



## A Tale of Two Weeklies

### Episode 2: Room With A Vue

[intro music]

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NARR: 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. I'm Andrew Paul. I'm Fawnda Mithrush. I'm Paul Blinov. And this is A Tale of Two Weeklies.

NARR: In September, 1995, Ron Garth and his staff vacated the SEE Magazine office and moved overnight into a new operation in their production manager's basement to start their new magazine, Vue Weekly. It came as a surprise to his printer, Great West Newspapers, to which Garth still owed a significant printing debt for the years of printing SEE Magazine. To briefly recap: two weeks before the first issue of Vue was published, Duff Jamison and the folks at Great West had proposed a deal to Garth that would manage his printing bill by having SEE Magazine go into voluntary receivership. Great West would essentially become publishers of SEE, with Garth in the existing SEE staff staying on as, well, Great West staff. Thinking that Garth would agree to the terms to make the debt go away may have been a hasty assumption. If there's one thing that we've learned over the years after working at both magazines and on this podcast is to never underestimate a tenacious idealist, and if there's one in this story, it's Ron Garth.

NARR: Instead of going along with the receivership proposal, Garth took everything to produce the weekly magazine, save the SEE branding itself. Though he did use the existing SEE racks all around town to distribute the first issue of Vue. He had to put the new magazine in something that week. Essentially the name of the new magazine Vue was a parody of SEE itself, and to the public it may not have looked very different at all. Garth's rounded up the SEE crew, took the files, the back issues, scrubbed the office computers and brought the advertising contacts along with them. And that's how Vue Weekly began as Ron's son, Mike Garth, recalls.



Mike Garth: Well, I remember the first the first Vue of every was produced out of the basement of our production manager's house. It's a newspaper is produced out of a basement of someone's home. And Vue didn't miss a beat. It was every single week. That's the, hence the need for a basement office. Whereas SEE, I think skipped a couple of weeks or two getting their feet back. I think they missed some news, but Vue didn't miss a beat.

NARR: Gene Kosowan and Steven Sandor were among the first employees at Vue Weekly, pretty much by default. They'd been working at SEE and both had some sense that something was happening between Garth and Great West. Still, to find themselves making the first issue of a new paper in a basement instead of an office was an abrupt change of pace. But they still had jobs, so they kept working.

Steven Sandor: It was, it was more of abrupt I think for me. I think we 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?' 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, and we're going next week and so just go to Jean's house and do what you do. I really, so if for me it wasn't so much about any sort of politics or anything going on in terms of the magazines. It was just the, okay, we're going there now.

NARR: The basement was the less than ideal space in which to make a paper. It was cramped with the smell of litter wafting courtesy of Kosowan's cats, and most of the production wasn't taking place during traditional business hours.

Steven Sandor: And it wasn't like we were working their nine to five. Right. It wasn't like we were coming in and getting out of his hair by five. It was, we were there late into the nights, early mornings and constant runs to the grocery store down the street for food. But yeah, well I remember this, the crampedness of it, like it was literally you kept to your spot because you'd take, you know, one quick move and you're going to like headbutt somebody else. So it was a, it was tight quarters and headbutting was pretty easy because of the emotions. It was tense.

NARR: The basement had six people working out of it. Two production people, Kosowan and Sandor editing, Ron Garth, and Kosowan's wife Brenda taking up the advertising side. Plus there was a steady flow of freelancers coming in and out with copy for the issue. They were diligently working away on their new paper, but at this point everything was up in the air, including payment. For those first few months, money showed up, but inconsistently, and sometimes from different bank accounts.]

Gene Kosowan: May, I do remember having to sit out a month and getting a check for two months worth of work.

