



A Tale of Two Weeklies

Episode 1: In the Beginning

[intro music]

Gene Kosowan: There were a few who were reticent about that. Um, which actually led to some very, very ruptured friendships, some of which continue to this day.

Zoltan Varadi: Yeah. I was never entirely clear on the circumstances and what went down, but I knew there was some bad blood there.

Duff Jamison: He wasn't really able to keep up with his print bill, which kept growing and growing.

Ron Garth: You know, you can't dip into an endless supply of cash when you're, you're taking something along that costs more money than you can possibly afford or even imagine.

Duff Jamison: Ron decided he didn't want to do that and left and started view weekly, took the staff and all of the files and everything and we were left with this empty room.

Scott Lingley: They were keeping SEE alive to draw advertising dollars away from this newly formed competitor paper Vue Weekly.

Bryan Birtles: The rivalry was the only thing we cared about and we were, we were soldiers in that ongoing battle.

Ron Garth: Yeah, we'll let that was, uh, that was it. That was messy.

NARRATOR: For 26 years to rival magazines existed as the alternative weekly press in one blue collar, Canadian Prairie city. This is the story of Vue Weekly and SEE Magazine, two weekly papers that ran in Edmonton between 1992 and 2018. This is a bittersweet elegy and love letter to those papers, their rise, glory days, notorious rivalry and eventual decline. I'm Andrew Paul. I'm Fawnda Mithrush. I'm Paul Blinov. And this is a Tale of Two Weeklies.

[music fade out]

NARRATOR: On November 29th, 2018 the final issue of Vue Weekly hit the streets in Edmonton, Alberta for 23 years. The free alternative news and arts magazine was delivered to hundreds of locations throughout the city every Thursday. While there was an outpouring of sadness from the community when the magazine finally shuttered, no one was all that shocked. Print media's the era of struggle began long before Vue Weekly's demise and the magazines shrinking page counts indicated that it too would



soon ending closure just as so many other publications like it. Calgary's weekly FFWD closed in 2015, and even the grand example of all weeklies, the Village Voice stopped printing a physical version in 2017 and shut down for good just a few months before Vue. In August, 2018 those final issues of Vue were delivered by a small fleet of converted Japanese vans owned by father-son team, Ron and Mike Garth who distributed the paper until its very last week. Ron Garth founded view in 1995 and eventually seated ownership of the paper to another publisher in 2011 when both few weekly and it's rival SEE Magazine were bought out and merged under a single banner. Vue Weekly was Edmonton's longest running, not weekly, but not its first back in 1992. The city's original weekly was that rival SEE Magazine, which began as a monthly music flyer merged with an indie newspaper called the Edmonton bullet. Our story begins when those two papers came together under the direction of one ponytailed music store owner. Ron Garth,

Ron Garth: I'm thinking, you know, when you, uh, do a good job and it works out and everybody's, you know, it's good. That's what you're there for. Yeah. That's what, uh, there is in it. There's nothing like the issue to issue when it would come up and it was, there was, it was coming off the press. Uh, and then there's whole other aspect of distribution and getting it out. And it was, uh, I think that's what happened to the record store businesses, it morphed into the, publishing business and we learned as we went.

NARRATOR: Back in the late '80s, Garth was running a music store on Whyte Avenue called Something's Hot, and began printing a small monthly magazine called Something's Entertaining Edmonton. That's where the S-E-E for SEE Magazine would eventually come from. A fellow named Reg Sylvester was running another paper, the Edmonton Bullet, which Ron wanted to connect with his own publication. At the time, there was a robust stream of provincial grants available in Alberta. The era was rich with oil profits and feel good vibes for Albertan heritage. Thanks to the Peter Lougheed government, which ended in 1985. Over that decade, several of Edmonton's most beloved arts organizations began. Brian Paisley formed the Fringe theatre festival based on Edinburg's model, which would become North America's largest Fringe festival. Joseph Shoctor was the director of the Citadel Theatre; today the main stage in that building bears his name and hosts shows that are on their way to Broadway. It was also during that decade that a plucky group of graduates from the University of Alberta called themselves the Freewill Players and formed Edmonton's outdoor Shakespeare festival, settling into the brand new at the time 1100 seat amphitheatre in Edmonton's river Valley. With emerging grant models supporting career minded artists, these organizations could afford year-round operations and also regular investment in local advertising.

