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## The Author's Words and the Editor's Pen, A Self-Study in Editorial Decision Making

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# **The Author's Words and the Editor's Pen**

## **A Self-Study in Editorial Decision Making**



Honors Thesis

Margaret M. Cahill

Department: English

Advisor: Patrick W. Thomas, Ph.D.

April 2021

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### Abstract

This study investigates the practices that professional editors use when evaluating manuscripts for publication. Specifically, I ask: 1) Which edits are the most essential to the overall development of a text? and 2) How does the editor serve as the bridge between writer and reader? In seeking answers to these questions, I apply the editorial practices for reading and manuscript development reported by professional editors to my work as an editor of one writer's memoir manuscript currently in the process of revision. Drawing on interviews with the author and changes to the manuscript itself, I examine the role of the editor in shaping both the author's work and the author's memories included in the manuscript. As the author seeks publication of her memoir, I employ the knowledge from working editors to assist her in preparing the manuscript for submission.

### Dedication & Acknowledgements

This project relied heavily on my own knowledge of the English language. Without the dedicated instruction of my dozens of English teachers & professors and the love of reading instilled in me by my parents, no amount of research would have made this project possible. Thank you.

This project is also dedicated to Colleen McDonnell for her tireless work on writing and revising, her willingness to be part of this study, and her enthusiasm throughout the process. Thank you for trusting me with your work. May your story inspire many others as it has inspired me. You have always been a living example of what it means to be 'all in' in everything you do.



University of  
Dayton

# Table of Contents

Abstract	Title Page
Introduction	1
Review of Literature	4
Research Questions	14
Methods	14
Findings	23
Discussion	40
Conclusion	43
References	45
Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Professional Editor	46
Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Author Participant	48
Appendix C: Interview Transcripts	49

## Introduction

The most effective editorial pen makes invisible marks on a manuscript. This step in the writing process best goes unnoticed. The concealed nature of the editor complicates the search for a thorough understanding of what constitutes compelling editorial decisions. It also challenges the notion of editorial guidance on its level of necessity to the author and the reader. If the most adequate forms of editing blend seamlessly into an author's text, why can't a work go unedited, relying on its authorial authenticity to excuse any blunders? What are the changes the editor makes doing to the text, and are they, in fact, improving it? As stated by a professional editor in a participant interview, it is the editor who reminds the author that "there are certain things you can do to bring out the essence of the story." (The remaining quotations in this paragraph come from the same professional editor). The editor asks, "What is the thing that the story you're trying to tell, the information you're trying to impart, what is it at its essence?" If "that's the thing that you have to discover as the story unfolds," if "that's not really what the story is about", then the author must "discover what that thing is that's unique and familiar yet surprising." In wondering about the impact an editor has on a manuscript - and particularly on one in development, it is necessary to consider that "one of the unwavering principles about writing is that you can't be objective about your own work." Herein lies the necessity of the editor: to discover a work's universal essence for its readers. The following thesis will explore, by way of a case study, how the editor's decisions contribute to this goal.

This study's aim to investigate editorial practices seeks insights into those best practices rather than a scientific formula prescribed by standardized testing. In fact, it is

this standardized approach to editing that this research intends to move away from. Current editorial guidance, although occasionally balanced in its approach, seeks to offer lists and structures for editorial processes. The case study is “interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (Noor, 2008, p. 1602). By researching through a case study, or “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence” (Noor, 2008, p. 1602), I seek to discover how editorial guidance is borne out on practical, applicable terms. I inquire into how editorial guidance affects the memoir, a nonfiction type of writing whose personal, narrative approach often resembles fictional prose. I collect evidence by consulting professional editors, the author herself, and the existing literature on editing practices. In this way, this study is “concerned with how and why things happen, allowing the investigation of contextual realities and the differences between what was planned and what actually occurred” (Noor, 2008, p. 1602).

It is already clear that editing is a widely respected step in the writing process, and much practical wisdom exists on how to edit most effectively. Why, though, is editing such a coveted (yet overlooked) practice? Why are certain practices more effective than others? How much influence does the editor have on effective writing? On what is the editor’s discretion (and subsequent choices, suggestions, and edits) based? It is through the following study these questions come to light. It is the gap in editorial guidance between pragmatic practice and theoretical rationale that makes a project extending theory into practice necessary and worthy of further study.

The case study I have developed to explore the role, impact, and rationale of the editor follows my editorial comments on a memoir manuscript written by Colleen

McDonnell, a student at the University of Dayton. Colleen is studying Biology in hopes of getting into veterinary school after graduation. My relationship with Colleen is personal: she is my roommate, my friend, and my teammate on the rowing team. We have known each other for three years. This relationship played a significant role in the study, as I know many of her motives as an author and her goals as an individual going into the project. I am also familiar with her writing style and her areas of strength and weakness as a writer. This personal relationship is not uncommon in the editorial world, as many author-editor teams work together multiple times. Relationship-building would have been a necessary part of the study had this relationship not already been established. This study reports on a year-long examination of my work with Colleen at the developmental editing stage of her memoir. The manuscript recounts Colleen's role as the kicker on her high school's state champion football team. During the course of the project, I edited the manuscript for clarity, coherence, themes, and structure to determine how the types of edits I made affected the text's quality and readability. During this process, I also consulted with two professional editors to gain insight into the different stages of editing, the common practices at these stages, and how they understand the goals and importance of the practice of editing.

In the following thesis, I document which edits are the most essential to the overall development of a text, the significance of the developmental editing stage in particular, and the factors which impact editorial decision making at this stage. Through my study of editorial commentary, I argue the most effective editorial decisions exist in a web of theoretical and practical editorial advice. The editor serves first as a reader of the author's text, and each of her edits must be upheld by a justification stemming from her

role as both a reader and an editor. There exists a gap between practical editorial guidance and complex theory, and within that gap sits the question of *why* particular edits are made and *how* that reasoning can guide editing as practice on a more holistic level. By conducting a self-study, I explore firsthand how the connection between reading, writing, and editing can fill this gap as well as the significance of editing to an aspiring author.

## Review of Literature

### The Theoretical Role of the Editor

In “What is an Author?” Michel Foucault (1969/1992) claims that “writing unfolds like a game that inevitably moves beyond its own rules and finally leaves them behind” (p. 300). Recognizing that “the name of the author remains at the contours of texts—separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence” and “the function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society,” the self the author projects upon the work becomes distinct from the writing (Foucault, 1969/1992, p. 305). Notably, Foucault’s exploration of the author function presumes a singular, unedited authorial voice. Yet even as Foucault is aware, just as the author’s voice is a social construction, so too is the author’s voice implicated by the work of the editor. As a textual reconstruction of the self, memoir writing in particular necessitates further consideration of how the selves of both author and editor influence the story being told through the writing. As the editor revises the text, the editor will not revise the identity of the author so long as the authorial self remains separate from the writing’s subject and the author herself. Since the “presence [of the author’s name] is functional in that it serves as a means of



classification...can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others...[and] establishes different forms of relationships among texts,” there must be some distinguishing factor encompassing the author’s individual voice (Foucault, 1969/1992, p. 304). The presence of an editor complicates the idea of a single identity crafted in a piece of writing by the author with revisions that come from outside the authorial self.

Foucault’s (1969/1992) author function suggests the author alone may not be the only contributor to her own voice in a work. When the editor reads a text, she is reading for a sense of the integrity of the author’s voice and reproduces that voice in her edits. Thus, while the writing and identity of the text originates from the author, its further manipulations suggest author function, or the placeholder of an author ideal to a reader who expects a story from a particular writer. Literary theorist Roland Barthes (1967/1977) provides an early awareness of the widely accepted relationship between reading and writing. Barthes (1967/1977) argues that “when the author’s voice is not to be located; and yet it is perfectly read; this is because the true locus of writing is reading” (p. 5). In Barthes’ (1967/1977) terms, the author’s voice is a construction of the reader’s mind. Simultaneously, a reader immersed in authorial voice may not notice it for sake of its contribution to reading flow (a noticeable voice detracts from the story’s meaning and effectiveness; the text becomes about the author’s identity rather than the author’s experience), all the while recognizing that how a text is read determines the author’s voice.

I contend that editorial review, though invisible in the final text that readers see, shapes the author function. More specifically, I argue that the editor reads and writes

within a text. If “literature is...the trap where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes,” (Barthes, 1967/1977, p.1) and that “the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author,” (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 6), the attendant reading and writing practices that occur during editorial review serves to separate the author not from herself or her story but from her text. Typically, the role of the editor includes assistance, improvement, elevation, and positive challenge to an author. Author Dinty W. Moore (2010) offers professional guidance on writing and publishing creative nonfiction. He suggests that the editor provides a “delicate balance between supportive and challenging” to “address both what is good and what can be improved” (p. 204). This balance creates a stable bridge for the text to cross between handlers. Editing requires rereading, and according to philosopher and writer Damon Young in his book, *The Art of Reading*, “when you reread, you are delving down” (Young, 2016, p. 34). When editors reread, they notice edits and can suggest or even make them. When editors “...chase texts that challenge easy resolutions,” they are delving into what makes (and what does not make) the reader curious and engaged (Young, 2016, p. 74). Rereading with an editorial pen is what develops the story and increases its intellectual value. Any story can be edited, so any story can become richer and improve in quality; rather than defined by its bones, the editor allows any narrative to be defined by its reconstructive possibilities. To conceptualize editorship in such a way illuminates new understandings of the author and editor. For the editorial role to be conceived of as a reconstructor of the text, the authorial role must be understood in light of the aforementioned author function. The authorial identity is an edited identity. Edits will

shift from seamless improvements to noticeable changes. The reader can locate the author's voice among the edits, and vice versa.

The author's role, then, is to construct a text of possibilities. The editor serves as the mediator between the author and her story. While "reading can encourage a richer ideal of heroism: not simply dominating others, but governing one's own desire to govern," editing puts this idealism into practice (Young, 2016, p. 74). Writer Charles Johnson attests in his book, *The Way of the Writer*, that the editor's contribution ought to come from the "...simple desire to humbly serve and possibly enrich...literary culture in our time" (Johnson, 2016, p. xviii). No text is intended for its editor; therefore, the writer's story and the reader's pleasure overshadow the editor's invisible construction of the author's possibilities. The editor undergirds the author's story with a set of nameless legs equipped for survival beyond the author's head.

The editor, first and foremost, is a reader. Thus, the efficient editor makes a point "to be genuinely curious...to see the current page as one of many possibilities, interpreted in light of many other possibilities" (Young, 2016, p. 35). To recognize the text's boundlessness is to pick up where the writer left off: at the limits of her own world views. Comprehensive editing keeps curiosity in mind since she is not the intended audience. Curiosity requires active reading that "might seem to diminish literary pleasure, because it dashes the spell of uniqueness or perfection. It reveals antecedents, parallels, agendas, and simple errors" (Young, 2016, p. 37). Here, another critical element of curiosity emerges: a condemnation of complacency as a reader of the text. However, the editor's eye and the editor's pen reserve two separate rights, for "by showing the possibilities that surround any one text, they highlight the specificity of the craft: of all the stories or

arguments, characters and atmospheres, plots and phrases, the author employed *these*" (Young, 2016, p. 37). Overediting, conversely, alters the author's specific choices and intentions; the words and ideas become that of the editor's. Editorial choices that forego curiosity for control risk closing off of perspectives and places a limitation on future curiosity. The editorial balance emerges within "...a willingness to recognise the best in a text, without turning it into a hallowed relic or infallible commandment," for "to see literary works as fallible is to recognise our own errors, ambiguities, and vicissitudes" (Young, 2016, p. 99). The text will never be perfect; the text could always use another edit. Therefore, every text needs edits and, subsequently, an editor. If the most polished work could still be edited and incomplete in any particular sense, the lowliest of works both need and deserve an editor. The only work that is too far gone is one that is not edited.

A holistic editorial perspective relies on the author's knowledge of her topic as much as the editor's knowledge of her craft. Through the act of reading, the editor enters the writing process. Once the editor approaches the text as a reader, she can begin to exercise the editorial pen. It is the editor's responsibility as a reader to suggest if a text is "emotionally powerful...rhetorically strong, but it does not have the integrity of real thought...the light as well as the dark" (Johnson, 2016, p. 27). To separate herself from the reader, the editor notices and indicates particular elements of a text that burden its ability to impart complexity of thought. The editor proposes specific actions to improve the satisfaction and comprehension of a reader. The editorial pen is "hard on...sentences...hard on...paragraphs...ceaseless and unrelenting in...revisions," but editorial guidance is not for "questioning [the author's] ability to be a writer" (Moore,

2010, p. 151). The editor's technical editing of words furthers the authorial purpose through improved coherence and clarity. The editor extracts the meaning the author makes, remaining conscious of both what the author says and how she says it. The editor recognizes the "crucial importance of details" (Moore, 2010, p. 31) with "careful layering that is the result of much revision...[and] attention to balanced construction" (Johnson, 2016, p. 50). Edits of minor details may affect the work as a whole just as big picture edits may affect how details are portrayed. The editor follows and notes the details in the story for how they are conveyed in a passage as it is considered in the present and after moving through a text. A range of edits marks an attention to detail because of its consideration of the goals of the work at technical, theoretical, and nuanced levels. Here, the editor's work stabilizes the gap between reader and writer by pulling the thoughts and memories of the writer's head into a channel accessible to the reader. This "sensuous description, or a complete world to which readers can imaginatively respond" asks for active participation by the reader (Johnson, 2016, p. 36). The response the editor experiences in her role as reader can be addressed by the editorial pen even more actively than the 'imaginative response' performed in the reader's mind. A complete description transcends the importance of individual words and phrases while also leaving room for only the most essential diction. Thus, the editor's choices depend not on her personal preferences nor fully on the preferences of the author; rather, the choices (and therefore the author's voice) come from a place of readership. An edited text seeks readers; therefore, the editor affords her choices to those readers.

