Copywriting – how’s that work, then?

SPEAKING at September’s LFB meeting, copywriter Jackie Berry opened with, “Hands up if you think it’s harder to get money as a journalist… hands up if you think journalism and your skills are under-rated.” Jackie was appearing along with freelance photographer Jill Furmanovsky, founder of www.rockarchive.com – see above.

Jackie runs a course on copywriting for freelance journalists. She reported one of its participants as saying that it should be called “How to make money as a journalist and not get treated like shit.” Skills “that journalists can naturally transfer” into copywriting include writing slogans (or headlines as we journalists call them) and “writing to a deadline, to a budget, to a brief,” but copywriters are paid and treated better, according to Jackie. Giving us a taste of her journalism.co.uk copywriting course, Jackie explained some of the steps in the “standard copywriting formula”. Your copy needs to attract, probably in order: Attention, Interest, Desire, Conviction and Action.

Her talk started with a “commercial break” for some people Jackie works with, LoveHeyMic, who sell Bluetooth mikes that clip with a magnet on to your clothing. This allowed Jackie to do the commentary for a short promotional video for the product while being filmed using two smartphones from the other end of the room “with no wires”.

This in turn allowed Jackie to demonstrate the standard copywriting formula with a practical example: First comes getting Attention (using “pattern disruptors” – suddenly someone comes out of the audience with a phone on a tripod and starts filming her) then Interest (getting people’s interest: “It’s a Bluetooth mike – what’s a Bluetooth mike…?”) then Desire – persuading people why they need it; Conviction (adding credibility to the marketing claims – “a new product developed by professional speakers”); and finally Action – in this case getting people to take a photo of the web address for LoveHeyMic’s, so they can find out more.

Jackie asked journalists at the meeting to form pairs to write a headline in five minutes – to promote “The Big One”, a massive chisel-tipped felt pen imported from Rockarchive.com.
**The Rate for the Job**

**PHOTOGRAPHERS** have been having a hard time, with attacks coming from all sides. NUJ London Freelance Branch, now again representing most photographers in the union, asked member Pierre Chukwudi Alozie for an update.

In a speech in Arizona on 22 August Donald Trump (the 45th president of the United States) spoke of "the very dishonest media, those fake news organizations", and was rewarded with booping of said people with cameras. Trump's remarks foster continuing attacks on working journalists throughout the world.

The general public also seem to be taking an increasingly aggressive attitude to photographers, videographers and writers. While covering protests around the the G20 inter-governmental meeting in Hamburg, Germany in July 2017, I saw a palpable rise in tension and hostility when anyone raised a camera, particularly around the Black Bloc and Antifa (anti-fascist) protestors.

At a protest in front of the Kensington Town Hall on 16 June 2017 over the the Grenfell tower disaster, a photographer working for *Agence France Presse* (AFP) had his gear snatched — only to have it returned later with the help of members of the community. There Sven Rosen-stein, a video journalist working for the Russian television station RT (formerly Russia Today), was beaten to the pavement — and rescued by the Metropolitan Police. Two days earlier Sven had been filming in front of the church community centre near Grenfell tower when four or five people came out and asked him to stop. They progressively got more aggressive, until one, apparently a doctor, threatened to break the camera and beat Sven up.

On 20 January 2016 freelance photographer Kelvin Williams was severely beaten at a far-right demonstration in Dover. During a lull in the running street battles Kelvin had to run from a group of masked neo-Nazis coming down the street. He tripped and fell — and one attacked his face with a long wooden pole. Kelvin raised his arm to protect himself and it was broken in five places — his "bones were in a mush", said the surgeon at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford.

After a two-and-a-half-hour operation, Kelvin was finally able to give a statement to the police. A racist thug is now serving seven years in prison. Kelvin faces a long recovery with arthritis and the prospect of an elbow joint replacement. He now avoids social media as he could be tracked.