Ron Garth: I guess in the late '80s there was a lot of funding going on through the '80s for the arts in general. And, the Bullet, you know, they were making a fairly reasonable effort to be self-sustaining and they did what they could to sell advertising, but not many people really liked to sell advertising very much. And it's easy to write for a grant, write up a grant. And, uh, and I think that the Bullet was great. They did a lot of good work for



years with that, but then the grants started to really seriously dry up. And so, uh, the Bullet was out there and, uh, I was working with sweat, you know at SEE and uh, and it, it's just became harder and harder to get money for grants and, uh, you know, Reg Sylvester and Sandra and a whole bunch of really good people who were working for the Bullet. And, and we just realized that we, we were, we had probably a little better business model.

NARRATOR: As the grant streams began to dry up for the community merging the two entertainment focus publications seemed like a way to ensure their continued coverage of the scene. That merger also altered the publication schedule. They increased from monthly to biweekly and eventually to weekly distribution. Back in the late eighties the alt weekly, which is shorthand for alternative weekly newspaper, or sometimes the urban weekly, was still emerging as a media model in Canada. If you're from a town of pretty much any size in North America, chances are you've come across one of these so-called alt weeklies. These are free magazines distributed widely throughout cities in sidewalk boxes and racks inside bars or other venues, usually with a new issue each Thursday. That distribution made it easy for readers to plan their weekends based on comprehensive event listings and expensive reporting on community happenings.

NARRATOR: At the beginnings of the alt weeklies are generally traced back to the Village Voice in New York city, which was founded in 1955 in Canada. The Georgia Strait began in Vancouver in 1967 and by the '90s most major cities in North America had an alt paper with its own voice, opinions and views on the city it was in. The weeklies offered artist profiles, previews and reviews of music and shows, columns on offbeat interests and reporting on topics that weren't covered in mainstream local media. The weeklies contained sex advice columns, crude cartoons, skewering film reviews, and sometimes award-winning reporting on underserved issues. The magazines were popular with many demographics because of the range of coverage, and really, because they were free and available pretty much everywhere. Existing publishers, people with money and resources, were starting to take notice.

Duff Jamison: I would travel throughout Canada and into the US and see what was going on and in other cities.

NARRATOR: This is Duff Jamison, CEO of great West newspapers, who took an early interest in the alt weekly format. While traveling to newspaper conferences across North America, he found himself picking up the existing alts while looking for what to do in the cities he was visiting. At the time, Jamison oversaw his family owned Gazette press located in St. Albert, which is a short drive North of Edmonton.

Duff Jamison: Then I had looked at the granddaddy and of alt weeklies in Canada was the Georgia Straight out in Vancouver. So I'd been quite familiar with that. And whenever I was in Vancouver, I would pick it up and look at it. Or if I was in Toronto, I would look at NOW Magazine and then the Toronto Star came out with their Eye Weekly and I would look to see what they were doing and find things to do.



NARRATOR: This was at the time, the prime function of an alt weekly to convey the happenings of a city through event listings. Jamison was an appreciator of that information.

Duff Jamison: It was kind of the, the uh, the ringleader when it came to, well, what are we going to do after our meetings tonight? And I'd say, I found a great blues club. Let's, you know, there's, let's go down there tonight. Right. And I always found that information in the listings of, of the alt weeklies and I traveled into the US for most of the major centers had an alt weekly. And because I'm in the publishing business, I'm thinking that's a, that's something that could probably work here.

NARRATOR: Once the Bullet and Something's Entertaining Edmonton joined to become SEE Magazine, it soon after came to be printed by Jamison's Gazette Press, which published numerous weekly newspapers across Alberta. We'll note here that in 1995, Great West Newspapers was formed in the joining of Southam Incorporated and Jamison Newspapers. As a fan of the urban weekly model, Jamison saw the potential in both the Bullet and SEE.