## The Practical Role of the Editor

Interrogating the editor's role is critical for the study of memoir, a personal piece of writing about the author's own experiences. In memoir writing, authors "recreate the past and then reflect on what they have learned, or haven't learned, about what now makes sense or what continues to be a mystery" (Moore, 2010, p. 28). The memoir's perspective adopts that of the writer's. It differs from the autobiography because it involves specific recollections as opposed to a chronological recount of an individual's life. The memoir differs from a diary entry because the memoir is a personal, rather than private, essay (Moore, 2010, p. 7). Although its roots are in personal memories, "it is not enough to simply expose your life, or describe your pain or triumph...Memoir is not about 'look at me, look at me...it is about trying to understand the vexing mysteries of human existence [with] more ways to consider the questions at hand" (Moore, 2010, pp. 29-30). While the writer's experiences remain in the past, their memories exist in the present and call for reflection on the past as a way to move forward into the future. Similarly, the writing in a memoir is about the past, but the writing itself is "for tomorrow, not for the past" (Moore, 2010, p. 40). The memoir is grounded in the ability to anchor memory with contemplation. Understood this way, such a personal text becomes more accessible to the editor because the goal is not for the editor to change the story but for the editor to organize the writer's thoughts and observations into a meaningful story for the reader. The memoir calls for the writer to "neither a hero nor a victim be" (Moore, 2010, p. 32). While the story is not an objective one, the personalization present in the writer serving as the first-person narrator may prove to be the most critical role of the editor when addressing a memoir.

The memoir is a genre that can benefit from editing also because of its historically large number of novice authors. Anyone can write a story about themselves, so many people do. Does this isolated act make them any less of a writer? What they lack are not the words but the experience and the knowledge of effective practices. The editor helps these novice writers express their own story and reflections. Authorial identity is often present in the “voice” of the text, but “voice is absent in apprentice writing precisely because the writer has yet to develop for...herself a vision of how the world works” (Johnson, 2016, p. 84). This vision can come from reflection and contemplation on the story the author wishes to tell. The editor helps to develop (not create) this voice based on the text already written. Voice integrates the author’s “unique approach to language and viewpoint” into the story, maintaining a sense of personal identity (Johnson, 2016, p. 84). If “90 percent of good writing is rewriting,”(Johnson, 2016, p. 77) novice writers need to continually improve their craft, so that they can further develop their ‘vision’ of how the world works. The editor can uphold the author’s voice. A significant change in voice signals a change in vision, which is not the editor’s to create but the writer’s. For a text “to exhibit our best thought, best feeling, and best technique,” it requires our initial thoughts, feelings, and techniques (Johnson, 2016, p. 77). An editorial assessment of these elements in a memoir preserves the voice of the author to preserve the story’s meaning, which is enhanced to be its best rather than professionally standardized to the point of identity elimination. The author’s identity underlies the evolution of thought in a text. Editorial choices are made from an author’s stated intentions and are justified by those intentions. While the author’s voice is guided by the editor and her edits, the author’s identity ought to remain intact. Rewrites and revisions are guided by a

motivation to form a relatable, sustainable, and intriguing text, made up of words inherently infused with a voice.

### **What is Marked by the Editor's Pen?**

The particular editorial practices best used in memoir stem from a “galaxy of techniques and strategies” (Johnson, 2016, p. 41). With so many different types of texts, there cannot be one standardized approach or single operating procedure. However, there are best practices editors can use to improve and consolidate any text. Best practices are not grounded in editorial preference but rather adjusted by it. These practices “must serve spirited, memorable storytelling” to qualify as credible sources of editorial revision (Johnson, 2016, p. 41). The practices mentioned below are grounded in the theoretical editorial goals outlined above.

When working with a manuscript, Johnson (2016) argues an editor and author work together to

“rewrite and edit until the piece has no waste or unnecessary sentences whatsoever. Nothing that slows down the pace of the story. Any sentence that *can* come out *should* come out...no *remplissage* (literary padding) or *longueur* (long and boring passages). No irrelevant postcard details in background descriptions.”

(p. 79)

The editor conducts a “word-by-word analysis...with an eye toward explaining the principle of craft behind a correction or line that [they] praise” (Johnson, 2016, p. 40).

When the craft guides editorial decisions, the editor becomes a vessel of writing's best practices, knowledge the author may or may not possess, as well as a perspective outside the author's head.



Many different elements are considered by the editor when assessing each sentence. Some of these include “...logically plotted sequences...three-dimensional characters - that is, real people with real problems...dialogue with the authenticity of real speech...strong narrative voice...rhythm, musicality, and control of the cadences...[and] originality in theme and execution” (Johnson, 2016, p. 36). While this list is not exhaustive, it comes from a writing guide. Since the editor is a reader and a writer (when making edits), the editor does best to follow reading and writing guides when making edits. These edits occur at both the developmental and line editing stages, revealing the necessity for the editor to maintain strong reading and writing practices throughout the editorial process. Of course, these edits are subject to critiques. Editors broadly advise authors, “Don’t tell us what happened, show us” (Moore, 2010, p. 31). There are hundreds of ways authors can ‘show’ a scene. However, edits can be more direct and specific, too, such as structural advice to “take the simple sentence, then “complicate” (i.e., extend) the subject, the verb, then the object” to create rhythmic sentences (Johnson, 2016, p. 48). The editor reads for structure and content because each contributes to the other. The editor is also looking for “how event transforms character even as it is produced by character. Character...is the engine of plot” (Johnson, 2016, p. 79). This is particularly important in memoir, a text driven by a personal, well-developed character’s experiences. The editor exercises her role of reader through active participation in the text’s revision process. If the editor was only reading for grammar or strictly structural issues, she would miss the “...perception of depth and breadth [beyond the senses that] is vital for reading” (Young, 2016, p. 96). The editor’s revisions require thought and attention to detail to do justice to the author’s work.

## Research Questions

The questions motivating this study of editorial practices are:

- 1) Which edits are the most essential to the overall development of a text?
- 2) What is the significance of the developmental editing stage?
- 3) What factors impact editorial decision making at the developmental stage?
- 4) What is the purpose of editorial guidance?

## Methods

### Methodology

The present study concerns a self-study of editorial decision-making as well as active edits a memoir manuscript. The study's goals are to prepare the manuscript for publication while taking note of the most effective and well-received editorial practices employed between writer and reader, noting the use of recurring practices. The theoretical approach to editing and its practices described in this literature review guide the study by providing an explicit example of the relationship between writer and editor (and how author and editor simultaneously function within these roles). The best practices outlined in this review are placed under scrutiny for validity, credibility, and effectiveness. When considering the role of the editor, the study aims to explore how the editor improves, organizes, and potentially even legitimizes a text. Editorial review offers a chance for active critical reading to impact a text and bridge the author's thoughts to the reader's. The editor serves as the mediator, and in a text as personal as the memoir, the application of writing's best practices may reveal the universality of a previously personal text.

To best assess the qualitative nature of the research and the personal relationships and reflections, this study follows a narrative inquiry structure. Since "relationality is at

the heart” (Lewis & Adeney, 2014, p. 165) of the narrative inquiry process, the intimate author-editor relationship calls for a more personalized, yet still reputable and replicable, research approach. Like the goals of this study, “narrative inquiry does not seek a conclusive finding or findings; rather, it looks for understanding and meaning” (Lewis & Adeney, 2014, p. 175). While the study produces findings, these findings highlight a larger understanding of editing that inform the process perhaps more than the raw data collected. As a method, “quality narrative research is time-consuming and requires flexibility, patience and a willingness to change direction if needs be” (168). The study took many different directions in its early stages before developing into its existing form. The narrative form can involve interviews or direct immersion into the life of the participant, and this study adopts a hybrid model of these options (Lewis & Adeney, 2014, p. 162). Through hearing Colleen’s approach to her story as well as actively engaging with the written form of the story, “new and more expansive ways to interpret [my] own [as a researcher] and others’ experiences” (Lewis & Adeney, 2014, p. 162). By studying “the individual’s experience in the world” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 46), the researcher engages with the participant’s point of view, reacting to and reflecting on what exists in the world around them rather than an ideal. When “authentic understanding is gained from the meanings people bring to phenomena” (Lewis & Adeney, 2014, p. 163), the understanding can then be applied to pre-existing as well as yet-to-be-in-existence scenarios based in reality. This study reflects the principle of narrative inquiry that requires that “the inquirer immerses herself in a particular world, observes, reflects, and is part of it” (Lewis & Adeney, 2014, p. 163). By working directly with Colleen’s

manuscript and performing editorial practices firsthand, I become aware of the editor's responsibilities to the author and how they manifest in the editorial process.

### **Context & Method**

To study the effects of the editor's changes and suggestions on a text, I conducted a self-study in editorial decision making. Keeping in mind the editorial guidance I learned in my research as well as my own embodied knowledge of reading, writing, and editing, I embarked on editing a 155-page memoir manuscript. In the summer of 2019, my author participant shared an unfinished manuscript of a memoir she started about her experience as the female kicker on her state-champion high school football team. She asked for general feedback as she went. I read the manuscript a little at a time as she updated it.

In the fall of 2019, I took a university course on editing and publishing and began to wonder what their effects were on the creation and production of 'good' or 'publishable' writing were. I approached Colleen and asked if I could edit her manuscript as part of a self-study to investigate the choices editors make as they read a manuscript, why they make those choices, and how they affect the text in question. She willingly agreed, stating her interest in my active involvement with the text beyond the role I had been playing up to that point. In this way, the study also benefited Colleen's personal and professional goals as a writer and aspiring published author.

To conduct my research, I interviewed two professional editors, one of whom works in trade publishing (Daniel) and another with experience in journalism, library communications, and freelance editing (Mary). I met Mary through mutual connections, and she introduced me to David. I conducted professional interviews separately with each participant after spending some time emailing with them to get to know them better. The

virtual Zoom interviews asked the editors about their editorial experiences, the types of edits they make, the importance of editing, and the relationship between the author and the editor. Since the participants work in different disciplines, they offered an opportunity for comparison and contrast of editing. Their comments serve as primary sources of editorial knowledge that speak editorial guidelines and theory into practice.

I also interviewed Colleen virtually over Zoom about her goals for her manuscript as well as her motivations for writing and having that writing edited. Although I knew Colleen before embarking on the research process, I conducted this interview to better get to know the persona she presented in her manuscript. Colleen's manuscript also represented the work of a novice writer interested in editorial guidance for her work. She was also not in a rush to publish the work, allowing for adequate time to edit the manuscript and conduct the study. Colleen represents just one type of author whose work could be assessed in a study of this nature. Colleen's willingness to submit her manuscript to this study was a vital element to being able to study firsthand the types of decisions editors are faced with.

In addition to these interviews, I conducted a document analysis of Colleen's manuscript in Google Documents. I used Google Docs in Suggest mode to edit the manuscript. Any edits made directly to the text were in Suggest mode, meaning the edits were suggested in green in the body of text but the document was not permanently changed. This also kept a record of the edits on the right margin of the document. I chose Suggest mode for both its tracking purposes and to approach the edits as suggestions for the author to approve, integrating her into the process and requesting assessment of how my edits fit her intentions. In addition to these suggestions, I made comments about

particular words, lines, paragraphs, and pages using comment boxes also in the right margin. Both suggestions and comments must be resolved by the author to become a permanent fixture of the text. The author can also reply to any suggestion of comment with questions, concerns, or a comment of her own.

Initially, I intended to develop an editorial checklist to use as a guide as I edited the manuscript. I also planned to read the manuscript in sections. However, since I was studying my choices, I wanted to explore what choices I made when unprompted and focused on what the text already was rather than what it could or should be as defined by common writing practices. With more time and/or another manuscript, I would have designed a study in which I edited once with a checklist and once without. However, since this manuscript belongs to a real author who intends to pursue publication, I wanted to give the text the time and attention I committed to Colleen at the outset. Since the editorial process was both research-based and pragmatic, it was necessary to balance the productive editing of another student's manuscript as a student with self-study. To rush the editorial process for the sake of this thesis' publication would not be fair to Colleen, the author whose relationship I value and depend upon for trust, in the context of this study, as an editor. Despite the limited amounts of edits and abridged editorial process this poses to the study, it is for these reasons that I decided to read and edit the entire manuscript before sharing it with Colleen. While much of this decision was practically based, it also considered the research I conducted up to that point. Common editorial practice addresses the manuscript as a whole, and the cyclical relationship my research yielded essentially demands it. To do justice to a work, grasp the author's intentions and themes, and view the text as a holistic piece working together rather than as separate,

disconnected pieces, the editor must consider the whole text during their first editorial consideration of it.

To answer the research questions, I chose to narrow the focus of the study to the developmental stage. While reading during the first round of edits, I noticed the amount of time it was taking to fully process and appreciate the text in its developmental stage. In this stage focused on structure and content, I also was becoming familiar with Colleen's writing style, her story, and the themes of the text by helping to develop its meaning and effectiveness. I began to recognize the developmental stage's intricate connection to the reader-writer-editor cycle. To spend time with the text was to appreciate it as a reader and to approach its writing editorially. While choices made at every stage are important, the choices made at the developmental level hold a significant weight on the text's substance (as opposed to the words and grammar making up the text).

### **Data Collection**

After reading existing literature on editorial guidance and theory, I developed questions (see Appendix A) for the professional editor interviews as well as for Colleen's introductory interview (see Appendix B for questions). I conducted all of the interviews over Zoom (see Appendix C for transcripts). With knowledge from the literature and the interviews, I edited the text with suggestions and comments in Google Docs suggestion mode.

After I sent Colleen the first round of edits, I encouraged her to look at them on her own time and at her own pace. Colleen, a 21-year-old college junior at the time of this study's publication, is a Biology major at the University of Dayton who has taken basic English and composition classes needed for general education requirements. She

continues to be a student athlete in college and hopes to attend veterinary school following graduation. This is her first manuscript, and it took her approximately two and a half years to compose a complete draft.