Media organisations require journalists to have a public profile on social media platforms — which exposes them to threats, intimidation and tracking. Women journalists in particular have been targeted by certain groups. For example in June 2016 a far-left group singled our Louise (not her real name) in front of the French Cultural Centre, for her photos appearing in a right-wing online paper. They harassed her by obstructing her movements and vision.

In October 2015, in Paris, writer David Perrotin was covering the French version of the Jewish Defence League protesting in front of the offices of *Agence France Presse*. One protester recognised him, alerted fellow protesters, and David had to seek refuge in the AFP building after being chased and kicked.

It seems that such incidents are likely to increase as tensions rise due to nationalism, racism and economic discrimination. As violence escalates and journalists have to take more risks to get close to their stories, I want to see courses like the Hostile Environment and First Aid Training, which is used primarily for conflict zones, adapted to domestic situations. The union must support freelance members to do these courses. Kelvin Williams told me that any photographer or journalist who had been on that street could have been on the receiving end of those blows.

Photographers in particular have a stark choice: to cover a protest or not to cover. As individuals we have a choice. As journalists, as eyewitnesses to the events and changes in our world — there is no choice!

© Pierre Chukwudi Alozie

*See [www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1710phot2.html](http://www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1710phot2.html) for Pierre's full report.*
Trades Union Concerns

LONDON FREELANCE Branch member Tim Dawson has a regular column in the Freelance online, including reports from gigs he attends in his capacity as NUJ President. See www.londonfreelance.org/president for the complete stories. Here are some highlights:

Trades Union Congress

Tim reports from the recent Trades Union Congress (TUC) conference in Brighton. He looks at the paradox of soaring Labour Party membership figures at a time when union membership continues to decline. He describes TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady as “the movement’s most dependable wit” and brings in evidence her imagining the Cabinet as a disruptive class taking advantage of a hapless supply teacher. Theresa May’s approach to Brexit was “more like a letter to Santa than a negotiating strategy”.

Another highlights of Tim’s report is the Musicians’ Union General Secretary’s description of premonitions of post-Brexit travel abroad for gigs – with a very unusual request from a member that requires a working knowledge of beasts of the Pleistocene epoch. Tim gave a speech to TUC on Qatar, in which “the NUJ has a particular interest because we have a collective agreement with Al Jazeera’s London newsroom, alongside members of Bectu. This is the only collective bargaining agreement that exists with Al Jazeera.” Of course the station is based in and funded by Qatar, which is under pressure from Saudi Arabia and others to silence it – and needs to look to its own human rights record.

Let fairness drive out fakes

Tim surveys the scene of work rights of freelancers and “false free-

The future of copyright (still) in Europe

THE EUROPEAN Union is debating a Directive to make changes to the law on copyright and authors’ rights. It contains some good things, such as a requirement that those who use writers’ and image-makers’ and other creators’ work must account regularly and transparently for how that work is used. The most controversial has been over a proposal that a way must be found to make internet service providers pay newspapers for the “content” they use to attract users and make profits.

Last month the Freelance received a leak of a “compromise position” to be debated at the Council of the European Union. The Council is where EU member states – still including the UK – meet. In parallel, the European Parliament will start debating nearly 1000 amendments to the Draft Directive this month. So this document is only a draft and only an indication of what position one of the institutions of the EU may take – but the Council is where that famous “veto” is exercised.

The good news is that the leaked document makes various rather sensible suggestions for amendment that would, at first glance, make the “transparency” proposals work considerably better.

The worrying part is a suggestion to insist that book publishers should be entitled to a share of Public Lending Right. PLR in the UK is a payment to compensate authors for the loss of sales due to their books being loaned by libraries. It is independent of copyright: for example payment is due to the authors (including illustrators and photographers) even if they assigned copyright to a publisher. Public Lending Remuneration in Ireland is similar.

If book publishers had a right to a share, and unless governments’ PLR budgets were increased to match, if passed it would result in a reduction in authors’ income in many countries, for example Ireland. Many journalists, of course, have work published in books and benefit from PLR payments.

