

**THE GREAT RESIGNATION:
TV NEWS, WOMEN, AND THE CHANGE THEY NEED**

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Chapter I: Introduction

Since my first year as a student at the Missouri School of Journalism, I knew I wanted to be a television journalist. I instantly discovered my passion for writing and storytelling, and I knew journalism was the career path for me. However, I did not expect the challenges I would face along the way. My experience working as a television news reporter at a local NBC-affiliate station allowed me to realize that the news industry was, in fact, not the career path for me. While I learned valuable skills and gained hands-on experience working as a multimedia journalist, I quickly realized that my lifelong career would not involve the news industry. During the final year of my undergraduate studies, I decided to switch my interest area from television news reporting to public relations. Initially, I thought I was the only journalist who struggled with the demands of the industry. After reflecting on my personal experiences and listening to my colleagues' experiences, however, I have realized that career change in journalism, and, specifically, television news, is a relevant, important topic that needed to be further addressed. As I started my graduate studies, I knew I wanted to conduct research that explored why journalists, especially television journalists, are exiting the industry.

A qualitative research topic that sustains my interest and contributes knowledge to the profession is exploring the reasons women journalists change careers from television news to public relations. Though existing research does not confirm whether individuals who leave the journalism industry are all headed for the public relations industry, the existence of a Facebook group titled "TV to PR Women," which has approximately four-and-a-half-thousand active members, indicates a strong pattern that deserves investigation. Through the method of semi-structured in-depth interviews with women

who are former television news journalists and current public relations professionals, I have identified the forces that influenced them to leave the field, as well as unpacked how gender played a role in shaping their experiences. Mainly, this research explored the issue of career change in television news with an emphasis on gender-driven issues.

Journalists, and particularly women journalists, are exiting the news industry. Recent journalism and communication research shows that women are more likely to leave the journalism industry before their male coworkers, and gender discrimination and burnout are elements that impact women journalists' decisions to change careers (Swanson, 2016). Yet, the phenomenon of career change is not a new issue to affect the media industry (DeLorme & Fedler, 2003, as cited in Kester & Prenger, 2021).

While prior research concludes that career change in the journalism industry is an occurring phenomenon, a gap in the literature existed that did not address former women television journalists' experiences exiting the industry and switching to public relations. Viererbl and Koch (2019) state that journalists who leave the field may pursue careers in fields like public relations: "Increasingly, journalists do not find permanent jobs and seek work in related fields, often public relations" (p. 1948). Thus, the goal of this research was to identify the influences that drove women television journalists out of the newsroom and into public relations roles, as well as gain a better understanding of the role these women thought their gender had in their decision to leave the profession. This research discovered the changes these women believe the industry should make to retain women television news professionals in the future.

In all, professional journalists should care about this study because it provides suggestions on ways to improve the workplace environment of the television news

industry and address how to help fix the problem of employee turnover in television news. The knowledge gained from reading this paper improves the profession by identifying the common forces that influence women professionals to leave television news altogether. Overall, the problem of the exit of women journalists generated an informative, intriguing research topic that helps understand the issue of the resignation of women in the television news industry. My research strived to identify what is broken and how it can be fixed.

Chapter II: Literature Review

According to Viererbl and Koch (2019), journalists are “increasingly” pursuing work in “related fields” of journalism, such as public relations (p. 1947). Though, career change is not a new phenomenon impacting the media industry (DeLorme & Fedler, 2003, as cited in Kester & Prenger, 2021). According to Olson (1989), public relations personnel have historically had higher job satisfaction compared to journalists. Additionally, public relations personnel have reported higher satisfaction with their growth opportunities and salaries, and they have historically reported higher levels of autonomy than journalists (Olson, 1989). Beam (2006) reports older male journalists tend to have higher job satisfaction, while MacDonald et al. (2016) conclude that younger women journalists, and, specifically, women with little experience working at smaller newspapers, are more likely to experience burnout and uncertainty (as cited in Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021). Consequently, gender is a significant factor when considering the prevalent career-change phenomenon in the journalism industry.

As the media industry continues to undergo transformational change, the changing industry continues to impact journalists’ job satisfaction, insecurity, and uncertainty. For women, exiting the journalism industry can impact their “personal and professional self-identities” (Heaney, 2018, p. 13). Yet, prior research does not thoroughly address the role former women television journalists think their gender played in their choice to exit the industry. Thus, the goal of this research was to identify the influences that drove women out of the newsroom and into public relations roles; further, this research aimed to gain a better understanding of how gender may have impacted their decision to leave the profession.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the phenomenon of women journalists changing careers from television news to public relations, as well as understand how gender-driven issues may have impacted the industry's exits. In all, this study explored women journalists' switch from television news to public relations with an emphasis on personal and professional experiences and gender-driven issues.

Industry Change

The American Press Institute (n.d.) defines journalism as the “activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities” (para. 1). The journalism industry, especially the news sector, has experienced vast changes as it adapts to an evolving media landscape (Ekdale et al., 2015). According to Ekdale et al. (2015), news organizations and journalists have become “casualties” of persistent industry change (p. 383). Ekdale et al. (2015) summarize the state of the news industry:

News organizations everywhere are trying to adapt to a shifting media landscape that has upended processes of news production, audience consumption, and revenue generation. News organizations and news workers have become casualties of this struggle. Layoffs, buyouts, and closings have become increasingly common, a development that affects both those who lose their jobs and those who remain in the newsroom. Many news workers worry about their ability to keep their current jobs, and they question the prospects of working in the industry long-term. (p. 383)

Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez (2021) also cite this claim by Ekdale et al. (2015) and refer to the industry as a “continually changing business environment” (p. 53). As a

result of this “rapid change in the news industry,” the industry has fostered a collective sense of job insecurity (Ekdale et al., 2015). However, Ekdale et al. (2015) found that, in terms of industry change, news workers at an American media company have diverse viewpoints. Ekdale et al.’s (2015) research found that there were individuals who ranged from “hopeful news workers who promote newsroom innovation to cynical news workers who challenge efforts to change news practices” (p. 383). Notable research on industry change and job satisfaction contends that the rapid changes have created a “great deal of uncertainty and stress among employees, eroding journalists’ satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job expectations” (Reinardy, 2011, as cited in Goyanes & Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021, p. 53). Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez (2021) also cite Reinardy’s (2011) claim by stating that the obstacles the industry has faced have created an environment of uncertainty, which, in turn, affects performance and forecasts (pp. 54—55).

Job Satisfaction

Today, many journalists question their job stability and long-term commitment to the industry (Ekdale et al., 2015). Nevertheless, research on journalists’ job satisfaction has historically been a popular area of interest. Shaver (1978) contends that researchers have strived to answer questions regarding the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of journalism graduates. Shaver (1978) explains that a high degree of job satisfaction was found among Michigan State University graduates in Miller’s (1972) study, while Samuelson’s (1962) study found dissatisfaction of newsroom workers to be associated with the following topical areas: (1) hope of newspaper journalism’s future, (2) personal duty satisfaction, (3) congeniality of newspaper journalism as a career, (4) leadership quality, and (5) salary satisfaction (p. 54).

It is important to note, however, that Black journalists have historically been more unsatisfied with their work compared to white journalists; Bramlett-Solomon (1992) concludes that the percentage of Black journalists' dissatisfaction is higher than those of white journalists. Bramlett-Solomon (1992) found that, from the results of a nearly 1100-participant survey of journalists attending the National Association of Black Journalists organization, the percentage of dissatisfied Black journalists is nearly twice the percentage of dissatisfied white journalists. Evidently, numerous internal and external factors that have contributed to the job satisfaction of journalists.

More recently, Weaver et al. (2007) concluded that burnout and stress were two primary factors that influenced journalists to want to leave the field (as cited in Reinardy, 2011). Various factors, including age and gender, affect the job satisfaction of journalists (Beam, 2016). Woodruff (2020) conducted qualitative interviews with 12 former television journalists about the reasons why they leave the field and concluded that increasing demands, such as work-life balance, decreasing resources, and work hours, along with management issues, including news commercialization, unrealistic standards, and industry consolidation, were prominent reasons journalists exited the industry (p. ii). Additionally, Woodruff (2020) found that the participating television journalists did not feel "adequately compensated" for their work (p. ii). Beam (2016) also argues that, for new workers, job satisfaction is linked with "perceptions about employers' business and professional (journalistic) goals and priorities" (p. 169). Layoffs and business closures are additional factors that have contributed to the industry crisis, which has led to increased stress, uncertainty, and fatigue among journalists (Goyanes & Rodríguez-

Gómez, 2021; Ekdale et al., 2015). Ekdale et al. (2015) agree with this claim and emphasize the significance of shutdowns and layoffs on job security and commitment.

Coupled with industry change, Ekdale et al. (2015) argue that “layoffs, buyouts, and closings have led many news workers to experience job insecurity and worry about their long-term futures in journalism” (p. 383). Reinardy (2011) discovered that newspaper journalists who expressed interest in leaving the field also exhibited “high rates of exhaustion and cynicism, and moderate rates of professional efficacy,” which can ultimately lead to burnout (p. 33). Centrally, the Mayo Clinic (n.d.) defines job burnout as a “special type of work-related stress – a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity” (para. 1). Burnout is not technically considered a “medical diagnosis,” but researchers claim that individual factors impact who faces job burnout (Mayo Clinic, n.d.).

Mental health is another constituent of journalists’ job satisfaction; Seely (2019) conducted a national survey of over 250 journalists and concluded that trauma reporting can have significant impacts. Seely (2019) found that “as trauma coverage frequency and intensity increase, so does the severity of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms” (p. 239). According to Seely (2019), journalists can face both primary and secondary trauma; thus, understanding the influence trauma can have on job satisfaction and well-being is paramount. The relationship between mental health and career switching is an area that researchers and news organizations also need to explore.

In terms of job satisfaction of journalists and public relations personnel, individuals working in public relations roles have historically had higher rates of job satisfaction; Olson’s (1989) study found that public relations employees have “reported

being significantly more satisfied with both their jobs and profession” (p. 37). Likewise, public relations personnel have generally had higher satisfaction with salaries and career opportunities compared to journalists (Olson, 1989). Contrastingly, however, journalists have had lower levels of autonomy and job satisfaction (Olson, 1989). Serini et al. (1997) address the concern for distinguishing men’s and women’s job satisfaction as different areas of research.

Career-Change Phenomenon

Fundamentally, the concept of career is defined as “the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with the work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person’s life” (Hall, 1976, p. 4, as cited in Grzeda, 1999, para. 7). More specifically, the overall phenomenon of career change is inherently defined as “a proactive choice among the outcomes of these activities” that is influenced by “environmental turbulence and can be represented by the degree of dissimilarity between future and past work” (Grzeda, 1999, p. 7). In 2017, Goldfinger (2017) reported that public relations and communications positions were growing. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts the public relations field will expand by six percent from 2014 to 2024 (George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, 2020, para. 3). Kester and Prenger (2021) state that “intrinsic and extrinsic motives” influence journalists to switch their professions to public relations (p. 420). Kester and Prenger (2021) refer to these individuals as “turncoats” and contend that this phenomenon is a “largely ignored” area in research; though, the scholars state that it is not uncommon for journalists to switch to public relations (p. 420).

According to the Public Relations Society of America (n.d.), public relations is defined as a “strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics” (para. 4). Essentially, the practice of public relations involves interacting and engaging with stakeholders while protecting organizational reputations (Public Relations Society of America, n.d.). However, the definition of the term has stirred debate among public relations practitioners (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2008). To journalists, the practice of public relations is commonly associated with “press releases, press conferences, and talking to journalists: in two words, media relations” (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2008, p. 3). Although, public relations entails additional duties, such as creating and managing company websites, events, and content (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2008, p. 3). However, Morris and Goldsworthy (2008) argue that the additional duties are not “always seen as PR” duties or performed by public relations practitioners (p. 3). Several of the disciplines and functions of public relations include crisis communications, marketing communications, media relations, content creation, reputation management, and multimedia (Public Relations Society of America, n.d.).

Viererbl and Koch (2019) found in their study that the primary causes of this career-change phenomenon are due to “push versus pull factors” and “hygiene versus motivational factors” (p. 1947). Viererbl and Koch (2019) refer to the “push versus pull factors” as “being pushed out of journalism because of poor working conditions versus being pulled into public relations jobs by attractive qualities of the work” (p. 1947). Viererbl and Koch (2019) also compare “hygiene versus motivational factors” to “extrinsic versus intrinsic rewards” involving the profession (p. 1947). Though, Viererbl

and Koch (2019) conclude that former journalists who are currently working in public relations carry a “journalistic self-concept” that intrudes with “specific norms in public relations” (p. 1947). Heaney (2018) contends a similar argument, claiming that former women reporters can retain self-identities as journalists after leaving the field. Hence, the career-change phenomenon of leaving the journalism field results in various causes, effects, and impacts.

While Viererbl and Koch (2019) and Kester and Prenger’s (2021) studies both research journalists’ switch to public relations, the major gap in the literature that they do not fill is focusing on the experiences of American professionals. Kester and Prenger’s (2021) participants were Dutch political public relations professionals, while Viererbl and Koch’s (2019) participants were former journalists who switched to public relations from Germany. The American public policy and industrial policy regarding family support is drastically different than the European models, creating a need for further research on this matter in the United States.

Gender-Based Factors

Swanson (2016) maintains a “leaky pipeline” exists between newsroom environments and journalism programs; Swanson’s research found that women tend to be passionate about storytelling, but there was ambiguity surrounding the presence of gender-based discrimination. Swanson (2016) explains her findings:

Some suggested that women still experience unintentional discrimination as journalists, while others believe that women are treated equally in the newsroom.

Issues were raised surrounding the challenge of balancing family and a journalism

career, the emotional toll of sexist comments from sources, and a lack of opportunities for women in some newsrooms. (p. 2)

Swanson (2016) also points out that women journalists are “more likely to quit the journalism profession earlier than their male counterparts,” and burnout and sexual discrimination influence career change among women journalists (pp. 7—8). Swanson’s (2016) study highlights women with journalism degrees are likely to pursue careers in public relations for higher pay and flexibility. Josephi and Oller Alonso (2021) agree with Swanson’s research as they state that women typically view themselves working in a strategic communication role upon graduation.

It is important to note that the construct of gender is defined as an “organizing principle ... used to classify and differentiate humans and give us guidelines for how we are to interact with others” (Wright et al., 1991, as cited in Serini et al., 1997, p. 100). Serini et al. (1997) contend that there are distinct differences in work-related satisfaction between men and women. Several variables connected with job satisfaction include autonomy, demographic considerations, interpersonal relationships, and power dynamics (Serini et al., 1997).

Charbonnet’s (2016) findings conclude that women who change careers experience “complex connections of personal and professional triggers, experiences, traits, and survival mechanisms” (as cited in Reinardy et al., 2021, p. 367). Similarly, Heaney (2018) reports that “turning points,” such as job offers, having children, and new goals, have influenced women journalists to exit the industry (p. 12). Chiefly, Heaney (2018) concludes that women’s self-identities can be impacted by exiting the industry.

Yet, prior research has not filled the gap in explaining the career experiences of former television news journalists with a focus on gender.

Nevertheless, literature has shown women in journalism are more likely to experience burnout, especially due to issues regarding sexism, family, discrimination, and a “proverbial glass ceiling that limits professional prosperity” (Reinardy, 2008, p. 5, as cited in Woodruff, 2020, p. 5). MacDonald et al. (2016) also conclude that women journalists, particularly those who have less experience and work at small-sized newspapers, are at high risk of facing burnout (as cited in Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021). On the other hand, older male journalists generally have higher job satisfaction (Beam, 2006). Grunig et al. (2013) argue that gender-based imbalances involving pay and opportunity are still prevalent as women have increasingly entered the practice of public relations over the past 20 years. In 2019, women made up “63.6 percent of PR specialists and 71.4 percent of PR/fundraising managers,” according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Schuman, 2022, para. 12). This statistic is noteworthy because Grunig et al. (2013) point out that fields “shifting to a female majority” experience the “realities of dwindling salary, status, and influence within the organization” (pp. 4—5). These realities can significantly impact individual perceptions; a study by Farmer and Waugh (1999) shows that female students studying public relations reported they anticipated to being promoted slower and earning less than their male coworkers. Farmer and Waugh (1999) also contend that, historically, there have been few books published that focus on women’s or men’s issues in public relations. As a result, research on gender-based factors involving women’s career changes from

television news to public relations was critical for understanding individual perceptions and experiences.

Age-Centered Industry

Younger journalists are also more likely to experience the effects of burnout, fatigue, and stress (Goyanes & Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021; Ekdale et al., 2015). The journalism industry has been perceived as a “young person’s occupation” despite journalists’ tendencies to exit the industry after a short period (Josephi & Oller Alonso, 2021, para. 1). Reinardy (2011) states that “young copy editors or page designers working at small newspapers” are the “most ‘at-risk’” of experiencing burnout (p. 33). While scholars point out that job burnout is increasingly common for younger journalists, existing literature fails to explain why this is a phenomenon among younger age demographics, creating a need for research on gender-based and age-based factors.

Common Misconceptions

Lastly, there are common misconceptions regarding the switch from journalism to public relations that must be addressed. Although journalists may predict the switch to public relations roles to be a smooth transition, the two fields do require different skillsets. Greer (2008) proclaims that a journalist’s career change to public relations may not be a seamless transition. The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management (2020) describes key points to ponder when considering switching from journalism to public relations: (1) Public relations demands knowledge of business; (2) Work in public relations can require more variety of roles compared to journalism; (3) Public relations is subjective; (4) The pace of public relations is different than journalism. Although, the practice of journalism does have several transferrable skills for public

relations. Youngblood's (2015) study on former journalists in public relations roles found that "writing, story pitching, and analysis were the most appreciated skills and abilities" (p. vi). Youngblood's (2015) research shows that there are transferrable skills between journalism and public relations.

For this study, public relations employees included those who work to "help a company project a positive image to the public in order to achieve its goals" (Doyle, 2020, para. 1). According to Doyle (2020), job titles in public relations can include general job titles (e.g., public relations director, digital and social media manager), account job titles (e.g., account director and account executive), communications job titles (e.g., communications coordinator and communicators director, development and fundraising job titles (e.g., development director and fundraising manager), marketing job titles (e.g., marketing coordinator and marketing director), and media job titles (e.g., media relations manager and media director). In short, public relations roles can entail content creation, media relations, social media, community relations, financial communications, and public speaking (i.e., spokespersons) (Chi, 2018).

This study also focused on former television journalists who were on-camera talent, including television news reporters and news anchors. The Princeton Review (n.d.) states that television reporters "gather information, investigate leads and report stories 'live' or 'on the scene'" (para. 1). News anchors "inform the public by reporting news stories and events happening on a local national, and international level" ("What is a news anchor?," n.d., para. 1). Television news anchors also serve as the "anchor" who guide news programs ("What is a news anchor?," n.d., para. 1). Fundamentally, television news anchors keep "continuity between segments after field reporters deliver

their respective stories” (“What is a news anchor?,” n.d., para. 1). Overall, this study focused on former women television journalists who currently work in public relations roles.

Unfolding Theory of Turnover

This research used the unfolding theory of turnover framework. According to Alla and Rajâa (2019), the phrase “turnover” is typically defined as “the number of employees who enter and those who leave an organization during a specific period” (p. 22). Particularly, there are two types of employee turnover, voluntary and involuntary turnover. In voluntary turnover, an employee willingly chooses to leave an organization; by contrast, in involuntary turnover, an organization chooses to dismiss an employee (Armstrong, 2012, as cited in Alla & Rajâa, 2019). Voluntary turnover can significantly impact organizations financially, which can result in “personal, work-unit, and organizational readjustments” for companies (Cascio, 1991; Mobley, 1982, as cited in Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Research on turnover in the television news industry is essential for understanding employee turnover and assisting television news organizations.

The unfolding theory of turnover maintains that when employees are contemplating whether to quit their job, they adhere to one of five cognitive pathways. Shock, history of dissatisfaction, script, image violation, and alternative job opportunity are the main factors that constitute the different pathways (Tellez, 2014). Tellez (2014) describes a cognitive pathway as “how employees interpret their work environment, identify options, and enact responses” (p. 3). Put simply, the turnover theory is a framework that explains the processes behind individuals’ reasoning for quitting their jobs. Goldstein et al. (2017) refer to this theory as an “unfolding process” that employees

experience when they leave their jobs (p. 448). Overall, the unfolding theory of turnover supports this study's research questions that unpacked the influences, especially gender-based influences, that drove women television journalists out of news and into public relations.

Studies on turnover have become prevalent in modern research. Although there were limited research studies on turnover in the 1950s and 1960s, there were over 7,000 studies on turnover in 2014 (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 446). According to Goldstein et al. (2017), March and Simon established the "first formal model of turnover" in 1958 (p. 446). This model maintained that employee turnover relies on an "organizational equilibrium" framework that considers the two factors of "perceived ease of movement" and "perceived desirability of movement" (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 446; Long et al., 2012, p. 12). March and Simon's model declared that these two factors impact employees' choices to resign from organizations (Long et al., 2012). Goldstein et al. (2017) summarize the essence of March and Simon's model:

When an employee believes his or her contributions to the organization outweigh the rewards and benefits received, the employee-employer relationship becomes out of balance. This causes the employee to consider leaving the organization (i.e., perceived desirability of movement) and consider how easy it would be to move to another organization (i.e., perceived ease of movement). (p. 446)

Studies on turnover have frequently used March and Simon's turnover model (Long et al., 2012). However, scholars argue that this model of turnover excludes significant variables, such as role stress or organizational commitment, that affect employee turnover (Morrell et al., 2001; Allen & Shannock, 2012, as cited in Long et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, scholars have established other models of turnover theory, such as the causal model of turnover, the intermediate linkage model, the cusp catastrophe model of turnover, the integrated process model, and the unfolding model of turnover (Long et al., 2001). While there are various turnover models, Lee and Mitchell's more recent theory of turnover, the unfolding model, added a "unique contribution to turnover literature" (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 448). Lee and Mitchell developed the unfolding theory of turnover in the 1990s to provide a "more comprehensive and realistic representation of what employees experience in making their decision to leave" (as cited in Tellez, 2014, p. 3; Goldstein et al., 2017). Harman et al. (2007) explain the significance of the unfolding model from a theoretical standpoint:

The central contribution of this approach is that it shifted theorizing from an assumption that turnover is always an evaluative and rational process to a broader model of how decisions are actually made. This analysis revealed that although some decisions to quit are probably quite consistent with standards of expected-value rationality, a great many others are driven by more intuitive or routinized decision processes. (p. 51)

Lee and Mitchell (1994) used the image theory, which is a "decision-making model," to form the unfolding theory of turnover (p. 57). The image theory delineates that the "decision-making processes as one in which most decision tasks encountered are resolved by pre-formulated procedures developed through prior experience or training" (Beach, 1993, as cited in Donnelly & Quirin, 2006, pp. 59—60). In short, an individual relies on images, which are also known as "schematic knowledge structures," during the decision-making process (Morrell et al., 2008, p. 130).

Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model emphasizes the events of "shocks" in influencing employee turnover. Lee and Mitchell (1994) define a shock as an "event that generates information or has meaning about a person's job" (p. 60). Put differently, a shock is a significant event that disrupts employees and, as a result, may cause them to evaluate and quit their jobs (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Shocks can derive from both professional and personal events, such as organizational or familial changes (Goldstein et al., 2017). The first, second, and third cognitive pathways start with a shock, while the other pathways do not begin with a shock (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Morrell et al., 2008). Individuals follow a preexisting script, or a pre-established plan of action, in the first pathway, and they leave their jobs without thoroughly evaluating their options (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Harman et al., 2007). For instance, employees may choose to relocate to a new location and, in turn, leave their current jobs; by doing so, they would follow a preexisting script and promptly leave without much thought (Tellez, 2014; Harman et al., 2007).

The second pathway is similar, but the second path does not activate a preexisting script like the first pathway (Harman et al., 2007). The shocks in the second and third pathways involve image violation, or "dissonance between the present job and one or more images" (Morrell et al., 2008, p. 130). Employees use "value, trajectory, and strategic images" to evaluate the situation within the organization (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p. 65). In other words, employees evaluate whether their jobs have violated these images and may act accordingly. Morrell et al. (2008) explain how image violation works in the second and third pathways: "[Image violation] can be so severe that satisfaction is irrelevant as a quit is triggered without search/evaluation or a job offer (path 2).

Alternatively, it can lead to dissatisfaction, then search/evaluation, and quit after a job offer (path 3)” (p. 130). The main difference between these pathways is that, in the second pathway, individuals typically choose to leave their jobs without considering job alternatives; contrastingly, individuals consider job alternatives in the third pathway (Tellez, 2014). Tellez (2014) reports that the first three pathways are positive, negative, and unanticipated, respectively. In all, the first three pathways rely on shock events to make decisions regarding quitting a job.

Shocks are absent in the fourth and fifth pathways, or paths 4a and 4b; however, image violations still occur. These pathways primarily focus on job satisfaction. In essence, employees will quit their jobs if job dissatisfaction is significant. In path 4a, employees do not contemplate job alternatives, but employees do contemplate job alternatives in path 4b (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). That is, employees will leave their jobs without looking for others beforehand in path 4a, while employees will look for other jobs beforehand in path 4b (Morrell et al., 2008). Job satisfaction/dissatisfaction is the primary determinant of employees’ decision-making in the final two pathways of the unfolding model.

The unfolding theory of turnover precisely aligned with the purpose and objectives of this qualitative study. To effectively study former journalists’ experiences changing careers, understanding the processes behind how and why individuals made decisions involving their professional careers was necessary. The unfolding model of turnover theory served as a basis for this research study on career change in journalism, and particularly, television news.

While there is ample research on the changes in the news industry, burnout factors of journalists, and reasons journalists leave the field, there was little research that primarily focuses on former women journalists' experiences leaving television news for public relations. That is, a predominant gap and less-examined area in the literature existed that does not describe the experiences of former women television journalists working in public relations roles.

Moreover, additional research on the gender-based factors involving television journalists' career change to public relations was essential for understanding the central phenomenon of voluntary turnover in television news. Consequently, this study sought to fill a gap in the literature by investigating women's personal and professional experiences in television news. This research helped address the broader, overarching issue of career change in television news by identifying ways to improve working conditions for women television journalists considering leaving the industry. Based on the theoretical framework and review of the literature, this study explored the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the factors/influences that drive women journalists out of television news and into public relations?

RQ1A: What role did gender play in these factors?

RQ2: What changes do these women believe the industry should make in order to retain more women television news professionals in the future?

Chapter III: Professional Analysis

When I asked the participants in this study what attracted them to a career in television news, most of them had similar answers: they knew from an early age that this was their calling, and they wanted to be storytellers who made an impact. However, the industry was not as “glamorous” as it appeared to be for most, especially toward the end of their career in television news. One participant said she qualified for food stamps and low-income housing, and her childhood dream was not what she anticipated: “It was almost like the veil had been revealed on this childhood dream that I had – almost like the Wizard of Oz being not what you thought... I grew up watching my local news, idolizing my local news anchors. And then when I was an anchor, I was like, this is what I signed up for?” Another participant described her experience in the industry as “disappointing,” while another referred to hers as “literal suffering.” One said that after she worked in the industry for ten years, she realized “it wasn’t so glamorous.” Nonetheless, these women have described their observations of the great resignation in television news as an “exodus.” Two participants said they have seen a “huge exodus,” while two others referred to the exits in the industry as a “mass exodus.” Hence, this research aimed to pinpoint what was broken in the television news industry and how it can be fixed.

I interviewed 14 women who are former television journalists and currently work in public relations roles. The participants in this study, identified by randomly assigned pseudonyms, consisted of on-air journalists who predominantly worked as news anchors, reporters, and multimedia journalists. The participants’ experience in the television news industry ranged from 3 years to 24 years, with the average amounting to 9 years of experience in the industry. The participants’ experience in the public relations industry

ranges from 2 months to 4 years, and the participants' current roles consisted of the following public relations and public relations-adjacent positions: senior public relations specialist, vice president of corporate communications, public relations account manager and media relations director, director of communications and outreach, marketing and communications manager, communications manager, media relations consultant, digital marketing manager, public relations information officer, media, marketing and public relations specialist, public relations coordinator, content specialist, and account director. In this study, the participants met the following criteria: (1) identified as a woman; (2) had experience working in U.S. television news for a minimum of a year as on-camera talent (i.e., news reporter and/or news anchor); (3) currently working in a public relations role.

The purpose of this study was to answer the following main questions:

RQ1: What are the factors/influences that drive women journalists out of television news and into public relations?

RQ1A: What role did gender play in these factors?

RQ2: What changes do these women believe the industry should make in order to retain more women television news professionals in the future?

From in-depth interviews with women professionals with experience in both the television news and public relations industries, the findings presented in this analysis identify the influences that forced women television journalists to leave the industry, how gender impacted these factors, and the changes that must be made to maintain women television news professionals in the future.

Unfolding Theory of Turnover

The unfolding theory of turnover is the framework that set the foundation for the analysis. To thoroughly understand the processes behind former women journalists' decisions to leave television news for public relations, it was critical to study the pathways the participants went through to make decisions involving their professional careers. The participants in this study followed various pathways that corresponded to the ones of the unfolding theory of turnover. In sum, Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model relies on five cognitive pathways that professionals use in the process of employee turnover; shock, history of dissatisfaction, script, image violation, and alternative job opportunity are the main factors that constitute the different pathways (Tellez, 2014).

In this study, participants followed the following three pathways of the unfolding model of turnover: the second, third, and fifth cognitive pathways, which all involve image violation. While the second and third pathways begin with shocks that kickstart the career change process, shocks are typically absent in the fifth pathway; however, image violation still occurs (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Morrell et al., 2008). In the second pathway, employees evaluate whether their images have been violated by their jobs and may decide to quit without search/evaluation or a job offer (Tellez, 2014; Morrell et al., 2008). In the third pathway, however, employees consider job alternatives before deciding to leave their jobs (Tellez, 2014; Morrell et al., 2008). The fifth pathway, path 4b, focuses more on job satisfaction; that is, employees contemplate job alternatives in path 4b before deciding to leave their job due to overall satisfaction (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Morrell et al., 2008). The 14 participants in this study followed one of the three pathways: the second, shock event and exit without considering job alternatives; the third,

shock event and exit with considering job alternatives/alternative job opportunity; or the fifth (path 4b), history of dissatisfaction/image violation and exit with considering job alternatives.

Figure 1: Unfolding Theory of Turnover

Cognitive Pathway	Number of Participants
Shock event and exit without considering job alternatives (path 2)	3
Shock event and exit with considering job alternatives/alternative job opportunity (path 3)	5
History of dissatisfaction/image violation and exist with considering job alternatives (path 4b)	6

Push Factors

Three participants followed the second cognitive pathway; that is, they experienced a shock and image violation and were prompted to quit their job in television news without search/evaluation or a job offer. For instance, Hazel H. quit her job in television news after being suspended for “insubordination” for speaking up to management about no longer wanting to work overtime without pay. Though the “total erosion of the industry from the inside and out” had been brewing over time for Hazel, the suspension was the shock that ultimately led to her resignation:

It was scary as hell cuz I didn't have anything lined up, but all of the pieces really fell into place. So, quitting your job at the beginning of the pandemic, when you're like everything's shutting down, and there are no jobs was scary as hell.

Thank God I did.

Megan M. recalled a specific experience that solidified her decision to leave her job in television news; an inaccurate story was aired by a reporter, and her management told her she was “being too much of a perfectionist, and not every newscast can be 100 percent accurate.” Megan said, “I thought, like, that’s not the reason why I’m in news. And if they don’t care, then like, then I’m done because that’s like, the very core of journalism is the truth. So, that was the big moment for me.” Megan was lightly looking at jobs a month prior to the shock, but she ultimately quit without having a job lined up: “I did not have a job, which is, so 180 unlike like me. I would absolutely never do that, but I was so fed up.”

Lastly, Natalie N. also left her job in television news without having a “backup plan,” or another job in place. Natalie mentioned that she had little room for professional development or longevity at her job, and she was told by her news director that she “wasn’t a true journalist” and “didn’t know how to develop a story,” which prompted her to quit her job. Natalie also recalled a specific moment that served as a “wake-up call” for her:

There was a woman who worked in the control room, and she had cancer, and she had been on medical leave and taking a lot of time off. But for some reason, she needed to work one additional eight-hour shift in order to get like, more benefits, or more leave or something like that, and the news director made her come in.

And she was so sick, she was not able to sit up... And I just thought that that was the most inhumane thing I've ever heard of in my life... It just, it really, really, really bothered me, and I was like, for what? This woman has worked here for 20 something years, maybe 30, and this is how she's ending it, and this is the respect she gets? Why am I going to sacrifice my life and for what?

In all, the second cognitive pathway in the unfolding model of turnover applied to several participants in this study.

Five participants followed the third cognitive pathway; in other words, they considered job alternatives prior to officially quitting their jobs in television news. Bailey B. and Karter K. both received unexpected job offers, which prompted them to consider job alternatives before leaving their jobs in television news. Bailey said, "So, what happened, what really made me leave the business was an out-of-the-blue unexpected offer to come work here... It just made sense for me to do that. I hadn't expected it." Karter also considered a job alternative before leaving the industry:

They invited me for the interview, and I got it. And I talked to my boss at the TV station. My assignment editor was great. And so, I was like, hey, what do you think? And he was like, I think you would be silly not to take this job. I was like, okay, if y'all don't want me, and the station had just overlooked me for a promotion to morning anchor. So, I was kind of ready to go. I took that kind of as the last sign of like, okay, they are not trying to keep you.

Elena E. also quit her job in television news after experiencing a demotion from her role as news anchor for reporting a coworker who had sexually harassed her. Though Elena had been casually looking for jobs outside of television news before the shock, the

shock, as well as the aftermath from the shock, was the event that forced her to leave her job. Elena had applied for jobs and had a job lined up when she received the settlement for the investigation.

For Anna A., the shock that pushed her out of the newsroom was not getting the open position of breaking news anchor:

And that was the like seminal moment where it was like, in addition to being underpaid, underappreciated, having this tough schedule, not working with family, feeling guilty, and you know, for hurting my poor newsroom cohorts, not getting this position was it.

After being bypassed for the position, Anna started considering job alternatives. Anna said, “After that seminal moment where I decided I really can't continue in this, I thought, I'm definitely not going to leave my position unless I have another one because I can continue to do this, but I can't not be employed.”

Julia J. had debated whether to leave television news, but she mentioned that a specific encounter with her managing editor over one of her stories was a seminal moment for her:

And that was when I was like, is so idiotic – this is asinine. I really just that kind of flipped a switch – that story. And then continuing, like I said, to have like panic attacks after that. I just knew that this was not sustainable. I had to get out for my own mental health.

Julia started considering job alternatives before leaving her job:

I just wanted to start seeing what was out there and experiencing through the application process what I could potentially get to, and then it just so happened

that really a great opportunity kind of fell into my lap. And the timing couldn't have been better – I was at my wits' end, and I needed a change.

Hence, the third cognitive pathway of the unfolding model of turnover was a pathway that was prevalent in this study.

Lastly, six participants followed the fifth cognitive pathway, pathway 4b, in which they did not have a specific shock event but still considered job alternatives from having image violations. In this pathway, job satisfaction is a factor that impacts employees' decision-making. Lena L. looked around for job for at least 3 years while she was working in television news prior to leaving the industry:

I would say it was more of a gradual – it wasn't one specific event. And I fought it for actually several years just because I do love the work so much. And I was so passionate about it... It wasn't paying the bills... I knew that I couldn't just up and leave, and I wouldn't do that without having something else lined out. So yeah, I did start looking just because I knew I needed to do something different for myself and for my family, too.

Ivy I. said her decision to leave television news was a gradual process:

It took me since 2016 until finally this year to say that's it. So, it was a gradual thing, but yes, I was absolutely not going to leave my job without having something else first and something else that was a good opportunity for me.

Ivy also applied for other jobs before leaving the television news industry:

It was mainly a process; it's almost like detachment. When you're in a relationship, which, you know, your employment is the relationship, and it's not good for you, sometimes it takes you a while, and you're like, no, I'm going to

make it work. And I just have to stick it out... I was already on the fence, so I started looking and applying for jobs.

Thus, she considered job alternatives, and her job search was a three-month process before she finally quit.

Clara C. also started considering job alternatives when she was no longer satisfied with her job. Clara said, "It wasn't really, one day or one thing, I think it was just what built up over time of like, I think there's good newsrooms and bad newsrooms." She accepted a job with a public relations agency and quit her television news job.

Daphne D. felt her process in leaving the industry was a "very slow build up throughout the years." When she was not satisfied with her job, she started applying for others while she was working. She accepted a job offer and put in her resignation notice for her television news job. Gracelyn G. also contemplated other job alternatives before she left her job in television news. Though she did not experience a specific shock that prompted her to leave, she went through the interview process for a job and accepted. Then, she put in her resignation notice.

Finally, Fiona F. accepted another job in public relations before quitting her job in television news. However, she was prepared to leave the industry without having a back-up option:

I had in my head that if I didn't have a job lined up by a certain point in time... I would leave news. And so, I kind of had that in the back of my head, like, am I prepared to just quit because I know it's no longer good for me? But I was lucky enough that I lined up a job before I left.

Fiona lined up her new job, accepted it, and put in her resignation notice.

This study's findings support the unfolding theory of turnover. Additionally, the theory has helped this study gain a better understanding into women television journalists' processes of leaving the industry. Through the cognitive pathways, the theory has served as an efficient framework for analyzing how and why women switch from television news to public relations.

Pull Factors

For most participants, the storytelling and content creations aspects of public relations, as well as the skillsets, were the factors that attracted them to the public relations industry. Indeed, there are various factors that attract individuals to certain jobs, but the storytelling/content creation and translatable skillsets were common factors that specifically pulled former women television journalists into public relations. When participants felt they were no longer producing their best work possible in television news, they thought they could continue to be storytellers and content creators in new roles where their skills would translate.

Storytelling and Content Creation. The ability to continue storytelling and create content were aspects of the public relations industry that appealed to participants. Essentially, the public relations industry allows former women television journalists to continue telling impactful stories in different capacities and environments. Hazel explained her attraction to public relations:

That's what attracted me – is the ability to continue being in a storytelling capacity to some extent, without any of the bullshit. And with the thing that actually attracted me... the idea that I could make a difference.

Public relations appealed to Anna because of media relations, and, in media relations, she could continue telling stories for the community, even if she was not in the newsroom:

Within PR is media relations, and that was appealing because I can still be a storyteller. I can stay in the community doing interviews and sharing stories, but the framework is within a school, a hospital, a public safety organization, a firm, you know, and that tends to come with a little... more employee appreciation, PTO salaries, better work environment, but you're still doing the same core things of storytelling, interviewing, and presenting complicated things in a simple way.

Basically, Anna can create content and be a communicator but with a better schedule, pay, flexibility, and benefits in the public relations industry. Anna said, "If I'm still able to be a cool video storyteller but have a supportive infrastructure around me to allow me to be a mom and a wife, yeah, I'll do that."

Bailey was another participant who favored the storytelling aspect of public relations. To her, storytelling was her first passion. She said that, at her current company, she tells internal and external stories; at first, she was concerned she would be bored in a non-television news environment, but she quickly found out that was not the case:

I'm like, I don't want a job where I'm just going to sit and write press releases all day. That does not interest me, but that's not what this job has turned into... So, I've been here four years... So, like, it's a great company because it's growing so much. And so, I think that has helped. I would be really bored, I think, and not challenged at a company that wasn't like that. So, I'm really fortunate in that regard.

For Clara, her position as an account manager, media relations manager, and podcast host pulled her into the public relations industry. Her company created a new position for her; although she was not “totally sold” on doing public relations work, she knew she still wanted to be a storyteller. Likewise, Megan wanted a job where she could use her writing skills in creative ways. As a television journalist, she felt that she had been telling similar stories persistently:

I had just been kind of writing the same story over and over again, like, how many times can you write about, you know, the people who got vaccinated. And so, it’s been really interesting to tell different stories... I was really looking for a job I could use my writing skills with the preferred option of, you know, helping people, but I was willing to kind of lose that in order just to get out of news.

Based on the conversations with participants, the storytelling and content creation aspects pulled former television journalists into the public relations industry.

Translatable Skillsets/Natural Progression. Most participants mentioned that transitioning to the public relations industry was a natural transition because of the translatable skills. In other words, a key factor that attracted participants to the public relations industry was the skillset. Participants emphasized that the public relations industry is where their skills seemed to fit. Fiona said she knew switching to public relations was the “easiest transition.” Ivy said it was a “natural progression” and “natural evolution” because of her existing skills. She said, “It just seemed like a safe place to be in after a decade of chaos.” Essentially, participants were attracted to jobs that required similar talents as television news. Julia said, “I just felt like PR was the most natural transition, given my skills, you know, some PR or communications type of field.”

Natalie and Karter were additional participants who were attracted by the skills. Natalie said, “I think it just kind of fit in with my existing skillset. I wasn’t afraid of writing all day or focusing on messaging... That’s why I went that route, instead of like going back to school or something.” Karter knew her skills encompassed reading and writing, and she also connected with other former television journalists who switched to public relations:

I had talked with a lot of former journalists, and a lot of them have gone into PR, obviously. And so, I was like, alright, well, this is the skillset I have, so maybe it’ll work. And like I said, the [PR] job just kind of dropped into my lap, and so that made it really easy to pursue PR.

Megan said her skills overlapped with public relations well, and women television journalists are equipped with marketable skills:

I think a lot of women in TV don’t realize like how powerful... and how sought after those skills really are because we’re not celebrated for those skills in the industry. So, leaving and seeing how many different roles were opened with the skills that I had. Most of the roles I saw that overlapped were in communications or PR... Like we’re so multifaceted. And I don’t think we realize it just because, you know, in the industry, it’s really just like, not valued unless you’re winning awards for the station... it’s just a very nice, it’s just a very nice little thing to have in your back pocket.

In sum, the skillset and transitional aspects of public relations were additional factors that pulled participants into the industry.

Factors/Influences that Drove Women Journalists out of Television News and into Public Relations

This study’s literature review cited existing research, which identified numerous factors that contribute to news professionals’ decisions to leave the industry. Participants commented on the following factors as they applied to their decision: rapid changes in the television news industry, job satisfaction, burnout/mental health pressures, sexism/discrimination, work-life balance, difficult stories, quality of news standards, shortage of resources (e.g., staff, such as camera people and editors; travel budgets, etc.), other health issues, unethical practices, compensation (e.g., salary, raises, financial stability), management issues, and sponsorship availability/conflicts. Additional factors that emerged from the data included lack of appreciation, lack of long-term feasibility, lack of room for development, structural issues, and threats/safety concerns.

Figure 2: Factors/influences that drove women journalists out of television news and into public relations (based on existing research)

Factor/Influence	Number of Participants
Burnout/mental health pressures	14
Shortage of resources and/or quality of news standards	14
Management issues	13
Compensation	12
Work-life balance	11
Job satisfaction	11
Rapid changes in television news industry	10

Unethical practices	10
Sexism/discrimination	8
Difficult stories	6
Other health issues	4
Sponsorship availability/conflicts	0

Burnout/Mental Health Pressures

All the participants said burnout and/or mental health pressures had contributed to their decision to leave television news in one way or another. Expectations for television journalists to produce content for multiple shows during every shift led to significant burnout. Julia mentioned how high expectations influenced her decision to leave the industry:

The expectations were so high as we were rolling it out, but that very quickly, kind of pushed me out the door because not only was this strain to do on a day-to-day basis, but I was already feeling that square peg, round hole feeling. I was just having so much anxiety... At some points, you know, to be candid, I was having panic attacks like both before and, you know, during work. And I felt like there, I wasn't the only one at the station. A bunch of other reporters hated this too, and management wouldn't budge.

The demands of the job and scheduling were factors that led to intense burnout and mental health pressures. Fiona described the burnout she experienced in her television news role:

I was completely burnt out, and it was actually really terrifying when I finally realized, like, I'm numb. The best I could describe myself was I feel like a

zombie, and I have legitimate blank spaces for months at a time of where like, I don't remember things.

Several participants said they had experienced panic attacks, anxiety, or depression during their time in the television news industry. Ivy said she had depression and panic attacks throughout 2017:

And even though like the real stress, as I mentioned, with like, in 2017, like I had an awful year, like I was depressed. I had panic attacks in the parking lot at my new station. So, that was even a darker time.

Karter described how much she needed a break from her job:

There would be days where I was like, I kind of wish I would break my leg so I can just stay in the hospital and not have to go to work. Like that's a terrible thought to have, but I just wanted – I just needed a break.

For some participants, burnout and/or mental health pressures were the biggest factors in their decision to leave the industry. Fiona knew her job in television news was not healthy for her:

I think for as much as I appreciate the work and effort that went into getting what I got, it also burnt you out by the end, and there was no other option other than either... commit to staying and knowingly harming myself, emotionally and physically, or I have to get out and make a change.

Shortage of Resources/Quality of News Standards

The factors of quality of news standards and shortage of resources were two elements that were frequently seen in conjunction with each other. Most participants said the lack of resources in the newsroom impacted the quality of news standards. Ivy said

the quality of news standards and lack of resources “go hand in hand,” while Hazel said the quality of the work impacts the credibility of television news:

I was literally the only person who cared about the quality of the product – that we cannot put an actual dumpster fire on the air. And it wasn’t just because it was my face, but because that is bad. That is very bad. Nobody trusts the news anyway, and if you are fucking it up, we’ve lost all credibility.

Hazel also said the quality of news had suffered at her station due to a lack of trained staff:

Listen, I’m not in management. I can’t make those decisions. I can tell you what the end product was... we had absolute garbage hitting air. We had fact errors. We had grammar errors. I was weekend morning anchor, and my shift was supposed to start at five for a show that starts at six, but I would have to come in over a series of worse and worse hires. I was coming in. I started at four, so that I could, you know, go through every script really carefully and make sure that we didn’t have spelling and grammar errors.

For Megan, the quality of news standards was the main factor that pushed her out of the industry. Megan said, “The moment that I had decided, like, oh, my gosh, I have to get out of here was because of the faulty news standards.” Additionally, Karter said, “I’m putting in the work, but the quality is not reflecting that.”

Based on participants’ experiences, it is increasingly difficult for journalists to produce quality work when there is a shortage of resources. For example, Lena said the lack of photographers made it harder to produce the same level of work:

When it came time to when they started pulling photographers or when the photographers would leave, and then they weren't replaced, that was just really tough for me to accept that, okay, you have to do this on your own... to me, it's impossible to do the same quality work when you're all by yourself out there in the field.

If Clara had the opportunity to keep working with a photographer rather than be a "one-man band," she likely would have stayed in the industry:

Looking back on it, I think if I had always worked with a photographer, I probably would have been a lifer. Like, had I not experienced the burnout I did from being a one-man band, and going through what I went through, like, because when I got to work with a photographer, I just noticed how much easier it was to ask better questions during interviews to like, make mental notes of how I wanted to tell the story... It would have been so much more helpful.

Julia was one of the only participants who said that her station had an abundance of resources; however, the quality of news standards impacted her decision to leave the industry. When she felt like she could no longer be creative with her stories anymore, she knew she needed to leave the industry:

The biggest thing that happened was during this type of storytelling approach, I felt like my creative options were taken away. I felt like I couldn't even be creative with my writing anymore, and that's when I said, I've got to pull the plug and do something else. There's just nothing about this job that appeals to me anymore.

In all, participants experienced a lack of resources during their jobs, which can significantly impact the quality of work that is produced. Ivy said, “They don’t want to invest in what it takes to run a new station, and they want the people who are there to work miracles, and you can’t... but that’s expected, and so you try to reach that goal, but it’s impossible.” Hazel said the quality of news and shortage of resources are connected, creating a “feed the beast” type of work environment:

The quality of the news comes down to the shortage of resources... they keep adding hours and hours of news without adding humans. So, the content is just like feed the beast – feed the beast, and no one cared about the quality of the content, except for the people who are getting so burnt out trying to keep that ship afloat.

Above all, television news stations must prioritize hiring qualified staff and supplying ample resources to maintain quality work.

Management Issues

Most participants brought up issues they had with management throughout their careers in television news. Management issues included lack of promotion, ethical dilemmas, gender discrimination, and, in one instance, too many managers. Karter explained how management issues impacted her decision to leave:

The decision to not promote from within – that was the defining factor where I was like, okay, this station clearly does not want to invest in me like — that probably would be the one management decision that I was like, I got to get out of here. This isn’t for me.

When Fiona informed her station that she was leaving television news for public relations, her manager told her she wasn't "cut out" for the job:

I had a manager when I broke the news say, you know what, some people just aren't cut out for it. And that was just like a knife to the side because I was like, do you know what I did for you for two years? Like how am I not cut out for it?

And to me, it reflected more on like, I was concerned for my manager because I'm like, you must be struggling if you think that continuing to stay in a harmful situation means you're strong. That was just more confirmation.

In Fiona's view, newsrooms are no longer set up for managers to be in-the-know of "what's actually happening." Fiona said managers now did not have the same responsibilities as television news journalists do today:

And I don't know if there's, like an industry-wide concern of, can managers really understand how much effort is going into what they're asking you to do? And the managers that are coming up in the ranks now, when they were in our positions, were never being asked to do as much as they are asking us to do. So that's why I'm like, I can't. I can't physically fault you or hold blame to you because you simply don't understand.

Fiona believes that it is up to management to help change the direction of the television news industry:

However, I think there is room for them to become more understanding if they're willing to do that... the burden is on them to make a change, and I don't know if they're willing to do that because the bottom line now is so tight for news stations that I don't know if it would be financially worthwhile. It's such a convoluted,

twisted problem... I was like, I gotta go, and when I left, and when I quit, I said I don't know if I'll ever come back, but I'm never going to close that door because I know I'm a storyteller at heart. So, if, for some reason, there's some sort of unicorn position down the line, sure. However, I'm never going back to doing what I was doing.

When Hazel had a child, she said she knew she could no longer deal with the management at her last station:

I had a child... it really changed everything for me in terms of like, I just can't keep living like this, and we had extremely toxic management in my last newsroom that just made it feel like I don't want to live like this anymore. I have to make a change.

Megan also noted the obstacles she had with her news director:

I had a news director... who hired a newsroom full of women and belittled women constantly. And then even up to the, you know, highest management, you have a general manager, I think, who spoke very condescendingly to people that he chose to hire. And even up to the top, the very owner, I had a meeting with her to let her know that I was, you know, thinking about leaving... And she told me that if I didn't feel good at work, I should go get bloodwork done because it had to clearly be something with me and not on the station. So, I was in bad management. Number one.

In one instance, however, Julia said there were too many managers at her second station:

You have a lot of people who have a wide variety of experience in news, but... it felt like there were too many managers – too many cooks in the kitchen. We have four different EPs; we have two managing editors; we have like four different assignment desk staff; we have a news director; we have an assistant news director. So, it's almost like I didn't really know who I could report to. I mean, they did have like direct reports established, but it just felt like there were too many eyes – too many eyes on my work.

Compensation

All participants raised concern over their compensation in television news; though, compensation impacted 12 participants' decisions to leave the industry. Low salaries, little raises and bonuses, and lack of promotions were the factors that were frequently brought up during the discussions on compensation. Karter said she was living paycheck to paycheck but was optimistic at the beginning: "You are bright eyed and bushy tailed, and you're like, I'm going to save the world through my journalism, so who cares if I'm making \$26,000?" Simply put, women are not paid enough to stay in the industry long-term, especially when families are involved. For Lena, compensation was one of the biggest factors in her decision to leave television news; she had kids to put through college. Lena said, "When it comes down to it, it just wasn't profitable enough." Overall, however, the payoff was not adequate to keep the women in the industry. Hazel said, "There was no payoff for this, like, I don't make enough money to want to die."

Work-Life Balance

Eleven participants said the work-life balance as a television news journalist contributed to their decision to leave the industry. Participants frequently mentioned that

they were unable to “unplug” from work when they were done, and they had no work-life balance. Julia said, “I couldn't unplug from work. Mentally, I was still there, even though I was off. So, that’s kind of evidence of not having a good balance.” Participants felt they were constantly on call after hours, which impacted their work-life balance. Karter said, “You never could truly unplug... There was kind of an unspoken rule – you are always on call even on your days off, you know, so there was no balance. There was no balance.” Hazel also said she had no work-life balance as a television news journalist:

I had no work-life balance. Even when I was home, I wasn’t off call. I was always having to schedule calls... I had zero time and zero ability to just let go and unplug... Like, there’s no advancement here. There’s no payoff for any of this. So no, there was no work-life balance.

Megan said work-life balance was “non-existent,” while Fiona said that “that word did not exist.” Particularly, Karter said she did not know what work-life balance was until she started her public relations job.

Job Satisfaction

Eleven participants said their job satisfaction had contributed to their decision to leave television news. Women in television newsrooms frequently mentioned they felt they needed to meet a certain quota rather than create quality work. For Lena, quality was more important than quantity, which impacted her overall job satisfaction:

The other thing was satisfaction because I was very adamant about doing quality work and, like I said, I won several awards for my work and my writing. And it got to where, towards the end, I was rushed so much because we were so shorthanded, and without photographers that it got to where it felt like you were

expected to slop your work together. And that was not me and that really bothered me to be expected to do that. And then of course, as you know, that's my face, that's my name, that's out there with that story. And to me that is, it's not good work.

Participants overwhelmingly reported that they were not satisfied, particularly with the work they were having to produce daily. Hazel explained her job dissatisfaction:

By the end, I was no longer satisfied at all with my job. I wasn't doing good work, and I knew it, and I wasn't getting any satisfaction out of it. I was not helping the community. And that was the whole point... what am I even holding on to anymore?

Participants wanted to produce work that made an impact but instead felt like they were a "factory worker," a "time filler," and a "cog in this machine." Specifically, Julia said she did not feel like a journalist:

I viewed myself more as like a factory worker than a journalist. I felt like I was just cranking out a product for the machine. I didn't really feel like I was telling stories that were making differences anymore. So, it, you know, just our work was so subjective. And so, you know, dependent on the finding the perfect character, I didn't feel like I believed in the work that I was doing.

Megan said she wanted to make an impact with her stories but instead was left cranking out stories to fill shows:

I went in wanting to make this big change and like help people and change, you know, change the way things worked. And then, by the end, I just kind of saw myself as like a time filler like whatever fills this 39th show, like, I can't control

every aspect of it because, you know, I'm the only person working in the newsroom today. Like, I just can't. So, I would say that's how that transition happened.

Rapid Changes in Television News Industry

Ten participants said the rapid changes in the television news industry contributed to their decision to leave the television news industry. Specifically, the implementation of the multimedia journalist role and technological changes, such as social media, were elements that evolved throughout the television newsroom setting. Though several participants felt they were prepared to work in the multimedia journalist role, others felt changes in staff and the expectations of multimedia journalists added to the existing workload of participants.

Hazel referred to rapid changes in the television news industry as a “churn and burn mentality” that is not a “sustainable model” for journalists:

I had some really high highs and some really low lows, but I also feel like the industry had changed so much over the 10 years that I was in, that I did not feel like I was really helping anymore. The model had changed to the point where it was churn and burn stories and grit.

Multimedia journalists are expected to operate cameras, conduct interviews, post on social media, package stories, and perform other tasks in addition to the tasks they are already completing daily. Ivy explained her work responsibilities as a multimedia journalist:

Since my entire career was – I was an MMJ – they just kind of kept adding to it. Do social media, write for the web, and it's like, no, I'm one person, and I'm

going [to] work from this time and this time because you're not paying me overtime, and I'm still working.

Throughout Lena's career, photographers decreased at her station, which created changes in the newsroom. Lena explained the changes that she saw take place at her station:

There were a lot of changes. So, I was there a little over 8 years, and I started out producing, and I very quickly went into reporting and then anchoring as well. But when I first started, there were three full-time photographers at the TV station. When I left there were none, and that was within a span of 8 years. That's how much it changed. So honestly, it was tough on me because of my work.

Gracelyn also emphasized staff changes:

During my first market, I was the weekend reporter, and we lost our weekend anchor, and our photographer, and our producer, like to my news director was producing. And then I was anchoring, but still having to do like all the other day when reporting. So yes, that's a factor.

Fiona said the rapid changes in the industry made the environment feel "frantic" and that she was "no longer involved in a team." Clara mentioned that multimedia journalists are pressured to keep up with the demands of the job:

And I think, especially for MMJs, where there's so much pressure put on you to do everything, and the benefits just aren't worth it. Like, it was pretty soul crushing because I felt such a calling to this profession, and I felt like everything in my life had prepared me for it and like I was where I was meant to be. And then, you know, I just I got bitter, and I hated being bitter.

