


Episode 136: An In The Know farewell with Cole Bursch

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For the last episode of the semester, producer Kaylie Sirovy invites the graduating A&E editor Cole Bursch to sit down and look back on his time at The Daily.

KAYLIE SIROVY: Hey everybody, this is Kaylie Sirovy from the Minnesota Daily, and you're tuning into In The Know, a podcast dedicated to the University of Minnesota. Today's episode is a bittersweet one, as we bid farewell to a friend and colleague. Our guest today is Cole Bursch, the talented A&E editor.

COLE BURSCH: Hey everybody.

SIROVY: Cole, it's wonderful to have you on the show today. How are you feeling as you embark on this new chapter in your life?

BURSCH: Yeah, I feel pretty good. Stressed with finals and stuff, but it's been a really fun fall too. You know, we went to Atlanta. I feel like we've all bonded a lot, especially the editors. So yeah, it was definitely bittersweet.

SIROVY: We learned a lot on that trip.

BURSCH: We did indeed. Yeah.

SIROVY: I saw you guys like sleep deprived.

BURSCH: Yeah, just, we had to become closer by circumstantial happenings, just with not sleeping and being dumb college students, so.

SIROVY: No, well, I was sleeping. You guys were awake.

BURSCH: Oh, yeah, no, I wasn't talking about you. You were being very responsible, and I mean, we were too, but it was just, yeah.

SIROVY: It was a good time. So let's take a trip down memory lane first. Can you share some highlights from your time as the editor or as the reporter?

BURSCH: Yeah, I'll probably go back to the beginning first because so some of my favorite memories were when I was a reporter so I wrote like a freelance review in December 2022 and then the former A&E editor James was like you should just be a writer and I was like, okay. We'll see how that goes. And that semester, so last winter semester was like the hardest semester of my college career because it was taken like all higher level classes.

But I was also, you know, being a reporter for the first time, like at a pre professional organization. So, very stressful, but super fun and my favorite story was this one I did on Caleb Wright. He's like a local music producer. Produced for Hippocampus, Milo, if you know who that is. And a lot of other people, too, like Samia. Yeah, she's like real big, like The Current is always doing stuff on her. She's from Brooklyn, but anyways, I got to interview him and he was just like super down to earth, cool guy.

He was like holding his baby while he was talking to me on the phone and through the interview process I kind of uncovered some personal stuff that he ended up sharing with me and it just made the story a lot better. And I don't know. It was just really cool for me because I grew up, when I was in high school, that was like when Hippocampus was first getting big and I've also listened to some other bands. He's been in through the years. So yeah, that was a big highlight for me.

SIROVY: Yeah, I remember when I was in middle school, my brother was in high school. And so he made me listen to hippocampus.

BURSCH: Yeah, it was a crazy time, high school.

SIROVY: Yep, sure was. So, how'd you then move as a reporter into an editor?

BURSCH: Yeah, so I think it was very like informal process at that time. James was, he was graduating and he kind of just was like, if anyone's interested, and I was like, well, I don't know. I'll give it a shot. Yeah, I ended up being the only one who's interested. And so I guess that's like how I got it. But no, yeah, that was pretty special. And then, yeah, from there, the summer was a lot more chill. I was, I think it was a little bit of like a deceptive in terms of how much work we are actually going to be doing because I don't know, I think when you're not doing school this job can feel pretty easy, but you know balancing the student life and being an editor is a lot more hard. So

SIROVY: It's tough, let me tell you. I first started as an editor this summer Yeah, I had it was just working and I was like and then school started and I was like, oh no.

BURSCH: Yes. Yes, and this is my last semester obviously too. So I'm just been like, yeah, I don't know, because I like doing Daily stuff more than that, sorry to all my professors right now, but I like it. I like it more than I like doing The Daily more than going to class and doing that stuff just because it feels more like what I want to do with the rest of my career. So, it's easy to just like pour myself into The Daily and then like forget about my responsibilities as a student. But yeah. It's been a fun ride this fall, for sure.

SIROVY: No, I totally understand that. I'm like, I just want to work on my little podcast. Yeah. I don't want to do assignments. That's boring.