This proposal appears to be a drafting accident and authors’ rights campaigners have hopes that it can be corrected. For some gorier details, including how the equivalent to PLR works in Germany and Austria, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1709copy.html.

On the idea of ensuring that newspaper publishers should get money, the EU Council is not united. One proposal tidies up the earlier plan that press publishers should have a “neighbouring right” – that is, a right that sits alongside authors’ copyright, as does for example the right of a music studio or record company in master tapes. Whether this is workable at all in the face of a monopoly that can simply say “if you say we have to pay to scrape up news headlines we’ll just not index papers’ web sites” – see news.google.es – remains to be seen.

An alternative option instead proposes a “legal presumption” that the newspaper publisher is the person entitled to sue for unauthorised copying of the works contained in the newspaper: “We are still struggling to work out how this would work, if at all.

Does any of this mean anything for journalists in the UK, you may ask, amid the cloud of confusion that is Brexit? If a Directive is finalised before March 2019, current indications are that it will be passed into UK law automatically. Even if that doesn’t happen, it will set the stage for any future legislation in a gloriously isolated UK. Through the European Federation of Journalists your union continues to work to make it as positive as possible.

NUJ vice-president Sian Jones addresses Trades Union Congress on rights for freelances. Photo © Tim Dawson

Useful things online

Imaging Insurance offers all freelances including “Image-makers” (photographers, photo-journalists, video and film makers) and “Writers” (journalists and authors) policies which are tailor-made to your individual needs. These include, crucially, insurance against libel cases and the likes, devised specifically for NUJ members. For details of the policies and how they have improved, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1708insu.html.

And remember that NUJ freelances can get free entries in the most reliable and probably the biggest listing of professional English-language media freelances on www.freelancedirectory.org. And again see the advice at www.londonfreelance.org/feesguide.

President Tim Dawson addresses Trades Union Congress on rights in Qatar. Photo © Pennie Quinton

Changing the world of work for good

Frances O’Grady, the Trades Union Congress general secretary, speaks at the Trades Union Congress.
Time to re-think the re-write

IT’S TIME to re-think the practice of rewriting stories as instant catch-ups. The issue has been brought to a head by Private Eye obtaining a copy of the Daily Mail style guide, which contains the following: “Attribution: The current official guidance is not to attribute quotes to other newspapers unless there is a threat of breach of copyright action, in which case ask for advice.”

It is not, of course, just newspapers that the Mail declines to attribute. Over the summer Australian freelance journalist Ginger Gorman invoiced its Australian website for AUS$2000 after it published rewritten versions of two of her stories, with no perceptible original research. The Mail refused to pay, saying “there’s no copyright in ideas”. This is true, in Australia as it is in the UK.

But is it ethical? And is it harming journalism? In days of yore, all the London papers would send people to King’s Cross station of a night to obtain copies of their rivals’ first editions as they went on the train to oop North. They’d rush back to the office, where some poor schlub would rewrite the juicier stories in the paper’s style and bung them in the second and subsequent editions.

Arguably, this served journalism as a whole well. Someone who wouldn’t read anything less than the Times could still be informed of much of what the Mirror had dug up – and sometimes vice versa. And the BBC news operation has long relied on rewrites for much the same reason.

Now, with all the papers online in one form or another… the practice is equivalent to the distinctly disreputable practice of “spinning”. This refers, not to the dark arts of political persuasion, but to parasitic websites that exist purely to rewrite others’ work, to garner slivers of ad revenue by poaching “hits”.

The results can be amusing, especially when these parasitic sites use auto-spinning software that looks up key words in a thesaurus and bungs in one at random. But they’re not informing anyone of anything.

Ginger Gorman was faced with two choices, as the law stands. She could swallow hard and move on: or she could try to find a very large wodge of cash to ask a court to rule that the Mail’s versions were “substantially similar” to the actual phrasing of her stories.