Though, several participants mentioned there were beneficial aspects to changes in the newsroom. Bailey said, “I always sort of embraced the change. You know, there were really great things about change. I mean, there were wonderful things that that happened. So, it was a factor, but I wouldn't say it was a huge factor.” Yet, changes in the television news industry have brought up questions about the future of the industry. Lena said:

I do get kind of sad thinking about how it's changed so much over the 8 years that I was there, because it is such a rewarding career... it is kind of sad to see the industry changing as much as it is. And I feel like, you know, the quality of work is kind of declining everywhere just because everyone is so short staffed. So, yeah, I don't know. I don't know what the what the future holds.

Unethical Practices

While unethical practices were not a primary factor in participants' decisions to leave the industry, more than half of the participants brought up instances that did not particularly align with their ethics or morals. Paid segments, sponsorships, and advertisers were mentioned by a few participants, while others discussed their hesitance in approaching families experiencing trauma. Fiona said she did not support speaking to trauma victims:

I think by the end, there were situations that I was like, this isn't unethical. However, I no longer approve of it. So, there are just some things in news that the longer I was in, the more I understood, like, that's okay for a news standard, but from like me being a human, I no longer wanted to do that. I no longer wanted to put certain family members in situations or people that were victims or

experiencing trauma in the moment. It was no longer my personal belief that that was healthy for them.

Fiona and Natalie both mentioned they made agreements with their photographers in certain instances where they did not feel comfortable interviewing. Fiona said:

When I was being asked to do certain things, or go and ask people certain things or knock on certain doors, 100 percent some of the photographers that I would work with, we would come to a mutual decision of saying, are we going to go back and say we knocked on that door and no one was there? And I said yes. So, we would make it so that we were comfortable with it, and we could report back... We're coming back and lying to our bosses, but I could no longer sleep at night after some situations... it was like this is a pick your poison.

Similarly, Natalie said:

Again, coming back to the asking your family members and friends to talk... I would lie all the time and say, oh, I knocked on this person's door. Oh, I called them; they didn't call me back. And I would make a pact with my photographer. Like, no, sorry, we're not doing this today.

Elena considers herself to be an "empathetic person" who "never felt good" about interviewing individuals experiencing tragedy. Additionally, Hazel and Karter discussed their concerns with their stations not necessarily pushing to get the right source for the story. Hazel said:

We were told to stay away from experts because experts are boring, but then you'd be out trying to get MOS on like, serious, important policy stuff that you have to explain to somebody and then try to get their opinion, which is

unethical... And why is it more important to have dumb ass on the street tell you what to feel about something, rather than give you the actual facts from people who are credible sources who can actually tell you the truth?

Julia said, from an ethical standpoint, it bothered her:

There was a point where I didn't believe in the mission of what we were doing anymore. I felt like we were, for example, just trying to find a person for the story, even if that person's not perfect for the story, just to tell it. You know, and I feel like sometimes new, the news became a little bit too much of an emphasis on, you know, just finding the perfect person and less about the actual story.

Sexism/Discrimination

Eight participants said that sexism and/or discrimination had contributed to their decision to leave the industry. Sexism and discrimination were prevalent in comments that primarily stemmed from management. Clara and Daphne both had female news directors who made discriminatory comments. Clara's news director told her that she could get fired for posting a picture in a one-piece bathing suit, while Daphne said she got more commentary on her clothes and hair from her female news director. Elena said, in one instance, a consulting company at her station told her to "show more cleavage and give the farm boys what they want" and that the general manager of her station "is just notoriously the good old boys club... he's just horribly sexist." Further, Elena was demoted from her role as a news anchor for reporting a coworker who had sexually harassed her. For Fiona, discrimination was evident in story assignments:

I felt there were several pointed times where I was more qualified, or a better storyteller for a specific assignment, or I'd even pitch something that was no

longer given to me it was given to someone who was male, or someone who may have had more experience and was male. And that that was apparently better qualifications than I had. So, I definitely experienced that. I was also in an environment where no one would, other than the females, that were on like, reporter level, no one would acknowledge that that was happening. It was just this is the newsroom and goes to the best reporting... there's no acknowledgement of that happening. So, you just don't say anything because then you don't want to be the whiny female crying over not getting to the story that they wanted.

Several participants also mentioned the uncomfortable messages they received from appearing on television. Clara said she would receive emails and social media messages from viewers about her looks:

It just kind of added to that pressure of like, okay, I know, they're not saying this to like, the male reporters. Just that social media expectation too, like getting weird, gross messages from guys all the time, like middle-aged men was just really, yeah, it was kind of it was unsettling. Like, you can brush it off, but then when it's constant, it's like, this is gross.

Difficult Stories

Six participants said that difficult stories were a factor that contributed to their decision to leave television news. Several participants said covering difficult stories did not factor into their decision to leave the industry, and they compartmentalized the difficult stories they covered. However, others said covering difficult stories had emotional and mental impacts. Hazel explained the impacts she experienced:

I think there was a cumulative effect of seeing too many dead bodies too many days in a row... and like, obviously, you see bodies in this industry. And I've seen bodies from the years before, but it was like day after day of like, facing the mortality of a human being who is lying in the street like garbage, and realizing that I don't care enough about that, where I'm just like, oh, this is a great shot. That took a toll on me where I realized that I had lost a lot of my humanity. And that's the only way you cope in this.

The former journalists frequently had to compartmentalize the stories they covered, even if it was subconsciously. Ivy said she experienced "empathy burnout," while Natalie referred to herself as a "self-identified empath."

I feel like I was too emotional for this job. I rarely cried when I was interviewing someone, but I would have moments where I totally break down in the newsroom with my photographer, and you know, have to decompress a little bit. Yeah, there were some stories that you know, you'll just never forget.

Nevertheless, several participants identified times when they would be emotional from the stories they covered. Karter said, "I can't tell you how many times there were hard stories where I went home, and I cried. But I just thought well, this is part of the job – tomorrow you'll do a story about a dog – like it'll all balance out."

Other Health Issues

Other health issues were not a common factor that contributed to participants' decisions to leave the industry. However, several participants had physical and mental impacts, including fatigue, high blood pressure, and urinary tract infections. Elena explained her health problems during her television news career:

I think just in general, I was always rundown, and I never felt like I could prioritize my health ever, ever... I don't think I went to a doctor unless it was like an emergency. I would let things get so bad, you know, because I couldn't take time off – like I couldn't. It was bad.

Ivy said she met resistance from management when dealing with health issues, especially as a woman:

“You suffer from constant UTIs because you're constantly having to hold your pee – you can't go to the restroom... I would call in because the company gives you days, and so you use them. And they brought me in – they were like you're calling in too often; you're going to have to give us a doctor's note every time you do it. I was like, fine. I have insurance. I'll go to the freakin' doctor, but if I don't want to come to work because I'm not feeling well, I'm not going to. So, I do think that you meet resistance from management. And yeah, no, there's absolutely health issues that are associated with this career, especially if you're a woman.”

When Karter had COVID-19 in April 2020, she had to work despite being symptomatic:

“I was like, well, if everyone wants COVID, that's fine. Like, I had all the symptoms. I was disgusting. So, they dropped off a laptop at my house, and I worked for a week and a half while I was dying of COVID.” Karter also noted other health issues she experienced in television news:

I could tell that journalism was taking a toll on my body, like health issues.

Absolutely. I gained a bunch of weight because I was stressed, and I was running through the drive thru on the way to a story. And so, I mean, obesity – you can

count that as a health issue, if you will... It was the chronic fatigue, man, that kicked my butt.

Other health issues did not impact Hazel's decision to leave, but she did notice the impact her job had on her health:

It didn't impact my decision, but I did get healthy when I left. You don't realize how far down the hole you are until you start feeling better. And like, I'd had high blood pressure while I was in news and was a side effect of working weird overnight hours, and the second I left my blood pressure went back to normal.

Sponsorship Availability/Conflicts

Sponsorship availability/conflicts were not prevalent factors in participants' decisions to leave the industry. Most did not experience many sponsorship availabilities/conflicts throughout their careers in television news. Though several had seen sponsorship interests occasionally, it was not an overall contributor to their decisions to leave the industry.

Additional Factors

Additional factors that emerged from the data and contributed to participants' decisions to leave television news included lack of appreciation, lack of long-term feasibility, lack of room for development, structural issues, and threats/safety concerns.

Lack of Appreciation/Value. Overall, participants did not feel appreciated or valued in the television news industry. Karter was willing to do "just about anything" for her station, but she did not get the same in return:

I was like, let me stay here and grow here and be your gal. And they kind of nicely were like, no. And so, they would have had to [find] a way to promote me

or make me feel valuable, and they would have had to pay me at least a little bit more. I was not asking for a lot... at the end of the day, I don't know if there was anything that they could have done that would have stopped me.

Hazel said, as a mother, she felt especially unvaluable to her station:

But I was no longer valuable [as a working mom]. On top of that, I was a lactating mom, so I had to make sure that I was sticking to my pumping schedule, and that made me completely useless to them. And I never missed a deadline. I never missed a live shot. I always made it work... the lactation area they gave me was the shared makeup room. So, my male colleagues were putting on their makeup while I was topless pumping... you have set it up to make it very clear that there is no place for a working mom here.

Fiona also felt unvalued. She believes the way the industry is operating right now can be harmful, especially to television news professionals:

I think when I finally realized I needed to value myself, instead of valuing a career that I thought defined me... my biggest struggle was trying to realize that once I left news, I wasn't losing myself because it's been ingrained in you so that you are a journalist – this is what you do, and this is the only way you can be proud of yourself is if you're winning awards and knocking out crazy stories and getting picked up by bigger and bigger markets because that means you are valuable, and so once I finally realized that's a lie, then that was the biggest key because once I realized that then I was like, okay, I'm either knowingly staying in an industry that is harmful to me right now, or I can leave. And that's not to say that journalism is harmful, but the way it's being used right now for the

employees is. I still firmly believe in journalism, and I'm so proud that I was able to do it for as long as I did. And I still fully support journalism, but not in the way that it's being used.

Lack of Long-Term Feasibility. Participants also mentioned that a lack of long-term feasibility was a factor that contributed to their decisions to leave the industry.

Though Gracelyn left the industry because of an unexpected job offer, she said television news would not be an industry that would be feasible long-term:

It's your whole life, which I'm sure you know, like, you put like, your all into the industry and into your job. And I kind of I think the pandemic shifted my mindset a little bit and covering just 2020 in general. I was like, okay, like, I wasn't necessarily looking for something outside, but I also was like, I know this isn't feasible long term. Like I would like something that has like a better work-life balance or just something better for like, my personal self.

Fiona also realized the industry would not be a long-lasting career for her, especially if her male coworkers continued to surpass her:

I knew it was not a career that I could sustain for as long as I could see my male counterparts seceding. I knew that it was not going to be feasible. So, I already kind of had in my head after my first market — I already had in my head — whenever the time is right, you have to leave, and you have to leave gracefully. There's no way you're going to get to the point where you're forced out... So, you need to leave on your own terms whenever that is, and you'll figure out when that is, but I already kind of knew I was never going to have like, a retirement out of news. It just was not feasible.

Lack of Room for Development. Several participants expressed there was a lack of room for professional development and growth, as well as promotions and raises. Although Lena was an established anchor when she was a television journalist, she did not receive the full promotion or title:

It was always this problem with me as far as I was titled anchor/reporter. And I never got the full title of anchor, even though it was a full two years, the only thing I did was anchor... It really was tough on me because they did change my role. Well, if they changed my role, it's a bump in pay. So yeah, I only anchored, but I didn't have that title. So that was a big one for me. They weren't budging because they were getting by with paying less, a lot less. And I was like, you know, I've got a family. I'm not playing games here.

Natalie emphasized the lack of room for professional growth, which was a contributor to her decision to leave the industry:

Long term, there wasn't a lot of growth potential.... And I just felt like I had plateaued, and I didn't want to plateau at the age of 30-something. I'm a curious person. I think a lot of journalists are curious, and I wanted to continue learning. I wanted some sort of professional development, and that just didn't seem possible in my current situation.

For Karter, lack of room for growth and promotion was one of the main factors in her choice to quit television news. Karter said, "Salary – number one, first and foremost, obviously, number two is the no room for growth or promotion, whether that was at the same station or at another station, like kind of like, you hit a ceiling really early."

Structural Issues. Structural issues of the television news industry were another theme that emerged from the data on the factors that influenced women television news journalists to leave. Clara said the system is at fault: “Like I didn’t have bad blood because I had nothing really against one person, it was more like against the system, you know, like, it was not one person’s fault.” Julia iterated that she “started to kind of see the signs” when she worked in a small-market station:

For example, going into neighborhoods by yourself as an MMJ and knocking on doors after there's been a shooting on that neighborhood just the night before, you know, bad places, you know, unsafe situations, and still being forced to turn off, you know, turn the story.

Safety Concerns. A final factor that played a role in participants’ decisions to quit their jobs was threats and safety concerns. Natalie explained that, on her first day at her new station, she faced safety concerns:

Because of the safety issues, news crews have been the target of several crimes and thefts. And it you know, I think it was my first day someone was like, would you be able to be held up at gunpoint? Because our photographer was just hit in the head with a gun last week, and then his camera was stolen. And I was like, Sure, sure... I don't know how to answer that question. So, I think those were the main reasons.

Hazel recalled a moment when she was 9 months pregnant where her and her unborn child’s safety were at risk during a story:

And somebody who was attached to this got very upset and chased my fat ass down the street swinging a chain at us. And I was just like, what am I doing?

Like, what if I fell on the ice? What if this guy actually caught me and for what – for life – for the sake of life because my life as a human does not matter?

Knowing we already had the story – we already had shot the story, but they wanted us live... I just got really angry about that one.

Television journalists who work nightside are also susceptible to safety concerns. When Ivy worked nightside for most of her career, she did live shots late at night in dangerous neighborhoods and empty parking lots. She was concerned about her safety, but she did not feel like she could advocate for her safety while working:

No one inside the newsroom cares about your safety because I wasn't in, you know, dangerous situations. And I went to HR and HR told me, well, it's your responsibility – if you don't feel safe, you have to make the call. So, it's like but also, you're not encouraged or even empowered to make those calls because if you leave a scene, then you don't have a story, and now you're scrambling to find another one.

Clara also experienced situations where she was threatened and a victim of a hate crime. She found out that there was a sign in her news station's yard that involved her name.

Clara explained the situation:

Somebody had taken like a Trump campaign sign, and they had written on it with like, big black Sharpie “[Clara] is a cunt” and put swastikas and like, yeah, it was just... it had to be investigated because that's a hate crime. My producer, who was the same age as me, like, there was a lot of young producers too at the time. She was like, yeah, we were debating telling you about it. Like, we didn't want you to be upset. And I'm like, no, I am upset. I'm almost more upset you didn't tell me

about it, because I'm going live alone every night, and this person probably knows where I am because we live tweet, we post on Facebook, like all the time where we're going to be... It was really disturbing.

Safety concerns existed not only in the field but also in the newsroom. When Elena reported a coworker who had sexually harassed her, the coworker came up to her and said, "I hope you die." Evidently, safety concerns were prevalent inside and outside of the newsroom.

Role of Gender in the Factors that Drove Women Journalists out of Television News and into Public Relations

Gender played a role in the factors that drove participants out of the television news industry and into the public relations industry. Sexism from management and viewers and better compensation for male coworkers were the main factors where gender played a role. Participants also felt replaceable as women, and the television news industry is a "tough" industry for working mothers.

Sexism from Management and Viewers

Participants experienced sexism from management, particularly from general managers, news directors, coworkers, and viewers. Participants said their male colleagues were treated better than them, and they were more likely to be promoted. Karter said, "I think my male counterparts had a lot easier time kind of maneuvering up to the level that they wanted to get to. Maybe they were more talented than me... I mean, I don't know." Elena also said, "Men were treated differently. They were treated better. They were paid better, just in general, just at the station as a whole." In addition, Elena

found out her demotion from anchor was directly tied to her reporting a male coworker who sexually harassed her:

Two weeks later, they tell me that I'm never anchoring again. And I said, can you? Can you explain why? And they said it's just a business decision. And they wouldn't give me any answers. I said, my ratings are good. I'm a great employee... I did everything for this place. Everything. Like too much – like would do whatever they wanted, even when I shouldn't have. And I was, I mean, after 10 years there, I wasn't going to go back to being an MMJ. Are you kidding me? So, I immediately contacted a lawyer... he knew the industry... he started investigating, and there was a whole investigation. Turned out, my demotion was directly related to me reporting [him]. It was horrible.

Hazel also said her male colleagues were more favored and appreciated from her management, as well as the community:

There was absolutely more respect, more pay for my male colleagues. And you know, even down to like, yes on not a daily basis, and even not even weekly basis, but like there's a lot of harassment from the community. Just like a lot of, even now, some rando dudes post pictures of me on Twitter, commenting on my body, and it's just like wears on you and like there's really nothing that station can do about that – the world is just a shitty place. But like, I'm not valued for being an intelligent, good journalist. I was there because I had tits, and it's hard not to deal with that.

Correspondingly, Clara said, “I feel like, you know, as women like, that added layer of scrutiny that we get from viewers and management is one thing.” Ivy said she was not able to stand up for herself without experiencing resistance from management:

I feel like I’m an assertive woman, and people don’t like that. I’ve seen men throw tantrums, my fellow, you know, coworkers, green mat producers, nothing happened. And I started standing up for myself, and it was just, it was worse. It’s almost like they were trying to like, you know, prevent me from doing that.

Besides participants saying that their male colleagues were treated better than them, they also discussed the comments they would receive about their appearances because they were women. Ivy said she was overlooked for the anchor position because she was not “stick thin:”

Aside from that, I’ve never been skinny. Like, I’m not overweight, but I wasn’t stick thin, and that was absolutely a factor. I wanted to be an anchor, and that was told to me that was like, specifically mentioned that that was, you know, a reason why I was not being looked at for those roles. And so, you know, you get tired of fighting with your body.

Karter is another participant who received comments from viewers about her physical appearance. She explained the criticism she received as a woman on television:

I know women make less money, obviously. And to be quite honest, the things that people would say about me as a heavier woman – “heavier” on TV, and the way I dress, the way my hair and makeup looked, that weighs on an already depressed and anxious person who is already putting themselves in these stressful situations day in and day out covering the news. It was just – it was hard.

Fiona said her male colleagues would frequently get approval to do certain stories over her. Though several of her male colleagues noticed the sexism, it still existed in the newsroom. Fiona explained the sexism she experienced:

I know there were a handful of male reporters that did recognize it, but only after testing it to where I said, watch, I'll pitch this story, it's not going to get picked up, and you can pitch the story tomorrow. So, I pitched the story, and word for word, pitched the story the next day, and it got picked up. And so, I would say there were a very small few who, like, who were male who saw that, and then realized, like, okay, I can pay more attention to this.

Although sexism from management and viewers was not a factor that influenced every participant to leave, sexism and discrimination toward women did play a role in participants' decisions to leave the industry. Hence, gender played a role in this factor.

Higher Compensation of Male Coworkers

Coupled with sexism from management, participants overwhelmingly stated that they were significantly underpaid, especially compared to their male colleagues. Ivy pointed out the pay gap between her and her male coworkers:

I was incredibly embarrassingly underpaid. I knew it – I made it known that I knew it. When I left, I was making \$62,000. And a reporter here makes around \$80-85. And when I started... I was making \$45,000. And it wasn't until I found out that my coworkers were making 70 that I basically wrote a letter and told them they were going they were discriminating me for being a woman, and they gave me \$5,000 more, but no, I mean, I, I was severely underpaid my entire career.

Clara said she also had a sexist news director, and her male colleagues made more money than her, even though they had less experience:

And then compensation. I mean, like, I knew, like my last news director was pretty sexist, would say, like, snide comments that you couldn't really prove. I knew that there were producers that had less experience than female producers; yet, they were making like five grand more for no reason, like, straight out of college.

Daphne is another participant who noticed the pay gap between women television journalists and their male counterparts. When her station hired a chief investigative reporter, he made three times the amount she made. She helped get the station's ratings up, but her male coworker got promoted to evening anchor at their duopoly. Yet, Daphne did not receive a raise. She said, "At that point, he got a \$50,000 raise, and they had told everybody else, including me, that they don't have the money... And nothing against him – like I'm happy for him as a friend. But I know I did more work than you did." Elena was also shocked to learn how much more money one of her male coworker made than her:

So, one of my best friends is actually – he is now the evening anchor there. He was the morning anchor... but when I found out what they are paying him, I mean, I was horrified because it was just so much more than what any of us were making.

Clara, along with several other participants, pointed out that, as working women and women news professionals, women do not feel like they can negotiate for better compensation:

I think women are also like, in an environment where you have to negotiate your worth at work, women are not taught to negotiate. And I probably could have negotiated higher and negotiated like, full comp, like other stuff, like gotten more PTO or gotten something, had I known that was an option.

With 12 participants noting that compensation was a factor that contributed to their decision to leave the industry, it is evident that gender played a role in this factor for participants.

Sense of Replaceability

Participants discussed how they felt senses of replaceability as women in television news. With the television news industry's competitiveness, participants believed they were easily replaceable as women in news. Ivy said, "They tell you, you're lucky to be here – you're replaceable... I feel like they almost groom you to accept that you're going to be stressed and overworked, and worst of all underpaid because we all start in those small markets."

Participants felt like they were conditioned to feel replaceable and be underpaid as women in the industry. Like Ivy, Hazel believes that the sense of replaceability for women is a systemic issue:

The churn and burn mentality, not just for the stories, but for the humans where there had always been this perception that, oh, that's okay – I'll just go someone younger and cheaper. You're lucky to have this job... they prey on women who are like... we're conditioned to feel that way. Oh, I'm lucky to have this opportunity to be treated like a slave. I'm lucky to do this thing that I've wanted

to do since I was nine, even though this is not a sustainable model, and it's destroying me as a human being.

Anna also recognized that she made less than her male counterparts, and even less than other female counterparts. She felt like she was interchangeable with other women who may not have had as much as experience but had a similar appearance:

I know that I made less than my male counterparts.... I made less than other female counterparts as well. So, it's not like that was just a firm line, but I did feel replaceable with another female who might not have my skillset but has my look.

Overall, participants felt a sense of replaceability that stemmed from their gender as women and contributed to the factors that led them to leave the industry.

Tough Industry for Working Mothers

Based on the conversations with participants, the television news industry can be tough for women professionals, but it can be increasingly tough for working mothers. When Hazel was in television news, she was paying more money for childcare than the money she was bringing home. She felt like she was discriminated against as a woman, especially as a mother: "I felt like I was really discriminated against because I was a mom, I was absolutely mommy tract, where I was going to just die on weekend mornings... this is not an industry that makes it so that you can have a family." In one instance, Hazel covered for one of her coworkers, and she had no other choice but to bring her baby with her to the news station. Hazel described a moment when it was difficult to be a working mother in the television industry:

I was like, I mean, if I have to come in, I guess I have to come in... I'm wearing my baby while I'm turning a package. That is a shitty position to put me in. And

the package was garbage because I was trying to take care of this kid who did not want to be there, and I had been made promises about support, and it wasn't there. And the flexibility you need, like not even flexibility – like let's have a normal life. I was trying to put my kid to bed at six because I had to be in bed at 6:30, and it kind of worked but like the strain on my marriage, the strain on everything – it exacerbated the postpartum depression a lot.

The industry did not pay Hazel enough for her to work and raise a family simultaneously. To her, it did not make sense to lose money by paying for childcare and working a job that made her a “miserable human being.”

Bailey felt like she was treated fairly and never discriminated against as a woman, but she has worked with individuals where sexual harassment existed in the workplace. However, she does think that the television news industry is a “tough business for moms.” She explained how she managed to be a mom in the television news industry:

You know, I did manage to make it work, and I say this, like, very humbly, but like, I made it work well. And I think that my kids would now tell you that, but I think they would tell you that, that I was still a good mom, but I also had an amazing support system, like my husband was 100% in, you know, and there were a lot of years that he took on the bulk of the evening stuff because he was the parent who was home, and not everybody has that.

Based on the conversations with former women television journalists about their experiences as women in the industry, this research confirms that gender played a role in several factors that contributed to participants' decisions to leave television news. These

factors include sexism from management and viewers, higher compensation of male coworkers, a sense of replaceability, and difficulty for working mothers.

Industry Changes to Retain Women Television News Professionals

Based on the conversations with former television news professionals who work in public relations, this research identified changes the television industry must make to retain more women professionals in the future. Though this study specifically focused on addressing concerns of the women participants, it is likely that the following recommendations may apply to male colleagues as well. It is also important to note how these recommendations align with a public relations professional's viewpoints. Hence, the television news industry needs to adapt the following systemic changes: address burnout through better work-life balance, prioritize employee appreciation, create safe environments, leverage employee values, support young professionals, and listen to journalists.

Address Burnout Through Better Work-Life Balance

The television news industry needs to address employee burnout through improving work-life balance. Specifically, the industry needs to establish a family-friendly work environment, understand the physical, mental, and emotional tolls of the multimedia journalist role, recognize the need to unplug, and provide mental health support.

Establish a Family-Friendly Work Environment. Participants said they had high expectations not only as television journalists but also as women television journalists, especially if they were parents. Daphne said:

There's just so many expectations of a female overall... if they're a mom, they have a ton of expectations. If they're a wife, they have a ton of expectations, and then you expect them to be looking for stories and doing stories on their own time. How?

As a parent in television news, Anna often struggled to take a day off when her child was sick because her station was frequently understaffed. Anna said that this can influence women to leave the industry:

As mom, that's kind of my job... if we had had more staff to pick up slack, any parent, male or female, could have had more flexibility with work and life and home life, and that probably would have increased their job satisfaction... and without the any pay increase, or any validation, that will push a woman out the door who's saying, look, I want to be able to achieve, and I feel like I'm just being, you know, used to smile at viewers.

Elena also noted the difficulty in establishing work-life balance for working mothers in the television news industry. Elena said, "My best friend who used to work with me, she just had a baby a few days ago... She's like, I can't imagine this if I was still at [a news station]. Like, I can't you know."

Lastly, Hazel explained that her current workplace values her more as a working parent than when she was a television journalist, prompting the need for the industry to create a family-accommodating workplace. Hazel explained that television news is not a family-friendly industry:

Now I'm here and like, you know, they value everyone I work with. And I think part of that is like very few people in news have kids... you get to a certain age

and it's either like stay in news and don't have kids or get out of news... It's so hard to make it work.

For these reasons, the television industry must accommodate working mothers and their families. Without the flexibility to manage families and work, the industry may not succeed in retaining women professionals in the future.

Recognize the Impacts of the Multimedia Journalist Role. Based on multiple participants' suggestions, the television news industry should understand the physical, mental, and emotional tolls of the multimedia journalist role. Simply put, participants who were multimedia journalists were overly stressed, overly worked, and understaffed with high expectations. Ivy said, "The MMJ role should not exist – like it should just not." Specifically, Ivy suggests limiting the responsibilities of the role, especially for women journalists:

I think just doing away with the MMJ, especially if you're a female. Maybe if you want to do like feature stories here and there because I did grow to love shooting my own video, and I love editing, but there's just no reason for you to be doing hard news by yourself.

Clara would have most likely stayed in the industry if she was not a multimedia journalist. In her opinion, she would not have experienced severe burnout if her work was not exploited and worked with a photographer. Clara said, "If I worked as like a two-person duo, like news has been for decades, I would've stayed in the industry, and I know other women would have stayed in the industry. I know other men would have stayed in the industry. Clara recommends that the industry ends the "one-man band" role:

For broadcast, it just doesn't work. The quality has declined so much, and too many people are getting burnout. And we're seeing all the MMJs that were hired around the same time as me leaving – they don't get to a bigger market where they have those resources, and sometimes even when they do that, it's like, oh, well, you'd have to do two or three packages a day.

Allow Employees to Unplug. With work-life balance as a factor for most participants' decisions to leave television news, the industry must allow employees to “unplug” from work. Participants overwhelmingly discussed how they could not “unplug” from their work responsibilities in television news, and they had no work-life balance. In Julia's public relations role, she has more work-life balance, a lighter workload, and less-intense turnarounds. Clara said that switching from television news to public relations was “the best decision for [her] career,” and the environment in her current role differs significantly. To Karter, the work-life balance in her public relations role does not compare to her job as a multimedia journalist and anchor. Karter said, “I didn't even know what work-life balance was until I started this new job.” Anna also has a work-life balance now that she works in public relations. Anna said, “Where I was grossly lacking in home-family life, I feel like I have an abundance of work-family life balance.” Consequently, the television news industry needs to allow journalists to “unplug” to create a better work-life balance.

Hire Qualified Staff. The television news industry needs to hire more staff to maintain quality work and employees, especially considering that all participants said the shortage of resources and/or quality of news standards contributed to their decision to leave television news. Megan said, “I would just say, more dedicated, trained staff. I

think that within itself, really could have made a big difference.” Bailey also suggested that the industry hires more employees. She described the consequences of understaffed newsrooms: “You can't have one person doing three people's jobs. Because first of all, they're underpaid. Second of all, they're going to burn out so quickly. Third of all, you're going to have horrible quality, because it's just there is a churn.” The television news industry must hire more qualified, trained staff to retain women professionals in the future.

Provide Mental Health Support. With burnout/mental health pressures serving as one of the largest factors that drove women television journalists out of news and into public relations, it is evident that the television news industry must prioritize the mental health of its journalists through de-stigmatizing and providing mental health support when necessary. Karter said journalists must be offered mental health support: “I feel like women on-air talent also need therapy. Like they need onsite counselors, or they need someone to foot the bill for therapy because therapy is expensive, and journalists need it as much as anyone.” Anna said, “It is not always mental health friendly. If somebody has a mental health challenge, it's not very accommodating.” Julia said, “I think that they really need to be understanding of women's health needs... It just is very clear that there's not enough of an emphasis on taking care of yourself or being able to take care of yourself.” Since switching to public relations, Julia's mental health has improved significantly. Julia said, “It just made me realize how badly I needed to make this transition.” To accommodate mental health, the industry should provide training on trauma reporting, offer counseling services, and be supportive of journalists' health needs. Particularly, the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma is a support network

committed to providing journalists with resources to report on trauma reporting; the television news industry should provide additional support for journalists' mental health.

Prioritize Employee Appreciation

The television news industry must prioritize employee appreciation and value its professionals to retain more women professionals in the future. Various participants expressed they did not feel valued or appreciated while in television news, and many were hardly recognized for their contributions to their news stations. The industry needs to recognize that the profession can be isolating, and it also needs to recognize the work and sacrifices of television journalists. Above all, the industry must show its employees that their contributions are recognized, valued, and appreciated. Anna said that she was barely recognized for her work when she was a television journalist:

I am a total achieving person, and I am validated internally. I don't need somebody to tell me and pat me on the back and tell me it's great that I did that, but when you have absolutely no validation at all, and no recognition of the amazing hoops you're jumping through, you start to think, why am I jumping through these hoops?

Though participants said they did not need to be applauded for their work daily, even some appreciation and recognition would have made a difference for them. Natalie said, "I don't even need like... praise every day, but like maybe an email that says... hey, thanks for coming in on a day off, or thanks for... just like little things... that would have made a big difference." Bailey is another participant who felt she was hardly appreciated for her work as a television news professional:

When I say valued, like not even the money value. It's like, management didn't – not that I need to be patted on the back every day. There was none of that sort of like appreciation... And part of that, I think is just you know, a product of the fact that you're just moving at such a quick pace in that industry. You don't stop to look at the good things and appreciate people... as soon as one newscast is done, you're gone to the next.

In addition, the television news industry needs to value its employees who are parents.

When Hazel became a mother, she said her viewpoints on stories changed:

Value what I bring to the table as a parent. I can tell you my perspective as a storyteller shifted a lot when I had a kid, where before I had kids, yeah, telling stories about kids in school issues and stuff was very different than after I had a kid – realizing like it just came from a different place in my heart... But by the time you're in your 30s, most women are out.

Compared to their jobs in television news, participants feel more appreciated in their public relations roles. Ivy said, in her current job, her colleagues praise her for her achievements; however, she did not feel the same in television news:

In the news business... it doesn't matter what you did like two minutes ago, it's like always, what's next? ... And then sometimes, like, it would happen to me. I would feel like really good about a story, and my news director would be like, don't ever wear that jacket again. So, you're just like, alright.

Overall, participants did not feel valued or appreciated throughout their careers in television news. Daphne said, "It just came down to me not feeling valued. I mean, when I left, that's what I told everybody. It's like, I have to go somewhere where I feel valued."

The television news industry has the responsibility to recognize, appreciate, and value its employees to retain women professionals in the future.

Create Safe Environments for Women

Structurally, the television news industry must create safer environments for women professionals through combating discrimination, investing in women talent, and limiting multimedia journalist responsibilities. Safety concerns, inside and outside the newsroom, were additional factors that contributed to participants' decision to leave the television news industry. For this reason, the industry needs to invest in resources to help create safer spaces for women.

Bailey said that creating these changes is paramount: "You've got to create a safe, safe place for women. Like I mentioned, the, you know, sexual harassment and discrimination. I know it exists, even though I didn't really feel it. So, you've got to create that safe space." Natalie also discussed the impacts the industry has on women:

Even like my best days, I had several colleagues and I who were talking of our escape plan, because this industry, it just really takes a toll on women – people who identify as women. It's not an industry that allows women to age – terrible.

Clara said that, in her current public relations role, she no longer has "constant anxiety hanging over [her]," and she no longer has to be sent to shootings late in the night "scared for [her] life." Altogether, the television news industry must dedicate ample resources to creating safer spaces for women to help retain more professionals in the future.

Combat Discrimination. The television news industry must continue to combat discrimination and treat women equally if it expects them to stay in the industry. With sexism/discrimination contributing to eight participants' experiences in television news,

they must be treated as equal to their male counterparts. Women television journalists need to be respected and listened to in the newsroom. Julia said that the industry needs to pay more attention to its women professionals:

I just feel like the industry had so many years of being a male dominated industry that they're still trying to undo a lot of that – a lot of the patriarchy, if you will.

So, I think just paying attention to the needs of female journalists and trying to do their best in whatever's in their power to help them do their job in a more healthy and sustainable way, would make a huge difference... I know so many women are leaving because of the way they're treated in the newsroom.

Bailey is another participant who emphasized the importance of gender equality. Bailey said, “You have to treat them equally, you know, you can't give a certain assignment to a male reporter that you wouldn't give to a female reporter because they're just as competent – sometimes more.”

Invest in Women Talent. First and foremost, the television news industry must improve compensation for women television journalists. The industry should establish community company policies to prevent perceptions of unequal pay and opportunities for women. To keep Bailey in television news, her employer would have had to “pay people what they're worth.” Although she felt she was fairly compensated when she left the industry, she was not in her early years, and she knew others who did not make a livable wage. For her, one of her first changes for the industry is to improve compensation. Ultimately, the television news industry must pay people what they are worth. In the public relations industry, Karter said she is better compensated:

And I always tell people, I used to think when I was a reporter that I had the best job in the world, and it turns out that now I have the best job in the world because I'm still using all of those journalism skills but telling the good, feel-good stories and getting paid more what I'm worth.

In Hazel's first television news job, she made \$10 an hour. Hazel described the struggles she faced as an underpaid employee:

Especially my first market, I was making \$10 an hour like I, I was eating peanut butter and jelly, and I was lucky if it was the good peanut butter. I like I made some truly horrific concoctions of like, these are cheap foods, and you can't live like that, and there is no reason to do it. And there's no reason they can't pay you record profits for the shareholders and throwing away the humans who do the work.

Hazel paid more for childcare than the amount she was bringing home in her paycheck, so she also recommends that the television news industry improves compensation for its employees. Hazel said, "If you're going to live like this, you better pay someone to live like this. And why, like, you just cannot sustain living like this, and not having enough money to pay for childcare." At one point toward the beginning of Ivy's career in television news, she ran out of money and did not have enough to buy groceries. Ivy said, "I feel like they almost groom you to accept that you're going to be stressed and overworked, and worst of all underpaid because we all start in those small markets."

Participants expressed they were paid more in public relations than in television news. When Fiona switched to public relations, she was shocked by her pay raise:

I was just like, I can't believe I just made so much more money in one quick switch versus, which is also a perfectly normal amount of money to make, then like being in PR realizing like, oh, this is what normal standard salaries are, like, you know, in my mind, I was making the moon and more right with that raise, when in reality, I'm making a normal, decent human's living wage, so that was a shocker and a learning curve.

Hence, the television news industry must pay its employees better to retain more women professionals in the future. Simply put, the television news industry needs to value the women professionals that are in the industry, especially if it wants to keep them in the industry. Karter said that the industry must make progress in investing in their women talent:

What it all comes down to is invest in your talent, especially your female journalists – female journalists of all shapes, sizes, colors, backgrounds, you know, invest in them, make them feel valued, make them feel like they matter – their work matters. Their voices [are] heard. All things that I think that the industry has a really long way to go on.

Daphne also said the industry must make progress in investing and valuing women television journalists. She noted the importance of women professionals to the television news industry:

I keep coming back to that word value and investment because if you look at the news industry as a whole, I feel like so many stations favor men because there are so few. And so, they are constantly looking for male reporters or male anchors,

and there's just so many women – it's a very female saturated industry, and I get that. However, they're obviously the ones who are doing the work.

Elena pointed out that a pay gap seems to exist between women and male professionals in the industry, creating a significant issue for women in the workplace. Elena said, "They need to pay people better, and I think that is really more so an issue for women. I know it's an issue all the way around, but I do think that there is a difference there." Hazel also said the industry must "pay them like the value professionals they are." In all, women need to be fairly compensated for the work they are contributing to the television news industry. The industry revolves around hard deadlines, inflexible schedules, and low pay, exacerbating the need for women to be compensated appropriately.

Limit Multimedia Journalist Responsibilities. The television news industry can create safer environments through limiting the responsibilities of multimedia journalists. The industry must acknowledge the immense responsibilities and tasks of multimedia journalists and have a plan for when they are in unsafe environments. Participants expressed their concern over being sent to spaces that were unsafe, which may impact more women multimedia journalists than men. The industry must recognize and understand the strains and risks that the role places on employees. For this reason, the industry should limit the responsibilities of multimedia journalists to create safer environments.

Leverage Employee Values

The television news industry must also identify its employees' values and incorporate them into the organization. Primarily, participants were attracted to the television news industry because they wanted to tell stories that made a difference in their

communities. To retain women television news professionals, the industry needs to nurture their values through news assignments and internal initiatives. Provide journalists with the resources to produce quality work that matters to them. Give them opportunities to be involved and support their communities through their storytelling. With participants feeling unvalued, it is important to improve the feedback loop to facilitate recognition and value. Additionally, the industry needs to value the evolving perspectives of its journalists.

Support Young Professionals

To retain women professionals, the industry must better support young professionals. With various participants leaving the industry near the beginning or middle of their careers, it is essential that the industry is cognizant of a living wage and the challenges of less-competitive salaries. The industry should help make young professionals' transitions from academic life to professional life and present them with a competitive, fair starting salary. Young professionals should be informed on the opportunities for advancement and development and be supported within the industry. As multiple participants experienced burnout early on in their television news careers, the industry has an integral responsibility to assist and nurture its young professionals.

Listen to Journalists

Lastly, the television news industry must listen to its journalists and implement changes accordingly. Participants said that if management listened to their concerns and been receptive to feedback, fewer issues would be present. Julia said, "They just really needed to be more receptive and responsive to our feedback as the ones who are out in the field making it possible. That would have helped for sure." Management needs to

have conversations with their journalists and be attentive to them. Natalie said, “They just need to have conversations and check-in today. You know, hey, how’s it going out there? What can I do? They just need to be more attentive.” All in all, the industry needs to follow through with its actions if it expects to make any changes. Gracelyn said one of the most important changes is to listen to journalists:

I feel like they need to, like, listen to us, like we're telling them what we want, and everyone is leaving for the same reason. So, like, actually making those changes... actually going through and doing it. I feel like it's the biggest thing.

Conclusion

Women journalists, especially women television journalists, are leaving the news industry at alarming rates. The presence of a Facebook group with four-and-a-half-thousand participants of former women television journalists who are in public relations highlights the severity of the resignation in television news. As participants mentioned, women are leaving the television news industry in a “mass” and “huge exodus.” This research is significant to the profession due to the need for women to age in the space; the television news industry needs its women professionals to the last in the industry. Simply put, allowing women to age in the industry allows them to connect better with their viewing audiences.

Burnout/mental health pressures, shortage of resources and quality of news standards, management issues, compensation, work-life balance, job satisfaction, rapid industry changes, unethical practices, sexism/discrimination, difficult stories, and health issues played a role in participants’ decision to leave the industry. Lack of appreciation and value, lack of long-term feasibility, lack of professional development, structural

issues, and threats/safety concerns were other significant factors that emerged from the data and contributed to participants' decisions to exit the industry.

Gender played a role in various participants' decisions to leave the television news industry and pursue public relations. Specifically, participants discussed how they experienced sexism from management and felt replaceable as women in the newsroom. Participants' male coworkers were paid more than them, and it was an increasingly tough industry for working mothers. Though women television journalists have the option to pursue various career paths, they are attracted to the public relations industry because of its transferrable skillsets and storytelling capabilities. Essentially, the public relations industry is a more sustainable, long-term career path for women professionals. When asked about the comparison of participants' new roles in public relations to their past roles in television news, they said they do not compare. Fiona said, "It's absolute night and day... The farther I've been out of it, the more impossible it is to think of going back to exactly what I was doing." Natalie said the comparison is also like "night and day," and that she "couldn't be happier with leaving, which is a relief and a surprise still." Though most participants still carry a journalistic self-concept in their current roles, the public relations industry allows them to continue telling stories that impact communities in a more structurally-sound and women-friendly industry.

Through interviews with women who are former television journalists and current public relations professionals, this research identified the forces that influenced them to leave the field and explored how gender played a role in these factors. Based on the changes the television industry must make to retain more women professionals in the future, an area for future research could be to investigate whether these changes have a

long-term effect on resignation in television news. Further, additional research is needed to determine how to implement these changes within the industry from a systemic standpoint. Future research could study how to implement changes within the industry for employees, particularly women professionals. Replicating a similar study with participations who were off-air talent (i.e., producers, photographers) and/or male participants are other areas of study that would contribute to the existing literature on career change in television news.

Overall, the future of women professionals in the television news industry depends on the industry's willingness to make fundamental systemic changes. To improve the issue of employee turnover in television news, the industry must address burnout through better work-life balance, prioritize employee appreciation, create safe environments, leverage employee values, support young professionals, and listen to journalists. As Anna A. said, "It lines up perfectly... the cons of TV are the pros of PR. I mean, my weaknesses became my strengths." Ultimately, it is up to the television news industry and management to fix these issues to retain women professionals.

Appendix I: Profiles

All names are pseudonyms.

I. Anna A., senior public relations specialist

Anna is a senior public relations specialist who worked 10 years in television news as an anchor and reporter. She worked at a top 20 market and has been working in public relations for one year.

II. Bailey B., vice president of corporate communications

Bailey is a vice president of corporate communication who worked 24 years in television news as an anchor and senior reporter. She has been working in public relations for 4 years.

III. Clara C., public relations account manager and media relations director

Clara is a public relations account manager and media relations director who worked over 3 years in television news as a multimedia journalist and anchor. She has been working in public relations for less than a year.

IV. Daphne D., director of communications and outreach

Daphne is a director of communications and outreach who worked 12 years in television news as an anchor and investigative reporter. She has been working in public relations for less than a year.

V. Elena E., marketing and communications manager

Elena is a marketing and communications manager who worked 10 years in television news as an anchor and reporter. She has been working in public relations for 2 years.

VI. Fiona F., communications manager

Fiona is a communications manager who worked 10 years in television news as a reporter and producer. She has been working in public relations for a year.

VII. **Gracelyn G., communications manager**

Gracelyn is a communications manager who worked 4 years in television news as an anchor, reporter, and multimedia journalist. She has been working in public relations for less than a year.

VIII. **Hazel H., media relations consultant**

Hazel is a media relations consultant who worked 10 years in television news as a multimedia journalist, producer, reporter, and fill-in anchor. She has been working in public relations for 2 years.

IX. **Ivy I., digital marketing manager**

Ivy is a digital marketing manager who worked 12 years in television news as a reporter and video journalist. She has been working in a public relations-adjacent role for less than a year.

X. **Julia J., public relations information officer**

Julia is a public relations information officer who worked 6 years in television news as an anchor, reporter, producer, and multimedia journalist. She has been working in public relations for less than a year.

XI. **Karter K., media, marketing, and public relations specialist**

Karter is a media, marketing, and public relations specialist who worked 3 years in television news as a multimedia journalist, anchor, and producer. She has been working in public relations for 2 years.

XII. **Lena L., public relations coordinator**

Lena is a public relations coordinator who worked over 8 years as an anchor. She has been working in public relations for a year.

XIII. Megan M., content specialist

Megan is a content specialist who worked 3 years in television news as a reporter, anchor, and producer. She has been working in this role for less than a year, and she also helps with crisis public relations for her client.

XIV. Natalie N., account director

Natalie is an account director who worked 11 years in television news as a reporter and multimedia journalist. She has been working in public relations for 3 years.

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[These transcripts have been minimally edited for clarity].

I. Anna A., senior public relations specialist

KW:

What attracted you to a career in TV news?

AA:

Oh, from a really young age, I loved making videos. I'm a millennial, and when YouTube came out, it was like the most amazing thing ever. And I wanted to be like a filmmaker and make YouTube films. And it was just so fascinating that you can capture things in videos so easily. But I also knew that film making sucks. And it's gig work. And I wanted something more consistent. I also was a bit of a nerd. And I liked current events and politics and economics. And I wanted to find a way to combine smart stuff with creative video stuff. And broadcast TV news was the perfect way to do that. And I figured that out in high school. So, I took the classes I needed in high school and landed a scholarship at my university for work that I had already done, you know, and got into the major no problem and did loads of it. I did like three or four internships, while as a student, and was able to just take off as a college student, I got my first job in the biz as a college student.

KW:

Based off that, what was your journalism experience like, and how did that factor that into your decision to leave the industry?

AA:

The job was fantastic. It was everything as advertised. You were meeting new people every day; you were telling important stories; you were holding the powerful accountable; you were shining a light on the underdog; you were promoting education and health and crime. And I mean, you're not promoting. You're promoting education and health and wellness. And you were, you know, removing the cobwebs in the shadows from crime and, you know, politics and business. And you were, I mean, it was just what I hoped I wanted it to be. I loved the video storytelling. I loved interviewing. I also loved the charisma associated with presentation. I loved looking the part and speaking with authority and watching my tape back and saying, "How can I communicate that better?" I love taking complicated things and making them simple. I would learn. I would get some super complicated housing authority story, and I would learn all about it. And I would simplify it to 90-second VOSOT at the end of the day, and everyone could understand this housing authority issue, you know, and I took a lot of pride in that. And I took pride in the fact that I got to present it as well, with a face or a smile or a concerned, you know, that the eyebrow furrow, you know, whatever we can do as newscasters to communicate a little emotion with our story.

KW:

When you get a story like that, you really have to, every day, become an expert on something new really quickly. So, you can be the expert that informs, you know, communities.

AA:

You're the perfect cocktail party guest because you know a little bit about everything, you know. Sit me down in front of a group of people, and I'll find something in common with each of them based on a story that I've done. I also took to anchoring quickly because that was personality driven. I was a morning anchor for several years and really enjoyed the news, the hardcore news writing of it, you know, and then the presentation part – the charisma associated with getting people up in the morning and getting them what they need to know, out the door. And then the second part of your question was “Why did you want to leave?” It was more the structure of news. The infrastructure around a newsroom – television news – how it monetizes – how it schedules because it is not family friendly. It is not always mental health friendly. If somebody has a mental health challenge, it's not very accommodating. It was difficult to have consistency in my personal life. I was the one who missed the family reunion because a police officer got shot, and I got called in, you know. I was the one who worked all the way up until like, two days before I delivered my baby boy because they didn't have anyone to pick up my shift. And I felt guilty, you know, just not showing, you know, taking maternity leave early when I knew that my coworkers would suffer for it. And I had to get a nanny to start to watch my kids starting at 5 a.m. because I was at work at two and my husband has an early riser job as well and needed to leave at five. So, we had to hire a nanny to start at 5 a.m. in the morning. It was very difficult to find somebody to do that. And so that's a couple of the reasons why I needed a job change, career change.

KW:

So, based off that, was there like a seminal moment or experience that solidified your decision to leave TV news?

AA:

There was, and it actually wasn't related to that. I was making the family thing work. I had a one-year-old, and we had found a nanny to do the crazy hours and my husband was onboard with me continuing with my crazy weekend shift and my working holidays and all of that. That was manageable. It was working. I hadn't gotten a raise in several years. And that was a stressor, especially when I had earned one. I had brought my new station its most lucrative franchise ever. And there was no pay increase or bonus associated with that. Whereas all the sales folks on that news franchise had gotten a bonus. So, that was very unfair. And, you know, but I was willing to go through all of that, if I could have my schedule changed. I needed to get off weekends, and I needed to get off early mornings, and there was a job opening and my company, my news station, for the daytime weekday anchor. I was the perfect candidate for it. It was the breaking news anchor, you know, you'd be there, you do the end of the morning show if need be. You do the midday show, and then you do the five, and then anytime in between, you were just there to cover breaking news, or I'd work on my franchise. And my news director told me that I was the top candidate for that position. I applied, and then they told me that they were eliminating

that position – that there was no longer going to be a mid-day anchor shift. They were going to make the morning guy work longer and the evening gal work earlier to cover the time, and so I said well, then there's no, that was my goal with the station. So, there's no upward mobility for me here. And that was the like seminal moment where it was like, in addition to being underpaid, underappreciated, having this tough schedule, not working with family, feeling guilty, and you know, for hurting my poor newsroom cohorts, not getting this position was it.

KW:

Gosh, I bet that was very difficult for you.

AA:

Then about nine months later, another gal got that position. They did hire somebody for that position.

KW:

So, after you made the decision that you were like, “Alright, I want to be done.” Could you just like, tell me about your process of your decision to leave news? Like, did you look for a job and then quit, or just take me through your process of deciding to leave?

AA:

I'm glad you asked because I really do have a process. And when I talked to some of my reporter friends who are looking to leave, I tell them this. After that seminal moment where I decided I really can't continue in this, I thought I'm definitely not going to leave my position unless I have another one because I can continue to do this, but I can't not be employed. So, what I did was to find out where would be a good next step. I started as a journalist doing interviews. I called a lot of my friends who had gone from reporter to PR and had a phone call with them. I think I did it like six times. And I had some friends who went into corporate PR, some education, some public safety, some who went into marketing as opposed to PR, and I just had a phone call with them and kind of collected my thoughts and decided what I might want to do. Talking to them and hearing that they had no regrets really encouraged my feeling. And so, then I started applying, I think in the month of August. So, if I made my like, seminal decision in early July, I had those phone interviews, rest of July, put out my first application in August and spent September doing interviews, and had several offers and shows one in October and started in November. It worked out faster than I thought.

KW:

That's great. That's another big thing in my research that I'm trying to look into is like, what was the process of your decision to leave news because everyone has their own process – so just interesting to learn that.

Based off the research I've done, there's about 10+ factors that contribute to news professionals' decisions to leave. So, I'm just going to go through some of them one by one. And if you just want to comment, if you have anything to comment on it, and how it affected your decision to leave, that'd be great... I just want to see how my research will,

you know, kind of relates to the research that's already been done to see if it's still relevant. Okay, so rapid changes. There's been rapid changes in the TV news, news industry and how news evolves. So, did that affect your decision to leave at all?

AA:

What kind of changes do you are you referring to?

KW:

I didn't really put any specific ones. But just overall, research is saying that the TV news is changing in terms of, you know, the platforms. Just in general with TV news changing, with like, you know, the emphasis on social media.

AA:

I would say yes. Specifically, when I was an MMJ, we were suddenly asked to do parallel Facebook lives and live tweets on events. And I'm like, look, if I'm already running a camera, doing the interview, checking the audio levels, and then putting the package together by myself and then going out live, I can't also add in a Facebook Live. It was just – it was a lot to add with no, you know, support or training, compensation, things like that. It just — the news industry changed to a more social platform, and we had to adapt without support or alleviation of the old-fashioned way of putting it on TV.

KW:

The next one is job satisfaction. How did your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction factor into your decision to leave?

AA:

The job I still loved. I created my own franchise for myself where we got to award a local teacher with \$500 and a trophy and a package all about why their kids love them. Like talk about satisfying. I was able to create that for myself and, with sales, we sold it, and we were able to do that once a month, and so I was very satisfied with what I had built my actual day, my job, into, and that was the hardest thing to leave was because I did love what I did.

KW:

Burnout and mental health pressures – did that factor into your decision to leave?

AA:

I wouldn't say mental health pressures, but I would say a little bit of burnout. I am a total achieving person, and I am validated internally. I don't need somebody to tell me and pat me on the back and tell me it's great that I did that, but when you have absolutely no validation at all, and no recognition of the amazing hoops you're jumping through, you start to think, why am I jumping through these hoops?

KW:

Sexism or discrimination – did either of those factor into your decision to leave?

AA:

No, no, I wouldn't say. I would maybe add that I was not hopeful about my opportunity to be promoted because I happen to know that the shift I was interested in was full of white females. And I thought, I am not going to be the top candidate to join this shift because they will want diversity in gender and race.

KW:

Work-life balance – how did that factor into your decision to leave?

AA:

Probably the number one thing. I actually found out I was pregnant with my second about a month after deciding to leave... That was a major factor.

KW:

What about difficult stories with difficult stories that you may have had to tell?

AA:

A lot of people assume that that was a big problem – that I had a hard time covering the crime and covering the tragedy. And that was really never too difficult for me. I'm grateful that I was able to compartmentalize that and still do my job compassionately without having to take it home emotionally.

KW:

Quality of news standards...

AA:

It's a factor that went in with mine because there's this awful thing happening in news where they're not paying their staff, which means they must hire less qualified younger individuals, which means that in my market, which is a top 20 market, I was training fresh college grads to do the job of somebody. The guy who left had been here for years. He had come with six years of experience, and his replacement had zero years of experience, and it was my job to train him and I'm like, there's no way I can get this kid up to snuff. His predecessor came with six years and then four, you know, so yeah, the quality of our newscast took a dive when they stopped paying staff.

AA:

The next one is shortage of resources. You basically just covered that, but shortage of staff or camera people and editors, travel budgets, etc.?

AA:

I wouldn't say that that contributed to me leaving but it contributed to my overall job dissatisfaction. I love my job, but the framework around it was excessively difficult, and in ways that I feel like could have been prevented if some of the money going into the station was located towards news instead of the other things my station prioritized that were not news based.

KW:

My next one is other health issues. So, I would assume like maternity would factor into that, so just anything that went on with you personally, did that factor into your decision to leave?

AA:

Not into me leaving, no. My maternity leave was nice, and my coworkers were really gentle about it. I had a couple of health issues as well one year, and my news director and the assistant news director were very personable and welcoming of me needing to take some time off.

KW:

So, my next one is unethical practices. So, if there was any, you know, if you felt influenced by management or higher ups to partake in unethical practices, or if not, what do you comment on that?

AA:

There is a change in the news industry where more paid segments are sneaking their way into newscasts. They're not staying in the style shows. They're making their way into the morning news, and I was very dissatisfied with that. I was told to read the anchor intro for a paid segment, and it made me look like part of the paid deal, and I was very unhappy with that. A, because I'm not a I'm not getting paid for it. B, it's disingenuous for somebody who's supposed to be unbiased to be using her face and voice to set up a totally paid segment over and over again.

KW:

On to the overall decision of why you left, compensation, salary, raises, financial stability, how much would you say that contributed into your decision to leave?

AA:

It was less on the I need more money and more on the why aren't they giving me a raise? Why are they refusing to not only include a cost-of-living wage increase, but a merit increase? When I have clearly earned one, and they have told me that this warrants a merit increase? But we're not at the point where we're offering that right now. That made me suspicious of where is the money going? And what are they doing to validate the overachieving or the above and beyond-ing that I'm doing? And the answer was, they're not doing anything for it, and I would need to do an investigation to find out where the station's money is...

KW:

The next one is management issues. So, did you have any management issues that factored into your decision?

AA:

There was maybe a little bit of retaliation whenever I would stand up for myself and my schedule. Anecdotally, there was a time when I was asked to move my days off, and I

said, no, because I have a family dinner on this evening, and I don't want to be working early the next morning. And they couldn't force me to change my days off, but I was retaliated against. I was pulled from some projects that I had been on originally, and when I asked why I was pulled from those projects, the answer was, we're giving it to a reporter who has more flexibility and is more of a team player. I said, that sounds like retaliation for me, and I'm moving my days off.

KW:

Based off those and what we've talked about... what would you say were the most important factors in your decision to leave?

AA:

Work-life balance, a combination of the direction that news is going, and the ethics of how news is going because, now that I answered that question, that was really frustrating for me, as a trained journalist, to not only have to train total rookies who are unprepared for this market, but then be told to sell, you know, gutter cleaning for, you know, a local company. So, that did play a bigger role than I think I had thought about. The main thing was the inflexibility to accommodate for my desire for a work-life balance.