Duff Jamison: At that time, Reg Sylvester would have been running the Edmonton Bullet. And he was kind of a one man operation, mostly with some freelancers and I think he was, he was, um, you know, working hard to and struggling to, to kind of make ends meet. He wasn't, Reg was more of a editorial type, less of a sales and marketing type. And of course the lifeblood of those things is selling in the advertising. That's what makes them tick. Anyway. Ron had come to us to get some printing quotes for his magazine and so we started printing this magazine format for a while and I said to Ron, you know, maybe this would make a good alt weekly. Yeah, not, uh, not what you're doing exactly right now. You're pretty focused on music, which is a big part of it. But we could be broadened and, and um, as Ron thought about that, I think he realized that that might be a good idea. And I mean, we spent countless hours talking and wandering around in the streets, you know, and I think Ron had been working in the past at CFRN. He was kind of in the sound area. If I remember right and he ended up, he ended up in the Gulf islands doing some, some that type of similar type of work out there and he'd come back and he had his store going. Anyway, we got going with this, um, he got going with this idea with my encouragement.

NARRATOR: We'd like to pause for a moment. As writers who worked for both magazines, this image was a pretty fucked up thing to imagine. For context, just a few years later these two men would be divided by a printing bill. That divide would grow into a decades long feud of litigation resentment and us or them sentiments for writers and advertisers alike, all of which was playing out in and around the pages of two mass distributed community newspapers and was a legendary rivalry by the time we emerged on the scene. So the image of these future rivals, strolling the suburbs, planning their paper to be is a hard thing to picture. Back to Ron.

Ron Garth: Uh, yeah, they're in the newspaper business. They saw how effective this Strait was and NOW was and Calgary didn't have an urban weekly and Edmonton didn't have an urban



weekly. And this looked like an urban weekly. So that was something they were no doubt interested in. If you're a printer, of course you're interested in that. And so that's, there was an interest in what we were doing and we were, you know, they're of interest to us because they're printing it and we needed a printer. And so, it became sort of convoluted I guess, because we'd done a ton of work and they had, they were interested in publications in Edmonton and Calgary two urban weeklies, obviously that, two larger cities that had lots of art stuff going on, especially Edmonton. So it was, uh, that's, that's how we got to, arrived there. It was, I guess we had mutual interest in the in urban weeklies. They knew all about the Strait and NOW and everything in between, so, and they, they had particular interest in what we were doing.

NARRATOR: SEE's first issue came out in July, 1992 by 1994, the printing bill had started to become an issue, especially for Jamison.

Duff Jamison: Um, but he wasn't, he wasn't really able to keep up with his print bill and which kept growing and growing and with, well, what are we going to do about that, Ron?

Ron Garth: It's just that, you know, you can't say you can't always, uh, uh, depend to an endless supply of cash when you're, you're taking something on that costs more money than you could possibly afford or even imagine.

Duff Jamison: And, um, because it became kind of a very large print bill.

NARRATOR: As SEE's print bill grew steep, around the \$240,000 mark, so grew the gulf between Garth and Jamison. Jamison thought a plan was being made to handle that debt through a mutually agreed upon handoff of ownership. On September 2nd, 1995, Jamison faxed a letter to Garth that proposed a plan to manage the printing debt. SEE would go into voluntary receivership. Great West would give Garth a job, and the increasing debts, Jamison thought, would end there. This is the voice of our co-producer, Andrew Paul, reading Jamison's letter to Garth, which we obtained through court records. A couple of quick notes on the content of the letter: GPL refers to Gazette Press Limited. And there is mention of two people named Maureen and Bob, and we'll get to who they are in a moment.

Andrew Paul: Dear Ron, I realize we have a fundamental difference in how we view the present financial state of your company. From my perspective, the company is bankrupt. Even if a gross value of some sort was attached to it, by the time the liabilities were deducted, you would be less than zero. I can appreciate the growth you've realized over the past few years, but at the same time yours wouldn't be the first enterprise to fail because it was chronically under capitalized. And that is the situation which faces both of us today. Having said that, I am eager to not only be fair, but to be seen as fair. With that in mind, here's what I am prepared to do.

