

WeMetUWhen_S2_BehindTheScenes

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SPEAKERS

Matisse Chik, Mia Johnson, Dante Ferraro, Lily Han, Jakob, Nashra Syed, Farkhouna, Mana, Anna Maria

00:07 SHEILA REID

This is We Met U When... a podcast by journalism students at Toronto Metropolitan University. We go back in time, dig up new stories from 2013. and track down the people in those stories. This episode is a little different. We want to take you behind the scenes of each episode of Season two, to let you in on our process,

00:29 JOSHUA CHANG

one of the goals that we could have when telling the story is to be uplifting, and to really highlight all of the experiences in a hopeful way.

00:39 SHEILA

Our struggles,

Mana 00:40

the story, potentially getting cut was something that definitely shocked us.

Anna Maria 00:49

It still might have that potential.

Mana 00:52

Let's just not think about that. Yeah.

00:57 SHEILA

And what surprised us about the making of this season,

Matisse Chik 00:59

I connected with it on somewhat of a personal level, but I never thought that it would actually, like get to this stage where it is now and I've seen that like evolution is really crazy.

01:12

I'm Sheila Reid, you're listening to We Met U When...Inside Season Two

Farkhonda 01:32

You're really well spoken? Yeah. Like the way you articulate things and everything. You're really well spoken. But I was like, Okay, how do we make the podcast I guess more like, you know, like, like this kind of like, joyful more aspect to it. And then like I got to like know, your like more funny side

MATISSE

Guys, you're making me blush (laughter)

FAR

I am Farkhonda Azizullah, but everyone calls me Far.

DAISY

I'm Daisy Kim.

Matisse Chik 02:07

I'm Matisse Chik. And we produced the episode called Memories of Mamie.

MATISSE

How challenging is it for you guys to like, when you're writing the script to like, sort of get in my shoes and like write about like, my feelings and things that I would say?

Farkhonda 02:25

Every day well in class, like I get to know your character more. So it was like, Okay, this is something I think Matisse would say something like this, you know,

02:35 DAISY

At first, I guess you seemed a bit quiet and cold and stuff, you know, but I think as we were in a group together, I actually got to know more about both of you. And sometimes when I write things like I was pretending to be Matisse, you know, like I am Matisse. I'm doing this assignment. And I was thinking, will he actually say this? I don't know you that well, I don't really know about your family at all. But I think I'm having a good time. Because these are also the things that you didn't know about your own family,

Farkhonda 03:09

I think that switching the narrative to like, you was like the best idea. I love the emotional aspect of it. And that takes a lot of courage. And I just, I love doing stories that are more personal. I just think they speak to people more.

Matisse Chik 03:29

I mean, the whole process has been tiring, to say the least. Like, I think I kind of underestimated how emotionally draining I would be at this stage. Yeah, I don't know if that's because we got like five hours of sleep last night. But yeah, like, um, this whole process has been really like, I really felt like, throughout the whole process, I felt like everything we were doing is paying off. And I could see that through our, you know, our versions of our scripts or the versions of our clips and edits and, and mixes, even in the edits when we were editing when I was editing the clips. It's just like hearing that. It's that pause that my granddad takes to clear his throat and really, and recall such a striking memory for him. Having to ask him these questions that I don't want to ask him to like because it puts him in an uncomfortable position. And I like obviously seeing my family I don't want to see my like granddad, like, distraught or like, you know, in a vulnerable kind of position. But to ask the question, I think was important. Like, for example, I asked him, you know, looking back on it now, like, if there was anything you could have done differently in terms of taking the best care for your mother, you know, which were like, is there anything that you would have done differently? And, and I, I kind of said that in, like reluctantly because I don't want to, you know, I don't want to provoke regret, like a sense of regret for him. Yeah, just putting my family in uncomfortable positions like is, was quite like like really contributed to that emotional charge for me and like the emotional weight of everything that I was doing.

05:33 DAISY

I think one thing that surprised me was how willing your family was, like cooperating with our project, like it may just seem like a student project, you know, just like a student thing, send an assignment, but your family, your mom, your granddad they were both so willing, and cooperative with everything they were giving us, you know, great answers. Because, you know, for them, it's also it's a painful, but also a good memory of, you know, just your memories with your great grandmother.

Farkhounda 06:02

Another thing that surprised me is how well our group executed everything and how well we got interviews and everything. And without like, like very few hiccups within that that's really surprising. Usually, there's a lot of, especially when it comes to podcasting, getting interviews, you know, we have like extra interviews, which is like, great. You know what I mean,

Matisse Chik 06:22

I mean, that's the advantage of like, doing, like, a piece on your family's because like access is like, is there like yeah, you know, you can always call them and, and usually they want to help you right? So access is never a problem.

Farkhounda 06:36

Sometimes that can be hard, because sometimes like family sometimes there's a language barrier. So yeah, and then sometimes they don't know what they want to say and the emotional things so access may be easy but getting the best out of them so short and your family did amazing.

Mana 07:12

There were a lot of complications along the way, I would say.

Anna Maria 07:17

Small things here and there. Yeah.