Steven Sandor: Some of the checks that sometimes were drawn off people's personal accounts and not off the, like it was done just because people were covering. And there were times where you were asked to wait until Friday to cash it. Yeah. Like you were waiting for not so



much for someone to pay for their ads or what have you, but for those checks that they knew were there to clear because it would take a couple of days. So it would be sort of, you know, they wanted to make sure that they were cleared by a certain day. The writers I think for the most part were they were exceptionally patient cause they, they, a lot of them believed in what they were doing and a lot of them like what they were doing and they were willing to say, Hey, like I'll pick this up on, on Friday. And, and you know, there were priorities. Ron and the people involved took it like a family. So they sort of knew like, Oh, this guy's got a bill coming in, so his check's gotta clear first because he's got to pay on Wednesday.

**NARR:** For some, the uncertain pay or the swift abandonment of a steep printing bill could have been unsettling. But those who worked with Garth felt a pull to stick with him. Call it naivete or idealism or damn the man, for the Vue staff. It was about family. And you'll hear the voice of our co-producer, Andrew Paul in this interview.

**Steven Sandor:** And he knew a lot about your personal life. I mean, one of the things that Ron used to do, and I I don't say this with any sort of pride, is Ron would literally go around to four or five homes, some of them more than one trip, and pick us up to make sure that we got to the office on time. It was a, it was an interesting dynamic. As I said, it was part of the whole family dynamic. Like how you getting to work? Well, the boss picked me up. Maureen Fleming, who was the co-publisher of the magazine, was married to Bob McCammon who was the assistant coach of the Edmonton Oilers. Bob and Maureen would have these parties for staff. So basically anyone who, you know, wasn't married, didn't have family in town, they would have like a Thanksgiving for everyone. Right. So it was really nice. We'd go up to their condo and, and we'd have this night and it was special that she was part of that whole family staff thing. And it was really nice.

**Gene Kosowan:** I think I just want to add something about, you were talking about how writers stayed loyal to us, and I think the best way to do recognize it, like I'm not very much for treating writers like family. I mean I was more like, I didn't want to get into the touchy feely thing. It was more like if they had a problem. So I said if you can't get it done right, get it in on time. But for the better writers and those that we were close to, if they knew they were getting regular work, that was a sign that they were part of it. Right. Those who weren't, well they weren't part of the family.

**Andrew Paul:** Yeah. Fair enough. And so I think we can all agree that the money was not the you know, one was in it for it, for the money. Right. So, but what was it, what, what was it about you know, Vue that kept so many people inside of that, you know, kind of pressure cooker, fly by the seat of your pants atmosphere—that will kind of just was also SEE when I was working there as well—it was very similar. There's a lot of similarities. Why, why did you stick a stick around and stay in it for as long as you did?

**Gene Kosowan:** Because it is one of the places where you actually could do whatever you wanted within given parameters.



NARR: But what would this new publication be called? Releasing a print magazine isn't just a matter of typing out a few articles and pushing a publish button. It needs a hook, an identity to sit above the stories it chooses to cover. One of the first titles batted about, had its sights set on the future, even if nobody understood that yet.

Gene Kosowan: Do I remember one time Ron walking in saying 'I've got the perfect name. I've got the perfect name. It's just, okay. So we're just saying, how about Edmonton Online?' First thing someone said and it was on everyone else's mind, 'so we're an internet publication now?' Okay. 'No, no, no. You don't get it. It's saying we're just on line. That means we're in tune with what's going on in the city. That's our way of saying that.' 'No Ron, that's a way of saying that we're on the internet.' So he had to be talked down a lot.

NARR: We interject here to remind listeners that they're discussing this in 1995, when AOL still build an hourly dial-up increments. Google wouldn't even exist until '98. Their debate of whether or not to be an internet publication and what that meant exactly casts a long shadow over the 20 years that would follow. Print media's inability to respond to what the internet would do and how it would affect the print industry was the beginning of a very long ending. Craigslist, which would lead the way to soak up so much of print media as most lucrative real estate, classified advertising, also started in 1995

NARR: Eventually they did decide on the name Vue Weekly, which was an across the bow shot to SEE. The names positioned the papers as two takes on the same scene. Two visions of the city to consider.