Others have gone to court. In July, local news website Rochdale Online won a case against the Manchester Evening News, which had used one of its stories without either payment or attribution. The Press Gazette reports that the MEN defence in Small Claims Court was “there is no copyright in news” and since the article was not copied verbatim there was no breach of copyright. The court disagreed and awarded £200 plus £170 fees.

In the same week the Independent declined to pay an invoice – on the same increasingly shaky grounds – for a court report lifted from Wales Online. Four months later it agreed after all to pay a very modest £40 – while continuing to deny that there is any copyright issue.

Back at the Mail, Private Eye also reports that several US titles have blocked anyone using a computer connected via dailymail.co.uk from reading their sites.

What should be done? Online, there is little or no justification for “lifting”. But for copyright to cover facts or ideas remains a terrible idea. Think, for starters, about a world in which you needed the permission of the Moloch Corporation to quote from its annual report. But for it not to cover “spinning” is looking increasingly untenable too. How to do that? Ideas on a postcard, please…

© Mike Holderness
Brexit job discrimination

THE FREELANCE has already encountered one example of an EU national within the Branch who applied for a staff job with a media organisation and who was asked for evidence of their Permanent Residence (PR) status in the UK.

Applications for that status are still a work in progress, as EU nationals had no idea they’d ever need to apply until last summer’s referendum result. Nor do they yet need any evidence of their immigration status – beyond showing an EU passport.

Until the UK formally leaves the EU, its citizens have the same rights to work in the UK as UK citizens: anyone who tries to tell them otherwise is in breach of the (still valid) Treaty of Amsterdam and other EU treaties and Directives.

It isn’t even clear yet what sort of status EU nationals will need to apply for in order to stay in the UK after Brexit. So asking EU citizens about their residence status is – on the face of it – currently unlawful.

UK Minister for Equalities Nick Gibb, responding to a recent Parliamentary Question, has said he will “review” a couple of dozen advertisements that have come to his attention and specify that only UK passport holders can apply for the job – in some cases a job needing a foreign language or travel to the EU.

Other ads offer different terms to EU nationals.

Gibb said the Government Equalities Office was “looking into” these cases and that it sponsors the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which enforces anti-discrimination legislation. The Freelance is making enquiries and hopes to have advice soon for EU nationals on how to respond to discrimination on the basis of their nationality and who to contact. Watch this space.

A recently-leaked Home Office document marked “Draft – official sensitive” proposes that, following Brexit, there will be a two-year “implementation period” – after which freedom of movement “in its current form” will end. In its place it proposes compulsory registration and biometric ID cards for EU nationals resident in the UK, with restrictions on bringing in their spouses. “Non-skilled” EU nationals will become temporary workers on a two-year work permit.

It’s not clear whether journalistic professions will count as “highly skilled” workers who can stay on permits of five years or more.

EU national freelances will be asked for “proof of self-employment” with a “minimum earnings threshold.”

The Guardian reports that there have already been ministerial rows within the UK government over the draft document. It should be stressed that this draft document is marked “subject to negotiation” with the EU, which has already taken a dim view of initial UK “offers” on the status of EU nationals. The European Parliament in particular is preparing to use its power to veto a final EU-UK deal over the issue of citizens’ rights.

COPYWRITING from page 1

Germany, that allows presenters to write really, really big on flipcharts so the people at the back can read what they’ve written in presentations. Most of the efforts were along the lines of “Size matters.”

She unpacked the “work process” for a copywriting gig, from an inquiry to an “initial chat”, after which she will send the client 20 questions, along the lines of “Who are you? How are you different from anybody else?” There follows a “more detailed chat” and offering them a quote, at which point she’ll then invoice the client for 50 per cent, without having written a word.

There follows the draft copy, then revised copy. If they haven’t responded to this in a month, they’ll be invoiced anyway for 25 per cent more.

Then they get the final version with an invoice for the remaining 25 per cent: “as you know, most of the work is at the beginning of the job.”

Average daily rates reported by the ProCopywriters network (www.procopywriters.co.uk) survey are £339 – or £426 in London, “£30 an hour for beginners”, £100 an hour for the very experienced. Jackie charges “by the project” having worked out how many hours will be involved and “how difficult” the client is.