The document I worked out of was a copy of the original document, and she had been simultaneously editing the original document with her own edits before seeing the edits I suggested. For the purpose of this study, the flexible timing allowed me to consider which edits Colleen truly wanted to make to her document rather than which edits she felt pressured to approve. My interview with Colleen was meant to uncover more about her experiences, her history, and her motivations for memoir writing. With this knowledge, I knew more about why Colleen wrote and wanted to publish her book; for example, she was not interested in producing an entirely groundbreaking story or in setting herself up to be a bestseller. Rather, she was interested in making her story available to others, particularly her family and friends, in a more official, preserved capacity. Edits for glitz, glamour, and drama perhaps would not address these goals. In addition to the process of editing and studying Colleen's choices, I also studied myself, so I examined what types of edits I chose to make, how often I ended up making them, and thought about why I was making those edits - how they fit into the developmental stage, how they affected the text, and the subjective and/or objective rationale for these edits.

### **Data Analysis: Analytic Procedure**

After completing a round of edits at the developmental stage, I created a spreadsheet with a column for each editorial comment or revision I made in the document and a corresponding column for the category that edit falls into. I separated the edits



present in Colleen's manuscript by type and then grouped those types together into broader categories. While some edits could fit into multiple categories, the particular category in which they ended up was based on the most compelling and necessary reason for making the edit. To maintain the integrity of Colleen's story and her voice, each edit needed a reason for being made that expanded beyond my personal interests and preferences as a reader or even as an editor. This categorization exposes the intentions behind each edit whose rationales were chiefly to move the story forward.

By analyzing the manuscript through edits and then analyzing those edits through types and categories, I was able to assess which types appeared more frequently, where which types occurred most often in the text, and what kinds of changes those suggestions had the potential to make if accepted or developed by Colleen (her responses to these edits could yield an entirely separate study on the editor-author relationship). The types and categories of edits came from a careful analysis of the edit or comment itself, the context surrounding, what it was suggesting to the text, and why it was being suggested. By categorizing each edit I made as a type, I studied how I was approaching the manuscript and had to determine why I was making particular edits (beyond just 'sounding' or 'looking' better). The categories also helped me notice the interrelationships and overlap of the types of edits, suggesting the complexity of editing that makes multiple different types of edits appropriate in the developmental stage.

### **Participants**

As a participant and researcher in the study, I was directly involved in both its method and analysis. I developed guiding questions and goals and also carried them out. In this way, I was intimately connected to the research and its intentions. It was important

to remain aware of this connection throughout the process to avoid confirmation bias of my own data. While I am not a professional editor, I am majoring in English and have multiple editorial experiences in academic and popular writing.

My relationship with Colleen was formed in college as teammates. My pre-existing knowledge of parts of Colleen's story as well as a familiarity with how she viewed the world helped immensely in the editing process as I tried to maintain the integrity of her voice and story through my edits. This relationship with Colleen anchored a strong author-editor relationship from the beginning of the project with little extra work required to get to know her and her writing style. Plus, I had already read a majority of her manuscript before officially beginning the study, offering a foundation for ways of thinking about her story and the most effective edits.

Daniel (pseudonyms used to protect participant identity of professional editors) is an author and editor who owns his own publishing consultancy. He has experience with trade publishing and particularly with memoirs. He advises aspiring authors on how to get connected with agents and publishers. He has both edited other people's work and worked with editors on his own writing. Some of his writing has been purchased for television. Daniel represents a successful, established figure in the commercial publishing world.

Mary, on the other hand, has journalistic and academic editorial experience. She worked for a newspaper for a number of years, first as a reporter and later as an editor. She then moved to academic publishing for a university library, editing and overseeing submission to digital platforms. She also serves as a freelance editor who offers editing at

multiple different stages of the writing process for various types of texts. Much of her experience and expertise lies in line and copy editing.

These varying participant backgrounds offer a richer view of editing as a practice relevant to multiple fields at different levels of expertise. The small number of participants allowed for an in-depth understanding of their roles and responsibilities as well as their thoughts and experiences as editors.

### **Findings**

Both Daniel and Mary, the participant editing professionals, alluded to the importance of editing on a personal level and its relationship to reading and writing, as well. Daniel shared, “I think every writer should edit other people’s work. You learn so much about writing by doing that.” Similarly, Mary expressed, “I got to read [the text] before anybody else...I also take pride in learning new things as I’m reading them...I like to read and I like to learn, and this provides me with that opportunity.” In their analysis of the role of the editor, they recognized that being a writer and a reader positively impacts their role as an editor, and being an editor allows them to become more nuanced, attentive writers and readers. Editing is not a chore to either professional but rather an opportunity to help another person and improve their own language skills while doing it. They attested to the editorial give-and-take present in my own self-study with Colleen’s gain of an edited manuscript and my gain of furthering editorial research.

The interviews with editing professionals also yielded a useful framework for my own approach to Colleen’s manuscript as well as helpful insights that led to the development of the types and categories of edits which I discerned following my document analysis of the manuscript. Both editors emphasized the importance of not

overshadowing the text with the editorial pen. Mary stressed, “Don’t rewrite it. It has to be theirs.” From this advice, I confirmed my decision to use the ‘Suggest’ mode on Google Docs rather than the ‘Edit’ mode to allow the author to see what I thought would work best in the text. The author also had the power to accept or reject my suggestions. By being in ‘Suggest’ mode, I also remained aware of just how many edits I was making on each page, keeping me in check that I was not rewriting Colleen’s entire manuscript. Similarly, Daniel explained, “Instead of saying, ‘Oh, this scene needs to be about this,’ I always ask the writer, ‘What is this scene about?’ and oftentimes if you gently coax a writer, they’ll come up with it themselves.” Daniel’s commentary here supports Mary’s encouragement not to rewrite the text, and his advice contributed significantly to the development of affirmational edits. By including comment boxes on the right side of the Google Doc, and particularly by including positive affirmations of good work in those comments, I aimed to “coax” Colleen into seeing strong parts of her work and applying those same strengths to other areas. Specifically at the beginning of the text, I also included questions and comments in lieu of more direct edits to help Colleen think about what she was trying to say and to offer her the independence to clarify, explain, and elaborate scenes on her own without my words becoming too entangled in what she as the author was trying to say.

Mary went on to say that the author’s “voice needs to be maintained and if...I find myself rewriting sections, sometimes I’ll just put the suggested rewrites in the notes, but after a certain point it’s not their voice anymore so I try to know them well enough that I can hear their voice and maintain that tone.” In this comment, Mary reiterates the author-editor relationship as one that is critical to the editorial process (and which is also a

critical element in this study). This comment points to the importance of editorial commentary as opposed to just direct editing and further suggests the decisive role of voice in a work. The editor is helping the author develop that voice through their pen, but the voice is ultimately the author's words. Since this study looks at memoir, the importance of voice manifests in the character development of the self who is narrating as well as that self's personal relationship to other characters. Thus, character development takes much precedence in the types and categories of edits outlined in the next section.

Daniel asserted that the role of the editor can be thought of as an adviser who assists the author with "the nuts and bolts of getting your ideas onto the page in a way where a reader can go, 'Oh, oh, I see.'" Not only does the editor ask the reader to explain and elaborate, they also "try to read things and present them in a way that is going to be useful to either educate or inform or entertain somebody...it has to be meaningful to them." The editor always has the reader in mind because the editor is a reader themselves. They are shaping both the tiny understandings and larger thematic issues in the same text, all for the sake of the reader's understanding and the author's opportunity to say in the best possible language what they are thinking. In this way, the editor contributes to both the big picture and nitty gritty of a text, often simultaneously.

Despite different editorial experiences in a variety of fields and at various stages of the editorial process, Daniel and Mary notably offered similar advice and theoretical approaches to editing and the role of the editor. Their emphasis on authorial voice, editorial reassurance rather than dictatorship, and holistic large- and small-scale approach to the texts they edit significantly impacted the editorial work and analysis present in this

study. Their comments also further support the interconnectedness of reading, writing, and editing this study puts forward.

Colleen's personal interview was more focused on her goals and intentions for her writing. Much of her interview contributed to my editorial consideration of the character development and thematic structure of her manuscript. Colleen underscored her reason for writing:

“I wanted to make sure that I never forgot what happened. I don't expect any money to really come from it, and I don't really expect a ton of people to be reading it because it's a small town, and I really just expected our own people to, but I wanted to write it for my teammates because they were very different than what people think of football players, and I wanted to show them how great they actually were. So, I thought coming from my perspective and showing them that was really helpful...I mainly wanted to keep it written down for my family to remember, and my teammates.”

In this explanation, Colleen reveals how important the characters in the story are, because these characters also refer to her target audience. When she is writing, this is who she has in mind; her goal is to recount the story in the best way possible for them to see themselves in a positive light as well as to mark the occasion. By understanding her motivations as an editor, I can make suggestions that lead her to writing for this audience through developing the ideas and parts of the story important to them. I am also more aware of to whom she is mentally writing: people who might not need as much explanation as a reader unfamiliar with high school football, her hometown, Colleen, etc.

By asking for more information at certain points of the story or asking for more details, Colleen can open up the story to more readers and audiences.

Colleen's comments also help me understand the themes she portrays and wants to portray in the story. With a working understanding of these goals, I can tease out particular moments and encourage her to develop them more or make suggestions of how to better incorporate them into the story she tells. Overall, Colleen hopes to emphasize the following message in her story:

“You could have all the talent in the world. If you don't have the right mentality, you won't win anything...champions are always the ones that do the little things and they always are the hardest workers. but You can't really be a champion without the other teammates around. So, I think it's when more than just one leader embraces that mentality...We're able to do a lot more than we think we can...I never thought twice about playing football and I didn't think that I couldn't do it. And I didn't limit myself.”

This insight into her own personal approach to her story and how she viewed her experience helps me as an editor stay true to the voice she puts forth in the text. Rather than define intentions or goals for her, she has clearly outlined what she hopes to accomplish in the text and what she hopes readers take away from it. As a reader of the text, I can approach the text with this in mind and make suggestions for how she can convey this mentality through her language and also make suggestions on how to further develop these ideas to appeal to her audience and attract other readers.

Colleen shared that she was “very willing to edit” her text because of her desire to have another set of eyes on her text:

“I think there's a lot of times where I think something is well written and then I'll look at it in a few weeks and be like, ‘Oh, wow. That was horrible.’ Or I'll be looking back at the first chapters. I'm like, ‘Why the heck did I put my PR in here? That was four years ago.’ So, that's why I think I needed one someone else. And then someone else like you, because you know my story more than anyone else, or just the way I am...the way I would think...the way I want it to be...Just like if you were a reader and being like, huh, you can't say that.”

In this statement, Colleen expresses her understanding of the role of the editor as a novice writer as well as the importance of a strong relationship to her editor. She values a working knowledge of the English language and how to best employ it to tell the story she wanted to tell. It was also important to her that her thoughts, opinions, and story remain true to who she is and how she wants those elements conveyed. In a sense, she is asking for editorial guidance and suggestions by asking for an editor who knows who she is and what she wants. She is looking for conventional edits and for someone to point out what she does not explain well, but she is also looking for someone to help develop her text to be meaningful to her readers and to herself and to be representative of her experience.

### **Categorical Editorial Analysis**

I organized the edit types outlined below by edits in most need of attention. The following categories - character development, textual commentary, narrative development, and conventions - are not representative of the frequency of the types of edits that appear. Rather, these categories are indicative of their importance in developing the memoir as a whole (the ultimate goal of the developmental stage). The characters in a



memoir are crucial to its personal development, textual comments requesting explanations and clarifications are essential for the reader to properly grasp meaning, narrative development is critical to the big picture approach, and conventions, although frequent and considered least in need of attention at this stage, are a necessary part of any stage of editing.

Character development edits included characterization and point of view edits. Characterization referred to the development of characters other than Colleen, the first-person narrator. These edits intended to help the reader get to know the characters as well as understand how they moved the story along. Conversely, point of view edits focused on the narration of the memoir, which also happens to be the way Colleen's character is incorporated into the story. The goal of these edits was to encourage Colleen the author to pull readers into her own brain and let them see the story through her eyes with more personal reflection and thoughts.

While character development involved a mixture of revisions and comments, the textual commentary category consisted heavily of marginal comments. Affirmations confirmed strengths in the manuscript with the hope of helping Colleen recognized the effective writing practices already present in her text. The affirmations were also meant to provide a source of encouragement and motivation through the editing process and to build a stronger editor-author relationship with Colleen. Clarifications seek to point out sources of confusion that hinder a reader's understanding of the story and require, for lack of a better term, clearing up. A clarification may be thought of as a contradiction of a gap. On a related note, explanations take clarifications one step further to offer more information. If a clarification is a filling in a missing point in a timeline, explanation is

outlining why the timeline is being discussed at all. Clarifications and explanations are more related to each other than affirmations, but all three represent how commentary on the text affects its overall development. While all edits are at the discretion of the author, clarifications and explanations are about as close to essential as mechanical, representing less of an artistic choice and more of a contextual foundation for comprehension.

Narrative development flows out of this textual commentary. Elaboration calls for expansion of a statement of scene through more detail or sensory language. While it is not critical to the understanding of the text, it enhances the quality of the reading experience, story development, and subsequent textual meaning. Elaboration is closely related to explanation but appears in narrative development because of its more artistic approach and response. Thematic edits tackle particular sentences or even paragraphs that seem out of place with the hope of relating them back to a larger theme present in the story. In doing so, the text may even develop new themes and, in making these edits, the author spends time considering what the themes of her story are and revisits her purpose for writing. Structural edits address how the story is laid out on both a large and small scale. The story's organization contributes to its development of themes, reader comprehension, and logical flow. The order of words, sentences, paragraphs, and even chapters can affect how the story is received and the significance of different textual elements. Structural edits go beyond the proper ordering of words to encompass a broader view of what the text is trying to accomplish.