Steven Sandor: I guess from my perspective, and I think probably from a lot of people's perspective is that you're putting this thing out or you think you're putting this in. I'm going to say you think you're putting this thing out because there was, as Gene was talking about the tension and it was this uncertainty that hung over everything you did that you thought, okay, I've marked up all these pages and this is the edge and I know these people are doing rewrites and this is, and I've got an article to write and I've got to get this stuff done, but is this ever gonna see the light of day or will this just be these stack of papers sitting here because you were thinking to yourself, is this actually going to?

Gene Kosowan: For the record, that never crossed my mind at all until I think it was, Steve actually brought it up to me and said, and I don't know if I said it to him, he said, I wrote, what I wanted to say is, why are you telling me this now?

Steven Sandor: I was always such a ball of positivity.

Gene Kosowan: Like, you know what, I'm focused on something, nothing else exists, right. I mean, so to me it was a done deal that it was going out. It's got to go out, you know just because of the work we did, it wasn't great. I think under better circumstances it would have been a much better debut.



Andrew Paul: Well, you gotta work with what I had.

Gene Kosowan: I'd think, you know what? I think we were really good at winning jackpots with lousy hands. That's how I look upon that.

Steven Sandor: That's a good way to put it actually, like it. You know what I would say like, you know, if we, if, if we were a band, we were putting it together with three cords in a mobile unit. We weren't like, you know, we weren't getting a nice studio or what have you. And we were just like, alright, you've got 500 bucks and three hours of studio time. Let's get this thing out here. So it, it, you know, it, it did feel like in, in those days when you were there, it came at you from all directions.

NARR: The cover feature in the first issue of Vue would look at sex work in Edmonton, but as it sometimes goes in the weekly business, the problem of good cover art was one of the first hurdles to overcome, especially as the issue's deadline grew closer.

Gene Kosowan: I think we're doing something on hookers was our first issue for Vue. Oh, okay. There's a lot of things here. We were arguing over that. The hookers thing was an idea of, was it Mandela, Charles Mandela? Charles Mandela was the news editor at the time. Okay. Who did not stay there at all. He did it from his house cause well he kinda liked that separation from everyone else. Okay. We had a read and Wendy Bowling tried to do something on, on the whole prostitution thing. Right. But we didn't have any photos. And so the night before we were actually gonna try and finish laying the sucker out. I said, okay, well the takeaway on the out for a drive and 95th and 97 street, you can take some pictures. And it was horrible. You know, we had a hookers yelling at us, could take my picture and they turned their head, whatever. And we did not DIR, we did not stop the car to take and we were just going like, I started a drive by shooting a scenario and so everything that came back was like streaks blurry. They would've made great art picks. But if for abstract but.

Andrew Paul: And this was all shot on film?

Gene Kosowan: Yeah. So it was Maureen, the associate publisher, who wound up getting some kind of a shot for that, which is pretty tame. I think it was a setup shop wasn't it?

Steven Sandor: I think that it was actually a stock shot. Yeah. Regardless we got somebody and that was vying against something else that was going on.

NARR: The first cover of you almost went in a very different direction, an image from 80s heartthrob rock band Loverboy. Kosowan learned that a local visual artist had done photography for the original Loverboy album. He wrote a story about her and her work and the Loverboy photos were, if nothing else, quality art.

Gene Kosowan: And we were so close to having Loverboy on that cover simply because it was, it was good art. Crappy band, sort of goes by everything and we stood for it in terms of



alternative values. But I know when push came to shove, and I know I wasn't pushing it too hard, but we wound up with the prostitute story instead, but there's a lot of pushing and shoving with all that. A lot of rewriting. Just a lot of focus really.

**NARR:** The first issue of Vue Weekly came out on September 21st, 1995 with the cover story titled Prostitutes in Peril: The Dangers of Bad Johns. The magazine looked so much like its predecessor in fact, that the claim for damages made by SEE's receivers against Vue and Garth outlined that the format of the new magazine was nearly identical to SEE and intentionally meant to confuse readers with that publication. On September 28th, one week later, SEE's receivers' claim for a temporary injunction against Vue was adjourned until the following month, and instead the judge ordered that Vue would be required to print a full-page apology advertisement in their next issue. Then run the same ad as three-inch square ads for six months following. Vue was ordered to deliver a copy of that ad to all advertisers that bought into Vue's first issue. Here's our producer Andrew Paul reading the ordered ad copy.

