

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Welcome to It's All Journalism. I'm Megan Cloherty joined by Mike O'Connell and our guest producer today, Sean McCalley. And we are here today with Clinton Yates.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Hello.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Hello.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

So, a newspaper shoved in between the seats and kicking around the floor of the Metro transit system is a pretty common site, but nine times out of 10, at least in my experience, it's the Washington Post Express [<http://www.readexpress.com>]. Clinton, you are the editor or one of the editors of the Express --

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I'm the local news editor.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Local news editor. OK. You're also a host for the podcast, The Three Wise Men [<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-3-wise-men-show/id502208923>]. You contribute to The Washington Post [<http://www.washingtonpost.com/regional>] in the national forum, and you're also a columnist for the The Root DC [http://www.washingtonpost.com/therootdc/2010/07/08/glQAYvN88I_page.html], so you're obviously produced a lot of content on a lot of different mediums. But before we start, how did you get involved in journalism? When did you decide that you wanted to become a journalist?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I got involved in journalism when, my first year of college I went to New York University. I was at the business school there and I hated it. I ended up leaving. It was actually a relatively, I won't say traumatic experience, but it was kind of a bummer. And, you know, I stayed home, I lived at home for a year, I worked at a bank and I read the newspaper and I listened to the radio all day.

And when I went back to college, my dad said, "You know, you might want to consider pursuing what you did the entire time you spent when you were not in school." So I did that. I went back to college, I went to Miami of Ohio, I worked for the newspaper there. I worked in radio. Left school and ended up doing radio in Cincinnati for a while, sports radio, rock radio. And then, came back home, applied for a job and got one. And the next thing I knew, I was local news editor at Express. And everything else just sort of came naturally.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

So did the jobs, did they just flow based on your experience or did you find a certain format, medium that you preferred and pursued that actively?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Well, I started in sports, because that was my natural interest. In fact, the way I landed my first internship with the George Michael Sports Machine [at] the old WRC-4 [in Washington, D.C.] Loved George, the late, great ... was I just sort of just bum rushed Tony Kornheiser at his radio show when they did it at the old ESPN Zone.

I had a bunch of my college columns and it was the kind of thing you can't do anymore. I mean, this was the early 2000s, and this was when the PTI show was still very much in its infancy. And he said "Oh, it's nice to meet you. Glad to meet someone who's interested in the business. Why don't you come down and meet [Washington Post Sports Columnist Michael] Wilbon?" I was like "You kidding me? Of course."

So the next thing I know I'm down there, hanging out, and so forth, just built a rapport with those guys. Mike liked me so he landed me an internship with George. And that just sort of went from there, and I did my best to build everything as best I could.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Would you say you were a beginning journalist at that point?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah, I mean, I might have written a few articles for my high school newspaper, but I didn't care about that. I played sports in high school, so I wasn't really that interested in it until I got to Miami of Ohio and there, it was a great outlet. Being able to write about something, even if it's a small school, it doesn't really matter. It's just something to be able to write about and it gives you an opportunity to do things and it was great.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Anybody who knows the late George Michael knows he was very intense.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Ran a very tight ship. How do you go from doing sports, which obviously was your first love, to transitioning to local news?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Well, it was obvious after a while that there was a big dearth in the coverage gap for a lot of the District. With the whole gentrification situations and the whole sort of rebirth, "rebirth" is probably a loaded word, so if you get offended by that, pardon me.

But the change of the city from what was effectively the crack era when I grew up, the Anthony Williams era when things sort of started to change financially for the way the city was, to now, there was a hole in the coverage in what people really remembered about the city and a lot of D.C. natives just weren't here.

It's always been a very transient place, but we're finally into the area where people were born and grew up in the neighborhood, not neighborhood, area and these neighborhoods, are staying because they want to. Not because they have to or because of some other thing. The local component to what is happening in D.C. has grown drastically.

When I started at Express in '07 it was clear that something needed to be done there in terms of looking more at what has been changing and where we are now. It's worked out pretty well.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Just you personally, I mean, you're from the area. You've grown up here. You know it very, very well.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I went to school down the street from here.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

There you go.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Where'd you go to high school?