BURSCH: Yeah, I don't want to do a two point assignment that, you know, is going to take me an hour and a half for some reason.

SIROVY: And it'll be graded two weeks late. What have been some of your favorite stories that you've either made or your reporters have made?

BURSCH: So I've written a few stories this fall too, even though I'm the editor and one of them that I got to do was on dial tone. They're like a local band, but they're also students. They're like all honor students, which is crazy. And I think the article turned out really good, but just the process of doing the reporting for that story was like super rewarding. Like I just kind of, I got to sit in their room where they recorded all of the music for their first album.

SIROVY: That's super cool.

BURSCH: By themselves. It was like a closet like they were like, that's where we've recorded the album and that was super cool. And they were just really kind, generous people. So, that was awesome and super talented, too, check Dial Tone out if you've never heard of them. But I mean all my writers right now are super talented so it's like kind of hard to choose a specific story.

I really liked, I know this isn't like a, it wasn't like a lot of reporting that went into this, but Alexis hadn't really, Alexis Letang is one of my writers and she hadn't really done like a movie review before. And she did this like really beautiful review on the new Priscilla Presley like biopic.

Yeah, and that was really cool, cause I'm like a super big fan of that director, and to like have somebody else do that story was really cool, cause she just noticed things that I didn't even notice when I went to go see it for myself, cause I just like that director, Sofia Coppola, a lot.

So, that was awesome. Ethan Lambert, one of my other writers, he's done some great stories, um, he gets a lot of like cool access with different artists, so he did, I'm totally going to butcher the name of this band because I don't know them. I think it's Brian Jonestown

Massacre or Jamestown Massacre, but he got an interview with the lead singer of that band. And the guy was just like super eccentric, so it was like, it was really, it was really crazy. He like swore a whole bunch.

SIROVY: Oh my goodness.

BURSCH: Just was a goofball. So, um, yeah, that interview by Ethan was really cool. And yeah, Max, I can't think of a specific story from my other writer, Max Mueller, but he always has like interesting ideas.

He's done some cool stories on like the interaction between like technology and art. So he did like a cool one on. Artificial intelligence and

SIROVY: Yeah, I read that one. That was really cool.

BURSCH: AI influence on music and how it's like completely changing the music industry so yeah, just a lot of different weird and eccentric ideas I guess.

SIROVY: That's what you guys can do at A&E though.

BURSCH: Yeah, it's the fun desk.

SIROVY: This is kind of like a basic question, but are there.

BURSCH: We like basic here.

SIROVY: Do we?

BURSCH: Yes.

SIROVY: Were there any stories that were really hard to either come up with or get like sources for or whatnot?

BURSCH: That's a great question. Well, yeah, no, I forgot about that one. This is one I wrote when I was a reporter last winter. So, I got to interview one of my favorite comedians, Sam Morril. And that process was like super complicated because he's like a big comedy name like he sells out theaters. So, I'd never like interacted with someone like very serious publicist. And she was like very generous and kind. But that process took like a month and a half of pre-reporting and emailing back and forth, like trying to find a date where he could get on the phone with me. And then like, I didn't even get to like, I didn't like get this guy, this comedian's number.

She like called me and then like transferred me to his phone and it was like really odd and a new experience for me as a reporter. But that was like super cool. He ended up just being like really personable and I took a lot of the things he said in the interview out because he

was just making jokes that were like super inappropriate and funny and like talking about, yeah, anyways, but then we ended up just talking about like basketball, too because he's a big basketball fan and he was like talking to me about the Timberwolves, which was really cool. So yeah, but that was like a hard process to get to the interview and then like super rewarding and I was like, oh, I'm so glad that I took all that time to do the reporting because it turned out really cool, so.

SIROVY: Those are the best kind of stories though.

BURSCH: Yeah, exactly.

SIROVY: The ones that take like the longest I think are always like, there's so much more behind it.

BURSCH: Yeah, so much more depth too. You're just like, wow. He asked me to get a drink.

SIROVY: Did you?

BURSCH: Yeah, no. I don't know, I'm not, I was, I DM'd him like the night of the show because I went to the show too, but he never responded, so. Oh. If you're out there, Sam, I'll still get a drink with you someday.

