

Share their success



From left: Chair Pennie Quinton welcomes Jake Hulyer, Marianne Lehnis and Leo Schick
Photo © Hazel Dunlop

Volunteering with Resonance FM radio led Leo to paid “side hustles or projects” in radio, some of which came to her via a callout from the UK Audio Network email list.

Jake (@jake_hulyer) moved to London to start freelancing some three years ago. He’s now a culture critic, a features writer – alongside consulting, copywriting and PR work.

Jake started out writing features for *Fact* music magazine. Actual music journalism can “pay very badly”. (See examples in the Rate for the Job on page 2.) More profitable

THREE young freelances told February’s London Freelance Branch meeting how they got here and shared their strategies for success.

Marianne Lehnis told how much work comes her way from attending conferences (on Twitter she’s @MarianneLehnis). She recommends talking to everyone everywhere you go, whether in your beat or not. At one such tech conference an editor told her, “Go home and send me six feature ideas tonight.” She interviewed conference-goers then and there, wrote these up and emailed them that night to the editor. She got a regular contributor gig on a niche magazine for “disruptors” that was “very bad at paying” before it “closed down owing me about £3000” – an example, she says, of why it’s good to be an NUJ member.

But Marianne “didn’t feel as bitter as I should, because it got me a lot of work”, some via a tech editors’ Facebook group, which in turn led to work on an investigative YouTube channel on bitcoin scams. She pitched the story about a large-scale bitcoin investment company that scammed people all over the world, researched the backstory and laid

the groundwork for the wider investigative project.

She advises covering “a fairly complicated niche area” – re-insurance is one of hers. In any beat there are always newly-emerging, unusual niche opportunities for which publications are searching. Look for these.

Leo Schick (@Leo_Sheek) is a video producer mainly for Associated Press (AP). “I like to do a lot of different things so freelancing is for me,” she says. Leo had “quite a few careers” before completing a Masters in Investigative Journalism at City, University of London – she trained as teacher and was a website content manager and librarian.

Leo came to AP as global news intern for three months, including work in the text department. (Yes, paid.) AP have proved “very flexible” and she’s always needed for their 11-hour video production shifts.

Leo has also recently worked at the “intersection of NGOs and journalism”. Her work has including a Niger Delta data gig, comparing what the Nigerian Government statistics said about emissions with satellite mapping showing hot spots pointing to where the gas is being burned.

“side hustles” in Jake’s chosen field include indy music labels paying around £150-200 for press releases of 1500 words, or for festivals £200-250 for longer press releases taking “half a day”.

Then there are the much more lucrative copywriting rates for a major label – and, even more so, work consulting for brand strategists. Rum distillers wanted to “have a thing at a festival” for example. Apple Music needs descriptions written for their play lists, plus there’s the “solid work” of transcribing lectures by DJs at the Red Bull music academy.

Jake’s now “trying to do more features writing”. One gig led to “research into bird smuggling legislation” in the British Library. After the best part of a year from commission to publication, he earned £2500 for 5000 words for a *Guardian* Long Read – he’s heard they pay four grand for more experienced writers.

He’s also written features for *Wired*, more recently for *FT* Weekend, who “kind of pay OK but (are) kind of a lot of work”. The “ratio of specialism and diversification” is “always really difficult”.

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Copyright battle heats up in Brussels

THE BATTLE over the European Union’s plan to strengthen copyright in some ways is, of course, heating up. **The NUJ issued a statement saying the Directive “makes a mockery of journalists’ authors’ rights” after late and unclear changes cast doubt on which journalists could get a share of any income newspapers get from the likes of Google News (see**

www.bit.ly/2SUImsf). Here the President of the European Federation of Journalists sets out the benefits that could come from the rest of the Directive – if the European Parliament passes it in late March or early April.

AFTER FOUR years’ preparation, negotiation and intense lobbying, European Union institutions on 13 February agreed the wording of a proposed Directive on Copyright

in the Digital Single Market. This addresses the challenges of the lack of remuneration for authors from the high-tech platforms. It is high time that we get the tools we need to license work protected by authors’ rights when it is used by news aggregators, social media corporations and other platforms provided by the high-tech companies.

The new proposal introduces the principle of an appropriate and

COPYRIGHT to page 5

LFB meetings
8 April at 6.45pm
Issues in reporting on street protests
13 May at 6.45pm
Making money in specialist fields

See back page & @NUJ_LFB