The final category of edits are conventions, typical of what many might expect an editor to be focused on. There are a few reasons for including convention edits at the developmental stage, the first and most pragmatic being not having to make those edits in

future drafts. While some of the edits may sit within content that will eventually be deleted, content that remains will already have one round of copy edits complete.

Additionally, conventional edits can affect the development of the story due to their close association with shaping tone, style, structure, and comprehension. Edits for convention consist most prominently of mechanical edits for grammar. Stylistic edits approach the language in the text and represent slightly more subjective suggestions than mechanical. Adjusting the language and addressing inconsistencies elevates the text's readability and may also heighten meaning within particular scenes. Edits for concision eliminate redundancies and superfluous information for an improved textual flow. These edits also allow certain elements repeated for emphasis to stand out apart from other, less significant information repeated unintentionally or unnecessarily. While concision has a level of subjectivity to it, the author's voice and choices remain intact when a rationale is attached to each elimination or concision.

**Table 1***Types of Edits by Category and Frequency*

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
<b>Character development</b>	Characterization	Developing characters besides the first person narrator	17
	Point of View	Strengthen first person POV; lets reader see through narrator's eyes	24
<b>Textual commentary</b>	Affirmation	Recognition of significant textual elements; meant to guide author edits	21
	Clarification	Point of confusion that hinders understanding	50
	Explanation	Not necessarily confusing but need/want to know more	22
<b>Narrative development</b>	Elaboration	Could benefit from expansion/detail	23
	Thematic	Relating sentences that seem out of place to larger themes in the story	7
	Structural	How the story is told and organized	40
<b>Conventions</b>	Mechanical	Grammatical errors	473
	Stylistic	Language could be stronger/more consistent to improve flow	107
	Concision	Eliminating redundancies and extraneous information	267

The frequency of these edits as listed in Table 1 is not indicative of their importance in the developmental stage. The most frequent edit was mechanical, yet this was the developmental stage of editing. This is due to a few different factors. First, the Google Docs platform counts each removal and replacement as separate edits, causing an inflated frequency. Additionally, the mechanical edits made at this stage of editing affect the text developmentally; they affect the tone, voice, and style of the text and can even affect intended meaning. Plus, mechanical edits made now are edits that will not need to be made later. These factors thus contribute to the high overall frequency of conventional edits.

As an editor focused on how I was receiving the text as a reader first, clarification was also important. While my English experience can be helpful in developing the text artistically, my role as a reader assumes the position of individuals with much less experience. If I do not understand something as a reader, it is my responsibility as an editor to bring forward any ambiguities. Similarly, structural edits address these points of confusion and flow and therefore represent a relatively larger amount of the edits.

Similarly, the type of edit made least often was thematic, but this again is multifaceted and not indicative of the relative importance of edits at this stage. Most importantly, thematic edits may fall under many of the types of edits outlined in Table 1. Each edit was only assigned to its single most relevant category. Many edits made at the developmental level are focused on the themes of the text, however this particular edit type is focused on relating sentences or paragraphs that feel out of place or underdeveloped to a larger theme within the text (or perhaps developing a theme out of recurring motifs). This specific type of edit is infrequent due to the limited number of

themes in a text and its overlap with other types. It also suggests already well-developed content toward major themes.

While frequency is not indicative of the importance of edits at this stage, the frequency of edit types changed from the beginning to the middle to the end of the text. Edits at the beginning of the text, shown in Figure 1, had a much broader focus on the text as a whole and setting its foundations. The text itself was manipulated and rearranged quite infrequently; instead, edits generally consisted of comments and questions as I tried to understand the text as a reader. In getting familiar with the text, I was ensuring I understood the text before changing it. I was still getting to know the characters, setting, plot, and themes; there had not yet been enough repetition, as many patterns had yet to be developed.

## Figure 1

### *Editorial Directives in the Beginning of the Manuscript*

#### EXAMPLE 1 (pg. 11)

Finally their work paid off. The 2012 Lumen Christi girls cross country team won the state championship. The news sent a shock of energy that energized the girls. All around me girls were crying and hugging as they chanted their team warm up: alert, alive, awake, and enthusiastic about running. Girls were sobbing in the arms of their teammates. A flood of lime green warm ups were celebrating the efforts of every thirty five of the runners. Jacqueline ran up to me and hugged me with all her might. The influence those girls had on my life was powerful. Her tears streaming down my back meant more to me than she could ever imagine. Once the girls were preparing to receive their trophy, Jacqueline took her bib off and gave it to Shannon. Shannon's name was printed boldly on the bib.



Maggie Cahill  
10:03 PM Dec 8



\*notable: shannon got the team to the state finals but didn't get to race in it - parallels your experience



Maggie Cahill  
10:01 PM Dec 8



this paragraph is CRITICAL to the story - take me there. let me see/hear/taste/smell/feel it. use all the senses.

*Comments above copied from original document*



Maggie Cahill  
10:00 PM Dec 8



can you write this as though it's being chanted - help me imagine this moment more

*Comments above copied from original document*



Maggie Cahill  
10:02 PM Dec 8



what had you been doing? what were you thinking? how were you feeling? pull out of retrospect here and write yourself into the scene

Once I became more familiar with the text as a reader, I was getting to know the author's style and story. Mechanical edits began to emerge more frequently in the middle of the text as seen in Figure 2, particularly as I noticed inconsistencies in voice, grammar, and diction. I had much more of a sense of the text as a whole. The author's choices became more apparent, and themes emerged. I felt more confident in taking the liberty of suggesting edits directly on the text. Additionally, with fewer comments and questions in Figures 2 & 3 due to having already spent a significant amount of time with the text's foundations, direct edits to the text ensured my sustained active reading and participation in the text as a reader first. By actively engaging with the text, I could more easily recall what I had already read and more readily made connections as themes gradually emerged. As noted in the discussion of edit frequencies, thematic edits were few and far between. To spot them, I needed to remain an engaged and active reader.



## Figure 2

### *Editorial Directives in the Middle of the Manuscript*

#### EXAMPLE 2 (pg. 113)

Suddenly, our senior captain lay on the field post tackle. Silence crept through the once lively sideline. The feeling of unrest and fear overwhelmed our team. Luke Stanton was a defensive back and one of the toughest on the team. Stanton was also known for his kindness and personality. I looked up to see Coach Shane Brogan in disbelief. ~~There are some athletes that when they do not get up right away from injury, coaches know the severity of the injury. In this situation,~~ Luke was one of those kids who got up right away. Our athletic trainer helped Luke off of the field to have the orthopedic doctor look at his injured knee. ~~Later on, it was known that~~ Luke had torn both his ACL and meniscus; and would need surgery. As a senior, Luke struggled to keep the tears in knowing that he would not be able to physically defend his state title. Our team fell quiet after the 48 to 15 point win over Quincy. Even though we won by such a great amount, Stanton was ~~on~~ in the minds of his ~~the~~ teammates.

M Maggie Cahill 11:27 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Add: "had"

Comments above copied from original document

M Maggie Cahill 11:27 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Replace: "e" with "n"

Comments above copied from original document

M Maggie Cahill 11:27 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Delete: ","

Comments above copied from original document

M Maggie Cahill 11:28 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Replace: "in" with "on"

M Maggie Cahill 11:26 AM Feb 23 ✓ ⋮

we have already been introduced to him

Comments above copied from original document

M Maggie Cahill 11:27 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Delete: "There are some athletes that when they do not get up right away from injury, coaches know the severi..."

Comments above copied from original document

M Maggie Cahill 11:27 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Add: "who got up right away"

Comments above copied from original document

M Maggie Cahill 11:27 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Delete: "Later on, it was known that" ✕

M Maggie Cahill 11:28 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Replace: "the" with "his"

Comments above copied from original document

M Maggie Cahill 11:28 AM Feb 23 ✓ ✕

Add: "mates"

The end of the text was marked by an abundance of edits for convention and hardly any comments or questions (with the exception of the very end, which included comments and questions about wrapping up the story and tying it all together). All of the edits in Figures 3 consisted of deletions, additions, and replacements. As previously mentioned, though, these edits for conventions still supported the developmental stage. For example, the deletion of the boys' names in Figure 3 was suggested because of how it contributed to the overall tone of the narrative. Since the reader had already met these characters, calling them by their full names and repeating their positions emphasized a journalistic tone focused on reporting the facts over telling a story from the author's point of view. Thus, this simple removal changed the development of the story.

## Figure 3

## Editorial Directives in the End of the Manuscript

**EXAMPLE 3 (pg. 141)**

Our offense sprinted on the field with confidence. This past season's success on the offensive side of the ball was ~~objectively very successful. The offense was very special.~~ It was easy to tell that they were different than most teams. It was easy for them to work for each other over themselves. Our offensive line was explosive and had a wicked mentality. ~~that An attitude that was dangerous~~ allowed them to ~~loyally~~ block with passion to protect their backs and receivers. ~~with Ian Williams, Keegan Smith, Austin Maynard, Ben Pelletier, and Tyler Bolen all powered the offense by their loyal blocks. As for~~ Our backs and receivers ~~responded to the line's loyalty with trust,~~ ~~their~~ speed and strength ~~creating were~~ the perfect formula to pair with the disciplined line. ~~Sebastian Toland, Troy Kutcha, Kyle Minder, Cody Kalahar, Dayton Keller, and Cameron White responded to the line's loyalty with trust.~~ The speed out of the huddle pointed to the discipline of this team. A toss sweep allowed Toland to earn a first down. Minder powered through four defensive linemen driving for the next down.

**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:26 PM Feb 26

**Delete:** "s for"

*Comments above copied from original document*

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**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:26 PM Feb 26

**Replace:** "o" with "O"

*Comments above copied from original document*

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**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:26 PM Feb 26

**Add:** "responded to the line's loyalty with trust"

*Comments above copied from original document*

---

**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:26 PM Feb 26

**Add:** "their"

**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:22 PM Feb 26

**Delete:** "objectively very successful. The offense was very"

*Comments above copied from original document*

---

**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:23 PM Feb 26

**Replace:** "An attitude that was dangerous" with "that"

*Comments above copied from original document*

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**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:25 PM Feb 26

**Add:** "loyally"

*Comments above copied from original document*

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**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:24 PM Feb 26

**Delete:** "with Ian Williams, Keegan Smith, Austin Maynard, Ben Pelletier, and Tyler Bolen all powered the offens..."

**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:27 PM Feb 26

**Replace:** "were" with "creating"

*Comments above copied from original document*

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**M** Maggie Cahill  
8:26 PM Feb 26

**Delete:** "Sebastian Toland, Troy Kutcha, Kyle Minder, Cody Kalahar, Dayton Keller, and Cameron White responded..."

## Discussion

### 1) Which edits are the most essential to the overall development of a text?

The range of edits throughout the text developed the narrative to better match the author's goals and intentions, improving and enhancing the text's quality for the reader. The distinction between the editorial stages (i.e., developmental, line, copy) lay in the rationale behind making them. The edits made in this first round were developmentally driven and focused on the big picture of the text as a whole, which is why reading and editing the text as a unit became so critical at this stage. By putting a reason behind each edit, it became a choice for the author to approve or disapprove of. While this may not be the most efficient practice for many editors, for the sake of this study, each edit I made needed to be justified. While professional editors may or may not offer a justification for each of the edits they make on an author's text, the consideration of 'how to be a good editor' and 'how to produce good writing' may in fact stem from the ability to justify editorial choices more than from an editorial checklist.

### 2) What is the significance of the developmental editing stage?

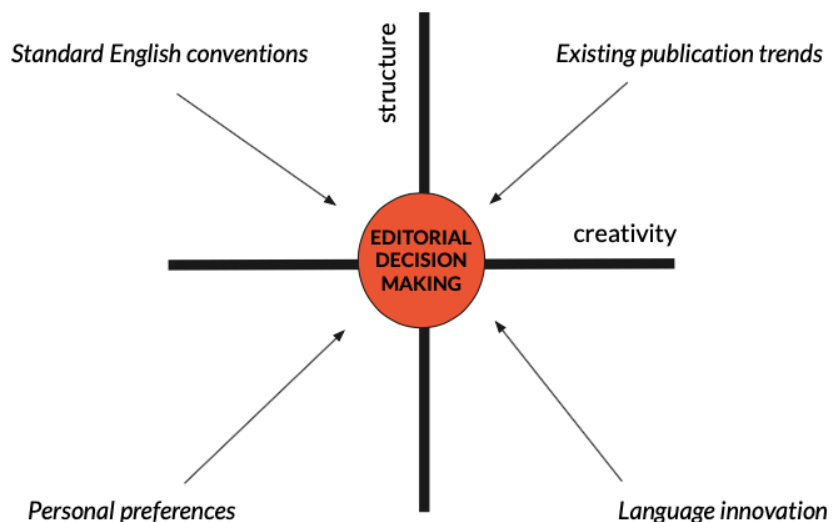
By acting as a reader of the text first, the editor respects the author's choices and the story she is trying to tell, "doing justice" to her work in the process. The justification of editorial decisions on Colleen's manuscript can be traced back to a desire to maintain the integrity of her story and the voice she uses to tell it. By actively engaging with the text with a critical eye toward her goals as a writer, each edit worked toward a just reading of her writing that goes beyond what I personally consider good writing or even what Standard English Conventions might consider to be good writing.

### 3) What factors impact editorial decision making at the developmental stage?

Therefore, the most effective editorial decision-making sits at the intersection of structure and creativity. It is the middle ground between these potentially polarizing forces that the most fruitful editing can occur. Structure refers to the more rigid editorial decisions like grammar or organization, while creativity references artistic choices like descriptions or word choices. Both of these elements are helpful and necessary in developing a healthy text. However, editorial checklists may not perceive their interrelated relationship. The range of edits made in the text just in the developmental stage points to a comprehensive approach to editing that values this balance in each stage of editing. The developmental stage incorporated mechanical edits alongside creative, thematic edits. A lack of either pole could result in a creative but disorganized, or a grammatically correct but dry, text that is unappealing to readers and unrepresentative of the story's purpose.