SIROVY: So, in what ways do you feel you've grown both personally and professionally during your time here?

BURSCH: Great question. Yeah, professionally, I feel like I didn't know how to actually be a reporter like I had done a lot of interviews, but when you're writing like three stories every two weeks, which is the quota for a lot of like just staff writers at The Daily.

That's a lot of reporting and a lot of things that you have to just do like ahead of time. So like, even though that story with Sam [Morril] might have been like one of the longest reporting processes I had. It was like pretty normal for me to do reporting like two or three weeks in advance.

And you know, that taught me a lot about like just how much you have to be on top of your shit basically to be a good reporter. And then when I became an editor, like I was, I would say I was okay editing my own writing, but then like it a completely different set of skills that I kind of had to learn on the fly when I became the editor, too.

And now I feel like I'm better at editing my own writing and recognizing what good writing is too. So, that's all been like the professional stuff, I guess. But personally. I don't know. I feel like I, well, cause I transferred here, so I didn't really have a lot of friends at the university or anything. And that's been kind of meaningful to me.

Like the connections that I've made. The connections I've made here, like since, especially this fall, like when we all went to Atlanta, like we, like I was saying earlier, we all kind of became better friends, I think.

SIROVY: I would all call you my good friends at this moment.

BURSCH: Yes. Yes. Totally. Much love to the homies at the Daily. Definitely. But, so that's been super rewarding and also just learned a lot about like work-life balance cause in the future like if I'm working a journalism job, like I'm not gonna be, you know, doing six other side projects like I currently am in my life, so.

SIROVY: Yep. Yep. No, I totally get what you mean though, cause I was also just, I wouldn't say thrown into being an editor. I knew what I was getting into.

BURSCH: Well, did you?

SIROVY: I knew what I was supposed to do.

BURSCH: Yes, yes.

SIROVY: I just didn't really know how to start, but I totally know what you mean about like that work-life balance. And especially like editing your own stuff, cause my stuff doesn't go through copy edits. So I am the one that is editing everything.

BURSCH: Yeah. That's a lot.

SIROVY: Yeah. So, cause it's kind of hard to copy edit when it's people's voices.

BURSCH: Yeah. Totally.

SIROVY: You can't change a whole lot.

BURSCH: Yeah. Exactly. I felt similar to that like when I've written, I think there's two stories this fall, but like balancing the editing, you know, on a given week I have like six or seven stories I'm editing from all the writers on the desk. And then having to then comb through mine and write a story. I was like, I'm glad I'm not doing this every week. This would be crazy.

SIROVY: Yeah, it can get a lot sometimes, but yeah, I don't know.

BURSCH: It's all worth it I think.

SIROVY: I love putting out the stories. I love reading your stories and you started the newsletter.

BURSCH: Oh yeah, true. I forgot about that.

SIROVY: How has that been going? I've been reading them every week.

BURSCH: Oh, thank you. No, that's been also super rewarding because it kind of started out just like as a brainstorm and it took a while to get off the ground like we didn't really start until like October just because everything was so busy and we were going back in person, which has also been a big part of, I think everyone's closer now here at The Daily, which is cool because of that. But yeah, it was just a lot of brainstorming between Alex Steil and also Theo, the sports editor, cause he started his own newsletter too, shout out to the rouser.

But um, yeah, no, it's been fun. And I feel a little disconnected from like the impact of it. It was cool though like my roommate's little sister is like a sophomore something at the U and she was like, oh I've been reading your newsletter. I was like, what the heck is this person?

SIROVY: People actually read it? What.

BURSCH: I just thought I was just going out into the void, but yeah, no, so that it's been cool to like get positive feedback about it and have kind of like something that I can have as my own because I like write a little blurb, you know, but then I also like add like my song of the week.

So, that's been fun. I've just been coming up with goofy songs. I'm like, I hope this isn't okay, some of them. I'm like if the editor in chief listen to this song, I don't know if you'd be thrilled with me having it as the song of the week, but I don't give a crap.

SIROVY: Oh, it'd be fine. I feel like Maddie would appreciate it though.

