

“Zoom interviews only get you so far.”

Aspiring documentary maker Jess Prewett shares her experience of moving to Bristol in a pandemic and reveals what it's really like to study journalism in lockdown.

By Izzie Hensby



Jess is studying a masters degree in journalism at UWE Bristol. Source: Jess Prewett

Journalism student and aspiring documentary maker in a busy brunch spot in central Bristol.

Jess is happy in her surroundings and comfortable in the city that was once new to her but has now been home for twelve months.

She's nearing the end of her masters degree in journalism at UWE Bristol and reflects on the challenges the last year has brought and what skills she will be taking away with her.

I asked Jess about her motiva-

tion behind enrolling in the course one year ago, “The main reason I wanted to study on this course was to develop on my undergrad experience which was in film production and cinematography at the University of Bournemouth. I wanted to study at UWE because I discovered that Bristol is one of the best areas to kickstart my career in documentary making. I had developed my skills in nonfiction storytelling and directing during my undergrad and I knew studying journalism would complement my skills and put me in a good position to pursue working in factual TV productions. The course allowed me to practice my interviewing skills and build my confidence with calling people and conducting zoom interviews.”

However, the year hasn't come without its challenges, social distancing restrictions meant limited on campus teaching and all teaching was conducted completely remotely for four months during the spring lockdown.

“I think the biggest challenge of

the last year has been the repercussions of Covid which meant there was an extended period of time where we couldn't film in public and zoom interviews only get you so far. We couldn't use the uni facilities, such as the TV studio and radio suite as much as was planned which was a shame as the facilities were what attracted me to the course. However, there have been positives such as extra editing workshops and tutorials so I have vastly developed my editing skills and increased my breadth of knowledge.”

Now her course is coming to a close, Jess reflects on what the experience has given her. “My favourite part of the course has been the versatility of skills that we have learned from writing to developing news sense. I think the skills I have learned will take me far in documentary and tv making. A benefit of the course was learning about news judgement as well as media law which I wasn't expecting to find as interesting as I did.”

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens review

Where the Crawdads Sing is the bestselling debut novel by Delia Owens, an American wildlife scientist.

The fictional story has been an unlikely success selling over 4.5 million copies and selling more print copies in 2019 than any other adult title, fiction or nonfiction. A film adaption has already wrapped after Reese Witherspoon's production company Hello Sunshine snapped up the rights after she selected the book for her online book club in September 2018.

The storyline spans from 1952 to 1970, following protagonist Kya Clark between the ages of 6 and 25 as she grows up alone in a shack in the swamplands of North Carolina after being abandoned by her family when they flee from her abusive father.

Owens successfully combines genres as this coming of age story meets romance and murder mystery. The story opens in 1969 when the body of Chase Andrews, the town's handsome jock, is discovered and Kya, branded the ‘Marsh Girl’ becomes the prime suspect.

The story continues cutting between the prejudice investigation and flashbacks to Kya's childhood and youth where she's ostracised by the local residents and finds friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand.

Kaya learns from observing the wildlife around

her, she gains the skill of camouflage to escape truant officers and survives off her surroundings. She learns to grow crops and acquires fishing skills to feed herself and sell to the shopkeeper Jumpin in the town over. Her only friendship with the African-American couple, Jumpin and Mabel, is formed when she makes visits to the area residents have coined Colored Town.

When, as a young woman, she attracts the attention of two city boys, kind, nature loving Tate and arrogant posh boy Chase, her dating rituals are drawn from observing the mating of fireflies. She also, crucially, observes the dangers of predatory behaviour in the wild.

Nature enthusiasts will enjoy this book as Owens draws open her background as a wildlife scientist. Kya's love for her natural surroundings is exquisitely conveyed through poetic descriptions of the flora and fauna, wildlife and sea around her. It will be challenging to convey Owen's poetic prose and talent for nature writing (she is the co-author of three bestselling non-fiction books about wildlife in Africa) on the screen.

Where the Crawdads Sing is about isolation and survival but also resilience and hope. It is a plot-driving, fast-moving tale with a courtroom thriller to conclude.



By December 2019, the book had sold over 4.5 million copies, and it sold more print copies in 2019 than any other adult title, fiction or non-fiction.

