

Speaker 1 (00:01:58):

Hi everybody. I don't know what that music was. I didn't- I've never hosted a space before. I don't know if you all could hear that. I hope you could hear it. Bye. This is Tamar. Thank you guys so much for joining. I am going to explain briefly what you're all here for and why it's being recorded. I recently launched a Substack newsletter, yay! Called Notes on K-Pop. And I am hosting this space to create essentially an audio version of the conversation I have with a lot of aspiring journalists. I talk to probably at least one a month, if not way more frequently than that. Either someone who's looking to change their careers or someone maybe who's in high school or college looking to see how to get into this field. And so I felt that I was doing a lot of redundant conversations. And while I really do love meeting everybody I felt like it was a little bit of taking a lot of time when a lot of these questions were repeated and I thought, well, it'd be great if there was a place for people to just go to as a source. And so while I'm always open to connecting, I thought that maybe we could create an audio explainer. So really briefly, if you're in the room, I assume you know me, but I will spend maybe five minutes getting up to everyone up to speed about who I am and what I do and then I'll open up the floor for Q and I've gotten some questions already.

(00:03:38):

So yeah, that's kind of what we're here to do. I'll reset the room every once in a while if it feels like there's brand new people coming in and everything. I don't have a, sorry, it's all just me for a few minutes. I'm soliloquizing... I don't know. I'm going to do a, soli-lo-soliloquy? I'm going to stop saying that word. Anyhow. So, hi, I'm Tamar. I am a music journalist who has covered predominantly and not solely for many years now. I got into it because I was a fan in high school of K-Pop and I was blogging in college and then started writing for some K-pop websites, news sites and at the same time, I was pursuing a career in the field. I worked at WNBC in New York for a while and I started while I was at WNBC.

(00:04:41):

Even though it's broadcast news, of course news is, reporting is still all based in the same skills. So I was learning really amazing things on the ground there and I started pitching outlets. The first big outlet that I pitched to some K-pop articles and actually not, I wrote a few non K-pop stuff at the time which was very exciting for me too was MTV Iggy, which is an international focused MTV outlet. That happened for a while. And then over time I eventually became a Billboard columnist and contributor to Forbes. Most recently I was working full-time in Hong Kong at the South China Morning Post, which is the biggest English language newspaper there. It's their equivalent to the New York Times or Washington Post.

(00:05:30):

I have written a book called BTS: Blood, Sweat and Tears, which came out in 2020. And I've been in a few documentaries about K-Pop that are boxes explained K-pop episode on Netflix and YouTube's K-Pop Evolution series. And I'm going to be in an upcoming one that I'm not sure has announced yet, but I will announce on Twitter, so stay tuned. [T/N: It's TVING and Viki's K-pop Generation, which began airing in January 2023.] But yeah, that's pretty much it. I started out in journalism. I started out as a fan. I don't think one of those things is necessary to be someone enter reporting on K-Pop or anything or reporting in any general field. I'll be talking specifically about my experience in Kpop, but I think a lot of what I'm talking about can be carried over to other entertainment fields and other beats.

(00:06:24):

So yeah, that's pretty much a really brief intro to me. I do a lot of speaking engagements. I love teaching and I would dream, my dream is to have to never work again and be able to adjunct to a CUNY because I went to CUNY which is for anyone who doesn't know, which probably a lot of you actually is the city of University of New York. It's the public school. I went there and I think it's great to get back. But yeah, so that's my really quick explanation to me. If you don't know me, hi, if you do know me, thanks. I see some familiar faces and some mutuals. So yes, [my doorbell rang] I hope it's not the most important package of my life or something.

(00:07:16):

So yeah. Okay. I'm going to start with a few basic questions and then at 8:10 I'll probably open the floor. This is going to be a relatively short space. Like I said, if you're just joining now, I created this essentially to create a recording database is not the right word, but essentially a explainer to introduce people to the field that if they reach out, I can share with them. And then if they want to talk further, I'm more than happy to talk. But yes, so yes. So the first question that I get a lot, and it's probably the most important question in just in how common it is, do I need a degree in journalism to pursue a career in journalism? Personally, I do not think so. I do not have a degree in journalism. I was lucky enough to have essentially the equivalent of an apprenticeship.

(00:08:17):

I do have a college degree, but I don't think that is necessary either. Skills are more important in this field than anything else. The knowledge that you get it's of course great to have knowledge of what you're reporting about before, but if you're a generalist, you of course will not have that. So it's more important to be able to learn on the job about how to do things and how to be a journalist. Being a journalist is not being an influencer. If you follow me on Twitter, you might have seen that this is a hot topic this week.

(00:08:50):

So being a journalist does not necessarily, it's not that you cannot become a prominent journalist, but if you're there just for the clicks and just to say things that you have no veracity to back up with facts it's, it's not journalism. Go into another career path pr, marketing, the, they're all great career paths and being an influencer is a career path nowadays. So I think that for me when I was working both writing or even before when I was working in broadcast news very few people had journalism degrees a few people had from major institutions and said they think that they got some support from it and they definitely were able to network better from it. But if you have a good network, which is very important for this field, that is probably more valuable. So if you are contemplating going to grad school or just J[journalism] School, it's definitely worth it because I think you're getting the skills.