**Andrew Paul:** Vue weekly is not associated in any way with SEE Magazine. The publishers of Vue Weekly sincerely regret any confusion that may have arisen as a result of the publishing of Vue Weekly on September 21st, 1995.

**NARR:** So, by strokes somewhat heroic, somewhat slapdash, as much of the rest of the next two decades would go, the first Vue Weekly issue came together under stressful and hurried conditions. With the weekly news cycle, there was no time to rest. The next paper had to come out next week, and the next the week after. Conditions remain the same for a while. Vue put out an issue every week while Great West receivers and Garth kept the proceedings going in court. There were interim injunction orders, findings of contempt claims for damages rising to \$800,000. It went on and on. The final payout involving the receivers of SEE Magazine—remember this was resulting from Garth's initial print debt with Great West—wasn't paid out until 2011, sixteen years later. And what happened in 2011 is for another episode. For now, back to those early days at the Vue office.

**Steven Sandor:** It wasn't like that was the first issue. It kind of went that way for a pretty long while. Like it was it was, you know, you, you would go on a Monday and you would be thinking, okay, well this thing's supposed to come out on Thursday. What is it actually going to look like? And you were thinking, I don't know. But yeah, so it was, that was part of the fun of it because you know, really by Tuesday the adrenaline kicked in and you were like, we did, we worked all night long. Like we were creatures of the night. And you know, it was just normal that Tuesday, Wednesday you pulled all nighters. Like you knew you were doing that. And you actually sort of prep for it. Like that's sort of like deal your living schedule.

**Gene Kosowan:** Yeah. I think people didn't like me because I had the added benefit of not having to commute.



**NARR:** Fortunately for everyone involved, Vue didn't stay in Kosowan's basement forever. A few weeks into its existence, the paper found a new office in the Empire Building on Jasper Avenue. Kosowan also wasn't there forever; some months later he found a full-time gig and left his managing editor position, and Sandor to takeover.

**Steven Sandor:** You don't have the time. You don't think how much is going to be thrown at you. You just kind of do it cause you're excited to do. It's like, wow, okay I'm going to get to sorta drive the bus in a way. But at the same time, you know, you're not thinking that Steve, you've been here, you know what it's going to be like. You know these frantic Mondays and Tuesdays and this fly by the seat of the pants. That's just going to continue. Right? You, you know, that by just the nature of the beast, no matter how much you try to and you ended up, it felt more like I was riding the wave rather than driving a bus. Like it really did. It felt like I just got on and now where's this thing gonna take me? Because that's really how it was from week to week.

**Gene Kosowan:** I gotta say that I think Steve really had a better handle on the till than I did because I don't know, maybe a process was already in place, however flawed it may have been. But Steve was a guy who could actually set direction instead of voice to it. I just basically use whatever was available, you know, to articulate the magazine. But I mean, I will say this though, I mean, and this is all I'm going to say about that first phase. It didn't seem like we achieved any kind of stability or at least the illusion of stability until we finally moved into the empire building. I was like October, November, okay. Of which year? Still '95.

**NARR:** The weekly grind was unique, something that wasn't quite taught in journalism school. You planned a week ahead and, if you were lucky, the week would go as expected.

**Gene Kosowan:** And the thing is what made it easier for me was the really crappy crew of people that was writing for SEE and running it. We could kill them, musically. And I remember one particular piece that I did that just said, yeah, yeah, we're staying. You guys don't know what the hell you're doing.

**NARR:** So what were the SEE and Great West staffers doing on the other side of the fence? Over at SEE's now upturned office, Great West was soldiering on, looking to replenish its ranks. They resumed publishing SEE Magazine shortly after the Vue crew's office exodus. Rich Cairney was freelancing for SEE in the early days after the split, and was eventually hired to edit the news, opinion, and theater sections.