Gloucester PR agency follows Iceland's footsteps for a 4 day working week

By Izzie Hensby

Radioactive PR in Gloucester have taken inspiration from successful trials in Iceland by adapting to a four day working week.

The PR Agency first trialled a shorter week in June 2018, then announced it would be permanent after going through the feedback from the team and clients. Founder Rich Leigh states two years later that the company has continued to grow and is even marginally more profitable.

Rich explains: “The whole reason behind adopting a four day working week was to show my team I care about their mental wellbeing and give them the opportunity to switch off whilst working in a stressful industry. I believe that if my team is happy, they'll produce great work which will lead to happy clients who keep paying. I can't pretend that the pandemic hasn't been hugely impactful to my business but if I could go back I'd still do ex-

actly the same thing.”

In Iceland, the trials of a shorter working week were run by Reykjavik City Council and the national government and took place between 2015 and 2019. They included more than 2,500 workers across a range of workplaces, including preschools, offices, social services, and hospitals.

Researchers have claimed the trials an “overwhelming success,” productivity remained the same or improved in the majority of workplaces and many workers have moved to shorter hours.

Despite the success, some business owners feel a four day week isn't the best approach for their team.

Richard Godfrey, CEO of Rocketmakers a tech company in Bath comments: “We wouldn't even consider saying that

you should have a certain time for lunch, or that you should finish at a certain time because for me that's the wrong approach. I think rather than having less working days but extremely rigid hours, I think it's best to have your working hours spread out but completely flexible.

“We've tried to tackle long working days by offering flexible working with core hours. We don't mind when people work as long as they complete the time that they're supposed to do and are available to collaborate with other people during the core hours, all of the other hours outside of that could be done any time. This is designed to fit in with people who are taking kids to school, or looking after other people and it lets people decide when they are going to fit their hours in.”

Bristol nightclub owner reacts to PM's decision for a vaccine passport requirement to enter nightclubs from September



Basement 45, Bristol's leading underground music venue opened it's doors this week. Source: Basement 45

The government has announced that proof of full vaccination against Coronavirus may be required to enter nightclubs and “crowded venues” from September.

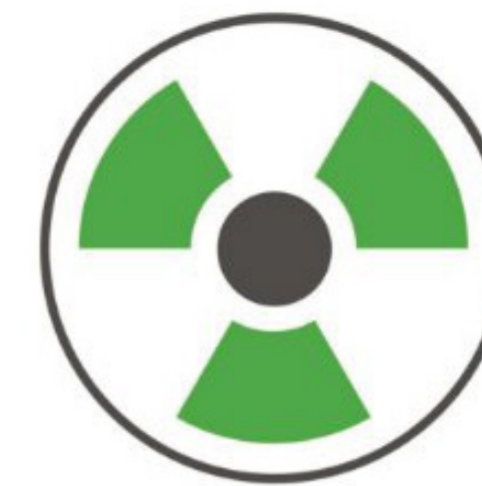
Speaking in the Commons on the day England's nightclubs opened for the first time since March 2020, Boris Johnson urged nightclubs to use the NHS COVID pass, which shows if someone is vaccinated or that they have tested negative for the virus. He added that in the next few weeks: “We will be keeping a close watch on how it is used by venues and reserve the right to mandate if necessary.”

Mr Zahawi, Minister for Business and Industry said: “By the end of September everyone aged 18 and over will have the chance to receive full vaccination and the additional two weeks for that protection to really take hold. “So at that point we plan to make full vaccination a condition of en-

try to nightclubs and other venues where large crowds gather. The PM added, “Proof of a negative test will no longer be sufficient.”

Mark Davis, owner of nightclub Basement 45 in Bristol reacts to the government's plans: “It makes sense that there's some kind of compulsory testing or something in place whether or not vaccine passports are the best way to do it, I don't know, as it's probably going to alienate some people. I know certainly a few of our staff have been promoting getting the vaccine and now people who come here have gone to get jabs so maybe that is the desired effect they're trying to go for.”

Mark explains why the venue hasn't put social distancing restrictions in place, “People are coming into dance and meet strangers. Clubs just don't work without that interaction.”



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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Radioactive PR were one of the first companies in the UK to adopt a four day working week. Source: Radioactive PR