(00:09:58):

But this kind of leads into the next question. Journalism is not a very lucrative career. So the debt of paying for grad school is really burdensome and it's not something that this industry really facilitates. So if you are thinking about it I would always suggest contemplate looking at other programs rather than the fanciest, most expensive one that you set your eyes on just because you think it is probably better. I've gotten most of my work through being friends with people. That sounds wrong, like my whole career is nepotism. That's not true. But just because I do have my background, whatever it is but because people trust my work and I am, they know my name, they suggest, oh, hey, she would be good to cover this. We should bring her on board, her name recognition. And of course, nowadays, thankfully I have a lot of work under my belt, so people recognize me for my work.

(00:10:54):

But at the very beginning, it's like I would write one piece for a blog that I co-ran with a few friends called KultScene and an editor would be like, oh yeah, someone sent me this. This is really good. Do you want to write something for me? So kind of growing your network naturally, social media makes it so easy. So I think that you need the skills, but the skills you can create in a lot of different ways. Somebody, actually somebody who is in the chat sent me a question earlier and this is actually a good time for it, and they said that they have laryngitis, so feel better. BrooklynGirl913. The question was I'm a blogger of Korean entertainment and culture since 2018. I blog from an over 35 B I P O C person's perspective. This sometimes makes me feel like unicorn among other bloggers in the genre, even among established entertainment journalists, not many from the community.

(00:11:53):

How can I reach a wider audience and develop my blog to a higher platform? Is there a way to turn blogging to a greater platform? So there's a lot in that question, but talking just specifically about blogging, I got my start because I was blogging. It feels really like outdated now. We're totally past the blogging era, but back when I was graduating college one in 2014 we still hadn't shifted away from that. So a lot of music writers came from blogs. Blogs were integral for people to get their skills. So I think developing your skills through blogs is a really great way if you know, don't want to go to journalism school or even if you do and you just want to get practice and write what you want to write. So there's obviously a lot of room for, I think one thing that people always assume, and I was talking about, there was a lot of conversations yesterday about journalism on Twitter.

(00:12:49):

I think that there's not a lot of room given to young talent to kind of grow in newsrooms. And there's not a lot of guidance in news organizations nowadays to kind of train people in the things that make journalists, journalists versus commentators or critics which is fact-based reporting and knowing <laugh> how to be objective. And that's something that I've always really prided myself on. And actually if you've been reading my newsletter recently, it's very personal. It's probably the first time I've ever personally written in a place since I've been professional. And it's really weird for me because I always feel like I'm best at being newsy. I cannot stand <laugh> when something is poorly reported. And a few weeks ago I had this, it was a tweet based on some info data from Spotify and it went viral. And then it turned out that Spotify had gotten their data wrong and I was mad not at going viral.

(00:13:52):

I was so upset. Please nobody share this with Spotify. I'm sure they were disappointed too. I was so upset with Spotify because this is your data, you should not have your facts wrong and they're not even journalists. So you can imagine how fun I am when I see some of bad reporting. So this is kind of my rambling explanation to say, no, I don't think you need a degree. I think degrees can be helpful, but be very cognizant of the industry when you do go to them or decide not to go to them. I have not been, every once in a while I still think should I go pursue a career, a degree in journalism because I feel like that's probably important, just like, because maybe I can learn one thing better and then I'm like, no, I could just go take some courses online like Catapult or something which is a great website and writing resource if you're interested in learning.

(00:14:44):

Excuse me. So if you're just joining the room, 15 minutes in I'm going to open the floor in a few minutes, but first I'm in a few seconds, sorry, but first I'm going to reset the room, which is to

explain what the point of all this is. It's not just a random space just because I was getting frustrated with the state of journalism recently, which this is too true too but I recently started a newsletter called Notes on K-Pop. And I've also recently, just because it's that time of year, a lot of college students have reached out to me to discuss this is a potential career path or just entertainment. Journalism's definitely usually K-pop fans, which is how they reach out to me. And I just felt like I was having the same conversation like five, 10 times a month. And so I thought maybe creating essentially a recorded explainer and kind of intro podcast to this space would be really great. So I'm going to stop monologuing and I'm going to open the floor, so if you have any questions, raise your hands. I have a few more prepped if you guys want me just to keep going, I can do that. If nobody has any questions I can keep going. Monologuing. If nobody has any questions let me go find my questions.

(00:16:13):

So this one is from at avierwrites. Hey, that's similar to my handle! Who is a journalist in Singapore and they asked me a few questions and so I'll start with the first one. No, I'll start with the second one. How did you manage to get so many opportunities in different press outlets? Because that is a very broad question. I wanted to focus on that one. I just kept writing that sounds really dumb, honestly, it sounds really stupid because everyone can, you know, do something a thousand million times and you can not get opportunities. Unfortunately in this world. I very don't like using the word luck, but lucky is part of it. I was diligent and hardworking and lucky and I was lucky that I'm from New York. I was lucky that I don't have any student debt because I mentioned earlier I went to CUNY and I was in a program that's free.