BURSCH: Just like a Migos song. Just like trap music. I'm like this is you guys everyone should be listening to this.

SIROVY: Everyone, yeah I love reading your newsletters, I love reading Theo's newsletters, and the one that Maddie and Alex put out.

BURSCH: Yeah, that one's good too.

SIROVY: I didn't really read the newsletter during the summer, but then I started reading it during the fall and I was like, I've been missing out on some stuff.

BURSCH: Yeah, no, there's some goofy little snippets and anecdotes from Maddie and Alex too on their newsletter.

SIROVY: I love hearing what you guys are up to.

Yeah. It's fun. Just goofy. So, um. Life. Just life. There was, there was one, I think it was the week of Thanksgiving. Theo put out one, and I thought it was incredible. He's like, he was talking about, like, the Thanksgiving leftovers. Mmm. But in terms of like the reporters. It was really interesting. I was like, how did you come up with that?

BURSCH: Interesting. Yeah tells you how great of a friend I am because I have not read one of his newsletters but.

SIROVY: You haven't? You guys put these out together.

BURSCH: I hope he finds out by listening to your podcast that I haven't listened to or read any of his newsletters, but now I feel like I have to go do it since I've said this publicly.

SIROVY: Well how public is it? I don't know.

BURSCH: Millions of listeners out there.

SIROVY: I'm like, yeah. What are your plans for graduation, after graduation, or do you have any?

BURSCH: Yeah, right now I'm like, I don't know, I've been telling a lot of people this which is just like funny, since I'm working at like a really prestigious student newspaper.

But I don't know, I might just go into like social media marketing or something like sell my soul to corporate America, which is totally okay with me. I just want to make a little bit more money right now. I've like worked like two or three jobs like all of the years I've been doing college. So, I'm pretty ready for like a change of pace like a steady job and like just kind of chilling out on the like customer service, food service work which, you know, I have a lot of love for, but it's not for me anymore. I'm getting too old.

SIROVY: I was a retail worker during the summers. It's not for me anymore. I don't want to go back.

BURSCH: You know, and shout out to all those people like hope you can unionize and hope everyone gets better pay. But yeah, it's not for me at the moment, so yeah, I'll probably go towards something like that. I mean, I'm always going to keep writing though, so we'll see. I've just been kind of trying to get through to graduation low key, so I don't have like a set plan at the moment, but I'm kind of, yeah, I'm kind of okay with that though. I'm like, yeah, I've just been focusing.

SIROVY: It's especially since you're graduating, got to make sure that you actually graduate.

BURSCH: Yep. Yep. That is the plan.

SIROVY: That is the plan. Um, so your major, is it, is it just journalism?

BURSCHE: Yeah, it's just journalism. Just journalism.

SIROVY: Okay, that's not what I meant because some people have double majors and then they add different stuff. I know what you meant.

BURSCHE: I'm just giving you a hard time.

SIROVY: No, I know. Do you have any advice for either your reporters or future journalists?

BURSCHE: Yeah, well, I don't know. Try to get as many published clips as possible if you're thinking about being a journalist because that's like how you become a journalist is having real work out in the world. You can't just like, I don't know, I've met people who even are like in the Hubbard school and they just like, maybe they do an internship their senior year where they get some published clips, but that's all or they don't.

And they just graduate and they don't have any published clips and it's like totally fine because like I said, I'm not even sure if I'm gonna go straight into journalism. So, it's like whatever, but if you really want to be a published writer, I think you just have to continually try to get on some type of you know published website that has credibility.

SIROVY: Or make your own.

BURSCHE: Exactly. Yeah, I mean you can you can do that too. You could start a blog. Just publish your work y'all. Yeah, I guess the other big piece of advice I have is don't overextend yourself. I've done that so many semesters where I'm just like working way too many hours at another job while being a full time student or vice versa and you know, sometimes I took a long path to graduate college like I'm 24, so yeah, take your time with college like there's no rush.

I think that's a such a misconception about like yeah, well no not a misconception but like a cultural norm in America for sure where you're like, you have to figure out your whole life and your career by the time you're 23 and it's like, that's just not real.

SIROVY: And you have to start when you're 18.