#### Figure 4

*Factors Affecting Editorial Decision Making*



Standard English conventions would be an example of a structurally based factor affecting editorial decisions. Elements like grammar, spelling, and other mechanics represent the more rigid tenets of language. On the opposite spectrum lies language innovation, including new forms of organization, new ways to use words, or complex figures of speech. These types of highly creative elements may not be the most beneficial choices for a novice writer seeking first-time publication, as they have a high potential for language to overshadow and muddle the story. Novice writers, though, may be expecting this type of editorial guidance. Thus, it is critical for the editor to offer a rationale for more standardized or conventional edits at the developmental stage to ensure the author recognizes 1) that consistency and coherence are more influential reasons for these edits at this stage than improper grammar and 2) that their writing is not inadequate.

Personal editorial preferences indicate a lack of structure and creativity as they represent the editor's own, unjustified claims and wishes. If the editor is a reader first, the requests and suggestions of a single reader fail to represent a text's readership as a whole, limiting the story to be directed toward a small audience (perhaps even an audience of one). Narrative development edits or even character development edits are in danger of falling into this trap if the editor allows personal preference to overshadow an author's goals and voice. An edit for what the editor wants or even thinks the story to be can become a gray area of discretion. Conversely, existing publishing trends, which theoretically would embody the apex of creativity and English structure may not fare well for texts seeking publication, as they will also lack a diversity and uniqueness when

compared to other texts publishers acquire. Furthermore, even established authors can benefit from insightful, fresh editors, editing, and editorial techniques.

#### **4) What is the purpose of editorial guidance?**

It is at the heart of all these interrelated factors, then, that the most innovative and effective editorial decision making resides. Editing is the quiet, behind-the-scenes craft pushing the writing to a higher level of thought and execution. It ties an invisible thread throughout a piece of writing to make thousands of words fit together seamlessly and effortlessly. Editorial decisions should ensure the reader knows, without a doubt, these thousands of words tell a unified story in a strong voice. The meaning the reader takes away was composed by the author but noticed and extracted first by the editor. All editorial decision-making ought to point to and be justified by the unearthing of what sits between the lines.

### **Conclusion**

To respect an author's work as an editor requires building a relationship. The editor must get inside the author's head to see from her point of view. The editor must adopt the writer's voice as a reader and an editor. The editor must approach a text with the determination that it can, in fact, improve. The limit on good writing is incomplete, unjust, selfish editing. To be an effective editor requires asking 'why' the items on the editorial checklist are necessary and how they should be integrated. Holistic editing implants the editor into a cycle of reading, writing, and editing that can be applied to a multitude of texts, authors, and identities. Curiosity lies at the heart of editing.

This research may continue in a variety of ways. Of course, this study ought to be replicated across a range of disciplines, editors, authors, genres, and texts. It may address other editorial stages like line or copy editing. It may be continued to consider how the

editorial process and decision-making shifts following feedback from a publisher or how an editor and author with a longstanding relationship work together on multiple manuscripts. Perhaps it may also expand to develop a matrix of experienced and new editors working on texts written by veteran and novice writers. It is these possibilities that suggest the importance of this study: editorial work must continue to be scrutinized for its approach but also recognized for its invisible yet vital hand in a text. The editorial pen has made many markings, but it is nowhere near out of ink.



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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Professional Editor

Dear X:

I am a senior English major at the University of Dayton conducting an Honors Thesis about the editorial process in publishing. The purpose of my project is two-fold. First, my study aims to describe the practices that professional book editors use when evaluating manuscripts for publication through observation and interviews. Second, my project aims to apply these practices to the development of one writer's memoir manuscript to submit the manuscript for publication. As I work with a student to help in the editing and publication of her memoir, I am curious to know more about your own experience as an editor. I hope to conduct a series of interviews with professionals in the field of editing to enhance my research as well as my own editorial process. Below are a sample of the questions I will ask:

1. What types of authors do you work with?
2. What types of texts do you work with?
3. What is the most frequent edit you make?
4. What is the least frequent edit you make?
5. What is the most critical aspect of editing?
6. What is the role of the editor?
7. Tell me about the relationship between the author and the editor.
8. Why should a text be edited?
9. In your experience, how willing (or resistant) are authors to the edits you suggest?

Why do you

think this is the case?

10. What should an editor avoid?

11. How does the author influence the editor? How does the editor influence the author?

The risks of this project do not extend beyond those encountered in everyday life. Interview participants will be asked non-sensitive topics about everyday work habits and practices. Interviews with participants will be audio-recorded and video-recorded (through the Zoom platform) to be referenced by the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used to maintain confidentiality of participant identity. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study if you are willing and able. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maggie Cahill

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Author Participant

### Author Interview Questions

#### 1. Background Interview

1. Aim: Determine what kind of editorial guidance is author seeking?
2. Questions:
  1. What are your main motivations behind publishing a book?
  2. Who should my favorite character be?
  3. Who is the protagonist in your story? The antagonist? (In other words - who are we rooting for?)
  4. What are we rooting for?
  5. What is this story actually about?
  6. What do you see as the most critical aspect of publishing your book?
  7. Why do you think your book should be edited?
  8. What kinds of edits are you hoping to gain?
  9. How do you think your manuscript can be improved?
  10. What is the strongest part of your manuscript?
  11. What is the weakest part of your manuscript?
  12. How willing are you to edit your manuscript?

### Profile Interview

- . Aim: Understand the author's personal history and how it manifests in the manuscript
- a. Questions:
  1. Why do people love sports?
  2. What is significant about your role as the only female member of your football team?
  3. How did gender affect your experience?
  4. Why do you think football has remained a predominantly male sport?
  5. What have you learned from your time on the team? Your time as an athlete?
  6. What was important about your particular role on the team (as a kicker, as a female, as a multi-sport athlete, as a collegiate athlete)?
  7. How did your previous life experiences contribute to your role on the team?
  8. How should girls be integrated into the sport of football (i.e. should it be a co-ed or single gender sport)?
  9. What are your top three personal sports moments?
  10. Tell me about what it means to be an underdog.
  11. What makes a champion?
  12. Underdog or champion?
  13. What does this story teach us or remind us about humanity/being human?

## Appendix C: Interview Transcripts (Edited)

### Interview 1: Daniel, Professional Editor

**Margaret Cahill:** Alright, so, um, if you want to start out just by talking a little bit about who you are and what you do, that would be great.

**Daniel:** Hi, I'm Daniel. I am the best-selling author of books. I write all different kinds of stuff: novels, poetry, songs, plays, screenplays, movies. Screenplays and movies, those are the same things. I just wrote a pilot for a TV show series and I also co-founded a business called X and we help people get published. We've been doing this for about years. My partner and I, we travel all over the country going to writers' conferences, book fairs, independent bookstores, libraries. We do an event which is kinda like American Idol for books where people pitch to us and our mission is to help voices that aren't heard get a place at the table in publishing, which is predominantly made up of white people who may be clueless of what America wants or think they're woke and are so not. So, we look for people who New York publishing doesn't know there's an audience for. You know. People of color. People have different sexual identities, you know, all kinds of people who are underrepresented in the world of publishing. I edit books. I help people fix their pitches. I help people find the right agent, find the right publisher. I produce events and I teach people how to reach their audience, whether it be through electronic means, live presentations, social media, all that kind of stuff.

**MC:** Great.

**D:** And I'm a softball player.

**MC:** Oh, you are?

**D:** Yeah, very serious.

**MC:** Where do you play?

**D:** A pitcher. I'm a pitcher. Yeah, can't start without the pitcher. See, that's

**MC:** Exactly, yeah. My parents were actually part of a softball league for a long time.

**D:** Yeah?

**MC:** Ha, really, yeah. I'm from Louisville, Kentucky, so

**D:** You're from Kentucky somewhere?

**MC:** From Louisville.

**D:** So, you say it like a real...people who aren't from there say 'Louisville.' Yeah, a little, little you're kind of

**MC:** Like marbles.

**D:** Marbles in the mouth. It's really a beautiful place.

**MC:** Yeah, yeah, I love it there. Neither my parents are from there, though. They're both from the northeast. But they've lived there for like years now. But yeah, so I'll tell you a

little bit about myself. I am, sort of like I mentioned in the email, a senior here at the University of Dayton. I met Mary...we just sort of got connected...through editing and publishing...I had expressed interest in that...that's how we got to know each other.

**D:** That's networking. Yeah, that's one of our fundamental principles of how to succeed in business. But it just shows you like that person turns down to this person and all of a sudden you're talking to this person. That works. I feel like it's best. Mary is awesome. She edited a book of mine.

**MC:** Oh really? Yeah, she mentioned that she was the emergency copy editor for somebody's book.

**D:** That's me. Yeah, it's not that often you have publishing emergencies. We have a life and death situation in publishing. It kind of was...Yeah, it's like she stepped up and she's one of the greatest editors I've ever worked with. And I've worked with dozens and dozens of editors. She's meticulous on like every single thing. She looks stuff up and she, I mean, she's, she's a model for what it is to be a professional and to be an editor.

**MC:** Yeah, I was able to work with her on a very short project, in May, and I was just blown away by how she looked up like every single word and like what does this word mean in this context. And it was such a short project. But still, like...

**D:** She's so meticulous; it's inspiring to me. I learned about being a professional from her.

**MC:** Yeah. So, I'm doing this thesis about editing and publishing and originally I was supposed to go to Oxford in England this past summer to study with a tutor.

**D:** Oh, no.

**MC:** So, unfortunately, I didn't get to do that, but it was in the process is when I sort of got connected with Maureen. And she kind of led me in a new direction. So, no, it's okay. But yeah, so the thesis is kind of like a two-part thing where one of my classmates is writing a memoir. And so, I am helping her edit that section by section and then on the other side, doing my own research about the editing process and about publishing and what types of things are published and kind of supplementing the work that I'm doing and sort of learning alongside my research and then researching alongside my experience. So that's a little bit about what the project is and then I am talking with some editors and professional editors to get their insight as well. So that's where this comes from.

**D:** Research. That's another of our four principles of getting successfully published. So you've hit two of them already.

**MC:** Networking. Research. What are the other two? Writing? Yeah.

**D:** You actually have to, you know, write a great book. There are lots of great books that get published. And perseverance. Perhaps the most important of all of them.

**MC:** They're good.

**D:** I mean they're basically, you know, principles that succeed in any business really. I mean, substitute whatever the craft is for writing you know whatever you're trying to

become a master of and make money at or being in the world doing. .Yeah, those principles are rock solid.

**MC:** Yeah. So, you touched on it a little bit, but can you tell me about the relationship between an author and an editor? What, in your experience, has that looked like? What do you think it should look like?

**D:** Okay, well, you know, ideally, an editor and a writer, have a kind of symbiotic relationship. You know, one of the unwavering principles of writing is that you can't be objective about your own work. So many times, I've talked to an editor and they said, 'Well, I don't get the scene.'

I'm like, 'What do you mean you don't get the scene? I mean just read it. I mean, just look at it. Look at it! Just read it! I mean just - it's all there on the page!'

And the editor will go, 'Well what did you hope to accomplish in the scene?'

'Well, you know, when the cat goes to the guy, he's thinking, Okay, well, this is my whole plot, meanders like what...'

'Literally none of that is on the page.'

I'm like, 'Oh, you're right. None of that is on the page.'

Like, it's all still in my head, kind of, and like that to me is, at the core, what a great editor can do for you. Should do for you. So, you know the nuts and bolts of getting your ideas onto the page in a way where a reader can go, 'Oh, I see. So, the cat represents everything in his life. Wow, that's cool,' which is what my intent was in this meetup scenario. That's like the foundation to me of what a great editor can do

Now pulling back from that: an editor should be looking at the voice of the piece, what we're talking about, like, well, any kind of writing. Doesn't matter. Before I became a professional writer, people would say that. I'm like, what, what is the voice. You know, it's on the page. And I tell people it's as if the author is telling you the story in your ear, reading it to you out loud. That voice, the language, the rhythm. It's so distinctive when you see a voice, where you go. Yeah, it just feels like somebody's telling me a story.

So, the voice, the plot. If there's a plot: a beginning, a middle and an end. Things come together and fall apart. Is it escalating? Is it, does it have a climax that's satisfying and yet unpredictable? Because if it's too unpredictable, it's probably not satisfying, and if it's too predictable, you know, it's going to be cliché. You hate, I hate those endings. Somebody told me that endings should be like a bell and not a bow. That's right. So, it's going out into the world. You can see there's all kinds of possibilities from that - the sound waves going out - whereas a bow, and then they get married and live happily ever after and their children go to a great college, you don't, don't do that unless you're making fun of that. So, plot: what are the things that happen? One thing leads to the next, segues between those things. Beginnings, middles, and ends.

Every book I've ever edited doesn't have a good enough first sentence. And it's the first thing anybody's going to read. In the world of modern publishing, where editors and agents are overwhelmed and inundated with their own clients to make those people's dreams come

true, never mind, somebody they don't know or went to school with their uncle's cousin. So, honestly, sometimes if the first sentence doesn't grab the editor or the agent or now the reader, because you have so many choices you know from reading books to Netflix, you're done, first paragraph, first page. I'm telling you, if an editor doesn't fall in love with you, or an agent, by the time the first page is done, you get that letter back:

Dear Sir or Madam, This piece doesn't meet our needs. This particular Jamie, whatever. Well, you don't even hear from them. That's probably more likely, you will never hear from them again. So, beginning oftentimes in the middle of a book and there's, you know, a lag time and things get slow and sluggish and then as the story goes, it has to get faster at the end until it, you know, boom, there's this fantastic climax. There's so many books that I edit that don't have a climax. What's life without a climax, I asked you. We all like climaxes, that's just a fact of human existence. That the character arc: person starts as this person, they slowly become this person by the end.