(00:17:12):

So I was lucky that I had the educational background that made me not have any debt so I could freelance for a really long time for a lot of different outlets when I was making relatively low money. I was also very lucky that, or privileged rather, that my parents would help me with my insurance because insurance in America is a scam but you still need it and it's important. So I always knew that if I had a really hard time working, I had a support system, which is not everyone has and I don't think it's necessary at all. But being kind of in a situation in this industry where that you can afford it is sadly something that I was lucky enough that I had but is not something that everybody has. And I think that's one of the things that makes it really hard for a lot of people to get started.

(00:18:05):

But luckily I think the industry is getting, just generally journalism is kind of becoming more aware of it. Not everyone, obviously some people are still like, I don't know if you guys saw the Nepo babies conversations about media people...but if you don't know what I'm talking about, you can go check it out on Twitter. So I think that obviously I think if you're probably in a big city, you probably have more privilege in that regard. You can cover more things people, I have friends who are based in Chicago and Chicago's music scene is very vibrant, but they are always looking for writers. So a lot of people starts for writing reviews for Chicago reader and now are giants writing for NPR and Pitchfork all the time.

(00:18:49):

And so I think there's many, many ways to get access. I mentioned briefly earlier that I started writing for M T V Iggy and that was because I was writing for a K-pop blog that I'm actually <laugh> not legally allowed to say their name because I sued them when they owed me thousands of dollars and I signed an nda, so I'm not allowed to say who they are. You could probably Google it. It was not the ones you're thinking of. I'm just clarifying. I did not write for

the very trashy ones. And so I always have the disclaimer. And so I started writing then and some of the other writers were also starting out their career and so they were talking to other editors and they were talking and so they would say, oh hey Tamar, why don't you have this editor's email if you have an idea and email them.

(00:19:43):

And so creating a community was really important to me as someone who did not go to J School, I think a lot of people who do go to J school do get this community built in. Just based on my career so far, I was based in broadcasting, so all my connections were in broadcasting, which I learned a lot, but all my peers stayed in broadcasting or other elements of media. They weren't in writing and reporting the way I was, but I was able to, through my blogging and stuff, I was able to make these connections and one day that turned into a phone call, Hey, Billboard needs someone to write a lot. And I was like, I can do that. And it was great and sometimes a struggle and I mean...My first full-time job in the industry as a writer was in 2020 and I was a senior culture reporter at a Hong Kong newspaper that is sadly it worked for me. I don't know if that works for everyone. There are several journalists in the room who I think have probably way more straightforward careers than me and I'm sure others who have just as kind of random and everything a sorry.

(00:21:05):

Does anyone have any questions before I go to the ones that people are DMing or commenting? Just raise your hand if you have one. I just feel like I'm talking to myself and I'm really good at that. Clearly if you're listening, maybe you get the idea that I like talking but it's kind of lonely. So if anybody has any questions, please don't hesitate. Okay. So Syed, you will have to unfortunately miss it, but I see it's being recorded. So if possible, could you perhaps talk about how new or freelance journalist can work to get on pure mailing list to get regular press information? I have no idea. I've honestly no idea. Sometimes I'm on a press list and sometimes I'm not pray and chat with people and try to get emails. I often do this lesson frequently now because luckily I usually know someone but I used to just go to company websites and just email their general contact email and hope that somebody responds to me. I still do that sometimes. That's what being a journalist is nowadays for English language PR for K-pop, there's a lot more on PR newswires and everything. And so you can sign up for something like...oh my gosh, what is that called?

(00:22:28):

I'm blanking. Hold on one second. I'll think of it. There is Muckrack, it's a website that you as a journalist can have a portfolio and you can let people, people know what type of list you want to be on or what blasts should be interested in PR list buy emails of journalists, journalists and subscribe to sending out blasts. So once you have some connections, that's kind of how you will end up on PR lists. I noticed when I switched from my job recently to to my personal email, I was no longer on some PR lists, partially because apparently it turned out that my goodbye email and transition email did not get sent to many people, which was very frustrating. But so I have to now recreate those connections. Journalism is a lot of connection making. That's kind of the summary of what I've said so far about degrees and how to get jobs and stuff.

(00:23:31):

Unfortunately I don't know if other people have that. There's a few other journalists in here. If anybody wants to share their thoughts, please raise your hand or if you just have a question, please raise your hand. Jaewha Bernardo just DMed me. What are some unethical practices that budding writers should be conscious or wary of when writing about K-pop? Writing about K-Pop

specifically? I think if you are not Korean, I think the thing that is always at the forefront of my mind is thinking about how the story is going to be impact people. I think that's the important thing for any reporter covering anything that is not their own lived experience. As journalists, we are supposed to be objective, but also we are there to tell stories that impact humans and people. And so I think that something that is something that's always in my mind and it's become this trope is the dark side of K-pop.

(00:24:30):

And I think that that's dangerous to think it's dangerous both to dramatize things for the sake of cliques. And I think it's also dangerous to under dramatize things. I think earlier today I saw that an outlet an American outlet covered album being canceled sorry, indefinitely postponed, not canceled. And I sent it to a friend who happens to be in this listening right now, thank you. And they were like, oh yeah, because it's a dark side of K-pop story. And it hadn't even blasted into my mind and I was like, oh yeah, I just thought people are really invested in Luna's thing as much as I am. And it was actually quite an intense explainer but it's true. It gets the cliques. And so I think you have to find a middle ground that is obviously if you're covering the news, you need to cover the news.