KW:

Based off of that, how do you think your gender interacted with those factors?

AA:

I mean, I know that I made less than my male counterparts. I mean, I made less than other female counterparts as well. So, it's not like that was just a firm line, but I did feel replaceable with another female who might not have my skillset but has my look.

KW:

Okay, so my next category is PR. So, we've made the switch, and so the next step, is what about PR seemed attractive to you? When you had those conversations with the people you talked to, what about PR seemed like you would want to do something in PR?

AA:

Within PR is media relations, and that was appealing because I can still be a storyteller. I can stay in the community doing interviews and sharing stories, but the framework is within a school, a hospital, a public safety organization, a firm, you know, and that tends to come with a little more employee perks, and perks is the wrong word – more employee appreciation, PTO salaries, better work environment, but you're still doing the same core things of storytelling, interviewing and presenting complicated things in a simple way.

KW:

I think you've kind of already just answered this, but overall, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR? Because you would be able to integrate that storytelling into what you're doing?

AA:

Yeah, it was the content creation that I really liked – helping to tell healthcare stories and to work with the media but still be able to turn everything off and go back and be with my family, you know. It came with a pay increase, it came with more PTO, it came with a supportive team it came with more benefits, a better benefit package than news offered. And so, if I'm still able to be a cool video storyteller but have a supportive infrastructure around me to allow me to be a mom and a wife, yeah, I'll do that.

KW:

Reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your role in PR compare to your role in TV?

AA:

It lines up perfectly... the cons of TV are the pros of PR. I mean, my weaknesses became my strengths. Where I was grossly lacking in home family life, I feel like I have an abundance of work family life balance. Now, I have more flexibility than I've ever had. Where I was dissatisfied with pay and benefits and ethics, I feel like now I work for a system who pays me more, gives me more time. You know... I feel more intrinsically motivated to help my organization than I was to get the news out because the news machine was starting to fail on me.

KW:

Now, do you still feel like you carry like a journalistic self-concept with you in your PR job? And how does that, if you do still feel like you have a journalistic self-concept, how does that affect how you do your job?

AA:

Guiltily. I will admit that when people ask me what I do, and I tell them what I do, I often add, but I used to be a TV news anchor for 10 years. At cocktail parties, that's a way more interesting conversation, and I still identify as that. And that's still how I connect with people. Like I said, I felt like I can tell a story about anybody in a room because I've done a story about something connected to everybody in the room. And so, I still find myself doing that. And like I say, guiltily, because I should be more proud of what I'm doing and move forward with that. My flashy, you know, headline job of being a news anchor shouldn't define me, but it still kind of does. What was the second part of that question?

KW:

How does that impact how you do your job now?

AA:

It doesn't really. I still can execute my job and do all that I need to. In fact, if anything, it helps me do my job because I have my connections. I know what these reporters need. I know what these new stations need. Whereas my coworkers who are not former journalists, when my coworkers say, oh, great, it's going to be a long weekend, enjoy the time off. I'm thinking, no, this is when I'm working extra because newsrooms have nothing to run on Labor Day or the day after, and I want to make sure I get them some

content to air, and they're like, what? And I'm like, you don't understand. If you want a story told, send it the day after Christmas.

KW:

Okay, my last few questions – TV new suggestions. So, what changes would your former employer have had to make an order for you to stay?

AA:

I concluded that if the station allocated more of its money towards news, more than one problem would be fixed. Not only would the individual employees be happier making actual money, but you have a better job hiring, and you wouldn't have some of the burnout associated with training rookies. Your standard of excellence would increase, and you wouldn't have so many ethical issues because you wouldn't be selling news time to advertisers for the money. You know, and I know that the station's getting money, I was a part of a mega major franchise. I don't know where that money went, but I decided, in my limited experience being a news director or a station manager, if only they put some money in the pocket of its journalists, then they would have better retention, better happiness, better job satisfaction and better, more ethical newscasts.

KW:

My last question is, what changes do you think the TV news industry should make in order to keep more women in the future?

AA:

It might not be the same answer for all stations, because I know that there's a big divide between big cities and little cities. And, for instance, in a big city like mine, we just were so understaffed, that I struggled to take a day when my kid was sick. You know, and as mom, that's kind of my job, you know. And so, if we had had more staff to pick up slack, any parent, male or female, could have had more flexibility with work and life and home life, and that probably would have increased their job satisfaction. When I went on maternity leave, I didn't feel guilty, but I did notice that my coworkers had a harder three months with me gone because they had to pick up the slack... that decreases job satisfaction, and without the any pay increase, or any validation, that will push a woman out the door who's saying, look, I want to be able to achieve, and I feel like I'm just being, you know, used to smile at viewers.

KW:

Is there anything else you would like to add anything that I may have missed?

AA:

I did think of one thing I wanted to add. I don't know that this has a place in your research, but just on the topic. When I have young college students or young people in general asking, should I go into TV news? The answer isn't yes or no easily because I am really grateful I went into TV news because I am more prepared to do the job I'm doing now as a former journalist than if I had started on this path from the beginning. And I would not have been happy, I think, doing this job when I started in TV news... I think I

would have been a clock watcher, and I needed to have the time that I did have for my own happiness, as well as for a really powerful accumulation of job skills. You know, you are put through the wringer as a reporter, and if you can come out of it, you have a lot of job skills, and it has made me, as I've been told, a valuable employee at my current, my current place, and I'm grateful to TV news for putting me through the kiln... I guess I think of as pottery, right, you go through this the fire the kiln, and you come out looking nice and shiny.

II. Bailey B., vice president of corporate communications

KW:

So, my very first question is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

BB:

I was about 13 or 14 when I decided that I wanted to get into the news business. Initially, it was because I liked to write, and so I was sort of thinking, newspaper, you know, that kind of thing. And then while I was in college... it was just a real immersive program. And so, I got to do some on camera stuff and behind the scenes stuff and really thought, you know, yeah, this is the way I want to go. While I was in college, I actually worked at a radio station and did the morning news drive, you know, my senior year, and I really liked radio, but there was something about being in TV and like really getting to meet people and tell their stories that you, I mean, that's what drew me to is that whole storytelling aspect. And so, I just was super fortunate, had a great internship, got hired right out of the internship, and then, you know, a couple of jobs along the way worked in a couple of different markets. And really, gosh, had such wonderful experiences.

KW:

So, based off your journalism experience, what was your journalism experience like? And how did your experience factor into your decision to leave?

BB:

The biggest thing that I loved about journalism... well, there were two things, the first of all, the storytelling, which I mentioned, but also, I felt like at least in the very beginning, that journalism mattered – that it made a difference, if that makes sense – so, a kind of this higher purpose. Where we hold elected officials accountable, and, you know, we just we did stories that sometimes brought about change. And that's such a rewarding feeling like, that we can make a difference in our own little, our own little community, our own world. And, and so that was really, you know, in the beginning, the things that I loved about it. It wasn't, you know, the whole people think TV is so glamorous, and you know, you're a big TV star. And I mean, that, you know, that's fun, but that wasn't what attracted me to it – it really was like the storytelling. What changed for me over the years is just the industry changed so much. And so, it became more about the bottom line and less about quality. It was more about just having warm bodies in a newsroom and not the talent or the capabilities. And so, I just started to love it less, if that makes sense. I still loved it, but it was just very different. You know, this will date me, but when I first was a reporter, like right out of school, the internet was just in its infancy. That changed, and so there became more and more of an effort to be, you know, the first, and it didn't matter, the facts didn't matter as much, it was all about push alerts, and, you know, the web stories and all those things I really felt like, were a distraction to our core, you know, what we were doing in terms of a television newscast. There were things that were really good about – you could do longer form things on the internet, which I enjoy, then social media came to be and so, there were really great ways to be able to connect with your audience, you know, in a way that we had never been able to do that. But I no longer felt like I was making a difference. It was all about what can we just stick into the show to fill

the time? And you know, there were some advertising pressures that I felt like were not good influences. You can't really be subjective and have a really strong news product, if you have the influence of advertisers. And so, there were a couple of experiences in there where I just sort of became, I don't want to say, disillusioned is really a good word, but just frustrated with the industry as a whole. Ultimately, the other thing that factored into my decision was family. So, for the last 17 years of my career, I worked nightside. So, I'd go in at 2:30. When I had little kids at home, that was actually a really great schedule because I could be home with them during the day. But the older my kids got, the harder that got. And the more I felt like, you know, when I loved it, it didn't seem like a sacrifice, but then when I got to the point where I didn't love it, I was like, why am I sacrificing all this family stuff for a career that I don't feel like I'm, you know, as passionate about? And they certainly didn't care about me – I mean, we also went through some ownership changes at that time. And so, you become just a number in a random city, and the corporate folks don't know you – they don't care about you. Again, it's all about the bottom line, and they're not loyal to you. And so, I started to think like, well, why am I being so loyal to them, and sacrificing, you know, like, the best years of my life and the best years of my kids' lives for what?

Because I just didn't feel that sense of purpose that I had. So, it's interesting – when I first started to kind of toy with the idea like, well, if I if I don't do TV news, what do I even do? Because it's all I've ever done, it's all I've ever wanted to do. I can't do anything else. I don't have any other skillsets, you know, all that kind of stuff, which was really garbage, you know, because I did have a lot of those skillsets that were transferable. I actually was in a really unique position. So, what happened, what really made me leave the business was an out of the blue unexpected offer to come work here. So, it was locally-owned company – we're big; we're 1.4 billion in sales. It's a large company, but locally owned, and I knew the owner because we had covered him throughout the years, or, like I would emcee events that he would be at. And so, you know, so I knew him professionally. And he knew about some of the changes that had been happening kind of in the TV landscape. And so, he had even said to me at one point you like, do you think you'd ever leave? And at the time, you know, I was still like, no, I feel like I still have work to do, and I still really enjoy it. But what happened was that the position opened up, and they were kind of thinking, well, we want to revamp the position and add some things and, you know, sort of take it to the next level. And so, he reached out to me just out of the blue and said, you know, do you think you'd be interested, and so that the timing was perfect. It just made sense for me to do that. I hadn't expected it. I'm part of the TV women group, and I see so many of them struggling, you know, they want to get out and can't find jobs. And I'm just like, super blessed that the job kind of just fell in my lap.

So, I do a combination. My job is sort of this really interesting hybrid. So, I do all of our internal communications... I do all of our external PR. So, we actually work with a PR firm in New York. And so, I work with them really closely, just to tell our story kind of on a national level, to brand awareness, things like that – all that's external facing. And then I also oversee all of our philanthropy and charitable giving. So, we give about a million dollars a year in donations and grants and things like that. So, I've worked really

closely with our CEO on that. I work really closely with our HR team for the internal communications and then I still get to kind of do the fun media stuff for external. So, I do a lot of writing just ghost writing for our managers, you know, all of our C-suite folks.

KW:

This is great because you're kind of leading into my next question. So, my next question was, if you had a seminal moment that solidified your decision to leave TV news, so would you say that that offer would have been that moment you were like, "Alright, it's time to be done?"

BB:

Yeah, absolutely, and then I'll share this story too. So, I was under contract, of course, and I had been with the same company for 23 years on two different markets but 23 years total. And so I went to my managers, my this was in early March that I got the job offer, and my contract was up in October. And so, we had just gone through this big ownership change. And so, I said to my boss, you know, here's the deal, I got this offer. It's not in TV news. I'm probably never going to work in TV news again. Once I leave, that's it. So, I'm not like, I'm not going to across the street to a competitor. But I have this great opportunity – it's more money. It's just like, normal hours, all these things. And my boss was very happy for me. And I had a great relationship with him. And so, this was early March, and I said, I will work through the end of May because it happened to be a primary election year. May is a rating period – all that stuff. I assumed that they would replace me from within – somebody already on staff, which they did end doing. So, I thought, well, it's not going to be that big of a transition. So basically, I gave them like 60 days' notice. So, I said, you know, I want to leave at the end of May. Well, that was fine. He went back to corporate, and they said no, if she leaves that's breach of contract. And I was like, really like after 23 years, you're going to do that, to me, like all this, you know, all the vacations that I'd given up in the holidays that you know, all these kinds of things. So, I came back to the owner... and I said, you know, here's the story, either I have to buy out of my contract, or they're making me stay till October. And he said, you can stay till October, that's no big deal. We'll bring you on later. And I was like, you know what, I just don't want to stay. Now that I've made that decision, I just want to finish up my time there and then move on. And so, we there was a lot of back and forth. And finally, the corporation just said, sorry, it's breach of contract. And... if you don't pay, we will sue you. Long story short, I came back to the owner here, and he was like, okay, what's your buyout? And I told him, and it wasn't even a huge amount. It was the principal of the thing. He's like, I'll pay it. And so that whole experience, like really solidified in my mind, like, I'm doing the right thing. If after all, this time, they're going to treat me that way. I just wanted to leave my contract four months early, and giving them, you know, 60 days' notice all that kind of stuff. Again, they hired they replaced me from someone, they moved the morning anchor to my position for the evening anchor. And I was like, if that's the way you're going to, then I'm doing the right thing... Then I came here. And you know, I have my annual review... and they're like, okay, here's a raise, and it's like a 5 percent raise. And then they're like, oh, and we give bonuses to so here's \$10,000. And it's like, that never happened in television. You were lucky if you got like one and a half percent raise. It wasn't about the money from me. I mean, the money is much better, but it

never was about that for me. It just really reinforced, again, like, why am I doing all this working these horrible hours, giving up my nights and my weekends and all that? For what? It just reinforced that.

KW:

My next section is career change factors. So, you got an offer, and that was a big moment for you to leave... I've done a lot of research on what's already been done. And always there's a lot of factors that go into why people leave the industry, but there's like a common denominator of about like, 10+. I'll just read them off one by one if you have anything to comment on it... but just comment on each one as they've applied to your decision to leave. So, the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry. How did that affect your decision to leave at all?

BB:

I would say yes, but not to a huge degree. I always sort of embraced the change. You know, there were really great things about change. I mean, there were wonderful things that that happened. So, it was a factor, but I wouldn't say it was a huge factor.

KW:

The next one is job satisfaction. How did your job satisfaction factor into your decision to leave?

BB:

That was huge. It really was. You know, as I talked about, just the environment – doing more with less, just constantly feeling like we didn't have enough resources. Yeah, and not feeling valued. That was the other big thing too, you know, not really being appreciated for the contributions that that you're making – so, huge.

KW:

The next one is shortage of resources, so staff, camera people, travel budgets, etc. Was that a big contributor to your decision?

BB:

Yeah, absolutely because we were we were producing hours of news every day with a handful of people. And it was like, if we can't do quality stuff, you know, that I'm proud of every day. Like, what's the point?

KW:

My next one is quality of news standards. So, would you say that the decreased staff would affect the quality of news?

BB:

Absolutely – yes. And it was just, you know, really poor quality. No oversight, people were not held accountable and things when it was poor quality. Though, you know, there were a handful of days that I would go home, and I'd be like, yeah, you know, we killed it

today and we did a great job and all that, but there were just as many or more days when I would go home and be like that didn't look good.

KW:

The next one is burnout/mental health pressures – did either of those factor into your decision to want to leave?

BB:

Not necessarily. I mean, I was getting burned out, but I wouldn't say it was mental health pressures. I will say, and this may be a question that you have, but the negativity of the news itself. And I didn't, I didn't fully appreciate that until I left the news business and stepped away from it. Like, I don't watch the news on a regular basis now, and I realized, like, really quickly, wow, like just being, you know, covering all the negative stuff that did affect my mental health. I mean, I wouldn't say I was, you know, depressed or whatever. But there, you know, there was an element of that certainly just weighed on me.

KW:

So, my next one is difficult stories. Were there difficult stories you had to cover that was a part of that element?

BB:

Yeah, definitely, but I wouldn't say that was part of the reason I left because I liked the challenge of difficult stories because I feel like there are so many people who don't tell those stories well, and so, you know, I enjoyed tackling some of that kind of stuff. But yeah, you know, we had a story, it was over the holidays, like Christmas time, and there was a little girl who had been kidnapped, and she was actually killed and dismembered. I mean, it was just like, this horrific story, and my kids were younger at the time. And like, yeah, horrible. So, it wasn't a huge factor, but yeah, it was a factor... And here's the thing, if I always felt like if I got to the point in my career, that those kinds of things didn't bother me, then that was a problem because I never wanted to lose, like that human element. And I never wanted to forget, like, even if it was a car accident or whatever, like, that's someone's brother, someone's father. So, you know, like, that human thing was really important to me.

KW:

Yeah... when so much of the news is so negative, it's like, I do think there's this numbing elements where, like, desensitization, you know, when you're seeing it all the time, it's not as shocking.

BB:

You do get kind of jaded for sure.

KW:

So, my next one is work-life balance. So, you did talk about your kids at home – how was your work-life balance and your decision to leave?

BB:

I wouldn't say the work was overwhelming in terms of like, oh, I can't get my work done or I'm taking my work home with me because I didn't really do that. The two things that I would say about work-life balance were, first of all, that the evening schedule, you know, that just the hours were bad. I mean, there's just not there's really not such a thing as an eight to five job in TV. It may be a five o'clock producer, you know, that kind of thing. So that was definitely a factor. And then there was sort of this strange element of you know, [city] is a pretty small town and for whatever weird reason they put their TV people like up on pedestals like celebrities. So, there was this kind of weird thing where it was like, okay, I can't go to the grocery store with no makeup, or like, you know, I go out to dinner with my husband and I want a glass of wine like are people over the other table – or if I'm disciplining my children or you know, things like that, that there really was this fishbowl effect. Now, I say that, and I don't say it to complain, because I, first of all, I knew going into it that that was going to be the case. Second of all, you sort of secretly want that, right? Like, if you go out in public and you don't get recognized, there's a problem because that means you're not branding you – no one's watching. So, it was sort of this double-edged sword where as much as I didn't like it, I craved it because I wanted, you know, the more people who knew then the better the research was, and better research, the better ratings.

KW:

Did sexism or discrimination affect your decision to leave at all?

BB:

Actually, no. It did not, and I think I'm in the minority. I'll be anxious to hear what you find out from others. It really never did for me. I always felt like I had a seat at the table. Part of that could just be that's my personality, like, I was never afraid to share my opinion. You know, I was, especially by the time I left the station, I was one of the older people there. So, you know, I had a lot of experience, and people relied on that experience. So, I never felt discriminated against. Now, there were some challenges. It was all of the managers – the last station I worked at – were men, white men, whose wives, for the most part, stayed home. So, there were times that I felt like they didn't understand what it was like to be a working mom, but they never treated me unfairly.

KW:

My next one was management issues...

BB:

In my previous station, I worked for a woman and, and so there was a little bit more of that sort of, I get you kind of thing. I would say, my local managers, I really liked and respected, and they treated me well, and we got along really well. It was the corporate stuff... and I say, they weren't even my managers. I didn't know them, but they were making decisions that affected me. So, it was part of that just the whole corporate thing.

KW:

If you had any health issues that factor in, whether that be maternity leave or did anything that you've dealt with in 23+ years affect it?

BB:

Yeah, no, they, in fact, so I was working in a different station... when I had both of my kids, and they were very accommodating to me. I had, you know, I was able to accrue vacation time and sick time, and I took 10 weeks off each time. And there was never, you know, and then in both cases, I went back to work, and I was breastfeeding. They, you know, they made allowances so that I could pump during the day. I don't know that all stations are like that or all managers are like that. But, you know, I had a good experience in that regard.

KW:

So, throughout your career, were there any unethical practices? Like if you felt that from management to where did that affect your decision at all?

BB:

No, it didn't really, I didn't mention, you know, there were times where we had advertisers that would get upset about like, well, you shouldn't do this story, because it's painting us in a bad light. And if you do this, then we're going to pull our advertising. That actually happened – one time that happened. I wouldn't say that's really unethical. We were frustrated that our news director didn't fight it more, but I also understand television is a business, and that's a tough balance.

KW:

With the greater pull on advertising now, did that factor into your decision to want to leave?

BB:

There were frustrations, but I wouldn't say it was a factor.

KW:

Compensation was the last one. So, did you feel like you're getting fairly compensated with your salary, raises, financial stability, did any of that factor into your decision?

BB:

This is sort of a double-edged sword because I had been with the company a long time and I was, you know, I was the primary anchor, so, I was well compensated. I mean, I made decent money compared to, you know, the brand new starting out of school reporters and photographers who like didn't even make a livable wage. But the raises, like I said, you know, we'd be lucky if we'd get, you know, one and a half percent raise, there was no such thing as a bonus, any of that kind of stuff. Now that I'm in a corporate world, I realize how underpaid... at the time, I didn't really think so. And, you know, like I said, I get bonuses here and there, you know, there are other perks that that come with the corporate world. So, if I were, you know, a reporter, you know, not a primary anchor, but if I were, I would never be able to make a living, especially if you have a family, you just

you can't do it on \$35,000 a year... you have to pay the bills, and that is really that is one of the big problems I think that's facing the industry now. They're not willing to pay for good quality people. And so, they're getting young, and I have nothing against young people, you know, I was young once and started out, but they're getting people who, who don't have tons of experience. That's the thing, too, when I first started, you know, maybe you started in market 150 maybe a market 100 if you were lucky, and then you worked your way up. Now, it's like, people are getting jobs right out of college in market 20, and they just don't, they just don't have the experience that they really need to work in the market. And so, so that, then again, the quality suffers because you have to be willing to pay people what they're worth. And, and that's why I think there's this huge exodus right now. Its people are realizing like, this is just not, it's not worth it.

KW:

So, after everything we've talked about so far, just to summarize, what would you say, in your opinion, were the most important factors in your decision to leave TV news?

BB:

I would say the hours – so like that kind of work-life balance because the hours were so bad. I just couldn't see myself working nights for the rest of my life. I'm like, I can't, it was fine for a time, but now my life's changed, and I just can't see doing that. So that was one of the bigger things. I think really, honestly, was the quality. The product itself was just not good anymore. I wasn't proud of what we were doing, and then just the culture of like, not feeling valued. And it wasn't even, like when I say valued, like not even the money value. It's like, management didn't – not that I need to be patted on the back every day. There was none of that sort of like appreciation... And part of that, I think is just you know, a product of the fact that you're just moving at such a quick pace in that industry. You don't stop to look at the good things and appreciate people because you're as soon as one newscast is done, you're gone to the next.

KW:

How do you think overall, just do you think your gender interacted with your factors to leave it all?

BB:

Like I said, I was always treated very fairly, and I don't think I was ever discriminated against because I was a woman. I have heard horror stories, and I've worked with people, you know, where there was even sexual harassment. Again, I am fortunate and never experienced that, but I do think it's a tough business for moms. You know, I did manage to make it work, and I say this, like, very humbly, but like, I made it work well. And I think that my kids would now tell you that, but I think they would tell you that, that I was still a good mom, but I also had an amazing support system, like my husband was 100% in, you know, and there were a lot of years that he took on the bulk of the evening stuff because he was the parent who was home, and not everybody has that.

KW:

So corporate communications – you made the switch. What about your job seemed attractive to you?

BB:

I still get to do storytelling. So, again, that was like, that was my very first passion. And so, I'm at a company where there are just so many great stories to tell, both internally and externally. So, you know, I love that part of it. So that was the, I would say the main attraction. Initially, I was concerned that I would be bored. You know, I'm like, I don't want a job where I'm just going to sit and write press releases all day. That does not interest me, but that's not that's not what this job has turned into. And I'm also fortunate because this company has grown dramatically. So, I've been here four years... So, like, it's a great company because it's growing so much. And so, I think that has helped, I would be really bored, I think, and not challenged at a company that wasn't like that. So, I'm really fortunate in that regard.

KW:

So, overall, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR?

BB:

To be honest with you, I never really thought in my head, oh, I want to get into PR, or oh, I want to get into corporate communications. It's just that that's where my skillset were. You know, for a time I even toyed with the idea of being a teacher, like going back and getting wrapped teaching certification because I love that. And I would if I were to do it, I would teach like English or creative writing or things like that, or I would teach journalism something. You know, I toyed with that idea, but that would have required a little more schooling and I don't know my age, I was like, I can't do that. So, it wasn't like, oh, I sought out a career in PR, it was more of like, what can I do with the skillsets that I have? That you know, that would transfer.

KW:

Reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV, how do, in your opinion, how does your new role compare to your old role?

BB:

Yeah, there's no, there's not a comparison. So, the culture and again, I think I'm fortunate because I'm at a company where they really stress culture... So, like, there are all kinds of amenities and things here that I would never have had. But I will tell you, this is an example. And I have, I've saved the email somewhere. Every year on my anniversary, our CEO sends me an email that says like, we're so happy that you're part of our team. And he'll have examples of like, you know, you've really improved this, or we love this. And so like, it's two or three sentences, and it's like, that never happened in the news business...

KW:

Now, do you still feel like you carry this journalistic self-concept with you? And if so, how do you think that affects your job?

BB:

I do. And I think, I think part of it is just that you probably would agree with me like journalists are curious people. You ask a lot of questions. You want to know how things work and why – things like that. And so that really has carried over because I, I'm very observant. And so, I you know, I talk to a lot of people and learn about different aspects of, of our business and what goes on. And so, I definitely think that has carried over just that sort of natural inclination to ask questions. So yeah, that's probably and then and then the writing thing. Like I keep going back to that storytelling.

KW:

What changes would your former employer have had to have made to keep you?

BB:

Compensation – so, you know, you've got to pay people what they're worth. And again, I felt like I was fairly compensated, but there were a lot of people in my early years, I wasn't so much and then there were a lot of younger people, like I said, who couldn't make a livable wage. You cannot do that to be so that's, that's one of the first changes. you know, part of it was the hours like, there was nothing they could do about that like I completely understood. You cannot be a primary anchor and not work until 11. And so, I never faulted them for that, you know, I chose that. But yeah, I think, you know, just being more accommodating with people's schedules and, you know... to that end, like, hire more people. You can't have one person doing three people's jobs. Because first of all, they're underpaid. Second of all, they're going to burn out so quickly. Third of all, you're going to have horrible quality, because it's just there is a churn. So, I think those are probably the three, you know, compensation, better quality people and flexibility.

KW:

So, my research is specifically focused on women who have left. What changes do you think need to be made in the TV news industry to keep more women professionals in the future?

BB:

Not just women but moms as well – and, you know, I only have that perspective, because [I'm] mom, but you know, you've got to create a safe, safe place for women, like I mentioned, the, you know, sexual harassment and discrimination. I know it exists, even though I didn't really feel it. So, you've got to create that safe space. You've got to have flexibility so that they can have a life and be a mom and all those kinds of things. You have to treat them equally, you know, you can't give a certain assignment to a male reporter that you wouldn't give to a female reporter because they're just as competent – sometimes more. And, you know, I think I'll kind of leave you with this is that, I think, for a newsroom, to be effective, there has to be diversity. And I don't mean, just like black and white, you know, there has to be like diversity of thought, or life experience, you know, like, I have my own experiences that I brought to the newsroom. And, you know, the producer who was 23 years old, you know, living in an apartment, for the first

time by himself, like, he had a different, you know, very valuable perspective... and so, newsrooms have to, like value all of those voices to keep the quality good.

III. Clara C., public relations account manager and media relations director

KW:

So, my very first question is why you got into journalism. So, what attracted you to a career in TV news?

CC:

Well, I grew up doing musical theater. I started acting when I was three. And my parents were always like, oh, like, you shouldn't move out to LA or New York. And like, we had family in both places. So, like, I did the audition circuit and stuff. But then once it came time to like, high school, when you got to pick a college, I did, like a very brief internship [at a station]. And I talked to journalists there. And they, they kind of showed how most of it was showbiz. I mean, it was like remembering. It was talking to people with people skills. And I knew I could do that. But at the same time, I wasn't still completely sold because I wanted to still pursue acting and filmmaking. So I went to college, and I was a double major in film and theater, and then switched that to law. So, for a time I was prelaw, because I started seeing more of my interests of like, I really like investigating... and so transferred colleges to study law. And then found media communication because the university where I did eventually graduate had a good program. And I started working with the sports communications department part time, just doing camera work, because I'd done the same thing for like film and theater stuff. I like, knew how that stuff... And then they were like, oh, well, have you taken the news class yet? Like, you've got to take this, and you've got to, you'd be really good on camera. And because I wasn't, you know, I wasn't a super sporty person. And like I wasn't going to be a sports reporter, but they were like, you should try news because you operate your own camera, and they're doing one-man bands now. So, I did. And that's how I eventually got an internship with [a station]. And then they hired me on right after I graduated. So, I started working there when I was 21 years old, and I was only their third MMJ that they'd ever had. But I guess what really attracted me to journalism was that the storytelling aspect and like it was all encompassing of all these other talents that I'd had growing up and skills I developed. And everybody in my life was pointing to me saying, that's why you should do this, because you did theater, and you were interested in law, and you did this. And so, it was like all the signs in my life, were pointing to journalism, I felt like it was really a calling. And I really loved it. I got hooked from like the first class. So, I'm really glad that I ended up in that career path.

KW:

Overall, with your passion, how was your journalism experience? And how did your experience factor into your decision to leave?

CC:

Yeah, I mean, when I first started, and I got my internship in college, and then eventually worked for my first station, looking back now, I was just extremely eager, and like, happy to be there and help you to do everything. I mean, I worked like a crazy schedule, I would work Monday, Tuesday on mornings, like, Wednesday, Thursday, on nights, and then Friday on dayside, like, they would just put me wherever. And then after I would

finish my work, you know, some VOSOTs for the morning or, you know, a package, I would always offer to like, stay and help if any of the other reporters who were not MMJs needed someone to go record something with them in a shoot, like, I was always raising my hand because I just wanted to learn and be involved with everything. And then, so I was hired in 2019. I graduated 2019 I was hired. And then like, you know, not even a year later, COVID happened. So, and like, over that time, too, there was just a lot of vitriol building up with people against journalists, because we had like the fake news era, and I'm working in... a pretty good mid-sized market, you know, in a big sized city where like, I mean, there were some dangerous spots, and I was going live alone, like, I mean, [my station] did not have an eye. Since then, I think they've made it a policy that, um, no one goes live alone. But at my first station, I was just doing live shots. I was doing everything like alone in the dark for the morning show or for nights. And like... that [highway] area is huge for human trafficking, and drug trafficking and gangs. And so, there was just I was constantly covering crime alone. And like knocking on doors and doing things that my mom, who was a police detective was like, I cannot believe you're doing that. My parents were constantly asking me like... you have any type of protection, like they were getting the pepper spray all the time. And because we couldn't have like, even if I was a gun owner, you know, we can't have those... [there's] such limited resources. And so, you know, that was building up, COVID happened, and I felt even more isolated, because we were working out of our cars, essentially... And me and other reporters started being followed by people like back to our homes, because either we were driving our personal cars, or we would we were driving a news car completely separately... And so, I had a stalker. And that was one part of it. It was a guy that I went on, like, one date with and told him hey, I don't think we're a good match. He didn't really get the message.

KW:

I am so sorry. Don't even feel the need if you don't want to talk about it – I'm sure that's traumatizing for you.

CC:

Yeah, so that was one part of it. And then oh, gosh, like we had in my market like 2020 was extra traumatizing because we had like a lot of bigger riots. And then we were investigating, like, the police department and all this, you know, footage from riots to see what was going on. But and so it was very, like anti police also along with the George Floyd that affected everybody. [The city] was hit very hard. We had two police officers shot in the line of duty and killed. And like, that was another added layer of trauma. I think because growing up with my mom is a cop, I just think, okay, but what if that was my parent, and so, and my boyfriend at the time was a cop, too. And there was just so much stress, like, everywhere. Gosh, so that was going on. Like, I was doing controversial stories all the time, just because it felt like more were popping up. And there was more of a demand. Yeah, at that time. And I don't know if what happened next was because of a certain story I did, because I still don't know who did it, but I got a call from one of my friends who lived down the street from my news station. And she was like, hey, I wanted to check in on you and see how you're doing because we saw the sign in [the news station's yard] and I'm like, well, what are you talking about? And I had no

idea what she's talking about. I call the station. I called my producer. I'm like, is there a sign out front with anything to do with me? And somebody had taken like a Trump campaign sign, and they had written on it with like, big black Sharpie [Clara] is a cunt and put swastikas and like, yeah, it was just... it had to be investigated because that's a hate crime. My producer, who was the same age as me, like, there was a lot of young producers too at the time. She was like, yeah, we were debating telling you about it. Like, we didn't want you to be upset. And I'm like, no, I am upset. I'm almost more upset you didn't tell me about it, because I'm going live alone every night and this person probably knows where I am. Because we live tweet, we post on Facebook, like all the time, where we're going to be like, we cover crime a lot. And so, um, yeah, it was just so I didn't go live that night. And I had some conversations with my news director and GM at the time. And they called me to kind of try and do damage control after they learned I found out and I was like, well, I'm not going live alone anymore. Period. And when that happened, I had already signed my next contract. So, I was just kind of waiting to leave. And so, I kind of had, I think, more ground to stand on, because my new job. But um, yeah, it was really, it was really disturbing. And like, I filled out a police report and everything for it, and they still never found who did it. And, um, it was just I think it just speaks for like the time and the, in the types of stories we covered in that area. Like, I don't know why I was singled out and not the station. It was probably for a certain story, but I honestly have no clue. So that was going on. And then I moved to [a different state] for my second contract back in the spring of 2021. So, like little over a year and a half ago, and I intentionally picked a place that was like, farther away. It was a bigger market, but smaller towns like it was a DMA-size population, but it seems like a lot friendlier and slower pace.

KW:

I am sorry. That's awful.

CC:

Yeah, so when I came here, I definitely found that it was a slower pace. And that kind of started to become a problem because I was hired as an MMJ dayside. And we were responsible for a package and a VOSOT a day, MMJing and then usually going live. And I was having trouble because like, I started realizing that a lot of news wasn't necessary. Like we were just pulling a lot of fluff pieces into stories because we had a quota to meet each day and filling the black and I was like, this is just not as fun. Like I was kind of unfulfilled as a journalist and that slower pace where there wasn't as much crime to cover. And then, like after I was hired on a certain schedule, you know, I wanted to stick to that because I wanted to be dayside, Monday through Friday, and I felt safer that way. And then their nightside reporter at the time, moved on to his next station. And so, they were like, well, we need you to cover nightside for a little bit. And I'm like, no problem... I'm a team player. I'm like, maybe I'll get some more action this way, and it wasn't bad. But like, I was doing nightside three days a week, and then dayside two days a week and covering weekends, and I saw my schedule starting to get like, worse, and I'm like this is not why I picked up and moved hours away from my family. I like, voiced my concerns with my news director first, and then nothing really changed. And so like, I would call off for PTO, or put in PTO, and they would like, call me on my days off and ask where I

was, and asked me to, like, prove where I was, and just started getting more and more suspicious about like, me calling in sick or taking time off. It's like, no, I really need time off. Like, I just had COVID. Like, I just tested positive, I need to chill out. So, like, I ended up going to HR after the weird schedule stuff went on for like five months. And I was like, listen, I really like to do my job, but I would like to have a dayside schedule, and I also had other businesses like other PR jobs reaching out to me and like other people I knew outside of news that knew that I was not happy at work. They're like, how can we snap her up? And so like, I told the HR person that and like a couple months later, they put me back on my dayside schedule, but we were becoming more and more short staffed because as people's contracts were coming to an end, they were not getting people in those spots. So, we ended up doing like, a package and two VOSOTs a day and having a deadline before like a 4 p.m. show to get everything in, and I'm just like, this is not fun. This is impossible, like why aren't they rehiring people? And I was posting in groups like MMJane and stuff, telling people that we had openings, but like, that only goes so far when you get people in for an interview, and then they're low balled for like 35 grand a year or something. You know, so that wasn't fair. And I feel like I tried to work with them for as long as possible, and then I was I was actively applying to other PR jobs because I saw the salary ranges, and I was like, this looks awesome. I'm pretty sick of living off my credit cards. I went into pretty substantial credit card debt just in the process of moving because they only offered like \$1,000 for moving expenses. So, like, there was, you know, I felt like I was constantly playing catch up and just like living paycheck to paycheck, and then the stress of the job and the scheduling stuff. And like, them being a little too, micromanaging my time off. I was like, I don't want to work here anymore. So, I got a really great PR opportunity with the agency that I'm at now. And they did one Zoom interview with me for a position they had open, and they were like, we're going to be honest, we're really impressed. We want to create a new position for you. So significant pay bump there – like great benefits. All my insurance is paid for like, I get mileage and gas reimbursement. My office is like two blocks down from me. And we get to obviously, like work hybrid. So, if I ever want to just stay home or I work hybrid, I work from home, like every Wednesday, but we can work elsewhere whenever. Like my manager's awesome. It's just the culture is so much better, but I think like the kicker for me, too, is after I was already actively applying, like, there would just be breaking news stories that happened and like no part of my soul had that ambition or that drive to like go get the story anymore. I was just like, they can wait for the night side person. Like I'm not doing this, and once I knew I didn't care, I knew like, it was time to move on, at least for now.

KW:

So, based off of everything that you've experienced during your time, was there like a pivotal moment or seminal moment that you knew you were ready to be done? Like, was it the threats that you got? Or like, just, do you remember when you were like, I'm so done, I need to leave? Was there a specific moment or do you think it was just overall what you experienced?

CC:

I mean, I think it was pent up. I think that it was also like I put in, so this would have been around like, November – last November, I put in PTO to go to [a place] for like, four days because my friend from high school – was her wedding. And so like, her wedding wasn't until May, and I put in for it that November. So, like I thought, plenty of time, and my assistant news director was like, asking me what the PTO was for. And I said, well, I have a friend who's getting married. And she's like, well, you know, we'll see what we can do. But we are, you know, we're not going to be hiring anybody until June, and I'm like, you're not hiring till June, like it's November and you told me that I wouldn't be on this crazy schedule for long. So, like her telling me that and then basically telling me, you know, I can put in for time off six months ahead of time and might not happen. It's like, it's just – that wasn't the work environment I wanted. So, like, it wasn't really, one day or one thing, I think it was just what built up over time of like, I think there's good newsrooms and bad newsrooms. And I think, especially for MMJs, where there's so much pressure put on you to do everything, and the benefits just aren't worth it. Like, it was pretty soul crushing because I felt such a calling to this profession, and I felt like everything in my life had prepared me for it and like I was where I was meant to be. And then, you know, I just I got bitter, and I hated being bitter. And like, I hated how we would get off work and hang out with the other reporters – all we did was bitch about work... I had second thoughts up until I put my resignation letter in it as far as like, oh, my God, can I really do this PR job? Like, am I going to miss news so much? But like, after, like, I talked to a therapist, too and she was just like, okay, well, let's go over all this happened to you... because I started going to therapy because of the job and because of those things that happened. And so like, when I wrote my resignation letter, I wasn't completely lying. When I said, I'm doing this for my mental health, and I just need a break. It was a lot.

KW:

When you switched to PR, did you wait to make sure that you got your offer from the agency you're at now before you put in your resignation letter? Or how did your process of your decision to leave and get another job, how did that go?

CC:

Yeah, so, I had an interview with the PR agency, and they basically said, hey, we're creating this new position, come into the office, we'll show you around and talk more about specifics and benefits, and you can email us and everything. So that lasted, like about a week, and I officially took the job. And then the following Tuesday, I put in my resignation letter, and I walked into my assistant news director's office because our news director was like, never around who's very – and she was more of our go to person. So, I just walked into her office, and I was like, hey, I just want to let you know, I'm putting in my two weeks, like, my last day is going to be it was like, March 31, because I started my new job April 1, and I was like, you know, I'm putting in my two weeks' notice that I'm done, and she tried to get me to stay at the station. And she was like, well, does [her news director] know about this, and he was my news director. I was like, he's never around, so I'm just going to email him, and I'm like, I'll fulfill my duties and do my best to help you find a replacement as I have these past six months... the opportunity, but I have other obligations to my mental health and other opportunities available. So, did that, sent the

resignation letter, and then they wanted like my full buyout for me, which would have been close to \$8,000. And like, I was expecting that, and since I was leaving the industry, but I was still staying in the same city, and working with reporters first I did want to end on a more cordial note with them. Like I didn't have bad blood because I had nothing really against one person, it was more like against the system, you know, like, it was not one person's fault. So, um, I actually called that attorney that is talked about so much, and I just asked about my options, because I was like, I would really like to negotiate this down. I mean, I can't really afford to pay them anything. But yeah, you know, I'll figure it out. So, I was able to negotiate it down to like \$2,500, which was like, I mean, it was a lot... But once I got paid on my new job, doable. So, you know, I was able to, to negotiate that down and sign the final paperwork on my last day. And I mean, my news director, like, brought in cupcakes and stuff because it was my last day and another reporter's last day, who was also leaving the business. So, they lost like two people within a month, and we both went to PR so and the other guy had actually been there for like, he was in his 50s. Like, he'd been there for a long time, but I think you saw the writing on the wall, too. So yeah, that was, but like, I was just so I remember being so nervous and uptight, talking to like, my boyfriend and my friends and my therapist. And talking about like, the buyout situation, what if they don't let me out of the buyout, like, I can't afford this. And my boyfriend was just like, well, I think you really have to decide how much you want to leave this job. And like, if you can stick it out for one more year because I really debated doing it, but, when I came to like my new PR office, and they showed me, I work in a very creative office space. And I mean, my boss is so caring, the benefits are so good. I mean, it's great. Like, I know that I made the best decision for my career and for my mental health, but that was kind of the kicker. It was like, wow, the environment is so different here, but like, I am not going to have this constant anxiety hanging over me. I'm not going to be sent to like, shootings at one in the morning. You know, scared for my life. Like, I'm not going to have stalkers, hopefully, anymore. So that brought me a lot of like calm, and just talking about it since then. And honestly, like meeting other people through the TV to PR group has provided support, and I've gone to a couple PR conferences also, like since I started working in my new career, and there's so many former TV people in PR. I mean, so many.

KW:

There's still there's like, not a whole lot of research on this – like this huge switch. But it's so common. And actually, one of my reporter friends sent me the TV to PR group after I had already decided this is what I wanted to do for my research. And I'm like, alright, like that group has like almost four-point-five-thousand people in it.

CC:

Yeah, I mean, I think I found out about that group, like, one year into my first contract because I was just online looking for other like, MMJane groups and TV groups and found that and I was like, oh, what's this? And when people were always posting about their success stories, it was like, okay, I'm not the only one kind of feeling the burnout here and there are other steps to take. So yeah, I totally applaud it. I think it's such an amazing resource. And you know, it goes back to people like you who are now doing this and seeing the mass exodus that I do.

KW:

Based off of all the research I've done already, there's like, a common denominator of like 10+ factors of why people leave. So, I'm just going to go through the list and if you have any comments on any of them... I'm just going to read them off and if you want to let me know if these affected your decision to leave... So, the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry. So, like how fast the industry is changing with the emphasis on social media – I know we're probably used to social media, but do you think the fast pace and the fast changes affected your decision to leave it all or no?

CC:

No, but I think it definitely affected the way management approach their employees, therefore, how I felt in the newsroom, and just that pressure on the job was enhanced because of how much things have changed due to technology.

KW:

The next one is job satisfaction. So did your job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction? How much of that contributed to your decision to leave?

CC:

Oh, like, almost 100 percent.

KW:

The next one is burnout/mental health pressures. So how does that contribute to your decision to leave, I know you've kind of talked about that already?

CC:

Again, yeah, definitely.

KW:

The next one is sexism/discrimination. Did you think you experienced any of that during your time in the industry or no?

CC:

Sex discrimination?

KW:

Sexism or gender discrimination.

CC:

Yeah.

KW:

Did you feel that through, like viewers or management, or where did you think that was coming from?

CC:

Probably both. My first news director was an older woman who'd been in the business a long time, but I think she was like, she would comment about like I had posted an Instagram, and it was like me in a one-piece bathing suit on the Fourth of July with my family. And she said that, like, if I was at another station, I could get fired for that, that that was like, inappropriate. And if I'm going to represent the company at all, I can't have that stuff on my Instagram. And so, I just, like, switched my Instagram at the time to like, private or took [news station] stuff off of it, because I was like, my mom took this picture. Like, this is not inappropriate, and then, I think it was also like, I mean, definitely, from viewers like emailing me about what I was wearing, or like, how much makeup I had on — it just kind of added to that pressure of like, okay, I know, they're not saying this to like, the male reporters. Just that social media expectation too, like getting weird, gross messages from guys all the time, like middle-aged men was just really, yeah, it was kind of it was unsettling. Like, you can brush it off. But then when it's constant, it's like, this is gross.

KW:

The next one is work-life balance, did that contribute to your decision to leave?

CC:

For sure.

KW:

The next one is difficult stories. So, did you feel like covering crime covering, you know, officers getting shot in the line of duty, did that affect your decision to want to leave the industry?

CC:

Not exactly. Just because I'm the type of person who – I really liked hard news and investigative news. And like, pursuing those things, I think it was that I was not set up for success in a lot of those situations where like, we would have all this stuff going on, and they want me to be at like two places at once and I'm one person. If I had a photographer, so we could kind of lean on each other in those situations and like, look out for each other and literally watch each other's back while I was going live, I would not have been as like nervous or anxious or felt as vulnerable when we were bringing that stuff.

KW:

So, the next one was actually shortage of resources, which mean like I have staff, such as camera people and editors. So, do you think if there would have been not a shortage of, you know, staff, do you think that would have helped you?

CC:

Oh, yeah, I mean, when I was hired, like I was the third MMJ hired, but they had a rule that even if we did have photographers that like, were at the station, and they were just kind of sitting around not doing anything like MMJs were supposed to MMJ like that was [the station's] philosophy is that if you were hired as an MMJ, then you needed to

perform that level of work, and so, not just the resources, but like the way they were distributed to almost make MMJs feel like we don't deserve to have another person with us. And then on top of it, like, I mean, they're just not hiring photographers anymore, but yeah, I mean, I think honestly, like looking back on it, I think, if I had always worked with a photographer, I probably would have been a lifer. Like, had I not experienced the burnout I did from being a one-man band, and going through what I went through, like, because when I got to work with a photographer, I just noticed how much easier it was to ask better questions during interviews to like, make mental notes of how I wanted to tell the story. Yeah, I mean, it would have been so much more helpful.

KW:

My next one was unethical practices. So, did you feel like anything from management or higher ups that you felt like they were being making you do unethical things at all during your career or was that not so much the case?

CC:

Yes. Yeah.

KW:

And was that like, it would have been through like stories where they tried to do stories that you weren't comfortable with? Or how did you feel that it didn't line up with your values?

CC:

There are like two instances I can think of. The main one was like, so now we see more new stations, adding more newscasts that aren't really newscasts, they're more like talk shows so they can get more sponsors on. And like, towards the later half of my career, I definitely saw more of a push to like, we're doing a story about the automobile industry, oh, well, we need to talk to [an] automotive, because they're doing ads, or they're doing this and like, there was more of a push to just talk to those people, and there was also a situation during a local election where this was not my story, but I felt like it was not managed well, where another reporter who'd actually been in the business for like 20 years went with her photographer. And there were people standing outside an election office, like waiting to vote like it was Election Day. And one of the candidates had just been revealed by our local newspaper that they had actually committed murder, like back when they were a teenager, but I can say, personally, that I know she was bias against this particular candidate, went to those people on Election Day standing in line and started showing them the article and getting their reaction on camera. And ethically, she influenced an election, because these people were not aware that or, maybe they were aware, that that council member had done what he did, but not supposed to do that. You can't actively influence an election one way or the other... Her package aired, and the news director saw it, and we got like a blast email that was like do not show [the reporter's] story anymore. Do not put it online – don't show it anywhere. And the station ended up in a lawsuit because that candidate sued them. And he was like, I might have won this election if it were not for the reporting, and like actively going up to voters and doing this. So, in part, and I mean, the news director must have known because she must

have pitched it. So yeah, I mean, and everything was done basically to like, cover up. I mean, we were just told like not to talk about it. And as a journalist, when you're told not to talk about something you're like?

KW:

The next one is compensation. So how much of a factor did you think if you weren't getting fairly compensated? How did that affect your decision to leave?

CC:

Significantly.

KW:

The next one is management issues – sounds like you had management issues, especially with PTO.

CC:

Had management issues.

KW:

So overall, considering all of the factors, which were the most important in your decision to leave TV news?

CC:

I mean, it probably just came down to I would say it probably came down to like, management practices and job resources. I mean, having much more compensation now in PR, I can say that it's really nice, and like, I know that I was luckier than most people to not graduate with any debt. So, like, I mean, I could put those things on credit cards. And I'm actually like, I'm still paying off loans now to pay off credit cards that I had to put money on. Like, compensation was a big part, but it was probably like, just management and like the system itself. I know that if I worked with a photographer, like, I would have stayed longer. And like the compensation would have been a little more fair because I would have been doing a lot less work.

KW:

With those factors, do you think being a woman and like your gender as a woman – do you think that affected – like, do you think that interacted at all?

CC:

Yeah, just because I feel like, you know, as women like, that added layer of scrutiny that we get from viewers and management is one thing. And then compensation. I mean, like, I knew, like my last news director was pretty sexist, would say, like, snide comments that you couldn't really prove. I knew that there were producers that had less experience than female producers, yet they were making like five grand more for no reason, like, straight out of college. Um, and I think women are also like, in an environment where you have to negotiate your worth at work, women are not taught to negotiate. And I probably could have negotiated higher and negotiated like, full comp, like other stuff, like gotten more

PTO or gotten something, had I known that was an option. And when I took my first job, like, I made 29 grand a year and got, like, five days off a year, and I had to earn them like month by month, so I didn't take a day off for like six months. And I think like, I think a lot of it does play into being a woman because like, when you're a woman and you want to be – I think women are the best at this job because we can naturally talk to more people and be more of like a people person we can talk to like, just be a little bit more extroverted naturally and that skill is not enterprised properly. And then like, even morning reporting – the morning show is tough, like you are putting a lot on your body to wake up that early. But if you look at most morning shows, it's mostly women. So, like, they have this terrible schedule, and yet they're doing the most active, imaginative, live shots, or they're covering the latest breaking news, like, it is such a tough schedule. And then they get stuck in like the morning reporter phase. So, if they try and go to a different market, it's really hard to break into a different shift because people just see you as a fluffy morning reporter. So, like, you're not getting compensated properly, your schedule sucks. And they make you think, oh, well, you're lucky to be here and all the viewers love you because you're such a pretty girl. And like, they wouldn't do that for men. If a man was like, actually, I want to do investigative reporting now, and this is what I want to do. They'd be like, oh, good for you. But, as a woman, me and my friends have experienced like, but you're so good on the morning show and the viewers love you and blah, blah. Like you're not taking us seriously.

KW:

Just what seemed attracted to you about PR and why you thought that would be the way to go?

CC:

Yeah, I think it was my job in particular, because I wasn't totally sold on just doing PR. I was looking at law offices to because I have my paralegal certificate. So, I was like, there are other things I could do, but I definitely still wanted to be a storyteller. And, I got, you know, when they created this new position for me at my current job, they were like, well, we want to start a podcast, and we want you to host it and like you can write our blogs and do this and like, it was still – I'm still doing a lot of the same things I used to do in news, I'm just doing it on a better schedule, and I talk to people in news all the time. I'm our Media Relations Director also. So, you know, I go to all the same events and ribbon cuttings and stuff. I'm just on the other side of it. Yeah, I mean, you know, I'm interviewing some Olympians that we work with for one of our clients does this like, Olympic training program like for people who want to be Olympic cyclists... I've gotten to interview them, and then write op eds and do like paid media, which I really didn't know a whole lot about when I was in journalism. But like, I'm still writing articles, and then they're getting syndicated all across the country. And I'm doing that on the PR side, because we want to get PR for our clients. But there's still so much storytelling involved, and I think really left for the right opportunity. I don't think if this opportunity had presented itself, I would have left. I think I really left for this job because I saw how happy I could be.

KW:

So okay, reflecting on your last job in TV news, how does your new role compare to your TV news roles?

CC:

Well, as you can see, I'm like not wearing any makeup today, and I don't have like my hair done really... For one, I'm spending so much less money on like upkeep just for my job because if I ever want or need any type of equipment or anything at work, like I have a work credit card when we travel, and I want to book a hotel, like, I don't have to even ask to book a hotel, or to like, order lunch on my card or dinner. Like when we're traveling for work, everything goes on that card, gas, whatever. And like financially coming from being a journalist where you are just expected to do anything and everything to get this story and like, maybe you'll be reimbursed for it later or you won't. Financially I'm just in such better shape, and like I'm paying off loans on time, but I'm also investing and saving money, like being in that space is so much less stressful. And then you know, I work nine to five, sometimes just like nine to three I mean, we kind of especially working hybrid, like you do what you need to get done and then your time is yours. Like I don't spend it in news, I would spend my off time still scrolling through my phone constantly trying to find stories.

KW:

It's like a constant feeling that you need to be, you know, doing your job.

CC:

I was just I mean, you have to be keeping up with world news. And like, I would wake up every morning at five in the morning, go to the gym and watch like all of the news, televisions, and scroll through my phone and be like, okay, how can I localize this? What can I do for my story today? Um, and like, and I loved it because I enjoy working, but now I can enjoy working while I'm working and then enjoy my time off because that time is mine.

KW:

You don't have to be scrolling through your phone looking for the world news. You know, you're done. And you can compartmentalize that until, you know, tomorrow. So okay, my last question about PR... do you still think you carry this sort of journalistic self-concept with you? And if so, how does that affect your work?

CC:

Yeah, I think that I did totally go through like an identity crisis when I left. Yeah, I just felt in my soul like that I was a journalist and like, I am this TV personality and blah, blah, blah. And like, I'm still kind of breaking down those barriers as far as like talking to people in a more corporate setting and not being so like, I don't want to say desperate, but being on my deadline... what was the question?

KW:

I was just wondering if your journalism experience and that identity you have with you as a journalist if that...

CC:

I know, I know. It has helped a lot because I'm the people that used to be my coworkers and other news reporters in my market, they love that I am in PR now because I get it and like... I can get them what they need. I can communicate better with my clients and tell them okay, when you're doing an interview, just chop it down...

KW:

And you know what they're looking, you know, what journalists are looking for. And so that totally helps, I'm sure. Okay, my last question is what changes would your former employer would have had to make for you to stay? What industry changes do you suggest that the industry to make in order to keep more women? Sorry, that was kind of a double-edged question, but changes employers would have had to make to keep you and then overall advice, like changes that need to be made to keep more women in the future?

CC:

To keep me, like I said earlier, I think that if I was never an MMJ, if I worked with a photographer, and like, occasionally I could have MMJ'd, but if I wasn't like, if my work was not exploited to the extent that it was, I would not have gotten burnout. And I think if I worked as like a two-person duo, like news has been for decades, I would've stayed in the industry, and I know other women would have stayed in the industry. I know other men would have stayed in the industry. And, like, I also have to say that knowing what I know now, from a PR standpoint, we do a lot of digital marketing. And so, I know that like, more eyeballs are online than they are on TV now. And so, I can't help but feel like TV news... the newscast as we know, it's not what it was when we were kids, and the industry will continue to change. And they'll probably just have to pivot more and more to online and independent journalism, and freelancers are great for that because they can be on scene and just, you know, put it whatever, they record on their phone directly online. So, I think it's going to switch more to that. But I think yeah, just have just get rid of MMJs when you're working in a news environment, like you are because for broadcast, it just doesn't work. The quality has declined so much and too many people are getting burnout. And we're seeing all the MMJs that were hired around the same time as me leaving – they don't get to a bigger market where they have those resources, and sometimes even when they do that, it's like, oh, well, you'd have to do two or three packages a day.

IV. Daphne D., director of communications and outreach

KW:

What attracted you to a career in TV news?

DD:

There was no like given moment where I remember saying I wanted to go into TV news. I have videotapes of me as a small child interviewing my grandparents. And I can pretty much say from like eighth grade on, I was one of the kids that knew exactly where they were going to school and what I was doing so, you know, I don't even think I ever really considered anything else. It was just always news.

KW:

So, my next question is how overall, what was your journalism experience like? And how did your experience factor into your decision to leave?