I always use the Wizard of Oz as a way of explaining character arc and plot. A girl dreams of going over the rainbow, she gets to go to the rainbow. There's a bunch of secondary characters who all have their story, who keep telling her the truth. She doesn't understand it. She can't grasp it until she comes by herself. There's a horrible monster who wants to kill her. And her little dog and the monkeys. It's scary and has a terrible castle and she's gonna die. And then there's a wizard. Wizard, he's bald man behind it, with a little bold short man behind a curtain. All these kinds of, you know, things happen in a story in one way or another. And by the end at the beginning of this story all she wants is to get out of Kansas and it's in black and white. By the end of the story, she's like, 'Oh my god, all I want is to go home. She's a different human being at the end that she is at the beginning.

So, character arc. Showing versus telling. He asked, 'Give me an example.' People do this all the time. So much exposition, backstory at the beginning. Some people reveal the entire story on the first page. 'And then when the Butler did it, everyone was shocked.' And now let's begin our story like no, no, no, no, don't, don't, don't do that. Don't tell us.

So, here's an example. I'm going to tell you something. My father was an angry man whose frequent bouts of rage severely affected his family, and in particular his oldest son. Okay, well that's something that happens all over the world all the time. That's so general it doesn't even have any meaning. You're showing.

I'm 10 years old. We're in the garage, me and my dad. I'm working his nerves, like I know exactly where the nerve is. I just want him to explode because I hate him. All right. And finally, I hit the nerve and you can just see like the rage vein pops out in his head and he goes all red. All the veins in his neck pop out and he grabs a motorcycle helmet. And he throws it at me. And everything's in slow motion. The motorcycle helmet is headed straight for my skull, I can see the whole thing. It's going to crack my head open. My brain's going to be on the floor. My dad is going to kill me. I'm not going to get to grow up. I'm not going to get to get married, have a kid, be in college. I can see the whole thing takes like an hour for what really would be like that. Well, I am blessed with good reflexes because of my dad, probably, so I duck out of the way. The motorcycle helmet hits the wall behind us. And there's a motorcycle helmet shaped hole in the wall, and he never fixes it. So, every time I walk out of the garage, I'm reminded, there's the time my dad tried to kill me.



That's showing. Not telling, showing. That's an editor's job: to find where the author is telling us stuff when they could be showing us and using word pictures, a sense of place, a sense of environment. World building, we call it in sci fi. Well world building happens all the time when you write anything, whether you're in a kitchen or whether you're on the moon. You have to show us, everything on the table that you show us has to move the story forward in some way or show us who these people are. The T shirts they're wearing, the way their hair is All those particular details. If we see those in Word pictures, that's the thing that engages our brain and our imagination as a reader.

**MC:** Yeah, even just you telling the two different stories, I could tell the shift of my attention was so much more...

**D:** Exactly. You can see it. Yes.

**MC:** So, what, then, would you say is the most critical aspect of editing? You kind of mentioned it, but, would you say that it's getting the author to show instead of tell, or would you say that it's something bigger or smaller?

**D:** I guess again, I'll go back to what I said when I started this: That the end of the beginning of that question. It's to make sure that what is in the author's head and what they're trying to communicate... Sometimes the author doesn't even really actually know what he's trying to communicate. Honestly, I've had this happen to me as author and editor over and over again but, 'What is the scene really about?'

'Well, it's a couple making breakfast.'

'Yes. But what is it really about?'

'Well, the eggs get burned.'

'No, but what is it really...?'

'He doesn't like burnt eggs.'

'No, but what is it really about?'

'It's because he hates being with her.'

'Oh, that's what the scene is really about.'

You're supposed to be writing something personal; you're working on a memoir. I've written two memoirs, and a ton of personal essays. And I edited so many people's memoirs and personal essays, I put together an anthology. It's all people's writings about their personal life. So I edited every story, hundreds of those stories. So, I've worked a lot on memoir. And it's particularly difficult to be objective about your own life. It's just not possible. I discovered so much about myself when I wrote my book. Everything I've written about my own personal life - and I've written a lot about it. My first memoir, I learned so much about myself that I didn't even know by writing this book and I was lucky enough to work with several brilliant editors who would say to me, 'But I don't understand what's really going on here.'

And I'm like, 'Stupid. I mean, look, at what's going on, what's really going on.'

Oh, I'm much better at it now. And that's a writer's job, is to cut out the whole what, 'Oh you're so stupid.' I have a lot of problems with that. My wife was my first agent and my first editor and I'm married to her so there was a lot of that going on. It wasn't good for anybody. So now I take a pause and I count to three before I respond, 'Let me see if I understand you correctly.'

So that's a writer's job. And it's an editor's job also to, you know, I had an editor who was like he was like a sadist he's one of the most brilliant, he's the most brilliant editor I've ever worked with. I can't say why. If he knew I said he's a sadist, he would be mad if I said that even though he totally is. He's just brutal. He's like, 'Daniel. This is the stupidest thing I've ever read my life. This is...I don't...I thought you were a smart person. Why did you write this?'

But I didn't have all that sort of like, 'What, why are you so stupid?' Because he's not stupid, he's the smartest guy, one of the smartest people I've ever worked with. But so, for me, it helps when an editor just puts a little honey on the poison that they're giving you because it does poison. When you're a writer, it's interesting to be on both sides. And I think every writer should edit other people's work. It's so...you learn so much about writing by doing that.

So, I add in as an editor, I always like to say, 'Oh, I loved when you did this and that and the other. You know when you had the cat come up to the lady, and she sees in that little piece of anchovy. Oh man, that was so cool.' Specifically, not just saying, 'Oh, this is a wonderful book.' No. Jovi and the cat scene. I always start with what I like about the thing.

And I tried to make it so that instead of saying, 'Oh, the scene needs to be about this, I always ask the writer, 'What do you...what is this scene about?' And oftentimes if I, if you gently coax a reader, I'm sorry, a writer, they'll come up with it themselves.

'Oh, I see the scene is really about this' and it's so much more valuable if they do that than if you tell them what you think it is. Because what you think it is might not even really be what it's about. And this is particularly important in memoir.'

**MC:** So, what kinds of authors, then, have you worked with? Interpret that however you want to.

**D:** I've worked with authors from the age of five years old to 85 years old. The 85-year-old was a retired Air Force, dude. The five-year-old was a kindergarten student. I worked with goth teenagers with Mohawks and piercings, I work with soccer moms, retired judges who are writing thrillers, athletes, some brain scientists...a ghost wrote a book for some brain scientists - that was fascinating. I loved. I also do ghostwriting for people as well. What's shocking to me about my business is the demographic of people who show up. It's just shocking. Every kind of person you could imagine from homeless people to surgeons: brain surgeons, heart surgeons. Every kind of person you can imagine has been represented in the demographic of people that we work with. People who have never written anything before, two best-selling authors.

**MC:** So, do you find a theme among the kinds of texts that you work with? Are they all pretty different? Since you work with such different types of...

**D:** Everything, everyone's different. Every, every book is different. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, you know, practical nonfiction, like how to grow a fruit tree is very different than the unicorns of Narnia. A volume trilogy about far away and where the unicorns roam free, you know, they're all different. But almost I would say the one similarity they might have is that most of the people that I, writers, I work with desperately want people to read their work. They, it's their dream. And many of them are utterly delusional about how difficult it is to make that happen. There's this idea, this sort of romantic idea that you can go out to your cabin on the lake and write your Opus and send it into Mr. Harper and Mr. Collins and the phone rang.

'Hello, Mr. Harper. It's so nice to hear from you. Oprah's on the other line.'

'Howdy, Mr. Collins. Yes, I can. I can make it to the studio. Of course I'll go on tour.'

Somebody of writers that we work with. When Oprah was a, you know, the thing they say, you know, 'I would be willing to go on Oprah. I would be willing to do that.'

Like, yeah, great when she calls back on me. Well yeah cuz I'd like to talk to her. Good. There's this idea, you even see it now, in the evolution of publishing with self-publishing, like you're just going to put your book up on Amazon and it's gonna be a bestseller, and why wouldn't it be? It's all my mom. It's her favorite book. And all my friends love it. We, I, get a lot of that.

**MC:** So, do you find that authors are resistant to your edits?

**D:** Oh, some. It's like saying, you know, are suitors resistant or welcoming to your advances? Let them fall in love with you... Look, I mean, I've heard , pitches from authors in years I've been doing this. And when you say, 'Here's what you need to do,' some of them immediately want to do everything they possibly can to make it great. Some of them want to tell you how you're the biggest idiot they have ever met in their lives.

And these people. I go, 'Well, you would know better than me. I have only written books. So, I thought about it. I guess your cousin is right. It really is just great the way it is.'

I used to fight, and I used to get in arguments with people I don't do that anymore. I'm like, 'Okay.'

**MC:** What's the most frequent edit, if there is one, that you feel like you can make on the books that you read?

**D:** I think it's the showing in the telling. Do that so much to just give so much exposition and backstory. Ah, I think that's the biggest thing that I find and the first line. It's never good enough.

**MC:** So why then do you think a text - this is sort of a philosophical or theoretical question, but - why then do you think a text should be edited? Why shouldn't everyone just put their writing out as it is? What, how does the editor bring out the author's voice?

**D:** That's two different questions. I'm going to answer the first question first. Why should someone have an editor? It's like saying, why should someone, when they bake a cake, have a recipe? Why don't you just put some eggs and some flour and some sugar, put it in

the oven for however long you want and then serve it to people? Why wouldn't you do that? Because you'd have a half-baked cake. Who wants a half-baked cake? It doesn't taste good.

I mean in any profession, there is, if you're beginning as a writer, you have to learn from. I mean, you can learn a lot by reading a ton of books which, I read. I'm reading *The Brothers Karamazov*, and it's like that thick. And I'm this far through. It's really great. It's, oh, I mean, a great book. But so, I read all the time. I'm a very avid reader. So yes, you can learn a lot by reading, but in any profession... You want to build a house. You don't just go out and just build a house. You have to find somebody that knows what they're doing, or watch a lot of it, even if you just watch a lot of videos. It's better to start as the bottom guy on the pole and watch how the master builder builds the house. Yeah, watch how the guy makes things level and you get hired on as an apprentice, and you learn how to do this very difficult task. And that's what an editor does for you. A great editor shows you. You should take lots of classes; learn all you can from everybody. Before I send out a book to an agent or editor, anyone, I have a professional editor work with me. And I've done, as I said, I've written books of my own, and with other people, but it's really hard to write something you can't...you can't write something and not have somebody work on it with you. It's just, in my experience, because people always help, can help you make it better. If you're going to someone who's really a master craftsman at being an editor. It's just crucial for my money. Sorry, what was the second question.

**MC:** Um, how does the editor help the author do the things that you talked about, like, bring out their voice and Show Not Tell

**D:** Yes, so every editor works differently. But the basic idea is that there's two kinds of edits. One is a developmental edit, which is more like looking at the forest and you do that one first. So I went through all the different things that you're going to work with an editor, you can look back at the video earlier: voice, character arc, plot, language, pacing, stakes - are the stakes high enough, is there anything at stake here? If it's not, it's going to be hard to get people's attention and hold it.

You know beginnings, middle, ends, all those things I said earlier, those are the things that an editor, if they're worth their salt is going to help a writer with. Developmental edit is the big picture. So, what I do is when I edit someone's book, I make notes throughout the book. I read a hard copy. I read on paper. I don't like staring at a screen for that long as it takes a long time to edit a book, so I make notes on the page. Showing not telling. What's at stake in this scene. All of those basic questions. You're slowing down, now you're telling me too much. There's too much exposition. Make this exposition into a scene with characters who are talking to each other. I put that a lot when I'm writing little notes on the side of the page. Um, so I go through the whole book making notes and then I write a developmental edit letter in which I detail what needs to be done to this book to make it better. How's the plot? There are holes in the plot or the plot doesn't move quickly enough or the ending is satisfying and I make suggestions. You might try this for the ending.

Oftentimes, people don't begin their books at the right spot. And I've done this as an author on my second memoir. I just started chronologically with me showing up with a dream. Okay. And that's a trope. That's so played to death. So, my editor said, 'Well, why don't you take something from the end of the book? It's really exciting. And put that at the

beginning.' So, I was starting my book in the wrong spot. It takes four pages. Maybe changed the whole book. It just made it exciting.

Again, if you're an editor, agent, you've got emails in your inbox of authors who want you to read their stuff. If you know when people read the beginning of that they're like, 'Oh my god what happens, what happens, what happens, what happens next?!'

The pages turn because it was something of suspense and the stakes are so high that you can tell by the end of page three. Yeah, I want this book because I want to know what happens. And if you don't evoke that response from an editor and agent, you're done. It's all over.

And that's what...an editor did that for me. I would never have come up with that. He didn't tell me, 'You should start with this,' he just said 'You need to start with something more than that. A good start for a story. Yeah, fine, but it's not a grabber, doesn't grab you by the back of a neck.'

**MC:** So then, since you've been in the role of both author and editor: how would you say that that the author influences the editor and how the editor influences the author? You talked a lot about how the editor influences the author, but how do you think being an editor, who's also an author, you've been affected? Essentially, I guess, simply, how does the author influence the editor?

**D:** As an author, I don't have much influence over my editor. When I work with somebody a lot, I might say, 'Could you say one nice thing about my manuscript?' I might say that that way.

I might influence that person, but the better might go, 'No, I can't say one thing about your script. Okay, suck it up, buttercup.'

Another editor might go, 'Oh, I'm sorry. I'll say something nice. You need an attaboy.'

But it's really more like a, you know, a teacher and that's not even like that because the teacher and the student, they're getting together every day. Most of the times an editor, you know, you're not with them every day oftentimes. And I've never even talked to my editor, like at a, you know, a big house, big publishing house. They just send you a letter.

I was a screenplay writer. And I was so, I was edited by a studio one time in this script that I wrote. The producer. My producer wrote this needs to be funnier. Okay. I didn't have much influence over the executive who wrote that, really could not have cared less about me or he just wanted it to be funnier. Okay, I don't know that I'd be, as a writer, that I have much influence over an editor, but an editor has enormous influence over a writer.