One: You will be given a two week window until Friday, September 15th at 5:00 PM to settle your account with GPL to my satisfaction (ie: existing terms of 80% credit for receivables under 90 days will remain in force).



Two: During that period, you will not incur any further debt with GPL. In other words, the bill for this week's paper will be paid before next week's paper goes to press. The same would apply for the following week.

Three: Failing settlement of the account, you will agree by Monday, September 18th at 10:00 AM to submit to voluntary bankruptcy.

Four: Should you agree to voluntary bankruptcy, you'll be offered an employment contract, the terms of which will be determined at that time.

Five: in the event of voluntary bankruptcy, I will do my best to protect Marine from the exposure she and Bob would otherwise face.

Ron, I am confident that I am being both flexible and reasonable, and this is as far as I can extend GPL's exposure with his account. Please convey your acceptance of these terms by signing where indicated and returning to me by 6:00 PM today.

Sincerely, Duff Jamison, Gazette Press Limited.

NARRATOR: The Maureen and Bob mentioned our Maureen Fleming and her husband Bob McCammon. The latter was the assistant coach of the Edmonton Oilers at the time, Fleming was the associate publisher at SEE and a longtime friend of Garth's who had come on board to help manage the printing debt. So Garth signed the letter, seemingly agreeing to the terms laid out there in back to Jamison.

Duff Jamison: Anyway, so FFWD was being launched at about the same time as all of this was this print debt and what I was coming to a head here in Edmonton with, with, uh, with Ron and and SEE Magazine.

NARRATOR: Great West Newspapers would go on to found FFWD Magazine, an alt-weekly for Calgary, in December 1995.

Duff Jamison: And, um, I thought that we'd had made an arrangement, this was all gonna work fine. And, Ron would, would essentially put the business into what was, what is known as a voluntary receivership. And then the main creditor, which would be us, would step in and, and we'd go from there and carry on. Ron would continue on in his role. But somewhere there was a, I guess a disconnect.

NARRATOR: There was. Garth had a very different plan for moving forward, which involves starting his own magazine by using all of the personnel and resources that had up until then been SEE Magazine. Even before the two week deadline that Jamison proposed had elapsed, Garth and the SEE staff up and moved out of their office. The first issue of Vue Weekly dropped on September 21st, 1995 which came as something of a surprise for Jamison.

Duff Jamison: I don't know what it was, but, but as we got to that point, um, Ron decided he didn't want to do that and, and left and started Vue Weekly, took the staff and all of the files and everything, and we were left with this sort of empty room.



NARRATOR: The lore of what happened is that Ron Garth and the staff gutted the SEE office overnight and used the advertising context and existing SEE racks to put out the first issue of Vue from an ad hoc office in the production manager's basement mere days later. It's the stuff of local legend, especially among people who worked at either magazine over the next 20 years. For those at Vue, it was a defining moment of rebellion and independence that would color the paper's focus and trajectory for years to come. And like any good legend, the details vary depending on who you ask.

Scott Lingley: I had kind of an idea. I don't think I got the full depth of it. I definitely, I only ever heard the, the version that my publisher told me,

NARRATOR: Scott Lingley was an editor at sea in the early years after the split and served as his longtime restaurant reviewer around town. He was also a drummer for the band Old Reliable.

Scott Lingley: So I don't know what offenses were committed on the, on the Great West or Gazette Press Limited side, but I understood that basically SEE magazine was started by the publisher of Vue and then he walked out on a printing tab and SEE took it over and ran it out of spite. Basically they were keeping see alive to draw advertising dollars away from this newly formed competitor paper Vue Weekly.

Eden Munro: Because I was already, I was kind of all-in from the first time I met Ron. You know, he was a great guy and I still call him a great friend, to this day.

NARRATOR: Eden Munro was used music editor for almost a decade, ending his tenure in 2014.