BURSCHE: Yeah, no, like I don't, if I was doing the same things that I was doing when I was 18, I mean, I might be in like a federal prison. Like I'm joking, but I'm glad that I'm completely on a different path. And so I don't know, just take your time. The college is really expensive too. So, you know, yeah. Some people just need to take it slower and I support all those people out there. Oh I think the other thing I was gonna say too is if you're if you're trying to be a great writer to like cause my goal is to like someday maybe write a book or something like that, but I'm just like not super in a rush to figure that out because a lot of the greatest

writers of all time were like in their 40s when they got their big work. You know, their big break or whatever like commercial success like sometimes you just need to live life to be a good writer so, don't put too much pressure on yourself, everybody.

SIROVY: Words of wisdom, indeed. Are you gonna miss the daily?

BURSCH: Am I gonna miss the daily? Hell yeah.

SIROVY: What are some things you might miss most about being either a reporter or an editor?

BURSCH: Causing trouble at weekaheads with Spencer and Noah, shout out Spencer White and Noah Mitchell.

SIROVY: They were definitely chaos at times. Oh my goodness, the stuff I learned.

BURSCH: Was Noah the one who was describing, no, he was doing that to somebody else, but yeah, Noah's so funny. Yeah, we would just start talking about the most random sub like cultures things. I think one time we had like a 35 minute debate on the greatest late night host of all time, which is obviously Conan, so.

SIROVY: I remember that, yep.

BURSCH: If you disagree with me, you're wrong.

SIROVY: As I watch Stephen Colbert.

BURSCH: Hey, now Stephen's alright.

SIROVY: And I saw Trevor Noah at a show this past November.

BURSCH: Oh, cool. Like a comedy show? You went to a Trevor Noah show? Oh, that's sweet. Yeah, wonder what he's gonna do next. We'll see. Yeah. The Daily Show's doomed, though. Hot takes from Cole.

SIROVY: Hot takes from Cole. We should have done that earlier. I would have loved to have a whole conversation with you guys about that.

BURSCH: Yeah, just get Spencer and Noah and I here, we'd probably like get banned from campus or something.

SIROVY: Alex would probably have a few things to say.

BURSCH: Yeah, Alex, yeah, Alex might do, yeah.

SIROVY: Um, but, yeah before we wrap up, is there anything you'd like to share with our listeners?

BURSCH: Yeah, I mean, subscribe to the scene. I'm pretty sure the next editor, Alexis, she's gonna be doing the newsletter still for A& E, so I'm sure there'll be a lot of cool things in there and I think it's like an easier way to kinda keep up with local arts news than necessarily you know, I don't always have time to go to a website and like click on the arts and entertainment section and just sit there and read articles. So, I think the newsletter is a sweet way to do that. But other than that, I don't know. Peace and love, yeah.

SIROVY: Peace and love. We'll certainly be keeping an eye out for any of your future work that you do.

BURSCH: Oh, thank you.

SIROVY: Yeah, of course.

BURSCH: We'll see.

SIROVY: You're gonna do it and it's gonna be great.

BURSCH: I might become an investment banker or something.

SIROVY: Don't do that. Don't.

BURSCH: Sell my soul completely.

SIROVY: You're so much better than that.

BURSCH: Yeah, I'm not going to do that. I'd be so sad.

SIROVY: It would be a complete end of the spectrum if you did. You started as an A& E editor, ended as an investment banker.

BURSCH: I don't even know what an investment banker is. I just said that.

SIROVY: Soulless corporate job.

BURSCH: Yeah. That Wall Street. No, I'm not gonna do that.

SIROVY: No, don't do that.

BURSCH: Don't worry, everybody,

SIROVY: Don't worry. It's all good. Thank you for your dedication, creativity, and incredible impact you've had as an editor. It's been really great to get to know you and we wish you all the best on your new adventures.

BURSCH: Well, thank you very much, Kaylie.

SIROVY: You're so welcome. As always we really appreciate you guys tuning in. Feel free to email us with comments or questions at podcasting@mndaily.com. I'm Kaylie.

BURSCH: And I'm Cole.

SIROVY: And this is In The Know.