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Washington International School [<http://www.wis.edu>] on Macomb Street.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Nice, very close.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

So for me, like, I'm from Northern Virginia, and I didn't really know D.C. growing up because I was too young to get out here. So, when I come to D.C. and I try to learn more about the city, it's sort of tough because I don't know where to start, where to go. Do you not have that same limitation because you know all the streets, you know all the neighborhoods?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I mean, knowing the streets isn't really what it's about. To me it's, I have a lot of family. My dad is ninth of 10 kids, most of which ended up in the D.C. area. They moved here

from North Carolina when he was 10. We're talking pre-Brown vs. Board of Education, so like pre-White Flight and all of that. It was a completely different D.C. It was segregated legitimately, and, so a lot of my family has been here for many, many generations.

So the D.C. I know and I've learned growing up, you know it's not just sort of upper Northwest. It's not just Northeast. It's not just Southeast. It's all over the place, it's the suburbs, it's all that. And going to school at a private school, you have friends that don't all just live in your neighborhood. You get around, so I just had a lucky experience between going to school and having a big family that allowed me to experience a lot of different things across a big socioeconomic range and that's just me now.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

So how does that inform your journalism, the way you report the city?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

A lot, because a lot of people tend to take things from the standpoint of what they know, which makes sense. But like I just mentioned, I was lucky enough to know a lot of things. I mean, when I was a kid I rode the bus with my grandmother's favorite daughter which was my Aunt Nell. She lived in Naylor Gardens for years and, pardon me to all the rest of my aunts, but that's what it was at least in my eyes.

And I used to just ride the bus to her as a kid over summers, you know. My parents were divorced and a lot of times I would spend a lot of time with other family members who could spend time with me. A lot of riding the bus around Northeast and Southeast just, with, effectively, an old lady, you know what I mean? Learning about the city and my late Uncle Johnny as well. He was a cab driver for 40 years in D.C. First for Capital Cab and then for Yellow Cab. Again, I would spend a lot of time just riding around in his front seat. He ended up lived in Temple Hills, sorry, Oxen Hill after moving from Congress Heights. It's just what you do, spending time with your family, spending time with you friends and you end up learning a lot.

And to get back to your question, therefore, you have to remember that stuff. That's sort of what the point is. If you don't remember what it is that you know, there's no real point in reporting. At least not to me. It's not just to me about walking into a room, hearing what someone says and writing it down. It's a lot more than that. And if you can't do that, there's really, to me, no point in doing it at all. Especially, if you're going to be reporting in your home town. That's the whole advantage that you have being from here. You know things that have happened before you walked into the room.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Being involved with the Post, which brings in journalists from all over the country, do you see that as an advantage to what you're doing?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I would think so. I don't know that it's an advantage necessarily in terms of the strict professional sense. But for what I'm trying to do, it helps me. I wouldn't be able to do the type of coverage that I do in any other place, because I haven't lived in any other place. I wasn't born and raised in any other place.

Advantage I think is a matter of what the reader likes. But for me, I just think it has allowed me to express myself creatively and professionally kind of at the same time. Which is something a lot of journalists don't necessarily have the opportunity to do. So I'm very lucky for that.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

So in 2007, when you started on at the Post, and you obviously have this lifetime of experience in this city, how do you then say, "So I'm the new guy, but I have all this experience." How do you translate that into a new job. We want to give people some tips, basically. If you're starting out, and you know something, and story ideas, how do you get started?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

It depends. What I would say, first of all, and I've said this before in different interviews, is write what you know and write what interests you. Because if it doesn't interest to you, it's not going to be interesting to anybody reading it, or anybody watching it or anybody listening to it.

If there's something that you know, I mean if you grew up in, let's say, Southwest, and the marina is the only thing you know there's no reason you can't write for that, about that for an extended period of time, until somebody takes that and translates it to what something else it could be.

That's always my advice to young journalists, is write about what you care about and what you think you are going to know the most about. Because if you're not willing to learn about whatever your beat is or whatever your coverage zone is, outside of what you have to do for your job, you're not going to be very good at it. And that's sort of the blessing and the curse of the journalist is that you have to take it home, or else it's not going to translate in the way it needs to in order to be effective I think for your audience.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Now if we could just back up just a little bit, for people that don't know, how does the Washington Post Express work? What is it? What is the audience that you're trying to reach? How is it distributed?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

It's a subsidiary of the Washington Post, and it is a free daily that is distributed on the Metro. And by on the Metro, I mean we have hawkers that are outside of different stations. There's a certain amount of stations that we're not, by law, allowed to hawk at. I want to say the airport, and I want to say the Pentagon might be one of those. But oth-

erwise we have stands around downtown, and it's designed for the reader that's on the go. You're supposed to be able to get all your news in a 20 to 30 minutes span, which is the average commute on the train, and that's pretty much it. It's designed for people that are on the go, on the commute.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Like original mobile journalism.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Pretty much.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

So when you write something, when you edit something, when you plan on the stories that you're doing, who is in your head? Who is that person that's reading it? What do you see them as?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

That's the hard part.