DD:

I graduated college in like August. I graduated early. I graduated in three years instead of four from college, and then I got a job pretty quickly after – I think there was like a three- or four-month lag. So, I moved in December, and I can tell you there it was, sink or swim. Like there is no training, any TV station that you go to. So, I remember feeling extremely lost. And I had gone to a really good broadcast school, one that I had practicums, and we were very hands on, and we did the news station, just like you did. Yeah, I still very much had felt like I had no idea what I was doing. There was no growing into that position. It was just you're here – now go do it. And then when I got to [city], you know, I felt a little more prepared. At that point, though, it was a team – I wasn't an MMJ anymore. So, you know, there were growing pains there but easier. And then when I got to [city], my experience gosh you know, my, I don't want to say disappointment. I don't really know what the word was. But in [city], I felt I was kind of a jane of all trades. I was hired as a reporter in weather anchor about a year, and I was promoted a weekend anchor. So, then, I was doing all of those things. And then they kind of changed my shift a little bit so I was helping produce and it was like what am I not doing for you guys? And yet, I was still never included in a promo. And that at that time, I was like, you know what – stop being so high maintenance. Like who cares if you're in a promo, it's fine, whatever. So, then I wanted to get closer to home and so, I moved to [city] as the breaking news anchor. It was basically morning reporter position but without going into the field, which I hate cold weather, so great. And I was still like I was still nominated as an anchor for Emmys. So, and then in [city], about a year and a half in, promoted a morning news anchor and still wasn't in promos – like what is going on? And it shouldn't even be a big deal, but there was so much that happened in Indianapolis like, I mean, it would take us forever to talk about that station and what happened to me. But, I mean, I can pretty much tell you that I was accused of harassment. I was accused of going through people's emails, even though there was. I mean, who does that, like, I'm going to sit in the middle of a newsroom and go through my co-anchors' emails? It's a federal crime. Then I was bullied by our meteorologists, and she finally got fired. Then, it was just so much turnover, and in the last kind of leg, so that would have been 2021 on

our ratings, because we finally kind of had like a permanent team. So, we finally had like a permanent team, and things are feeling good... and I was at a duopoly, but on the on the small side of things. So, there's always like that number one money grabber, and I was on the other side, so that we never got any attention on that side. But our ratings, I mean, we were doing great. I mean, our ratings grew 110 percent – like, fantastic – still no promos. I was the investigative reporter – the only one for our station, still no promos. Then, we hire a chief investigative reporter, and he's making three times the amount that I am... I'm not one to tout myself, but at some point, it's just like, what am I doing? ... It just came down to me not feeling valued. I mean, when I left, that's what I told everybody. It's like, I have to go somewhere where I feel valued. And I mean, my coworkers were mostly great. They all saw how hard everyone worked, but my news director refused to see it. And the straw on the camel's back was, we had had evaluations this year, it was spring, it was like May. And you know, during COVID, I had started coming in early because we had producers working from home and again, turnover, I mean, literally a new producer, what felt like every month and no executive producer. So, someone had to step into that position, so I did it. I mean, I was the most senior person on the morning team. Sure. So, I was in there producing, helping write. You know, turning investigative content once a week while anchoring. And I'm not talking little projects like these are, these are big stories. And my coworker, we were all really close, and in passing, I was like, well, how'd you guys' evaluations go? And they were like, Oh, great. You know, they love they love what we're doing couldn't be better. Ratings are great. I went in there. And this sounds stupid now, but I had met expectations. And in my, in my review, it's like you don't get along with your coworkers. And like, if you don't, if someone tells you that you're like, okay, what's the real story? But I mean, it was just the most atrocious thing I've ever heard to the point where we had a follow up meeting and every line, I'm like, Where's the proof? Where's the proof? I have people lined up ready to come in here and tell you, and we went in circles. I mean, it recorded the whole conversation. It was ridiculous. So that was my wake-up call... and my co-anchor, which again, it was a team effort to get those ratings up. They promoted him to evening anchor on the other stations. So, the duopoly – he went to the other side. And at that point, he got a \$50,000 raise, and they had told everybody else, including me, that they don't have the money. Okay. And nothing against him – like I'm happy for him as a friend. But I know I did more work than you did.

KW:

Based off all of that, was there a specific moment where you were like, alright, I'm out; I'm done, or was it kind of more like a buildup of everything happening, or what's your perspective on that?

DD:

I feel like it was a very slow build up throughout the years in [city]. And then that meeting really kind of did me in, and that's when I started applying for jobs. And I had some interest from a new station, but it was for a chief investigative position, not an anchor position. And I had applied for an anchor position and wasn't hearing back. And so again, kind of a wakeup call of like, maybe, maybe that's just not going to happen, you know? So, I started applying for jobs while I was at work, of course, because when else

am I going to do it? And I remember this position, I remember thinking, like, that's not going to be anything, but why not? What's the harm? And then here I am.

KW:

Did you accept your current your job offer and then put in your resignation notice for your TV news job?

DD:

Yep.

KW:

There's a bunch of reasons why people leave, but there's like a common 10+ across all the research I've done. So, I'm just going to go through each factor one by one. And if you have any input to say, and how that affected your decision to leave, feel free to add to it. Okay, so one of the reasons why people leave the industry is because of the rapid changes in the TV news industry... did that affect your decision at all to leave?

DD:

No, I would say no.

KW:

Okay, what about job satisfaction? Did that affect your decision to leave TV news?

DD:

Yes. Summarized? Yes.

KW:

What about burnout and mental health pressures?

DD:

Yes.

KW:

Okay, and do you think that was kind of a result of like, scheduling/the stories you were doing? Or where do you think a lot of that derived from?

DD:

You know, I really liked my hours. I was morning, so I went in at like two o'clock in the morning, and everyone's like, oh, those are horrible hours, but I love them. So, my burnout came from just like, turning out stories and, and watching other people, you know, I'm doing the job of two or three people and then other folks are just going in and reading words and going home. So, that gets exhausting, and then yeah, like the stories every day, it was sad, bad news. And I would ask, like, every day, we had a shooting, I mean, that's not breaking news anymore. Let's not put it at the top of the show. It's okay, and they just refused. And it wasn't actually until I was at the very, very end that I was like, wow, this really is weighing on me because when you're in that moment, the

adrenaline is pushing, and I don't really think about it. But then, yeah, afterwards, just I don't know how we did it.

KW:

Circling back to when you were applying for jobs. How long were you applying before you accepted your current position right now?

DD:

Not long – maybe two months if that.

KW:

Whenever you put your resignation in, did you have any issues with buyout or anything? How did that go?

DD:

That's a question mark. So, when I went to leave in my head, I was like, I'm just going to pay it because I don't want to have this looming. I resigned on Monday, and the Saturday prior, we were at Emmys, and my news director was there, and he didn't even say hi to me. Now, he didn't know that I was going to resign. But like, if you're not even going to acknowledge that I'm there. Why would I? So, I turned my resignation letter in on that Monday, and the first thing he said to me was, well, you owe us money. And I said, I know that's addressed because I had asked per my agent, I had asked if I stayed longer, would they reduce my buyout? And they said no. And so, it was kind of up to me and, at that point, it was only like three weeks, and I had stories that I had already shot and I'm like, oh, I want to get them on air. Plus, I have a family of four. Like I can't really afford to just take time off. I could swing it, but I don't really want to do that. So, I just ended up staying, and I have not paid, and nobody has said anything.

KW:

Did you face any sexism or gender discrimination during your time in TV news?

DD:

I would say yes.

KW:

And what that from viewers? Management? Where?

DD:

Never viewers – it was all management.

KW:

And was that through like, clothing? Like was it through like the clothes you would wear or just from, you know, not getting valued or compensated with raise or pay? What like, what do you think that was?

DD:

I don't really think anyone ever said anything about my clothes. What's interesting and, in [city], I feel like I got more commentary about my clothes or hair from my female news director. And then when I got to [next city], that kind of, yeah, it kind of switched. Like, I remember a time being told we weren't allowed to do cold shoulder. But, you know, I just, I was just a yes person, like, whatever, I don't care. But as far as [city] goes, it was all management, and it was all just not being compensated and the amount of work that was expected and what I just described to you of just unfair treatment.

KW:

The next one is work-life balance. Did the work-life balance affect your decision to leave at all?

DD:

No.

KW:

What about quality of news standards?

DD:

Yeah, I mean, I think. I don't want to say the number of people because we were always just so low anyways. But like, we were hiring straight out of college, and those people didn't really, they weren't trained, and they didn't really want to be trained. So, then it's almost like, to me, it's coming off as laziness. I tried so hard to be like, what do you think about this... But there are just people out there that really don't know, really just don't want to hear what you have to say – no matter how long you've been there.

KW:

This one's shortage of resources – so again, that goes back to like staff and also like travel budgets and stuff. Do you think you had enough resources when you were working as a news reporter and anchor?

DD:

No, no. Cameras broke; they wouldn't be replaced. Cars would break – wouldn't be replaced. There was never opportunity for professional development. They would never pay for you to go to a conference.

KW:

So, did you ever have any health issues that came up while you're a reporter, whether that be maternity leave, or anything that affected your decision to leave?

DD:

It's somewhere in between... I never really thought about that when I left. When I was pregnant with my second child, we were in the middle of COVID, and my news station was one of those ones who kind of had people working from home, but for very short periods of time, and none of the main talent, so none of our anchors, none of our meteorologists, were allowed to work from home. So, that kind of sucked. I mean, I

brought in a doctor's note, and while you're even though, you're telling me that, yeah, anchor the show, and then you can go and work the rest from home. You're still expecting me to do one investigative report a week, and I can't do that from home. So, I still was out very much in public. And then my, toward the end, I was on anxiety medications.

KW:

My next one is unethical practices. Do you ever feel like pressure from management to do anything unethical?

DD:

I remember moments that I'm just that I remember being like, wait, what? But I can't tell you what they were off the top of my head.

KW:

Okay, then the next one is compensation. So how much do you think salary, getting raises or not getting raises and financial stability? How much did that factor into your decision to leave?

DD:

On a scale from like, one to 10? I would say, seven – seven being somewhat high, I guess. Because in my head, it was like, I knew if I stayed at that station, I was not going to get much more, even if they resign, and there's no guarantee of that.

KW:

How much of a factor would you say management issues were in your decision to leave?

DD:

That was the biggest factor.

KW:

So overall, what would you say were the most important factors in your decision to leave just meant?

DD:

I would say management, the pay – those were the two biggest.

KW:

Do you think your gender as a woman affected any of those factors in your decision to leave?

DD:

Yeah... because, I mean, I know I'm kind of pigeon-holing [city] like, I don't know, if my other markets would have contributed to that. But in [city] like, there was a running joke of just how sexist that newsroom was, or that news director was.

KW:

In your job now, what about your current role seem attractive to you?

DD:

Like when I applied or when I accepted?

KW:

Yes, like when you applied, like when you were you're applying for jobs, or when you were still in your TV news role. What factors were you like, okay, this can be better, this is probably going to be better for me and TV news?

DD:

So, the only place that I looked was [city], because that's where I'm from, and there was no reason for us to stay in [city] if I wasn't in news. So, I was only looking in [city]. I never saw myself working for a [type of organization]. I applied, though, to a few. I was more looking for like, like police agencies. I interviewed with a mayor's office, and then I think what attracted me to this, I remember I remember exactly where I was when I applied for it, and I remember writing a cover letter. And even at that time, I didn't really quite understand what the agency did, but I knew it was it helped people. I know that seems so like cliché, but that's why that's why I got into news was to help people right and yeah, totally. So that kind of carried on with my values. I guess.

KW:

Okay, so reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your past role compare to your current one?

DD:

180 – Yes. I have a female CEO. She's so well respected for good reason here. The first time I talked to her, there were there were actually a couple of things. Let me back up for a second. The second interview I had, one of the people there was, it was like a three-round process. And in the second interview, someone said, fill in the blanks for me... I'm at my worst when, and I'm at my best when, and I answered like that. And it was, I'm at my worst when I don't feel valued, and I'm at my best when I'm passionate about something. And like I couldn't describe how that relates into this position better, because so then I get into the third interview, and the CEO, one of the first things she said is, I believe in transparency and honesty, and if I don't know the answer to something I'm going to tell you, and she says that very often. And so, I appreciate that, because it's so different than where I came from. She's constantly, you know, asking like what we can do to help. As far as pay goes, I mean, I got a \$20,000 raise coming here, which is unheard of for [type of organization] ... And then, of course, you know, time off. So, I started with four weeks' vacation, work from home flexibility. Obviously, holidays off, which is not the case in news. They offered me a number, and I said, well, I have another offer. Right away, she was like yeah, we can do that.

KW:

So, would you say that your work culture where you're at now is better?

DD:

Oh, yeah – better.

KW:

Do you still think you kind of carry a sense of like a journalistic like, identity with you? And if so, how does that affect your job?

DD:

That's an interesting question because I'm still very much a storyteller, and I think that's why I got hired because at the end of the day, you know, we, it's about our clientele, like we need to be telling their stories and our stories of what we're about. So, I still, and I had done a few interviews before I left [city], and I think I said, I'll always be a journalist. And I do think that rings true. Like, someone just told me, I do these short little videos, you know, for social or whatever, and someone was like you all your videos look like you came from news, but at the same time, I'm trying to not be so newsy. I don't know. Like we I just had a meeting about advertising. I'm like, well, we should do advertising on the news, and I don't want to keep being that person. I'm just like, the news, you know, and I have to remember there's other mediums out there other than broadcast... We've been on the news from what I've been told more in the last like seven weeks since I've been here than we have in a very long time, and that's because I know what they're looking for and when I'm sending press releases out, I'm thinking in my head well Sunday night no one is going to be there, and Friday it's going to get buried, so I'll do it first thing Monday morning, but I have to give them enough time to plan. And then you know, spoon feeding because I know everyone's short staffed – spoon feeding them stories. So, I'm not going to make them ask me for the real person to talk to. I'm just going to tell them I have a real person for you to talk to.

KW:

What changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you?

DD:

Under the same news director, a lot – more money, more investment, more understanding that employees are humans first – that they have families.... Internal promotion, even though that didn't really apply to me, per se... it sucks watching your coworkers and friends get passed up on jobs when they deserve that. And then, but if they were to just switch news directors, I do question if everything would change.

KW:

What do you think TV news has to make in order to keep more women in the future?

DD:

I wouldn't even I wouldn't even say accommodating, I would just say, and I keep coming back to that word value and investment. Because if you look at the news industry as a whole, I feel like so many stations favor men, because there are so few. And so, they are constantly looking for male reporters or male anchors, and there's just so many women –

it's a very female saturated industry, and I get that. However, they're obviously the ones who are doing the work. So, and then there's just so many expectations of a female overall... if they're a mom, they have a ton of expectations. If they're a wife, they have a ton of expectations, and then you expect them to be looking for stories and doing stories on their own time. How?

KW:

Okay, I think that's really all I haven't get unless you have anything else to add?

DD:

You know, I do think more things like this – more conversations like this – need to be had because so many people, especially women, are being either forced out or they feel like they're being forced out of the industry, but then also being forced to shut up about it. Because we have looming buyouts, and we're scared to say anything or, you know, the broadcast world is so small, you don't want to burn bridges, but it's not fair.

V. Elena E., marketing and communications manager

KW:

Okay, so my very first question is, is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

EE:

Yeah, so I always was, I think public speaking and writing were always strong parts of my academic experience, and I also did a lot of theater. And you know, when I was in high school, I'm like, oh, I want to be an actress. I remember one of my professors or my teachers in high school saying, why don't you look at television journalism, like, it's a nice little, you know, and so that's what I did. And so, I mean, I knew from a very, I would say, a very young age that that is what I wanted to do.

KW:

So, based on your passion for that, how overall, what was your journalism experience like? And how did that factor into your decision to leave?

EE:

I delayed leaving because of that... but yeah, I think it became such a part of my identity. And it was like, that was what I was always going to do. Right? Like, that is what I was. And I did. And I remember going to my, my 10-year high school reunion a couple years ago, and people being like, oh, wow, like, you actually did what you always said you were going to do you're like the only one you know. And like, that's, there's a feeling of like, a sense of, like, obligation, I think. And if I think that that probably delayed my leaving the industry for quite a bit longer than if I had considered all the other factors.

KW:

So, based off of that, how do you think your perception of your role in TV news changed over time? Like, were you really excited at the beginning, and it just started to go downhill or just kind of happened to think your perception shifted a little bit if it did?

EE:

Yeah, I was super excited in the beginning. And I think that that continued, because I quickly took a promotion like a year in and then, and then things just, there were a few things that happened over the course of – I was there for about 10 years, actually. So, there were several certain things that happened that just – I realized it wasn't so glamorous first of all. I realized, well, I knew it wasn't a good work environment, either. I don't think I really realized that though, till later, when I work now with a wonderful boss, and so like, I think it was just kind of a gradual, like, oh, this isn't what I thought it would be, but it took me a while to come to that and to accept that I think, too.

KW:

So, were there any like specific moments or seminal moments were that like, solidified your decision to want to leave or was it more of a gradual process?

EE:

I think it's an important piece of it... I saw my best friend leave and she took a job... So, she had been doing, I was an anchor, she was a reporter and a fill in anchor. So, she'd been doing stories at [workplace] forever and ever. And she made some good connections. And they have like an internal news network that produces content that TV stations then use, and she ended up getting this wonderful job as a reporter for [organization]. And we were roommates at the time. And I saw her just I mean, she like tripled her salary and just like she had a normal schedule, and she was so much happier and all of that. So, like, I started, like, casually looking right, like not super serious. Because at the same time, I had just taken another promotion at work. My newscast that I anchored was expanded to an hour because it was doing so well. I was fortunate to actually finally have like, a normal-ish schedule. So, I did a little like feature [reporting], and then I would anchor our hour long, four o'clock, and then our five o'clock news. So, I was done by six, you know? So, like for news, I mean, they were long days, but like I still for the most part, and I had to fill in sometimes, but like nothing too, too major. And so, things were going fairly well. I was getting paid crap, and the city we live in is very expensive... I was like this is probably not sustainable forever. So then, there was a situation so I, my co-anchor was I'm going to just make this a little shorter than it is, but my coworker was a long time – she was like the assistant news director as well and had been there for 20 years. We were friends, but she screwed me over constantly with scheduling like it was so bad like I was out after eight years there, I was still working all the holidays while other new people would have it off. And she, I mean... if I would ever like bring it up, the two news directors would essentially, oh, well you just must not be passionate enough. They knew how to manipulate me, and they did, badly. They also, two separate occasions asked me to, if I would be interested in the evening anchor spot, and I didn't really want that schedule, but I knew that was like, you know, what I was supposed to want, and it would be more money. So, both times I said sure. Both times, they ended up giving it to someone else without even telling me like, I had to find out through a promo once, when I thought it was my job, I found out through a promo that they had given it to a girl who started a year before. So like things like this happened. And I, I just dealt with it, like I was like, okay, like, this is just whatever. And because of where my family is, I never really wanted to leave the market. I was happy with the location and with my life there. I got a few job offers in bigger markets, but like, I just didn't want to move, move. So that's why I stayed where I did for so long. So then, they hired a new chief meteorologist, and he was very good at his job. He was a terrible person. So myself and him and then my friend/news director, friends, I say lightly. We all did the four o'clock news together. And it became very clear that our two news directors who were both women, I mean, they would flirt with him, they gave him way more power than a chief meteorologist should have. It became very clear that if he didn't like you, you were screwed in their eyes, too. So, I put up with a lot of shit from him to be honest. He was married – started sending me some very inappropriate messages via Snapchat. And this was in like the summer of 2019. Just to give you some like a time context. I went along with it like nothing major, but I did just kind of like I didn't say anything, because like, I didn't want the retaliation that I knew what happened. And that all happened eventually. So, like so then, one time I was with some coworkers, we were out on a boat, a beautiful summer day. And I received – I had a work phone and a regular phone – right so I'm sure you know with Snapchat like, if you screenshot, they can see.

Well, this meteorologist he sent me a very, like, the only way I know how to explain it is a sexually violent Snapchat. And something in me – I was a little drunk – but something me told me to take a picture of the Snapchat. So, I did... Whatever life went on, our show expanded, everything was fine. Well, then in the fall, a couple of the younger, fresh out of college gals at work kind of approached me with some concerns about this guy. And it sounds like he was maybe doing similar things to them, right, and I was thirty, and I was able to handle myself fine. But these – I was a little concerned. So, one day, I casually told my co-anchor... I casually said, hey, so I don't want to like — I was like, you know, this is something that I brought to my attention from these girls. And she's like, oh, [he] would never do that. And I said, well, actually, here's the thing and I showed her this Snapchat message. Well, she, the next day, I get to work – that was on a Sunday. She kind of was like, oh my god, he sent that to you – what, what. She seemed not super receptive, but like, I expected her to at least – I don't know – I didn't necessarily expect her to like report it, but I wanted it to be on her radar... Next day, I get to work and [he] just comes up to me, the meteorologist, and he's like, I hope you die. Literally. And then [she]'s sitting there giggling. I had to anchor a show... it was horrible. Like I left the studio crying and my other news director who didn't know at the time what was going on came up to me and she's like, what's wrong? And I'm like, I can't even tell you I can't even tell you what's going on right now. I received messages that night from [her] saying, you know... I don't believe you. This must be a different [guy]. I had to tell him because he I don't want you ruining his reputation. Then, the next day, he messaged me saying I can't believe you did this. You called me every name in the book. He said we have to work together, so you better – I mean, it was horrible. I was so uncomfortable.

KW:

I'm so sorry this happened to you.

EE:

So, this was around right before COVID happened, and so I got really sick, didn't end up being COVID, but I was very, very sick. So, I ended up being out for two weeks. During this time some weird stuff started happening like I mistakenly was sent an email about taking me out of a promo and was no explanation now also leading up to this keep in mind, I was always very popular with viewers. My show always received wonderful ratings. I never received any kind of negative feedback from management, from viewers, anything like that. I got very suspicious, and I texted my actual news director and I said, what is this email about taking me out of a promo and she just said, that's just the way it is... blah, blah, blah. And then she said, then something happened or she like something about when you come back if you end up anchoring again, and I was like, haha, what is going on? So, then I get a call from her the day I come back, and she's like, oh, we're making temporary changes because of COVID. You're not going to anchor for a while. And I'm thinking, okay, like, whatever. Then I just I kept asking when, what is a while? What is the timeframe? ... Oh, then two weeks later, they tell me that I'm never anchoring again. And I said, Can you? Can you explain why? And they said it's just a business decision. And they wouldn't give me any answers. I said, my ratings are good. I'm a great employee... I did everything for this place. Everything. Like too much – like would do whatever they wanted, even when I shouldn't have. And I was I mean, after 10

years there, I wasn't going to go back to being an MMJ. Are you kidding me? So, I immediately contacted a lawyer. And this lawyer had helped my best friend get out of her contract. It was obviously different. She had a contact of a lawyer who actually used to be a reporter. So, he knew the industry... he started investigating, and there was a whole investigation. Turned out, my demotion was directly related to me reporting [him]. It was horrible. I still had to work there while this was going on. Luckily, I was working remote, and I wasn't anchoring. I was just reporting at the time, I was working remote because of COVID stuff. So, I didn't have to like go in, but I still had to work there for about three months while this investigation took place. They interviewed they interviewed me about like my sexual history... It was crazy. So, he ended up getting fired. I ended up with a settlement. And they offered me. Oh, we want you to stay. But the two women involved in this who were supposed to be my friends and my managers who I trusted. They didn't get fired. They got a little slap on the wrist. They're both actually – it's my coworkers last day there now. That like – it like forced me to leave. And, and I was lucky enough in the middle of a pandemic to land a decent job. It wasn't like my dream job, and I ended up only being there for eight months. But like, it was better pay. It was nice people. It was something to get me out of there. And at the time, I thought you know what I'm going to do, I am going to work here. And then I'm going to go back to one of the other stations in the area because part of my settlement was to get rid of my no-compete because I thought I still wanted to be in this business, but then, once I started not being in the business, I realized I never wanted to go back if that makes sense. And so, I didn't. I ended up getting the job that I have now, which is like a perfect job. So.

KW:

You got you got your settlement, and then did you already have your job lined up? Or like how did that go?

EE:

I did. I did. I had been applying during this whole thing... the settlement was fine, but it wasn't like enough to live on for more than like, a month. So, it was like... I need something. And I wasn't going to be picky because it was the middle of a pandemic. And I was fortunate... I learned enough in my short time there to get me the job that I now have. But yeah, so I was very fortunate that I landed something as quickly as I did. I mean, and then the day after I got the job offer, my lawyer called me and he was like, you're done. You don't ever have to go back... it was the like biggest relief of my life, and I think I had two weeks between when I left and when I started my new job, and I think that's like, the first time since I was like 15, I didn't have responsibilities, and it was glorious.

KW:

So how long do you think you were looking at other jobs while this was going on?

EE:

I would say like two months probably... it was the middle of the pandemic – there wasn't much. I applied for three jobs. I got interviews at all three. I was the runner up for the first one, and then they came back to me like two months later, begging me to work for

them, which I didn't. And I'm glad I didn't it because it sounds like a nightmare with like a marketing agency.

KW:

Everything works out the way it's supposed to.

EE:

It does. And then I got the job that I took. And then the other one, I didn't even end up doing the interview for because I got the offer before that interview. So, I mean, I didn't have I didn't have any trouble.

KW:

Perfect. Especially during a pandemic, that's just good that it ended up being fine.

EE:

Shockingly well. I was literally about to go work at Sephora. Like, I didn't care. I just needed something to pay the bills, or something, but I ended up getting something along the lines of, you know, communications.

KW:

From the point where you saw your roommate with her other job, you started looking for other jobs, what do you think the time difference was between that and then when all of the meteorologist started happening?

EE:

Well, very short, actually, like six months. She left in the summer of 2019. And then all of this happened in the winter of 2020. And I ended up like, spring, I would say like late winter, early spring, then I ended up my last day, there was July 1 of 2020.

KW:

I appreciate you opening to me. I just hope that, you know, you're healing and moving past it. I hope you're doing well.

EE:

It's been a process. But yeah, I finally ended up going to therapy, because like, I realized that I was just like in survival mode and didn't really process. It's all good. And I mean, it worked out very well. For me, I have a wonderful job.

KW:

So, based off the research I've done already, there's obviously a lot of factors that go into why people have left, but I like picked like 10+ that are super common... I'm just going to go through the list of the 10+ things and if you have any comment on if/how that contributed to your decision to leave. So, the first one is rapid changes in the news industry. So, like with TV's heavy emphasis on like advertisements, social media, MMJs, did that all affect your decision to leave? And if so, how?

EE:

I think so. It was definitely a thought that I had had in the last couple of my last couple years there was like, this probably isn't sustainable as a long-term thing. So yes, I would say yes.

KW:

The next one is job satisfaction. So, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

EE:

Yes, 100 percent. I mean, I can't even believe I allowed them to treat me the way they did and pay me what they did for as long as I did.

KW:

The next one is burnout/mental health pressures. So, did that impact your decision to leave at all?

EE:

Yes, yes. I definitely... I struggled during my on and off during my 10 years there for various reasons, but I think a lot of it was now that I'm out of it, I think a lot of it was job related.

KW:

Do you think sexism/discrimination/harassment, would you say that was a big part?

EE:

Yeah. And even I mean, even like the men at that station, I mean, so one of my best friends is actually he is now the evening anchor there. He was the morning anchor when all this happened, but when I found out what they are paying him, I mean, I was horrified because it was just so much more than what any of us were making it.

KW:

And that's just so frustrating on so many levels, because women, I feel like just from what I've learned and stuff, it's like, there's so many women in the TV news industry. So, it's like, they're putting in all the hard work. Why are they getting paid less?

EE:

Yeah, definitely. And the general manager of the station I was at is just notoriously the good old boys club. He's just horribly sexist. And then like, they hired a consulting company to come in, and I'm not even kidding. They told me to show more cleavage and give the farm boys what they want. Yep, that was fun, too. At one point, all of the female anchors, there were four or five of us. We were all blonde with big boobs. They were all on a billboard. And I was like, I'm like, okay, this is creepy.

KW:

The next one is work-life balance. So, how did that contribute into your decision to leave?

EE:

That was definitely a big part as well, especially when I saw my roommate just have so much more of that. And I mean, I think like the holidays were a big one too, because she got this two-week break while I was working like a double shift on Christmas Day. Oh, yeah, it was terrible. Oh, it was so bad. And so like, I just realized, like, I don't want – I missed so much with my family. I missed so many things, you know, and that was a big – that's been one of the best parts of leaving.

KW:

At least you've changed your path where it's like, you don't have to put up with that anymore. And you don't have those important holidays because life's too short. If 2020 to now has taught us anything, it's that life is too short.

EE:

Who cares if you leave a job that you thought you were going to like, it doesn't matter...

KW:

The next one is difficult stories. Do you think any of the negative stories you would have to, you know, report, and talk about, did that factor at all?

EE:

For me in the later years, not so much. I was fortunate in that I got to do a lot of fun stories just because of what my position was, but I will say early on, I, my first year there, I considered leaving, because I was your age, like exactly. I was right out of school, I was sent to the home of a Navy Seal – 35-years-old who was killed in a helicopter crash, and they made me knock on the door. And this family was so rightfully upset that I was even doing this. And I just remember thinking like, it was a Sunday I was like, what am I doing? Like, this is not – I don't feel good about this. And then the following week, I went to a murder where a 14-year-old boy or no, he was 12. Sorry – shot his mom, who was a nurse and his dad with a sheriff's deputy – shot his mom 14 times then raped her dead body. And I just like, I was like, this can't – and this was all within like my first probably two months on the job.

KW:

Why did they put you in charge of covering those stories when you were so new?

EE:

Well, they both happened on weekends. I was the weekend reporter, so I got to do both of those things. And then, I mean, it was like, that was my first year I was just full – if I hadn't gotten promoted to anchor as fast as I did, I think I would have left because, like, it's just, yeah, it was that part of it. I never got over that part of it. Like, I didn't love the negativity and the some of the, you know.

KW:

You can try your best to like to compartmentalize that, but also, at the end of the day, we're all humans, that still happened, and you're the one having to take all of that in.

EE:

I don't have it in me to not care that I was approaching people in the worst light. I know plenty of reporters that didn't... but I could not look at it like that, ever.

KW:

Based on that, did you ever feel like you were kind of influenced or forced to like to engage in like unethical practices, or like stuff that went against like your morals just for a story?

EE:

Oh, yeah. I think just, you know, knocking on the door of somebody who just experienced a tragedy. I'm a very empathetic person. I always have been, and I think sometimes that did actually help because I was able to get people to talk to me that maybe wouldn't, but I never felt good about it, if that makes sense... There was another time, and this is just like a stupid one. Like, I had a story set up. And it was about a new business opening, right? Like, it wasn't even a bad story. And the business owner called me while I was on my way to the shoot, and he said, I am so sorry. The store is a mess. I do not feel comfortable doing this story right now. I tried to talk him into it, so he was just like, no. So, I remember calling my news director and she was like, Okay, so why did this happen? This just seems fishy to me. Like what it's like, oh, really? Like, I was like, she was blaming me for the story falling through and like she used to be, and she was very manipulative like that very, very manipulative. She once told my roommate when we both worked there that she loved to get me riled up about things. This was my boss. She's a psycho. She's a complete, complete psycho. I mean, she no longer works there either. But like, I have never met the three people involved in my situation, the news director, assistant news director and the meteorologist, I've never met worse people, ever. Horrible people.

KW:

So, management issues [are] my next one.

EE:

100 percent.

KW:

So, the next one is shortage of resources. So, I know you were an anchor, and you weren't necessarily an MMJ when you were done, but do you think if there's a shortage of staff, or just like, you know, travel budgets, like how did that contribute, if it did, to your decision to leave?

EE:

Yeah, I mean, there was always shortages. Right? Like, I mean, I think one of the big things for us was we were bought out by a small media company, and we were the

smallest station of the ones that they owned, but they had expectations that we could produce content to the same level that their station that they owned in literally New York City. And they would have the consultants would go through our newscast, well, why didn't you do this and this and this, and you should have produced it like this. And they should, because we don't have the resources. Are you going to provide us with, you know, photogs and two producers per show and all this equipment and like, it was crazy.

KW:

The next one was quality of news standards. So, do you think that the shortage, like just the lack of resources ended up impacting the quality of news that was being produced?

EE:

Absolutely. The majority of my time there until the end, I think we did a pretty good job, honestly, like for what we had, like we were a pretty good station for a while. Yeah, but yeah, there was no way for us to meet what those expectations were from higher ups.

KW:

My other one says other health issues. So, did you experience any other health issues that influenced your decision to leave or not so much?

EE:

I think just in general, I was always rundown, and I never felt like I could prioritize my health ever, ever. Like I would I don't think I went to a doctor unless it was like an emergency. I would let things get so bad, you know, because I couldn't take time off like I couldn't. It was bad.

KW:

Yeah, that sounds awful, and that's why I also wanted to focus on mental health because I just feel like there's so much more that news stations can do to prioritize the mental health of their reporters, even just through like trauma reporting, like...

EE:

I 100% agree.

KW:

And that's what I like started off with my topic, and I ended up coming to this because it just like encompasses more than mental health... but okay, my last one for this is sponsorship/advertisements. So, were you seeing more of that and the segments?

EE:

Not so much at where I was at. I have heard that since then, there's a lot more of that going on. I didn't really experience that though during my time.

KW:

Overall, so based on the factors we talked about, and then your opinion, what would you say were the most important factors that went into your decision to leave?

EE:
Like top three?

KW:
Just overall, what would you say were top contributors?

EE:
So, the discrimination, harassment, retaliation, for sure. Management, and I guess like, I don't know if this falls into any of the categories, but honestly, the pay.

KW:
I'm sorry, that's the only one I missed. My other one was compensation – salary, raises financial stability.

EE:
It was a big, big factor.

KW:
And then did you think your gender interacted with these factors that influenced you to leave? And if so, how?

EE:
Men were treated differently. They were treated better. They were paid better, just in general, just at the station as a whole.

KW:
What about PR, marketing, communications... what about that seemed attracted to you, especially for a role outside of TV news?

EE:
I just thought it's where my skills would translate best to, obviously, you know, dealing being on the other side of it, you just naturally... And the majority of my friends and coworkers that had left before me, that's what they did...Most of the people that I know from TV are no longer in it. Maybe like one.

KW:
Overall, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR?

EE:
I mean, it was there. That was what I just if I wasn't going to do TV, I felt that's where my skills would be most, you know, trying to transition well into that and something that I would something I could still use, you know, my skills that I gained from schooling and from my decade in the business, but had the perks of not being TV, if that makes sense.

KW:

Reflecting on your TV news role, how does your role now compare to that?

EE:

Yeah, I mean, I am in a management position now and I have so much freedom and flexibility with my schedule. I mean, as long as I get my stuff done, they don't care when or where. I think the biggest struggle for me with the transition, which I think is an interesting piece is you know, when you're in news, every day, you have a very specific – you need to get the newscast done, or you need to get your story done. Now I have all these projects being managed.... pen like oh, how do I prioritize this? Oh, that doesn't have to be done.

KW:

Do you think you still carry this identity/self-concept of like, being a journalist? And if so, how does that affect your job?

EE:

I think there's going to be that always, and in my current role, I do get to do some writing like articles, we submit articles for, like a monthly magazine. And I'm currently working on writing some articles for our annual report. So, like, there's still pieces of it that I do, and I think I always will have that. I don't say I'm a journalist anymore, but I think I always will have some of that.

KW:

What changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you at the station?

EE:

Just in general, like, even if that whole situation hadn't happened, I couldn't sustain that for much longer. So, like, they would have had to pay me significantly more. They would have had to do some changes with the scheduling. Honestly, I would not have stayed if they didn't make changes to management either. Those people needed to go.

KW:

What changes do you think the TV news industry needs to make in order to keep more women in the future?

EE:

Totally. I mean, they need to they need to pay people better, and I think that is really more so an issue for women. I know, it's an issue all the way around, but I do think that there is a difference there. I think that work-life balance is just, for women too, like when you're starting families. My best friend who used to work with me, she just had a baby a few days ago. And like, she's like, I can't imagine this if I was still at [news station]. Like, I can't you know.

VI. Fiona F., communications manager

KW:

So, my very first question is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

FF:

I basically decided in high school that's what I was going to do. We had a like, announcements program in high school, and so I did that with one of my best friends, and it was just super fun. Um, so it kind of started from there. And then I think it was like, also in high school, we had to do a research project of what would it take to do a certain career. So, you had to look up where you had to go to school and interview someone like in that field. And so, I interviewed, I grew up in [city]. And so, I interviewed one of the long-time anchors that I just grew up watching, and I thought it was so cool. And so, I just kind of decided from there and went with it, but I loved telling stories. My parents always told me, they couldn't get me to shut up since I was born. And they were like, you're either going to be a lawyer, or you're going to be a journalist. So, that was basically it. I just decided that's what I was going to do, and I found a college program that I liked, and I pursued it. And I was lucky enough to get my first job straight out of school doing what I wanted to do. So, it just all kind of lined up. And it confirmed to me the more I was doing it, the more I was like I made the right choice, right. I do love telling stories.

KW:

I do think as journalists, you do have to have the passion behind it, but I do think so many of us are just, at the end of the day, love storytelling, but I think PR/communications (we'll get into that later), but I do think that's another avenue to keep doing that storytelling... So, my next question, it's kind of a bigger one, but just overall, what was your journalism experience like in TV news, and how did that factor into your decision to ultimately leave the industry?

FF:

I was also lucky enough to move around to quite a few stations. So, I had a good amount of experience by the time I landed at my last station. I was in it for 10 years. I started as a producer, switched over to being on air and all of those markets I think helped me. Instead of feeling like I was launched into something that I wasn't ready for, I think by the time I got to my last station, which I was there for five years, I knew that I was making the right choice. I knew I was ready for that market. So, I think for me, I was prepared to do the stories that I was being given. And I was prepared to do the digging and felt really confident doing that. So, I appreciate all of the grunt work and late nights and zero pay for so long because by the time I got there, I felt like I was ready for it. So, I wasn't second guessing myself, and so that made it easy to go ahead and kind of claim my place in that station.

KW:

How did your perception of your role in TV news kind of change over time? So, like, were you super excited at first and then that kind of start to go downhill? Or just overall, what was your perception of the beginning and at the end?

FF:

I think it kind of goes in to the same like the flip side of my last answer, and that I was so excited, and I had so much energy. And so, working through all of that grunt work, I was able to, but then that wears you down. So then by the time I got to the station where I eventually left, I was so ready for it and so proud of myself. But then after a while of realizing there are the same issues here, I'm hitting the same roadblocks as before, some people will never trust me no matter what. And I have to keep proving myself even though I've already proved myself – that ends up wearing on you. And so then, halfway through my time at my last station, it became a struggle because I no longer had like straight out of college energy. And you had to convince yourself that like, no, it's worth it – it has to be worth it because there has to be something on the other side. So, I think for as much as I appreciate the work and effort that went into getting what I got, it also burnt you out by the end, and there was no other option other than either have to commit to staying and knowingly harming myself, emotionally and physically, or I have to get out and make a change.

KW:

Well, that makes you think, you know, it is when you get out of college, it's like the newness of it all. And it's like, okay, this is my first job – it's going to be hard no matter what, but then it's like, right, I feel like then you think about, can I really do this for the rest of my life?

FF:

Yeah, I knew it was not a career that I could sustain for as long as I could see my male counterparts seceding. I knew that it was not going to be feasible. So, I already kind of had in my head after my first market — I already had in my head – whenever the time is right, you have to leave, and you have to leave gracefully. There's no way you're going to get to the point where you're forced out or you're forced out. So, you need to leave on your own terms whenever that is, and you'll figure out when that is, but I already kind of knew I was never going to have like, a retirement out of news. It just was not feasible.

KW:

So, based on that, was there a seminal moment or a groundbreaking moment for you solidified your decision to want to leave, or it was the kind of more of a gradual burnout process?

FF:

There was burnout, but I think specifically to this market... And so, through 2020, with the pandemic, we also had very unique to [city], a year's worth of social unrest from the Breonna Taylor situation. So, I was one of – the way our newsroom did it, we split crews because of the pandemic — as inside versus outside crews since we really had no idea what was going on. So, I was one of the crews that was outside. So, I was going into an

unknown scenario, and then when protests hit not too long after the pandemic kicked in, then I was one of three crews that was for 100 days covering protests. So, I willingly said I was going to do that, but I also think I was in a mental frame of – I look back at it now, and I was burnt out and zoned out then. So, I was not making good choices for myself anyway. So, I basically put myself through an extended like one year that is a blur now that I should have left before then but should have coulda woulda. So, I think for me that but, even after, I remember after the grand jury decision came down, that was in September, I think, September 18th. And that weekend, I went home, and all of a sudden, it was like, what did I do for a year? Like, where did it go? What just happened? I have blank spaces for months at a time, and I don't know where I'm going with my career. I just, you just kept doing it, because that was the only thing you could think to do, and so that was the moment where I was like, I am either willingly going to continue working as a zombie, and probably doing more damage to myself, but also, without the without the ability to feel fully invested in the community and in those stories that you're telling. My biggest concern was that I was no longer doing the best work possible. And so, for me, I was like, well, that's a big concern, like for my own pride, but also, I love this community, and they deserve more. So, if I'm not reaching what I would consider the best possible story for you, that's not fair for you. So, I'll remove myself. So, I knew at that point, I was like, I have to find a way. That was when I was given a different position at the station, and thought, well this is completely different. Maybe this will be the change, but I feel like as news people were always like, Oh, it's that next market and next position. So, it was just the same mindset. So, I hung on for about another year in a completely different position. But halfway through it, I was like, no, it's the same old, same old I gotta go. So, I left actually a year ago today – it's my one year out.

KW:

So, with the current role that you have now, how did you go about getting that? Just describe your process of leaving TV news? Like, looking for jobs while you were still in the industry? Or did you get another offer? If you just want to elaborate on that a little bit?

FF:

Yeah, so, I did not tell anyone that I was looking to leave at the station, and I just chose to give my two weeks' notice. I broke my contract, and that was perfectly fine. My news director completely understood – did everything to try and keep me so to his credit, like he legitimately cared and told me, at any point, if you want to come back, there's an open door for you. So, there was no hard feelings there. But I knew that if I opened up to say, I think I'm going to leave, then there was going to be the discussion of what do you want to stay in? That's what extended it by a year to begin with. So, I'm not going to open that door again. So, I started looking secretly. My strategy was I basically reached out to – because I've been in this market long enough – I knew strategically the best ways to transition here. My family lives not too far from here, but I was like, I don't know that market as well as I do here. So, I just started reaching out to former news, people who I knew had gotten out well before the pandemic and were established and was asking them advice, but then also saying like, hey, if you find something, let a girl know. And I had them help me with like writing my resumes and tweaking all of that, but it was by word

of mouth that I got my first job. So, and the first job I got out is actually not the one I'm currently in. So, I transitioned fairly easily into a metro government position because I'd covered metro for so long – they knew me and so it wasn't too far of a stretch to be like at least I have five years of knowledge of what you guys have idling within government. So, I took a communications director role straight out, and I loved it. I could tell right away I was like using different muscles and different parts of my brain that I'd never had to use before because for as unique as news is and journalism is – it can be boiled down to like, copy paste, like, figure out like I have a deadline by the end of the day. So, I have to get these things done and finish a deadline, or so much in PR is project based and kind of big picture thinking, and then coming down to the details. So, for me, that was really, really fun to be given basically a challenge and say, like, yeah, I'll do that and then have to go back to my desk and like Google, what the hell is this?

KW:

Totally. So, at my internship right now, it's more lifestyle/home design client based... So, I'm used to covering council meetings, and then I'm going to make having to strategically think about how to pitch to the media... totally different. It's a good different; it's just different. So how long would you say after you put your two weeks' notice in, you got your job as the communications director for the government position?

FF:

I had my job already. So, I lined it up. I accepted, put in my two weeks, and then went straight to metro government. So, I had in my head that if I didn't have a job lined up by a certain point in time, when I was the news, that I would leave news. And so, I kind of had that in the back of my head, like, am I prepared to just quit because I know it's no longer good for me. But I was lucky enough that I lined up a job before I left... I was definitely prepared to, if I did not have anything, my mind was if I didn't have anything by the holidays, I was done because I just did not know. I kept coming back to that. If I have to leave gracefully, like I have to leave on my own terms. I'm not going to make the this a scene, so I would rather just exit.

KW:

But do you have any idea of how long you were looking for jobs – like a few months or a few weeks?

FF:

I would have started late fall of 2020 with the thought process of I gotta get out. Then I took I took a new position at the station at that same time. So then, you know, there's like three months of honeymooning – everything's great. So, I would say by the New Year, so by 2021, I still knew like, this is not right. So, springtime, I started reaching out to people. So, I would say I was looking, or I was putting out feelers from the spring to when I got my I accepted the position in September 2021.

KW:

Basically, there's obviously many different reasons why people leave TV news, but out of the stuff I found, there's about 10+ really common ones. So, I'm just going to read

through those and if you've anything to comment on if it affected your decision to leave... the first one is the rapid changes in the TV news industry... do you think that affected your decision at all?

FF:

Probably, I probably hadn't thought of it that way, but it probably did. It got to a point where things just felt frantic and like I was no longer involved in a team. It felt like I was just kind of, on my own having to follow the next, you know, the next consultant's decision or the next rating's reaction to ratings and there was no longer any sort of like, oh, well, I'm this – this is what I do. So, the stability I think impacted that for sure.

KW:

What about job satisfaction? Did that impact your decision to leave?

FF:

Absolutely. I would say through 2020. So, I would say personally, some of the issues, were already there, like some of the station issues or some of the news flaws, or like the industry flaws that we see now, were obviously already there pre-pandemic, but I think that highlighted that. You're a cog in this machine, and so you're, you know, you have to do these things, because it's part of who you are. You can't describe yourself without saying you're a journalist. So, if you're not doing this, then who really are you? Like your identity, and your worth, and value is tied to your action, and your paycheck, which is very minimal. So, if you're not doing this, then you're not being who you are – who you're meant to be. So, I think all of that all of a sudden started falling apart when all of a sudden, you're realizing wait, you just asked me to do what, and it wasn't a question – it was expected. And if I don't do this, then then shame on me. So, I think that's kind of where it all started. You realize, like, I can't believe I put up with that for so long.

KW:

The next one is burnout/mental health pressure. So, would you say that was another big contributor to your decision to leave?

FF:

Yeah, absolutely. I was completely burnt out, and it was actually really terrifying when I finally realized, like, I'm numb. The best I could describe myself was I feel like a zombie, and I have legitimate blank spaces for months at a time of where like, I don't remember things. I don't remember what I did, or like, have any recollection of like, did I pay my bills that month? I don't even know... And I will say that this is a double-edged sword. I will say, I was asked several times by managers, like low level managers, how are you doing? And they asked everyone, like, how are you doing? What do you need, but when you opened up or were honest about it, then there was like, a surface level response of, oh, that's good to know. Like, we'll figure that out. But then the next reaction was, can you go get this? And go get this and this and this and then come back for protests tonight? And we're not providing you with security detail. So, then you're like, I just told you I need a day off. You know, so that's kind of weird was like, that was also hard, because you're trying to balance like, I can't be mad at you because you just asked me

how I'm doing, but I am because you actually didn't listen because you knew that the solution to help make me feel better and all of my team would cause trouble to you from a logistics standpoint of getting your content on the air. So that's where it finally like clicked in of like, I know it sounds like you care.

KW:

So, my initial research interest for this was journalist mental health, specifically during COVID because I felt like, you know... I've really advocated for news stations to implement more like trauma reporting training, and just like mental health, you know, like journalists, there needs to be more mental health resources, but anyway, it kind of boiled down to this.

FF:

I would completely agree with that because there was so much of just like... Well, I think journalists see – a lot of journalists see things that first responders do, but obviously not tasked with responding to it, just documenting it but we still see it all. So, everything from like, I can remember my first station and seeing my first body to, you know, going to this station now and being in protest and having a gun pulled on you. So, you're just like, there's no one there to say, like, you come back, and your producer hears that because you're reporting logic the whole time, but then you come back and they're like, I can't believe that. And the producers felt, I think, more fear and concern for us because they were seeing it with us. Yeah, but from a management level, there was no follow up to that, because I'm sure some of my producers had nightmares of like, oh, my gosh, I put like my friends and my coworkers in a scenario, and I didn't ask for that. Like, I didn't mean for that to happen to them, but there was no follow up of like, hey, do you need a therapist to come to this station just to like, talk it out from all sides? There was nothing of that, and so that's kind of it was more of like, and when I was going to therapy, it was more of a like, hey, I can't have a live shot at this time because I have to get there is that okay? And it being of concern that I was missing time at work simply to go drive to therapy, and that that was more of a concern, that I may or may not be available for a live shot in the last half hour of my workday. So that was just kind of was like more cherries on top.

KW:

So, based off your experience with management, like you said, you were fine with your news directors but overall, how did any management issues affect your decision to leave?

FF:

A lot. It definitely affected it a lot because I just felt, and this is where I've thought about it a lot, and I don't hold blame to them. I just think newsrooms are no longer set up to where managers can be in touch of what's actually happening. And I don't know if there's, like an industry-wide concern of can managers really understand how much effort is going into what they're asking you to do? And the managers that are coming up in the ranks now, when they were in our positions, were never being asked to do as much as they are asking us to do. So that's why I'm like, I can't, I can't physically fault you or hold blame to you because you simply don't understand. However, I think there is room for

them to become more understanding if they're willing to do that, but they have to know that as soon as they understand, then they would, basically, the burden is on them to make a change, and I don't know if they're willing to do that because the bottom line now is so tight for new stations that I don't know if it would be financially worthwhile. It's such a convoluted, twisted problem that that was also while I was like, I gotta go, and when I left and when I quit, I said I don't know if I'll ever come back, but I'm never going to close that door because I know I'm a storyteller at heart. So, if, for some reason, there's some sort of unicorn position down the line, sure. However, I'm never going back to doing what I was doing.

KW:

I just wish I would have had like the “TV to PR Women” group before when I was going through that because I just feel like I was too weak for the industry when in reality, it's like an industry problem – not a me problem.

FF:

Yeah, it's kind of weird. I distinctly remember a manager telling me when after I told my news director, and he was perfectly fine with it, and had the best reaction you could ever have for a boss. So, I'm so thankful for him, and I had a manager when I broke the news, say, you know what, some people just aren't cut out for it. And that was just like a knife to the side because I was like, do you know what I did for you for two years? Like how am I not cut out for it? And to me it reflected more on like, I was concerned for my manager because I'm like, you must be struggling if you think that continuing to stay in a harmful situation means your strong. That was just more confirmation.

KW:

It's frustrating for me to hear this because it's like you do so much, but then, you know, at the end of the day, I'm grateful for experience I had. I learned a lot, and I'm sure the skills you've learned everything, you know, it's helped you.

FF:

Yes, absolutely.

KW:

Did you ever feel from management or anyone that you were kind of forced to engage in whether that be unethical practices or just like get stories that didn't really line up with your values, or anything of that sort?

FF:

Not at this station – not at my last station. I think by the end, there were situations that I was like, this isn't unethical. However, I no longer approve of it. So, there are just some things in news that the longer I was in, the more I understood, like, that's okay for a news standard, but from like me being a human, I no longer wanted to do that. I no longer wanted to put certain family members in situations or people that were victims or experiencing trauma in the moment. It was no longer my personal belief that that was healthy for them. And so, when I was being asked to do certain things, or go and ask

people certain things or knock on certain doors, 100 percent some of the photographers that I would work with, we would come to a mutual decision of saying, are we going to go back and say we knocked on that door and no one was there? And I said yes. So, we would make it so that we were comfortable with it, and we could report back. So that we had to find a balance of like, we were tasked with something to do 100 percent we're coming back and lying to our bosses, but I could no longer sleep at night after some situations. So, it was like this is a pick your poison. And I felt like the longer I was in it, the more I was realizing, okay, there's, you know, there's hard black and whites of the spectrum of what's right and wrong, ethical and not ethical, liable and not liable in news that you learn into textbook, and then that is what's translated to a newsroom. However, it is a sliding gray scale. So, you, have to figure out where do you lie, and where on that scale, and what are you comfortable with? And there were some things that I was not okay with by the end, but that's not to say that it wasn't textbook.

KW:

Right. That's such a good point... the next one is sexism/discrimination. Did you feel like experienced any of that as a woman in TV news or not so much?

FF:

Yeah, I definitely felt that way. I felt there were several pointed times where I was more qualified, or a better storyteller for a specific assignment, or I'd even pitch something that was no longer given to me it was given to someone who was male, or someone who may have had more experience and was male. And that that was apparently better qualifications than I had. So, I definitely experienced that. I was also in an environment where no one would, other than the females, that were on like, reporter level, no one would acknowledge that that was happening. It was just this is the newsroom and goes to the best reporting. You know what I mean. So, there's no acknowledgement of that happening. So, you just don't say anything because then you don't want to be the whiny, female crying over not getting to the story that they wanted.

KW:

It's like a spiral of silence.

FF:

Yeah, so I definitely, definitely felt that and I know there were a handful of male reporters that did recognize it, but only after testing it to where I said, watch, I'll pitch this story, it's not going to get picked up, and you can pitch the story tomorrow. So, I pitched the story, and word for word, pitched the story the next day, and it got picked up. And so, I would say there were a very small few who, like, who were male who saw that, and then realized, like, okay, I can pay more attention to this and would make it a point to like, talk to you about it or strategize of like, okay, you have this story, like, how are we going to get you to do this story because that's your story. So, they would then become advocates for you. And by that point, once, it was very obvious, I was like, well, I'm so burnt out anyway, like, I don't have I don't have the fight in me to fight this. So, I was just like, I'm coasting it out. I can't add that to my plate of like being concerned over.

KW:

Work-life balance – how did that contribute to your decision to leave?

FF:

I had no balance – there was no balance. That word did not exist. And I was I made it to the point where I was, you know, the nine to five, I did not really get called over for breaking news because they had mid-shift and nightside crews that would do that. So, like, I had, quote on quote, the ideal schedule. And yet I would come home and sit on the couch for five hours afterwards, because I was like, I can't move. I can't think. I don't want to do people like I need to save all of my energy because I can't function or do anything else that's outside of that. My shift doesn't start until 8:30, but I've been coming in [earlier] because we've been on a we have [an event] right now. And getting video and like pictures... which I'm like, I'm so happy to do this... And once my manager found out that I I came in one morning at you know, 6:30 and I came in another morning at 7:30. She was like, Oh my gosh, how much extra? Have you worked? And I was like, well, I mean, it was a long day, but like it was fine. I enjoyed it. And she was like, no, that was work time like, so she had to forcefully tell me for Friday, she was like, you have to stop working at noon. Like everything has to log off. I will force log off your computer because I want you to go home and enjoy your day because you worked extra this week. Even if it was fun to you, you were working. So, I need you to log off because I don't want you to burn out. And I've heard her say the b-word and I was like burnout. How can I possibly burnout doing this? Like, this is so much fun. And she was like no, I need you to set boundaries because this is still a job even if it's fun... And it was just like, fireworks went off. Angels started singing. I was home at noon on a Friday and I was like, what do you do like, but now being able to have an actual balance and being able to say like, I can do a workout class every day after work because I have the energy to do that. I can go and have dinner with friends because I have the energy to do that during the week, and I want to do that. And for 10 years not having energy to do anything that would fill you back up. So, it's absolute night and day. And that's why it's the farther I've been out of it the more impossible it is to think of going back to exactly what I was doing.

KW:

Did you feel like there was a shortage of resources, whether that be staff, camera people, producers, editors, travel budgets... and do you think if, there was a shortage of resources, if that affected the quality of news that was being produced?

FF:

Yes. Well, yes, I think there was a shortage of people as a resource. We just simply didn't have enough people for the amount – like it's a math equation – like it's simple math. If they wanted x amount of news to be done, and they kept adding shows, every market continues to add shows add shows because it's cheaper to create your own content. So, it's simple math. If you continue to do that, or you continue to promote so many people into management roles that then don't backfill, then how do you expect any of that to get done, like with an existing crew? So, I would say for me, the biggest, like lack of resources wasn't simply having enough people so that you weren't taking on the burden of four. There was probably, like, lack of physical resources of, did we have enough

laptops? Or did we have enough this or that or the other, but I don't think that would have... Journalists are resourceful, like, we could have put news on with our phones. You know what I mean? Like, we can make do with whatever we have in front of us, but I think the biggest influence would be knowing that I have enough people to support me... and I was enough that I was a reporter – I wasn't an MMJ for my last station – So like I was an MMJ before, and I know what it's like to be an MMJ. And even as a reporter, I was like, there's not enough like, I'm still being asked to do too much a lot.

KW:

Difficult stories... do you think covering the protests, COVID, Breanna Taylor, any of that – I know you've talked about that, but do you think that contributed to your decision to get out and tell different stories?

FF:

Yes. So, I went into news, and I wanted to do hard news. And so, I signed myself up for that, but I also don't think you fully comprehend that when you're what 21 and straight out of school, and you've lived like, to my benefit, I've lived a very safe and privileged life. And so then saying that you want that and realizing what that is, is completely different. And I was able to cover a lot of investigative, and I enjoyed it. I loved it. And in the middle of covering the pandemic, and also covering Breanna Taylor, there was, there's this like, nagging thought of like, oh, but you're doing good. And this is a part of history, and you should be proud to be here. And for as true as that is, it's also harmful. Like, if that's your only reason for doing it is like, this is a notch on my belt, or a reason to keep going like that. That's not enough, and I honestly feel like management used that and saying, you know, this is such an important time, and we're so proud of the team that we have because you're doing things in a moment that will remember forever. You think like, but I'm tired. I know, all of that definitely played on how heavy that was and there are still like some stories or some moments that like, honestly come back to you after a while and in different situations that you're like, I can't believe I did that, or I can't believe I lived through that. And now being able to say, one of my biggest concerns, because this is what people in hard news tell you is that, oh, you're going to retire now. You're going to PR – you're going for the good life. You're retiring out of it. You're coasting – and feeling really hurt by that because again, it's that macho sense of like, oh, you're not tough enough for it, and now like now I've been a year removed basically. And last week we did a story with Make A Wish... And I remember it was just like go go go that whole morning like coordinating everything with them and, and then at the end of the day, as soon as they left, I just started sobbing. And I was like, I know that all of my old like hard news, people said, like, oh, you're retiring, but I got a different joy and like, true satisfaction doing that for one family, and seeing that story take off all over the country, once it got picked up by affiliates than I did for some of the stories that I have Emmys for like. I feel nothing tied to those Emmys as I do that one story that I'm never going to get an award for, you know what I mean? And that just became very, like, crystal clear – news to PR of – I'm telling stories that are just as valuable, if not more, in some sense and actually being cared for in the process.