Mia Johnson 07:20

Then I think Juleyka in a way revived it

Anna Maria 07:29

I'm Anna Marie Moubayed

Mana 07:30

I'm Mana Hosseini.

Mia Johnson 07:32

And I'm Mia Johnson,

Anna Maria 07:33

We produced Coco's Key Change.

Mana 07:40

First, we were doing a story about a bookshop. And it didn't turn out well, because most people didn't want to talk to us about it

Mia Johnson 07:47

We were not getting responses. We were getting very stressed.

Anna Maria 07:51

Did you end up getting any responses?

Mia Johnson 07:55

I actually just had Another Story Bookshop email me back yesterday. And they were like, so sorry, I missed this. And I was like, Oh, well, that's always you know, sometimes that's the way it goes. People have difficult schedules, they miss emails, but when we're on deadline like that, yeah, it's definitely something that's always in the back of our mind that's so present, you know, we have to get it done. And I think even with the story we're pursuing now Anna Maria. You didn't really know the big all the context when you were looking at the original article. Yeah, it was it was talking and reaching out to Coco Ma, who's centered in our podcast, that that gave us kind of the the story.

Anna Maria 08:36

Basically what happened was, I found her name and an article from 2013. And I searched it up, it came up that she was a pianist, and I saw some pictures from halls that she's played at and the halls that I recognized in Toronto, so I was like, Oh, this is very cool. So I started looking at her social media accounts, like Instagram accounts, and I saw that right now she's, you know, mostly working as an author. So I reached out to her and I wanted to find out what kind of happened in the middle there. We spoke with Juleyka Lantigua, who's the founder of LWC Studios. She's an amazing person in podcasting, and we were very, very excited to have her in class and talk to her.

09:19 JULEYKA

What is the thesis statement in one sentence? Huddle together before you answer this- in one sentence - what is the thesis statement for this piece?

Anna Maria 09:29

Juleyka pointed at the one thing that we couldn't kind of put our fingers on. And it was the fact that you know, we had our pitch, we had the overall idea, and we had the goal to the story, but we didn't have what she called a thesis.

09:45 JULEYKA

The thesis of the story is not Coco. The thesis of the story is something to do with a creative pivot. It's something to do with reimagining your creativity. It's something to do with fighting for other ways to express your your gifts. Do you see the difference there? Okay, so now huddle again and tell me what is the thesis for the story?

Mana 10:12

We didn't understand that we had to have this bigger scope that Juleyka cleared that up for us. She was like, this is a story about someone who's determined, someone whose determination took them so so far in life, even when something so terrible happened. And Juleyka really helped us pinpoint that and move forward with that idea.

Mia Johnson 10:37

Every time we kind of got stuck in sort of script writing, or, or or where we wanted to go, I think that was always a grounding point. That's what a thesis is. It's what's driving us. It's what we're reflecting back on when we're trying to figure out what we what we are trying to say.

Anna Maria 10:55

There was another line where I say, like, this isn't where the story ends. I had originally put that in so that it sounds a little bit more mysterious. It just worked better without it. But still, because it's something that, you know, it's your creation. So it's an a way hard to take out. But at the end of the day, I do see why we took it out. And I see the value in that. So it did hurt my soul, yes. But it that allowed my brain to grow.

11:42 NASHRA

Can I redomy name? (laughter)

JOSH

We can all Yeah. I'm Joshua Chang.

Jakob 11:54

I'm Jacob Kristensen

Nashra Syed 11:55

I'm Nashra Syed. And we produced The Sound that Stays.

12:10 JOSHUA

I definitely didn't anticipate how strong our sources were going to be. We actually had to cut a former source that Nashra had interviewed at the beginning, because the interview was just so strong, and it kind of took away from Allison's story.

Dante Ferraro 12:26

My name is Dante Ferraro, I'm 20 years old. I'm part of the men's varsity soccer team and I'm a goalkeeper.

Nashra Syed 12:36

Honestly, I was very attached to Dante's story just because I do know him outside of the podcast as well. And you know, his entire story like I was there when it happened. So it was it was difficult. I'm not gonna lie because he is a very good speaker. He was describing things in a way that listening to it, you could really imagine like you were right there when everything happened to him.

Dante Ferraro 13:00

But I want to say my first like, real real concussion when I was like, Holy, sh..Holy, Holy shit, like I got hit to the head. I want to say it was two years ago. I was playing soccer for League One. I was at practice. The guy was close, I want to say we were like six yards apart, he ripped the ball, shot it, hit me in my face like this my head, back, forward, face to the ground, don't remember anything then woke up. I asked my teammates, what happened? They're like, yeah, you hit in the head, your eyes crossed, rolled back. And then your nose started bleeding. And you started like, I don't know, I don't wanna say twitching, because I don't think it was a seizure. Just so I'm not gonna to say twitching. I was just moving weirdly. I woke up, bleeding from the nose, felt fine, drove home. Didn't think anything of it. Went to work that same day, a week came by then I started feeling the symptoms.