(00:25:30):

So if something bad happens, you cannot avoid it. I think that there is a way to make sure that you are not sensationalizing. I think that there is a lot of ways to make sure you get the facts. I think there have been times when I've made mistakes and you have to up to altering a story post fact is the worst thing. But I think every journalist needs to unfortunately go through that to kind of learn how not to mess up in the future. Something about journalism that I think a lot of people just who are not in the field don't really understand is that there are people working to get stories out. And unless it's a long format story that takes months and months of fact checking or something, there is such a sense of urgency and so things get wrong. I remember this was really ridiculous. One time I was writing a story about one of happens to be one of my favorite K-pop groups.

(00:26:28):

That's not relevant to any of the work I do. I don't think anyone should. Side note, I don't think anyone should know or particularly care about a reporter's favorite K-pop stars if they're covering K-pop. If you're covering it from a critic's perspective, I guess that's important. But for fact-based, I don't think that's important. And I don't think nine out of my 10 friends probably know who my bias groups are or anything unless I say it publicly. So I've said this publicly. I wrote a retrospective about this a few years ago about how I was a big fan of Infinite and it was writing a story for Billboard and I had written all the members names and I guess I was formatting it or something and I swapped some of the last names by accident and I didn't even notice when I was editing. So I was copying and pasting or something, the order and some last names got messed up and I had to say that was the worst thing.

(00:27:17):

I still remember, this was seven years ago and it was the worst feeling in my life when someone tweeted at me, you messed up their names like wow, you're such a bad reporter. And they were right. I had messed up. I think that I'll get- I'll talk about probably about this a little bit later if anyone has any more questions but that's one of the hardest things about this job for new writers is that you are in the public space and now we all live in the public space. You can have a tweet. One of my friends, she had a tweet about the season of singles inferno go viral. And I was just thinking, wow, it's so crazy that this one person's opinion in a tweet infu, it's so many other

people, but it's also that we're also connected to other people. So I think that being a journalist now is really hard because you can write one blog post and either a single fan could get upset or a single fan could like it or thousands can, or the PR people can or celebrities can.

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And there's so much visibility from day one that I think it's really hard nowadays. And so I'm honestly very happy that I don't know, I got my start a few years ago before TikTok. I don't know how to use TikTok. If anybody wants to get me to sign off on internship hours or something and teach me how to TikTok, I would do that a hundred percent. I hope that answered your question, Jaehwa Bernardo. If it didn't, please follow up or raise your hand. Again we're at the 30 minute mark, so I'm kind of out of questions. I have some more, but does nobody have any questions because I can just keep talking, but it feels really weird to keep just talking and I don't even know if anybody's feeling that this is interesting or important, but I hope it is and I hope it's helpful to anybody who is in the room listening. Well, I wrote down some questions.

(00:29:27):

So I had said earlier that someone who's not here at Avierwrites, I hope I'm pronouncing that right sent me some questions. So one of them that I really liked <laugh>, and I'm probably the worst person to ask about this, was I wanted to ask, how do you get past the writer's block? And the question, the answer is, I take a shower or I go on a walk, I get out of my head, I go clean my closet, the apartment is always clean when I'm procrastinating the most or I don't want to write something. Sometimes you have a deadline. And honestly, I work the best on deadlines. So if there's breaking news, I will get the stories out like that and I'll get them out so quick. But if it's something that I've been promising myself since two weeks ago that I would write something for the newsletter for end of your stuff and I just started it today cause I was like, ah, you have to do it. You really have to do it tomorrow. By the end of the year. You can't publish an end of your list in the early January like you can, but then it just doesn't feel good.

(00:30:26):

So please look forward to my favorite songs. Next question, Brooklyn Girl913 ask, how do you stay grounded as a journalist when a feedback is immediate and can sometimes be cruel, I cry and go to therapy. This isn't really the space for that. I've had a lot of trauma from that. I'm probably the worst journalist because in that regard, because I am both intensely fueled by passion. So being going to a job that's not as interesting to me is really something I cannot, I can't fathom. And at the same time, I love doing what I do, which is great, but it's also really tough and I've definitely don't have a thick skin. So I've recently, I mean I've been working on this for years, I always joke that my therapist should pay me because she has a degree. She knows more about K-Pop than anyone else in the world who's not a K-pop stan, or like me.

(00:31:35):

She knows so much and she knows, I don't think, honestly, she never says it. I really hope that she's into K-pop at this point or has a kid. She never talks about her family. I have no idea if she has kids or something. I just know she has a cat. And for years it would be I go to a session and be like, oh, what happened on Twitter today, tomorrow? And I'm like, my life sucks. Why am I doing this to myself? But I always think it's important because as cruel as people can be, it's cruel from a sense of passion and a sense of importance and a sense that whatever you say or I gave an example of something I got wrong factually and how to be updated. That is the worst thing in the world and I, it's happened and I own up to it.