Her course includes “how to find clients”, in a phrase “network hard” at the beginning is her advice. She has free tips at www.jackiebarrrie.com and posts gigs she doesn’t fancy or is too busy to do at facebook.com/groups/copywriterserclub. A member asked whether there is a trade union that organises copywriters. LFB Secretary Phil Sutcliffe noted that the NUJ “does include PRs, and copywriters.”

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© Jackie Berry

Image © Hazel Dunlop

Demonstrators at a pro-EU rally in London in September

Image: © Matt Salusbury

COPYWRITING from page 1

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© Jackie Berry

Image © Hazel Dunlop

Demonstrators at a pro-EU rally in London in September

Image: © Matt Salusbury
Women’s mags, Xmas gathering, new venue!

IT IS JUST possible – depending on where you live – that this newsletter may reach you by post to hit your doormat in time to alert you to the LFB meeting happening on Monday 9 October.

If this is the case, then October’s meeting is on protecting yourself from trauma while covering conflict. Speakers are Gavin Rees, head of the Dart Centre Europe and Molly Clarke, who is head of communications at the Rory Peck Trust.

Thursday 26 October sees an additional meeting for members new to LFB, at the Camera Café in Holborn: for details see page 4.

What's happening to women's magazines, and how well do the new entrants pay? That's provisionally the theme of Monday 13 November’s Branch meeting. Details and speakers are to be confirmed.

The meeting could possibly include a look at the recent surprising rise of independently-produced women’s print “zines”. See below for how to get updates on this meeting as details are finalised.

November’s meeting will be the last LFB monthly gathering to be held at Friends House on Euston Road NW1, opposite Euston Station. Please note the change of venue for LFB gatherings after that.

The LFB get-together on Monday 11 December will be a seasonal end of year networking party. Free food and some free drink will be laid on. The December gathering takes place at what becomes our new venue for meetings: Headland House, 72 Acton Street London WC1X 9NB.

LFB meetings are at the time of writing from 7pm to 9pm at Friends’ House, Euston Road NW1 (opposite Euston Station), which is accessible to people who use wheelchairs, but see elsewhere on this page for details of a change of venue for LFB meetings with effect from December. Start and finish times will remain unchanged after that.

If you need the Branch to pay for care for a child or dependent so you can attend a meeting, call a Branch officer.

For updates on meetings and for confirmation of themes and speakers for forthcoming meetings, see the Branch calendar web page www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings.html and LFB’s Twitter feed www.twitter.com/NUI_LFB

Can members who have difficulty reading the agenda on paper please contact us to get the agenda in electronic form ahead of the meeting?

For etiquette on recording or live-tweeting from LFB meetings, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1507film.html

An introduction to data journalism – and more

THERE MAY still be places available for LFB Training’s very own course in data journalism on Friday 20 October in London. Areas it will cover include understanding data and risk, assessing data quality, surveys, government and open data, combining and manipulating data, graphing and mapping. It’s at the NUJ’s HQ at Headland House, Acton Street, London WC1X 9NB. The cost is £31 to NUJ members. You’ll need to bring a laptop with Microsoft Excel or the free Open Office spreadsheet program installed on it.

To check whether you can still book a place, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1709trait.html – where you’ll also find details of free FEU training courses on the “business side” of being a self-employed professional and more.

The Branch’s banner is deepest red (and black and white and green)

THE LONDON FREELANCE Branch banner – now fitted with more lightweight poles – is available to collect from the Freelance Office at the NUJ HQ at Headland House for outings to NUJ-organised events and picnics. If you propose taking it to other events, please contact the Branch Chairs via www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/contact.html in plenty of time to ask if it’s something to which the Branch is already able to lend its name – or bring a motion to a branch meeting.

Shown below is an authentically archival image of the Branch banner on an outing on the occasion of May Day 2012 as part of our campaign for justice for interns.

Photo © Matt Salusbury

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