KW:

The last one... compensation – salary, raises, financial stability – how did that contribute to your decision to leave, if it did?

FF:

So, I was lucky enough to work at the station in town that paid the most, and that being said, is nowhere near what any reporter should be paid. Like with a grain of salt, but knowing the different stations in town, I know people at that station were being paid more than others. So, I knew that I was like, if I just make the same amount of money per leaving, like I didn't even research, what does PR make getting out? I just knew that was the easiest transition. And being shocked then at my first paycheck [at new job], so that was a big change, making a ton more, but then I remember chatting with one of the people on the committee that hired me. And they said, well, we were concerned that we weren't going to be able to afford you. And I was like, what are you talking about – I'm coming from TV, and they were like, yeah, you were on air, like, you had to be worth so much. We were worried you weren't going to accept, and I was like, well, shoot, I should have negotiated more. Like, that's still the outside thought process of TV makes all this glamorous money, which is not true. So then, I was just like, I can't believe I just made so much more money in one quick switch versus, which is also a perfectly normal amount of money to make, then like being in PR realizing like, oh, this is what normal standard salaries are, like, you know, in my mind, I was making the moon and more right with that raise, when in reality, I'm making a normal, decent human's living wage, so that was a shocker and a learning curve.

KW:

Overall, with everything we've talked about, in your opinion, what would you say are the most important factors that led you to leave?

FF:

I think when I finally realized I needed to value myself, instead of valuing a career that I thought defined me, and I've talked to so many of my friends that have left news, and there has been in this market in particular, a huge exodus. And I know it's industry wide, but here has been a ton and all kind of in the same age range, and all saying the same thing. So, my biggest struggle was trying to realize that once I left news, I wasn't losing myself because it's been ingrained in you so that you are a journalist – this is what you do, and this is the only way you can be proud of yourself is if you're winning awards and knocking out crazy stories and getting picked up by bigger and bigger markets because that means you are valuable, and so once I finally realized that's a lie, then that was the biggest key because once I realized that then I was like, okay, I'm either knowingly staying in an industry that is harmful to me right now, or I can leave. And that's not to say that journalism is harmful, but the way it's being used right now for the employees is. I still firmly believe in journalism, and I'm so proud that I was able to do it for as long as I did. And I still fully support journalism, but not in the way that it's being used.

KW:

Why did you pursue a career in PR, and what about it seemed attracted to you?

FF:

My transition was mainly strategic... I knew that the longer I stayed in news, and the older I became in leaving, then the more difficult it was going to be to have a salary with quote on quote zero history to back myself up, right. So, I felt like I was at a good strategic point of being able to say, like, I can convert 10 years of news, right, and prove to you how valuable that is to PR. And I'm still young enough to come in at a salary that works for me, and I still have room to grow. So, I knew just, strategically, it had to be done. And also, I had no desire to go back to school. So, I was like, well, I can write the hell out of this resume and out of this cover letter. So, we're just going to do that now and see how it goes.

KW:

And it sounds like you're enjoying it. That's great. So just also overall, like just the first step that comes to mind, how does your role now compare to your career in TV news?

FF:

It compares as to like, the skills that I use, but as to the outcomes, it doesn't compare at all because I'm being used now as an asset to the longevity of the [organization] and future projects. I never felt like that as a journalist. I felt like my biggest role was turning a story by the end of the day, and then coming in and repeating that, whereas now being involved in projects that they're like, hey, we're getting ready for this for, you know, [event] in two years. What do you think like, what can you bring to the table? There's no comparison and the value that you feel then.

KW:

Do you still feel like you kind of carry this sort of journalistic self-concept? I know, we've talked about, you know, journalism being a part of your identity. And if so, how do you think that impacts how you do your job?

FF:

I definitely feel like a journalist in a PR world, and I'm not mad about that. I know that I can work twice as fast, and my level of what is acceptable is probably twice as high. Just because you have to be accurate and perfect to go on air. So, I think all of that benefits me in my outcomes for a job, but that's simply because I was trained that way. So, I don't think in 10 years that'll ever change, even if I were to go back to school specifically for you know, public relations. I still feel like I would be coming at some projects from a journalism standpoint, and I don't see any problem with that. I see value out of that.

KW:

For you, what changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you?

FF:

He asked me, what can we do to you, and he gave some very kind, and generous offers that did not have anything to do with like, monetary value either, and I flat out told him,

there's nothing at this point you can do to make me want to stay for my like, for my health, for my future growth – I can't. So, I don't know how to answer that.

KW:

I'm sure you saw from what I posted – I'm specifically focusing on women in the TV news industry. So as a woman, what changes do you think TV needs to make in order to keep more down the road?

FF:

I don't know because I don't know how you overcome some of those things. I don't know if it's like training for management or what it is because... Or if it's just simply people accepting that it's a problem and therefore being aware of it like, because what do you do when you're sitting in a room full of, you know, every race, every gender in a story pitch meeting, and you're told, no, that's going to him. That decision came from somewhere. So why? Is it because you don't think your entire newsroom of female reporters are trained as well? If so, then what training do you think I'm lacking? If we come in with the same age, the same education and the same number of stations? What is it that I'm missing? So, that's kind of where, again, I feel like it's a math problem of like, if it's not this, then it's this. And so, the only thing I could potentially think of is just y'all need to accept that it's happening because it is, and then if it's some sort of like mind change, y'all need to have I don't know how you simply don't just say like, oh, you pitch the story, go do it because you're qualified.

VII. Gracelyn G., communications manager

KW:

My first set of questions is just about your experience in journalism and leaving it, so my first question is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

GG:

So, I grew up in the [city] area, and I just grew up watching the news with my parents. And, specifically, I didn't see many women of color, or biracial women on the news, so that was always kind of something I was interested in. And I was always into, like storytelling and writing. So, in high school is when I ultimately decided that that's what I wanted to go to school for.

KW:

Overall, what was your overall experience like in TV news? And how did your experience factor into your decision to leave?

GG:

I would say that it's very like, it's your whole life, which I'm sure you know, like, you put like, your all into the industry and into your job. And I kind of I think the pandemic shifted my mindset a little bit and covering just 2020 in general. I was like, okay, like, I wasn't necessarily looking for something outside, but I also was like, I know this isn't feasible long term. Like I would like something that has like a better work-life balance or just something better for like, my personal self.

KW:

Based off like when you started your career versus got out of TV news, how did your perception kind of change? Like at first, were you really excited and enthusiastic and then you kind of started questioning things toward the end, or just kind of how did your thought process go in terms of like, how you looked at your job?

GG:

Yeah, so I started off in [city, state], which is the capital, and it's like market 115. So, it's not too like small of a market. It was a good market to start out in, and it's a city still, and like I was closer to home. So, I was excited about that, like only being an hour away from home and only an hour away from where I went to school. But I like I don't know, like as, like my time in the industry progressed, it was just things that would happen where I'm like, I feel like I shouldn't be this stressed out about work. So, I was like, well, maybe it's a first market thing, because your first market's obviously, like smaller and there's less people. So, like, maybe it'll change in a second market and like some things do get better, like there's higher staffing and like better pay, but like, ultimately, like the principles as far as like the hours you work and like, the overall pay, like that's not changing... It's not worth, like, sacrificing my well-being for a job – at that point that no, I'm good.

KW:

Was there like a specific moment, or a seminal moment that like solidified your decision to leave TV? Or was it kind of more this gradual process during your time in TV news?

GG:

It was kind of a process because I was thinking about it, but not like too seriously while I was in my second market. And then my current job, someone reached out about it, like saying, hey, this job is open, you should apply for it. And at first, I was like, I don't know. Like, I was in the middle of my contract. I filled like a year and a half left. But it's a good job. And like, it was a big pay bump. So, I was like, well, I might as well just like apply like even though I never really like thought about it too deep. Like it's probably after my contract with my second station I probably would have applied for like, both in and out of the industry jobs and just kind of seen what hit. But then I had the interview and like went through that and got the job. And it was almost like I would be like stupid not to take it because of how much better of an opportunity it was. So, it was hard because I was like I feel like I didn't really mentally prepare like to just like because I like all of us – all we ever wanted to do is news. And then you're like, well, like now what? But it's worked out great.

KW:

So, did the employer reach out to you and like tell you to apply for it was like a friend or like just like kind of take me through your process of like, your decision to leave news and take your other job?

GG:

It was someone who worked here that reached out. Like I went through the interview process, and I didn't tell anyone at my current station or anything. So then going into when I actually got it, obviously, worried about the buyout. And I got my new employer to pay for the buyout, which was nice, because that was powerful. Another like where I'm like, okay, I should take this job.

KW:

Did you just put in your two weeks, like your resignation notice, after you already accepted the job?

GG:

Yeah. So, I accepted the job, and it was around the holidays. It was like the second week of December. And then [they] wanted me to start when the semester started in January. So, I had like, three weeks until like the start date. So, I've just put in my two weeks and met with my GM. She's very nice. I will give her that. But she's still like, obviously, there's the buyer out and everything. So she went over the legal stuff, but I feel like it could have went worse, and I think it's because I was leaving the industry and not like going to another station.

KW:

So, was your GM like pretty understanding about it? Or did she try and do anything to like, get you to stay?

GG:

We didn't have a news director at the time. He left somewhere else. So, we had an assistant news director, and then our GM. So, like, I told the assistant news director who pinged the GM because I was like, I kind of need to talk to her today. I'm putting in my two weeks regardless, so then I went up and talked to her. And she was cool. Like she was saying that she's had a couple of former employees that went and worked at university or went to communications and really enjoyed it and like, she thinks I would grow and stuff like I was surprised because I didn't really like talk to her that much.

KW:

How far were you into your contracts when you were thinking about applying for that job?

GG:

Probably like a year and a half. When I left, I was at my two years. And I was under a three-year contract.

KW:

Based off my research proposal, there's been like, obviously, there's a lot of reasons why people leave news, but I have about 10+ different factors that are really common, so I'm just going to go through them. And if you just want to comment on like, if that affected your decision to leave... So, the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry... did that impact your decision to leave at all or not so much?

GG:

I would say yeah, during my first market, we lost our... I was the weekend reporter. And we lost our weekend anchor, and our photographer, and our producer, like to my news director was producing. And then I was anchoring, but still having to do like all the other day when reporting. So yes, that's a factor.

KW:

My next one is shortage of resources. So, you would say that was something too that affected it?

GG:

Yeah. Because it's almost like if someone calls in, then it's like a whole ordeal. These things should be talked about ahead of time.

KW:

Do you think the shortage of staff impacted like the quality of news that your station was putting out?

GG:

I'd say my first market, yes. The second market was a little better as far as making sure shifts recovered, but overall, yeah.

KW:

My next one is job satisfaction. So, would you say your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction played a role in your decision to leave?

GG:

Yeah.

KW:

What about burnout or mental health pressures?

GG:

Yeah.

KW:

How much would you say burnout/mental health contributed to your decision to want to leave?

GG:

That was probably the biggest factor because I was the morning reporter. And so, I worked 3 a.m. to noon, and starting off at my second station, I was Saturday to Wednesday, so it was like, my whole social life on the weekend, and they moved me Monday through Friday, but I'm still on like, that shift felt like, it was better a little bit, but I'm still like, tired all the time. And I just felt like I was like, operating at like 50 percent just because of work. And like trying to still stay in touch and like, have a social life was like you just didn't sleep. So yeah, that was a big factor.

KW:

So, would you say that that impacted your work-life balance then especially with your scheduling and stuff?

GG:

Yeah.

KW:

Okay, what about difficult stories? So, I know 2020 was obviously horrific. But do you think any of the stories you were covering or just the coverage or you know, COVID, protests, any of that? Did that kind of influence your decision to want to leave?

GG:

Not wanting to leave, but I definitely like noticed the difference afterwards. With like, anxiety, like you said, like going into, like, covering certain events and just like, looking back at it, I'm like, oh, kind of stressed like during that time.

KW:

Did you personally experience any sexism or discrimination while you were in TV news?

GG:
No, I wouldn't say so.

KW:
The next one is unethical practices. So, did you ever feel you know, from either higher ups or management that they were kind of influencing you to want to like, do a story that you might have think was unethical or just anything that went against your kind of ethical morals?

GG:
No, I don't think so. Like if I had those thoughts, I feel like I could have went to my bosses and told them.

KW:
What about compensation, whether that be salary, raises, financial stability?

GG:
Yeah. When I heard about the difference. I was like, what? Okay, well, I'm going to do this.

KW:
What about management issues? You said your general manager was decent, so did you have any issues with your management during your time in TV news?

GG:
I feel like it was fine for the most part. Like, they, I didn't really have like relationships with them, which we're now seeing in retrospect, is like kind of an issue. But like, it was never, never anything bad. Like, because I had an EP that I would go to who would like relay to the news director.

KW:
The next one is other health issues. So, like, besides mental health, did you ever have any, you know, health issues going on? That would have been like, if management wasn't understanding of that, would that have affected your decision to leave?

GG:
Nothing like too crazy, but I used to grind my teeth all the time when I was in news, and now I don't. That's just like something like a couple months into my new job. I was like, I haven't got like, that doesn't happen. That's so weird.

KW:
What about sponsorship or advertising? Did you think that there was like new segments that focused a lot on like getting sponsors or no?

GG:

Maybe a little bit? Because on the morning show, like, that's where they would like, if we were like hosting an event or something, they'd have us cover it, but I wouldn't say it was like, that big of a factor in decision making. Like it was still like, a story that we probably would cover.

KW:

Overall, based on all the different factors and even just your own. What would you say were the most important? I think you said burnout. Was that kind of the biggest one or what were your biggest factors?

GG:

I would say work-life balance and salary. And yeah, those are probably the big ones.

KW:

Do you think your gender kind of interacted with those factors? Or do you think your gender kind of played a role in your decision to leave?

GG:

I don't think so, no.

KW:

So, what about PR/communications work seemed attractive to you? So, like when you got this job offer or just told to apply for the job, what about and seemed like, okay, I would like to do this?

GG:

I saw it as like an opportunity to like make a difference, because that's ultimately like, why like reporting was like, connecting with different groups of people and like, people who wouldn't necessarily talk to one another and making sure like people's voices are heard and like this job that I currently have, I could still do that, it's just through a different avenue.

KW:

Ultimately, just overall, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR/communications?

GG:

I figured it would, like be a disservice to myself not to, cuz I was like, I know, like, all I ever wanted to do was like news. But that doesn't mean I can't be good at something else. And like, I might as well like, allow myself to try this opportunity, and see if I like it, versus not knowing and not trying at all.

KW:

So, reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, you know, work-life balance/salary, how does your new role compare?

GG:

Oh, it's much better. Like, a story example, when I first started here was like, a couple of weeks in. There's a snowstorm... and like, I'm used to going out and getting called in early and like five in the morning, like standing on the side of the road, like talking about how it's snowing outside, and my new boss was like, oh, just go ahead and work from home. Like, it's coming in, grab your laptop, and it was just mind blowing for me. What? Like, just like stuff like that, but like, it's not a thing in news.

KW:

My last question about this is, do you feel like you personally still kind of carry this like, journalistic self-concept with you... and do you think that affects your job?

GG:

I think so. I feel like, I'll always be a reporter. It's just like, who I'm working for, like, who I'm reporting for. Because I'm like, the values like don't change. I'm still doing the same thing just for someone else.

KW:

And do you think like, your skillset and TV news, like, prepared you to do your job well in your new role?

GG:

Yeah, because you learn how to do everything.

KW:

Overall, what changes do you think your former employer and TV news would have had to have made in order to keep you in your role?

GG:

More money and the ability to like because we had PTO, but it's not like nearly as great as my PTO situation now. So, like, the ability to take time off when you need and, and like a flexible schedule. So, like, if I were to need to work from home, for whatever reason, like the option to be able to do that.

KW:

Did you feel like if you've ever had mental health problems, or if something you know, a certain story made that worse? Did you feel like your new station was accommodating of that or did you kind of just keep it to yourself?

GG:

I just kept it to myself. It's almost like, is it even worth it to try to put up this fight?

KW:

My last question is, what changes do you think TV news needs to make in order to keep more women professionals in the future?

GG:

I feel like they need to, like, listen to us, like we're telling them what we want, and everyone is leaving for the same reason. So, like, actually making those changes, instead of like, performatory stuff, but actually going through and doing it. I feel like it's the biggest thing.

VIII. Hazel H., media relations consultant

KW:

My very first question is, at the very beginning, what attracted you to a career in TV news?

HH:

Um, I would say my two greatest character flaws are that I'm nosy and I don't like secrets, and I turned that into a career. I loved being able to learn something new every day. I loved being out in the community and talking to people and telling their stories and truly feeling like I was making a difference – that I was a helper in the community.

KW:

Considering the reasons why you're so interested in journalism, what was your overall experience like, and how did that factor into your decision to leave?

HH:

I had some really high highs and some really low lows, but I also feel like the industry had changed so much over the 10 years that I was in, that I did not feel like I was really helping anymore. The model had changed to the point where it was churn and burn stories and grit. And listen, I started in a very small market, extremely under resourced, but I was able to sort of carve out a niche there, it was in a military town. And so, I was able to it was it was at the height of, we were just getting out of Iraq, still, obviously, Afghanistan. And I was really able to carve out a niche where I was able to serve that military community. I did a series about preventing military suicides, and I got some feedback about, you know, you truly saved some lives... that drove me for a long time. But towards, you know, the last half, even the stuff that I felt like was good was not good. I wasn't making a difference in the community – no one trusted local news, and the model had made it so that whatever I was doing wasn't reaching people.

KW:

How did your perception of your role change over time? So where are you really excited and passionate about for at first, and then that kind of shifts by the time you're leaving news, or just kind of how did your perception change if it did at all?

HH:

I mean, I feel like in the last year or so I had kind of checked out. And it's, it's so unfortunate because I've always loved storytelling – I've always loved it. And the funny thing is, like they, I, you know, in my first market, you know, you're making, I was making \$10 an hour, and that was like, I'm just so excited to be here, but we're in your 30s. And going, holy shit, I can't pay the rent. I had a child and that it really changed everything for me in terms of like, I just can't keep living like this, and we had extremely toxic management in my last newsroom that just made it feel like I don't want to live like this anymore. I have to make a change. And I feel bad because I kind of underserved the community and that I was just like, I get paid whether the story is good or not. But I also – you have to keep in mind that I was a morning reporter. So, most of my story, I was a

morning reporter in [city]. So, my most of my stories were me standing on the side of the road in the winter, be like it's snowing in [city], like that was serving anybody. And I did a lot of like, fluffy morning stuff, which was fun. I really enjoyed it, but like, what good am I actually doing?

KW:

Based off of all of that, was there like a specific moment or seminal moment or experience that solidified your decision to leave TV news? Or was it kind of more of a gradual process of being like, maybe this isn't what I want to be doing anymore?

HH:

I think it was a gradual process over probably, honestly. It was every market I was in – I was like this can't be my life. And then I would go the next market and be like, this will be better. And it was honestly progressively worse market by market. But I, I am a completionist. And if I, you know, when I was nine years old and decided I wanted to be a reporter, dammit, I'm going to be a reporter. So, it was really, really hard for me to let go of that sense of identity I had around it. So, I would say the last few years, we had a news director who was really toxic. And then when I had my first kid, my priorities changed. And I just couldn't keep doing this. I couldn't keep working 20 hours for free. I couldn't keep, you know, we were paying for childcare more than I was bringing in – it was dumb for me to work, and I was unhappy. And I was finally – even then I wasn't really well willing to let go. But then, we just kept making a series of worse and worse hires. And by we, I mean this really bad news director. This is [city] – it was a market like 55, and she had an obsession with hiring people who were from [city], partly because she thought they wouldn't leave her, and they all do. And partly because she realized that to pay rent and live on his wages was not possible. So, these are all people who would live with their parents, which was an insane thing, you're asking adults to live with their parents so that they can make this work. But then she would, you know, it went from hiring people who had like one year of experience to hiring people who had no experience. They're fresh out of college, to hiring people still in college. Yeah. And so, we were getting, especially producers, I understand there is it's hard to attract producers, which is why we need to make some systemic changes to attract producers who actually have skills and keep them in. And it wasn't a lack of applicants – it was a lack of pay. She would not pay anybody because I don't know. Listen, I'm not in management, I can't make those decisions, I can tell you what the end product was, is that we had absolute garbage hitting air. We had fact errors. We had grammar errors. I was weekend morning anchor, and my shift was supposed to start at five for a show that starts at six, but I would have to come in over a series of worse and worse hires, I was coming in, I started at four, so that I could, you know, go through every script really carefully and make sure that we didn't have spelling and grammar errors. And then the next one, I had to go in at three to make sure that we didn't have some glaring fact errors. And then that by the last one who was still in college, I was coming in at two to completely rewrite the show. And then after my shift, I still had to stay and turn a package. And at this time, I already had a kid and I wanted to be home with my kid – like I can't work a 15-hour day. And I'm not getting paid for this. Keep in mind, I'm not getting paid for this. I'm only getting paid for my eight hours, and I had a breaking point where this kid – he was in college – was not

ready to produce a show on his own. And I had multiple discussions about how we need to have more supports for him – he needs more training – he cannot do this, and I cannot keep coming in at two and then staying. So, at one point – without telling me – they were like fine, he's going to do it – he's going to produce this, and this was after like a month of like he could not do every time somebody had to hold his hand. And this is during the week, somebody had to hold his hand. And then they're just like, whatever, we don't have enough bodies – he's going to do this. This is a long story, and I'm so sorry about this. But it speaks to me, and it speaks to the situation, that I was literally the only person who cared about the quality of the product, that we cannot put an actual dumpster fire on the air. And it wasn't just because it was my face, but because that is bad. That is very bad. Nobody trusts the news anyway, and if you are fucking it up, we've lost all credibility. And so, I had heard through somebody else, because management didn't even have the balls to tell me to my face that they were throwing this in there. And I said, this place is a clusterfuck. And this is the thing, all I actually threatened to do – all I threatened to do was only my job. And I said if you are so confident, then I will show up at five o'clock when my shift starts. And I will read the best to the best of my ability, what we can fix between five and six. And that was insubordination. And I was suspended, which was contrary to my contract – we were a union, but the union had lost all of its teeth. Like we had given away everything because our personal service contracts superseded the union contract. So, no one cared about the union contract, and my union rep was sleeping with the news director. So anyway, I got there was no progressive discipline. I was suspended, and that was the moment – my husband had been chomping at the bit. He's like, we need to change this – we need to do something. And we had talked about maybe coming back, I'm from [city]. So, we had talked about maybe coming back here, because it was just so hard to raise a family far away from my family. And when they suspended me, I said, all right, done, take that interview, let's do this. And within a day, he got the job offer. And within three weeks, I put in my, my two weeks' notice, which was perfect because it was right at the start of the pandemic. And man, that worked out well for me in terms of like, I don't want to be here. It was scary as hell cuz I didn't have anything lined up, but all of the pieces really fell into place. So, quitting your job at the beginning of the pandemic, when you're like everything's shutting down, and there are no jobs was scary as hell. Thank God I did.

KW:

Overall, if you could just describe your process to lead TV news. So, you put in your two weeks' notice without knowing what your next job was?

HH:

Yeah.

KW:

So, would you say kind of the buildup of the quality of news plus your suspensions and that was that kind of, you know, your moment where you're like, it's time to leave to leave?

HH:

Yeah, and well, and right after, I can't remember it was right after that, or right before my contract was going to be up soon. And they offered me a one percent raise after five years there. So, after 10 years in the industry, I was almost going to make the \$50,000 –almost. So that was really the thing... The suspension made me mad, but the total erosion of the industry from the inside out had been building for a long time, and when the next, our standard 1 percent came up, I was just, no, I can't do this anymore. I feel like I should have said the pay was also a large factor.

KW:

So, you quit, and then how did you go about searching for a new job?

HH:

So yeah, I just, I quit. And I went on LinkedIn and started just searching. And I had already joined TV to PR, like a few months before this. And I was, you know, you're wary about if you like to do I want people to know that I'm thinking about getting out. I had gotten a lot of like, really good advice from just lurking there. And so, I was just applying to jobs... But, you know, I got ghosted for about a month from a lot of places. And then the job that I have now, it was just honestly, fate. It was fate that that job opened up. My predecessor retired, right at the time – she was already planning to retire. But then, the pandemic happens, and she's like, well, I'm never going back to my office, goodbye. And so, they were able to post the job. And it was it was perfect. It was scary as hell.

KW:

So, you're still a media relations consultant, right?

HH:

Correct.

KW:

So, is that the initial role you got out of this job?

HH:

It is.

KW:

How many months were you applying?

HH:

Only a month... Just got really lucky – the right job opportunity open at exactly the right time, and they saw my application.

KW:

I have a list of about 10+ common reasons why people leave. So, I'll just go through these one by one and if you have anything to comment – if that impacted your decision to leave at all... the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry.

HH:
Yes.

KW:
How much do you think that was a factor in your decision to leave?

HH:
I mean, I don't know how rapid but over the decade, it was. I mean, the churn and burn mentality, not just for the stories, but for the humans where there had always been this perception that, oh, that's okay – I'll just go someone younger and cheaper. You're lucky to have this job. And they, they honestly, they prey on women who are like, we're conditioned to feel that way. Oh, I'm lucky to have this opportunity to be treated like a slave. I'm lucky to do this thing that I've wanted to do since I was nine, even though this is not a sustainable model, and it's destroying me as a human being. So, but yes, the longer I was in the industry, the more pronounced that became. And that even moving up markets, it seemed to get worse, because I think the industry got worse.

KW:
So, my next one is shortage of resources (staff)... So, it's shortage of resources, and then quality of news. So, if you want to just comment on the shortage of resources – if that impacted your ability, your decision to leave and if you if that affected the quality of new standards, in your opinion?

HH:
It was that every day was a struggle that didn't need to be. That every day, we were fighting for bare necessities of like, I need a laptop so that we can do this in the field. They want to live for the sake of life, but don't want to have us set us up for success on any of this. The quality of the news comes down to the shortage of resources, where we're all now trying to – they keep adding hours and hours of news without adding humans. So, the content is just like feed the beast – feed the beast, and no one cared about the quality of the content, except for the people who are getting so burnt out trying to keep that ship afloat... I was burnt out. I was so burnout out. I can't be the only person who cares.

KW:
The actual next one is burnout/mental health pressures. So, did that impact your decision to leave TV news at all?

HH:
Yeah, burnout did. I mean, I just couldn't keep – it was always going so far above and beyond and having nothing to show for it. And to just see, like, being the only person who's trying to keep it together. And listen, there are other dedicated journalists, but we can all only do what we can do. There are systemic problems that are making it so that what you're doing in your silo does not make a difference.

KW:

Right. And that was my thing. Like I was still student but even as a senior when I had that experience, I was the first out of my friend group to leave, and I felt like it was a “me” problem like me not being cut out for this or like, strong enough for this. A. reason I got so passionate about this topic because I noticed my I started having mental health problems when I started doing TV news. And I'm like, okay, my relationships haven't changed, you know, my grades haven't changed. So, it's like the only thing that had changed that had significantly made my mental health worse was TV news. So, I get where you're coming from.

HH:

Looking back on it, I feel like I've always dealt with some level of anxiety but that's just like who I am, but looking back on, it can now realize I was going through some significant bouts of depression over those 10 years. And like, one of them, I was postpartum depression, but it was so much exacerbated by the conditions of my work where like, I just, they did not give me any – listen, I understand you have to do the job – but like, there was zero flexibility. Or just like, as I mentioned, I was paying for childcare more than I was bringing home, and I could not be late to get my kid. And I was working morning shifts, so I was I had to be home by one, so I could get my kid. And whether or not you have something else going on, you have to get your resource there so that I can hand the story off. And like it just – one time, and I did not have a support system in [city]. My family is in [city]. And none of my friends had kids because they you know, we're all reporters too. And this is not an industry that makes it so that you can have a family. And like one time they bullied me into coming in to cover somebody else's sick calls. I didn't have childcare. My news director was like, just bring my baby in. And I'll watch him while you get this done. And I was like, I mean, if I have to come in, I guess I have to come in. So unfortunately, I was passing [baby] to, you know, college kid producers being like, there's a shadow me and at the time, it was just like, I'm so proud of myself working mom has it all. I'm wearing my baby while I'm turning a package. That is a shitty position to put me in. And the package was garbage because I was trying to take care of this kid who did not want to be there, and I had been made promises about support, and it wasn't there. And the flexibility you need, like not even flexibility – like let's have a normal life. I was trying to put my kid to bed at six because I had to be in bed at 6:30 and it kind of worked but like the strain on my marriage, the strain on everything, it exacerbated the postpartum depression a lot.

KW:

The next one is other health issues. So, this kind of is related to that. But in terms of like maternity leave... Did other health issues or maternity leave, did that impact your decision?

HH:

It didn't impact my decision, but I did get healthy when I left. You don't realize how far down the hole you are until you start feeling better. And like I'd had high blood pressure while I was in news and was a side effect of working weird overnight hours, and the second I left my blood pressure went back to normal... And I've had I've had another

baby since I left news – no depression. So, and like, yes, there's like – you have a predisposition to postpartum depression. If you have mental health struggles, if you have a history of depression, you're more predisposed to having postpartum depression. But the fact that I wasn't dealing with all of the nonsense from news, I wasn't like, dreading every day of my life waking up being like, oh, what fresh hell is facing me now? Like, I was able to cope with the struggles of having a newborn so much better.

KW:

My next one is work-life balance. So, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

HH:

Absolutely. I had no work-life balance. Even when I was home, I wasn't off call. I was always having to schedule calls. And so, I'd be putting my kid down at night, and somebody would be calling to set up a like to deal with a story or something – work was always calling me. You're tied to this phone. The irony, of course, is that they shut off my access to my email the second I had a baby. So, for the 12 weeks, most of it unpaid that I well, I was in [state]. So, [state] paid me on my maternity leave, but the station did not. I didn't have access to my email, and that put me behind in my career. To be honest, I lost a lot of connections with people. But they were contending that if I was on maternity leave, and I checked my email, I was technically working, and they'd have to pay me for working. And I turned around and said, so the fact that I'm checking my email all day, all night, I never have a second where I'm not attached to this phone, which by the way, you no longer pay for you dicks. Again, the cheap, like just the lack of resources, I didn't have a work phone. They like that doesn't count as working. All of that unpaid labor I was doing, and then add to that the emotional labor of running my household and dealing with you know, my husband was going through some stuff, and I had to keep that boat afloat. And I had this baby, I had zero time and zero ability to just let go and unplug. And honestly, I tried to quit the fall before I actually did quit in the spring. Because I had been like, well, I'll just hold on here, and at least over Christmas, I'll have opportunities and I'll get you know these things. But [she] was promoting her little darlings. And it turned out I was just going to work my normal shift over Christmas. I was like, I'm going to miss my baby's first Christmas... because why? For all three viewers, for me to be like it's snowing in [city]. Like, there's no advancement here. There's no payoff for any of this. So no, there was no work-life balance.

KW:

The next one is compensation, so that includes that includes salary, raises, financial stability. Did that impact your decision to leave?

HH:

I mean, yes, it did. There was no payoff for this, like, I don't make enough money to want to die. Like and honestly there, there were like increasing threats of violence against us. I remember I was nine months pregnant... I was so fat, like could not see my feet. It was icy as hell, and they insisted on me being live in a bad neighborhood after we'd already turned the story. I'd shadow look live during the morning. And they insisted on me going back there for noon. And somebody who was attached to this got very upset and chased

my fat ass down the street swinging a chain at us. And I was just like, what am I doing? Like, what if I fell on the ice? What if this guy actually caught me and for what – for life – for the sake of life because my life as a human does not matter? Knowing we already had the story – we already had shot the story, but they wanted us live, and I honestly can't remember the question. I just got really angry about that one.

KW:

I'm sorry that you've had to go through all this. It was just compensation/salary/raises.

HH:

Yeah, so there was no financial stability. One of the reasons I got married was to get off of health insurance because my husband had better health insurance than me and there just was [no] payoff. Like, there are lots of jobs that are very hard. And they, they need you to have a lot of passion that doesn't have the truly extrinsic reward for it. But if you're going to live like this, you better pay someone to live like this. And why, like, you just cannot sustain living like this, and not having enough money to pay for childcare. Or, you know, especially my first market, I was making \$10 an hour like I, I was eating peanut butter and jelly. And I was lucky if it was the good peanut butter. I like I made some truly horrific concoctions of like, these are cheap foods, and you can't live like that, and there is no reason to do it. And there's no reason they can't pay you record profits for the shareholders and throwing away the humans who do the work.

KW:

My next one is unethical practices. So, did you feel from management that, at any time during your career, did you feel like they were kind of trying to influence you to engage in a story or something that didn't really align with your morals or not so much?

HH:

I think I avoided some of that. I think there were a lot of editorial decisions that were made that I was like, what are you guys doing? Like things like, if somebody was an advertiser, they would like think twice about whether or not they were going to say something shitty about them. And I don't think that should have ever been part of it. Or they would like pull the plug on us. Like one of my coworkers did a really good investigative story about the school to prison pipeline, and they just, were not playing ball with it, not even trying to figure out how to make it work with what they wanted. But it wasn't something that like big management wanted to wait into, because it would have made it a difficult relationship with the school district. So, they just didn't run this important story, which I think was an important community story. I think, really, just like a dumbing of our populace, to be honest. Like we're chasing stories that don't matter, or a super large focus on MOS on stories that should not have been MOS. We were told to stay away from experts, because experts are boring, but then you'd be out trying to get MOS on like, serious, important policy stuff that you have to explain to somebody and then try to get their opinion, which is unethical. If I have to tell you what the policy is, you can't have an opinion on it. And why is it more important to have dumb ass on the street tell you what to feel about something, rather than give you the actual facts from people who are credible sources who can actually tell you the truth.

KW:

My next one is difficult stories... do you think any kind of difficult stories may have had to do impacted your decision to want to leave?

HH:

I think there was a cumulative effect of seeing too many dead bodies too many days in a row. And I was lucky, I did a lot of fluffy stories, but there were like weeks where because I'm morning, fluff reporter, but we break for breaking news. And there was like one week where I think I had like five bodies, and they hadn't done a good job covering it up. And like, obviously, you see bodies in this industry. And I've seen bodies from the years before, but it was like day after day of like, facing the mortality of a human being who is lying in the street like garbage, and realizing that I don't care enough about that, where I'm just like, oh, this is a great shot. That took a toll on me where I realized that I had lost a lot of my humanity. And that's the only way you cope in this. Fun fact, now that I'm out of news, I cry at everything. It is absurd how much I cry. Everything affects me – it hurts. The world hurts right now. Yeah. Because I feel like I had compartmentalized myself so much so that nothing hurt that I was unable to be affected. And so, your body's like subconsciously being like, this is not normal. This is not okay. But like consciously you don't have the space to be okay.

KW:

My next one has management issues. Did that factor into your decision to leave?

HH:

Part of this is that all I had never worked with not bad management. I would say over the course of my 10 years, I worked with five different news directors in different markets, and all of them were toxic in their own ways. And even the ones where I'm like, wow, you genuinely did set me up for success, like my first market was a very tough place to work. They were harsh – like that is not how you talk to people, but it made me a damn good reporter. My following markets, nobody was even reading my scripts, like there was no mentorship, there was no push for me to get better it was just get this to air – it doesn't matter what it looks like, which, you know, I'm the only one who cares anymore. And then there was a lot of really garbage practices – really garbage practices in my last market. Like I had an issue with a photographer who really was truly terrible at his job. The stories – that was part of my burnout is like, why am I putting all of this effort into something where I'm embarrassed that this had air because it looked so bad. But he was also he wouldn't prioritize the job in a way where like, he would stay up all night, and then he would come to work. And then he would fall asleep while driving the newsman, and on more than one occasion, almost drove us off the road. And I could not get him to do even basic functions of the job to get the story done. And this manager told me that she would not take me off of having to work with him every day because, quote, you're the only one who can get him to do anything. Why is that on me? You're the manager – you get him to do something. You set this up as a way that we can have some sort of constructive conversation. It was really, really not good. And that's when my blood pressure was really high, and then over the years, I worked with other photographers, and

it got better. But the underlying thread here is that she would say one thing to your face, and then would turn around and stab you in the back. She would make you promises that she never intended to keep. When I was going for the weekend morning anchor job, she actually pitted me against another reporter. I would do Saturday. She did Sunday's, and it was a competition, the other reporter ended up leaving, because who wants to work like that, but you should never be pitting two people against each other. We should be making it so that everyone can be successful. Or here's this novel idea: talk to people like adults. I may not like what you have to say, but you better fucking tell me the truth. And we're in news, like we deal in truth we deal in facts, not this bullshit.

KW:

The next one is job satisfaction. So, I know like this kind of this overall arching theme – you weren't very satisfied with your job. But how did that impact your decision to leave if it did?

HH:

I mean, by the end, I was no longer satisfied at all with my job. I wasn't doing good work, and I knew it, and I wasn't getting any satisfaction out of it. I was not helping the community. And that was the whole point... what am I even holding on to anymore?

KW:

During your time in TV news, did you ever felt like you experienced sexism or discrimination?

HH:

Yes, I know that reporters who were coming in after me, who had less experienced than me, but in the same market that I had started in, was making more than me. A very good example of this is when I said this place is a clusterfuck, excuse me, I got suspended. A male colleague had said literally the exact same thing with no consequences... But yes, there was absolutely more respect, more pay for my male colleagues. And you know, even down to like, yes on not a daily basis, and even not even weekly basis, but like there's a lot of harassment from the community. Just like a lot of, even now, some rando dudes posts pictures of me on Twitter, commenting on my body, and it's just like wears on you and like there's really nothing that station can do about that – the world is just a shitty place. But like, I'm not valued for being an intelligent, good journalist. I was there because I had tits, and it's hard not to deal with that. And then I felt like I was really discriminated against because I was a mom, I was absolutely mommy tract, where I was going to just die on weekend mornings. All of the other opportunities for filling anchoring dried up. And, you know, part of that is like I had a little issue being flexible. Like, I didn't have childcare. But if you gave me enough notice, which is what you gave to everyone else, I could have made that work. But I was no longer valuable. On top of that, I was a lactating mom, so I had to make sure that I was sticking to my pumping schedule, and that made me completely useless to them. And I never missed a deadline. I never missed a live shot. I always made it work. But I don't know, at least once every couple of weeks at 11 o'clock, they'd be like, where are you working pumping where I've always been on the side of the road at a murder scene. In this, the lactation area they gave

me was the shared makeup room. So, my male colleagues were putting on their makeup while I was topless pumping. And listen, I have no shame, boobs are boobs, it's 2022, and I'm not that bothered by this. But that you have set it up to make it very clear that there is no place for a working mom here.

KW:

I'm sure that was very frustrating for you... even as a journalist, but also as a woman and a working mom.

HH:

And now I'm here and like, you know, they value everyone I work with. And I think part of that is like very few people in news have kids, very few women in news have kids, you get to a certain age and it's either, like stay in news and don't have kids, or get out of news. And you just, it's so hard to make it work. There's not enough money to make it work. Childcare is so expensive, and I it didn't make sense for me to keep working and losing money by going to work in a job that was making me a miserable human being.

KW:

My very last one on this is sponsorship availability/conflicts. So, whether that be seeing more paid segments, like from advertisers, did you kind of see that? Or did that impact your decision to want to leave at all?

HH:

That didn't really impact me. I mean, if I had seen that, I mean, on this side of things where I'm like setting up paid segments, I'm like, this is so unethical, but you know, it's my job. I can see a lot of that where I was.

KW:

What were the most important factors to you and your decision to leave TV news?

HH:

My money and my family. I didn't make enough to sacrifice my family like I was.

KW:

And then as a woman, do you think your gender interacted with these factors at all or together man, you would have been any other gender would have been the same experience?

HH:

I do think it did because I knew I was making less than my male colleagues. And I knew that there was less room for advancement for me. And I knew that, you know, it is what it is, but I am the primary caregiver for my kids. And while my husband is like, yeah, I'll stay late at work, and it's just not an option for me.

KW:

Whenever you quit your job, what about PR work or your role now seemed attractive to you?

HH:

So, this is one of the things that I think kept me in news for longer than I should have been that I didn't realize – I thought I'm only qualified to do this. And going TV to PR women or whatever, really helped me understand that I could still interact in a way where I'm telling stories about things that matter to me. And honestly, I work in education... So, I'm able to talk about issues that I do feel like make a difference. We do a lot of trying to pass legislation that improves our public schools. We're doing a lot to try to ensure equity for students of color and like those are things that I'm like, yes, I feel good about what I'm trying to do here. So that's what I guess that's what attracted me is the ability to continue being in a storytelling capacity to some extent, without any of the bullshit. And with the thing that actually attracted me to lose in the first place, which is the idea that I could make a difference.

KW:

Overall, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR, rather than, you know, anything else that you could have done besides news?

HH:

I didn't know what else I could do. Realizing I could do PR was a really big step for me. I still don't know what else I could do.

KW:

Reflecting on all the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your role now compare to your role in TV?

HH:

The grass is extremely green on this side of the fence. I make double my salary from when I left news. There is room for advancement. There's room for growth. They care about me as a human being. I've had another baby since then and had paid maternity leave. And, you know, a lactation room. The flexibility where you know, if my kid has a dentist appointment, I am able to just say, all right, I'm working from home today, or I'm working a half day. We have generous leave policies. We have great insurance. We get five weeks of paid vacation, outside of Christmas, where my family can come first, if, when I'm at work, I'm able to focus on work. And granted being a media relations role, I do have more on call than other people in my department, like reporters will call me at night. They'll call me on the weekends, but I'm also able to, like, I feel appreciated, I feel valued for my expertise. And I know that my managers see what I do because they'll say, hey, I know you were doing this last night – flex your time – make sure you come in late tomorrow, is recognizing that I'm a human being with needs like sleep or time with my family. And just, it's truly amazing.

KW:

Based off the experience you have as a journalist, do you still do you think you still carry like a journalistic self-concept in the work you do now? And if you do, do you think that you know impacts your job?

HH:

I think I am better at my job because I did TV news, if nothing else, because I understand what reporters need and how newsrooms work so that I can ensure that we get them what they need and have a good relationship. I do a podcast for our organization. We truly love it a lot of time, and it's funny to watch from like season one where it's like, I'm going to be doing this as a super fair journalistic story to now where it's season three, where I'm like, wait a second, I am not held to any of these standards. And you know what, I'm going to insert my opinion right here. This is Mo Larkey that this is happening in our state house like, so I've become what I think unfortunately, journalism has become where I'm just inserting my opinions into everything and trying to make it a compelling story, rather than just the fact. At least I can recognize that it's all biased propaganda, but that's what a good journalist would have done still in the industry.

KW:

Overall, I know this might be a big question, but what changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you at the news station you were at?

HH:

Significantly more pay – significantly more, and a huge cultural change where it would be clear that you valued me as a human – like a pizza party ain't going to cut it. Which as a morning news person, the pizza always came at 2 p.m. So, I didn't even get the pizza.

KW:

What changes do you think the TV news industry needs to make in order to retain more women in the future?

HH:

They need to make it more family friendly. They need to have enough staff. They really need to build the bench strength so that if you have to, if you don't have childcare, it's not a big deal if you can't come into work that day. They need to value the fact that like after your shift is over, you can't be the only person working right now. And they need to respect that shift if I sign up for four to 12:30, I need to leave at 12:30. You can't expect me to be there till 2:30 every day. I honestly feel like a move to a four-day work week would solve a lot of their problems, but that requires hiring people, and that requires paying people. Like don't pay people for four days' worth of work at \$10 an hour. Pay them like the valuable professionals they are. Give them the supports. Read their scripts, and not just to make sure we're not getting screwed, but in ways that there's continued mentorship. Create opportunities for people to thrive. Value what I bring to the table as a parent. I can tell you my perspective as a storyteller shifted a lot when I had a kid, where before I had kids, yeah, telling stories about kids in school issues and stuff was very different than after I had a kid realizing like it just came from a different place in my heart... But by the time you're in your 30s, most women are out. Like I remember in my

first market, like people were leaving, and I was like failures, losers. If only I had changed course 10 years ago, how much more money I would have made, how much happier I might have been in my life. I probably would not have gotten the job I have now without 10 years newsroom experience. So, you know, it was worth it in the end, I guess, but what I gave up to get here was not worth it to me... I have one more thought that I'm hoping I can add, and this is why I'm so glad you're looking at it from just specifically, here's what you need to do for your women in your newsroom is that I think societally we've been conditioned not to take up space, and not to be bitches and not to demand. And so, we don't do a good job right off the bat of negotiating higher salaries for ourselves. And when you do speak up, you're suspended. But the only real way, I guess, to ensure that like, oh, I'm getting the best money I can is to get an agent and then to pay that agent such a large chunk of your salary. So, like that's an in general feminist issue is that it has to do a better job of demanding more for ourselves, or having great union contracts. That's honestly the best thing about where I am right now. I'm in a union working for union and the union that I in, everyone makes the same starting salary. I mean, you can like if you have X number of things going on, you can come in at a step, but having that egalitarian system, knowing that I am making exactly the same as my male colleagues who are at the same level of experience and the same number of years for this organization, that is a morale booster more than anything like that makes me know that I am being valued as a human being and not setback because of my lady bits... and I think we need to be more open about how much we're making. Like we've also, you know, oh, we don't talk about how much we're making. I think it is really important when you're in the newsroom to know that this person is making this much, and they have this much experience. This person is making this much. The women miraculously are all making \$10,000 less than the men. Let's talk about this. So, you can say, wait a second, this is bullshit.

IX. Ivy I., digital marketing manager

KW:

So, my very first question is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

II:

So basically, that was my dream since I was like a teenager. You know, my mom was an accountant. So, you know, I'm not a first-generation college student. So, with me, it wasn't like, oh, we hope you go to college, it was more like, what are you going to do? What are you going to study? What's going to be your career. And so, I went to a high school that had a law magnet, but it also had a TV magnet. And so, I was in the law magnet, you know, thinking I was going to be some sort of attorney. And those classes were not for me – we had to take criminal justice first, and it was just not for me – it was not interesting. It was like a drag. And so, I joined the TV magnet. And it was just like, my world opened up – I loved it, TV production was everything. I'm not a shy person, and I've always loved to read love to write. And you know, just be nosy and know everything that's, you know, going on – I would read the newspaper when I was in high school, which was a little weird. And so yeah, that was kind of like my initial, I guess, what prompted me to look into a career and to journalism.

KW:

So, going off that, obviously, you were very passionate. So, my next question that's a little broader, but just overall, what comes to your head when you think about your journalism experience overall? What was it like, and how did your experience factor into your decision to leave?

II:

Oh, I mean, you know, it's a very harsh duality because this is everything that I wanted to do since I was a child. And being a news reporter, and especially me, I worked for a Spanish network. So, I was in touch and in contact, and talking to the Hispanic community every single day – that was incredible. That's been one of my life's most greatest honors in my life to be to have been able to do that, but it was also incredibly hard and on honestly, like thinking about it now, especially because I was so young, it was a system of abuse, psychological abuse, like labor abuse. And I think the situation with me, and when with a lot of the colleagues that are in Spanish media, is that we're often overlooked. And these companies get to get away with a lot of things that wouldn't be that aren't right. And so, when I think about my experience, I just think about like, literal suffering. And it was just, you know, I couldn't do it anymore. I didn't want to – like there came a point where my dream literally turned into a nightmare, and I just wanted to get out.

KW:

It's hard to hear because, you know, when you are so passionate about it, and then the harsh reality kind of kicks in. But, based on your experience, was there any specific moment or like a seminal moment that solidified your decision to leave news? Or was do you think it was more of a gradual process or?

II:

It's definitely like death by 1000 cuts, and I was an MMJ my entire career, except for like, the first two years that I was actually like a news reporter. So being an MMJ, especially in market five... it's a huge city, all the, you know, group of cities – everything is far away – you're by yourself – you have these crazy deadlines because you're in a market with multiple shows. It's not just the five and the 10. I was doing at one point the 11— like the noon show, and the four and in the five by myself, you know, live shots, editing packages. So, you add that crazy amount of stress that you have every single day to the safety aspect. I was nightside for most of my career, so I work from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m., and I was doing live shots at night and dangerous neighborhoods – in empty parking lots. I mean, you really don't think about it, because you're so young, and you're just so eager to do well – and, you know, please basically. That nothing like some of the situations I was in it was just like, oh, my goodness, you know, and no one inside the newsroom cares about your safety because I wasn't in, you know, dangerous situations. And I went to HR and HR told me, well, it's your responsibility – if you don't feel safe, you have to make the call. So, it's like but also, you're not encouraged or even empowered to make those calls because if you leave a scene, then you don't have a story, and now you're scrambling to find another one. So, there was that, and that was kind of like the first maybe seven years and then in this this other company that I was in for the last three years because I exited in April of this year, there was just mismanagement and just a toxic work environment, but not necessarily so much as the first one. However, like for example, the two photog who was in charge of the maintenance of the news vehicles that we drove didn't do anything, I almost lost a tire on a news unit because they had taken it to get the tires replaced or rotated or whatever. And the people who did it, like literally just put it on and didn't tighten the little screws or whatever that go around there. That – and then, like a year later, I was left without brakes – I was driving on the highway and like the brakes went out because they weren't keeping up with the maintenance. So, it's just like, alright, like, this is enough.

KW:

So overall, how did your perception of your role in TV news change over time? So like, were you super excited/eager at first? And then did that kind of start changing as time went on? Or just kind of take me through what your perception how that if that changed at all – how it did?

II:

Absolutely. I think initially, you're just so excited to – and I feel like this goes back to all of our professors and everything you learn in college. It's almost like they tell you you're you know, and it's true. It's a very competitive business 200+ people graduate, like every semester, from every school in the country, and there's like four news stations. So, you have this entire – not even pool, but like an ocean of people – competing for like five jobs. And yeah, they tell you, you're lucky to be here – you're replaceable, like within two minutes. And so, and I think another aspect is, I feel like they almost groom you to accept that you're going to be stressed and overworked, and worst of all underpaid because we all start in those small markets. My first job I was making \$25,000 a year, and that was in

2012... I was paying \$460 for a really big one-bedroom apartment. But still, I mean, 25 like, there was a week when this was the first time that I had actually like lived away from home. Because when I went to college, I went relatively nearby, there was a week where I ran out of money, like I did not have money – I didn't have groceries – I didn't have anything to eat. And it was like a Tuesday, and I wasn't going to get paid until Friday. And so that was the initial years, but then as, you know, grow older. And, yeah, I mean, it just you still feel like you're really lucky to do it, and you love what you do, and you have a commitment to, you know, inform the public, but I also think that they really drill it into your head that this is a calling like, this is what you're meant to do. When in the end reality like no, this is just another job and a career and a way for you to feed yourself and your family. And if it's not working out for you, then you need to just switch.

KW:

Could you take me through your process of your decision to leave TV news – so what I mean by that is like, did you look for other jobs before you put your resignation? Or did you quit and then look for jobs? Just kind of take me through how you went about exiting and finding another?

II:

Well, we just started like a whole bunch of my colleagues and coworkers, it was like a mass exodus last year, because on top of that, with COVID, you know, everybody got to go work from home. And we were, they tossed us some K95 masks and were, like, go out there. So, I think COVID really just compounded everything, like the reality. So, what we really were going through. And so last year, like five of my coworkers left – one of my friends left to be, you know, to do PR for a city, so I, you know, and she would tell us kind of like, her day to day and how different it was and how much more money she made. I mean, clearly, that was like the first, you know, and most important thing. And so, it was mainly a process – it's almost like detachment. When you're in a relationship, which you know, your employment is the relationship, and it's not good for you, sometimes it takes you a while, and you're like, no, I'm going to make it work. And I just have to stick it out. And it's like, at one point, you start thinking like, okay, this is not going to work, I need to keep looking forward. And so, for me, it was really just kind of like, several things that were coming together. I was going to get married. So, I wanted to be able to have a job that would provide for my family in the future. And if I want to be a mom, and I want to have kids, I don't want to have to leave them at the drop of a hat and go being a tornado. And actually, here... we get a lot of tornadoes. So, when I was already on the fence, so I started looking and applying for jobs. Since October of last year, I applied for one – didn't hear back, then in February, I was just like, I need to get out of this. So, I just kept applying, I applied for like to like three other jobs before I saw the posting for my current job. So, I finally applied. And they called me in for an interview. And I went into the interview, but then, you know, this is what I've been doing, or being a reporter was what I had been doing for the entirety of my adult life. So, I kind of almost was like, no, never mind, I don't want to do this, like, this is what I know, this is what I love, and I'm going to stick to it. But then, in March while I was going through the initial interview process, it was my mom's birthday, and a tornado hit like two hours

away. So, I had to go over there, and because of like the internal workings of, you know, there's people who literally don't work like our chief photog, I just, you know, have a bone against him because we were incredibly short staffed, and I get it that now you're a manager. But if there's a tornado, and there you have like two crews, and everybody else has six crews, then you need to go out and go cover the freaking tornado. So, what happened was, they sent me out on my mom's birthday, and the thing was, I was like, I need to be back here for her dinner. Like I'm not missing her dinner. He was supposed to go take the meteorologist to the site of the damage. But of course, he didn't want to go out and drive two hours and miss his personal life. So, they call me like around noon and they're like, hey, he's not going to go over there. Your photog who you're with, because when there's natural disasters, they do send you with a photographer. You guys are just going to have to stick around for the meteorologist and, you know, whatever she wants to do. And I was like, absolutely not. I called my boss. I threw a fit. I was like, this is just not going to happen. Like, I'm going back. Even I've had to, like catch a ride with someone. So thankfully, that didn't happen. But it was just like, I was just tired of always missing out on my important events, you know, my family, and like literally my life. I've always worked all the holidays – Christmas Day of 2016, I remember I was like, in some awful apartments where a murder had happened, and people were drunk. It was just often, and it is one of those things that you're like, what am I really doing here? But it took me since 2016 until finally this year to say that's it. So, it was a gradual thing. But yes, I was absolutely not going to leave my job without having something else first and something else that was a good opportunity for me.

KW:

Do you know when you applied for your current job, and when you, like how much time passed before you ended up accepting?

II:

So, I think I applied either end of January or early February – around there. I did get a call back I think late February, and the initial interviews were at the beginning of March. And so finally they, they made me an offer. And by April, I was set on going over there. So, it's like a three-month process.

KW:

And then you quit your news job in April as well?

II:

Mhm.

KW:

There's obviously a lot of reasons why people leave, but I've, I have like, 10+ common ones that are reasons why people leave. So, I'm just going to go through those, and if you have anything if to comment on each one and if they applied to your decision to leave... my first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry – that can be more of an emphasis on social media or emphasis on MMJs... did that impact your decision to want to leave the industry at all?

II:

Yes, I mean, and since my entire career was – I was an MMJ – they just kind of kept adding to it. Do social media, write for the web, and it's like, no, I'm one person, and I'm going work from this time and this time because you're not paying me overtime, and I'm still working.

KW:

What about your job satisfaction? Did that impact your decision to leave?

II:

Yes.

KW:

How so?

II:

Because they, especially in the last news station that I was in, they saw a decline in ratings, which just there's a lot of factors. I mean, people really being on TV and the news, as we know, it is just not as valuable as, what's the word I'm looking for? As it was, like, 10-15 years ago, even five years ago, I mean, streaming is everything – people really – no one goes home and turns on the news at like six o'clock, you know? So, yes, with job satisfaction – they implemented this whole new like branding thing, and it just really changed the way that they wanted us to execute our news gathering, and to me, that didn't make sense.

KW:

The next one is burnout/mental health pressures. So, did you experience either of those? And if you did, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

II:

Absolutely. And even though like the real stress, as I mentioned, with like, in 2017, like I had an awful year, like I was depressed. I had panic attacks in the parking lot at my new station. So that was even a darker time. These past three years weren't as bad. But yes, it was just – it was too much. You wake up, you go to sleep thinking about oh, because they wanted us for example, they wanted us to pitch three stories. But we had to go through like this little essay that we had to do, of like the new branding. So, it was like – it was ridiculous. And so, you go to sleep thinking, what am I going to pitch tomorrow? You wake up looking for stuff to pitch like no – it was just – I didn't want it to take over my life any anymore.

