know, digital photography, digital audio, video, all of that was not non existent when I left Duke, you either picked radio, TV or print and you kind of went for that. So the skill set has changed. I would say, you know, the basics kind of remain the same. It's get it first but get it right. We all need to be able to work on deadlines, journalist daily, weekly, whatever your deadline is and getting the facts right. That hasn't changed at all.

I guess in terms of my big question is like what now in terms of skill set, because, again, you know, where I'm speaking from is where I did the whole show today, as I've been doing for the past six weeks, is this kind of going is this current workflow going to be the permafrost going to be in permafrost now?

Transcript

How much of this are we going to keep? And how much of this is going to demand new skill sets? Or maybe jobs will be eliminated.

I just saw a clip the other day of a BBC correspondent in Mumbai, and he would get his grandmother to run the lights and the camera for him as he said that. So it's like, do we really need, you know, high paid high skilled people? I mean, I would argue yes, because otherwise, the whole profession, the whole industry is going to collapse.

But you know, I we have people who are doing local TV shows on WGBH. They usually have a crew of like, 10 people, they're doing it all by themselves now. So that then leads to the question, how much more are, you know, big media corporations going to consolidate? And how much are smaller ones going to kind of disappear? I know right now, there's a big panic among small public radio stations, local fundraising, local underwriting has dried up in the last six weeks. That's the money they use to buy programs like ours. So what does that mean? So those are the skills that I'm kind of worried about right now. Um. Yeah.

1:29:27 Maureen

These are some of the skills that you all will have, especially the people who were undergrads now. You naturally will be so much further ahead of like me, and, you know, a lot of people in the newsroom just what you have at your disposal and the things you do on a day to day basis.

But I think I still think at the end of the day, the more important skill set is to be like a really good storyteller or a good writer and a good you know, really like scrupulous about your fact checking and a good, a good communicator, a good you know, sourcing, like building connections with your sources and making people trust you. Sarah, I thought your point was really important, like just being trusted in your community, like you need to be trusted by your sources.

I think no matter there are other skills that are, are good to have. But I think if you don't have those, I mean, some one thing at the Wall Street Journal is like, the like the word correction is like the like the most terrifying words you could ever, like, hear like having to correct something. It's like, there's some level of like being detail oriented. That I think all that comes first and is so important and finding good exciting stories. And the the great thing I think right now is like there isn't this divide that there used to be in terms of like, are you going to be a print reporter? Are you going to be going to be on radio? Do you want to be on TV?

It's such an exciting time to be if you could tell a good story. You can go I mean, the Wall Street Journal, now you write, I mostly write, but I write a story. And then now we have our daily show The Journal, you go on. And it's really I mean, we've a really amazing team. And you know, that does all the legwork and draws you out telling your story to the producers. And yeah, and then there's TV opportunities. So I think it's just exciting. But I do think this, the most important skill set is the storytelling being really careful developing sources, and everything else is gravy.

01:31:51

Transcript

But if there's also if there's stuff that you really like, I mean, newsrooms do want innovation, we have a whole innovation team and almost other newsrooms do. So if you're, if you're really talented at graphics, and have these ideas, you'll be you'll be have, I think, a lot of opportunities to do that to a huge and a big asset to the newsroom. So I think there is a certain to a certain extent, your other, your additional talents, depending on what they are and what your interests are, you can find places to deploy them within a newsroom.

1:32:27 Sarah Derris

Thank you so much. And thank you so much to all of our panelists. It's been an incredible opportunity to be able to hear from all of you this evening. We hope you all stay safe and well and thank you again for coming.

OUTRO: Dave Karger 57:28

That's it for this episode of DEMAN Live. I'm DAVE KARGER, DEMAN is a signature program of Duke Arts and Duke Alumni Engagement and Development. Follow DEMAN on social and stay updated at DukeDEMAN.com, that's d e m a n.com where you can find our full archive of episodes. Thanks so much for joining us. See you next time.

This episode was produced by me, Lilly Clark, in collaboration with Hear at Duke, Duke's student run podcast hub. Our theme song is "Carolina" by Cameron Tompkins.

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