(00:32:20):

And I think anyone who, journalist who doesn't own up to it is not a journalist. You make mistakes. We're human. So I think that it's something that I'm still working on. I think it's something that everyone is working on. I think that younger generation, in both a good and bad way are receptive or less receptive to criticism just because there's kind of an expectation nowadays that people on the internet are just not nice people typically. That's what fuels algorithms unfortunately. So I try to always remind myself that even, yeah, if it's just something random that I had no control over or something I didn't do. Cause people love saying that you do something or that you implied something in an article that you did not.

(00:33:06):

It's just coming from a sense of passion. So I always remind myself I got into this because I love being a fan and that's why I cover culture is because I love culture and I think that there is passion there. So I just always try to remind myself of that. I just think that's an important thing for anyone who's covering the arts or just generally journalism. Why are you doing this? Why are you pursuing a career where your job is historically maligned and historically very thankless. Like, who do people the least HR people or journalists? No offense to any HR people here. But people just don't think, yes, this is a great positive career. Whenever a bunch of journalists get together, there's probably some booze involved. Like the best, the cheapest booze, the cheapest bar in Hong Kong when I was living there that I went to regularly was the foreign correspondent club.

(00:34:00):

We just all drink. It's very unhealthy drink responsibly. Everyone tey by nature said, as someone who is mostly just writing from my blog, how do you recommend reaching out for press for events? I do more and write for events without it, but it would really help to expand what I can do. So that is actually something that I really have experience in. I mentioned it a little bit earlier, but a few friends and a few friends of mine and a few years ago, many years ago now, almost, almost a decade. That's crazy. I'm so old. We started a blog called KultScene. It's K U L T S C E N E. And if you go to it, it's very outdated. I don't think we've touched it at all in 2022. I don't know if we touched it at all in 2021 but it started out as just passion.

(00:34:55):

And a lot of things were we just either just went to things and covered them. Why do you need to be press to go cover something? Like you should they should give you access, but if they're not, you can just go cover it anyway, that's on them. People are not PR people are gatekeepers, but you don't need to be kept out by them. One of the only, I don't know if only not the only one of the things that always gets covered always gets linked from KultScene is that some of our reporters, some of some of my friends at the time they were in la so they went to BTS'S first ever concert in LA when they were filming their variety show. And so they did on the ground reporting and they talked to fans there and they did a whole fashion thing and they just were there and they happened to be there and being based in LA they were able to go and just go cover it.

(00:35:48):

And they were lucky enough that they were able to go do that. And we, I've randomly, if I'm reading something I always check the end notes to see which friends of mine and if I am also any of our articles are sourced. I just think it's fun to see and I always see that article posted and it was just my friends, Alexis and Javi going to a BTS concert and hey, let's see if we can make some content out of this because we started this blog because we love it and we want to write about it. So I think that's one way. The other way is just, I mentioned it earlier, just email people



go to their websites, go to see if they have a contact page and just send them an email and if they don't answer, that's on them. I mean it's on YouTube, but it's more on them.

(00:36:31):

We've got a lot of interviews with indie acts like within the past three or four years. One indie band reached out to me on Twitter was like, I don't know if you remember this, but you did an interview with us for cold scene like five or six years ago and that really, it really made us feel good. There's so many musicians from around the world who just don't get a lot of coverage and you cannot possibly cover everyone. You as a single individual, every outlet cannot cover everything. Every person cannot cover everything. So there's a lot of stuff that's not being covered or a lot of stuff that people want to talk about, but they might not. I always feel so bad, I read this is not probably a great tip, but I read every press release that I get that is relevant to my field. I will not read every pr, I skim my headlines, make sure that there's something I need to read but I at least try to skim every press release. Not because necessarily the PR people but because I feel every artist should get some acknowledgement even if they don't even know about it. People are in the creative field because they are creatives, they're passionate and that doesn't always turn into the dream life and career that you would like, but that doesn't mean that it's not valuable.

(00:37:53):

I hope that answered a good question, your question, if not, please ask again or ask for some clarification or I've now been talking for about 40 minutes by myself. If anybody has any other questions or wants to raise their hand, this is really weird. I really hope people are enjoying this because this is not really what I imagined, but I hope it's informative and worthwhile to you guys. Let me find my other questions. I think I have one or two more that I prepped because I was terrified that nobody would ask me any questions. Another one from Avier Tan, I don't know if I'm pronouncing this right he's at Avierwrites, like my Tamarwrites.

(00:38:45):

In your opinion, is there still hope in true press quality reportage with so many fan driven sites that are producing similar content but with less diverse content and possibly content with lower quality than a large outlet for instance? I'm not quite sure I would like some clarification for this question to be honest but I think what you're asking is how can there be true objective reporting nowadays? I think that that's something not just entertainment reporting or K-pop reporting or any of that all is I think the whole industry is dealing with that. I think objective reporting doesn't get hate clicks typically. I mean if people don't like the facts. The bearer bad news always bears the brunt, right? And so I think that it's something that the whole industry is grappling with. How do you relay facts in a way that is engaging without being sensationalist? And so I think there are many good outlets that do an amazing job.

