



MakeYourStory

A Collaboration of Purdue Libraries and School of Information Studies and
The Brian Lamb School of Communication

Episode 2: How to Conduct Interesting and Authentic Interviews

SH: Sarah Huber
AB: Annette Bochenek
KL: Kristen Lopez

KL: I mean, I definitely used to be of the mind of like, I'm going to wing it. I'm just going to sit down and get on the phone with this person. And sometimes that yields great conversations, but eventually as I would go on now, I would notice that, how did I not know this about this person? Why didn't I ask them this? Because I hadn't researched and written questions down. So what I usually do is like the day before, you know, really scour, IMDB, past interviews and create a list of at least, you know, a dozen questions where I'm like, if I run out of time, if I don't know what to say, because there's always this concept of, if you're formulating a question while you're listening to them, you're missing out on the possibility of taking something they're saying and asking a question off of that. You know, you're not, you're only paying half attention because you're trying to make sure there's no dead space as you're trying to figure out what the question is.

AB: Hello and welcome to *MakeYourStory*, Episode 2: How to conduct interesting and authentic interviews. So at this point you've done your research, you know, the background information about the person you are interviewing for your podcast episode, but now what? How will you foster an engaging, genuine conversation with the person you're interviewing? In this episode, we will speak with Kristen Lopez from IndieWire about tips for interviewing people. This series is a collaboration between the Purdue libraries and School of Information Studies and the College of Liberal Arts' Communication program. My name is Anne Bochenek and I'm an assistant professor of library science. I'm Sarah Hubert, assistant professor of library science.

Joining us today is our special guest. Kristen Lopez. Kristen has been an entertainment writer, film critic, and a pop culture essayist for 12 years. Her work has been published on Forbes, MTV and the Hollywood Reporter, among other places. And she holds a master's in English from California state university Sacramento. In her free time, she podcasts and spends her days bingeing on Turner classic movies. And thank you so much for joining us today, Kristen.

KL: Thank you so much for inviting me. This is going to be awesome.

AB: We're so happy to have you. I guess, really to start things off, tell us a little bit about your work with IndieWire.

KL: Yeah, I am the TV editor there, which generally just means I watch a lot of TV. I do a lot of reviewing trailer posts, interviewing people, so kind of a Jack of all trades type of position that

allows me to be writing about a hot new show one minute, and then maybe talking about representation the next. So it keeps me on my toes.

AB: And then you too have also launched into the world of podcasting. You have your podcast series, ticklish business, some collaborators as well. And can you tell us a little bit about that podcast too?

KL: Yeah. So we're, we've been doing this about, I think, five years. If we haven't crossed the five-year mark, we are going to. It's a show aimed at something that I wanted to do for a long time where I was spending so much time back when I started it talking about contemporary movies. And I didn't really have a lot of opportunities to talk about classic films because there's still very much a mentality in entertainment writing where it's about what's timely and a movie made in 1930 isn't necessarily timely. It's not something you can write about on a Tuesday just for laughs. So I wanted to do a podcast that was aimed at classic film at the time classic film podcasting was not a big thing. Now there are so many amazing classic film podcasts, but it was an opportunity to both stretch my talents as a creator and a producer. And at the same time talk about something that I wanted to make timely and accessible. So illustrating why these movies can be relevant to people and should be seen as opposed to just kind of considering them passé and at times goneby.

AB: I wanted to talk a little bit about, um, your work on these two fronts, now with IndieWire and Ticklish Business, uh, both very different in terms of what you cover and kind of how you approach things. Do you feel as far as interviewing goes that your interview style differs at all when you are in your kind of IndieWire mode versus Ticklish Business?

KL: It does a little bit, you know at IndieWire, there is far more of a stringent need to kind of find an angle. So you, you find the angle before you do the interview, right? And the hope is that you're tailoring the questions to specifically look at that angle. With Ticklish Business. It's more, we're just happy to have these people talking about their expertise. So really the angle is they're interesting. The person is interesting. And sometimes that also happens in an IndieWire story. You know, where I'll be talking about the fact that this person has broken barriers and thus that person's story is the angle itself and why we should be talking about them. I've done, I've done great interviews for them, especially, especially looking at disabled performers or Latino performers and talking about their strides in the industry is the reason for why we're writing this and why we're talking to them. Ticklish Business is a bit, it's a bit more conversational. It's more of this person is awesome. They're in the sphere that we're looking at. So why not talk to them about that time? I always say with Ticklish Business, the goal is to kind of create a time capsule. You know, it's the sad fact of our show is that a lot of these people are older, you know, and, and there is this timeliness of getting it down before it's too late. Um, which I know sounds terrible, but that's really our goal. You know, we want to talk to them about these stories before they're lost to time. Whereas, whereas in an IndieWire story, it's far more current, you know, it's, it's right here and right now.