When you're covering the city that you grew up in, there's a certain amount that you know is important, that is to you or that you feel is going to be to a lot of people that you know, or that you feel is going to be of interest to a lot of people that you don't know.

But, trying to find that blend is sort of the hard part and that's an algorithm that I'll never be able to write down or put into any sort of building blocks. It's just something that, on a day-to-day basis and on a longer term of sort of story arc of what I've been doing, you just have to fit in.

I mean, there're some times when the governor's race in Virginia is going to be a lot more important than the Starbucks that closed up the street, but there are some times when it won't be. And you just have to find a way to pay attention enough such that you can understand in what places things become more important.

That's really what the job of an editor is, outside of correcting the grammar of each thing that is written or writing headlines or captions or cutlines or what have you. But that being able to sort of understand how the stories rotate and what's more important is, I wish I could say I more about why certain things matter more, but I can't. It's just a matter of understanding the news cycle as best you can.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

And sometimes it's just you get a feeling and you're weighing two or three different stories that you've ...

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Basically. Sometimes I will look at things that are more popular on social networks or are getting more Web hits or have more things written about them. But other times, you'll take that and look at the opposite way. You'll say, "Hey, you know what? There's one person writing about this, although I consider it to be hugely important, because if this person is writing about it or if this picture doesn't exist in print form, or what have you, nobody's going to know. And that's more harmful than reproducing the thing that everybody's going to know about through some other medium.

So, it's delicate balance. Like I said, that's the hard part I take very, very seriously as an editor, because, you know, people read this stuff and you got to make sure that you're giving them what they need to know as well as what they want to know.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Does that approach change when you go to The Washington Post or you write columns for The Root?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Sort of. For the newsletter, Lunch Line, which is five days a week, which is basically an aggregation of different Post stories as well as other things that I've added, it does change a little bit. I try to put in a lot more of my personal experience there, because it's, after all, a newsletter and that's sort of the whole appeal in some minds, is that there's a personality. I don't mean that I talk about myself in the third person. People like, because there are no other newsletters that do this as well, but people like to hear something about, you know, your life. That's sort of the fun part on a certain level.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

It draws them in.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

It does change in that regard. When I write columns for the Post or The Root, it depends on the topic. It really matters what the topic is. If it's something that is very personal to me, yes, I will put myself in the story as a columnist. But, if it's something that I think requires a lot of outside understanding about something that I know and I respect and I like, but I haven't specifically, personally experienced myself, the tone of the column will change.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Tell me about The Root. How would you describe that to somebody?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

The Root DC is a blog that is housed at The Washington Post that is basically designed to highlight the experiences of people of color, particularly black people inside the D.C. area and outside. It tackles issues of, not just race, but issues of sort of socio-economic things, different issues. I'll use a phrase that some people use, but I don't necessarily hugely like to say myself, but "Our Stories," in terms of "Our" being "black people."

That's idea. I mean, obviously, we're not living in separate nations. Some people would argue that. But there are different things that matter to different people in different ways, and that's one of the things The Root tries to highlight in order to get a little bit more exposure to things that mainstream America, aka "White America," might not necessarily as be attuned to.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

You have a really unique position because you have this editor role. You have a blog where you can kind of put your own personal thoughts into it.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

You wear a lot of different hats. At the end of the day, do you have a favorite? Do you have somewhere where you think you're career is going, like one way or the other? Or do you like having all of these different roles."

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Honestly, talking in front of a microphone is my favorite thing to do. Radio was my first sort of love. That's how I kind of got into the business. I wasn't a print journalism major in college. I was a comm major and I liked radio the most.

But, that aside, what I like to do is to be able to show something that people have either kind of forgotten about or don't really know about or wouldn't ever have known about. So, I don't know that I can say that I like one more than the other because they all exist. If the newsletter was taken away from me, I'd probably be like, "Damn, I really miss writing Lunch Line" But if I stop writing columns, I'd be like, "Man, I really want to do more on this." Or, if I wasn't editing the paper every day, it would kind of be like, "Oh man, I can think of a headline for that story that would make a lot of sense."