KW:

The next one is work-life balance. So how was your work-life balance, and did that impact your decision to want to leave?

II:

Yes, because as I mentioned, like you make a lot of sacrifices by missing out on the holidays. On special events, I worked for, like eight years, the weekends. My whole 20s, I just feel like I, you know, wasn't young and carefree because I was working Saturday and Sunday. So yes, that was absolutely a part of it.

KW:

Did you experience, in your opinion, any sexism or discrimination? And if you did, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

II:

Yes, absolutely. I mean, part of the reason why I had such a bad year in 2017, is because I feel like I'm an assertive woman, and people don't like that. I've seen men throw tantrums, my fellow, you know, coworkers, green mat producers, nothing happened. And I started standing up for myself, and it was just, it was worse. It's almost like they were trying to like, you know, prevent me from doing that. Aside from that, I've never been skinny. Like, I'm not overweight, but I wasn't stick thin, and that was absolutely a factor. I wanted to be an anchor, and that was told to me that was like, specifically mentioned that that was, you know, a reason why I was not being looked at for those roles. And so, you know, you get tired of fighting with your body. And so yeah.

KW:

My next one is difficult stories. So, I know you left during COVID, I'm sure you've covered a lot of difficult stories, so did that impact your decision to leave at all or not so much?

II:

I wouldn't rank it high up on the list, but it's definitely like empathy burnout almost. You know, like, literally since I quit, I do not watch the news. I don't want to – I spent 12 years of my life hounding people who had just lost a relative or had gone through a traumatic experience, and that takes a lot of emotional strength and labor. And so yes, it does, does take a toll on you.

KW:

The next one is shortage of resources. So, I know you said you guys were way understaffed, but, you know, lack of staff or, you know, photogs, editors, travel budgets, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

II:

Oh, absolutely, absolutely. That's probably like number one or two because it's just like they don't want to invest in what it takes to run a new station. And they want the people who are there to work miracles, and you can't, you can't, but that's expected, and so you try to reach that goal, but it's impossible.

KW:

So, going off that with the shortage of resources – my next one is quality of news standards. So, did that impact your decision to leave it all and/or did you think the lack of staff was impacting the quality of news that was being produced?

II:

Yes, absolutely. They go hand in hand. To me, it was embarrassing that something major would happen, and we didn't have anyone to send. Last year, I tore a tendon [in] my foot, so I wasn't able to carry – I basically wasn't able to MMJ, so they put me like on desk duty. And last year, there were some protests from Cuban expatriates were here. They were protesting, and they were protesting, like, 45 minutes away, and they call the new station. And they told us, hey, we're here, we're going to protest and the assignments that told them, oh, we don't have anyone to send. Those people went and stood outside our new station, so that they could get coverage, or else they weren't going to get coverage. And so that was so embarrassing. And it's just like, yeah, I mean, you're not really real news station because you're not covering news.

KW:

The next one is unethical practices... Did you just ever feel like you were kind of being asked to do things that didn't align with your ethics or morals or was that not really prevalent?

II:

So that started creeping up, as I mentioned, because there was like a shift in branding. And so basically, what it came down to is they wanted our news to be urgent, but you know, that was an acronym for whatever, whatever. And the main thing, it has to be useful, and people have to learn something from this, and I remember there was an issue incident last year, where a woman killed her two children... really awful. And my news director then heard that had something to do with mental health. And so basically, she wanted me to tell the story and then give mental health resources. And I was like, I'm not going to make that kind of connection – you don't know that. No one has told us that. Mental health can be a lot of things. She could have been high off on crack – that affects your mental health – but she was pushing for it because that was part of like the branding – you have to give people resources. And so, when that came in, it just kind of modified because as a journalist, like you just tell people what, what happened, and that's it. You don't try to like, you know, not giving your opinion and definitely not tie up loose ends where you don't know.

KW:

The next one is compensation – so salary, raises, financial stability – did that impact your decision to want to leave?

II:

Absolutely. And I don't know – I don't know what it's like in other markets because I've only worked in [specific markets]. However, I was incredibly embarrassingly underpaid. I knew it – I made it known that I knew it. When I left, I was making \$62,000. And a reporter here makes around \$80-85,000. And when I started in [city], I was making

\$45,000. And it wasn't until I found out that my coworkers were making 70 that I basically wrote a letter and told them they were going they were discriminating me for being a woman, and they gave me \$5,000 more, but no, I mean, I, I was severely underpaid my entire career.

KW:

So, it was your male coworkers that were getting paid more than you significantly?

II:

Yes, but also there's a very – the Spanish media is underpaid, comparing them to general market.

KW:

You mentioned about your tendon and your foot, so with other health issues, did that impact your decision to leave at all? Like was your management accommodating with your injury?

II:

Yes, however, as a woman, like, and this is, but it's the truth, you suffer from constant UTIs. Because you're constantly having to hold your pee – you can't go to the restroom. And yeast infections... you're sweating all day. And so that was a constant, constant thing. And how do you say that? How do you, you know – back in my previous station, where I had the dark time, I would call in because the company gives you days, and so you use them. And they brought me in – they were like you're calling into often; you're going to have to give us a doctor's note every time you do it. I was like, fine. I have insurance – I'll go to the freakin' doctor. But if I don't want to come to work because I'm not feeling well, I'm not going to. So, I do think that you meet resistance from management. And yeah, no, there's absolutely health issues that are associated with this career, especially if you're a woman.

KW:

My next one is management issues. Did you experience management issues? And did that impact your decision to want to leave?

II:

As I mentioned, some of the managers that are there now. They've been there for 20 years, and so almost it's like they don't do anything anymore, but they're the ones running the show.

KW:

And then the last one is sponsorship availabilities/conflicts... did that impact your decision to leave?

II:

No, I never really that was not a thing that I saw.

KW:

Okay, so overall, out of all the factors that influenced you to leave, what would you say were the most important ones?

II:

Safety, um, lack of resources, and just the MMJ role should not exist – like it should just not.

KW:

How do you think your gender interacted with these factors?

II:

I do feel like because, especially because I started so young, you know, they see you, you're a young girl, they're going to try to get away with whatever I mean, they got away with paying me \$45,000 for three years while I was in [city], where people are making literally twice that much. So yes, I do think that, especially the younger people coming in, it's just like, I don't know what kind of industry they're inheriting.

KW:

So, what about PR, digital marketing, communications – what about that work seemed attractive to you?

II:

Well, I think it's just like a natural evolution for you, you know, as a journalist, you have like a very specific set of skills. I'm not good at math, and so, I'm creative. I know how to read and write really well. I know how to shoot and edit, and those are really commodifiable talents, but you don't know that until you come out here. And you know, they're paying you like, if you do freelance as well, you can make \$2,000 on a package that you used to do every single day. So that as well as having more of a work-life balance. I'm finding now that hasn't been the case because in the city that I worked for, we're under community engagement, so they try to pull us in for a lot of like, the extracurricular events, etc. But it's just it's definitely like a change of pace, and a very welcome change of pace.

KW:

So overall, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR/digital marketing/communications?

II:

It just seemed like a natural progression. It encompasses things that I know how to do. And it's not that, you know, I don't know if this is what I'm going to be doing later on. It just seemed like a safe place to be in after a decade of chaos.

KW:

So, reflecting on the factors that influence you to leave TV news, how does your new role compare to your role as an MMJ?

II:

Oh, it's night and day, like, I've never had an office. I've never even had a desk. Now, I have an office. People treat us like a person and a person who's there to contribute and who is valuable. Like my boss, when I started, had a little welcome gift for me. Everybody praises me whenever I do something well, and it's not that you, you know, you're looking for that. But it's like, you know, in the news business, it's like, it doesn't matter what you did, like two minutes ago, it's like always, what's next? What's next, what's next. And then sometimes, like, it would happen to me. I would feel like really good about a story, and my news director would be like, don't ever wear that jacket again. So, you're just like, alright.

KW:

Do you think you still carry a sort of journalistic self-concept with you? And if so, how does that self-concept impact how you do your job now?

II:

Yes, it is because, I mean, the main thing that I love to do was on, hold municipalities accountable for things, and now, I'm on the other side, and I see certain things and it's like, no, I got to focus on the positive. And it's right, like now I'm a salesperson for the city. And so that really does draw with me, because at the end of the day, like, the root of what I care about, is people and people who, you know, don't have their voices heard, for whatever reason. So yes.

KW:

In your opinion, what changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you as an MMJ or just in your TV news role?

II:

Yes, no – do away with MMJ – give me a photog. I mean, I had some seniority. I've been doing this for – I had been doing that for 12 years, and just let the news be the news. Don't try to do all this extra stuff. You know, you don't need to dress up a good story. A good compelling story is going to be a good compelling story, regardless of if you're the one telling it or not. So that and I just think, resources.

KW:

What changes do you think the TV news industry needs to make in order to retain more women professionals in the future?

II:

I mean, I think just doing away with the MMJ, especially if you're a female. Maybe if you want to do like feature stories here and there, because I did grow to love shooting my own video, and I love editing. But there's just no reason for you to be doing hard news by yourself.

X. Julia J., public relations information officer

KW:

My very first question is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

JJ:

So, it kind of traces back to my youth interest in musical theater. I loved performing, and I loved kind of the feeling of sharing my voice with an audience. But you know, when I got to college, I started thinking about how I could do that in a more practical, you know, kind of way because as we know, theater is not exactly like a very regular, balanced career. Then again, news is not either. But you know, then I started getting into TV news, and I really, really loved it. It was an incredible opportunity I felt to share it to tell stories, to be creative, and to just kind of help spread important messages. So, everything involved seemed like it was something that I would be interested in.

KW:

So, this is a bigger question, but just overall, what was your journalism experience like? And how did that factor into your decision to leave?

JJ:

Yeah, so this is definitely a bigger question. I worked at two different TV news stations. So, you know, looking back, I started to kind of see the signs when I started my job here because there were a lot of different aspects of the job back in a small market station that were deemed necessary to do to complete the assignment that again, looking back, I don't know why I was ever comfortable with that are okay with that. For example, going into neighborhoods by yourself as an MMJ and knocking on doors after there's been a shooting on that neighborhood just the night before, you know, bad places, you know, unsafe situations, and still being forced to turn off, you know, turn the story. So, that improved when I got to my second station. They put a huge emphasis on safety. We made sure that no reporter was ever alone in situations where their safety could be compromised, and we talked about that. If there was a safety situation, we talked it through, and so, I kind of was like, okay, I'm in a better place now. But then it kind of became a situation of I use the phrase like square peg, round hole, where the responsibilities of the job, I could do them and I was well trained to do them. I was comfortable with what I had to do, but I felt like it just wasn't a good fit for me anymore. There was a point where I didn't believe in the mission of what we were doing anymore. I felt like we were, for example, just trying to find a person for the story, even if that person's not perfect for the story, just to tell it. You know, and I feel like sometimes new, the news became a little bit too much of an emphasis on, you know, just finding the perfect person and less about the actual story. So, that bothered me from an ethical standpoint. I also was in a unique situation... it's almost like, okay, what is the story even about again? And it was so difficult to find them. The expectations were so high as we were rolling it out, but that very quickly, kind of pushed me out the door because not only was this strain to do on a day-to-day basis, but I was already feeling that square peg, round hole feeling. I was just having so much anxiety over these excitement over these assignments. At some points, you know, to be candid, I was having panic attacks like

both before and you know, during work. And I felt like there, I wasn't the only one at the station. A bunch of other reporters hated this too, and management wouldn't budge. But the biggest thing, the biggest thing that happened was during this type of storytelling approach, I felt like my creative options were taken away. I felt like I couldn't even be creative with my writing anymore, and that's when I said, I've got to pull the plug and do something else. There's just nothing about this job that appeals to me anymore.

KW:

So, going off that, how did your perception of your role in TV news kind of change over time?

JJ:

Are you talking about like, since I left?

KW:

I would just say from like, when you started to when you finished? Like, for example, were you super, you know, excited and just really passionate at the beginning and that kind of started to fade away? Or how did your perception change from the beginning until the end?

JJ:

Yeah. I was so excited in the beginning to get started and to just kind of like start that mission of, you know, feeling like I had an important voice in the community. And, you know, there were definitely a lot of times when I did feel that you know, and community would recognize that. They would recognize our station for our hard work and our efforts for telling sometimes very difficult, but very important stories. And so, I felt like my work was making a difference. And that's what kind of got me through day to day, even if it was a really hard day, knowing that was what powered me through. And I still felt that when I went to my station here, when we were reporting on the pandemic, and we were reporting on Black Lives Matter and all of the crazy things that happened in 2020 and 2021, I felt like my voice mattered. Like, as a journalist, my platform mattered and was actually making a positive impact on people. So, I still was into it. And like, I think it was probably my last year of being in news, year six, that really, things started to change. And I viewed myself more as like a factory worker than a journalist. I felt like I was just cranking out a product for the machine. I didn't really feel like I was telling stories that were making differences anymore. So, it you know, just our work was so subjective. And so, you know, dependent on the finding the perfect character, I didn't feel like I believed in the work that I was doing.

KW:

So, was there like a seminal moment or specific experience that solidified your decision to want to leave? Or was it kind of more of this gradual process/realization that you wanted to leave?

JJ:

So, there were several events that happened that kind of solidified my decision and to be honest, my teetering with the idea of getting out of news was much longer than just the last year. I had been thinking about it on and off, I think, really the second half of my career in news, but I never felt really, really serious about it like, oh my gosh, I have to do this for my own sanity and well-being until the last year. I remember there was one point where I had one of these... stories assigned, it fell through, I was on the phone for like two hours with my managing editor trying to like find a different story because I had to have a different story. And so, I finally found one, I was really proud of my work. I feel like I had everything in place. It was a really good story, but I received critical feedback on it – not because it wasn't told well, but because it wasn't visual. He's like, okay, you talk to this manager of this department, and he's just doing busy work in office. He's not like doing anything with his hands that's like, visually interesting. And I was like, well, he is literally at the core of the story. He is literally the character of the story. He is the one who benefited from what we're talking about. So, I don't know what else you want me to do. And that was when I was like, is so idiotic – this is asinine. I really just that kind of flipped a switch – that story. And then continuing, like I said, to have like panic attacks after that. I just knew that this was not sustainable. I had to get out for my own mental health.

KW:

So, going off of that, could you just take me through your process of your decision to leave news? You said you were contemplating for a while wanting to leave, but were you applying for jobs while you were still working? Or did you quit and then try and find a job? Take me through your transition out of news and into your next career path.

JJ:

I never started actually applying for jobs until like, I want to say about nine months before I left, maybe less seven months, six or seven months before I left, because I knew it was like, well, if word gets out to my boss, that's not right. But at that point, I didn't really care. I just wanted to start seeing what was out there and experiencing through the application process what I could potentially get to, and then it just so happened that really a great opportunity kind of fell into my lap. And the timing couldn't have been better – I was at my wit's end, and I needed a change. I would say all throughout that time, I was looking on LinkedIn. I was looking at career websites, and just trying to figure out what type of PR job would be a good fit for me, and I did kind of have that narrowed down... So, when I found the job I have now, everything about it felt right.

KW:

Did you apply for this job or did the employer reach out to you?

JJ:

I did apply for the job, but I knew the hiring manager. I'd worked with her before as a journalist.

KW:

Based off the research I've already done, there's obviously a lot of reasons why people leave, but I've found about 10 plus factors that contribute to people's decision to leave the field. So, I'll just go through them, and if you just want to comment on if the factor contributed to your decision to leave news? The first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry. So, whether that be, you know, more of a heavy emphasis on the MMJ or social media, did that impact your decision to leave at all or not so much?

JJ:

I would say somewhat. I mean, if you're talking about the specific changes that happened to [my] news stations, then yes, absolutely.

KW:

What about job satisfaction?

JJ:

That one's also a somewhat I, you know, the job itself that I was in actually had great benefits, and the people were amazing. So, I was happy with the work environment. I just wasn't happy with the job itself.

KW:

What about burnout/mental health pressures? I know you're talking about anxiety and panic attacks. That's what I also experienced, so I get it, but how much would you say that contributed to your decision to want to leave?

JJ:

That was one of the main factors that was one of the two main factors.

KW:

Do you like during your time in TV news that you ever experienced any sexism or discrimination or no?

JJ:

Actually, no. I was lucky. I've read so many people's stories on you know the MMJ Facebook groups that have just been horrifying to read. Horrifying, but I was lucky to have, you know, good news directors and management for the most part while I was there.

KW:

What about work-life balance? Did that impact your decision to want to leave?

JJ:

Yes, that's a bit more of a complicated thing. I'll just say yes because I, for a lot of my career, I worked weekends. So, I was missing out on a lot of stuff with friends. I was missing out on events and really cool happenings that would have given me more of a feeling of work-life balance, and because of all the odd hours that I worked, it was, yeah,

that was definitely a factor. I couldn't unplug from work. Mentally, I was still there, even though I was off. So, that's kind of evidence of not having a good balance.

KW:

So, my next one is difficult stories. So, did you feel like reporting on difficult stories impacted your decision to want to leave? Or was that not a factor?

JJ:

No – I mean, I think, obviously, difficult stories are difficult. They can, you know, take a toll on you. But I always, for the most part felt like I was able to handle difficult stories pretty well, both in my product and mentally. So no, I'd say that it wasn't really a factor.

KW:

The next one is shortage of resources. So, whether that be staff, camera people, editors, travel budgets, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

JJ:

No, that was one thing, that [my station] had a lot – a lot of resources, and they prioritized things that needed paying for and you know, even travel. So, when I was there, I think things have gotten worse since I left, but when I was there, that aspect was pretty good.

KW:

What about the quality of the news standards?

JJ:

Yeah – absolutely.

KW:

What about any other health issues you may have experienced that wasn't directly related to mental health? If you had any, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

JJ:

No, because anytime I did, I mean, I do have other health conditions, but my management has always been really understanding if I needed to have a doctor's appointment, you know, as long as I gave them enough notice, they would let me do what I needed to do for my own health.

KW:

The next one is management issues. So, did you really experience any management issues? And if you did, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

JJ:

I mean, the management issues that I experienced were different at the two stations that I was at. The first one was some of the managers were a little incompetent. They did not have very positive attitudes. So, you know, I felt like the only person that could really

rely on was my news director, because some of them were very temperamental. Some of them didn't really have good news judgment. So, I did have an issue at my first station with that. The second station, it was a very different issue. You have a lot of people who have a wide variety of experience in news, but there's it almost it felt like there were too many managers – too many cooks in the kitchen. We have four different EPS; we have two managing editors; we have like four different assignment desk staff; we have a news director; we have an assistant news director. So, it's almost like I didn't really know who I could report to. I mean, they did have like direct reports established, but it just felt like there were too many eyes – too many eyes on my work.

KW:

So, my next one is unethical practices. I know you kind of touched on this, but did you feel whether the quality of news or just the stories made like management or higher ups wanted you to tell? Did you feel like that ever went against your ethical beliefs/morals? And if so, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

JJ:

Definitely my first station, that again, just trying to do a story. We reported heavily on shootings, and it's like it would be the same story – like guy shot on a drive by shooting? They tried to make it like a package every time if it was significant. It's the same story. You go out there, and you try to talk to people on the street and a lot of times you're alone doing that so, ethically, that looking back, was a big problem with me. Also reporting on like traffic crashes at my first station. But going live by the side of the road – that was a big problem that's luckily had a lot of attention shed on it and isn't hopefully not much of a problem anymore. But I would say the other ethical issues that I had were some of our reporting with COVID-19. I felt like we were sometimes taking new numbers and just kind of like blowing them out of the water – taking them as more significant than they really had to be. So, I know, a lot of people felt like, you know, they would say, like, oh, the media is just like hyping this COVID thing up and using it to, you know, whatever their conspiracy theories were. But at some rate, I felt like we were kind of going a little bit too doom and gloom on like COVID updates – it didn't necessarily need to be. Overall, I think sometimes we put too much emphasis on a story just to try to like make it pop or make people want to watch it when it really deserves like a more somber tone or a more neutral tone.

KW:

My next one is compensation. So, salary, raises, financial stability, did that impact your decision to want to leave? And if so, how?

JJ:

I mean, I always did kind of want to make more money. I was making enough money to live on somewhat comfortably. But I mean, it wasn't good – TV, new salaries are notorious for not being great. So, I will say I was well taken care of at my second station. So, that wasn't really a factor for me leaving. The first station, the pay was terrible, but absolutely abysmal. But the second one was a lot better.

KW:

My last factor is sponsorship availability/conflict. So, whether that be you know, increase in paid segments or advertising? Did you see any of that? And if so, did it impact your decision to want to leave?

JJ:

I don't think that really came into play all that much. So, I don't know. So, I think I saw maybe a taste of it one time from the sales department. But yeah, I think we were kind of cognizant of making sure that we don't play favorites.

KW:

Overall, what would you say were the most important factors in your decision to leave TV news?

JJ:

Not feeling like it was the right fit anymore – the career itself causing me extreme bouts of anxiety or panic attacks, just feeling like I didn't believe in the mission of what I was doing anymore.

KW:

Do you think your gender as a woman interacted with these factors?

JJ:

Not really, because I think at the newsrooms I was in, most of us were women.

KW:

What about PR work seemed attracted to you?

JJ:

Well, big thing is I was craving normalcy. So, I will say that the nine to five schedule was very appealing – having my weekends back. And I just felt like there was a more positive nature involved in it. Some PR is not as fun. Obviously, there's crisis communications, and there's dealing with the bad news report. I don't really feel like I have to do that that much, and I kind of knew that going in. So, you know, I felt like I could see a lot of really cool, interesting things and be involved in a lot of different projects that made me proud to be a part of and not feel that immediate stress of trying to meet an urgent deadline. So, I just kind of felt like I would feel a little bit more at peace in this industry.

KW:

Reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your new role compared to your last ones?

JJ:

My mental health has been so much better – so much better, and it just made me realize how badly I needed to make this transition. You know, the work is very different in TV, where as a reporter, I wouldn't anchor I was just trying to, you know, turn out a segment

once a day, every day with very tight deadlines. I had one story to do a day. And but now, you know, I have like multiple projects I'm managing at the same time some might be due, you know, by the end of the day, some might be due at the next week, some might be, you know, two months out. So, it's presented a little bit of a challenge in terms of managing those projects and timelines because that's something that, professionally, I've never really had to do before. So, you know, it definitely has an adjustment period. It's very, very humbling to switch careers. And I didn't really realize that until I got into it. It almost feels like you're starting over even though you're not – you have to remind yourself that you do have a lot of valid, great experience that you bring into PR from being a journalist. But overall, it's just a lot more balanced. It's not such heavy duty, heavy load, very urgent turnaround type of situation.

KW:

So, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR versus other career paths that you could have pursued outside of news?

JJ:

I just felt like PR was the most natural transition, given my skills, you know, some PR or communications type of field. I, again, I was a little bit more focused on where I was working and for what industry than I was about, you know, what position it was... So, I could have really been good with like any role, whether it was like internal comms, external comms, media relations, PR, social media, I just wanted to be involved in that and communications of some sort, in that type of workplace.

KW:

Do you think you still carry this sort of journalistic self-concept in your PR job? And if you do, how do you think that impacts how you do your job?

JJ:

There are certain aspects where it's so helpful and so easy for me to perform certain tasks because I was a journalist, and there are some instances where it's harder. The biggest thing that I've had to unlearn was working really fast and just trying to get something in. I still find myself working too fast and not proofreading as much as I need to, or not double-checking things, you know, on social media before they're live. Just today, I made a post. and I didn't tag the correct organization. And then like, didn't realize that I was trying to get it up. Yeah, that was where my brain was, and that's how I had been conditioned to work for so many years. Yeah. So, trying to unlearn that. I mean, I've only been at my job for six months. So, I keep having to remind myself to give myself some grace. And remember that you know, habits like those are hard to unlearn. So, in my job, I am doing a lot of different things. I am handling all of the aspects like PR/internal comms/external comms/media relations/social media – all of that. I have other upper management that you know, approves everything I do. But yeah, I do touch a lot of different aspects of it. So, I would say the media relations obviously comes very naturally to me. I know exactly what reporters want, and I do everything I can to get them all the visuals and the interviews that they need when they request it. The PR and external comms aspect of it is also very natural for me because, again, like I had to externally

communicate so frequently that I kind of know how to present myself and how to communicate a message effectively. So, it was really the internal communications and the social media that I had the most trouble with and still have trouble with. For some reason, I just I feel like with social media, you either get it or you don't. I mean, you can post in, like make things look cute, to really on an advanced level, it can be difficult to know, and keep up with all of the nuances of each platform. So yeah, there are those things I haven't really done before. Because when I worked for my last station, we actually didn't post our own things to social. We had a whole digital team that did that for us. We weren't even given the login for our station's page. So, you know, I just was rusty in that regard. And yeah, so some things were great to have that journalistic background and other things not so great.

KW:

My last two questions are about TV news suggestions. In your opinion, what changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you?

JJ:

I think they would have needed to be a little bit more lax and understanding with the storytelling policy that they were trying to employ, because their rigidness and unwillingness to budge on it was the reason why several other MMJs left before and after me at my station. They just really needed to be more receptive and responsive to our feedback as the ones who are out in the field making it possible. That would have helped for sure. I also asked to be off weekends. I had worked weekends for almost two years. And I was like, you know, I feel like I'm doing a really good job. I'd like to be given a Monday through Friday spot, and they're like, okay, well, how about Monday through Friday mornings? And I'm like, no, that's not really what I meant. So, if they had given me a more regular schedule that might have helped also. So yeah, but even with that in place, I still feel like this would have been the same outcome because my issues were more so with not feeling like it was a good fit for me anymore.

KW:

So, I'm specifically focusing on women professionals who were in TV news. So just in your opinion, what changes, if any, do you think the TV news industry needs to make to keep more women professionals in the future?

JJ:

I think that they really need to be understanding of women's health needs — mental health, as well as maternal health. I know a lot of people who've said that, you know, they had issues with their terms of their maternity leave, and, you know, just needs that they had while they were pregnant, out in the fields not being that. And so, I just feel like the industry had so many years of being a male dominated industry that they're still trying to undo a lot of that — a lot of the patriarchy, if you will. So, I think just paying attention to the needs of female journalists and trying to do their best in whatever's in their power to help them do their job in a more healthy and sustainable way, would make a huge difference. And just because I know so many women are leaving, because of the way they're treated in the newsroom, or because of, you know, their mental health, it just is

very clear that there's not enough of an emphasis on taking care of yourself or being able to take care of yourself.

KW:

Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

JJ:

One thing I did want to add is that I think for me, one of the most challenging parts about leaving was that I had associated so much of my identity with being a journalist and being a reporter and being on TV, and I'm sure that's probably something you've heard before, but I think that's one of the reasons that holds women back from leaving news when really they, they should, you know, for every other reason, but they're just scared of losing that aspect. So, I think it's important for them to find other outlets where they can be public and share their voice in a different way, so that the transition is a little bit easier. Because that is probably one of the hardest things when people leave news to do PR is that you're not on camera anymore. You're behind the scenes and you're not presenting information in the same way at all.

XI. Karter K., media, marketing and public relations specialist

KW:

Okay, so my very first question is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

KK:

I knew from the time I was three years old, that what I wanted to do, but it was to be a famous actress, obviously, and I was like tunnel vision on this. And then when I was in sixth grade, I think my mom was like, maybe you need like a backup plan, you know? And so, I thought to myself, Okay, what else can get me on TV? And I was also a weird kid, my mom and I would watch the news growing up. And I was like, I could do that. Like, they just show up and they read I can do that. That is honest to goodness, what got me first started in news, but when I was in seventh grade, we kind of had to do a research project on colleges, actually. And I thought, and I picked [my college] because my grandpa went to [there]... And so, I leaned more into the to the journalism side, and that is how I ended up in the broadcast.

KW:

Overall, what was your journalism experience? Like and how did that affect your decision to leave TV news?

KK:

When I got into the like the real world, if you will, if you can call it that, I spent about two and a half years in TV news, and I was very fortunate that right about the time that I came to my station, the weekend anchor left, and I just said hey, I'm interested. And so, I spent a good majority of my broadcast career weekend anchoring. So, MMJing during the week, anchoring on the weekends, producing all that good stuff... But so, my goal had always been to be a full-time anchor, like I loved MMJing to an extent. I really liked feature pieces, fluff pieces. I hated confronting people, and due to a personal experience on the other side of a news story... when I was a junior... my aunt's house burned down, and my cousin died in the fire.

KW:

I am so sorry.

KK:

Thank you. It was two days before my 21st birthday... but we had a reporter from one of the local stations, she just kept asking me – like we were there to comfort my aunt, we were there to kind of clean things up, you know? And she was just like, hey, I'm sorry about your loss. Like, can we do an interview? Can we do an interview? And I was like, no, like we can't. And so, I was really struggling with journalism, even from the get-go. But my dream had always been to be an anchor so that I didn't have to go out in the field and talk to people on their worst day. You know? And so, my contract was up, and I was looking for looking for jobs, and the pandemic happened. And so, all of that got put on hold, obviously. And so, I was just kind of chugging my way through still working in news during the pandemic. I was exhausted. I was burnt out. But I still was like, it's news

or nothing. There's nowhere else for me to go that would make sense, right?... And I was working at the TV station in [city] while I went to go do a story at [an organization]. And their PR person was a good friend of mine, or I should say a good source. She wasn't really like a friend, but she always said good stories. Like she was on time she was consistent. Like she was everything a reporter dream, right. And so, I went to do a story there. And she was like, hey, do you want to make more money, work better hours and tell the stories that you like to tell? And I was like, you can't really argue with that sales pitch, you know. And so, I was still applying to journalism jobs. I was still applying to even just like weekend anchor, morning anchor, like part time MMJ, just still keeping most of my eggs in the journalism basket. And I truly said to myself, I'll apply for this job for shits and giggles. Like, if I get it, then we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. It'll be good interview practice; it would be good... And I applied. They invited me for the interview, and I got it. And I talked to my boss at the TV station. My assignment editor was great. And so, I was like, hey, what do you think? And he was like, I think you would be silly not to take this job. I was like, okay, if y'all don't want me, and the station had just overlooked me for a promotion to morning anchor. So, I was kind of ready to go, I took that kind of as the last sign of like, okay, they are not trying to keep you. [The organization] is excited about you like, and I, I truly thought I was the only person that applied to this job. I was like, how did they choose me, but turns out there were a lot of candidates. I went into it thinking I was the only person that applied for the job, but I have not looked back, I work eight to 4:30, Monday through Friday. When I started, I got a \$12,000 raise from what I was making in local news. And my stress load is down. And I always tell people, I used to think when I was a reporter that I had the best job in the world, and it turns out that now I have the best job in the world because I'm still using all of those journalism skills but telling the good, feel-good stories and getting paid more what I'm worth.

KW:

Would you have a rough estimate of the time period of when you, you know, applied for [the job], and then took that – was that after your contract was up like during COVID?

KK:

It was October. My contract was up in October of 2020, and I started applying for jobs in March of 2020. And I was I was like, listen, I've done my two years. I re-signed as an anchor three months into the job. So, I was like, I've done my two years like, let me go kind of I mean, I'm going to explore options. And I was at a [specific] station, so I was looking at all the [specific] stations because I thought well, if they have a problem with my contracts and I can just go to another great station. I applied for the [PR] job at the beginning of September of 2020.... Got the job kind of in the middle to end of September 2020. And I started in October of 2020. So, my two years at [current job] is coming up in two weeks.

KW:

So exciting – congratulations. It's crazy to think that 2020 has been two years ago. It seems like it's been going on forever, even though it's 2023. It's like a blur.

KK:

You're telling me... I don't know what any of my coworkers faces really look like.

KW:

Was there like a seminal moment or a specific experience that solidified your decision to leave TV news? Or was it kind of more of a gradual realization that this wasn't necessarily the right fit for you?

KK:

I think it was a couple of seminal moments. So obviously, the pandemic when everything shut down, and no one was hiring, no one wanted you to move, you know. That was one. I actually had COVID in April of 2020. So right when it started, but you couldn't really get a positive test. There wasn't really any help. And my boss at the TV station was like, well, unless you have a positive test, you have to come to work. And I was like, well, if everyone wants COVID, that's fine. Like, I had all the symptoms. I was disgusting. So, they dropped off a laptop at my house, and I worked for a week and a half while I was dying of COVID. That was one. And then as I mentioned earlier, so our morning anchor was leaving. And I was like, well, I had no problem getting the weekend anchor job. So, I kind of you know, nicely told my boss was like, hey, I'm really interested, you know, I hope you'll consider me. They gave me a couple of test runs, and the anchor that was leaving was like, you have nothing to worry about, like great. And they brought a girl in who had less anchor experience, but more TV experience. She had been in a newsroom for several years, and they went with her. And I think that was the biggest moment. I don't remember when she started, but I know it was very shortly before this [PR] job came open. And I don't know about you, but I'm kind of spiritual kind of don't believe in like coincidences. And so, I was like, alright, that is a very clear this door is shutting, another door's opening.

KW:

Based on the beginning of your TV news career compared to the end, how did your perception of your role change over time?

KK:

Ooh... well, I think all of us start out, bright eyed and bushy tailed, out of college... But like, they were like, you came in hot. And I was like, sorry, guys, I was ready to hit the ground running like. So, I think we all come in kind of like, this is fun and new. And I have a fun job. And I'm on TV and like, you know, and you're willing to look past some of the things that are really problematic in the industry. And over the years, I really felt the toll on my mental health, on my bank account on. I'm just realizing like, I don't know if I can do this for the next 40-50 years before I retire. Like, I'm tired and I'm 24 like... it's just different when you're working it four or five... we were blessed that we had four day work weeks. But you needed a three-day weekend after everything, and so towards the end I kind of got, I don't want to say jaded, but I, it was a lot of dark humor, a lot of cynicism, a lot of like I don't even know the word that I'm looking for. But it was almost like the veil had been revealed on this childhood dream that I had almost like the Wizard of Oz being not what you thought it. You know, like, I grew up watching my local news,

idolizing my local news anchors. And then when I was an anchor, I was like, this is what I signed up for? So, it was a lot of just wore me down, man.

KW:

I have about 10+ factors listed that contribute to news professionals' decisions to leave. So, I'll just read them off, and if you could just comment on each one as they apply to your decision to leave... So, the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry. Did that impact your decision to want to leave at all?

KK:

Um, yes. And no, I mean, like, there was a lot of change in personnel that was kind of really hard for me. But thankfully, like... everything was a little bit slower, I would say, but I definitely could see the decline in like the quality of local news and the amount of money that was being put in local news, if that makes sense.

KW:

So, one of the next factors actually is quality of news standards. So, did you see that? And did that impact your decision to want to leave?

KK:

It didn't impact my decision to leave. But looking back, my heart breaks, watching my old station watching the stations here... because I'm just like, was this like this when I was working there? Like, isn't that terrible, but like, I have friends who are still reporters at that station, and they're like, the new group of like, it's like, it's very cliquy. So, they're like the new group of reporters terrible. And it's like, well, yeah, the pool of people who are willing to work for what they want to pay you is small and not good, like, and so they're getting more and more desperate. And I think they're realizing that you should invest in your talent. You can't just replace people and think that it's going to be the same. That's kind of what I've noticed is like, my old TV station hired a girl who worked, I'm not trying to knock this, but the only professional experience she had was at a newspaper in a town that's like 10,000 people – I'm like, broadcast very different. Like so... definitely towards the end, I kind of was like I'm putting in the work, but the quality is not reflecting that.

KW:

What about shortage of resources? So, whether that be staff, camera people, editors, travel budgets. Did you experience that and did that contribute to your decision to want to leave it all?

KK:

Oh my gosh. Yes. Yes. So, I mean, there were times where it was like, we have one dayside reporter and one nightside reporter. And if there's nothing for you to if people aren't getting back to you, or whatever the anchors are on you. And you're like, you can check my phone log I've called 50 people like, I don't know what you want for me. So, the shortage of staff – when I started, we had a dedicated photog, he was gone within the first six months, we never replaced him. So, we were MMJs from the get-go, everyone.

We did not have anyone with us on live shots unless they really, really thought that your life was in danger. And even then, they'd be like, yeah, and I mean, my experience with COVID was a really clear example of not having enough resources because they were like you need to still work. We still need content. I was like, I am dying. And I also worked when I had the flu. I called in sick, and my boss was like, do you really have the flu? And I'm like, yes, I went to the doctor, I threw up in his trashcan. He gave me a diagnosis. Like he shoved the thing up my nose. So, it was just like, we don't have enough resources and that's a you problem. And especially on the weekends, we were a skeleton crew anyway, and I would have one reporter for the whole day. Well, if they weren't dayside, and something happens at seven o'clock at night, either I have to call them in, and they're my friends, and I hate doing that for that to them, or we miss it. And like, that's not fair. And it was always that impossible decision.

KW:

Another one is like health issues. Mental health is a different category, but just outside of mental health, like with COVID and the flu, are there any other health issues that like, like COVID in the flu that contributed to your decision to want to leave?

KK:

I was dealing with just chronic fatigue. And I was starting to get more headaches. I was starting to get migraines. And I could tell that journalism was taking a toll on my body, like health issues. Absolutely. I gained a bunch of weight because I was stressed, and I was running through the drive thru on the way to a story. And so, I mean, obesity – you can count that as a health issue, if you will. It was just that it was the chronic fatigue man that kicked my butt.

KW:

Yeah, I can't imagine, especially like doing it every day during the week. Okay, so another one is burnout/mental health pressures. Did you experience that and did that impact/ contribute to your decision to want to leave?

KK:

Oh, absolutely. The burnout was real. I think all of us felt it in the pandemic. It was not exclusive to journalists, but there were definitely like, I had a few come to Jesus moments where there would be days where I was like, I kind of wish I would break my leg so I can just stay in the hospital and not have to go to work. Like that's a terrible thought to have, but I just wanted -- I just needed a break. And so, when this job opened, I was like, okay, this is the break that I'm I need, you know, and they always tell you, when you get out of news, it like hits you like a ton of bricks. The pace just slows down. And the first few weeks I was like, oh shit, oh shit, like, I'm bored, but then I was like, wait a minute, I'm bored in the air conditioning. I'm bored and not stressed about somebody getting back to me, like on deadline, you know, I'm bored and I'm not wearing makeup to work. So, there was definitely burnout. I also have depression and anxiety – pretty open about that with everybody. And so, it like, I mean, you shouldn't be thinking that you would rather break your leg and like be in the hospital and go to work. So, I think I kind of that was kind of a, that was a come to Jesus moment.

KW:

So, what about work-life balance? How was that when you're in TV news, and did that impact your decision to want to leave?

KK:

I was really blessed that we worked four 10-hour days for the majority of my time in TV news, but because I was the weekend anchor, I missed a lot of things on the weekends. And so, I didn't have any social life and even though I had three days off, at least one of those days, if not more, was dedicated to catching up on all the sleep that I was missing, or like, letting my body rest so the fatigue wouldn't be so bad. It was also those days were spent cultivating sources and stories, and you never could truly unplug. That was the thing is like, there was kind of an unspoken rule, you are always on call even on your days off, you know, so there was no balance. There was no balance. Whereas like, now my boss will be like, sorry to bother you after work, and I'm like, it's 4:40 I just left at 4:30 – it's okay. You know, and she'll get on to me if I'm responding to emails after work, or like she's like, turn off your phone go away. So, it's, it's nice to feel like I have – I didn't even know what work-life balance was until I started this new job.

KW:

So how was your job satisfaction in TV news and did that impact you your decision to want to leave?

KK:

Oh, it was difficult because there were parts that I really, really loved and there were parts that I really, really hated. So, I don't think anything specifically was like, Yeah, I hate this job. I'm out because like, if somebody stops you in the street and tells you that they love seeing you on TV, or like, hey, that story was fantastic. Or like, my mom would watch every newscast and tell me what she thought like. So, there were parts of the job that just really made me feel happy. Like I said, I thought I had the best job in the world. You know. So, nothing specifically was like, I hate this job if that makes sense.

KW:

What about difficult stories, were there difficult stories that you had to cover that may have impacted your decision to want to leave?

KK:

Well, anytime I got sent to a house fire, I was very stressed – very stressed. There was one time where there were injuries in a house fire – they didn't die. But trying to go live like I was crying up until, like, a minute before my live shot and the anchor was in my ear. Like, we will cry and hold each other when we when you get back to the station. But right now, you're going to compartmentalize and you're going to tell the story. And I was like, okay, we can do it. And I looked up to her, and she's still one of my really good friends, and she kind of walked me through it. But I was just like, oh, I covered an execution. That was really hard. I covered a drug robbery gone sideways, where a young mom was shot in the head, but you kind of become numb to stuff like that. So, I can't tell

you how many times there were hard stories where I went home, and I cried. But I just thought well, this is part of the job – tomorrow you'll do a story about a dog, like it'll all balance out. But then, you know when I went to [current organization] and my source at [current organization] was like, you don't want to tell hard stories. Don't you want to come and tell like the good feel-good stories that we have? And I was like, yeah, you're right... I'm tired of ambulance chasing. I'm tired of door knocking. I got called the vulture one time and I was just like, yeah, this ain't it.

KW:

So, this one's a bit more personal, but during your time in TV news, did you ever feel sexism or discrimination? And if so, did the impact your decision to want to leave?

KK:

Thankfully, no, not a lot of sexism or discrimination. I will say we had a male anchor who needed to be the loudest and the smartest in the room, and I also need to be the loudest and the smartest in the room. And so, we butt heads quite a bit, and I had gone to my boss, I was like, listen, I'm terrified of this anchor. He rips my stories to shreds. I cry in the bathroom, like, can we do something about it? He's like, yeah, I know, you guys are all scared of him. I'm like, so we're going to do something about it? And it just kind of was like, nope, so not really sexism or harassment or anything like that. Thankfully, my newsroom was a really, for the most part, as nontoxic as the newsroom can get, because there's always going to be those about as good as it could have gone.

KW:

Okay, the next one is unethical practices. So, did you experience any of that like for management or anyone and did that impact your decision to want to leave it all?

KK:

I'm trying to think... I don't think so. I know that's kind of surprising. I take that back. I take that back. I have one story for you. There was a local radio disc jockey, one of the shock jocks in the morning, was arrested for domestic assault on his wife and child abuse for making – like the kids were there. Anyway, every other station in the entire state reported this story, and we did not because they were one of our media partners, and he was friends with a lot of our anchors. And they tried to be like, well, we don't ever report the names of assault victims or assault people if it's domestic assault, and I was like, lies, and we were like, also, and the reporters, all of us, were like, him being famous, and a recognizable name is enough to run this story. And we were basically told to shut up, like, and we got so many emails about, like, why aren't you running this? Have you seen this? Are you guys trying to protect him? And that was the only time that I felt like the station made an unethical decision to protect him and not serve the public interest.

KW:

Leading into that is management issues is another factor. So, did you experience any of that and did that impact your decision at all?

KK:

I think my news director really kind of had his hands tied. He was I think he was truly doing the best that he could, and he kind of always gave off like a cool dad vibe. I don't know if there's like a good way to describe that. I just think sometimes he made uninformed decisions or decisions that I was just like, where did that come from buddy? Like, and it was just that's who he is. That's the decision. And he was super easy to talk to, but you wouldn't always get a lot back from it. But obviously, the decision to not promote from within, that was the defining factor where I was like, okay, this station clearly does not want to invest in me like — that was the that probably would be the one management decision that I was like, I got to get out of here. This isn't for me.

KW:

I just appreciate you opening up because I'm sure it is kind of hard to revisit the past—that's why you got out of it, but I appreciate it. So, the next one is compensation – so salary, raises, financial stability – did that impact your decision to want to leave?

KK:

Yes, and anyone who tells you know, is a big fat liar that in the air because I've always been on the reporters do not make enough money for all the shit they do train. I also you know, I'm kind of bougie I don't know if you can tell that about me, but I needed to live in a safe apartment, I needed to live in one with like a washer and a dryer in the unit, and so those cost more money. And I was driving the same car that I had had from high school that was paid off by my mom a long time ago, it was a beater like, and like I said, earlier, I qualified for food stamps. I qualified for the low-income housing. And I was like, people think it's so glamorous because we're expected to have a nice wardrobe. We're expected to have the hair and the makeup and all the beautiful, like, whatever. But I'm like, all I have are these dresses like, I'm struggling to eat, you know. And so, when I heard the starting pay for this job, my jaw dropped, and I thought they were lying to me. So, I don't know, if you want, I don't know if you want, like numbers. But my starting offer at the station was \$26,000 a year. That is nothing, and when I applied for or whenever I got the news anchor job, I went up to \$30,000, I think, and then they made me salary. So, then they were making me work extra hours that they didn't have to pay for. So, it really brought my wage back down. Thankfully, a law came along that said, if someone's making less than \$35,000, they can't be salaried. You can't take advantage of them. And I think I ended up at \$32,000 is where I topped out in news. It's just not feasible. I wasn't saving any money. I was living paycheck to paycheck. And so, I went in, and I asked my boss for like, when my contract was up, and I was thinking about renewing. I was like, I want 35. And he was like, nope, we can't do that. He was like, best we can do is like 33. And I was like, no, I want 35, or I'm walking. And so, I was like 35 is not an unreasonable number. It's just not. And so, starting out at [current job], I was making \$45,000 a year. I now make 48, and I'm about to get my raise for two years. I have a new car. I have a very nice apartment. I'm saving money. Like, at first, I was like what do I do with all this money? So absolutely. Salary was huge... You are bright eyed and bushy tailed, and you're like, I'm going to save the world through my journalism, so who cares if I'm making \$26,000?

KW:

The very last one is sponsorship/conflicts. So, whether that be, you know, like seeing more advertising and news, like paid segments, or any of that, did you receive any of that? And did that impact your decision to leave at all?

KK:
No.

KW:
So overall, in your opinion, what would you say were the most important factors in your decision to leave TV news?

KK:
Salary – number one, first and foremost, obviously, number two is the no room for growth or promotion, whether that was at the same station or at another station, like kind of like, you hit a ceiling really early, and number three was the mental and physical health tolls that it was taking on me.

KW:
And how do you think your gender as a woman interacted with those factors?

KK:
I know women make less money, obviously. And to be quite honest, the things that people would say about me as a heavier woman – “heavier” on TV, and the way I dress the way my hair and makeup looked, that weighs on an already depressed and anxious person who is already putting themselves in these stressful situations day in and day out covering the news. It was just – it was hard. And as far as like hitting the ceiling, I think my male counterparts had a lot easier time kind of maneuvering up to the level that they wanted to get to. Maybe they were more talented than me, or maybe there were fewer men in they were looking for. I mean, I don't know.

KW:
I know that's a lot to unpack. So, I really appreciate you going back with me to talk about that. But my next question is, what about PR work, your role now seemed attractive to you?

KK:
Well, first off, the very first thing was just the money. At first, I really had tunnel vision for the dollars, but I'm still being able to use I mean, I still turn stories, like, I don't do it day in and day out, I have a little bit more breathing room with a story. So, if a story needs to be two minutes, or two and a half, they're like, great – whatever you need. If it takes me three weeks to put it together, great. So, it was still doing everything that I was doing for more money, and I realized that I can make an impact in my community in a different way, and so that was really exciting. And I learned that PR doesn't have to be negative, because I think in the broadcast school, especially it's like us versus them. People are like you're going to the dark side, or like what a PR people even do all day if they can't return my phone calls, you know, like, and so I forget where I was going with

that, but like, oh, so I learned that PR could be positive. And I realized that I have a passion for what this [organization] does. Like, I get paid to tell people how great [it] is, but I would do it for free because I'm passionate about what they do. So that was that was so exciting.

KW:

So, reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your new role compare?

KK:

I don't have to stand in the snow. I don't have to knock on doors. I don't have to give up every weekend. The work-life balance, I mean, doesn't even compare. Like not even close. And whenever I was giving, like I was getting my raise – my yearly raise at [current job]— so I was in there for my like yearly raise my yearly review, and my boss was like, oh, hey, by the way, you're getting an additional raise, because every year they pick a couple of jobs within [organization], and they compare you to our competitors, and they don't feel like you're being paid enough. And I was like, am I being punked? Like, I'm not being paid enough? And she was like, oh, yeah, they do like market research, and they just were like, yeah, you don't get paid enough. So, I got another raise. And I was like TV news could never – never.

KW:

Overall, why did you want to pursue a career in PR versus other career paths you could have pursued?

KK:

I felt like the only things I was good at I was good at were reading and writing, and I had talked with a lot of former journalists, and a lot of them have gone into PR, obviously. And so, I was like, alright, well, this is the skillset I have, so maybe it'll work. And like I said, the [PR] job just kind of dropped into my lap, and so that made it really easy to pursue PR.

KW:

So, my last question about this is, do you still carry a sense of a journalistic self-concept in your PR job? And if so, how does that impact how you do your job?

KK:

Oh, absolutely. I want to be a reporter's dream. And so, I will go out of my way to make sure that I do everything I can to support a reporter who is coming to us for a story. And I also, we have discussions in the marketing department that are very similar to the ones in the newsroom... And so, I'm able to put my journalist hat on and identify when a patient might make a good story, how we can use things like that things that would be attractive to a reporter that would want to cover [current organization]. But then I also get to wear the PR hat and be like, well, so absolutely, and all the lessons that I learned as a reporter, I'm using now, like, I got to use the nat pops, like how to write like Boyd Huppert... And so, I'm doing all of the things. I've taken all the life lessons from being a journalist. I don't

think you can just like flip a switch and be like, hey, now I'm PR now like, all of that journalistic training stays with you, you know.

KW:

So, what changes would your former employer have had to have made in order for you to stay in TV news?

KK:

You know, it's funny. I was willing to do just about anything for that station. Like, I was like, let me stay here and grow here and be your gal. And they kind of nicely were like, no. And so, they would have had to found a way to promote me or make me feel valuable, and they would have had to pay me at least a little bit more. I was not asking for a lot... at the end of the day, I don't know if there was anything that they could have done that would have stopped me.

KW:

And since I'm specifically focusing on women professionals for this study, who were on air talent, what changes do you think the TV news industry needs to make in order to retain more women in the future?

KK:

A hair and makeup budget or clothing budget would be super helpful, because, you know, men can wear the same suit jacket and change the tie and no one notices. But if I wear a dress twice in a month, it's like, she is just like, I don't know. And we had a color calendar so that we would all be coordinated on air and like, your girl doesn't look good in orange. I have one orange shirt. Every time orange comes up on the color calendar. Guess what? I'm wearing the one orange shirt. So, that would have been super helpful if they had... I feel like women on-air talent also need therapy. Like they need onsite counselors, or they need someone to foot the bill for therapy because therapy is expensive, and journalists need it as much as anyone. Yeah, I think but what it all comes down to is invest in your talent, especially your female journalists, female internal journalists of all shapes, sizes, colors, backgrounds, you know, invest in them, make them feel valued, make them feel like they matter, their work matters. Their voices are heard. All things that I think that the industry has a really long way to go on.

XII. Lena L., public relations coordinator

KW:

So, my very first question is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

LL:

I always have been a storyteller, and I love to tell stories. I would say that is first and foremost. I knew it would be an exciting career, and it was.

KW:

What was your journalism experience like? And how did that factor into your decision to leave?

LL:

Well, my journalism experience, I would say, you know, I got to live to meet a lot of people, got to do a lot of kind of cool things that you normally wouldn't get to do in a regular type of a job. There was a lot of excitement. It was always something different, and you never knew what you were going to be doing. When you thought you knew what you were doing in the day, there was a tragedy or something massive happen. And there you go; you're going to that instead. So, there were a lot of really enjoyable parts to it. But yeah, and then I think you asked what kind of led me to look elsewhere. Honestly, it would have to be money. That's just all there is to it. When it comes down to it, it just wasn't profitable enough.

KW:

So, from when you started your TV news career to when you left, how did your perception of your role change over time?

LL:

There were a lot of changes. So, I was there a little over eight years, and I started out producing, and I very quickly went into reporting and then anchoring as well. But when I first started, there were three full time photographers at the TV station. When I left there were none, and that was within a span of eight years. That's how much it changed. So honestly, it was tough on me because of my work. I mean, I live for my work, and I'm a perfectionist, so I knew that quality of work with a photographer, and, and I got used to that, and I loved it. And I did some award-winning work, but then when it came time to when they started pulling photographers or when the photographers would leave, and then they weren't replaced, that was just really tough for me to accept that, okay, you have to do this on your own. But your quality work is, to me, it's impossible to do the same quality work when you're all by yourself out there in the field.

KW:

So, based off your experience, was there like a seminal moment or specific moment for you where you're like, that solidified your decision to want to leave? Or is it kind of more of a gradual process/realization that this might not be your lifelong career in TV news?

LL:

I would say it was more of a gradual; it wasn't one specific event. And I fought it for actually several years, just because I do love the work so much. And I was so passionate about it. But it just, it wasn't paying the bills. I'm a mom – I've got kids go into college now. And it just got to be like, this is just not ever going to work unless I were to move to a larger market. Which I am not, you know, it's not something that I was interested in doing.

KW:

Going off that, can you describe to me the process of your decision to leave TV news? How did your job search process go in terms of going into PR?

LL:

Sure. So, I did start to kind of ask around and just kind of feel things out as I was still working at TV news. I knew that I couldn't just up and leave, and I wouldn't do that without having something else lined out. So yeah, I did start looking. Just because I knew I needed I needed to do something different for myself, and for my family too.

KW:

Okay, so this you might not know, but just like a general estimate, how long do you think you were looking around?

LL:

I would say probably at least three years. I was keeping my eyes open for a while.

KW:

Did you leave TV news for your current role now?

LL:

Yeah, I'm still where I'm at, when I left yeah.

KW:

The next section I have is 10 factors+ for why people may leave news just based off the research I've done. So, I'm just going to go through all 10+. If you have anything to comment on each one, basically just comment on each of the following as they apply to your decision to leave news. Okay, so the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry. So, by that I mean, you know, more of a focus on the MMJ and focus on social media. Do you think the changes in the TV news industry was a factor in your decision to leave TV news or not so much?

LL:

I would say not all the changes. I think social media can do can be a good thing. For MMJs, anchors, everyone that's in TV, but yeah, the photographers, that was a big hit on for me anyway.

KW:

What about your job satisfaction? Did your job satisfaction and TV news add to your decision to want to leave?

LL:

It did, yeah. I think I stressed the financials – that was the number one thing, but the other thing was satisfaction because I was very adamant about doing quality work and, like I said, I won several awards for my work and my writing. And it got to where, towards the end, I was rushed so much because we were so shorthanded, and without photographers that it got to where it felt like you were expected to slop your work together. And that was not me and that really bothered me to be expected to do that. And then of course, as you know, that's my face, that's my name, that's out there with that story. And to me that is, it's not good work.

KW:

So, my next one is shortage of resources. So, whether that be staff, photogs, editors, travel budgets, would you say the shortage of resources in the newsroom added to your decision to want to leave?

LL:

Yeah. I mean, it all kind of snowballed.

KW:

And so that goes into my next one – quality of news standards. Do you think that the lack of staff contributed to the quality of news standards, or just kind of give me your take on that?

LL:

Yeah, I really think it does. And where I live, I live in a small town too. So, I still watch news... and I've noticed even their quality of work, and some of their reporters are fresh out of college. Whereas maybe eight years ago, to get into the [city] market, you had to be that was at least your second or even third TV station. They were good. But now, I'm noticing that they're brand new in the industry. So, I think it's not just the small markets that are being affected and changed. And the quality of work, unfortunately, I think has suffered because of it.

KW:

So, another one is burnout/mental health pressures. Did you experience any of that? And if so, did it contribute to your decision to want to leave?

LL:

Yeah, it does. Because after a while, it's like they just, you know, unfortunately, because we were so short staffed, I would get told, well, you have to produce the show and anchor it. And I did that for months, I produced and anchor the noon almost every day, and that was after anchoring the morning show. You know, you get burned out because it's like, you want to do good work. But you're pushed to the max to go so fast because you're the

only one doing it. You have to produce the show that you, again, slop it together. And then you're burnt out from that type of work.

KW:

What about difficult stories? So, throughout your career, if there were any difficult stories you had to cover, did that add to your decision to want to leave or not so much?

LL:

I would say not so much. I did do some very difficult stories of tragedies... like there were several fatalities and a fire... I'll never forget that day, but that was closer to the beginning of my career where I had a photographer with me, of course, I did multiple live hits and did packages, but yeah, I would say no, that didn't really make me want to leave more.

KW:

What about work-life balance? How was your work-life balance, and id that contribute to your decision to want to leave it all?

LL:

I would say no. I would say it's taken me quite a while to change that thought and that process of constantly feeling like I got to check Twitter or I got to know what's going on, so I can retweet it. Even if it's a weekend. It's like, I don't I don't have to do that anymore.

KW:

Do you think you've ever experienced any sexism or discrimination while you were in TV news? And if so, did that add to your decision to want to leave?