AB: Yeah, that's awesome. I think it's, it's so important to document those stories at any point and especially before it's too late.

KL: Exactly. Exactly. And we've been, you know, especially with Ticklish Business, there's been some moments where, you know, it becomes the mortality angle becomes a lot, you know, we, we interviewed Ed Asner back in July and the interview is not out yet, but, but it was something where he passed, you know, just, just recently. And so, you know, we were sitting there looking at this, this audio file that we have, you know, and, and I think that that really does kind of galvanize, especially with Ticklish Business, why it's so important to me as a project, you know, the fact that, and I think a lot of the time for the subjects too, especially for podcasts, these are people that in some situations are not often interviewed a lot, you know, we, we try to track them down.

Um, and they're very surprised that somebody wants to talk to them. And in many cases they haven't really told stories like this before, and we're very off the cuff. So, you know, a lot of times we've had people say to us, like we've done a lot of interviews, but like, you know, we, we talked about some things that we haven't talked about and that's a big thing for me because I'm sure they don't want to be asked the same five questions.

SH: Okay. Touch on a really good point. I think as students are preparing these podcasts, you know, episodes for interviewing, and I see it in the classroom, when we ask them to interview people, you know, in any sphere, it can be really daunting. First, you know, who, who do I want to reach out to and how do I reach out to them? You know, what's your process from the very beginning of deciding on who to talk to and the way you reach out to them, leading up to that, you know, that moment of, okay, now I'm going to interview them.

KL: Yeah. So what we tend to do, I mean, it's different for my day job at IndieWire versus the podcast, because you know, IndieWire is in a very advantageous position in that people want to be a part of, of our site. So it's, it's often a concept of just emailing them. You know, I have an IMDB pro account, which in the concept of interviewing anybody famous is a godsend because you have links to representation there. So that's usually the first thing I do for an IndieWire story and, and Ticklish Business as well. You know, the, the rule of thumb is never go through the person directly and it's kind of bad form to slide into a celebrities, DMs or a subject's DMs, and be like, Hey, do you want to be on my podcast? Or do you want to do a new story? You know, they have people for that. Um, and I think, I think that tends to get lost in that, you know, most people that, um, and this might be different just for like me. I am my own PR person, so people slide into my DMs and say, Hey, we want to talk to you about something and I'm like, Okay. Um, but usually if you're working with any type of public figure, they will tell you I have a manager or publicist, you know, and the best way I find if you can't absolutely. If you go to IMDB and they don't have representation listed, but they are on some type of social media, you are certainly able to reach out to them through that. But the question always needs to be, you know, I would love to consider you for a project, Who do I reach out to? Um, and don't put them on the spot and have them be like, you know, they don't want to have to turn you down. Um, and sometimes they forget, you know, to give you an email address or give you a name and you'll be like, I don't know this person's email. And then you got to go back. So it's best to make a very succinct message through social media and just be like, I would love to reach out to you about this project, who can I send more information to? But IMDB pro tends to be a great resource for public figures. There's always a lot of, you know, the management companies have websites that usually list email addresses. So that is usually my first thing. They get a lot of public figures, especially get thousands upon thousands. So it's always best to be as succinct and to the point and give them literally all the information so that they do not have to come back at you. So, you know, for a subject line, I usually put, you know, the, the client of the representation that I'm reaching out to with interview. And I say, who I am, what my project is, you know, what Ticklish Business is and what IndieWire is, if they don't already know, and what I want from their client in terms of an interview. Is it through zoom? Is it through phone? How long will it take max? What is my deadline, as well, as, you know, in certain instances like with the podcasts, especially why are we important? So for people that have smaller projects, you know, it's always great to say we've been recognized by this awards body, or we've interviewed these people. To kind of show a concept of why you think this person fits in. It's all about showing, not necessarily your expertise on the subject, but your expertise on why this person fits.

