

EPISODE 203

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:09] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist brought to you by the team at OnePitch. Are you looking for a more efficient way to find and pitch the right journalists? Head to our website at onepitch.co to learn more.

Our guest today on today's episode of Coffee with a Journalist is Lucy Morgan from Glamour. As the purpose editor and deputy website editor, Lucy is responsible for coordinating long-term policy campaigns at the intersection of politics, female empowerment, and sustainability. During the episode, Lucy talks about a story her team has been working on about Taylor Swift, the variance in sources she works with outside of PR, why she enjoys a quick in-person chat, and more. Let's dive in.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:00:56] BB: Welcome, everyone. This is Coffee with a Journalist. I'm Beck Bamberger. What we do on this little show which has been going a long time now is talk with real reporters, journalists, editors, freelancers to understand how they like to work with publicists because we all need each other. It's a difficult relationship at times, which is what we unpack here.

With us today – Lucy, are you coming from the UK right now?

[00:01:22] LM: I am, yes.

[00:01:23] BB: Oh, my gosh. All the way from the UK, Lucy Morgan is with us today. She is Purpose Editor, ooh, and Deputy Website Editor of Glamour. I can't wait first to talk with you, Lucy, about what a purpose editor involves. Let's start there. What does it all involve?

[00:01:41] LM: Sure. The role of purpose editor was created in – I think it was July 2022. Essentially, Glamour is a brand that's really focused on women's empowerment. Part of the reason this role was created was to have someone whose sole role was to make sure that we

are meeting that goal of creating meaningful content around women's empowerment. Essentially, we're still living up to our purpose of creating that empowering content. That's why it's called purpose editor.

The job was created with me. I'm the first person to do this job, which is amazing. But I'm still very much – it's new territory. It's new territory for everyone, new territory for the brand. Obviously, everyone I meet is really interested to know what purpose editor means. It's really great to be able to shout about empowerment and politics and sustainability, and to get to say that that's **[inaudible 00:02:40]** work for a place that's passionate about promoting that.

[00:02:43] BB: I love it, how bespoke. Let's talk about your inbox, Lucy, because as an editor, that often is more complex not just with pitches but pitches possibly from freelancers and whatnot. So do tell.

[00:02:58] LM: Yes. I mean, it's a real mix at the moment. My inbox is nightmarish right now. I've just been on annual leave. I'm a bit poorly, and so I'm really just working my way through it. It's a lot of – to be honest, it's hard because there's so much exciting stuff. Sometimes, I feel when I've got so many exciting emails that I want to get to, I feel like you almost have that like, “Where do I even begin?”

In my role, I'm also deputy website editor. That means, well, I deputize for Ali, Bianca. Ali Pantony is the website director, and she does a job share with Bianca London, which is really cool. Bianca is currently on maternity leave, so I fill in the gaps kind of.

[00:03:46] BB: You're doing all the things.

[00:03:48] LM: Yes. I mean, I think everyone at Glamour is just like –

[00:03:50] BB: Yes, we all are.

[00:03:52] LM: Doing a million jobs. I also cover books as well. I sort book extracts, and that's one area. That's like completely saturates my inbox is people trying to get me to do a book extract for Glamour. It's so hard because all the books that I'm sent and all the pictures around

books that I'm sent are incredible, all about these empowering topics, about really exciting books coming out. One of them is *Romanticize Your Life* by Beth McCall, who used to be our mental health correspondent. That's sitting at the top of my inbox right now. I need to go through the PDF. I need to pick out an extract. I need to go through all that. It's a lot of work for one email. It's just **[inaudible 00:04:36]**, but I will get there, as I always say to them. Yes, it's a lot of stuff like that.

Obviously, there's the emails that are very easy to just go through, and I just delete because they're not for me. One is about heart-shaped pancakes. One is about a new medication that's just come out. A lot of it is Valentine's Day commerce stuff, which just isn't relevant to me, and that's easy. That goes easily, but a lot of it is really exciting stuff that's harder to get through.

[00:05:04] BB: I love that you say it's exciting stuff. I don't think I've ever had someone on here in the 200-whatever episodes we've been on saying exciting. My inbox is exciting. I love that vibe. This is fantastic. It is exciting when you're sitting, I think, in a position that funnels so many phenomenal ideas and things. Of course, there are a lot of not phenomenal ideas that come your way but that you get to see quite a swath, I imagine, across all these fields.