LL:

I guess so, yeah, I would get creeps message me on Facebook that I didn't even know you know, telling you know, you're so hot or whatever. And those kinds of creeps... did it affect me as far as my decision to leave now. I would blow them off. And one time I did get a phone call that kind of creeped me out – I got a phone call on my personal phone – someone that said he saw me at a story. It was at a trailer park. Anyway, I don't know how he got my personal cell phone number, and it freaked me out because I was of course by myself because I didn't have a photographer. But anyway, yeah. It didn't affect – it didn't tell me no, you got to get out of this business, but it definitely was alarming.

KW:

Another one is other health issues... Did that impact your decision to want to leave it all?

LL:

No, I would say no.

KW:

Another one is compensation – so salary, raises, financial stability – you said that was the kind of the number one reason, so would you say that added to your decision to want to leave?

LL:

Yeah, unfortunately, yes.

KW:

Did you ever experience any management issues? And if so, did that add to your decision to want to leave?

LL:

Yeah. Yeah, I feel like the managers were probably under the same pressure that they put us under. You know, it's corporate. So, they were told what to do, and then they were passing that on to us. And yeah, it was, it was not a very good work environment whatsoever.

KW:

What about unethical practices? Did you ever feel like from management, or just anyone in the newsroom, that you felt influenced to do anything that didn't really necessarily align with your morals or your ethics?

LL:

Yeah, I mean, oh, gosh, I'm trying to think... I know that there was one time, and I knew that this might not be really ethical, but the news director at the time had said, well have somebody stand in the crowd and help you with the camera because there was no photographer. And I was like, wait a second, I thought, you know, no one touches the equipment, and little things like that. But then, when they knew we really needed a photographer, well, just have somebody in the crowd help you out. Yeah. No, I can't say that's really an ethical issue, but it was just like going against the rules that they had set for. I'm sure there were other instances, but I can't think of anything off the top of my head.

KW:

What about sponsorship or paid advertising?

LL:

No, I would say no.

KW:

So overall, based off all the reasons why you felt like you needed to leave TV news, what would you say were the biggest factors in that decision?

LL:

I would say salary and management.

KW:

Do you think your gender as a woman interacts with those factors at all?

LL:

No, I don't think so.

KW:

What about PR work seemed attractive to you?

LL:

Well, salary is much better. And that again, that's the main thing that I had to look at, for my family. I guess hours and stress level, all of that does come into play as well.

KW:

So ultimately, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR versus other career paths that you could have pursued?

LL:

Well, I just felt like I would have some kind of an idea of what it was all about. Because you're basically you're on the other side now. I have reporters calling me, asking me and you know, and I feel like I understand where they're coming from when they, they need me to call them back right away, or they need that story before the five o'clock news, so I felt like I understand a little bit about it.

KW:

So, reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your new role compared to your roles in TV news?

LL:

Not very much at all. Not at all – it's much more laid back. I hate to say it, but the people are, I think, I think everyone is much kinder, mostly because I think they are less stressed than where I came from. There was just so much stress from everyone before. So, I work with some really wonderful people that truly care about they care about everybody there. So, I can't say enough about where I'm at now. It's just the stress level is so much less.

KW:

Since you were in TV news, do you still think you carry this sort of journalistic self-concept with you? And if you do, how does that impact how you do your job?

LL:

Yeah, I feel like I still do, and I don't know if I'll ever if that'll ever go away. Yeah, as far as I don't know how, how it affects my job now. I mean, I do different things at work now that I pulled from that experience, to be able to be can I do orientations for new employees and things like that. So, it all comes into play to help me out.

KW:

So, what changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you in your role in TV news?

LL:

Well, there It was always this problem with me as far as I was titled anchor/reporter. And I never got the full title of anchor, even though it was a full two years, the only thing I did was anchor. So that, and it was it really was tough on me because they did change my role. Well, if they changed my role, it's a bump in pay. So yeah, I only anchored, but I didn't have that title. So that was a big one for me. They weren't budging because they were getting by with paying less, a lot less. And I was like, you know, I've got a family. I'm not playing games here.

KW:

Based on that standpoint, what changes do you think the TV news industry needs to make in order to retain more women in the future?

LL:

Well, I think women are smart, and they know about the contracts these days, and that people get locked into their contracts. And I think that if TV stations and corporations would not make these people feel like they are married to this company for two and three years, they might be able to keep those good employees. But when you tell a girl hey, you're going to have to be here for three years. That just doesn't, doesn't always work out... I do get kind of sad thinking about how it's changed so much over the eight years that I was there, because it is such a rewarding career. But at the same time, you know, the smaller markets are really suffering right now... It's everywhere. So, it is kind of sad to see the industry changing as much as it is. And I feel like, you know, the quality of work is kind of declining everywhere just because everyone is so short staffed. So, yeah, I don't know. I don't know what the what the future holds.

XIII. Megan M., content specialist

KW:

So, my very first question for you is what attracted you to a career in TV news?

MM:

I would say I grew up watching TV news every single morning, and we would always turn on the NBC station when I got up for school, and we'd watched it all the way through to like the first hour TODAY show before we left. And it was such like a big part of my life as I grew up, and I just saw the value in it, and then I ended up being in newspaper in high school. And I, that was the closest I'd ever been to journalism, And I thought, wow, like, this is the first thing I'm actually like, really, really good at and passionate about, like, and I can make money, like, that's really cool. Yeah, and then, you know, I went to school for journalism and followed that passion. So that's kind of that's where all that came from.

KW:

So overall – this is kind of a big question – but just what comes to mind... what was your journalism experience like, and how did that factor into your decision to leave the industry ultimately?

MM:

I would say, the biggest word that I could describe, or like, the one word that I could describe my experience in TV news would be just disappointing. I mean, I was dealt a really bad hand of cards because I graduated in May of 2020. That sucks already and then, you know, I went to my first station, and then you're really not doing like the fun, cool local news that I grew up doing, you're doing Zoom interviews, and using stock B roll, and it was just horrible. It was not what I wanted to be doing. It was not being involved in the community. And then, you know, on top of all of that, as I'm sure you know, pay not great, obviously, which I knew going in, and I was willing, you know, to be working at that level. But as time went on, in four months, I went from an MMJ to an MMJ, anchor and producer. And there was one show where I ended up having to run my own commercial break because there wasn't anybody scheduled in master control. So, it's like, continuous instances like that of like, I'm done. I can't do it, like this anymore like, just working 14 hours straight working, you know, 20 days in a row. And then I think your mouth was a gape. I think it might open again. I worked the morning shift. I filled in as a producer and anchor on the morning shift three days a week. So, I was 2:30 in the morning till 10:30. And then I was the weekend anchor and producer from 3 p.m. to 11:45 p.m. So, I did that switch shift for seven months. So, I would say just off the top of my head, those are my gripes.

KW:

Compared from the beginning to the end of your experience, how did your perception of your role in TV news change over time, if it did?

MM:

Yeah, I would say, you know, I came into my newsroom really excited to make it different. I went to school in [state] and I grew up in [state], to really like Hispanic heavy states. And then I moved to [state], which was like, so unlike anything I've been involved in before because it's like all white people. And so, I was really excited to be telling stories about those undervalued communities, which is something that I told my news director, from the very beginning, I was like fighting for those stories, and, you know, really seeking the stories out. But as time went on, they weren't really interested in those stories. They were more, you know, interested in like the daily crime, and just stories that really didn't have much of an impact outside of, you know, that that one news cycle. And so, I would say, on the beginning, I went in wanting to make this big change and like help people and change, you know, change the way things worked. And then, by the end, I just kind of saw myself as like a time filler like whatever fills this 39th show, like, I can't control every aspect of it because, you know, I'm the only person working in the newsroom today. Like, I just can't. So, I would say that's how that transition happened.

KW:

So, based on your experience, was there like a seminal moment or specific experience that solidified your decision to leave TV? Or was it kind of more of your just this like, gradual process of realizing that this may not be like the best fit for you?

MM:

Absolutely. So, on the weekend, I had been having several issues, just like the same issues over and over where my reporters weren't turning the stories I was asking them to turn, or they just weren't turning any stories at all, which was, you know, a struggle... only have two hours to produce, you know, for three shows. So, there was a time where one of my reporters turned a story on a politician and completely misquoted the politician... He never said something like that, and I was very upset, because my news director was the one that was proofing scripts and approving scripts, and he didn't catch that. And so, it went on air. And I have a big sit-down meeting with him and my general manager to discuss it. And I said, like, how are we going to make sure this never happens again? Like, I'm so embarrassed, like, it only aired once, and like, I made her amend the online article, you know, and we, you know, do we correction, what do we do? And they just told me that I was being too much of a perfectionist, and not every newscast can be 100 percent accurate. And I just thought that was such an egregious mistake, and they didn't care. And so, I thought, like, that's not the reason why I'm in news. And if they don't care, then like, then I'm done because that's like, the very core of journalism is the truth. So, that was the big moment for me.

KW:

Based off of that moment and your experience, how did you go about leaving TV news? Like, did you start looking for other jobs while you were still working, or kind of take me through that process you went through when you were like, okay, I can't do this anymore.

MM:

Yeah, I was lightly... I was just lightly looking at other jobs. I would say, I started looking at the end of December, just lightly kind of looking around to see what could

work for me. And then I would say that interaction probably happened in January. And then I started seriously looking for jobs. And then I put in my 30 days in February, and I left it in March.

KW:

So, when you put in your 30 days in February, did you already have a job secured, or were you like I'm just going to be done and then, you know, finalize the job stuff afterward?

MM:

I did not have a job, which is, so one 180 unlike like me, I would absolutely never do that, but I was so fed up. And at that point, a lot of people were leaving the station, and I was told that I would be taking on an additional show. And they had given me this proposal for the most ridiculous raise. I'd get like 50 cents. Like, I'd get 50 cents more. And then in two years, I'd get another raise. There's just absolutely no way so yeah, then I was like you know what, no, I'm done. Like, I have a savings I can rely on until I find a job. And then I was super lucky and within a month, I had already secured a job and I was I was moving out of the state.

KW:

And was the job that you got then still the same job that you have now?

MM:

I freelanced a little bit before I got like my, the job that I have now. But that was just a really quick just writing stint. So other than that.

KW:

The research that I've done has identified, like, around 10 + reasons that contribute to professionals leaving the industry. Obviously, there's a lot of reasons that go into that, but just based off the research I've done, there's like 10+ common ones. So, I'm just going to read through those and if you just want to comment on if that contributed to your decision to leave at all... the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry. So, whether that be you know, focus on like, you know, this new focus on MMJs doing everything or, you know, more of an emphasis on like digital, first social media, anything that's changing in the TV news industry, did that kind of impacts your decision to leave it all or not really?

MM:

I would say not really just in the sense that like, I already had an understanding that I tend to be an MMJ, and like, have to, you know, write my own digital articles and articles and do my own social media. I wouldn't say that applied to me because my new station was like, everything in that new station was from the 80s.

KW:

Okay, so the next one is job satisfaction. So did your job satisfaction impact your decision to leave, if so, how?

MM:

Yes, I was not satisfied with the insane hours I was working and the shows that I had been dealt and the resources or maybe I should say lack thereof.

KW:

So, that actually leads me to my next one, which is shortage of resources – so whether that be staff, photog editors, travel budgets? Was there a shortage of resources at your TV news station? And did that impact your decision to leave at all?

MM:

Absolutely. I went from having two reporters and a designated weather forecaster on my team on the weekend to one of my reporters, they moved to the weather forecaster position with no experience, my one reporter, you know, staying a reporter and almost pretty much refusing to do that job. So, there was one photog who was only there during the week, and my news director also had to edit all of my newscasts. So, I would say 100 percent, crazy lack of resources.

KW:

And do you think that the shortage of resources impacted the quality of the news that was being produced at all?

MM:

Oh, absolutely.

KW:

And did that impact your decision to leave – the quality of news standards?

MM:

Yes. I mean, the, you know, the moment that I had decided, like, oh, my gosh, I have to get out of here was because of the faulty news standards.

KW:

What about work-life balance? How is your work-life balance, and did that impact your decision to want to leave?

MM:

Non-existent. Yes, it impacted my reason to leave.

KW:

Were there any difficult stories you had to have covered? Did that impact your decision to leave news at all or not so much?

MM:

Absolutely. We had a really, really devastating forest fire rip through my area in October of 2020, and I had moved in May of 2020. So, you know, it was really, really impactful to me. It burned the two cities that touched the city I lived in. The new station was under

like a level two evacuation notice. Like, it was a super extremely stressful time. And I would say after that, and after another year of doing fire stories, I simply could not do another wildfire story. It was insanely stressful and really bad. Not only for my mental health, but I would say my physical health too, because you know, we were out there reporting. When the AQI was like, over the 500 limit, like we're wearing smoke masks hoping for the best.

KW:

With your stories and everything, another one is unethical practices. So, did you ever feel from like management or higher ups that you were kind of being tasked with anything that went against your morals or ethical beliefs or not really?

MM:

Yes, I would say so... we were like a locally owned and operated station. And so, there was like a lot of choosing of top stories and choosing the stories in general that really just, I didn't think were ethical at all.

KW:

So, another one is like sponsorship/advertisements. Did you see like, whether that'd be like paid segments or anything – did sponsorship or advertising impacts your decision to leave at all or not really?

MM:

I would say not so much on that end.

KW:

Another one is management issues. Did you ever experience any management issues, and if so, did that impact your decision to leave?

MM:

Yes, and. yes.

KW:

And how so?

MM:

Again, we were a locally owned and operated shop. My news director was the nephew of the owner. And so, you can tell right there that not a lot was getting changed. So yeah, I had a news director who constantly who hired a newsroom full of women and belittled women constantly. And then even up to the, you know, highest management, you have a general manager, I think, who spoke very condescendingly to people that he chose to hire. And even up to the top, the very owner, I had a meeting with her to let her know that I was, you know, thinking about leaving, and then I really wasn't having a good time in news anymore. And she told me that if I didn't feel good at work, I should go get bloodwork done. Because it had to clearly be something with me and not on the station. So, I was in bad management. Number one.

KW:

So that leads me into my next one is – it's a bit more personal, but it's sexism and discrimination. So, did you feel like you experienced that during your time in his career? And if so, did that impact your decision to leave?

MM:

I would say while not outright, I would say there was definitely sexism in our newsroom just in the sense of how we were treated. How a big group of women in the room that was treated, but I wouldn't say that, per se was a reason I left. I think there were like things bigger than that to get to that decision.

KW:

What about burnout/mental health pressures?

MM:

Absolutely. Oh, my goodness, at the end of my time, I really had like, no mental brainpower at all. And it's so wild to me now that I have so much energy and I can go on walks after work and other things and, you know, not feel like my body is crumbling.

KW:

What about any other health issues that you might have had? Would that have impacted your decision to leave at all?

MM:

I don't think anything was applicable there.

KW:

Compensation – so whether that be salary, raises, financial stability, did that impact your decision to leave? If so, what extent?

MM:

I would say yes. Because I put in my 30 days after I had the issue with the reporter, and then right, after they gave me the proposal, my raise proposal for the next how many ever years that they wanted me to sign on for. Yeah, it was just absolutely ridiculous. And so, I put my 30 days in the next day without talking to them because I just... yeah, I'm just done. I just felt really disrespected, honestly.

KW:

Yeah, that's so unfortunate. So, based off all the factors or, you know, just all the reasons why you wanted to leave what would you say were the most important factors in your decision to leave TV news?

MM:

It was like bad management and then like, the disregard for journalism ethics.

KW:

My next question is, how do you think your gender as a woman interacted with these factors? If it did at all?

MM:

I would just say the way I was spoken to in terms of, you know, checking up on the ethics, in terms of letting management know that I was unhappy, and the ways they could fix that, and the way they were unwilling, I just think the whole way I was talked to would not have been the same if I'm not a woman, I felt, you know, very talked down to and like very just like belittled and like a child. And that's just like the way they treated me.

KW:

Yeah. Okay, well, enough of the TV news stuff. I know that's probably really hard to talk through. So, I really appreciate it. Next, we'll move on to what you're doing now. So hopefully, it's more positive, more positive to talk about. Let's hope in terms of you know, we got a TV news for a reason, but okay, so I know you're a content strategist. Is that right? Specialist. Sorry, specialist, not strategist. Could you just give me like, kind of a rundown on what you do? Or do you work with clients? Or do you do any PR work or anything in your current role?

MM:

So, I do a little bit of everything, I'm super lucky. So, I only work for one client – it's just the hotel. And it's really neat to kind of be able to learn the product inside and out... And so, I do all of the written copy for internal and external documents. So, I do everything from like, the pamphlets to the, you know, the fact sheets to the history... But then I also have been able to use my TV experience to help with crisis PR for them, which has been a really interesting, you know, learning curve being on the opposite end, and then being a media liaison. And I've been helping out with photography and videography for the property, but we just got a new social media specialist today. So that's off my plate.

KW:

So, what about PR work seemed attractive to you?

MM:

To me, I was honestly just looking for a place that I could use my writing skills in a creative way. I felt like for a really long time, I had just been kind of writing the same story over and over again, like, how many times can you write about, you know, the people who got vaccinated. And so, it's been really interesting to tell different stories. So, I would say that I would just, I was really looking for a job I could use my writing skills with the preferred option of, you know, helping people, but I was willing to kind of lose that in order just to get out of news.

KW:

So ultimately, why did you decide to pursue a career in PR/communications versus another career path?

MM:

I would say for me, it made sense. The skills overlapped really well. And I think a lot of women in TV don't realize like how powerful and how, you know, sought after those skills really are because we're not celebrated for those skills in the industry. So, leaving and seeing how many different roles were opened with the skills that I had, most of the roles I saw that overlapped were in communications or PR... Like we're so multifaceted. And I don't think we realize it just because, you know, in the industry, it's really just like, not valued unless you're winning awards for the station or whatever else. So anyway, it's just a very nice, it's just a very nice little thing to have in your back pocket.

KW:

I relate to where you're coming from because I feel like a lot of the things I'm talking to I see the same in myself, so it's just interesting... anyway... reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your new role compare?

MM:

Oh, my gosh, I would say it is just a full 180. I have a female director. And above her, I have a female general manager, which seems like small potatoes, but for me has been super instrumental in like my growth, like, I think they're both such strong, powerful women, and they're all about lifting everybody up with them... It's just been really powerful to like, have those super powerful women, you know, just in my day to day. And then on top of that, I'm doing work that has an impact.

KW:

That's so awesome. Okay, so based off of that, do you still in your new role, do you still think you carry this sort of like journalistic self-concept and your new role? And if so, how does that self-concept as a journalist impact how you do your job?

MM:

I would say it does, in the sense that I am like, constantly, you know, double, triple quadruple, checking all of my facts before I print something. I just couldn't even consider not doing that. Like, I'm really good at getting everybody's names right. Everyone is always complimenting me on how I never have a typo on my emails. I'm like, I don't know how you don't but whatever. But yeah, I would just say like, I still have a really close eye on everything. And I'm really always like up to date with what's going on around because I'm just like nosy and ask a bunch of questions. And so yeah, I would say there's still like very much a journalist inside me where I am like, constantly asking questions, maybe poking the bear sometimes, but the one thing that's really cool about the [client] resort is everyone's pretty open. So, I know a lot about what's going on...good or bad because they're willing to talk about it. So, it's nice.

KW:

What changes would your former employer have had to have made in order to keep you and your last role?

MM:

I would say real changes needed to have been implemented after that big mess up on air – the big inaccuracy. So, I would say I'm trying to even like, qualify, like, what would have needed to be, there was just so many factors, I would just say, more dedicated, trained staff. I think that within itself, really could have made a big difference...

KW:

What changes do you think the TV news industry needs should make an order to retain more women in the future?

MM:

I would say there really needs to be a huge shift in TV from – I would say there needs to be a really big shift in how things look to the way that things are. So instead of focusing on talent coaches, and you know, somebody coming in to tell you what blush looks best, when it doesn't, like I would rather have you know, a talent coach that comes through and says, you know, and helps me with my investigative work or something like that. Like I would say, that to me is like more of an added value for women to stay in as opposed to like what we get now which I feel like is like a lot of backhanded you know, advice that can serve you or not.

XIV. Natalie N., account director

KW:

What attracted you to a career in TV news at the beginning?

NN:

I really wanted to be a storyteller. And I wanted to be a storyteller that informed people of meaningful things that I thought would make an impact in their lives one way or another.

KW:

Overall, what was your journalism experience? Like and how did that factor into your decision to leave?

NN:

Yeah, well, I was a journalist for 11 years. I applied to at 87 different TV stations when I first graduated from college. So, it was something that I desperately wanted to work out. It was something that I always dreamed about as a little girl. I even had like a fake little newspaper report when a bird got stuck in our chimney when I was little, and I interviewed neighbors about it. So, like, it was just like, always a thing that I wanted to do. And so, from there, I landed a job in [state], and I had an awesome experience in two markets in the state. It valued storytelling – the viewers were phenomenal. There's something to be said about the smaller markets, almost adding more life value, because it was it was wonderful. So, then I left [state]. I moved to [new state] because my wife's family is here, and this was always my dream market because I knew I wanted to live out here. I was pretty nervous to make the jump from [state], I think it was market 80 to market number to market number six at the time, but through freelancing here, it turned into a full-time contract reporter position. And I thought this is it. This is what I want to do. I had no interest in becoming a national correspondent because of the demands of travel and time away from family and all that kind of stuff. But yeah, I thought this was it. I was in my dream market. I was working the morning shift, which believe it or not, was my preferred shift because again, the family life balance, I felt that that was the way to make it work. And I wanted it all. So, I guess things took a turn. Listen, the grind of news is always the kind of news even like my best days, I had several colleagues and I who were talking of our escape plan, because this industry, it just really takes a toll on women, people who identify as women. It's not an industry that allows women to age – terrible. It's almost like the Leonardo DiCaprio of industries, like once you're past 25 years, you're old, and your experience isn't valued. And so those thoughts were always in the back of my mind, but it was working for me at the time because I was in my late 20s and early 30s. And I was in the grind, and then my news director changed. He was an absolute horrible human being – not just a bad manager, but just not a good person. And the pandemic – February, I had a conversation with my news director and he told me that – it came out of nowhere – two weeks before he had said how amazing I was and how I like really did well on this New Year's series that he had pitched or whatever. And then he kind of threw a curveball at me. And two weeks later and told me I didn't know how to develop a story. I wasn't a true journalist. I had to prove myself to him. And this was after

I had put in, let's see, that was 2020. So, eight years, nine years in the business, so I had felt like I had, you know, I still obviously wanted to learn more, but I felt like I had a good grasp on how to be a journalist. There was no warning sign that he felt like this. So, because of some things that he did in the newsroom, and my overall thoughts of this, the longevity of this isn't going to work out, I quit, and the pandemic happened, and I didn't have a backup plan. So, I freelanced for another TV station... which turned out to be an incredible experience. I'm so glad it's the last station I worked for because that news director is one of the best human beings of all time. I would have stayed and worked for her forever, but it just didn't work out that she, the budgets were slashed. And so, I was freelancing, a TV station, and I was freelancing with two different agencies. One was more of your traditional PR agency, and then I was working for a marketing agency. So, I got a little taste of that world, and I was able to build up my non-news resume. So, to get back to your question... it was the daily grind, the lack of recognition, I don't even need like, you know, praise every day, but like maybe an email that says, like, hey, thanks for coming in on a day off, or thanks for you know, just like little things like that would have made a big difference. And I just felt like I had plateaued, and I didn't want to plateau at the age of 30-something. I'm a curious person. I think a lot of journalists are curious, and I wanted to continue learning. I wanted some sort of professional development, and that just didn't seem possible in my current situation. So that's why I left.

KW:

Based on all your experience, was there like a specific moment or seminal moment that solidified your decision to want to leave TV news? Or was it kind of more of a gradual process of realizing that this wasn't really for you?

NN:

There's one moment that really stands out to me, and it didn't even affect me at all, but it kind of woke me up as far as like the type of people that seemed to end up as news directors. There was a woman who worked in the control room, and she had cancer, and she had been on medical leave and taking a lot of time off. But for some reason, she needed to work one additional eight-hour shift in order to get like, more benefits, or more leave or something like that, and the news director made her come in. And she was so sick, she was not able to sit up. So, she spent the entire eight-hour shift lying on the floor because as long as she was physically in the building, in the control room, she was going to get her benefits extended. And I just thought that that was the most inhumane thing I've ever heard of in my life. I blamed my news director personally, and I also just blamed the corporation in general. I just, you know, you couldn't have overlooked an eight-hour shift? We couldn't like, work something out? She made an effort to come into the station – you couldn't have noticed that she was lying on the floor? It just, it really, really, really bothered me, and I was like, for what? This woman has worked here for 20 something years, maybe 30, and this is how she's ending it, and this is the respect she gets? Why am I going to sacrifice my life and for what? So, that was definitely my wake-up call.

KW:

Going off your decision/process of leaving TV news, did you put in your resignation and then search for jobs? I know COVID kind of ruined jobs for everyone, so your process was you quit your job and then searched for others after you already put in your resignation notice, is that what you were?

NN:

Per my contract, I actually had to give a 60-day notice. So, I had two months where I was still receiving my reporter salary. And I figured it, was February of 2020, so I was like, oh, I can find something, even if it's, you know, part time or like, I can figure this out in two months – it's plenty of time. I feel like I have a lot of connections in this area, whatever. And then, yeah, of course, it didn't work out like that. But fortunately, towards the end of my 60-day notice coming to an end, I was able to get a freelance TV position, which I initially thought, reluctantly, because I was so over news. But I had heard incredible things about this place. I loved the vibe, you know, when you're out in the field, and you kind of know, like, what other stations are good and what aren't. So, word on the street was that this was a legit place, and that I would be valued. And, you know, they thought I was great. And so, they actually believed that I could develop a story – that I was a journalist, so that was a win. Then while I was freelancing there, I just knew that I had to get out still, and I picked up a couple freelancing things. Like I said, outside of TV. So yeah, that's how that process worked. In the meantime, I was I was applying to full time communications positions, but it was extremely difficult to get anywhere. I think I applied to a lot of jobs, but I think I only had interviews at one or two places that advanced anywhere, Aside from I got my freelance gigs through connections I had. So yeah, kind of the cold, applying to places did not work for me at all.

KW:

There's a lot of reasons why people leave news, but there's about 10+ common reasons why people leave. So, I'm just going to go through the list. And if you just want to, you know, briefly comment on if/how that applies to your decision to leave... the first one is rapid changes in the TV news industry. So, whether that, you know, be more social media, more MMJs, whatever it is, did that impact your decision to want to leave and if so, how?

NN:

I would say slightly, I mean, I was taught in school to be an MMJ, so that didn't necessarily scare me. And I was kind of brought into social media in the same way. So, once I got to this market and the big city and seeing how much driving and just security reasons, I would have to deal with by myself as an MMJ, that was definitely a deterrent. Yeah, I'd say it definitely impacted my decision because everyone is trying to move to MMJ here.

KW:

What about job satisfaction?

NN:

Job satisfaction. Yeah. I think in in regard to just the lack of professional development opportunities and the feeling of plateauing for sure.

KW:

What about burnout or any mental health pressures? Did you experience any event? If so, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

NN:

A million percent. While the morning shift was working out for my life, it definitely took a toll on my mental health – not to the point where I had to seek counseling or be prescribed medication, but it was it was a huge family sacrifice for me to work the morning shift, but that was the only way we knew how to juggle logistics at the time with our kids. And so, that was just kind of how it fell on to me but yeah, the hours I could never get more than, you know, four or five hours of sleep a night wasn't sustainable. So, it was absolutely burnout to some degree and my mental health. It didn't feel like it when I was in it because I was just in it, and that was the way it was. But now, in hindsight when sleeping, you know, normal hours, typical hours. Yeah, it was really, it was brutal.

KW:

So, what about your work-life balance, then? How was how was that? And how did that if did that impact your decision to want to leave?

NN:

Yes, again, a million percent. It was difficult, because although I was physically present, I would be exhausted or always stressing about, well, I got to get XYZ done by seven o'clock at night, or I would be really bitter toward missing out on life, you know, holidays. Even just if it was a weekend activity, I worked weekends, a lot, of course. That feeling of if something big happens, I could get called in at any time. The constant concern there. So yeah.

KW:

What about difficult stories? Journalists cover difficult stories. So, did that impact your decision to want to leave or not somebody?

NN:

Yes, for sure. I'm definitely a self-identified empath. And I just, I feel like I was too emotional for this job. I rarely cried when I was interviewing someone, but I would have moments where I totally break down in the newsroom with my photographer, and you know, have to decompress a little bit. Yeah, there were some stories that you know, you'll just never forget. And they usually involved human tragedy and not like, you know, weather events already. But like, if someone was killed, and then having to go get a sound bite with a victim's family member or friend, it just was like, what am I doing? If I was in reverse positions here, I would tell me to go to hell, you know? So yes, for sure, an impact.

KW:

What about the shortage of resources? So, whether that be staff, boats, hogs, editors, travel budgets? Did you experience any of that? And did that impact your decision to leave?

NN:

I did. It was never fun to be asked to fill in because they were short staffed or be denied vacation because they couldn't find anyone to fill my shifts. Yeah.

KW:

My next one is quality of news standards.

NN:

Yes. Yeah, the quality has went from I was telling legit stories that made that affected real humans... it was more like car accidents, fires, shootings. And just, as I mentioned before, like having to talk to family members of victims – what's the true value in that, you know, what does that offer for public safety reasons, and, and so forth? So, yeah, news, judgment and news selection was part of it all.

KW:

Did you felt like you've ever experienced any sexism or discrimination? And if so, did that impact your decision to want to leave the industry?

NN:

Not really. I am Caucasian, and I think because of that, I was never going to be an anchor here because they look for diversity, which is great. I'm never going to say that that's a bad thing. It just was the fact that played into how I was viewed here.

KW:

Did you ever feel influenced to do something that went against your morals or ethics? If so, did that impact your decision to leave?

NN:

I would say yes. Again, coming back to the asking your family members and friends to talk. It's not something that I – I would lie all the time and say, oh, I knocked on this person's door. Oh, I called them – they didn't call me back. And I would make a pact with my photographer. Like, no, sorry, we're not doing this today.

KW:

What about compensation? So, salary raises financial stability, did that impact your decision to want to leave?

NN:

It actually did not. I ended up being paid fairly well in [state]. But I think long term, maybe, I guess, yes. Long term, there wasn't a lot of growth potential. So, it was going to be a standard, you know, 3 percent union raise or something like that, and I think I viewed life outside of news as an opportunity to earn more long term.

KW:

In general, what would you say were the most important factors in your decision to leave TV news?

NN:

Probably work-life balance, professional development and security. Because the [market] I think the only news market. I don't know if New York does this... It's news crews travel with armed guards. Because of the safety issues, news crews have been the target of several crimes and thefts. And it you know, I think it was my first day someone was like, would you be able to be held up at gunpoint? Because our photographer was just hit in the head with a gun last week, and then his camera was stolen. And I was like, Sure, sure... I don't know how to answer that question. So, I think those were the main reasons.

KW:

And do you think since you identify as a woman, do you think that interacted with these factors at all, or not so much?

NN:

Um, well, I had a few things. I had to miss my sister's graduation because of sweeps, and I just started a new job. I was ambushed by some homeless men a couple times, and pretty shaken up those incidents. This happened after I left, but one of the security guards who was assigned to a news crew, he was shot and killed on assignment one day. What else would really stand out to me? I think just overall, the pandemic and our past president, then the fake news sentiment, I think some people even in the liberal [area] would express their opinions and get pretty hostile. And so, I was just kind of overall that conversation. I was just doing my job – not expressing my opinion at all – being unbiased and doing my best to record both sides. And I was just like, there's a better way to collect a paycheck and to just do my job without people yelling at me.

KW:

Okay, so enough about TV news, I really appreciate you opening up about that. I'm sure it's very hard, especially since there, you know, are obviously reasons why you're not doing it anymore. But moving on, what about PR work seemed attractive to you?

NN:

So, I was really interested in learning the different fields within PR. I didn't really want to pitch to media – I had no interest in that, but I still wanted to tell stories. And I thought through brand messaging, I could do that. And so that was really appealing to me to just help these, either larger corporations or small businesses kind of tell their story and help market whatever their products were to normal people. I thought I really love taking something complicated and breaking it down into digestible little tidbits for people to understand. And so, I wanted to do that on a larger scale.

KW:

So why did you decide to pursue a career in PR versus other career paths you could have chosen after you left?

NN:

I think it just kind of fit in with my existing skillset. I wasn't afraid of writing all day or focusing on messaging. So yeah, that's why I went that route, instead of like going back to school or something. I still wanted to be a storyteller at the end of the day, and I still wanted to work on messaging and that sort of thing.

KW:

So, reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does your new role compare to your last role?

NN:

Oh, my gosh, it's night and day. I feel like I have news PTSD. It still takes me a while to realize that it's okay to get up from my desk and take a lunch break. That I can go for a walk and bring my phone and then if something is urgent, they'll text me, but it's usually not. It just allows me to sign off without question every day to get my kids on time. They called me at 4:30 one day and they went, so sorry for the late call, because I'm remote – I work from home – so sorry for the late call. This is incredible. It was very sweet. So yeah, it's been a night and day experience. It's just a good camaraderie, good vibes, people aren't jaded, they're not bitter. And if they do start to go down this, they kind of raise it to management in a professional way. And there are conversations that happen, and there are improvements that happen. And yeah, couldn't be happier with leaving, which is a relief and a surprise still, because as I mentioned, I just identified as a journalist forever. And so, it is part of your identity. And it's still a relief that it all worked out the way that.

KW:

So, do you still think now that you're not in news anymore, that you still think you kind of carry this journalistic identity with you?

NN:

100%.

KW:

Do you think that impacts the way you do your job too?

NN:

Yes, yeah, I think I'm able to speak like a real human and help these bigger companies – just people understand... My agency, because I was a journalist, they love that fact about me. So yeah, I use it. I use it all the time.

KW:

What changes would your former employer have had to make in order for you to stay in TV news?

NN:

They would have had to have a five-year plan for me to grow professionally. They would have had to guarantee my safety every day on the job, and they would have had to allow me to be flexible and to you know, take a look live when I needed to instead of being live somewhere.

KW:

And what changes do you think TV news the TV news industry needs to make in order to retain more women in the future?

NN:

It just needs to be aware of the fact that there are different obstacles because of how they present themselves or how they're taken seriously or not seriously. They just need to have conversations and check in today. You know, hey, how's it going out there? What can I do? They just need to be more attentive.

Appendix III: Weekly Field Notes

Update: 8/29-9/2

This week in my internship, I mainly built media lists, crafted briefing books, tracked client coverage, wrote placement notes, and created editorial calendars. Specifically, I built a media list for one of my team's clients, Cultural Council for Palm Beach County, for its September press release. I also created a briefing book for another one of my team's clients, Cosentino, for an upcoming event launch on September 13. In addition, I tracked press coverage that included my team's clients in a spreadsheet, which included organic and supported coverage. To track press coverage, I recorded details of the articles, PR objectives, spokespersons, links, and impressions. I also wrote placement notes that detailed the recorded press coverage, which were sent to our clients at the end of the week. Lastly, I gained practice creating editorial calendars for Four Hands, a furnishings company that is a Sharp Think client. In terms of my master's project, I reviewed my proposal and made a working list of my upcoming plans and tasks. Currently, I am working on recruiting participants. I finished a draft of the post that I am planning on posting in the "TV to PR Women" Facebook group this week, and I also created a Doodle form, which will allow participants to schedule times for in-depth interviews. I also plan on meeting with Dr. Porter in the next week for a check-in meeting on my professional project.

One of the main lessons I learned via my internship about strategic communication, and specifically, public relations, is how it works in conjunction with journalism. In other words, I learned from first-hand experience how public relations professionals work closely with journalists to gain coverage and media exposure for

clients. The assignment that I am currently working on at my internship is a master media lists for one of Sharp Think's clients. By searching for journalists and reporters to add to the media list, I realized that public relations work would not be as effective if it did not work in conjunction with journalism.

Time management is an area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me. While I always meet deadlines for assignments, I have found that my time management skills always have room for improvement. As a "new" New Yorker who is balancing an internship and studies while living in a new city, I think it will take me another week or two before I am able to confidently say that I have figured out how to manage my time effectively and efficiently.

The primary challenge that I have been facing since starting my internship is getting comfortable working remotely in a professional setting. As a new intern, I find myself hesitant to reach out and ask questions to my supervisors via Slack. While I am familiar with studying remotely, I am unfamiliar with working remotely. Personally, I think that this is a challenge that merely takes time to become comfortable with; I already felt more comfortable working remote during my second week compared to my first week.

This week, I hope to finish the master media list that I am currently working on, and I am also aiming to complete several editorial calendars for my team's clients. I plan to make this happen by blocking off time slots during the week that will be strictly set aside for finishing these tasks. In terms of my goals for my master's project, I hope to wrap up participant recruitment this week. My goal is to ensure that I have in-depth

interviews scheduled for the upcoming month, and the overall goal is to have my in-depth interviews completed by October 7.

Update: 9/5-9

At my internship this week, I primarily tracked coverage for my team's clients, wrote media pitches and built media lists. Specifically, the brands I tracked coverage for were Kohler Co. and Four Hands. Kohler Co. is a leading brand for kitchen and bathroom products, and Four Hands is a designer-approved furnishings brand. I also wrote a media pitch for Kohler Co. and built a media list for the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County for its upcoming event in Chicago. In terms of my master's research project, I am still working on recruiting participants. I am hoping to get all my interviews scheduled by the end of the week so I can wrap up my interviews by the first week of October.

The main lesson I learned via my internship about strategic communication, and particularly public relations, is that public relations has hard deadlines like journalism. While I did not particularly favor the hard deadlines and fast turnarounds in the news industry, my deadlines for my public relations internship have shown me that the media industry, in general, revolves around fast turnarounds and quick deadlines. Although, a fast-paced environment keeps work interesting, intriguing, and exciting.

My work this week showed me that my media pitch writing is an area that can be improved. I am relatively new to writing media pitches, so this is an area that I hope to improve over the course of my internship. I will be curious to look back on my first media pitches and see the improvement I have made over the course of my internship.

I did not experience many issues last week, especially in comparison to my first week. As I mentioned in my last weekly field note report, time management is a problem

I have faced since making the move from Columbia to New York City. However, as I settle in the city and become more familiar with my duties and responsibilities, my time management skills are improving.

I hope to learn how to write effective editorial calendars this week at my internship, as well as finish the participant recruitment stage for my project. I plan to make this happen by following a strict schedule and setting out times to get my tasks done (i.e., work at my internship from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, work on my professional project from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday).

Update: 9/12-16

This week during my internship, I attend a PR event for one of my clients, put together media mailers and tracked coverage for my team's clients. At the PR event on Tuesday, I was primarily in charge of crafting the briefing book for this event, as well as checking-in the editors and public figures who attended the event. I also created and shipped media mailers for one of my clients, and I helped track weekly coverage of Kohler and Four Hands, two of my clients at Sharp Think. For my master's project, I spent this week preparing for my in-depth interviews by reviewing my proposal and getting familiar with my interview questions. Since my professional project topic may bring up sensitive topics of conversation, it is crucial that I am respectful, considerate, and prepared for my interviews with participants.

One of the main lessons I learned this week during my internship is that strategic communication is a non-stop process of building relations and creating effective messaging – whether it be through public relations events, media pitches or press

releases. In other words, I have learned that the practice of public relations is an ongoing process that does not merely end once the workday is over; it is a continuous process.

An area of self-improvement that I could enhance is relationship building with clients. This is a practice that is new to me in the practice of public relations, but my experience in the news industry has taught me how to build relationships and foster connections with sources and the community. Hence, I am hoping that I can learn how to improve my relationship building with clients and contacts through my internship.

One of the main challenges I have experienced this week is adapting to the world and high stress of the public relations industry. While I am used to the fast turnaround of the news industry, I have realized that public relations is also a high-demand industry to work in. However, my colleagues have assured me that it takes time to adapt and become familiar with the public relations landscape. Personally, I think new environments take time to become familiar in; for this reason, I think it will take time for me to adjust to the public relations industry.

I hope to start my interviews for my professional project and continue to learn about the public relations landscape during my internship. In terms of my project, I also hope to meet with Dr. Porter this week to check-in with her. Checking in with Dr. Porter will help me ensure that I accomplish my tasks for this week and am on the right path for prepping for my in-depth interviews.

Update: 9/19-23

During my internship this week at Sharp Think, I built extensive media lists, worked on editorial calendars, tracked coverage for clients and attended client calls. I built two media lists for one of Sharp's clients, the Cultural Council for Palm Beach

County. One of the media lists I built was for the CCPBC's October press release, while the other one was for a tourism pitch. I also worked on a media list for Kohler, another client of Sharp Think, for its upcoming smart toilet campaign in Los Angeles. I was tasked with crafting a media list that targeted major broadcast outlets in the Los Angeles area, such as KTLA and KTTV. In addition, I worked on more editorial calendars and tracked coverage for my team's clients. This week, I also attended client calls where Sharp Think gave status updates and discussed our current objectives. For my master's research project, I published my screener survey in the Facebook group "TV to PR Women" and scheduled eight in-depth interviews with participants. Currently, my screener survey has received approximately 90 responses. I also met with Dr. Porter this week to discuss my progress and upcoming tasks for my project.

Through the tasks I completed for my internship this week, I learned that it is crucial for public relations professionals to understand the media landscape and build relationships with clients and journalists. By building media lists and writing editorial calendars, I realized that it is important for public relations professionals to stay up to date on journalism professionals and the industry. At my internship, I am tasked with staying up to date on the journalists my team works with and how to write pitches that appeal to them. Through attending client calls, I learned that maintaining relationships with clients is just as important as maintaining relationships with journalists.

My level of creativity is an area of self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me. While my written and oral communication skills are strong, the tasks I engaged in this week, including writing editorial calendars, showed me that my creativity could be heightened to produce more effective, engaging work. Personally, I think that

my creativity will improve through finding inspiration and learning from my colleagues.

A challenge that I have recently faced at my internship is learning how to distribute my time evenly to the accounts I work with, which include Kohler, Sprig by Kohler, Four Hands, Brown Jordan Outdoor Kitchens, Cultural Council for Palm Beach County and TEFAF. As my internship progresses and my workload intensifies, I have been challenged with figuring out how to juggle working on six accounts. I can address this challenge by connecting with my colleagues to receive tips and advice on how to manage my time and workload.

In the week ahead, I hope to learn how to build meaningful relationships with the journalists Sharp Think engages with and learn how to write more creative content. While both tasks take time to learn, I am hoping to learn more about how to improve my skills when it comes to building relationships and writing creative content. For my master's project, I plan on completing the in-depth interviews that are scheduled for this week, and I also plan on transcribing the interviews immediately after the interviews are completed. If I need additional participants for my research, I will post my screener survey in the Facebook group again to recruit more participants. I plan on accomplishing my tasks by meeting with my colleagues at Sharp Think and confirming the time and date of my interviews with participants.

Update: 9/26-9/30

In my internship this week, I was tasked with leading the creation of an extensive media list for one of my team's clients, Cultural Council for Palm Beach County, for its PR event in New York City during the first week of December. For this assignment, I

researched and vetted over 150 media contacts who covered travel, arts and culture news and would be a fit to write about CCPBC's art and culture organizations. I ensured that the media contacts resided in the New York City metro area and were will actively writing. In addition to this media list, I also continued working on a media list for Kohler's smart toilet campaign that is scheduled to launch in Los Angeles. I researched and vetted producers at national news outlets in Los Angeles and added them to the list. I also wrote several editorial calendars and worked on updating a press kit for one of Sharp Think's clients, Neha Dani.

For my master's research project, I completed six in-depth interviews and scheduled an additional four interviews for this week. Mainly, I communicated with participants, collected consent forms, created Zoom links, and completed the interviews, which ranged from 45 minutes to an hour. By the end of this upcoming week, I am scheduled to have 12 interviews completed with participants.

This week, I learned that preparation and research are essential to the work I do as a public relations intern and media professional. Indeed, journalists are tasked with becoming experts on their story topics and sources, but I have learned that public relations professionals are tasked with becoming experts on their clients, as well as the reporters, editors, and other media professionals that they contact. Specifically, I realized that preparation is key to effective, efficient work while I built my media lists and media briefs. This realization will help guide my work throughout the rest of my internship.

An area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me is becoming more familiar with the titles of media professionals in the journalism landscape. Essentially, it is important that I know the titles of the media contacts I add to

the media lists I am building and what their work responsibilities entail. Generally, I add editors, contributors, and freelancers to my media lists, but my extensive media list this week showed me that having more knowledge on the individuals my team pitches to is an area of my work that can be improved.

An issue I have faced that I could use some input on is reaching out for help when I need clarity on a task or have questions on an assignment. Particularly, this is a challenge that I have faced since the first week of my internship. While it is crucial to ask important questions, I often find myself embarrassed to ask my manager or colleagues questions about a specific assignment. I ensure to pay close attention to my directions and instructions and only reach out to others when I am unable to find answers to my questions. However, a way I can address this issue is by asking to meet with my manager or colleagues when I need more clarity or explanation on a project I am working on; by being proactive, I will produce better work for my clients and Sharp Think.

Overall, I hope to learn how to write effective media pitches at my internship this week. While most of my tasks have been crafting media lists, building media briefs, and writing editorial calendars, I hope I can learn how to write successful media pitches that appeal to the media contacts that are targeted. Media pitching is a key component of public relations, so this is an area of work I hope to learn more about at my internship this week.

For my master's project, I hope to complete the remainder of my in-depth interviews and start diving into the transcripts and my findings for the final report. The other half of my interviews are scheduled for this week and should be wrapped up by

next week, so I plan on wrapping up the participant recruitment/research collection stage of my research and get started on drafting the final report.

Update: 10/3-7

During my internship this week, I frequently worked on finalizing an extensive media list for one of Sharp Think's client's upcoming PR events, and I worked on several editorial calendars for Kohler. I was also tasked with starting a media brief for one of the accounts I have been working on over the course of the semester. For the media list, I worked alongside a senior account executive to make final revisions and add any last-minute edits. I drafted three editorial calendars for Kohler, which entailed pitching to media outlets about client products and events. One of my coworkers applauded my work, congratulating me that she did not have to make any edits to my submissions. The media brief I am currently working on is for an upcoming trade show that my client is attending near the end of October.

For my master's research project, I completed five in-depth interviews this week; currently, I have 11 interviews completed with women media professionals working in the public relations industry. I have four more interviews scheduled for this week, which will bring my total to 15 interviews. This week, however, I mainly conducted and completed interviews, and I also worked on transcribing the finished interviews.

Through my internship this week, I learned that it is paramount that media professionals, especially strategic communicators, personalize and tailor their messages based on the audiences they are trying to reach. Particularly, I learned this lesson this week when discussing media outreach at one of my team's internal meetings. My team and I reviewed techniques for tailoring our media pitches based on the media outlet and

journalist. For example, when pitching to journalists, we talked about incorporating authors' recent coverage in the pitch to ensure that its personalized. Overall, I learned that taking the time to customize the messages you send out are likely to produce better results.

Through the work that I completed this week, I learned that scheduling and blocking out my daily calendar is an area that I can improve. As a PR intern on six different accounts, I find myself struggling to sort out my deadlines and prioritize assignments that are timely. In other words, I have worked to get my assignments done in an effective and efficient manner but taking the time to schedule out my days and carve out time for my assignments will improve my time management and alleviate stress.

Like the previous question, one of the challenges I am currently facing is learning how to balance my workload. As a graduate student, I am used to balancing academic tasks, but learning how to balance both professional and personal tasks is a new challenge that I have not had to face until this internship. One of the best ways that I can address this problem is by staying in close communication with my manager and keeping her in touch with how I am feeling and what I am doing.

This week at my internship, I plan on setting aside extra time to make daily schedules that will help me prioritize my timely assignments. I plan on completing the briefing book that I've been working on, and I also plan on meeting with my manager on Thursday to discuss my weekly assignments.

For my master's research project, I plan on completing the last few interviews that I have scheduled and begin working on the professional analysis component of the final

report. I plan on accomplishing these tasks by transcribing the interviews once they are finished and by searching for recurring themes that derive from my research findings.

Update: 10/10-14

Over my internship the past week, I crafted a media list for a creative pitch for Kohler, wrote editorial calendars for Four Hands, created a media briefing book for Kohler and started working on a media list for MandiCasa. For the Kohler media list, I added reporters and outlets that were relevant to Sharp's October creative titled "Art of the Mix" pitch, which primarily included home editors and lifestyle editors from national outlets. I also wrote editorial calendars that included products from Four Hands for the upcoming High Point Fall Market, which is the largest home furnishings industry trade show in the world. For the media briefing book, I outlined the editors that will be attending media deskside appointments for Kohler in New York City. Lastly, I started another media list for MandiCasa, which I plan on completing this week.

For my master's research project, I completed two more interviews for a total of 13 finished in-depth interviews. I have two more interviews scheduled for Tuesday, which will conclude my interviewing process and bring me to a total of 15 interviews with participants who are former on-air television news professionals who currently have a role in the public relations industry. This week, I have also worked on finishing the transcription process of my interviews.

The main lesson I learned this week via my internship about journalism and strategic communication is the importance of understanding the audience you are trying to reach. Through my media list building, I have learned that each reporter and outlet that I add to the list has to be vetted and ensured that they are relevant to the pitch and reach

the audience we are trying to reach. For instance, the media list I built for the Kohler creative pitched consisted of home and lifestyle editors from relevant national outlets, such as Architectural Digest, Better Homes and Gardens, Forbes, House Beautiful, Vogue and Who What Wear. These outlets and their respective reporters made sense for our creative pitch and the audience we were trying to reach (i.e., design lovers and trend-setting individuals).

An area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me is improving my communication with my colleagues. Though I have met my deadlines and prioritize my assignments, I still find myself needing to improve my communication with my colleagues when it comes to my tasks, especially ones that I have not done before as a media professional.

A challenge that I specifically faced this week during my internship was figuring out how to manage and balance my workloads when out of office. Particularly, Sharp was closed on Monday for Indigenous Peoples' Day, and I was also out of office on Thursday for the media tours; consequently, I only worked three days this week, which contrasted from my usual five-day work week. However, I was able to complete my tasks through blocking out periods of time to get my work done.

This week, I hope to finish the MandiCasa media list I am working on, and I also hope to work on the Sprig master media list, which includes hundreds of outlets and reporters. Time management will be critical to my tasks for this week, but I do feel as though I am getting better at managing my workload.

For my professional project, I hope to finish transcribing the last of my interviews through Otter.ai and by manually checking them. I also plan to work on the coding process through finding emergent themes.

Update: 10/17-21

During my internship this week, I worked on editing a media list that consisted of nearly 800 reporters and editors for Sprig by Kohler for its upcoming brand launch. In addition, I created a presentation for Kohler's media deskside appointments in New York City next week. For the presentation, I created slides that highlighted Kohler's recent and upcoming products and collections and attached the respective imagery and prices to each item. I also worked on a fact sheet and media brief for Four Hands, another one of Sharp's clients, for the High Point Fall Market, the largest home furnishings industry trade show in the world that occurs in High Point, North Carolina. Lastly, I collected various outlets' 2023 media kits and created an outline that highlighted the outlets' editorial calendar deadlines.

For my master's research project, I completed my final interviews, worked on the transcription process, and scheduled a meeting with Dr. Porter. Now that my last few interviews are finished, it is important that I meet with Dr. Porter to ensure that I am accurately coding the information I collected and know how to write up the professional analysis component in the final report.

Through my internship this week, I learned that setting established communication goals and objectives are key to the operations of public relations. Whether the objective be to build brand or product awareness or enhance brand image, setting succinct goals and objectives will help public relations professionals achieve the

end goal. Through my internal meetings and client status calls with my teams, I have learned that vocalizing and discussing these objectives and goals ensures our team is on the same track.

An area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me was realizing when my workload is full. In other words, the work I completed this week made me realize the importance of completing my tasks to the best of my ability but also recognizing when to limit taking additional tasks so that I can focus on the ones I already have. Specifically, the Sprig media list that I have been working on has had a longer turnaround than other assignments I receive, so I am learning how to balance short-term and long-term deadlines simultaneously.

A challenge that I have been facing is being communicative about my workload to my colleagues. As an intern, I feel as though I need to assist as many people as I can during the time that I am working. However, I am only one person, and if I take on too many tasks, the priority assignments will not get as much attention as they should. When I was a multimedia journalist, I would focus on finishing one story a day, but, as a public relations intern, I work on multiple assignments with different deadlines every day. This is a challenge that I am still figuring out how to manage and navigate.

This week, I hope to finish the Sprig media list that I have been working on, and I also hope to learn how to improve balancing multiple assignments at once. To do this, I plan on meeting with my manager to inform her of my workload, and I also plan on blocking out time every day this week to work on the media list. For my master's project, I plan on meeting with Dr. Porter to discuss the coding process and professional analysis component, and I will spend a few hours each night this week working on my project.

Update: 10/24-28

Throughout my internship this week, I mainly worked on creating an extensive media list for an upcoming Kohler event in Miami next month, and I also assisted the Kohler team at Sharp Think with its deskside appointments with editors in New York City. For the deskside appointments, I created a presentation with the latest additions from Kohler, and I also created a face sheet that outlined the editors who would be in attendance. At the beginning of the week, I traveled around New York City to compile and drop off gifts for the editors. Throughout the rest of the week, I finished working on the media list for the Kohler event in Miami, and I also worked on several editorial calendars for Kohler and Four Hands.

For my master's research project, I completed the remainder of my transcriptions and worked on the coding process. I met with Dr. Porter to discuss how to tackle the coding process, and I am also going to meet with her this week to ensure that my coding and analysis component will successfully answer my posed research questions.

This week via my internship, I learned that the journalism and strategic communication industries involve a vast range of tasks, events, and individuals. Specifically, the media lists I have been compiling have consisted of hundreds – if not thousands – of reporters, editors, and other media professionals. Through compiling media lists and sending editorial calendars to editors, I noticed this observation about the media industry.

An area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me is outlining my deadlines related to my internship and my academics. While this task seems to be an area for self-improvement me frequently, it is one I am still trying to overcome

and master. As a student and intern in New York City, it is still difficult to balance working an internship, completing a research project, and exploring the city during my limited time.

A challenge that I have faced this week is learning how to unplug from work and school. As the near of the semester is approaching, I have also noticed that the fall has been a busy season for Sharp Think. I have been picking up additional hours this month, so it will be important that I learn how to implement a work-life balance into my life so that I can set myself up to be a successful media professional.

This week at my internship, I hope to finalize the media list for the Miami event for Kohler, and I also hope to finish the master media list for Sprig. For my master's research project, I plan to meet with Dr. Porter near the beginning of the week, as well as finish the coding and analysis portion so that I can get a rough draft to her by Sunday. I plan to make these actions happen by prioritizing my project this week and by not taking additional hours at my internship unless it is necessary.

Update: 10/31-11/4

During my internship this week, I worked additionally on media lists, contacted editors for editorial calendars and helped monitor coverage for one of our client's special events in Chicago on Thursday. I completed my tasks for the Sprig media list, so I helped my colleagues with their tasks on the list since I finished my assignment early. I also contacted various editors for their outlets' 2023 media kits so that I could add the upcoming editorial calendar deadlines to my teams' databases. Lastly, I helped one of my teams monitor coverage for the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County's Chicago

event. I monitored the invited influencers' social media accounts and saved any coverage that came through from the event

For my master's research project this week, I met with Dr. Porter, finished the coding process, and started working on the analysis section of my project report. With the end of the semester quickly approaching, I am working hard to get my project report as clean and precise as possible for my committee.

A lesson I learned via my internship this week about strategic communication, and specifically, public relations, is the importance of special events to the practice of public relations. During my weekly team meetings and client calls this week, we talked a lot about the planning and logistics of the launch events we are planning for several of our clients. Through talking with my teams about the events, I learned that events are an effective, efficient way to gain earned media for clients, although they do require significant time, planning and money for the client and agency.

An area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me is my media list building. As a public relations intern, building media lists nearly every day can feel repetitive, but media lists are crucial to media outreach for my teams' clients. A way to improve my media list building is to look at the mastheads in recent print issues of publications to find recent, relevant editors to add to my list.

A challenge I faced this week is figuring out to balance my daily and weekly workload in shorter work weeks. Particularly, I had a four-day work week this week due to my grandma's funeral; so, I had to balance completing my assignments and tasks within a four-day work week instead of a five-day work week. However, I stayed in

communication with my manager during the week and was able to stay on top of my assignments despite the shorter week.

This week at my internship, I hope to work on the master media list for TEFAF, a client that I will be starting to work with this week. I also hope to learn about more strategies to improve my media list building and communication with editors. I plan to make this happen by meeting with my manager and asking her about tips.

For my master's project this week, I plan on finishing the analysis section of my project report and getting the completed draft to Dr. Porter by the end of this week. I plan to make this happen by working on my project every day this week once I am done with my internship for the day.