At this point, where it is, I don't know that I can hugely visualize myself not doing one of the three, including the podcast, which is The Three Wise Men Show with my buddies, which is totally having fun. There's a lot of outlets and I'm grateful and I'm blessed for that, but I don't know that I could say that I have a favorite at this point because, without one, I'd feel probably feel the same about one that was missing."

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Or you'd start a new one.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Right.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

As part of that extension, though, when you put on those different hats you're also jumping platforms, going from radio/audio to multimedia to straight up print. So, you're switching up your craft. Is there a particular way you like to produce more than others, or how did you end up, I guess to further along that question, how did you get to the point where you could just fluidly switch?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

That's something I'd tell young journalists as well. You talk about trying to get in the business and where you are doesn't matter, but being able to switch platforms is huge. And the mindset, it comes naturally to me, and I don't, like I said, it's one of those things where I'm not entirely sure how to describe it, it's just that when you grow up in an environment in which you're used to seeing different things, different ways, you can train your brain to do and visualize things in different channels that, if you like things that are effective, will make sense to you when you try to reproduce them yourselves.

There are some radio shows that are good. And there are some radio shows that I read their websites. And there are some TV shows that I'll watch on TV, but I won't read their websites. There are some websites that I will read their Twitter feeds, but I won't read their actual websites. What I try to do is I try to keep abreast of this so that when I'm presenting my content, I've found the best voice for that particular channel. Again, I really wish I could describe that better, but it requires a lot of work and paying a lot of attention to things that are actually effective and trying to find the right blend for your own recipe.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

When you came in here, the first thing you did after sitting down next to the microphone and adjusting your chair was to take a picture and tweet it out. Social media, how does this figure into your mix?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

It's huge.

Most people, when I find myself in professional, social situations, if I tell them my name, they'll say, "Where are you from?" I'll say, "The Washington Post." They'll be like, "Oh, seem familiar." Somebody else will invariably tell them, "I sure you know him from Twitter." It's like, "Oh, right."

And so, Twitter has been this big equalizer in terms of the entire way people can communicate with each other online that to me has really democratized the way news matters. I mean, cause people don't care, people will not retweet, people will not click and nobody will talk about it.

I realize that a small percentage of people are on the Twitterbox, as we like to say, but it still has moved the way that we can communicate in terms of what is immediately im-

portant in a way that I think has been neat, for lack of a better term. And so, when I got on in, it was '08, it wasn't like it was on, I was not one of the --

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Pioneers?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Pioneers by any stretch of the imagination, but I just started using it the way that it came naturally to me. I'm just going to write what, kind of, after a while I started to live blogging things I was going to or live-tweeting things I was going to and then after a while I started telling stories about things that happened. Afternoon Twitter Tales, if you ever read that, which are kind of, they get kind of emotional sometimes, but whatever. They're stories that I tell. I don't know. It just came actually because I watched other people that I thought were doing it well and tried to emulate what I thought the best things of each person that I admired did well and put it all together in one.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

And how do you think you use it the most? Do you think as an editor you use it more to see what people are kind of talking about and see what the conversation is or do you use it more to build an audience? Or, can you even say how you ...

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Probably both. I use it for different reasons in different ways.

As an editor, I definitely use it a lot to find out what people are talking about because it is very conducive to the print medium. It's short phrases in a set amount of characters and people who are pretty smart tend to say smarter things in shorter spaces. That helps well when you're trying to dilute what is a smart opinion and what is not or what is actually being said. You can read things fast and you can move on fast. As an editor, I use it a lot for that.

As a writer, I definitely use it a lot for self promotion. It's just the nature of the business. It's easy. It's free and it's easy and the main thing is it's not cumbersome. I think that's sort of the whole point. Like, if you're on Twitter and you're engaging in the discussion, the whole point is to get a lot of information coming your way. So, you're not offending people, you're not in their faces with stuff. Somebody tweets me something that they wrote or something that they recorded or something that they sang or acted in it's like, "OK, fair game." I'll watch it or I won't. It's not a problem for that because that's the nature of the medium, so it works well for self-promotion on that front.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

It's also easier to know your audience, I feel like. I mean, you know that people are following you because they have an interest.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

So, there's a start there.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Otherwise, you can unfollow. That's the other weird thing about it is that it's got this very sort of "lunchroom vibe with permissions."