[00:05:31] LM: Yes, exactly. Yes. It's just a really – I do feel very privileged that people are thinking of me and thinking of Glamour for these things. I guess it's just finding the energy and the time to do justice to them, especially with the books. Obviously, with female empowerment pictures that come through, they're often very sensitive topics. You need to give so much time and energy to each and every single one. There's only eight hours –

[00:05:54] BB: Yes, yes. You mentioned just earlier, okay, heart-shaped pancakes, not for me. Are you doing a review of your inbox, which you said is insane, by subject line alone and deleting from there?

[00:06:11] LM: Yes.

[00:06:11] BB: Yes. Okay.

[00:06:13] LM: That'll be the first thing I do is I'll go through and cut anything that I know from the subject line isn't for me and probably actually isn't intended for me. I probably ended up on a list somewhere. The PRs are just doing due diligence by sending it to me. Unless it's someone's repeatedly sending me stuff that's just not right or needs to go to someone else in the organization, I will usually just delete it and move on. Then I'll will start working kind of methodically from the oldest to the newest emails and actually go through it.

Then I usually put books in a separate one because the book extracts are so time-consuming that it needs to be a separate thing altogether. I'll usually set aside maybe two hours on a Friday to go and do some book extracts. The rest are manageable.

[00:07:00] BB: Okay. For filing, let's say, do you file any pitches that you come back to eventually?

[00:07:09] LM: Yes. Again, it's like with the book. I could have some amazing pitches and just know that I haven't either got the time or the brain space to get back to people because I do. I mean, I used to be freelance before –

[00:07:23] BB: Yes, you get it.

[00:07:24] LM: Before I came into this position. I know what it's like when you sent a beautiful pitch off, you sent a follow-up, and this editor, who you perhaps have spoken to before and you've met isn't responding. I don't want to be that editor. I want to send careful considered emails back to freelancers because they do an incredible job. I know exactly what it's like. They will get that email for the most part. It will just come a week later.

I think it's really important as editors to do that and remember that freelancers are in a much shakier position. There's more freedom for them. But in terms of that regular work coming in, there's a lot more insecurity, and we need to be mindful of that. I am always trying to practice that mindfulness around being prompt and being considered with freelancers, especially as I mentioned earlier, the pictures that come my way are often really quite personal on topics ranging from everything from sexual concern, what it's like to have ADHD, navigate the mental health system.

People put a lot of their life and experience into these pictures. So I don't feel going, "Not for us, but thank you." I want to do a little bit more. Sometimes, the perfectionist in me just overrides it. Then you're at a point where it's like, "Well, I can't do it perfectly, so I'm not doing it at all." It's the same outcome **[inaudible 00:08:42]**.

[00:08:44] BB: Oh, gosh. Given the plethora of stories that are out there right now and so many of these, as you're saying, is like heartfelt personal, are there any that are particularly enticing you right now in this, let's say, early February time frame that we're in of 2024?

[00:09:03] LM: I think first-person stories are Glamour's bread and butter. I think any women's empowerment brand or women-first brand wants those first-person stories because they're inherently unique. They're hard to get because you're, essentially, someone to sell a part of their life **[inaudible 00:09:24]** and for it to sit on our website. That's really hard, and I don't want to be in a position where I'm commissioning writers to mine their own experiences and trauma if they're not – it needs to feel genuine. It needs to feel like there's a purpose to it.

A lot of the first-person pieces that we do will invariably be hooked to new stories that are taking over Twitter. At the moment, the biggest rumbling story is deep fakes are being circulated of Taylor Swift.

[00:10:00] BB: Yes, exactly.

[00:10:01] LM: I had a lot of brilliant pitches come through about that about people who have experienced deep faking, or they're concerned. They basically have so many opinions about this Taylor Swift is such an interesting person because people expect so much from her, so many different things.

[00:10:17] BB: God, I know.

[00:10:18] LM: She's one of those really interesting celebrities. I think anyone who comes in with an opinion or a perspective on a rolling news story like that, I'm always going to click on that first, I think, because of that timely element as well.

[00:10:35] BB: Yes, the timely hook.

[00:10:37] LM: That I can't bring. I'm a white woman. I'm cisgender. I'm not disabled. If someone's bringing in a perspective other than that, I would love to commission that.

[00:10:48] BB: What about sources that you're seeking? Is there a type of expert that you love pitches for?