(00:39:51):

I think there are many reporters that do an amazing job. I think that it's something that every new journalists are struggling with. Suzette, I'll just mute your mic for now and I'll call you new when the question is ready. Thanks. So I think that there's just a lot you as a journalist have to decide to do. I had a call with a college student a few days ago and they got on the call and they had reached out to me because they wanted to become a journalist and by the end of the call they were like, I don't think I actually want to be a journalist. I think I want to be an influencer. And I was like, it sounds like it. <laugh>. They were more interested in sharing their opinion. And I think that there is, obviously there's op-ed writers or critics, those aren't journalists [note: I meant that they're not reporters!] and you can be next request and I'll like cue do a cue of speakers who

do requests. So then you can if you want to talk rather than send a message or under the thing, that'd be really great. So just do a request and you can call on you after Suzette.

(00:41:04):

So yeah, I think that that's something that is a big struggle. I think it's something every reporter has a struggle with. I think I always joke, I'm like, I'm an optimal Libra, so I'm always trying to find balance even when you cannot. So I recently was talking to an editor who I pitched something to and they were like, this is too objective. I was like, how is it too objective? I'm a journalist, what does that even mean? They were like, you're not showing both the bad and the good of K-pop. And I'm, I think, oh, they're saying you're showing too much of both the bad and the good. I was like, why is that a bad thing? Why are we trying to limit objectivity in the name of getting more money in clicks? But I think that kind of sidebar a few days ago I wrote a listicle and some people who don't particularly like me took it off with it as this is why K-pop reporters are sham is because it's not negative enough and it's not talking about all these things that we think it should be talking about.

(00:42:13):

And I thought that was hilarious because they don't actually know what the article was supposed to be and what the editor asked for was not what they thought it should be and it had nothing to do with them. And I mean it had something to do with them as in I want people to be happy and learning something when I write something. But it was just interesting to me to see they were saying exactly why they thought this story should not be this way. And I was just like, okay, so you can become a journalist so you can talk to the editors you want to work with. Different editors have different work ethics, different editors have different values, different editors have different things that they value. That's the exact same thing I just said twice, sorry. So I just think that there's lot, I think there's always space for your perspective if your perspective your interpretation is important even when you're trying to be objective because we as humans are not innately, we cannot, sorry, there is no objectivity.

(00:43:10):

My existence is not an objective one. Your OB existence is not an objective one. Your mindset will never be objective. You can try to, if you want to just put clear cold hard facts, people will just hire ais at this point but that's not, that doesn't bring stories to life via long form stories. So I think obviously there is importance to doing a 300 word news piece, but I also think that, I don't remember what I was going to say anymore. I'm sorry I was rambling and I got off rail and now I don't remember. I will try to come back to that. Suzette, you had a question, so I'll go to you. I pretend I'm going to remember what I was just rambling about and I'm really sorry about that. Wait, so thank you.

Speaker 2 (00:44:02):

Thanks for calling on me. So I'm new to K-pop. It happened over the pandemic, so many other people. So I'm just wondering from your point of view in journalism and in blogs, are there things that might not be covered as much on the K-pop scene or is there anything that you'd like to see more coverage of or that should be discussed more often?

Speaker 1 (00:44:36):

Everything. I think there's a lot of people covering the same things. I often read interviews and I notice that this person just said the exact same thing to five different reporters. Trying to find a new lens on things is really important. I don't get to do this as much, but I used to really doing deep dive explainers. I think that's important to bring your perspective, whatever it is into what you're doing. Kate Halliwell at the Ringer, she always has really funny takes all the vehicles that

Super has had in their music videos ranked things. I would never think of that in 10,000 years, but that the ringer enables her to write that way they're reporting and humorous slant in that regard. So I think that there's, if you're asking for something specific, I don't have a list in my head. I think that when I got started, I mentioned earlier for KultScene, we were talking to a lot of indie artists, a lot of indie artists don't get a lot of coverage this year.

(00:45:44):

If you guys know RM was in from b t s was in a song called Sexy Nukim with Balming Tiger and Balming Tiger came to KCON a few years ago for an indie night thing, and I've been getting their press releases for years and I kept on trying to pitch them to editors, but editors were like, oh, these are guys are just Indian and they're just relevant to Korea but nobody needs them or anything. And I was like, okay, well I can't just write an article because my boss is can say, I mean I can't write it because my boss is saying no, but I'd often find ways to put people into a list if I can't cover them or something. But then of course, balming Tiger blew up and it blew up and so I saw a lot of really good outlets covering it. Sorry, a friend just texted me something kind of worrisome. So one moment please. Again, I'll reset the room. I'm probably going to end this at nine. I just don't like sorry, Suzette, did that answer your question?

Speaker 2 (00:46:48):

It did, thank you.

Speaker 1 (00:46:49):

Sorry, I don't have any specifics. Write what you want to read. If you are not seeing someone else write it yourself. I mean, unless it's an interview with God or iu, those are equivalent in my mind. So yes. Does anyone else have any questions? I think I saw Maria respondent one, Mariana tweeted, do you think it could be helpful for entertainment journalists that cover an niche K-pop to connect in a group chat with other journalists from all over the world? Or is the competition too harsh and it can actually be a problem? I would love group chats with all the journalists from the world covering K-pop. I would love more group chats to talk about K-pop. If anyone wants to add me to chats, to talk about Kpop, any to group chats to talk about K-pop or just want to DM me to talk about K-Pop, I would love it.