SH: It's so funny, because yesterday I was on Instagram and Amy Schumer, one of my people I follow, she's laying in bed and she's looking sick. And she said, I'm sorry, people, my doctor, my doctor told me I'm just too sick to be on your podcast. I just can't do any more podcast interviews. And it did make me wonder, have I approached people the wrong way before? Like, you know, people probably, I don't know what her real intent was, but it just got me to thinking, have I ever done that? Where like, like you said, just sent an email or in a social media post

string or something like that. So.

KL: Yeah, I mean, I, it's definitely, it's definitely something where, you know, there's this there's a series of gatekeepers and it's something that, especially a lot of creators of color and writers of color and other minority groups have talked about. There are gatekeepers to getting access to a public figure that you want to interview. And oftentimes, you know, you're, you're not necessarily, there are some reps that take every request to their client and ask them, Hey, do you want to do this? There are some reps that vet and cherry pick. Um, so sometimes, you know, you'll get ghosted by somebody who probably didn't even take the request to the person because they just didn't think it was something that was worth this person's time. Or sometimes you'll get a very quick, no. Um, which again makes you wonder if they even took it to them. And so, you know, I always say that there's a great, you want to be persistent, but not overbearing.

So definitely use the avenues you have. Um, again, social media is definitely an outlet if you haven't heard back from a rep, you know, to just go to that public figure's Facebook or Instagram or Twitter, but make the point that you did reach out to the representation and you haven't heard back, is there maybe another email address? You know, so you're not asking the public figure to go nudge their person you're asking. I there a different avenue maybe that I can try to reach out now? In some instances, I know that some, some people have lovingly guilty public figures in terms of like, maybe tagging them on Twitter and be like, Hey, so-and-so love to have you on the show. Uh, you know, and, and see what happens there. Um, I don't recommend doing that, that doesn't often work, but there's definitely ways to exhaust every avenue. And, and sometimes, you know, what I've done is if somebody has told me no, you know, I've kind of said like, okay, well, can we revisit this in six months? Can we revisit this in a year? You know, keep the lines of communication open with, with the representation so that, you know, maybe if it's a no now, you know, you can keep an eye out and say, I know this person has another project coming out, down the line, am I welcome to revisit this topic when the time comes?

SH: I think you make a good point. I'm thinking about some of our students and, you know, lesser known librarians, reaching out to people, um, about having built some kind of project, you know, something that they've done already that they can point to. So, you know, if they're doing some reaching out to local people or, or just more approachable, people, can be a really nice, having some good conversations, and, and what not, can be maybe a stepping stone to some of these bigger figures I'm thinking of your ticklish business. It sounds like it was just took off from the beginning, but was it kind of like a, okay, I need to start with some lesser known figures to reach the stars, or are you able to just right out of the gates takeoff?

KL: Oh, no, we, we, it's only been within the last like year or two that we've actually gotten, um, people of note, I would say, um, on, on the show and that's, that's a lot of just kind of building, building a brand, so to speak. Um, knowing the show started out, I was interviewing a lot of authors, you know, people that had books out, um, where I was like, Hey, you know, you got a book, I got an audience. Let's, let's see what happens here. So it was a lot of authors and friends, you know, Annette I know each other through the TCM community, so it was a lot of kind of emailing people and being like, Hey, you know, I know you like this, I got an episode coming on this, you want to just talk about it? Um, and I mean, any, any interaction where you have somebody that has some type of audience following, maybe doesn't know your work, you know, that that's a benefit. So, you know, in some instances I would find, you know, podcasters fellow podcasters, that had big followings and be like, Hey, do you want to be on the show? And sometimes that door does not swing both ways, which is frustrating. You know, sometimes you'll ask somebody to be on and kind of hope that they'll extend the invitation to you so that you can promote on their show. That does not always happen. But, you know, the, the concept is though that you are kind of building and you are expanding out. So from there, you know, we were slowly able to kind of say, like, who do we want more of? And I think with Ticklish Business, especially there was a lot of imposter syndrome of me being like, I'm never going to get an actual celebrity on this show. You know, we're not, You Must Remember This. Like, nobody's