Nashra Syed 13:59

And then when you think back to that first experience with a concussion, what one memory sticks out to you the most. So like if someone on the street were to ask you

Dante Ferraro 14:09

The feeling of the ball hitting my nose. I can still feel it. I still feel it.

Nashra Syed 14:18

It was an editorial decision that we just had to make, because it is a 20 minute podcast. It's not an hour long. And he is such a strong source like don't like Josh said that it took away from Alison's story. It was yes, both about concussions. But they were like two parallel stories about a topic where I don't think we would have been able to do justice to either story in 20 minutes. So it's tough.

14:42 JOSHUA

I'm really grateful, again, that our sources were so well spoken and so enthusiastic, and it was just a great experience being able to work with Jakob and Nashra two very like seasoned journalists two people that are able to offer a different perspective.

Jakob 14:56

I'm an exchange student from Denmark and I reached out to Shari to ask if I could be in this class because I really like storytelling journalism. And it's only been a different experience than back home in Denmark, I think here was definitely a challenge trying to like balance this very big project that's just the entire semester, with like everything else you also had to do with like other stories or assignments, or just like going to class and like in different courses, and you're having to balance that in your head at the same time. And also just having to do interviews in English, which is not my first language it was, it was definitely a challenge in the beginning. But actually I remember the second time I interviewed Allison, how much more confident I felt doing it in English compared to the first time. It's been experience for me, I'm very happy that I got to be in this class and work with Josh, and Nasha.

Nashra Syed 15:47

We're definitely going to miss Jakob when he goes back to Denmark, but I'm really proud of what we were able to produce.

Lily Han 16:07

So it was really stressful. If I'm being really honest, I think that it was stressful just because like we didn't have a story for like, a month. So everyone was like a month ahead of us by that point.

Sheila

I'm Sheila Reid.

Lily Han

And I'm Lily Han. And we produced You Saw My Name Where?

16:41 SHEILA

I came in late in the project. So I kind of came into this group where a lot of work needed to be done, but it was a really clear focus. And the thing that I noticed first, like when I met with the group was and Lily you can comment on this, but like Lily's limp cuz she'd hurt her foot and I was like, Okay, I need to I need to help carry some of this load. So Lily's not doing everything by herself with like an injured foot,

Lily Han 17:09

yeah, I can confirm that I did injure my foot. It was I sprained my ankle. And it was like, I was out of commission for like, a few weeks, which like really sucked because I couldn't really do anything. Like I was just like bedrest for like, the worst time ever. Like exams are now like holidays. And I was like, I can't, I can't move.

17:28 SHEILA

And you were exhausted, like, I'm sure you were so exhausted.

Lily Han 17:32

But overall, I think that like everything started running smoothly after like the script was edited. I remember during editing, I was almost done, I was at like, the, like, 18 minute mark or something like

that, 16-18, something like that. And my entire Audition crashed, and I was staring at that computer. And I was literally like, there's no way

17:53 SHEILA

That's my greatest fear, when I'm working in Audition, is that there's a malfunction, and I have no way of recovering anything. I think that's something that is really underestimated is how much work goes into a 15 to 20 minute podcast. So to lose all of that and be somewhat attached to like the way you specifically arranged everything, even though you can just redo it, it's like, there's a finesse to it. And sometimes when you're just working on something for so long, and you're part of like a show for so long, you start to just get tired in general. You know, your brain gets scrambled. I felt like I wasn't sure if I was making good choices. So to like kind of click with you guys and like be able to make decisions together was such a relief. It did seem scary to be putting kind of the media on trial.

Lily Han 18:43

Honestly I think we have like a conversation about it. I don't know if we're going to add this in the like the bonus but I remember like Sheila, me, Bana and Jy all had a conversation about it. We were like, do we want to like name drop? Do we want to do this? And we're like we are young journalists like we do want to get jobs. So like, are we really doing this?

18:59 SHEILA

We were really careful to include in the story that Jessica didn't think that Maclean's misquoted her, you know, it's like everything we did was like trying to follow the rules. We're not trying to produce something that's more salacious than it is. So I think just like knowing that we were sort of doing a bit of media criticism, it was really that like, almost extra important to us professionally to make sure that like we got that story right.

Lily Han 19:23

For sure like the one thing she didn't want to come across was like, she didn't want to be like, being like, I'm putting the media on blast or anything. She's like, no, she's like, I love the media. I love talking about my research. I've done so much great work with incredible journalists and great publications. But the fact is like, she could still think about the media and like think about things that like didn't sit well with her and still like the media.

19:53 SHEILA

We Met U When... is a production by journalism students from The Creative School at Toronto Metropolitan University.

This episode was produced by Daniella Lopez and me, Sheila Reid.

Shari Okeke is our executive producer and professor.

Angela Glover is our director of audio production. Our season two graphic was created by Mana Hosseini. Web design by Daniela Olariu. Special thanks to Juleyka Lantigua, founder of LWC Studios for her support during our pitching process. And thank you to The Creative School for the Curriculum Innovation Grant that made Juleyka's participation possible.

I'm Sheila Reid. Thanks for listening.

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