Update: 11/7-11

This week at my internship, I created a face sheet for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center's fall party, helped add coverage to a High Point recap presentation, collected 2023 media kits, added to Sprig master media list, and packaged and shipped mailers. I also found out that I was added to a client project that involves Rob Gronkowski and Camille Kostek. Lastly, I got a job offer this week from Sharp, which is extremely exciting! For my master's research project, I worked on the bulk of my analysis and met with Dr. Porter. I received feedback on my draft from Dr. Porter and am planning on sending an updated version to my committee this week.

Through my internship this week, I learned that planning, and more specifically, planning in advance, is critical to strategic communication and public relations. As the end of the year approaches, Sharp is working with clients and other agencies to plan PR and launch events in New York City. Though the events are a month away, our teams

have been intensely collaborating to build media lists, do media outreach, design invitations, reserve venues and ensure that editors and other invitees get to the event safely and smoothly. In other words, this week reiterated the fact that efficient event planning is necessary for effective public relations.

An area of self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me is being more proactive about tracking coverage for clients. While tracking coverage is not necessarily a relatively timely or urgent task, it is important to stay on top of monitoring and tracking coverage that includes our clients. A challenge that I am still facing as I am nearing the semester is being communicative about the projects and tasks that I am working on. Since Sharp is team-based and collaborative, I need to ensure that I am thoroughly communicating with my teams about my workload and bandwidth. Although this is a challenge that takes time, I am getting better at this challenge every week.

This week at my internship, I hope to work on the project that involves Gronk and Camille and also work more on event planning. For my research project, I plan on finalizing my draft and sending it to my committee this week. I plan to make this happen by managing my time and staying in communication with my teams and committee.

Update: 11/14-18

This week in my internship, I worked on the Voomerang media list, tracked media coverage, worked on editorial calendars, and worked on the TEFAF master media list. I attended my team's weekly internal meetings and client calls, and I also helped my team with planning for the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County's upcoming event in New York City on December 6, which I will staff. For my master's research project, I scheduled my defense date with my committee and completed my project report draft. I

spent every night last week writing, editing, and revising my draft, so I am elated that the components of my project are finally drafted and ready for review.

I learned that public relations is about mutually beneficial relationships for clients, the media, and the agency. Through attending a client call with Kohler, I realized that the client benefits from the agency's work and media content, while the media benefits from the agency's media pitches and editorial calendars. Overall, my internship has taught me that journalism and public relations work hand in hand.

An area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me is creativity. While building the media list for the Voomerang project, I struggled to be creative with my list-building and editor selections. Basically, media list building relies on finding the right reporters and editors that can help reach target audiences at the right time, a lesson we discussed at Publicis this week. So, I met with my manager to give me some of her advice for finding ways to be more creative with my projects.

The main challenge I am currently facing is balancing my internship duties and master's project. With the end of the semester quickly approaching, I have worked hard to polish my project report and make it the best it can be. Since I have been working more on my project within the last few weeks, I have found it challenging to juggle working and finishing school simultaneously.

For the upcoming week, I plan on working on a media brief for the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County's event. I also hope to finish the Voomerang and TEFAF media lists before the Thanksgiving holiday. These two lists are substantial, important projects that require time, effort, and creativity, so I plan to finish those tasks and ensure that I completed them to the best of my ability. For my master's project, I plan on

receiving final edits from Dr. Porter and getting approval to send my project report to my committee ahead of my defense on December 2. I plan on completing these tasks by staying in communication with my teams and meeting with Dr. Porter.

Update: 11/21-25

Over the past week, I worked on finishing the Voomerang launch media list, worked on a briefing book for the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County's New York City event, and worked on editorial calendars. For my master's research project, I sent my final project report draft to my committee and reviewed my draft ahead of my defense on December 2. It is hard to believe that the end of the semester is approaching, but I am proud of the work have completed for my internship and for my professional project this far.

A lesson I learned about journalism and strategic communication this week is that the industries do not have time off. Although many industries are able to break for the holidays, the media industry, and journalism in particular, is always on duty. I learned that it is important to stay alert and stay updated through my assignments and meetings this week.

A continuous area of self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me was time management, especially during a three-day work week. Though I stayed ahead of my assignments and tasks, I would work on my assignments on the evenings to ensure that I was staying on top of my work ahead of having the rest of the week off. I particularly do not enjoy shorter work weeks, but I am still learning how to balance my workload for my internship and professional project.

A challenge that I faced this week was unplugging from my internship and professional project. Although the week was short due to the holiday, I struggled to take a mental reset for myself on the days that I had off. I constantly felt like I needed to be checking Slack or reading through my professional project, but I also think it is important to take time off when needed to relax and recharge.

This week, I hope to help my team finalize the planning for Cultural Council for Palm Beach County's event in New York City next Tuesday, and I also hope to finalize the 2023 editorial calendars for Sharp. For my master's research project, I plan on continuing to review my project report and meet with Dr. Porter ahead of my defense on Friday. Additionally, I plan on finishing the presentation I have made for my defense that summarizes my participant recruitment strategy and research findings.

Update: 11/28-12/2

Over the past week, I worked on a trends pitch presentation for one of Sharp's clients, worked on three media lists, and finished a briefing book for a client's upcoming event in New York City. I also prepared and ordered items for the event and worked with my team to ensure that we are prepped and ready for Tuesday. For my master's research project, I crafted a presentation for my defense, reviewed my project report, and defended my research to my committee. It is difficult to believe that my professional project is in its final stages of development, but I am proud of the work I have completed and am grateful for my extraordinary committee.

Through wrapping up the final stages of event planning this week, I realized that journalism and strategic communication are detail oriented. Essentially, journalism and strategic work that is produced is attentive to detail, and the campaigns, events, and event

planning are additional aspects of the strategic communication industry that require attention to detail. If strategic communicators did not pay attention to the details in their work, there would be significant consequences where crisis communication would come into play.

An area for self-improvement that my work this week uncovered for me was managing my workload. At my internship this week, I balanced working on several different projects with different deadlines simultaneously. As a former journalist, I am used to focusing on one story at a time, whereas in public relations, I am often working on multiple projects at the same time. Though I enjoy the variety of work and tasks that I have in public relations, I can still improve how I manage and complete my work.

A challenge that I faced this week was figuring out how to navigate my work and class schedule. Specifically, my team is meeting with our client tonight to prepare for the week's event in New York City; however, my seminar class happened to be at the same time. Once I realized the two events conflicted, I reached out to the leadership on my team and informed them of my situation. The issue was quickly resolved, and I am still able to attend the seminar while staffing the event on Tuesday. I am glad I chose to be proactive when facing this issue.

In the week ahead, I plan on staffing our client's event at Hudson Yards on Tuesday and making the final edits for my professional project. I plan on working closely with my team this week to ensure that I am prepared for the event, and I also plan on working with Dr. Porter to add the final touches to my project. To accomplish these tasks, I will schedule meetings with my teams and Dr. Porter.

Appendix V: Self-Evaluation

This fall semester, I interned with Sharp Think, an award-winning communications agency with offices in New York City, Los Angeles, and Palm Beach. Sharp Think is a public relations, social media, and events agency that focuses on architecture and design, food and beverage, arts and culture, education, and philanthropy. As a public relations intern, I worked with teams on six accounts: Kohler, Sprig by Kohler, Cultural Council for Palm Beach County, Brown Jordan Outdoor Kitchens, Four Hands, and TEFAF. In my role, I built media lists and editorial calendars, developed creative pitch concepts, facilitated mailers, compiled media briefs, staffed client events, and supported client monitoring and reporting.

Through interning at Sharp Think, I learned about the fundamentals of public relations and the basics of working at an agency. I learned how to craft effective media lists that reached target editors, assisted with event planning, and supported agency engagement. Most importantly, I learned the basics of building mutually beneficial relationships and the importance of earned media. By attending clients calls and internal meetings, staffing client events, and creating media briefs, I gained a strong foundation in public relations skills that will undoubtedly prepare me for my professional career as a strategic communicator.

All in all, I am grateful I interned at a welcoming, hands-on agency where I enhanced my communication and research skills. The individuals I met, the lessons I learned, and skills I developed have set me up to be a successful media professional. In terms of post-graduation plans, I will be staying at Sharp Think as a full-time account coordinator with the goal of working in account executive positions in the future.

Appendix VI: Project Proposal

**THE GREAT RESIGNATION:
TV NEWS, WOMEN, AND THE CHANGE THEY NEED**

A Project
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
KAILI WARD

Supervising committee members:

Dr. Jeannette H. Porter, chair

Jamie Flink

Reuben Stern

MAY 2022 (anticipated project completion DECEMBER 2022)

Introduction

Since my first year as a student at the Missouri School of Journalism, I knew I wanted to be a television journalist. I instantly discovered my passion for writing and storytelling, and I knew journalism was the career path for me. However, I did not expect the challenges I would face along the way. My experience working as a television news reporter at a local NBC-affiliate station allowed me to realize that the news industry was, in fact, not the career path for me. While I learned valuable skills and gained hands-on experience working as a multimedia journalist, I quickly realized that my lifelong career would not involve the news industry. During the final year of my undergraduate studies, I decided to switch my interest area from television news reporting to public relations. Initially, I thought I was the only journalist who struggled with the demands of the industry. After reflecting on my personal experiences and listening to my colleagues' experiences, however, I have realized that career change in journalism, and, specifically, television news, is a relevant, important topic that needs to be further addressed. As I started my graduate studies, I knew I wanted to conduct research that explores why journalists, especially television journalists, are exiting the industry.

A qualitative research topic that sustains my interest and will contribute knowledge to the profession is exploring the reasons women journalists change careers from television news to public relations. Through the method of semi-structured in-depth interviews with women who are former television news journalists and current public relations practitioners, I will aim to identify the forces that influenced them to leave the field, as well as unpack how gender may have played a role in shaping their experiences.

Mainly, this research will explore the issue of career change in television news with an emphasis on gender-driven issues.

Journalists, and particularly women journalists, are exiting the news industry. Recent journalism and communication research shows that women are more likely to leave the journalism industry before their male coworkers, and gender discrimination and burnout are elements that impact women journalists' decisions to change careers (Swanson, 2016). Yet, the phenomenon of career change is not a new issue to affect the media industry (DeLorme & Fedler, 2003, as cited in Kester & Prenger, 2021).

While prior research concludes that career change in the journalism industry is an occurring phenomenon, a gap in the literature exists that does not address former women television journalists' experiences exiting the industry and switching to public relations. Viererbl and Koch (2019) state that journalists who leave the field may pursue careers in fields like public relations: "Increasingly, journalists do not find permanent jobs and seek work in related fields, often public relations" (p. 1948). Thus, the goal of this research is to identify the influences that drive women television journalists out of the newsroom and into public relations roles, as well as gain a better understanding of the role these women thought their gender had in their decision to leave the profession. This research will seek to discover the changes these women believe the industry should make in order to retain women television news professionals in the future.

In all, professional journalists should care about this study because it will provide suggestions on ways to improve the workplace environment of the television news industry and address how to help fix the problem of employee turnover in television news. The knowledge gained from reading this paper will improve the profession by

identifying the common forces that influence women professionals to leave television news altogether. Overall, the problem of the exit of women journalists generates an informative, intriguing research topic that will help understand the issue of the resignation of women in the television news industry. My research will strive to identify what is broken and how it can be fixed.

Professional Component

For the professional skills component of the professional project, I plan to participate in the Missouri School of Journalism's New York program. Primarily, I want to participate in the program to amplify my skills as a public relations practitioner. Recently, I was accepted into the program with a scholarship and tuition waiver. During the fall semester of 2022, I will spend a minimum of 30 hours per week for a minimum of 14 weeks engaged in a professional-level strategic communication internship. Through participating in the program, I will have the opportunity to increase my professional training, improve my communication skills, and gain insight into the strategic communication industry.

Based on my experience as a multimedia journalist at KOMU 8 and digital strategist at AdZou, I believe my skills are applicable to the public relations industry. My goal is to secure a professional internship as a public relations practitioner. Currently, I hoping to intern at the public relations firm Sharp Communications. My greatest strengths are my research, analytical thinking, writing, and storytelling skills; for this reason, I believe the public relations industry is a career path I would excel in. Participating in the program in New York will provide me with an enhanced

understanding of the media landscape and prepare me for a full-time career in the strategic communication industry.

Theoretical Framework

This research will use the unfolding theory of turnover framework. According to Alla and Rajâa (2019), the phrase “turnover” is typically defined as “the number of employees who enter and those who leave an organization during a specific period” (p. 22). Particularly, there are two types of employee turnover, voluntary and involuntary turnover. In voluntary turnover, an employee willingly chooses to leave an organization; by contrast, in involuntary turnover, an organization chooses to dismiss an employee (Armstrong, 2012, as cited in Alla & Rajâa, 2019). Voluntary turnover can significantly impact organizations financially, which can result in “personal, work-unit, and organizational readjustments” for companies (Cascio, 1991; Mobley, 1982, as cited in Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Research on turnover in the television news industry is essential for understanding employee turnover and assisting television news organizations.

The unfolding theory of turnover maintains that when employees are contemplating whether to quit their job, they adhere to one of five cognitive pathways. Shock, history of dissatisfaction, script, image violation, and alternative job opportunity are the main factors that constitute the different pathways (Tellez, 2014). Tellez (2014) describes a cognitive pathway as “how employees interpret their work environment, identify options, and enact responses” (p. 3). Put simply, the turnover theory is a framework that explains the processes behind individuals’ reasoning for quitting their jobs. Goldstein et al. (2017) refer to this theory as an “unfolding process” that employees experience when they leave their jobs (p. 448). Overall, the unfolding theory of turnover

supports this study's research questions that aim to unpack the influences, especially gender-based influences, that drive women television journalists out of news and into public relations.

Studies on turnover have become prevalent in modern research. Although there were limited research studies on turnover in the 1950s and 1960s, there were over 7,000 studies on turnover in 2014 (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 446). According to Goldstein et al. (2017), March and Simon established the "first formal model of turnover" in 1958 (p. 446). This model maintained that employee turnover relies on an "organizational equilibrium" framework that considers the two factors of "perceived ease of movement" and "perceived desirability of movement" (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 446; Long et al., 2012, p. 12). March and Simon's model declared that these two factors impact employees' choices to resign from organizations (Long et al., 2012). Goldstein et al. (2017) summarize the essence of March and Simon's model:

When an employee believes his or her contributions to the organization outweigh the rewards and benefits received, the employee-employer relationship becomes out of balance. This causes the employee to consider leaving the organization (i.e., perceived desirability of movement) and consider how easy it would be to move to another organization (i.e., perceived ease of movement). (p. 446)

Studies on turnover have frequently used March and Simon's turnover model (Long et al., 2012). However, scholars argue that this model of turnover excludes significant variables, such as role stress or organizational commitment, that affect employee turnover (Morrell et al., 2001; Allen & Shannock, 2012, as cited in Long et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, scholars have established other models of turnover theory, such as the causal model of turnover, the intermediate linkage model, the cusp catastrophe model of turnover, the integrated process model, and the unfolding model of turnover (Long et al., 2001). While there are various turnover models, Lee and Mitchell's more recent theory of turnover, the unfolding model, added a "unique contribution to turnover literature" (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 448). Lee and Mitchell developed the unfolding theory of turnover in the 1990s to provide a "more comprehensive and realistic representation of what employees experience in making their decision to leave" (as cited in Tellez, 2014, p. 3; Goldstein et al., 2017). Harman et al. (2007) explain the significance of the unfolding model from a theoretical standpoint:

The central contribution of this approach is that it shifted theorizing from an assumption that turnover is always an evaluative and rational process to a broader model of how decisions are actually made. This analysis revealed that although some decisions to quit are probably quite consistent with standards of expected-value rationality, a great many others are driven by more intuitive or routinized decision processes. (p. 51)

Lee and Mitchell (1994) used the image theory, which is a "decision-making model," to form the unfolding theory of turnover (p. 57). The image theory delineates that the "decision-making processes as one in which most decision tasks encountered are resolved by pre-formulated procedures developed through prior experience or training" (Beach, 1993, as cited in Donnelly & Quirin, 2006, pp. 59—60). In short, an individual relies on images, which are also known as "schematic knowledge structures," during the decision-making process (Morrell et al., 2008, p. 130).

Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model emphasizes the events of "shocks" in influencing employee turnover. Lee and Mitchell (1994) define a shock as an "event that generates information or has meaning about a person's job" (p. 60). Put differently, a shock is a significant event that disrupts employees and, as a result, may cause them to evaluate and quit their jobs (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Shocks can derive from both professional and personal events, such as organizational or familial changes (Goldstein et al., 2017). The first, second, and third cognitive pathways start with a shock, while the other pathways do not begin with a shock (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Morrell et al., 2008). Individuals follow a preexisting script, or a pre-established plan of action, in the first pathway, and they leave their jobs without thoroughly evaluating their options (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Harman et al., 2007). For instance, employees may choose to relocate to a new location and, in turn, leave their current jobs; by doing so, they would follow a preexisting script and promptly leave without much thought (Tellez, 2014; Harman et al., 2007).

The second pathway is similar, but the second path does not activate a preexisting script like the first pathway (Harman et al., 2007). The shocks in the second and third pathways involve image violation, or "dissonance between the present job and one or more images" (Morrell et al., 2008, p. 130). Employees use "value, trajectory, and strategic images" to evaluate the situation within the organization (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p. 65). In other words, employees evaluate whether their jobs have violated these images and may act accordingly. Morrell et al. (2008) explain how image violation works in the second and third pathways: "[Image violation] can be so severe that satisfaction is irrelevant as a quit is triggered without search/evaluation or a job offer (path 2).

Alternatively, it can lead to dissatisfaction, then search/evaluation, and quit after a job offer (path 3)” (p. 130). The main difference between these pathways is that, in the second pathway, individuals typically choose to leave their jobs without considering job alternatives; contrastingly, individuals consider job alternatives in the third pathway (Tellez, 2014). Tellez (2014) reports that the first three pathways are positive, negative, and unanticipated, respectively. In all, the first three pathways rely on shock events to make decisions regarding quitting a job.

Shocks are absent in the fourth and fifth pathways, or paths 4a and 4b; however, image violations still occur. These pathways primarily focus on job satisfaction. In essence, employees will quit their jobs if job dissatisfaction is significant. In path 4a, employees do not contemplate job alternatives, but employees do contemplate job alternatives in path 4b (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). That is, employees will leave their jobs without looking for others beforehand in path 4a, while employees will look for other jobs beforehand in path 4b (Morrell et al., 2008). Job satisfaction/dissatisfaction is the primary determinant of employees’ decision-making in the final two pathways of the unfolding model.

The unfolding theory of turnover precisely aligns with the purpose and objectives of this qualitative study. To effectively study former journalists’ experiences changing careers, understanding the processes behind how and why individuals make decisions involving their professional careers is necessary. The unfolding model of turnover theory will serve as a basis for this research study on career change in journalism, and particularly, television news.

Literature Review

According to Viererbl and Koch (2019), journalists are “increasingly” pursuing work in “related fields” of journalism, such as public relations (p. 1947). Though, career change is not a new phenomenon impacting the media industry (DeLorme & Fedler, 2003, as cited in Kester & Prenger, 2021). According to Olson (1989), public relations personnel have historically had higher job satisfaction compared to journalists. Additionally, public relations personnel have reported higher satisfaction with their growth opportunities and salaries, and they have historically reported higher levels of autonomy than journalists (Olson, 1989). Beam (2006) reports older male journalists tend to have higher job satisfaction, while MacDonald et al. (2016) conclude that younger women journalists, and, specifically, women with little experience working at smaller newspapers, are more likely to experience burnout and uncertainty (as cited in Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021). Consequently, gender is a significant factor when considering the prevalent career-change phenomenon in the journalism industry.

As the media industry continues to undergo transformational change, the changing industry continues to impact journalists’ job satisfaction, insecurity, and uncertainty. For women, exiting the journalism industry can impact their “personal and professional self-identities” (Heaney, 2018, p. 13). Yet, prior research does not thoroughly address the role former women television journalists think their gender played in their choice to exit the industry. Thus, the goal of this research is to identify the influences that drive women out of the newsroom and into public relations roles; further, this research will aim to gain a better understanding of how gender may have impacted their decision to leave the profession.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the phenomenon of women journalists changing careers from television news to public relations, as well as understand how gender-driven issues may have impacted the industry's exits. In all, this study has explored women journalists' switch from television news to public relations with an emphasis on personal and professional experiences and gender-driven issues.

Industry Change

The American Press Institute (n.d.) defines journalism as the “activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities” (para. 1). The journalism industry, especially the news sector, has experienced vast changes as it adapts to an evolving media landscape (Ekdale et al., 2015). According to Ekdale et al. (2015), news organizations and journalists have become “casualties” of persistent industry change (p. 383). Ekdale et al. (2015) summarize the state of the news industry:

News organizations everywhere are trying to adapt to a shifting media landscape that has upended processes of news production, audience consumption, and revenue generation. News organizations and news workers have become casualties of this struggle. Layoffs, buyouts, and closings have become increasingly common, a development that affects both those who lose their jobs and those who remain in the newsroom. Many news workers worry about their ability to keep their current jobs, and they question the prospects of working in the industry long-term. (p. 383)

Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez (2021) also cite this claim by Ekdale et al. (2015) and refer to the industry as a “continually changing business environment” (p. 53). As a

result of this “rapid change in the news industry,” the industry has fostered a collective sense of job insecurity (Ekdale et al., 2015). However, Ekdale et al. (2015) found that, in terms of industry change, news workers at an American media company have diverse viewpoints. Ekdale et al.’s (2015) research found that there were individuals who ranged from “hopeful news workers who promote newsroom innovation to cynical news workers who challenge efforts to change news practices” (p. 383). Notable research on industry change and job satisfaction contends that the rapid changes have created a “great deal of uncertainty and stress among employees, eroding journalists’ satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job expectations” (Reinardy, 2011, as cited in Goyanes & Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021, p. 53). Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez (2021) also cite Reinardy’s (2011) claim by stating that the obstacles the industry has faced have created an environment of uncertainty, which, in turn, affects performance and forecasts (pp. 54—55).

Job Satisfaction

Today, many journalists question their job stability and long-term commitment to the industry (Ekdale et al., 2015). Nevertheless, research on journalists’ job satisfaction has historically been a popular area of interest. Shaver (1978) contends that researchers have strived to answer questions regarding the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of journalism graduates. Shaver (1978) explains that a high degree of job satisfaction was found among Michigan State University graduates in Miller’s (1972) study, while Samuelson’s (1962) study found dissatisfaction of newsroom workers to be associated with the following topical areas: (1) hope of newspaper journalism’s future, (2) personal duty satisfaction, (3) congeniality of newspaper journalism as a career, (4) leadership quality, and (5) salary satisfaction (p. 54).

It is important to note, however, that Black journalists have historically been more unsatisfied with their work compared to white journalists; Bramlett-Solomon (1992) concludes that the percentage of Black journalists' dissatisfaction is higher than those of white journalists. Bramlett-Solomon (1992) found that, from the results of a nearly 1100-participant survey of journalists attending the National Association of Black Journalists organization, the percentage of dissatisfied Black journalists is nearly twice the percentage of dissatisfied white journalists. Evidently, numerous internal and external factors that have contributed to the job satisfaction of journalists.

More recently, Weaver et al. (2007) concluded that burnout and stress were two primary factors that influenced journalists to want to leave the field (as cited in Reinardy, 2011). Various factors, including age and gender, affect the job satisfaction of journalists (Beam, 2016). Woodruff (2020) conducted qualitative interviews with 12 former television journalists about the reasons why they leave the field and concluded that increasing demands, such as work-life balance, decreasing resources, and work hours, along with management issues, including news commercialization, unrealistic standards, and industry consolidation, were prominent reasons journalists exited the industry (p. ii). Additionally, Woodruff (2020) found that the participating television journalists did not feel "adequately compensated" for their work (p. ii). Beam (2016) also argues that, for new workers, job satisfaction is linked with "perceptions about employers' business and professional (journalistic) goals and priorities" (p. 169). Layoffs and business closures are additional factors that have contributed to the industry crisis, which has led to increased stress, uncertainty, and fatigue among journalists (Goyanes & Rodríguez-

Gómez, 2021; Ekdale et al., 2015). Ekdale et al. (2015) agree with this claim and emphasize the significance of shutdowns and layoffs on job security and commitment.

Coupled with industry change, Ekdale et al. (2015) argue that “layoffs, buyouts, and closings have led many news workers to experience job insecurity and worry about their long-term futures in journalism” (p. 383). Reinardy (2011) discovered that newspaper journalists who expressed interest in leaving the field also exhibited “high rates of exhaustion and cynicism, and moderate rates of professional efficacy,” which can ultimately lead to burnout (p. 33). Centrally, the Mayo Clinic (n.d.) defines job burnout as a “special type of work-related stress – a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity” (para. 1). Burnout is not technically considered a “medical diagnosis,” but researchers claim that individual factors impact who faces job burnout (Mayo Clinic, n.d.).

Mental health is another constituent of journalists’ job satisfaction; Seely (2019) conducted a national survey of over 250 journalists and concluded that trauma reporting can have significant impacts. Seely (2019) found that “as trauma coverage frequency and intensity increase, so does the severity of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms” (p. 239). According to Seely (2019), journalists can face both primary and secondary trauma; thus, understanding the influence trauma can have on job satisfaction and well-being is paramount. The relationship between mental health and career switching is an area that researchers and news organizations also need to explore.

In terms of job satisfaction of journalists and public relations personnel, individuals working in public relations roles have historically had higher rates of job satisfaction; Olson’s (1989) study found that public relations employees have “reported

being significantly more satisfied with both their jobs and profession” (p. 37). Likewise, public relations personnel have generally had higher satisfaction with salaries and career opportunities compared to journalists (Olson, 1989). Contrastingly, however, journalists have had lower levels of autonomy and job satisfaction (Olson, 1989). Serini et al. (1997) address the concern for distinguishing men’s and women’s job satisfaction as different areas of research.

Career-Change Phenomenon

Fundamentally, the concept of career is defined as “the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with the work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person’s life” (Hall, 1976, p. 4, as cited in Grzeda, 1999, para. 7). More specifically, the overall phenomenon of career change is inherently defined as “a proactive choice among the outcomes of these activities” that is influenced by “environmental turbulence and can be represented by the degree of dissimilarity between future and past work” (Grzeda, 1999, p. 7). In 2017, Goldfinger (2017) reported that public relations and communications positions were growing. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts the public relations field will expand by six percent from 2014 to 2024 (George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, 2020, para. 3). Kester and Prenger (2021) state that “intrinsic and extrinsic motives” influence journalists to switch their professions to public relations (p. 420). Kester and Prenger (2021) refer to these individuals as “turncoats” and contend that this phenomenon is a “largely ignored” area in research; though, the scholars state that it is not uncommon for journalists to switch to public relations (p. 420).

According to the Public Relations Society of America (n.d.), public relations is defined as a “strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics” (para. 4). Essentially, the practice of public relations involves interacting and engaging with stakeholders while protecting organizational reputations (Public Relations Society of America, n.d.). However, the definition of the term has stirred debate among public relations practitioners (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2008). To journalists, the practice of public relations is commonly associated with “press releases, press conferences, and talking to journalists: in two words, media relations” (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2008, p. 3). Although, public relations entails additional duties, such as creating and managing company websites, events, and content (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2008, p. 3). However, Morris and Goldsworthy (2008) argue that the additional duties are not “always seen as PR” duties or performed by public relations practitioners (p. 3). Several of the disciplines and functions of public relations include crisis communications, marketing communications, media relations, content creation, reputation management, and multimedia (Public Relations Society of America, n.d.).

Viererbl and Koch (2019) found in their study that the primary causes of this career-change phenomenon are due to “push versus pull factors” and “hygiene versus motivational factors” (p. 1947). Viererbl and Koch (2019) refer to the “push versus pull factors” as “being pushed out of journalism because of poor working conditions versus being pulled into public relations jobs by attractive qualities of the work” (p. 1947). Viererbl and Koch (2019) also compare “hygiene versus motivational factors” to “extrinsic versus intrinsic rewards” involving the profession (p. 1947). Though, Viererbl

and Koch (2019) conclude that former journalists who are currently working in public relations carry a “journalistic self-concept” that intrudes with “specific norms in public relations” (p. 1947). Heaney (2018) contends a similar argument, claiming that former women reporters can retain self-identities as journalists after leaving the field. Hence, the career-change phenomenon of leaving the journalism field results in various causes, effects, and impacts.

While Viererbl and Koch (2019) and Kester and Prenger’s (2021) studies both research journalists’ switch to public relations, the major gap in the literature that they do not fill is focusing on the experiences of American professionals. Kester and Prenger’s (2021) participants were Dutch political public relations professionals, while Viererbl and Koch’s (2019) participants were former journalists who switched to public relations from Germany. The American public policy and industrial policy regarding family support is drastically different than the European models, creating a need for further research on this matter in the United States.

Gender-Based Factors

Swanson (2016) maintains a “leaky pipeline” exists between newsroom environments and journalism programs; Swanson’s research found that women tend to be passionate about storytelling, but there was ambiguity surrounding the presence of gender-based discrimination. Swanson (2016) explains her findings:

Some suggested that women still experience unintentional discrimination as journalists, while others believe that women are treated equally in the newsroom.

Issues were raised surrounding the challenge of balancing family and a journalism

career, the emotional toll of sexist comments from sources, and a lack of opportunities for women in some newsrooms. (p. 2)

Swanson (2016) also points out that women journalists are “more likely to quit the journalism profession earlier than their male counterparts” and burnout and sexual discrimination influence career change among women journalists (pp. 7—8). Swanson’s (2016) study highlights women with journalism degrees are likely to pursue careers in public relations for higher pay and flexibility. Josephi and Oller Alonso (2021) agree with Swanson’s research as they state that women typically view themselves working in a strategic communication role upon graduation.

It is important to note that the construct of gender is defined as an “organizing principle ... used to classify and differentiate humans and give us guidelines for how we are to interact with others” (Wright et al., 1991, as cited in Serini et al., 1997, p. 100). Serini et al. (1997) contend that there are distinct differences in work-related satisfaction between men and women. Several variables connected with job satisfaction include autonomy, demographic considerations, interpersonal relationships, and power dynamics (Serini et al., 1997).

Charbonnet’s (2016) findings conclude that women who change careers experience “complex connections of personal and professional triggers, experiences, traits, and survival mechanisms” (as cited in Reinardy et al., 2021, p. 367). Similarly, Heaney (2018) reports that “turning points,” such as job offers, having children, and new goals, have influenced women journalists to exit the industry (p. 12). Chiefly, Heaney (2018) concludes that women’s self-identities can be impacted by exiting the industry.

Yet, prior research has not filled the gap in explaining the career experiences of former television news journalists with a focus on gender.

Nevertheless, literature has shown women in journalism are more likely to experience burnout, especially due to issues regarding sexism, family, discrimination, and a “proverbial glass ceiling that limits professional prosperity” (Reinardy, 2008, p. 5, as cited in Woodruff, 2020, p. 5). MacDonald et al. (2016) also conclude that women journalists, particularly those who have less experience and work at small-sized newspapers, are at high risk of facing burnout (as cited in Goyanes and Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021). On the other hand, older male journalists generally have higher job satisfaction (Beam, 2006). Grunig et al. (2013) argue that gender-based imbalances involving pay and opportunity are still prevalent as women have increasingly entered the practice of public relations over the past 20 years. In 2019, women made up “63.6 percent of PR specialists and 71.4 percent of PR/fundraising managers,” according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Schuman, 2022, para. 12). This statistic is noteworthy because Grunig et al. (2013) point out that fields “shifting to a female majority” experience the “realities of dwindling salary, status, and influence within the organization” (pp. 4—5). These realities can significantly impact individual perceptions; a study by Farmer and Waugh (1999) shows that female students studying public relations reported they anticipated being promoted slower and earning less than their male coworkers. Farmer and Waugh (1999) also contend that, historically, there have been few books published that focus on women’s or men’s issues in public relations. As a result, research on gender-based factors involving women’s career changes from

television news to public relations is critical for understanding individual perceptions and experiences.

Age-Centered Industry

Younger journalists are also more likely to experience the effects of burnout, fatigue, and stress (Goyanes & Rodríguez-Gómez, 2021; Ekdale et al., 2015). The journalism industry has been perceived as a “young person’s occupation” despite journalists’ tendencies to exit the industry after a short period (Josephi & Oller Alonso, 2021, para. 1). Reinardy (2011) states that “young copy editors or page designers working at small newspapers” are the “most ‘at-risk’” of experiencing burnout (p. 33). While scholars point out that job burnout is increasingly common for younger journalists, existing literature fails to explain why this is a phenomenon among younger age demographics, creating a need for research on gender-based and age-based factors.

Common Misconceptions

Lastly, there are common misconceptions regarding the switch from journalism to public relations that must be addressed. Although journalists may predict the switch to public relations roles to be a smooth transition, the two fields do require different skillsets. Greer (2008) proclaims that a journalist’s career change to public relations may not be a seamless transition. The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management (2020) describes key points to ponder when considering switching from journalism to public relations: (1) Public relations demands knowledge of business; (2) Work in public relations can require more variety of roles compared to journalism; (3) Public relations is subjective; (4) The pace of public relations is different than journalism. Although, the practice of journalism does have several transferrable skills for public

relations. Youngblood's (2015) study on former journalists in public relations roles found that "writing, story pitching, and analysis were the most appreciated skills and abilities" (p. vi). Youngblood's (2015) research shows that there are transferrable skills between journalism and public relations.

For this study, public relations employees will include those who work to "help a company project a positive image to the public in order to achieve its goals" (Doyle, 2020, para. 1). According to Doyle (2020), job titles in public relations can include general job titles (e.g., public relations director, digital and social media manager), account job titles (e.g., account director and account executive), communications job titles (e.g., communications coordinator and communicators director, development and fundraising job titles (e.g., development director and fundraising manager), marketing job titles (e.g., marketing coordinator and marketing director), and media job titles (e.g., media relations manager and media director). In short, public relations roles can entail content creation, media relations, social media, community relations, financial communications, and public speaking (i.e., spokespersons) (Chi, 2018).

This study will also focus on former television journalists who were on-camera talent, including television news reporters and news anchors. The Princeton Review (n.d.) states that television reporters "gather information, investigate leads and report stories 'live' or 'on the scene'" (para. 1). News anchors "inform the public by reporting news stories and events happening on a local national, and international level" ("What is a news anchor?," n.d., para. 1). Television news anchors also serve as the "anchor" who guide news programs ("What is a news anchor?," n.d., para. 1). Fundamentally, television news anchors keep "continuity between segments after field reporters deliver

their respective stories” (“What is a news anchor?,” n.d., para. 1). Overall, this study will focus on former women television journalists who currently work in public relations roles.

Research Questions

While there is ample research on the changes in the news industry, burnout factors of journalists, and reasons journalists leave the field, there is little research that primarily focuses on former women journalists’ experiences leaving television news for public relations. That is, a predominant gap and less-examined area in the literature exists that does not describe the experiences of former women television journalists working in public relations roles.

Moreover, additional research on the gender-based factors involving television journalists’ career change to public relations is essential for understanding the central phenomenon of voluntary turnover in television news. Consequently, this study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by investigating women’s personal and professional experiences in television news. This research will help address the broader, overarching issue of career change in television news by identifying ways to improve working conditions for women television journalists considering leaving the industry. Based on the theoretical framework and review of the literature, this study will attempt to explore the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the factors/influences that drive women journalists out of television news and into public relations?

RQ1A: What role did gender play in these factors?

RQ2: What changes do these women believe the industry should make in order to retain more women television news professionals in the future?

Methodology

Method

To address the research questions, the qualitative research method of semi-structured in-depth interviews will be utilized. Specifically, the researcher will explore the research questions through semi-structured in-depth interviews with former on-camera television journalists who currently work in public relations roles. The in-depth interviews will help the researcher identify why women leave the television news industry and how gender-driven issues may have impacted their experiences.

The method of an in-depth interview is an effective, efficient method for this topic of study. According to Roulston (2010), qualitative interviewing is suitable for studying human sciences. Pessoa et al. (2019) declare interviewing helps explore personal experiences and individual beliefs: “When well conducted, interviews enable interviewees to reveal their desires, feelings, prejudices, expectations, life projects, among many other topics that concern the interviewee’s own life” (p. 1). Interviews are also considered an appropriate research technique for exploring participants’ perceptions of specific issues (Pessoa et al., 2019). Scholars have used the method of in-depth interviews in journalism and communication research studies. For instance, Woodruff (2020) used the method of qualitative interviews to study why television journalists exit the industry, which relates to this area of study. Coupled with participant observation, Stobb (2017) also conducted interviews with journalists to explore how working in

television news impacts journalists' personal lives. Hence, an in-depth interview is an appropriate methodological choice to help answer the posed research questions.

For the interview approach, the romantic conception of interviewing will guide the interview strategy. According to Roulston (2010), in romantic interviewing, the researcher expresses his or her interest in the research topic and is open to discussing his or her interest during the interview. Establishing rapport is an essential component of romantic interviewing, and Roulston (2010) states that "rapport is established with trust from the [interviewer] to create comfortable, in-depth conversation" (p. 217). The romantic conception is appropriate for exploring participants' experiences, opinions, and attitudes (Roulston, 2010). Since sensitive subjects and personal topics may be discussed during the interview, rapport and trust will be essential to garnering rich, in-depth responses. Finally, the romantic conception allows the researcher to prove that he or she is a "reflexive researcher by being aware of their subjective relationship with participants," which will be a significant factor for ensuring validity (Roulston, 2010, p. 217). In sum, the romantic conception of interviewing will be utilized to allow the researcher to show interest, establish rapport, create trust, and demonstrate reflexivity.

The in-depth interviews will also take a semi-structured approach; that is, the interview guideline will consist of predetermined questions, and additional questions will be developed and asked that consider the context of the discussions taking place during the interview. According to Wilson (2013), semi-structured interviews can provide interviewer flexibility and elicit unknown issues. Moreover, researchers should utilize semi-structured interviewing when attempting to "gather facts, attitudes, and opinions" and "understand user goals" (Wilson, 2013, p. 24). Therefore, a semi-structured

approach will guide the interviews to explore the experiences and opinions of former journalists.

Recruitment of Participants

The participants in this study will consist of women who are former on-camera television journalists working in public relations roles. For this study, on-camera talent will be defined as television journalists who worked as news reporters or news anchors and were on-camera, or, in other words, on television. Bark (2008) reported that journalists are leaving the television news business in substantial quantities, stating that television journalists are “leaving the business in droves” (para. 1). A study by Reinardy (2013) also concluded that “more than one in five broadcasters were especially exhausted and cynical about their work, notably among anchors” (as cited in Woodruff, 2020, p. 4). In addition, Reinardy’s (2013) study found that over a third of participants reported that “they planned to leave the profession within the next five years” (as cited in Woodruff, 2020, p. 4).

Although the literature does not confirm whether individuals who leave the journalism industry are all headed for the public relations industry, the existence of a Facebook group titled “TV to PR Women,” which has approximately four-and-a-half-thousand active members, indicates a strong pattern that deserves investigation. For these reasons, former television journalists, and specifically, on-camera talent, who left the television news industry for the public relations industry will constitute the participants in this study.

The researcher will aim for 20 appointments with the goal of using at least 12 participants’ interviews for the analysis component. The researcher will strive to conduct

the interviews with participants shortly after they commit to participating in the study to help improve the response rate. In-depth interviews will be conducted with a sample size of at least 12 interviewees or until saturation is achieved. Data saturation occurs when “new data tend to be redundant of data already collected. In interviews, when the researcher begins to hear the same comments again and again, data saturation is being reached... It is then time to stop collecting information and to start analyzing what has been collected” (Grady, 1998, as cited in Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1896). Sandelowski (1995) suggests sample sizes in qualitative research should be substantial enough to develop a “new and richly textured understanding” of the phenomenon but narrow enough to sufficiently study the phenomenon (p. 183, as cited in Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2). The sample for this study will consist of women who are former television journalists; the researcher will focus primary focus on this field of journalism due to her familiarity with television news, which will also help narrow the pool size of possible interviewees. The participants must meet the following criteria: (1) must identify as a woman; (2) must have experience working in U.S. television news for a minimum of a year as on-camera talent (i.e., news reporter and/or news anchor); (3) must be currently working in a public relations role. Interviewees will also consist of participants of different ethnic/racial backgrounds.

For the methodological procedure, possible interviewees will be primarily recruited through a Facebook group, as well as networking by the researcher and the recruitment technique of snowball sampling. According to Dusek et al. (2015), snowball sampling is frequently utilized to recruit participants. The process of snowball sampling occurs “when a qualified participant shares an invitation with other subjects similar to

them who fulfill the qualifications defined for the targeted population” (Berg, 2006, as cited in Dusek et al., 2015, p. 281). Essentially, this technique helps boost the number of participants because trustworthiness is established (Small, 2009). The researcher will utilize her professors, colleagues, peers, and professional accounts (i.e., LinkedIn and Facebook) to connect with potential subjects. A private Facebook group consisting of women professionals in the television news and public relations industries is the main resource the researcher will use to identify and recruit participants. The researcher will post the objectives and details of the research study on the group’s Facebook page to recruit possible interviewees, along with a link to a Qualtrics survey with screener questions.

It is important to note that there will be limitations to this study. Since the researcher is a former journalist, the possibility of personal bias cannot be disregarded. However, the researcher will engage in self-reflexivity and other validity techniques to combat this obstacle. An additional challenge of this study may be participants’ willingness to discussing sensitive topics and personal experiences; for this reason, adhering to the romantic conception of interviewing will be imperative. On the other hand, there will be advantages to this study. The researcher is a part of the demographic that this research is studying, which are former television journalists who are currently in the public relations industry. The interviews will be free of gender imbalance, and the researcher will be cognizant of the questions she asks, especially if the questions are personal or sensitive.

The researcher will be aware of ethical issues and implications that may arise from this study. To ensure that the research is meeting ethical standards, the researcher

will obtain informed consent from each participant before conducting research through a consent form. The researcher will inform participants of the research objectives, obtain consent to record the interviews, and guarantee confidentiality to all subjects by using pseudonyms. The researcher will randomly select and assign pseudonyms to participants. The researcher will strive to be transparent with participants, be aware of personal bias, and refrain from making any assumptions. It is important for the researcher to perform these actions to ensure transparency and ethicality.

Data Collection

For the collection of data, the researcher will conduct the in-depth interviews remotely during the fall season. Specifically, the researcher will recruit participants in August and September. Next, the researcher will conduct the in-depth interviews with the participants in September and October on a videoconferencing platform. Then, the researcher will analyze and write-up the data, as well as complete a draft of the project report in October and November. The researcher will collect the data during the first half of the fall semester so that she will have ample time to write-up and analyze the data during the latter half of the semester. Below is a sample timeline of the researcher’s plans for the research process during the fall semester:

Sample Timeline

Month(s)	Objective
August and September	Recruitment of participants
September and October	Execution of in-depth interviews
October and November	Analysis of data; completion of project report draft

December	Oral defense of final project report
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Regarding the setting of the interviews, the interviews will take place via Zoom to allow for geographic flexibility. The researcher will reside in New York City, New York, at the time the research will occur, so conducting interviews via Zoom will enable the research to interview participants around the United States. The researcher will record the duration of the interviews through Zoom’s recording feature after obtaining consent from the participants. For backup purposes, the researcher will also record the interview on her phone and save it as a voice memo or audio recording.

The interviews will be conducted in English, and the researcher will refrain from taking written notes of each detail of the interview to focus on the interviewee and eliminate distractions. However, the researcher will take written notes intermittently during important points that may arise throughout the interview. According to Muswazi and Nhamo (2013), note writing is a beneficial technique to use in research because it facilitates analysis. The researcher will transcribe the interviews immediately after completion while the conversation is fresh in the researcher’s mind. The researcher will use the transcription software Otter.ai to convert the audio and video to text. Once transcribed, the researcher will review the transcriptions and interviews to guarantee that the transcriptions are accurate and complete. After the interviews are completed, the researcher will send follow-up questions to participants if necessary.

The researcher will guarantee confidentiality to the participants in this study; since the interviews may discuss personal experiences and sensitive topics, participants may prefer to conceal their identities. Guaranteeing confidentiality to participants may

also encourage them to answer the interview questions truthfully and genuinely without fear of identification.

Interview Questions

The interview protocol will encompass interview questions that reflect the objectives of the research questions. Questions will be grouped into various topical categories that explore the following areas: (1) leaving journalism; (2) career change factors; (3) public relations; and (4) television news suggestions. Interviewees will be asked about the factors that attracted them to the television news industry, as well as the factors that influenced them to leave the field. The researcher will ask interviewees about their experiences in the television news industry and why they pursued a public relations career. Then, the researcher will ask interviewees about the changes they think the television news industry should make to retain more women professionals in the future. Interview questions will align with the posed research questions to ensure that the purpose and objectives of the study are fulfilled.

Data Analysis

After the transcription of the data, the researcher will perform a grounded theory-influenced textual data analysis. Nowell et al. (2017) describe the significance of data analysis in qualitative research:

To be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible. (p.

1)

For the sorting and analyzation of the data, the researcher will engage in the process of coding to contextualize and interpret the data. At its core, coding is the process of “identifying segments of meaning in your data and labeling them with a code” (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019, p. 6). For the procedure of the data analysis, the researcher will use open coding, or inductive coding, to look for emerging themes from the interviews, which will guide the interpretation and analysis of the data. According to Costa et al. (2016), open coding “refers to the process of generating initial concepts form data” in which “concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions [are] discovered” (p. 38). In open coding, the researcher examines the concepts and its explications that are rooted in the data (Costa et al., 2016). Khandkar (n.d.) mentions that the objective of open coding is to “build a descriptive, multi-dimensional preliminary framework for later analysis” (p. 8). In the process of open coding, the validity of the data is enhanced through the grouping of conceptual categories from the data (Khandkar, n.d.). The process of open coding is beneficial for gaining comprehensive insights, retrieving the data, sorting the data, establishing transparency, enhancing validity, and incorporating participants’ perspectives (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). In all, the process of coding is a suitable method for analyzing qualitative data.

The researcher will use open coding to find common themes, patterns, and concepts from the data. To do this, the researcher will review the data and use context to produce initial codes (i.e., labels, words, or phrases) and create meaning from the data. Then, the researcher will review the data an additional time to increase accuracy and precision. Next, the researcher will group the codes into core categories, which will be determined from the codes’ properties and dimensions (Khandkar, n.d.). The researcher

will look for connections between the categories and identify reoccurring themes from the categories. Fundamentally, the themes will serve as the basis for interpretation. The researcher will repeat the data analyzation process until all the data is reviewed and coded.

Lee and Mitchell's unfolding theory of turnover will help guide the analysis of the data. The researcher will consider the five cognitive pathways of the unfolding model of turnover theory during the data analysis to answer the posed research questions. In other words, the researcher will utilize the cognitive pathways of the unfolding model to analyze interviewees' decision-making processes that led to their decision to leave the television news industry for the public relations industry.

To improve validity for the data collection and data analysis, the strategies of reflexivity, peer review, and low-inference descriptors will be used. For reflexivity, the researcher will engage in critical self-reflection to assess biases that may impact the procedure or findings. For peer review, the researcher will discuss her interpretations and findings with other researchers to gain constructive criticism and useful insights. For low-inference descriptors, the researcher will use verbatim (i.e., direct quotations) and exclude adjectives to ensure that the researcher's descriptions are as close to the field notes and participants' accounts as possible. Altogether, utilizing multiple strategies that promote validity will allow the researcher to reduce the effect of research bias throughout the study.

Publication

For the deliverable component of the professional analysis, the researcher will construct a white paper that will be presented to television news organizations. White

papers are researched reports that help present solutions to specific issues in an industry (University of Arizona Writing Center, n.d.). The University of Arizona Writing Center (n.d.) summarizes the significance of white papers for research reports:

A white paper shows the authority and expertise a person or company has about their respective industry. Its purpose is to persuade readers, through in-depth analysis of evidence and information, that a particular solution to a problem is best. Furthermore, it illustrates to readers that the writer (or company) responsible for the white paper is a trusted expert in the field. (para. 2)

Based on the interviews and research findings, the researcher will aim to identify how television news organizations can implement changes to help retain women professionals. The white paper will focus on providing and explaining suggestions for how the television news industry can help with the problem of employee turnover, and particularly, the resignation of women television journalists.

A specific target outlet for publication of this study is the Radio Television Digital News Association. According to the RTDNA, the association is “the world’s largest professional organization devoted exclusively to broadcast and digital journalism” (Radio Television Digital News Association, n.d., para. 1). Since the RTDNA’s mission is to “promote and protect responsible journalism,” this study on former women television news journalists is relevant to the association and its audience (Radio Television Digital News Association, n.d., para. 1). The RTDNA frequently publishes stories that focus on the television news industry, so research that focuses on the industry and its women professionals would be applicable to the RTDNA’s content.

Another target outlet for publication of this study is the Missouri School of Journalism's Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute. RJI is an ideal avenue for publication, especially since this study aims to discuss how to improve the television news industry. According to RJI, the institute "engages media professionals, scholars and other citizens in programs aimed at strengthening journalism in the service of democracy. RJI generates and tests new techniques and new thinking that promise to improve journalism" (Reynolds Journalism Institute, n.d., para. 2). Based on the finding of this study, the researcher will seek to understand how the television news industry can implement changes to help with the issue of the resignation of women professionals; for this reason, RJI would be an applicable, pertinent outlet for publication.

Potential Interviewees

The researcher identified 12 potential interviewees who meet the demographic criteria for this study. The following individuals are former television women journalists and on-camera talent who are currently working in public relations roles:

Brittany Absher: Absher was a news reporter and anchor at WTAE-TV in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, before exiting the television news industry in 2022 for a position as a director of public relations and marketing at an agency. She has over 10 years of experience working as a reporter and anchor at television news organizations, including WTAE-TV, WSAZ-TV, and WDTV-TV. She received a broadcast journalism degree at Point Park University in 2010.

Carolyn Callahan: Callahan is a former news reporter and anchor who is currently the chief of communications and community relations of Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Kentucky. She has over 10 years of work experience as a news reporter and

anchor at television news organizations, including WVII-TV, WABI-TV, WIS-TV, and WLKY-TV. She left the industry in 2020 and worked as a public relations coordinator and media relations and multimedia strategies manager at UofL Health, an integrated regional academic health system. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in broadcast journalism from the University of South Carolina.

Camille Connor: Connor is a public relations coordinator for the Salvation Army who has more than 5 years of experience working as an on-camera television journalist. She has worked at WMC-TV in Memphis, Tennessee, and she has also worked as news reporter and fill-in anchor at KAUZ-TV in Wichita Falls, Texas. She left the news industry and started her public relations job in March 2022. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in broadcast communication and a minor in communication studies from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Madeline David: David is a former news reporter and anchor with more than 5 years of experience working in the television news industry. Her work experience includes working as a news reporter at WVEC-TV, KRQE-TV, KXII-TV, and KTVT-TV. David left the news industry in 2020 and currently works as an engagement coordinator at North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from Texas Christian University in 2015.

Abigail Jackson: Jackson is a communications specialist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. She has 5 years of experience working in the television news industry; for 2 years, she worked as a multimedia journalist. The television news organizations she has worked at include WFFT-TV and WSBT-TV. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from Ball State University.

Megan Judy: Judy is an award-winning broadcast journalist who worked at KOMU-TV for 20 years. She exited the news industry in January 2022 after joining EquipmentShare, an equipment and digital solutions provider, as the deputy director of public relations and communications. She is a millennial mother who has also worked as a professor at the Missouri School of Journalism. She received a Bachelor of Journalism degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2004.

Lindsay Nadrich: Nadrich has more than 10 years working in the television news industry, and she started a public relations job in 2022. She has worked as a news reporter, multimedia journalist, host, and fill-in anchor at television news organizations, including KOIN Local 6 News, KGW News, KREM 2 News, and KHQ-TV. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in business finance from the University of Washington – Michael G. Foster School of Business in 2009. She also graduated with a master’s degree in mass communication with a business journalism emphasis from Arizona State University in 2011.

Makensie Oubre: Oubre is a senior public information officer for the City of Corpus Christi Public Works Department who has more than 5 years of work experience in the television news industry. She has worked as a news reporter and anchor at television news organizations, including KNOE-TV, KMBT/KJAC-TV, and KOSA-TV. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in mass communication from Texas State University in 2015.

Ali Warshavsky: Warshavsky is a former news reporter and anchor who is currently working in media relations at the California Building Industry Association. She has 10 years of experience working as a multimedia journalist at television news organizations,

including News 12 Networks, Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network, FOX 61 News, RNN-TV, WNCN-TV, News 12 Connecticut, and WICZ Fox 40.

Jennifer Webb: Webb is a publicist for The Dollywood Company in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Before joining The Dollywood Company in 2018, she worked as a news reporter for 2 years at WATE-TV, and she also worked at WDHN-TV. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Tennessee in 2015.

Winnie Wright: Wright is a senior specialist of public and media relations for Habitat for Humanity International in Atlanta, Georgia. She has more than 10 years of experience working as a journalist and public relations specialist. She has worked as a news reporter and anchor at television news organizations, including WHBQ-TV, THV11, and WCTV. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in in communication and media studies from the University of Alabama in 2012, and she earned a master's degree in political management from George Washington University in 2021.

Sample Screener

I. Facebook post copy

Hello! I am Kaili Ward, and I am a graduate student at the Missouri School of Journalism who is conducting a research study as part of a professional project to earn my master's degree. The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of former women television journalists who were on-camera (i.e., news anchors/news reporters) and now work in the public relations industry. A goal of this research is to identify ways to improve the television news industry in order to retain more women professionals in the future. All participants will be guaranteed confidentiality.

If you're interested in helping me, please fill out this screener questionnaire with 10 questions that is linked to this post. If you have any questions, please email me at kvwtdw@umystem.edu. Thanks for considering this and helping to make the industry a better place for women.

II. Screener questions (Qualtrics link)

Thank you for your interest in this research. This research aims to identify ways to improve the television news industry in order to retain more women professionals in the future. Participants will be guaranteed confidentiality. If you are interested in helping with this research, please complete this screener of 10 questions. Thanks!

1. What is your gender identity?
2. How long did you work as a television news journalist?
 - a. In what country was the majority of your TV news experience?
 - b. Were you considered on-camera talent? (E.g., news reporter, news anchor)
 - c. Did you leave TV news to pursue a career in PR?
3. Do you currently work in a PR role?
 - a. How long have you worked in the PR industry?
 - b. What is your job title/position in the PR industry?
4. What is your name?
5. Would you be willing to share your current resume?

Consent Form for Participation in Interview Research - ©NCPI

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Kaili Ward from the Missouri School of Journalism. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about the factors that drive women professionals out of television news and into public relations. I will be one of approximately 12 to 20 people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. Participation involves being interviewed by the researcher. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. A Zoom recording of the interview will be made and stored on a password-protected computer. Transcripts will be uploaded and wiped of all and any identifiable information. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Pseudonyms will be used to guarantee confidentiality. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts.
6. I understand that this research study will be published on the University of Missouri Libraries' Electronic Journalism Masters Projects and may be submitted to pertinent outlets, such as the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) and the Missouri School of Journalism's Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI).
7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature

Date

My Printed Name

Signature of the Investigator

Sample Interview Guideline

I. Leaving Journalism

1. What attracted you to a career in TV news?
2. What was your journalism experience like and how did that factor into your decision to leave? (Push factors)
3. How did your perception of your role in TV news evolve over time?
4. Was there a seminal moment or experience that solidified your decision to leave for PR?
5. Please describe the process of your decision to leave TV news.

II. Career Change Factors

1. Research has identified 10+ factors that contribute to news professionals' decision to leave the field. Could you please comment on each of the following as they applied to your decision?
 - a. Rapid changes in the TV news industry
 - b. Job satisfaction
 - c. Burnout/mental health pressures
 - d. Sexism/discrimination
 - e. Work-life balance
 - f. Difficult stories
 - g. Quality of news standards
 - h. Shortage of resources (e.g., staff, such as camera people and editors; travel budgets, etc.)
 - i. Other health issues
 - j. Unethical practices
 - k. Compensation (e.g., salary, raises, financial stability)
 - l. Management issues
 - m. Sponsorship availability/conflicts
2. Which were the most important factors in your decision to leave TV news?
3. How did your gender interact with these factors? (*Re-read them if needed*).

III. Public Relations

1. What about PR work seemed attractive to you? (Pull factors)
2. Why did you decide to pursue a career in PR?
3. Reflecting on the factors that led you to leave TV news, how does the new role compare?
4. Do you still carry a journalistic self-concept in your PR job? How does your self-concept impact how you do your job?

IV. TV News Suggestions

1. What changes would your former employer have had to make in order for you to stay?
2. What changes do you think the TV news industry should make in order to retain more women in the future?

V. Conclusion

1. How do you prefer to be described in the final report?
2. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

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