Eden Munro: I love when I see him. And he told me the story between the two and it was like, nah, man, I'm, I'm all in like, I'm on your side and this is, this is where I'm at. So even when I was a writer, I did still pick up SEE. It was, a lot of times it was, it was to look at the difference between the two. Right. Even when I was not editing, once I was editing the paper, then it just became like a weekly thing where we sat down. It was like, now we do this all together. I'm reading it, doing exactly what I did, saying like, Oh, how come, how come they got this interview and we didn't get this interview? Or, you know, here, look, we both got the same interview and you know, I like this one better than that one. Reading their paper and being like, who's, who are the writers here? Who's, who are the good writers? You know, who, who would we rather have? You know, if, if the opportunity came up.

Zoltan Varadi: Well I'd get this story of like this bitter rivalry, of how the the publisher of Vue had this intense hatred for SEE.

NARRATOR: Zoltan Varadi was a long time writer for SEE and photographer in Calgary. He actually shot the very first cover of FFWD, Calgary's alt weekly published by Great West. He now works in the media department at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary.



Zoltan Varadi: I don't know, I never talked to the man, so I don't know how much of any of this is true, but the story I received that at one point he was actually the person who started SEE and then he was bought out, but not willingly, or something. I was never entirely clear on the circumstances of what went down, but I knew there was some bad blood there.

Bryan Birtles: So I've heard that from SEE's perspective, they didn't think that there was a rivalry, but, but from our perspective, the rivalry was, was that the only thing we cared about.

NARRATOR: Bryan Birtles filled a number of roles at Vue over the years. When we talked to him for the series, he was in law school at York University.

Bryan Birtles: You know, our boss, our leader, had had his first paper taken from him, you know, by, by a combination of the bank and by a combination of a media baron out in St Albert. And, uh, and they had, they had wrested control in some sort of legal maneuver from him. And there was a, there was some sort of a midnight move. It created a Vue and we were, we were soldiers in that ongoing, um, battle.

Gord Nielsen: The reaction to, to, uh, to view popping up, uh, I guess was, um, probably the best word is dismay, sort of somewhere between surprise and shock.

NARRATOR: This is Gord Nielsen, who was the chief financial officer at Great West and would become the publisher of SEE Magazine from 1999 until 2007.

Gord Nielsen: I wouldn't have imagined that happening at the time, but I guess in, in retrospect, not soon after, it wasn't really that surprising.

NARRATOR: Gene Kosowan was the production manager for SEE at the time of the split. It was his basement that Garth and the editors moved into to produce Vue, the new magazine,

Gene Kosowan: As I know, a lot less than what people suspect because just handling the editorial end of things was a job in itself. So I wasn't even aware of stuff until maybe two or three weeks before it happened. He showed me a letter that came from Duff, what was his name? Duff Jamison. That's right, yeah. That they were going to come in, they were bringing their own people in and they was going to continue and basically we're gone. Okay. And he had a particular date, which was late September. I don't remember the exact date that it was happening because some of us were thinking, well, if they came in, they'll leave the core staff alone because we know how to run this thing. Which was a huge mistake on their part, I might add, because the first wave of people that came in and didn't know a damn thing about how to run it. And while they had a greater presence because they could throw more money at it, I still think our writing was connecting with people a lot more because we knew that we knew that stuff. We knew the whole scene.

Andrew Paul: So when you moved offices, um, what, what did you take with you? There's the freelancers. I imagine you brought a bunch of people with you.



Gene Kosowan: We brought as many as we could. Um, there were a few who were reticent about that, which actually led to some very, very ruptured friendships, some of which continue to this day. Um, all these resources we managed to do, um, computers, not so much, although I scrubbed them myself. I just remembered my dos language and went in there and is totally scrubbed them, so there was nothing that they could retrieve from those computers if they broke once they got in there. Right. So that meant they had to create their whole magazine from scratch cause all templates were destroyed the whole bit.

NARRATOR: Steven Sandor was also working at SEE as a writer and copy editor at the time of the split and also moved over to the basement office with Garth.

Steven Sandor: It was, it was more abrupt, I think, for me. I think he had heard rumors and such, but I think it was more as in the, Oh, what do you mean we're putting the next issue out in jeans out of Jean's basement and we're not doing this at the office? It was like, what, what, what's going on? And well, we're actually not SEE anymore. We're going to be something new. And it's like, so just go to Gene's house and do what you do. I really, you know, so if for me it wasn't so much about any sort of politics or anything going on in terms of the magazines or even so it was just the, okay, we're going there now. And that office was like bear like, I mean it was paid to clean. Um, the old one and the, the, the shotgun move to the new one which was Jean's basement and I how, how long were there a month? Two months?