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

On or off.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Right. And I don't like to typically tell people, "Well, if you don't like it you can unfollow." I don't really do that. But there are plenty of people that do that and I respect that. "This is my platform and if you don't want to listen to it, there's one button you can press. Otherwise, don't waste my time."

There's downsides to that, because I try to listen to what everybody tells me. Otherwise, it becomes a pulpit and if people have enough pulpits as it is and I don't really think that that's the purpose for it, at least as far as I'm concerned. That's not really the way I operate, so I try to respond to everybody unless it's vulgar or nasty, which happens. But, I do my best to sort of keep it about board because you never know who's reading, even if you know who all your followers are.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Are your most emotional ones around the area of sports and D.C. sports in particular?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

You might be able to say that. That's also typically because it lends itself to that.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

It's an emotional thing.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Right, you know, like I said, the Afternoon Twitter Tales I've written are easily the most emotional things I've done and those are just telling stories from childhood and different things that have happened in my life that are important. And that's sort of a medium that is away from the personality of the columns.

But yeah, sports lends itself to Twitter. I was telling somebody the other day, I don't know that I would watch the NFL without Twitter anymore. It makes it better. It's just as simple as that.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

It totally makes it better. I agree.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah, it's very emotional.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

To put you on the spot and wrap up the Twitter conversation, who are your like top people on Twitter that we should follow, journalism-wise, cause I know RG3 [Washington Redskins quarterback Robert Lee Griffin III] is on there as well.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Journalism-wise? Let's see.

My colleague Dan Steinberg is really good [@dcsportsbog]. He writes the DC Sports Bog. He's always been on sort of the forefront of mastering a lot of different levels of the Internet game.

If you don't know why his blog is called "The Bog" is because he used to cover [University of] Maryland sports. When he went to Coach Ralph Friedgen and told him that he was starting a blog, Friedgen immediately said, "What's a 'bog?'" So he named it, he immediately took ownership of something that wasn't understood and went from there. That sort of irreverent sense of humor is exactly how his Twitterfeed goes, it's his blog goes and so forth and so on. I would say Dan is pretty good.

Jason Whitlock [@WhitlockJason] is not bad. He writes for FoxSports.com, and he's one of my favorite writers in general. He's very funny, and he's also one of these guys that will break people off on Twitter with no qualms.

And Bomoni Jones [@bomoni_jones]. He works for SB Nation. He's also a panelist on Around the Horn on ESPN. He's very good as well.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

What about Michael Wilbon?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Wilbon doesn't tweet that much. I mean, the parody accounts of Wilbon are much funnier than Mike ever is. But Mike, he's a serious guy. So, his Twitter account is not very indicative of his personality in the way that it would be for some other journalists.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Does he still give you journalism advice?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Occasionally. The last time I was in studio I want to say was, it was earlier this year, and I was telling him about the way things were going as far as my career was concerned.

He was the first guy that made me believe that I could actually be an opinion writer. He said, "You know, Clinton, you're going to realize in the next 10 years that there's going to be a place for voices like yours, which is young black men in the realm outside of sports."

Because, the opinion field as far and columnists and so forth goes has not been exactly the purview of a lot of young black men for a long time. I mean, in sports, it's been almost the only place where that was an available option. But, outside of that, that was something he told me in college. He said, "It's not necessarily going to be sports or music. It'll be something that will come naturally to you." And it has.

We talk, occasionally. We talk probably two or three times a year now. But, if I ask him a question, he'll answer it, and he's always been good about that as a mentor.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Do you have a dream of what you want to be writing in a few years?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

You know, I don't know, cause there's part of me, and this is about as honest as I'll be about it, there's part of me that feels like if I start getting caught up in things like that, I'll not be able to do what's required right now. You can shoot for a dream all you want, but if you're not able to handle the day-to-day of what it is to even get there ... Yeah, could I visualize a book in 20 years that is a collection of things that I've written about the city over the course of my career? Yeah, but if that happens, that happens. I'm not about to start doing anything today that's going to sort of change how I would feel about that then. You know what I mean? So, the dream is that I can successful do what I'm doing now until I want to stop.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

And that can almost be a limiting thing, because really, you're punching the clock every day, you're doing what you do every day, that takes you, quite often, in direction that you never even imagined.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Right. So if I limit myself to what I think I want to do, it doesn't allow me the sort of creative freedom to do the things that just come along. Which is, as far as I'm concerned, a part of the whole fun of journalism, is that you never know what's going to happen in the world and if you keep your mind closed or if you just sort of keep too many blinders on, you won't be able to see the things that you might not otherwise have seen if you weren't looking for them."