gonna want to be on this. Um, and so a lot of it was kind of pushing the bubble further. So, you know, I was covering a lot of TCM stuff. And so I would email TCM and be like, Hey, you have people that are not the hosts that maybe want to come on and, or, maybe want to send us clips. You know, I, I went to the film festival and I would record audio, you know, on the red carpet with celebrities. And that would be an episode. So it wasn't like we were sitting down and having an interview, but I had these great, you know, two and three minute sound bites from everybody that I could kind of weave into an episode. And eventually all of that kind of is like going back to TCM and saying, Hey, I want to host, you know, I want somebody who's like the face of the network, you know, and, and eventually that also became like, maybe we can actually get celebrities, um, celebrities that have projects are always a big thing, you know, for the podcast. It's something that, you know, we tried very hard to take advantage of because somebody, you know, who's not promoting something doesn't necessarily have incentive to come on the show. You know, we, did an episode with Hayley Mills recently about her autobiography and, you know, Haley mills is a very busy woman. Um, and I doubt if you would try to interview her last year, you know, when we were our show, she probably would have been like, I'm really busy. Um, but you know, she has a book out right now and it was a great opportunity to kind of be like, Hey, you have this book, we have a show, that's all classic film. Let's, let's see about working that angle. So again, it's all about kind of finding an angle that I think makes you say, like this person would be worth it, but at the same time, there's a vast pool. I think with podcasts and things nowadays where it doesn't have to be a big name, it can be somebody that is tangentially connected to a project. We've also done great interviews with children or grandchildren of, of, you know, public figures that maybe don't have the first hand experience, but still have a lot of great insight and memories. So I think there's definitely different ways where I think people that get into podcasting assume you need to have big names, and that certainly helps, but there's just as much great information and great content that could be mined from someone that maybe is adjacent to something.

SH: I really like your tip too, about taking soundbites. If you're at some kind of event or talk to someone and just asking their permission, Can I include this on the, on the show? Again it doesn't always have to be a big full interview.

KL: Exactly. Yeah. I mean, there's, it's, it's one of the things I think that comes from being in the public space now is that, you know, a lot of writers and creatives, you know, we look at all the things we love and we monetize them. We try to find ways to, how can I make money off of this? And I think a lot of times, you know, especially with like, as a side thing like this, you know, it was, it was placed, I was already going to, so it was like, okay, well, I'm going to be here. What can I do with this, this event? Um, and so, you know, I started thinking like, what if I just start recording everything for people who can't be here, but maybe want to act like they are, you know, so I, I would record not just red carpet interviews, but I would record, you know, intros to the movies with the celebrities that would show up and kind of give like a little Q and A, you know, we were, we were hoping to expand out into video, but COVID, uh, prohibited that. That is still something we'd like to do, you know, but a lot of it was kind of like, what would I want to listen to? Well, you know, if I couldn't go to this event, I love to at least be able to maybe hear something or see something to give that feeling of having gone. So that that's kind of how it started.

AB: You're essentially providing like the media coverage that you would like to see or like to hear.

KL: Exactly, exactly. And I mean, I know, you know, a lot of, a lot of people too, you know, I think, I think the big, one of the big things that I, I don't, I think it, it factors in, maybe it doesn't, you know, is, is I'm a disabled person. I use a wheelchair. And I think a lot of what I do comes from just having spent so many years, not being able to go to places and go and do things. And so, you know, a lot of like the videos that we did and, and interviews, I think a lot of people were surprised to be like, oh, she's a girl in a wheelchair that's interviewing these people. And, you

know, if I see that maybe I can go to this event, you know, one of the big things, you know, that I did a couple of years ago with the film festivals kind of create like an accessibility guide of like, what are the best streets to be on in the area? What are not the best streets to be on? You know, and I think that, especially as, as a niche group, you know, like disability tends to be perceived, as you know, there is this desire of wanting to create content for people that again, might not be your target audience, but do feel underseen. And if they know you're catering to them, that creates a, a kinship and a rapport, people that want to check out your stuff.