**Rich Cairney:** I as I said, I was doing a lot of science writing and so forth. I went to the world AIDS conference in 1996 in Vancouver. So, at that time, the politics surrounding the epidemic were severe. That was my first article. We covered a few different takes on it, sort of the politics and the protests that were going on on site. And some of the, these, this was the coincided with the first announcements of the antiretroviral cocktails that are now responsible for bringing people down to like zero load basically. So that was my first byline with those guys. That's huge. It was, it was phenomenal. It was, it was early days



of the takeover. So, because I was working for Great West newspapers, which was the chain that had sort of taken control of SEE Magazine from Ron Garth. So I wasn't involved until more than a year after that. But working in that company and contributing to like the very first issue of that magazine under Great West control, we were very aware, very aware of it. It was a very much at all hands on deck. We were like, Great West Newspapers was the St. Albert Gazette and a chain of rural weekly newspapers. But a lot of us were I was already doing a lot of arts reporting and news reporting in and around the Edmonton scene. So it wasn't that hard to make the leap.

NARR: Suddenly there were two papers covering the same beats in the city, trying to get interviews on the same stories. Even under simpler beginnings, a rivalry would have seemed inevitable. But given how SEEE and Vue came to be, their publishers in Garth and Great West still battling it out legally, the stakes seemed higher. Not only were the papers trying to cover the same ground, they were also splitting the same advertising pool, which meant each paper had to find their own way to attract dollars.

Rich Cairney: Yeah. Crazy. It was so intense. It was the most, you know, they say like news and newspapers are a competitive game. And it was the most highly competitive game I have been in, in my, in my life. It was, it was every week, you know, doing editorial content, compare and contrast, and the ad people doing editorial inches to advert display ad and classified ads and trying to calculate what was their ad revenue, how many of those ads were given away, how many were paid for, what's the circulation? So it was, it was a newspaper war, good old-fashioned knock-down, drag out newspaper war.

NARR: With the tradition of the weekly arriving in street boxes for the Thursday morning rush hour, the Tuesday night production grind was the same at SEE as it was at Vue. They stuck to the same publication schedule. So the editorial rooms were doing pretty much the same things at the same times.

Rich Cairney: Well, you're trying to fill the paper right at those Tuesday evenings when you're mapping it out and Wednesday, you're all day in production, right? And Lingley used to do this thing,

NARR: Scott Lingley was in journalism school when he started freelancing for SEE.

Rich Cairney: He would put up both hands, palms facing me, and start wiggling his fingers and then put them down on an imaginary keyboard and say, 'the bullshit starts here.' It's just like we got to write something. So those Tuesday nights, sometimes you were up pretty late getting more copy generating like real content.

NARR: Lingley did end up getting a full-time job at SEE. He was drumming for local bands in the early days of the magazines, sat at an editor's desk there until 2003, and stayed on as a freelancer thereafter. He capped out his alt weekly stretch as SEE's long-time restaurant



reviewer. Like many young J school graduates though, his first real full-time gig wasn't quite what he expected.

Scott Lingley: In SEE proper, I dunno, it was, it was a bit of a circus. Salespeople coming and going all the time. My first day, actually I won't tell that story. [...] Well, and so when I, when I interviewed for the job, they told me how much money I was gonna make and I was very excited because I had not made that amount of money before, which is not to say that I'd ever made any reasonable amount of money. It was kind of my first serious full time job. And then my first day of work, the publisher popped his head in the office and told me that I was actually going to be making significantly less than what they had told me at the job interview. So that wasn't so amusing. The thing that I remember most about my first year at SEE was the incredibly long hours that I kept.

Scott Lingley: It's not a totally hilarious anecdote or anything, but we did 60, 70 hour weeks. You know, I would start editing on Sunday night if I got a trickle of copy in, and then I would work all day Monday. Tuesday we had to get the paper ready to go to press, and at one point our publisher decided that it would be cool if I went on A-Channel, remember A-Channel? Remember Wired? I would go on A-Channel and I would do a movie review. So that got added to my Tuesday. So I would edit, copy all day, stack the paper right at the end of the regular work day, go home and eat something, get downtown, do my A-Channel spot, and then go back to the office and keep editing until everything was done. So that got to be a little bit miserable.