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

On the other hand, working at the Post, do you feel that's opened doors for you or do you think, "I've made it. This is the Post."

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I don't know. It's opened a lot of doors in terms of the District. That's for sure. You walk into a room and tell people you work for The Washington Post and everybody either stops talking or starts talking.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Let me tell you about being a journalist who doesn't work for the Post and going places and "Oh, we've already told the Post about this" or they say, "We'll get you that information" and then you find out the Post is already running with it. And it's like, "Well, I thought you were going to--" "Well, they called and it was the Post."

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

There is something to be said to be working for a legacy news media outlet. It can be limiting in a way, but it can also open doors.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

For the time being.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

It's also worked well because I also don't cover a lot of super-mainstream stuff. Occasionally, I will. But I'll try to find pockets of things that aren't otherwise being covered by a lot of mainstream outlets. And so, then it helps almost doubly.

I did a story about the mural on the side of Ben's Chili Bowl. I don't know if you've seen it. It's like a four-headed mural. People were just like, "Oh wow, the Post is doing a story on this?" I was like, "Yeah, and I'm here." People were a lot more sort of effusive about it than they would be otherwise if I was at, who knows? I don't want to speak for anybody else's outlet and what kind of coverage they get. But, just showing up at all made people feel a lot better about it, you know, because they weren't used to seeing stuff like that in the paper.

And that's sort of what I try to do. There's going to be a place where we change what people are used to seeing and I'm going to try to be at the forefront of that.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Not being an employee of the Post, but as somebody who watches what's going on there, in the way, it's evolved in the last five years and the way it's changed with its online presence. Do you see the way it's covering the city changing as well?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

It's hard for me to say, because I know what I do. I know that I am trying to speak to people that arrived in D.C., that don't necessarily know if they want to leave. And people that, as I mentioned before, have stayed in D.C. that were raised here.

Because, before, these had two sort of very different sects, the transients and the natives, and most of the natives that were here were people that were sort of either the super-rich that it was never even part of the concept to go anywhere and the much lower socio-economic class, who was like, "No, we can't go anywhere because that's just not an option."

Now, you've got a much larger sort of bourgeoisie, if you will, people in the middle. You know, it's like, "Yeah, OK, I've got disposable income. I'm from the area. I can choose to stay here and this is what my life is like." That's what I think is going to be the next big coverage group for any outlet. Forget about just the Post. That's TV. That's radio. Those are the people that a lot of different outlets are trying to find a way to capture, because right now, that's sort of a lost demographic.

That's what I'm trying to do for the Post, at least, for myself. Because, quite frankly, that's the demographic I'm in, so it's a lot easier for me to understand the mindset of that group of people.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

I've been in the area since '83, and I can see, having grown up and lived elsewhere and coming here and sort of watching how this city has changed. It really has changed in the last three decades.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

We can talk about where we specifically are, but we're right outside [the National Cathedral in Northwest Washington, D.C.] and if you told me 10 years ago that some big, mixed-use development was coming up off of Wisconsin Avenue called Cathedral Commons, I'd've been like, "No way that anybody in that neighborhood is letting happen." It took like 10 years in order for this thing to get off of the ground. That's not even cutting across the socio-economic and racial lines that a lot of things have existed. That's a development line. That took so long to break in one neighborhood. My point is that you can see change in more places than just the gentrification conversation.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

So there's always news to be found really because of all the changes and that kind of stuff, and there's always change no matter what decade you live in. But one thing that's definitely for sure is resources for journalism have gone way down. For the Post, does that make things more difficult for you? Do you find yourself doing more work for less? Is that the reality of the job now?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

You have to understand, I didn't come up in any situation which resources were ever super-heavy for journalists. It's hard for me to understand like, you know, I'll hear older guys tell stories you know ...

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Drinking in the newsroom--

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Not even that, spending a week somewhere holed up trying to find some story, eating on the dime of the company. I'm just like, "That's insane to me." Not that there's a problem with that, but it's just, I have no concept of that. So that's never been something that I've looked back upon and been like, "Oh man, those were the days." Because that was never really part of my situation.