Gene Kosowan: Um, it seems like almost a month. Um, yeah, it felt like a year, but it was less than two weeks before we got the first issue out. And that first issue was a nightmare to do.

Steven Sandor: And there was the injunction against it, right?

NARRATOR: The Monday following Vue's first issue, four days later, the appointed receiver of SEE Magazine filed a claim against Ron Garth and Vue Weekly for damages in the amount of \$400,000, claiming that Garth quote published a magazine called Vue Weekly with layout, type font, editorial content, column headings, distribution network, writers, and advertisers that were substantially similar and in many instances identical to those utilized by SEE Magazine. The statement of claim noted that Vue is distributed in distribution racks owned by SEE without its consent or knowledge and claimed that the defendants, being Garth and Vue and Fleming, have deliberately attempted to pass off the publication of the magazine as being associated or affiliated with SEE Magazine to obtain the benefit of the reputation and goodwill of SEE Magazine. They also state that the defendant's conduct is calculated to or is likely due to deceive the public so as to confuse Vue Weekly with SEE Magazine in later records. There is evidence submitted that shows faxes to advertisers from sales staff saying that Vue Weekly is formerly SEE Magazine and Vue is a new name for an old friend. Again, this is the voice of Andrew Paul reading one of those faxes.

Andrew Paul: To: The Brian Mitchell campaign
From: Vue Magazine



Date: September 21st

Vue Magazine is a new name for an old friend, SEE Magazine. Attached please find rates and distribution information. We have talked to several candidates who have asked us so we thought we'd provide some information to you. Deadline for Vue is 4:00 PM Fridays with copy camera ready for 3:00 PM Monday. I would like to talk with you about our exciting changes. Vue is now on the streets.

NARRATOR: We found many faxes, some of them handwritten, as we worked our way through court records for this series. Which was kind of charming, but also reminded us, this was 1995— email hadn't exactly caught on yet. Anyway, so Jamison and Great West worked to keeps me afloat and Vue kept right on trucking, even through a court ordered injunction. For Garth, having his staff stick with him in the new magazine was a vindicating feeling.

Ron Garth: That was pretty gratifying because there wasn't a, there was a, there was a meeting and everything, but there wasn't, there were no speeches. And the courts too. And we don't want to get into that cause we, we were in court initially and uh, and they saw it as a, yeah, they went after it and tried to get us off the street and legally the court and they just threw it out. They saw it for what it was. And, uh, that was pretty gratifying. But, but again, who cares? That's dry court stuff.

NARRATOR: There is a lot more to this dry court stuff, as Garth calls it, and it goes on for years. We will include notes and evidence along the way in this series as it pertains to the story. For now, suffice it to say that the split was not amicable.

Ron Garth: Yeah, well that was, uh, that was, that was messy. And I can, but I do, I don't want to like I say, there are no good guys and bad guys here. If anything, I was one of the bad guys, and one of the good guys too, because we'd been years building it up. And when push came to shove, we both had versions of the story, but they wanted it and, we wanted it and so, we both got it. It wasn't, Oh yeah, the bastard, you know, sons of bitches. It was, it was like, that's the way it works. You know, that's human nature. It's the publishing business, it is what it is. That's the way it goes.

NARRATOR: As the weeks rolled on, Vue continued production in the basement, which had quickly proved itself to be a less than ideal office environment.

Gene Kosowan: It was, it was a bunker is very tiny. It was cramped. It was, uh, a rumpus room that was maybe, who knows, 20 feet long and about 10 feet deep. If you moved your elbow, you'd probably hit the production guy in the head. It was that cramped. We also had two cats. There was a litter box by the furnace in the next room. And then we did, we had a guy named Terry, Terry Cox. He was one of my production guys and a reviewer who went by the pseudonym TC Shaw, he says, yeah, it's always great to come in here and we're going to place that smells like a cat's butt.