NARR: So, you know, with the long hours and the low pay and everything, why were you there? What were you, where were you sticking it out for?

Scott Lingley: I felt like it was in some ways the best journalism type job I was going to get out of school. You know, it was, it was a lot of responsibility, but I felt like I was kind of up to it. I thought that I was a better writer than a lot of people who were working for SEE Magazine. And so I thought that I can prove, improve things on that front. And we had a lot of freedom to do the stuff that we wanted to do. We didn't have any money to do it, but we could come up with any idea that we wanted and try to execute it. Sometimes that caused problems.

NARR: The editors at Vue had similar stories of late nights, long hours, and somewhat exploitative work to pay ratios. But there something about the freedom Lingley mentioned that seemed to attract a particular sort of personality, despite all of the hardships and stresses of a relentless weekly slog.

Steven Sandor: It was, you know, it's not so much the editorial meetings. I remember it as much as the layout nights. One funny story I remember from the early days is we had someone who was with us and he was as a sort of part time, part time and he was in psychology at U of A, you know, the late nights got a little because we were up for like long periods of time and we tried to break the tension in some way. And he had this course in what he



called nonviolent aggression that day he was telling us, cause he had this book in nonviolent aggression. I'm like, what's that supposed to be? And he was like, you're supposed to be able to take all of the criticism and all of this and deal with it in a nonviolent way. And I'm like, Oh, you don't, you don't tell me that you just did that. So, I would literally hand him stuff to do all night long as the night went on. And I would swear at him and I would like say things. I would insult him in the worst way. And I was just trying to see if nonviolent aggression worked. And when he finally took a swing at me until three in the morning, I win, I win, I win, I win. And it was like, you know, everyone sort of laughed and it was like the tension was sort of broken. But yeah, we would have long, long nights and yeah, fueled by really bad pizza. It was just, just energy. You know, as much as you say that you wanted to organize, not like organizing a magazine, like I've done sense where you kind of have a really good editorial plan. It's like our editorial plan was sort of like, this is kind of sorta maybe what's going to happen, but we'll SEE what, where it goes from, you know, as the, as the week goes on. Because it was, it was an interesting office dynamic. It was, it was a family but a sort of dysfunctional one. It, we all kind of loved each other, but we all had very different quirks and quirks about us.

**NARR:** Editorial positions at the weeklies came with social perks, like getting into countless concerts, and into the good graces of event promoters. Those lofty coming of age stories where the awkward young journalist finds himself hanging it with his music heroes? Yeah. That actually happens, kind of. But the trade-off for buying into the lifestyle often meant that personal financial security had to be found elsewhere. The truth is, there wasn't that much money to be had for staff or freelancers at either magazine.

**Andrew Paul:** What were freelancers getting paid back then?

**Gene Kosowan:** When I was there, nothing we started paying them near the end of the once we started going weekly back with SEE, we started paying them. And I don't remember the pay scale at all. I do know that we weren't, Ron wasn't very keen on paying by the word. So we did it by the column inch. The writing got better but also a lot more writing. Got padded. That's it.

**Steven Sandor:** That was something that I insisted that we stop paying by the end. Cause we stopped doing that really quickly. I said that I'm paying by the inch means that yeah, you're getting a lot of bridge paragraphs that don't need to be there. Like a lot of like stuff that I'm putting lines through. And of course the writer then is annoyed when they are getting paid by the inch and you've taken over half the story that doesn't need to be there. So I said, you play a flat rate. What we got, it is what it is, and what we keep, we keep. But I remember it was probably around somewhere to like 50, 50, like, you know, that's a number that sticks out. There's some that were more, some that were less. I mean we did, we did sort of train it sort of as this is a an easy one on one interview to do that is going to be lined up by a music industry rep for you.