**MC:** So, then my final question is, what is the biggest lesson that you've learned as an editor?

**D:** The biggest lesson. Well, I'm just...one of the things that come to mind...I don't know if this is the biggest lesson, but the great author, Kate DiCamillo was talking. She was keynote at...I think this was in North Dakota or South Dakota. Not that it matters, but she said she went to this library to do a presentation she does all the time and the librarian said,

‘Miss DiCamillo, if you don't mind, I would, you know, after you read, I would like to ask you questions.

‘Sure. Of course.’

Asked questions. ‘I was really going to ask you about some of the themes in your book.’

She's like, ‘Are there themes in my book?’ This is an author who sold a million books. I think one of the things I've learned from being an editor is that you really have to get your first stab at writing a book. You just have to write your story. Just let it out. Just have to write the thing out. However you want the story to be.

As an editor, what I've learned is that there are certain things you can do to bring out the essence of the story. Some of that involves eliminating stuff. They call it, you know, I'm sure you've heard this, killing your babies, where you go as an editor you say, Is the scene with the parakeet moving the story forward at all? Because the parakeet doesn't really play much part in the story.

And the author will often say, ‘You don't understand. I love that parakeet,’ that he said it was in my life when I was growing up. Yeah, we should write a book about the parakeet. Throw that thing in a file and write the parakeet book cuz that sounds awesome. But this story here about the pig farmers got nothing to do with the parakeet. So, I think an editor...what I've learned about writing from being an editor is that you have to be merciless and, you know, when you sit down to write a book, it's like trying to do a crossword puzzle. But there's no box and you have to make the pieces. You don't know what this thing is. Yet you have an idea of what it is. But you don't really know because it's not a thing yet. So, to help to define what the...

When you boil it down, you know, like, reducing in cooking, you just keep the heat on until this big pot of water gets down to this. And that's the stuff - that's all the good stuff - is boiled down to this. What is the thing that your story, you're trying to tell? The information you're trying to impart? What is it at its essence?

And that's the thing that you have to discover as the story unfolds. So, it's, you have to have a certain amount of faith that it's going to happen. It always does. And for me and for almost all the writers that I know who keep working and keep working and keep working and keep working - the perseverance on a book - and make it better and better and better. So they go, ‘Oh, yeah, it's about this, this thing right here,’ like this memoir I was talking about.

So, when I wrote the memoir, I thought the story was about one thing. That's what I thought the book was about. These guys, my producers who were editors, you know, in a way to define what the story is, they said, ‘No, no. That's not really what the story is about.’

Like, ‘Yeah, it is stupid.’

‘Oh, we're not stupid. Shut up you idiot.’

I'm the idiot. Okay. Continue. They say, ‘Uh, no, really what it's about is this.’

Like, that's a cool idea for a TV show that we're all like, ‘Wow, that is actually a cool idea, yes that kind of is, this was a groundbreaking moment in history.’ This is a theme in the

book, mind you, but it wasn't my chief theme. That was a cool, interesting high stakes thing, but they helped me discover what the true essence of what was special about that story was. And that's what I've learned, I think, most as an editor. You have to discover what that thing is that's unique and familiar and yet surprising. Like the familiar thing has been what's surprising. That's how it's different. It's a new mouse trap. And that's like one of your chief jobs as a writer, as an author, as an editor, is to help someone find what is unique and yet slightly familiar. And the core, the essence, the sweet part of the watermelon of the story.

**MC:** So, is there anything else you want to add?

**D:** I don't know what I could add to that. I feel like that was the perfect way to cap it all off. Literally nothing to add.

**MC:** All right, perfect. Well, um, I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me today. I really enjoyed hearing all the stuff you had to say. And it made me, it always makes me so excited to hear from somebody who's doing editing and publishing. It's kind of cool to hear from somebody who does it and lives it every day.

**D:** Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that. It was fun talking to you. Let me know how this memoir progresses.

**MC:** I will. I'll have to send you my final paper when I finish it.

**D:** I'd like to see that.

**MC:** I'll be sure to send it your way. Alright, well thank you again.

**D:** Thank you. Have a lovely day. Bye.

## Interview 2: Mary, Professional Editor

**Margaret Cahill:** Alright, so, then we'll start with I guess just a little bit of background about you and the types of work that you've done.

**Mary:** Okay. Well, I started my interest in editing as a young person, probably the ninth grade, because anytime I took a class in English, I relished the grammar and the structure of the language components of the course and less so the literature part. I always liked the other language arts components, but grammar and the structure of the language were my favorite parts.

So, I also had a great fascination with newspapers at that time. So, I decided I would go into journalism and went to college at a journalism school and made it into the news editorial track. To get into the courses, you have to pass an English proficiency test. A lot of people had to take it more than once, but I showed up to it and I aced it and I didn't find it difficult at all. I thought I would.

But then one of the faculty members contacted me and said, 'You know you did really well on this test. I'd like you to meet my daughter who is the owner of this business above the college bookstore, and I think you would, you know, have some editing work there.'

So, I started professionally editing, you know, my sophomore year of college editing people's dissertations and checking their citations, things like that. And as I progressed in the news program, I took an unpaid internship at a local newspaper and learned how to copy edit, and I learned that by sitting at a computer.

At the time, desktop publishing wasn't invented yet - this was in about 1989 – and so we had these things called dumb terminals. It was on a network and they call them down because you couldn't save anything to them. They were just a terminal with the keyboard and all the articles were in queues. You know they were labeled queues and usually based on the section of the newspaper they were to be in, and there were editing functions. You can use different modes to make sure that no mistakes were made. And usually with new people like me at that time I had to use what was called notes mode. So, it would highlight everything that was changed, and a copy editor sat next to me and, you know, watched every move I made and told me, 'Oh, be sure and look that one up' or, you know, and so I became, you know, really accustomed to questioning every single thing I read.

And a good copy editor, does that, you know, even if you're working with learned people, PhDs, and you would do that if you go work for a publisher or if you work for a newspaper, magazine, you will encounter, you know, the work of very learned experts, but they all need editors. And anytime a person says, 'oh, I don't really need editing,' they're usually wrong. So, and most people discover that once you have edited a piece for them. They realize, well, that person just saved my reputation. I misspelled Billie Holiday's name, you know, or I spelled the last name of somebody in two different ways or even local things, local details that aren't in an AP Stylebook or a dictionary. You correct and help people save face. You know, things like neighborhood names. We had a



blog about the history of a street. And in it, the two writers who are both, you know, they're not native, they refer to a neighborhood name that's very logical, but incorrect. So, you know, those are the kinds of things, little precision items that that I can take pride in helping people with.

So anyway, that's my background. Oh, and I told you I took the job at the newspaper. My first professional job out of college was as a Reporter at local newspaper. It was a daily - I don't remember what the circulation was, I think about, I don't know, 50 or 80,000 people. I wasn't a very good reporter, though, and I really wanted to be a copy editor. And so, I took a job as soon as one opened up on the news desk there. And then went back to the other newspaper. That was a nighttime job. So, I worked about 4pm to 1am and then decided to take a day job at the university. And the PR office had former newspaper reporters and editors in there. So, I was among my people and got to do a lot of the same stuff, but for university.

**MC:** So, then, when you are on the news desk...do you have a specific topic that you covered or section? Or was it just sort of whatever came across your desk?

**M:** So, I worked a couple of different tasks on a news desk, the way it used to be. I don't know really how they handle it anymore. I think it's all mingled. But, as it was at that time on the news desk at night, you would. I would be copy editing everything that would go into sections. So, it was all coming from local reporters who were in the same newsroom that I was in. They weren't always there. But usually, there were assistant city editors, an ACE, and if we had questions. we could go to the ACE and if they didn't know the answer, they would ask the reporter, usually calling the reporter at the home because they didn't have cell phones back then, you know, or we would just have to look things up and the reporters would trust us to do that. And so, it might be a crime story. It might be a city council meeting. It might be a news feature. We had news columnists. I didn't read a lot of sports - the sports department had its own copy desk.

But how things would come across is they, you know, a layout person would see all the stories that needed to go on the page. They draw the page out on a on a dummy and they'd say, Okay, this story needs to be nine inches long and it needs a headline. We measured them in tigers, tigers and points. So, if it was a one column headline, it would be, you know, three lines of 24-point type on 12 tiger three which is one column. And a subhead of 14 points on one column also. So, and then we'd have to write captions. Sometimes we'd have to walk over to the photo desk and get the picture right the caption. And then once we were done with it, it was called the rim because it was in the shape of a shoe.

I sent it to another queue called the slot, and there were two slot editors who checked everything and then it was sent off to the composing room where the pages were pasted up and then plates were made and proofs came through pneumatic tubes to the copy desk, all while the press is running. So, if we found errors on the proofs, they would send them down to the composing room. They'd rebuild the page or, you know, pull off the incorrect part, print, you know, and a new piece of type. It wasn't hard. It wasn't cold type or wasn't

hot type. It was on this photo static paper and then they'd make a new plate and put it on the press, and it started running again and so, you know, you always had to go to bed, knowing that half the readership got the mistake because he didn't destroy all the papers that had the mistake. And this is just the life of a newspaper.

And I remember one mistake. I had to write a headline and it was about something that happened at the airport and I just had to keep trying new headlines, because it was a really narrow copy. I mean, it was 12 pike at three in the headline order. Had a 30-point headline or something on it. And the word airport wouldn't fit. So, I'm like, okay. Maybe if I just bump it down one point, you know. Finally got it to fit and then the proof came back and this guy by the slot to it, said 'a port.' And I've never forgotten that, you know, and I've made bigger mistakes, but that's how it went.

Yeah, we would read everything from the news department. Basically, I also worked a little while in another department called zones. It was called the neighbors section and it had news specific for different parts of the city. And a lot of that content came from freelancers so that required a lot more detailed and aggressive editing because it wasn't coming from, you know, professional reporters.

**MC:** So, then what was it about the editing that drew you away from the reporting?

**M:** I was not a fast enough writer. I am too much of a perfectionist to write at the pace that's required for journalism, and this is a truth that was hard for me. To do it just was such a stressful job. If I covered a meeting or if I did an interview, you know, number one, you have to take super notes and you have to be able to listen to what they're saying, record it. You know, I didn't have a tape recorder. And then be able to attend enough to follow up, you know, to fill in information that they hadn't given yet or ask probing questions. It was just really hard. And then I would have to go back to the newspaper and write it and that was extreme pressure to get it done. Because you had to meet the deadline. Otherwise, the entire process would get held up and I never was happy with my work, I never was. So, it was good enough. But it wasn't great. And I sweated every single word.

**MC:** Yeah.

**M:** I'm sure you do that too.

**MC:** Yeah, when I worked at the TV station over the summer, they'd like give me a story and say, you know, we just need the bare bones of it, don't overthink it or whatever. And I, it just was so quick, moved so fast.

**M:** Oh yeah, and then don't you hate it when people tell you not to overthink things? Like why is this derogatory, you know? Incorrect summary of the way we think - it's not overthinking. It's just a different way of thinking. But it's definitely not appreciated by the people who are able to conceptualize things and communicate them quickly. It's also not a good fit for the reporting life so that's the way it is. People can learn and if that's what you want to do. I mean, I know you want to edit, you know, but if you found yourself in a

spot where you needed to do reporting, I know you could adjust. I know you could. Part of the reason I know you could is that you're on the rowing team and you know how to get it done.

And, and, you know, getting it done right or getting it done well enough to get by. That's okay. Yeah, and that's why they call journalism, the first draft of history. It's not perfect. No, no, but who gets the first draft right of history, you know? I would like, once it goes to cut, copy editing. You want it to be as perfect as you can make it, but, you know, they learn to live with this idea that it's not going to be perfect.

**MC:** Yeah. So then what kinds of editing do you do in your job now?

**M:** So, my professional job is in the library and my job is to administer an institutional repository for faculty scholarship and they wanted somebody who could be a critical reader of data that is often very sloppily submitted by learned people. They get the names of the journals wrong or because they're in a hurry. And they don't care that much about the details. They want it to be on their CV correct, not reporting it for the library, or sending a list to the Provost Office of the things that they've written and published. If it's not going to be published, they don't care that much about it. So, we get data that is really horrible, and it has to be double checked. So, they wanted somebody who is precise.

But since taking that job, they've also, in the library, discovered that I was an editor and I'm, you know, default copy editor for all the blogs, and we do a lot of communicating on the blog. So, we just counted it because we did a presentation and we've had more than 500 blog entries in the last few years. So, a lot of content and blogs are, it's an institutional snapshot of history. So, it is important that that the information, that it is correct, and especially the historical components of it, the names, because we don't have a regular campus news publication anymore. We do have a campus report that comes out once a month. We have an email that goes out, but not all of that is captured. So, you know, we put a lot of effort into high quality content in the blogs that communicates what's happening in the libraries, but also you know reflections on the state of the university or in the case of this blog I mentioned earlier extra little research projects people are doing.

**MC:** So, you have all different kinds of people writing these blogs from across the university?

**M:** Well across the libraries. Now, I don't read all of them across the university. A person in the Dean's Office for the one of the colleges, who used to work at the newspaper with me, administers that one. He does basically the same thing. They invite submissions by all kinds of people, students, faculty members, staff members. We want participation, we want a lot of voices in the blogs, and you know we want lots of topics represented. Like if we have, I don't know, a good, just a good fun local feature, or if we want to bring attention to a themed week. For example, you know, we want different people to be able to write about those things and we want the people who write about them to feel

passionate about it. So, you know, blogs are an opportunity to write that first draft of history.

And then I get to read it, and if I have questions, I ask them questions and get things clarified. I write a headline on it, put it on the network. We have a platform that we use for blogs and you know it goes through a similar process to what happened in the newsroom.