(00:47:42):

I love talking clearly. I've been doing it for almost an hour. I love talking about K-Pop, one of my life's great passions and I think that on a journalistic front, I think it's really great. I think it's a way for a lot of people to really connect with each other. I also think that, as you say, the competition is really tight when you're freelancing. I think once you have full-time roles and you're not competing, that's a little bit more comfortable. I think knowing, having respect for each other regardless of group chat status is important. I definitely would not say I have the best relationship with some people who people are like, oh yeah, you guys are definitely friends. I'm like, well, I thought we were, but they clearly don't. And I can't control how other people feel about me, but I don't think every journalist is friends with every other journalist.

(00:48:37):

But if you have friends, just talk to them. If you have friends in the field, talk to 'em. If you have a journalist who you like talking to on Twitter, just damn them and say, Hey, did you like this thing? I literally just damned a friend this morning, Hey, did you see this thing? She's not a journalist, but I, I'm really big on that. I think if nobody's talking to you, you can just talk to people. People I just actually shared it was in the Cut. It's a Hello Poppy newsletter. It was about how some sort of people always feel like nobody reaches out to them. And because I'm hugely healthy person mentally unhealthy person, I also think that way. And the advice was really great,

which was everybody lives in their own brain. So if you want to talk to people and you feel like you don't have anyone to talk to, just talk to people.

(00:49:27):

They can ignore you and that feels like the worst thing out of the planet. But you can also find other people to talk to. We live in the age of connectivity. It's disconnectivity as well. But I think if anyone wants to start a Kpop chat from this group, chat from this, just listening to this, start a group chat. I think it's good. I think for professionally, it's a little tough. I think it definitely, there's always that element of professionalism in it. I know that I'm also really annoying because I bring my professional perspective to every K-pop group chat that I've ever been added in. And I'm the most annoying person in a group chat and there's a few people in here who I know are nodding their heads and are like, yes, she is. She ruins everything because we want to just be like, oh my gosh, this amazing thing. And then she's like, oh no, that's actually really bad for the company. Or something someone just commented and it's definitely one of you. If it's one of you being like, yes, you're right about this, I'm going to send some memes to the group chat whoever has a group. Oh no, thank you. I'm glad. 'Whoever's group chat, chat for K-pop, journalists, writers, I would love to be in it. Please, I'd love to talk to all of you please.' That's from at @Optimistnims, so add them to group chat.

(00:50:43):

So yeah, does anyone have any other questions? I said I'm probably going to end this at nine. I'm happy to open the floor if anybody else has thoughts on anything we've discussed. There's a bunch of other journalists in the room. I'm sure there are things you've been like, no Tamar, you're wrong. You are wrong. So please correct me. I love hearing and I'm wrong because it helped me grow. It's the worst feeling, but it's also great, just my mindset. Hi Piper.

Speaker 3 (00:51:09):

Hi, how are you Tamar? Good, how are you? Great. Thanks for hosting. This has been really helpful. I've been jotting down so many notes, just trying to keep up. But before you know, end everything. I just wanted to ask about especially being a new journalist how do you recommend finding the best place to pitch writing? Because sometimes I'll write something and then I'll finish and be like, oh, that was great, now what do I do with it? So it's just how do you find the best home for your work if you're freelancing or just getting started?

Speaker 1 (00:51:43):

That's a really great question. I'm really grateful that you brought that up because I did not discuss pitching yet, and that's kind of the most important thing. So the first thing I would say is that actually most editors are not usually looking for fully fleshed out articles. Sometimes they are. There's outlets often will have outlet guidelines if there's a particular outlet that you would like to publish. So I know Vox or Vulture this Vulture, I know Vox does a bunch of outlets, a big bunch of big outlets. They have how to pitch us guidelines and those are really helpful. There's a lot of really good resources for freelancers on where to pitch or just who's open for pitches. There's a lot of journalism newsletters that you can subscribe to, both paid and unpaid or just people on Twitter who I think at Writers of color or they always are commenting to find out rates and stuff.

(00:52:39):

And Sonia Weiser, she has a newsletter that's really good. A lot of people just compile who's looking for pitches. They're usually looking for unwritten work. The thing I learned pretty early on was if I have something I want to write but nobody wants to and I want to write it, but I don't have anyone to pay for it, I can either keep it in my head or I can put it on a blog. I kind of

started Notes on K-pop recently because I was laid off and I noticed I had a lot of things I wanted to talk about that were both related to how I usually cover K-pop, but we're kind of different perspectives and I realized I had never had a, in recent years, like I said, I used to write for our blog, KultScene. Alexis is in the room now. I started it with her.

(00:53:28):

Hi Alexis. and I used to do random takes and things that I really liked. <laugh> at one time wrote something about how SM entertainment is a lot like Disney and I kind of wish I had done a better job on that because it's a really good metaphor. Anyway. So random things like that, that's kind of why I started a Stubstack and it's has related to my reporting, but it's really the things that I knew that editors wouldn't, not necessarily be interested, but just I couldn't place fast enough so that it's relevant essentially. Or I could and I just didn't want to do the effort because I'm lazy and I'm working on other things right now. But the one thing going back to you most editors do not want full pitches. Most editors, unless it's in their pitch guidelines, they want an email that's like, hi editor my name is Piper.