NARRATOR: It's telling that Garth's newfound Vue Weekly branded itself as 100% independent, that was a quiet shot at SEEs more corporate ownership, which dovetailed with the era of the paper was emerging in. The 90s, was a time of authenticity, of indie legends versus corporate sellouts, of gen X rebellion against bland office culture capitalism. The division between Indie and corporate then was pronounced and profound, and Vue Weekly was firmly positioning itself on the former side and was looking to land with impact. The fledgling paper had a rival to best and something to prove.

Ron Garth: You know, I talked to people in groups and whatnot and everybody was there. Everybody felt the same way. And so somehow we managed to put it back on the street. And so, so we did become really independent, and we became really poor.

[music]

NARRATOR: And that was how SEE Magazine and Vue Weekly began their decades long rivalry. The papers were covering Edmonton over a period when the city doubled in population from 500,000 to a million people, oil prices rose and crashed and rose and crashed in a province that succeeds and suffers along with that industry. Maybe you've never heard of Edmonton. Most people know it as either the place where Gretzky won a few Stanley Cups, or the one with the very big mall. During the weekly's tenure, the city's once great hockey team, the Edmonton Oilers lost its former glory and yet was somehow rewarded with a half billion dollar new arena. Meanwhile, the career-long trajectory of local artists could be traced within the weeklies pages from indie productions to the biggest stages, the creative scene in Edmonton birthed many greats, including bands like The Smalls and Jr. Gone Wild, the video game company BioWare, actor Nathan Fillion, the second largest Fringe festival in the world, and the weeklies were there to write about them all. There was robust coverage of news, arts, food culture, and politics, and internally countless journalists and writers were given their first paid bylines.

[music fades]

NARRATOR: Before we go into the rest of this series, we have some disclosures to make about who we are and how we came to tell this story. We all worked at one or both of these papers between 2006 and 2016 as freelancers and editors. Our early adult lives were spent in the alt weekly grind, it's fun and sometimes reckless lifestyle, it's personal and professional challenges, and it's meager wages. We got to know both magazines' distinctive casts of characters, many of whom talked to us for this series and some of whom are no longer with us.

Fawnda Mithrush: I started at SEE in 2006 as the snarky receptionist and eventually took over editorial of listings, a city life and music, until 2009. And then, I was fired. At that point I crossed over and wrote for Vue until 2017.

Paul Blinov: You wrote for me. I was the arts and film editor of Vue Weekly from 2009 until I left the paper in 2016.



Andrew Paul: I shared a desk with Fawnda at SEE as an intern in 2008. Afterwards, they let me stick around to edit the listings before hiring me as a staff writer, and I ended my tenure at the paper in 2010 as the entertainment editor.

Andrew Paul: The three of us met in 2009, and we started podcasting together in 2013. We wanted to tell this story because both magazines were part of our lives at a very formative time, but this is more than just nostalgia. As alt weeklies begin to disappear from the media landscape of North America, the living history they represent is going with them. The websites of both Vue and SEE are completely gone, so there's very little evidence of what went on. And as Ron Garth might say, we should probably keep trying to tell that story. This is our bittersweet elegy for the rags, and our love letter to the column inches where we got to play, and grow.

NARRATOR: Next time on A Tale of Two Weeklies.

[music]

Gene Kosowan: You know, we had hookers yelling at could take my picture and they turn their head, whatever.

Rich Cairney: It was, a newspaper war, good old-fashioned knock-down, drag-out newspaper war.

Steven Sandor: And I was just trying to see if nonviolent aggression work, and when he finally took a swing at me until three in the morning, I went, ah, I win!

Gene Kosowan: But with what made it easier for me was the really crappy crew of people that was writing for SEE.

NARRATOR: A Tale of Two Weeklies is produced by Andrew Paul, Fawnda Mithrush, and Paul Blinov. Music is by Luke Thomson. Artwork is by Michael Nunweiler. This series was made possible with project support from the Edmonton Heritage Council. Special thanks to Edmonton Community Foundation for use of their recording studio.

[music fade out]