SH: When I started the podcast last year, I was so nervous about it being natural and not being particularly scripted sounding. And one interview person I liked was Studs Terkel. I don't know if you've ever heard of him. He's out of Chicago and I just listened to that. And then I read his advice on giving interviews and I'd try to bring that to the interview. And I just was too nervous. I just forgot about it. But what he recommends is just having honest conversations, just authentic conversations. And that's so much easier said than done, right? But is there anything that you can recommend? You know, like we prepare questions, you know, that's also recommended so that the person you're interviewing doesn't feel like they're not coming to something and not knowing what's going to happen. It gives a little structure. What's the balance of having some structure and having an authentic conversation?

KL: Yes, it's tough, I mean, I definitely used to be of the mind of like, I'm going to wing it. I'm just going to sit down and get on the phone with this person. And sometimes that yields great conversations, but eventually as I would go on now, I would notice that, how did I not know this about this person? Why didn't I ask them this? Because I hadn't researched and written questions down. So what I usually do is like the day before, you know, really scour, IMDB, past interviews and create a list of at least, you know, a dozen questions where I'm like, if I run out of time, if I don't know what to say, because there's always this concept of, if you're formulating a question while you're listening to them, you're missing out on the possibility of taking something they're saying and asking a question off of that. You know, you're not, you're only paying half attention because you're trying to make sure there's no dead space as you're trying to figure out what the question is. And that creates more nerves. You know, you, you definitely are feeling like you're underprepared. So I always, I always aim to get, have a page of questions where I'm just like, if, if the conversation lags or I don't know what I'm going to say next, and we start, I know I have, and that takes a lot of the burden off of trying to formulate stuff in the moment, so that I can listen to what they're saying. And if a question does pop into my head, I can be like, oh, let's talk about this. And for me, I always feel like I pat myself on the back a little bit if I look at the paper after I'm done, you know, I still had three questions left that I could have utilized or something like that. So I think that for me, I tend to write a question out, but I don't ask it that way. I tend to, and I criticize myself for it a lot. I say, you know, or I kind of give my opinion on it first as a way of telling them why I'm asking it. And I think that also is a great, as much as I say to myself, like get to the question, nobody wants to hear you ramble. I do know that a lot of interviews I've listened back to the subject will be like you, what you're saying is exactly what people should be talking about and I don't know why we're in, it leads to this whole conversation where the fact that I have all these thoughts about the topic makes them have thoughts about the topic that are different and that sparks a conversation that I think feels a lot more authentic than just rambling stuff off page. And I think to some of the best interviews are ones that you want to do with people, you know? So, so for me, I love and it can be good and it can be bad sometimes, you know, as a, as a disabled writer, a lot of people are not asked questions about disability representation. And so I've had some great interviews where I've talked to an able-bodied director or something, and I've been like, well, as a person who's disabled, I see this as a disabled narrative. And they are like, I've never thought about that. I, the fact that me as a member of a specific group, that creates difference already. You know because you're already thinking different things. And you're asking people questions that maybe they haven't been asked before. So I think that there's a way to be prepared without being overly prepared, but still drawing on your own experience to create something unique.

SH: Specifically, have anything you're trying to capture. I'm hearing you say a little bit about your personal story, connecting with their personal stories.

KL: I think I'm always trying to capture something that hasn't been said a million times. And I think that that's, that's again very difficult because sometimes you know, if you're talking to a celebrity that's been in this industry 30, 40 years. I'm sure Meryl Streep has been asked, literally every question in the book. I'm sure I would never be able to ask her something that she has not already been asked, but I think a lot of times just enthusiasm and interest in something that you know, who you're interviewing has done and showing that you are really interested in it, can create something that some, somebody hasn't talked about a lot. You know, I did before I was an IndieWire, I did an interview with Preston Sturges, the director's son. We had a great interview and I talked to him about, you know, your dad's creation of humor and things that he had talked about. And, and then I said that I was a big Veronica Lake fan, and I felt that the stuff that she did with his dad was, was always the best. And it was a shame that they never got to work together and I kind of started quoting chapter and verse things that she had written. And he paused on the phone and was like, you're really the first person that has shown that you know my dad's work like, like the back of your hand. Um, and he actually, he actually sent me a canceled check that his dad wrote. He was all, When is your birthday? And I told him, and he said, you know, I send people that are true fans, canceled checks that my dad wrote on the day of their, their birth. And so I have a check signed by Preston Sturges on September 1st. It's a, it's a great memento that I, that I love. But I think, I think at the end of the day, a lot of people that are interviewed just want to know that you're not doing this as a job. You know, like you're, you're wanting to talk to them because you are interested in them. And that, that can be very hard. I think a lot of people, especially in entertainment often feel like the only reason people are talking to them at all is because of who they are. And I think for me, a big thing that I want to talk about is not just what they are doing in the industry, but like, who are you as a person? Could we be best friends? You know, like, do, are you a person I want to hang out with at the end of all of this? Um, and I think that's what they really, really want a lot of them is, is to know that this isn't just something where you're like, okay, I found my story. I'm done with you. I'm moving on to the next, there is an opportunity to kind of show that there are people who are in this industry that don't just want to get a gotcha headline or get clicks. You know, you actually want to do something deeper.