[00:10:57] LM: Yes. I mean, so we also do a lot on women's health. I'm always kind of looking for experts across like doctors, GPs, experts in reproductive health. Really hard to find good experts in these areas. I think there's a lot of sort of pseudo health professionals come through. They'll make it really easy for you. They'll send quotes that are ready to go. You can copy and paste, and you can have them.

When I first started out as a freelance journalist, I thought, great, this is what we do. We have quotes. They're an expert. But it's not as simple as that. You need to cross-check with other experts. You need people who are really, really qualified, not just, "Oh, I'm a doctor." I need them to be specialized in the field, and it's not good enough.

When I'm editing work sometimes, a writer will have come through with a doctor who's qualified. But they're a man, and it'll be specifically about gynecological health. They won't be a specialist in gynecological health. It'll just be general comments. I'll have to go back and say, "I'm really sorry, but this person isn't a fit for Glamour," because a woman reading this is not going to be comforted by a man with a big medical practice who is essentially wanting PR from us. It's just not right. You have to meet in the middle somewhere. It has to be right for us for it to be right for them as well.

[00:12:26] BB: Lucy, I can tell you care so much. It's very apparent, and I love that. It warms my heart. I hope everyone listening to this is feeling that as well.

[BREAK]

[00:12:40] ANNOUNCER: Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to learn about the unique ways OnePitch helps brands engage with the right journalists? Head to onepitch.co and create your own custom media list in five minutes or less. Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW RESUMED]

[00:13:03] BB: Let me ask one thing about relationships, given your care but, of course, your limited time. You're in the UK. How do you make relationships with publicists, ever in person, ever via long-term email exchanges? How would you say?

[00:13:17] LM: Yes. I mean, Glamour does a lot of events.

[00:13:20] BB: They do.

[00:13:20] LM: We have our Women of the Year event. We have **[inaudible 00:13:23]** Summit. Those kind of events are really nice to meet people who I've been having those long email exchanges with. You do build up relationships over email. I have so many great contacts who if I need a legal expert, there's always one woman I go to. If I need a health expert, there's one woman I go to. If I need someone to talk about politics in the UK, I've got someone I go to. I have these lovely contacts, but it's always nice for them to be in the same room and to meet up with them.

I love going for coffee with people. I love actually putting faces to names. It makes life so much easier. It's just hard with the time constraints that we're all operating in. I don't have time really to go for a nice long lunch.

[00:14:08] BB: No. Who does? My God.

[00:14:11] LM: In this industry. I feel like they were maybe a thing 30 years ago. I work in an office full of young women who are all working extremely hard and don't take lunch. We're all baffled by the idea that we could go for long lunches together. Yes, maybe one day, but I would like to do it more. My work at the moment, just no.

[00:14:31] BB: I am stunned, by the way, whenever someone's like, "Oh, we can go for lunch." I'm like, "Do you have two and a half hours in the middle of the day or something?" You know what, though? What that tells me is that it's not a busy person, by busy equating to productive. I'm like, "No, I don't know. I'm good with that." Or you're such an astronomical billionaire that you do have that luxury. That's what it says to me.

[00:14:58] LM: Yes, yes. Our entertainment director, Emily Maddick, she's incredible. A part of her job is sometimes taking clients out for long **[inaudible 00:15:06]**, and it's incredible. I just think yes. Obviously, she's working so hard. Her relationship building is another level. But, yes, sometimes I do like to tag along and see her, kind of shadowing to see her do it.

[00:15:25] BB: That is insane to me, the lunch. Oh, my God. Okay. But you are down for a coffee, a meet-up, a something in person.

[00:15:33] LM: Yes, sure.

[00:15:35] BB: By the way, seasonal type of question here as we get into just the year. Are there conferences, well, obviously, the Glamour ones but let's see if there's more, that you show up to that you're like, "Hey, I will be here at this."

[00:15:48] LM: Yes. I mean, as my role gets kind of more traction, I'm invited to more and more things. I went to the Women's Health Summit recently, which is basically the government's policy document on women's healthcare in the UK. It's really great to be in those rooms. Before we had a purpose editor, I'm not sure Glamour was in those rooms. Obviously, that's a room full of policymakers, of clinicians, of charity leaders. It's great to be in that room. I'm hoping that we will continue to have a presence at these events that are all about women's empowerment, women's health, women's safety. I mean, women's safety is such a massive thing at the moment. We're actually hoping to organize our own events around this as well. Yes. I can't say too much at the moment but –

[00:16:34] BB: Okay. More is coming. By the way, this is not on the topic, and it's definitely not on my sheet here. But how's your mood, attitude, let's say, on women's health generally? Are you optimistic? Are you feeling anger? I don't know. I thought you would be the person to ask.