To me, I'd argue that the resources of journalists now are larger in terms of ability to gather information. You don't need all this money to do the same jobs. Some people will consider that sort of, you know, blasphemous, but I mean, come one, what are we talking about? The Internet is incredible. We've all got iPhones. Neal Augenstein [<http://itsalljournalism.com/podcast-10-neal-augenstein-wtop-reporter/>] who reports for WTOP [radio] does his entire job on his iPhone, which to me is awesome. That's as cool as it gets in my opinion. You've got more resources in terms of technology. You've got more resources in terms of being able to share information. Yeah, you might have less money, but you can already do more.

So, yeah, does news industry need to figure out how to sort of change that distribution of wealth and so forth to do their jobs? I would say so. But I've never been asked that question personally in terms of being able to give resources to distribute, but no, I don't consider myself as a journalist to be under-resourced, not at all. Getting paid for your work is a different thing than having the resources to do your job. The economies of scale have created in the news industry such that you can do your job for a pretty cheap price and do it at a pretty high quality if you know what you're doing.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

A very noble answer.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I believe that.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

No, it's very true. I mean, I think we say it on our website, the technology that is killing legacy journalism is also what's going to save journalism.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

It's the technology that allows us to do the things that a giant newsroom used to do with fewer people, more efficiently, to a greater audience.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

And that brings up too, because we're talking about technology, I mean the Post is now investing a lot in new platforms, possibly in doing TV or in doing, there are projects on the horizon. Going back to the multimedia topic, obviously, it comes easily to you. I think when you're a younger journalist, it does. Social media, you get all that. But do you feel any sort of pressure from any of your outlets to do more, to go across more platforms, to not just keep the Express, you know, print?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I wouldn't call it pressure. I would say that everybody is trying to grow.

Yeah. I guess you could call it pressure in the sense of there are different things that every outlet wants to do, but I mean pressure, that's part of the job. Again. I wouldn't be in the business if I didn't think that deadline oriented things or getting the next best thing was part of it.

That's something I definitely learned from George [Michael]. You talk about how George ran a tight ship. I mean, a lot of people, pardon my French, thought he was an a-hole because he was very serious about how he wanted to be the best. He wanted to be the best by having the best technology, by having the best, I mean, down to the lights. I mean, he was a serious, serious taskmaster because he wanted to make sure that he was the best. To me, that was one of the best things I ever learned in the business was. Pressure is whatever you want to make it. Some people just consider it motivation to get to the top.

Is there pressure to create new product? Is there pressure to get along other platforms? I guess. But if you don't feel the pressure and you're in the business, I don't really know what you're there for. I'm not one of these like hard-driven, winning, egomaniac kind of types where it's like, you know, "Greed is good" and all that. It's just what it is to me. That's why you do it, it's because there's something out there always that you can't get to that you're going to try to get to.

Pressure? Whatever. I call it motivation.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

I was talking to one of the guests we had for a podcast awhile ago off-mic and just sort of joking about, "Oh yeah, that's a lazy journalist." And he said, "No, there's nobody lazy in the newsroom anymore. There's no room for it."

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Right.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

You can't be.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

You will get left. I've seen it happen across a lot of platforms at a lot of different papers at a lot of different TV stations and a lot of different radio stations. People who were just sort of fighting what they believed to be what should be in terms of the way they looked at things. It's just like after a while, the train is gone and --

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

We're going this way.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Right. You want to get on, get on. Or, if you want to sit there and complain about how the schedule changed and nobody told you, you're going to get left.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

There has to be a subtlety to that. Maybe you do have a great new idea and maybe you can redirect that train. Have you ever experienced that?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah. That's part of what the newsletter was about, I mean, the fact that it's 2012, I started this thing in 2010, just after the election. I mean, a newsletter, people were like, "What? How do you plan on that being remotely successful?"

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

You're like doing that in the church basement.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Exactly. I'm posting it up on people's doors and stuff like that. People were like, "This is ridiculous." But, I'd like to think that the content was good enough that they liked it. And so, it was one of those things where, yeah, I tried to sort of reverse time a little bit and it's helped. It's got a very high sort of unique click-through rate and all that. People read the stuff because they're getting it presented in a way that they're not used to. It's a little more personal, but it's also not just like everything else.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Since we're talking different platforms and we're on a podcast, let's talk about your podcast a little bit. Cause that's something we've never actually talked about on this podcast, the actual medium that we're delivering in. Why do the podcast? Why enter this new arena?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I do the podcast because, like I said, radio, first of all, is my first love. And, I just, Tommy [Keeffe] and Chris [Williams] are just two guys that I've been friends with for awhile. I'd hang out with them at the bar. We'd talk a lot of trash. After a while, I was, "We are wasting our time, just sitting in here yelling at each other for two hours a week."