AB: Since you mentioned too a little bit about formulating questions. Do you ever find yourself developing questions a certain way, or maybe actively avoiding certain types of questions as well, and sort of what that looks like?

KL: I always repeat certain things. You know, How questions are, are my favorite things? Like, how did that happen? How did that come about? Um, and I try to, at least if I, if I can't re-jigger the question into something that is maybe like a what or who I always say, like, Can you talk about? You know, kind of change up the way you at least ask the question so that maybe if it sounds similar, you can at least make it sound different by stating it in a different way.

I don't usually ask personal questions unless it's really relevant to the topic. So like big thing that I, I've talked about, I've done it for both IndieWire and Ticklish Business. When you're talking about representation, you know, you have to ask tough questions, like, can you talk about your struggles with discrimination in the industry or growing up as a young woman in Hollywood? Did you experience, you know, sexual harassment? So you definitely have to ask tough questions. And for me, I'm one of those where, where, I'll preface it with kind of historical elements. So like, as we've seen over the decades, you know, it's not surprising that there are still claims from women that they've experienced sexual discrimination in this industry or harassment, you know, is that something that you experienced? And sometimes they'll say no, and I'll be like, okay, the questions answered, we're moving on. Sometimes they'll say yes. And they'll talk about it. I think as long as you're not kind of pressing being like, well, how have you not experienced that? You know, there, there are some -- lines of inquiry where if that's your angle to get them to say that

you're going to be disappointed. I always try to say like, if the angle is about, say it's about representation and struggles in the industry, and that person has not particularly had that struggle, I think a lot of interviewers would be like, well, crap, now I don't know what I'm going to write. This person was not tormented in this industry. You know, I often say like, how do you look at claims by other people, even though you haven't experienced it? How do you feel about their claims? Do you think the industry can do better? Where can we do better? Why do you think it's so hard for us to do better? So I think there's ways to kind of ask questions that are at the heart of what you want to ask and not really being in the business of wanting to confine yourself in a box to, to a topic

AB: Then the, like a rule of, I guess, uh, trying not to ask like yes or no questions, sort of like closed ended questions. Like you want more, I think of a response from your interviewee.

KL: Exactly what I think even, you know, yes or no questions, there's opportunity to be like, I I've done interviews before with people where it's a really hard interview, you know, it's just yes or no, you know, what do you do with that? And, and oftentimes, you know, what I often try to do is kind of reiterate that I'm a fan first and foremost, and again, that it's not a job. So an interview I'm doing tends to look like it's going down the tubes, which has happened. I'll try to like, kind of Retcon and just start talking about like their projects and the things that they've been doing kind of outside of the interview. And sometimes they'll come back and they'll be like, you know, I answered this first question really wrongly. Sometimes they don't. But I think that there are ways to save failing interviews by, by always stressing that you are a fan first and that you like the person that you, like for me, I always kind of want to make a point of, like, I wouldn't be sitting down with you if I didn't want to.

AB: You touch on a question I had later on here of about, uh, if you've ever had a particularly difficult interview and I'm sure there, there are instances of that all across the board, it sounds like, and there's there's opportunities to save them.