NARR: A decade or so later in 2008, when those of us working on this podcast started writing for the papers, the pay rate was pretty much the same, around 50 bucks a pop for a freelance piece. SEE paid moderately more sometimes, and longer features like covers did tend to pay more, maybe a hundred bucks, but the rates never really improved. Not in a significant way. There's something to be said for the Vue staff's loyalty to Ron Garth. He built a culture around that paper, around that fight that made you feel like you were part of something, despite the lack of money you were taken care of. Garth himself was certainly aware that financial difficulties could amplify stresses at work, but the comradery of that mutual misery built bonds,

Ron Garth: You can, you can never get enough resources together to hire all the writers you need to do the kind of job you want to do. I mean, it was just everybody was always stretched, you know, that very well. I both handle that very well. And so you'll end up with people that had a real love of it. And, you know, I couldn't really want to get a mutual interests, but you didn't, I didn't, you know, I didn't always have the money to people who have paid it wasn't as well as it, it wasn't as good as it should have been. But certainly we all had a pretty good time and learned a bunch of stuff.

Steven Sandor: You know, as I said, that we were, we were family dysfunctional family. We were close. There were some people I was extremely close to that I consider some of the best friends I've ever had. And so that ability to work with those people as stressed out as it was and as, as I said, fly by the seat of your pants as it was that you're working with people that you kind of truly love, that keeps you going for awhile. It's not gonna keep you going forever. It's going to keep you going for awhile because you understand you have to make way. But at some point you're going to say to yourself, I need to go on and make a little more dough and do some other things. But when you're in your 20s, you know, I was having a lot of fun and I don't think I appreciated how much fun it was until much later. If anyone says do you regret those have to go, no, I kinda needed those times. Like I needed that time where I was able to let my hair out I, and, and be sort of the person with the stick one hand. I'm going to poke poke you here. I'm going to poke you there. You know that's not who I am today, but we all need to have that point in our lives where we let hair out down a little bit. I think when Vue was at its best, and it doesn't matter who was editing it and if it doesn't matter if it was 1998 or 2008 is when it let its hair down.

NARR: And Ron Garth, that ponytailed purveyor of independent alternative news, kept right on going. He may not have taken it the ponytail very often, but he had his own ways of letting his hair down. He avoided the bill with Great West, but in 2005 Garth sued the Government of Canada, Conrad Black, Hollinger Incorporated, and SEE Magazine for \$5.7 million in damages. At the time, Black's company, Hollinger Incorporated, was owner in part of Great West newspapers. Garth's claim alleged that because Conrad Black had renounced his Canadian citizenship when he was knighted in 2001, that made SEE not actually a Canadian-owned magazine, and therefore cheated taxpayers and Vue of any advertising revenues collected. But that's also a story for another episode.



**NARR:** If there is one thing we remember best about the times that the weeklies, it was the fondness we had for the range of personalities that made up their mastheads: The dedicated editors grumbling at late filing columnists, the wide-eyed freelancers picking up CDs for review, the savvy designers who would eventually come out on top and the digital era, and the front office staff who cordially took cash for escort ads that filled the magazines' back pages each week. It was, as they say, the best of times.

Next time on A Tale of Two Weeklies:

**P. Matwychuk:** You know there's some sort of alchemy there where it's a bunch of different voices but they all feel like they belong under the same tent and you just want to check in with it, you know, every week.

**F. Griwkowsky:** It was an open happy conspiracy to write about the people that you knew.

**Mari Sasano:** A lot of us just kind of ran in a pack for a while and we were young enough that we didn't have to worry about early mornings or responsibilities.

**Bryan Birtles:** Yeah. It was really a dream come true. For a 20-year-old.

**Mari Sasano:** I just considered us sort of like this, like special world of people who happen to be lucky enough to be able to do this.

**NARR:** A Tale of Two Weeklies is produced by Andrew Paul, Fawnda Mithrush, and Paul Blinov. Music is by Luke Thomson. Our work 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.