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

"Listen to all this content that's being wasted."

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Exactly right.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

"We need to monetize this."

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

That's the journalist mind in me is like, "You know, we could actually put this in a bottle and sell it kind of thing." Also, [radio personality] Don Geronimo is a guy that I don't know how many of you are familiar with, but he always says that the reason he got into radio is that he likes pressing buttons that make noise. At the end of the day, that's kind of the fun part. It's just a fun outlet. I get to get in there with my buddies. Hook up all the equipment. We play the music. Play the stupid sound effects. We talk about our lives and it's fun.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

It's really free-form and there's a lot less physical restrictions on you've only got 12 inches of print to fill in.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Or a certain amount of words. Right, exactly.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

The topics can go wherever they go.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I love it. It's fun. Time restrictions, we try to do it once a week. Time restrictions have made it sort of difficult as well as sort of set up stuff, but, people like it. I'm not going to act like it's setting the world on fire, but it's a lot of fun for me. It's a lot of fun for them. We take a lot of pride in it. It's the Three Wise Men Show. We like it.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

The thing about the newsletter and the podcast, it's the "Field of Dreams -- If you create it, they will come." It's to create something and try and find your audience. If you produce interesting content, whatever your expectations for success, whatever your meas-

ure for success is, something will happen. Doors will be open in ways that you never really anticipated.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I agree and that's part of going back to the young journalist advice thing is that the days of "Oh, I've got some sweet degree and a great GPA and I went to x-school --" Nobody cares about that. If you can't produce anything that anybody wants to watch, nobody is going to hire you. That has been the sort of big equalizer in journalism that we talked about with everybody being able to have at their hands and feet the tools that you can use to make something is that, if you're really good at making something, you can get yourself into business. That's a good thing as far as I'm concerned. There's nothing wrong with that.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Be an innovator. Be an entrepreneur.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

And you will be rewarded.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

How do you feel about the future of journalism? How it's sort of changing and adapting and changing and going forward? We've now all embraced multimedia, hopefully, we're trying to and social media, but do you feel confident, especially where you're at, the outlets you're at, that we're going in the right direction?

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Yeah. If we get into a situation in which, and this is kind of a very specific thought of mine, if we get into a situation in which every screen that we see around us is touchscreen interactive, that'll help journalism a lot. Because it will enable visual journalists to get back into the game in a way that hasn't existed in a long time, in terms of what we look at being very important. It'll enable print to get back in a way that won't necessarily be the printed word, but it will be the written word. It'll be able to integrate all the different things we see.

For example, I went to Crate & Barrel the other day. They had a big old TV and it was like a touchscreen and it was just like you could search. And I was like, "Huh, this is cool. Imagine if you could do that sort of anywhere but you could do that with whatever subscription you had to a newspaper." You know what I mean? I go to the airport. Remember those old TVs at the airport?

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Yeah

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

Where it was like whatever, you punched those boxes and you tried to get a football game on some channel and it was a disaster. It would make all that noise when you tried to rotate it. But imagine if they just had those and they were just big tablets that you could watch so that you didn't have to carry yours around with you. You could have your phone. You could have whatever. If you could find a way to sort of get these technologies out there and get your platform so that it could adapt to all these different things, journalism is not going to die.

Newsrooms might die or change in ways that we're not necessarily used to seeing. But there's no way that the power of getting information out to people is somehow going to go away. That just doesn't make sense in terms of human beings. It's just a matter of adapting technologically to make yourself available to people depending on what they'd like to touch and see and do.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

Clinton, thank you very much for joining us.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

You're very welcome.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

We covered a lot of stuff today.

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Yes, we did.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

I think it was a good conversation.

Sean McCalley, guest producer, It's All Journalism

Rapidfire journalism right there.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

I do my best.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

You can find Clinton on Twitter @clintonyates. Obviously, TheRootDC, Washington Post Express. Am I missing something?

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

The podcast.

Clinton Yates, local news editor, Washington Post Express

The podcast. @3wisemenshow is the Twitter handle and it's on iTunes as well. Just search the Three Wise Men Show.

Megan Cloherty, producer, It's All Journalism

And we are It's All Journalism. You'll find us on Twitter @AllJournalism and thanks for listening.