KL: Yeah. I mean, I started out, you know, doing interviews for the podcast. That was, that was my earliest example of doing interviews. And I shutter, I, I'm glad that I get a lot of them transcription wise and that the audio no longer exists because I'm like, oh, I was, I was very green when I, when I, and I have a bad habit of getting so excited that I'm talking to somebody that just like interesting questions go out the window. But there are some interviews, you know, where, uh, I, I did an interview a long, long, long time ago with the child of a celebrity who shall remain nameless. And it was literally a nightmare interview because, and I I've asked these same questions to other people and I've had great answers. So I don't know if it, I don't necessarily think it was the questions I was asking, but I was asking, oh, did you ever, was there a moment where you realized that your dad's work was different than other dads? Nope. He was just my dad. And I was like, okay. You know, Do you have a favorite movie of your parents? Nope. They're all, they're all pretty good. Okay. And they're at the end of the day, there just some interview subjects that just, maybe they're having an off day, maybe they don't want to be interviewed, they're just doing this because they're promoting something. And I think there's definitely a way to kind of save them by emphasizing that you're a fan, but sometimes, you know, some interviews just don't go good. And all you can do at the end of them is just be like, well, thank you for your time. Try to salvage something with what you got. And that happens. I mean, I've written articles where I've had really bad interviews and the quotes are in there, and it's, it's a lot of my thoughts at the end of the day, as in with kind of peppered with these are not great answers. And that happens. I mean, I think you can always make lemons out of lemonade and even in a bad interview, you can use the content in a way that is interesting if you're just willing to put a little bit more of yourself into it, I think, than what you were expecting.

SH: No, that's great. And there's always a story. That's what I'm hearing from this, but there's ways to bring in other elements, other artifacts to, to make a good story.

KL: Exactly. And I think at the end of the day, that's really, all you want is, is to create good story. And if that's 80% you, and 20% interview subjects, it's still a great story.

AB: Well, I guess my final question for you is, do you have any general advice you'd like to offer up to someone who's looking to maybe start a narrative podcast and that might likely include the use of interviews?

KL: Yeah. I mean, I think that, you know, podcasts is a lot of work and it's a lot of I say, thankless work in the sense that you are not going to get paid. You're never going to be able to retire off of it. You know, there's always going to be imposter syndrome in a concept of like, why am I not as big as that podcast? Like we do kind of the same thing. There's always going to be that concept of like competition, especially because so many people have podcasts now. And there's, there's a lot of money that goes into podcasting. And most of that goes to the top 10% and you're going to be the 90%. Um, so do it because you love it. You know, the minute it starts to feel like a job, you probably should do something else because it's not going to go the way that you want. I'm fortunate that, you know, there's, there's great women that run the show and I get to hang out with them. Um, and at the same time, you know, interviewing people, I think that it's about shooting your shot. You know, I've seen people that have been like, I would love to interview this person, but I know that they're not gonna want to do it. And sure, most of the time, you know, if you're trying to get Chris Hemsworth on your podcast and your podcast only gets about, you know, 200 hits an episode, he's probably not gonna come on the podcast. But at the same time, you know, I've interviewed people that I would never have thought to interview and had them say you know, no, or I've had them say yes, you know, it's sometimes you get a really nice, no. I remember I emailed a couple of years ago, Robert Wagner, about coming on the podcast. And he, his people sent me a very nice, you know, he, he can't do it right now, but he wishes your show all the best. And he's very excited to listen to it. And I was like, well, at the end of the day, Robert Wagner, possibly listening to my podcast. so I'm okay with that. So I think, I think it's just about doing what you want and, and building something that you would want to be, want to be doing at the end of the day. And as far as interviews go, the nerves never really go away. You know, I still get sweaty and nervous every now and then, you know, leading up to an interview. Eventually though, there are some interviews where you just like the nerves go away and you can get nervous about somebody that's like really intimidating. Most interviews now and panels that I do, I don't tend to get nervous, unless I know I'm not as prepared as I should be.

SH: Thank you, Kristen.

KL: Thank you so much for thinking I was cool enough to, to interview. This has been such a treat.

SH: Basically just gave us a mini course on how to conduct successful interviews. We learned about how to professionally and respectfully reach out to people to ask them for an interview, how to prepare questions, how to host authentic, genuine conversations. And of course, what do you do if things don't go according to plan. And ultimately, how to have fun with these interviews. So thank you very much. And listeners be on the lookout. We're going to do a call out for a cash drawing on you submitting your narrative podcasts, an episode. So be looking for that on the library, social media, and then we're done for this semester. Next semester, be on the lookout for three more episodes on crafting your narrative podcast. So thank you and stay tuned.