[00:16:53] LM: Yes, yes. It's really interesting. I wrote an article about the Women's Health Summit. There are so many brilliant things that came out of it. They're taking baby loss and miscarriage more seriously. They're talking about periods very, very openly and talking about how – so women will go to the doctors with period pain, and it'll be dismissed there and then as period pain, rather as being an indicator of something more serious. There was so much good stuff to come out of it.

We have a women's minister in the UK who really seems to be very against abortion, which is **[inaudible 00:17:29]**. She's entitled to her opinions about abortion. But to one person in the room who asked a question about it, that seemed to be a disconnect. How can you have someone against a vital source of **[inaudible 00:17:43]**, who is then kind of creating policy around it?

[00:17:48] BB: Yes, that's interesting.

[00:17:49] LM: That worries me. I mean, obviously, I think reproductive healthcare and reproductive freedoms for women are under attack in the UK and US and just the world more generally. That's an area that worries me hugely. We do our best to stay on top of that issue. But, yes, I mean, there's so much about women's health that really –

[00:18:09] BB: There really is.

[00:18:11] LM: It's a really scary thing. Anyone who's been to the doctor as a woman, especially if you're with a male doctor, it's a very vulnerable thing to go and discuss your health because you never know, especially if you're fat or if you're black. There are just different factors coming in where you can be dismissed and say, "Well, you lose some weight," or, "This is in your head." Or just these little things that are – they just don't happen **[inaudible 00:18:37]**.

[00:18:39] BB: Yes. You have to be the entire advocate for you, or you will just be railroaded. The time, the energy, oh, gosh, it's just exhausting. It's just exhausting. Well, thank you for that answer. Off script, everybody, but I liked it. By the way, okay, now some little day in your life type of stuff, Lucy. Are there any books, publications, or content that you're just like, "Oh, I'm just drinking it in," or, "It inspires me so much."?

[00:19:10] LM: Obviously, I love women's media. I love what Teen Vogue are doing. I think that's brilliant. I think they really have created a niche for themselves that is in line with the Vogue brand, but it's so distinct, so unapologetically for women, which is what Glamour is trying to do. Obviously, we're beauty first. Vogue are very much politics first. I'm the Purpose Editor of Glamour, so I love what they're doing.

I think Teen Vogue, I think someone released a snarky article or something about some of the writers who worked there. I just thought how easy it is to punch down on anyone who aligns themselves with women's content and interest. We get that at Glamour as well. It's even from journalists I admire will make snarky remarks about Glamour. I just think we're one of the top magazines in the world for women's media. Women love reading us. Why is that such a weird thing for you? I love any publication that is just unapologetically about, by, and for women. Teen Vogue is definitely up there. Obviously, I love Glamour. I love Cosmo as well. I started my career at Cosmo, so yes.

[00:20:22] BB: Yes. Okay. Yes, I know. Can we talk – what type of things are people sending you? Like, "Oh, I can't believe you're talking about periods again." What?

[00:20:34] LM: I think yes. A lot of our Instagram comments –

[00:20:37] BB: Oh, God.

[00:20:38] LM: Will be –

[00:20:38] BB: The trolls.

[00:20:40] LM: The trolls, yes. We did an amazing cover last year featuring Logan Brown, who is a transgender man who was pregnant at the time. We were like, “We have to share his story.” It all comes back to healthcare again because so many of the issues he was facing as a trans man in the healthcare system were also faced by cisgender women in the healthcare system. We thought what a brilliant opportunity to talk about allyship between cis women and transmen via this cover and how cisgender women shouldn't be scared of transgender people. They should see that we're natural allies.

Obviously, that was an incredibly divisive cover. Many people in the LGBT community loved it. Obviously, we got some hate. It was on various right-wing panel shows **[inaudible 00:21:27]** woke, as if woke is a bad thing.

[00:21:31] BB: Oh, gosh.

[00:21:32] LM: It was right and I was so just honored to be working for a publication. Deborah Joseph, our editor-in-chief, really championed it the whole way. She knew it would be divisive. We just thought as long as Logan **[inaudible 00:21:44]**.

[00:21:44] BB: Yes, still did it.

[00:21:46] LM: We've got to do it because this is –

[00:21:47] BB: I love it.