(00:54:23):

I want to write, this is why you should hire me. This is my perspective and this is how I'm going to do it. If it's an interview, you have to say you have contact or how you're going to get in contact or I've already talked to the PR person and they're going to, they're like on board, if you want to pay me for this or you want me to write for you. I personally don't believe in writing for a byline for someone who's not me or a friend for free, but that's not for everyone. I've definitely written in for free. I know friends of mine who still write for free because they would like to write about something and some outlets just don't pay, which is terrible. Pay your writers, editors. And so I think that if you have stories you've already written if you don't have a relationship with an editor, it's really hard.

(00:55:12):

I think some editors, most editors... This is how to find editors. Just go on Twitter and follow editors and see when they post that they're looking for pitches. That's the best way to get writing as a new writer, I think it's like I've written for and you don't need to have written formally. You'd be like, oh, I've written for my blog for a few years now here's my portfolio. I would love to write something for you. Or I've written for this site or I've written for my school paper or something. Having some experience is important, but you don't need to be the most experienced person under the sun. It doesn't necessarily pay off. I'm not getting an easier foot in the door to writing outlets just because I have a career. If I don't have any relationship with those editors, once I get in touch with them, they might boost me up their list, but I'm nobody until I introduce myself or someone introduces me.

(00:56:05):

So that I, introduction is really important. I think before you're like, here's the article. But for those sort of things, there's luckily a lot of blogs out there and there's a lot of writers. So I think blogging should be making a comeback in 2023. I think substacks have kind of done that. So that's essentially blogging nowadays, unless you use it properly, unlike me and actually do reporting via them. Something to think about tomorrow. I hope that answered your question, Piper, in my very rambling way. Yes, I did. Thank you so much. Thank you so much for joining and asking questions. I appreciate it. It is so hard to talk about myself for an hour and my field, but it's also easy because I like talking there. Any other questions? Oh, some people are talking about starting a group chat or a discord for writers.

(00:56:59):

That'd be really fun. There used to be- I was actually just researching, cause I kind of want to do a history of this for Notes on K-Pop one time it was the, I wasn't in it, but there used to be a K-pop writer's workshop. I think I'm just, I've had their page up on my phone for a few weeks now cause I'm like, I need to write about this and I will forget if I don't see it every day. Cause I have a memory of a mouse and it was active in like 2013 and 2014, which is so cool. Why wasn't I in it? I'm sad that it doesn't exist anymore. Anyway...Pete DJ Peter Lowe asks, where do you all think K-pop in entertainment journalism going? Is it changing? Which way is the wind blowing? I really like that you ask y'all when is just me talking because nobody else is raising their hands to speak. Peter.

(00:57:50):

I don't know the answer to that question. I don't know if entertainment journalism is going the right path. I don't think journalism necessarily is going the right path. I think that journalism is harder than ever. I think that there's a big difference nowadays based on algorithms and the news cycle, not necessarily being so over flooded and information being so over flooded. Not to detract from K-Pop, but if you've been paying attention to the Tory Lanez and Megan Thee Stallion lawsuit. Oh, well, actually no, I shouldn't say it that way because Megan is not actually involved in the lawsuit. It's just Tory. But of course she's involved. There's so much misinformation, there's so much disinformation. Those are two different things. Misinformation is when the facts are wrong and disinformation is intentionally falsifying facts to mostly to confuse people and sometimes impact elections and stuff. There's so much either people just trying to essentially get their numbers up on Instagram or TikTok that it's unclear whether this misinformation and disinformation, well, I guess I should call it misinformation.

(00:59:06):

It's not clearly that clear that it's disinformation. It's just overwhelming. So today I saw people were reporting that the verdict came out and Tory was not guilty, but the jury is still meeting and reporters in the newsroom were just like, please people stop listening to those people who are not in the news or who are not in the courtroom. Excuse me. There is a huge big bang size media illiteracy like implosion going on right now because of the state of social media and how media companies are not equipped for it to deal with it. Honestly, that is just what I think, Peter. I don't know if that answered your question. If anybody else has any thought, other thoughts or any questions, I said I would bring the room to nine and I think I got to everyone's questions. If I didn't, please speak now or forever hold your peace or tweet or DM me quickly.

(01:00:12):

I hope that this was an enjoyable experience for everyone. Really grateful for you guys to join. I'm sorry that the time was not optimal for some people. I know some Brits and Europeans wanted to join. Is there anything I didn't talk about that anyone wanted to hear about? I can hang around for another 15 minutes, but who am I joking? It's nine o'clock on a random Thursday night that I'm not doing anything. So I could hang around forever, but nobody's talking, so I'm not going to hang around forever if nobody has any other thoughts or questions. But I really appreciate you guys joining. It was really fun and I really hope it helped someone or many someone or made some things clearer. All right, I'm going to mute my mic now and put on the music, and if anybody requests to speak or sends over some more questions in the next few minutes I'll keep going. Otherwise, I'll shut down the room. So night guys. And.