[00:21:48] LM: Our times. Trans rights in the UK, especially, are really used as political football. They really are. It's just every day there's a new MP talking about how they're going to restrict transgender people's rights. Today, a labor MP has come out and said, “Transgender women will be on separate hospital wards.”

[00:22:09] BB: Oh, God.

[00:22:11] LM: It just feels like saying, “We have no hospital wards. Where are you going to put them?” It's so underfunded in this country. So it feels like those moments, I'm so proud to be that divisive.

[00:22:23] BB: I love it.

[00:22:24] LM: That alternative viewpoint. Yes. I hope we have another moment like that this year.

[00:22:29] BB: I hope so, too. Really just hateful people just hate themselves. That's the sad part.

[00:22:34] LM: Exactly.

[00:22:35] BB: That's the sad part. Okay. Lucy, this is such a juicy conversation. I just love it. Okay. A little more thing on the publicist side and then we have our little rapid-fire questions here. How is the story approval process for you?

[00:22:55] LM: It's fine, to be honest. I mean, it just depends on the publicist sometimes can be a bit iffy. I hate, hate, hate receiving a list of kind of deliverables before we've even started, before even started negotiations. I think it's good to like establish interest between both parties before demanding things. Often I cannot meet those deliverables. I just cannot. It's good to establish a give-and-take relationship early on. Generally, it's not a problem. Most publicists I work with are just wonderful, wonderful people. Yes. No complaints really.

[00:23:38] BB: Great to know. Okay, Lucy, a little rapid-fire question session. Give us your take. Here we go. Video or phone interview?

[00:23:47] LM: I think I would go for a phone interview.

[00:23:50] BB: Bullet points or paragraphs in a pitch?

[00:23:53] LM: Paragraphs because I love to see how people write. I think you can get a lot more sense for a writer if they're writing in paragraphs. But I would always say three paragraphs max.

[00:24:04] BB: Great. Then that answers the next question, short or long pitches. I would say short if you didn't hear. Yes. Images attached or Dropbox zip file?

[00:24:15] LM: Ooh, attached I think. Let me see them straight away.

[00:24:20] BB: Okay. Email or Twitter XDM?

[00:24:24] LM: Definitely an email. My social media is just a no-go for any work. I just don't go on social media, so it's got to be email.

[00:24:29] BB: No **[inaudible 00:24:30]**. One follow-up or multiple?

[00:24:34] BB: Honestly, follow up as much as you want. I say most of the time, if I've not responded and it's a pitch that I'm probably likely to be interested in, I have just missed it. So follow up as much as you will, obviously, if it's not a commerce or a beauty thing. If it's like feminist empowerment and I genuinely will like it, keep following me.

[00:24:53] BB: Direct or creative subject lines?

[00:24:56] LM: Direct.

[00:24:57] BB: Press release or media kit?

[00:24:59] LM: Press release.

[00:25:00] BB: What time do you usually read pitches? Or is it just all the time?

[00:25:04] LM: It's all the time. I mean, I always say 7am is the best time to pitch me because that's when I'm doing my sort of pre-work work.

[] **BB:** Your pre-work work. Yes.

[00:25:17] **LM:** But anytime, honestly. If it's a good pitch, then I will get back to you.

[00:25:20] **BB:** Okay. We already covered sources, so I think we're good on that front. Lucy, do you have any last things you want to promote, highlight, celebrate today?

[00:25:31] **LM:** Yes. I would love – yes. We last year launched a Glamour Talks Consent survey all around basically our readers' attitudes towards social consent, both online and offline. We will be releasing the results of the survey which are very juicy later this year. I'm so excited to essentially start the next phase of our campaigning around consent. Yes, super interested in everyone's thoughts on that and excited to share that with the rest of the world.

[00:26:04] **BB:** Lucy, thank you for being on here today, by the way, on your day off even. Look at her. She is here. She is showing up. It's a pleasure to chat with you, Lucy. If I'm ever in the UK, we will go for some tea but quickly, no lunch too long. It will be great.

[00:26:21] **LM:** Thank you so much.

[00:26:22] **BB:** Thank you, Lucy. Have a great rest of the day.

[00:26:25] **LM:** Yes. You, too. Bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:26:27] **ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for listening to this week's Coffee with a Journalist episode, featuring Lucy Morgan from Glamour. For more exclusive insights about the journalist on this podcast, subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter at onepitch.co/podcast. We'll see you next week. Until then, start great stories.

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