**MC:** Yeah, I love that first draft of history phrase. That's really cool because like even in history classes when we look for a primary source, it seems like news is always a big one to look at.

**M:** Yeah, I didn't coin that phrase. Yeah, so, you know, I mean, that's a very popular way to classify the news industry, but it's an important field and it's hard to make money in it right now because a lot of people, you know, number one, they had to change the medium. So that's changed copy editing to, you know, used to be paper now it's all online. And there's also the expectation that you get it for free. And the truth is you get what you pay for with journalism. I mean, you pay for a subscription to The New York Times, you're going to get the best news coverage available. Same with the Washington Post, National Public Radio, Wall Street Journal. Terrific, you know, but these are professional journalists who have credentials. They follow a code of ethics, they have unassailable scrutiny of their sources, whereas anybody can do a blog. Anybody can do a news commentary. Anybody can rip content from other sites and add their own little special flair to it, you know, cause I played touristic. You know it's like they can release it and they can say they can cite it and kind of rewrite a story, but it's often with an agenda in mind, whereas the newspaper wouldn't be. I mean, their agenda is to inform and to hold administration and government to task and to make sure that, you know, they're checking and making sure that things are on the up and up and you know defending us from corruption and all kinds of things that journalism is there for.

**MC:** So, then in all of your experience, what do you find is either the most frequent edit or category of edit that you have to look for, come across, or I guess it could be maybe a series of edits, or like what kinds of edits do you find yourself making?

**M:** So many different categories of things. Of course, the simple things as simple as a serial comma. You know, different people that I edit for use different versions of style books. AP style and anything on our news or on our library blog uses AP style because that's the university's choice for external communications. But if I'm reading an academic paper that somebody wants to submit to a journal, that could be Chicago Manual of Style. It could be APA, which is American Psychological Association, it could be a house style. The Oxford University Press uses its own house style and its own dictionary. Oxford wants you to have the Oxford English Dictionary, or the Oxford, I just bought it over the summer, The New Oxford American Dictionary, and there are differences to things like what do you, if any, you know, what do you, when do you use a hyphen after a prefix? When do you not use it? The rules sometimes change.

So, I'm constantly looking things up. So, there are little detail questions about simple things like punctuation and hyphens that you want to be consistent across the publication. So, you know, always follow those. But then now there are other things that I want people to be careful about like cultural sensitivities that they, a lot of people weren't even aware were cultural sensitivities. And I do it too. I use, sometimes if there's a list, they'll mention three or four things as if that were the entire extent of types of things in this particular series. Many times, I know that there are more things in that container than they've listed. So, I'll say, 'and other things.' I use 'and other blank' all the time. Except I have a colleague who is, he's trans, and I had a phrase in there. I added 'and other blank.' I can't remember what it was, and he said, that's true. Like, we do need to work through that because the list includes more than just what I listed. But the word 'other' is loaded and it's because people who are trans are considered 'other' all the time. I didn't, that didn't even occur to me, you know. Lots of expressions have cultural slights that we're not aware of. So, there's a lot that we're attentive to that we didn't use to be. So, occasionally I encounter those in the things I edit, and we try to work around them. And, you know, educate the writer and usually they're really appreciative.

**MC:** So, then when you're making these kinds of edits, and all of the edits that you've mentioned, what is the relationship like between the writer and editor, if there even is one?

**M:** At the newspaper, the editor had the last word unless it was a dialogue where they had to go and do some rewriting. But usually, by the time it got to me all the factual problems were mostly solved. You know, the bigger problem was if there were, if there was more than one way to interpret a sentence. So, in the newspaper field the reporter's done with it when they turn it in, and they have to just trust the editing staff because they can't scrutinize every little edit.

Some customers of mine, they give me free reign to edit, and I will provide them with a clean edited version. And then I also use the compare feature in Microsoft Word, so they can see every single edit that I've made, but I always discourage people from scrutinizing every little thing. First of all, because you know there might be a problem and it takes three or four different edits to change. And if they're selectively accepting and rejecting edits, they might miss it. They might retain the original error or create more confusion and also it feels bad. You know, they look at stuff and they're like, 'Oh my gosh, this was horrible.' And, you know, it wasn't horrible. This was pretty clean. You know, I'm just taking passive voice out. I'm just putting this in the format that he wants it, or that Chicago wants it. Or taking out a cultural insensitivity and replacing it.

And sometimes I'll use the notes feature to say, 'What about this instead?' Like this isn't wrong, but it might be better if he said it this way. So sometimes it's a back and forth. And sometimes I give it to the writer, I give it back and I never see it again. And then at that point they own all the mistakes that they put back into it.

**MC:** So, what would you say is the most critical part of editing, then? Why is it important to have your writing edited?

**M:** Because the brain has this way of not seeing new things after you've read it a couple of times. This is documented, but I can't cite it like off the top of my head, but when somebody is so familiar with a piece of writing, they may not be able to see anymore that there's another way of reading the sentence or that that I've left a word out. Or that I've misspelled something. Or maybe I'm so close to it, maybe my professional understanding of it is so good that I don't know what it's like to read it from the perspective of somebody who's not an expert in the field. That's what I encounter a lot too.

A lot of my career, I've been, I have spent making highly technical things digestible and understandable. I shouldn't say shoe salesman to salespeople. That's another thing that we were careful about. I ran across the word draftsman last night when I was reading a lesson plan for somebody. This company, this publisher, has me read curricula and I said it's draft or, you know, because we don't want to exclude, there's a lot of women draft, drafters. They don't want to be called draftsmen.

A guy said we need all these explanations of engineering projects to be understandable to the city council member who sells shoes for a living, you know, has no expertise in structural engineering. So that's why, that's why it's important because audience, you know, audiences, the number one consideration for reporters and it is for editors too, you know, we try to read things and present them in a way that is going to be useful to either educate or inform or entertain somebody. You know, it has to be meaningful to them. So, if it's too technical, it's not that helpful.

**MC:** Yeah. So, you mentioned this a little bit, but do you find that authors are generally, or just writers in general, whenever you're editing, generally resist? How do writers typically react to the edits that you suggest?

**M:** I'd say 90% of them are grateful. Some of them are offended. And I always tell them that you can accept or reject anything that I do and I'm not the boss of you. Nobody reports to me. And if they don't like what I do, they don't have me do it again but that's pretty rare.

**MC:** Well, that's good.

**M:** And you'll find that too. I mean, I'm sure it's already happened to you. You read things for people and they're like, well, thank you. This is so much better.

**MC:** Would you say that the writer has any influence over the kinds of edits you make? Do you kind of approach editing with a standardized format? I know you use the style books and things like that. But just kind of your personal approach to editing - do you consider who wrote whatever you're editing or is it just, you're more focused on the piece of writing than the context around it?

**M:** The person with the name on the piece has to be the primary consideration and their voice needs to be maintained. And if there's a lot wrong with the piece structurally, and I

find myself rewriting sections, sometimes I'll just put the suggested rewrites in the notes, but after a certain point it's not their voice anymore so I try to know them well enough that I can hear their voice and maintain that tone. And if it's really problematic, I'll send it back to them and I'll say this is not ready for editing, and you know, and I ran into the most problems. You know, if you rework this section, that will help, but I can't do it because I don't have the content knowledge that you do and it's not my writing. My name's not going on it. And some work, I turn down because I just don't, I can't fix it. Some of it is definitely not the quality that copy editing would help.

**MC:** So, then what should an editor avoid when they approach a piece of writing that they do choose to accept?

**M:** I don't know how to articulate that. I guess, don't rewrite it. It has to be theirs. And what we're trying to protect them from and what they pay us to do is to keep their mistakes out of it, you know, and you help them with mistakes. Some things, especially like if you have an opinion piece that you're reading, you may not agree with it and you don't want to be associated with it. And no amount of explaining how horrible. I mean, just put a note in that says, you know, this is a loaded word, or this is judgmental or whatever and then not accept any more work from them, I guess.

**MC:** So, then my final question, that wasn't on the list: Why do you find editing to be such a meaningful task?

**M:** Well, especially when I was at the newspaper, I love reading the news and this way, I got to get paid to do it. And I got to read it before anybody else. So, it's like getting paid to do things that I would typically pay to do. I also take pride in learning new things as I'm reading them and that's the greatest reward of all this. Now granted, I don't retain every single thing I read, and I wish I did. I used to retain a lot more, but I like to read, and I like to learn and, you know, this provides me with that opportunity. Well, also, you know, making a living and helping people.

**MC:** That's great. I can definitely tell that you're passionate about what you do, so I had to throw that question in there.

**M:** So, I want you to be able to do this too in whatever capacity you want, copy editing and there's, there are differences between copy editing and line editing, you know, from what you've from what little you've told me, I understand that you'll be doing sort of both copy editing and line editing for Colleen's book and it's a great opportunity for you, and I hope you get to craft your career based on what you really like to do the most. I think it's just as important to teach people precision of language so that they can go out and do what we do we or to produce work that is understandable and gets the point across that they're trying to actually make So education is a great way to use that gift that you have, if you want to practice the skills and, you know, develop as a copy editor.

Another way to do that would be to work on a universal desk somewhere, that's what they use now. It's called the universal desk and I only know this anecdotally, because I still

have friends in the news business, but they have editors in another faraway city reading content that's produced here. They're missing some of that local stuff like that I told you about with neighborhood names and the history of the area and the spelling of familiar names or nicknames that people went by, all kinds of stuff. But that's how it goes. It's either getting features content, news content, all kinds of different content. And so, you would get a lot of practice. I doubt, you'd have somebody sitting next to you, you know, calling things to your attention because it just isn't the time for that anymore. Yeah, and then the pace is much, much faster. But that's also an option.

Publishers are another route. I don't know much about the traditional publishing business. But I know a lot of people are independently publishing and are required by the publisher to hire a copy editor. So, there's going to be a market for that...And there's a need. People don't realize the need for copy editing. But once you do a few projects for people, they realize, oh, yeah, I definitely need a copy editor and it's a good value for organizations to outsource it to independent people.

**MC:** Yeah.

**M:** Well, good to see you. Just call me if you have any other questions. I'll do my best to answer them.

**MC:** Okay. Great. Thank you so much again for taking the time to meet with me and sharing all your great thoughts.

**M:** Well, keep doing the good work and I can't wait to see Colleen's memoir, and you know when it's time to think about how to get it in print, I'll offer what I know. There's lots of different routes. I think Daniel probably was able to tell you some of those. I'm not terribly familiar with the traditional publishing world other than, you know, I know of it by way of other people, but I've never interacted with it. But there's on-demand self-publishing companies that if you're good enough at the copy editing and you're confident that the content is good and you can hire a graphic designer to make a cover, you can end up with a really nice-looking book for really not a lot of money. But there are lots of different hybrid type publishers...Just let me know if I can be of assistance.

**MC:** Yeah, thank you so much. I'm very excited about this whole project. So, I can't wait...Thank you, have a good rest of your day.

**M:** You too. Bye.



### Interview 3: Colleen, Manuscript Author

**Margaret Cahill:** Recording. And if you don't want to answer any of the questions, you don't have to, but they have been approved by an official Research Board, so they shouldn't be too personal.

**Colleen McDonnell:** Well, you know almost everything about me so...

**MC:** I probably know the answers to some of these, but, whatever. Um, alright. So, this is a two-part interview that we can either do on two separate days or we can do it all right now. What would you prefer? Do you want to do the first part and then we can see how long it takes? Okay. So, the first part is a background interview, and the second part is a profile interview. So, the first part is basically more just about what you're hoping to get out of the book, I guess. And then the second part is more like your personal history and like more about you. So, my first question is, what are your main motivations behind publishing a book? And, before I let go, you don't have to make it like an answer that you think that I want to hear. Just tell me, whatever, like, actually you think.

**CM:** I wanted to make sure that I never forgot what happened. I don't expect any money to really come from it and I don't really expect like a ton of people to be reading it, because it's a small town and like I really just expected our own people to, but I wanted to write it for my teammates because they were very different than like what people think of football players and I wanted to show them how great they actually were. So, I thought, coming from my perspective and showing them that was really helpful. I also wanted to make sure other Lumen Christi teams like the football program also didn't lose that part of, I don't know, lose that character that that team had because it always seems like every year there's always kids that have it. I guess it's like respect and like a big amount of discipline that makes them really good, but sometimes they lose it. So, I just want to make sure that also stayed. But I guess with like recent news and stuff with like the girls playing football that wasn't my main goal, but I mean, if that's something that like...I guess girls thought it was cool that I played so I guess it's a good thing. But I mainly wanted to keep it written down for like my family to remember and like my teammates to remember how to treat each other.

I knew the whole time that I could do it like since I was in kindergarten. I never once thought I couldn't play that position. And I guess it was kind of frustrating to me that people thought initially when I was doing it that I was only doing it to be like proving myself in some way, because I never thought anything of it. I always thought I could do it. So, I guess that's why I was like, I mean, I think it'd be good for girls to read for sure. And like I guess it's a good audience, but not in a way that's like sassy, you know.

I just think like I didn't just get the position because I was a girl like I had to beat a boy out for it. So, like we competed every single day 'til the game, and then he was like, 'Okay, well we're gonna play Colleen because she won the games,' like that we used to play with each other; like whoever won the most like would win today, would win the next day, like I didn't just earn it because I was a girl, I guess.

**MC:** Okay, so who would you say is the protagonist in your story? If you were thinking about your story as though it were only in terms of like a story, who is the protagonist and who is antagonist? So, in other words, who are we rooting for?

**CM:** Um, I guess I don't really have an antagonist.

**MC:** And the antagonist doesn't have to be a person.

**CM:** Okay, um, I guess I made it like in the beginning like me, and then as I went to the end, the team. I tried to like open it up, half because I sprained my ankle and didn't do as well at the end. But also, because they are the ones who really like put in the extra actual work like I really only scored which I mean, that helps. But like I guess I went from me to the team at the end. So, I kind of...That's what I felt like I was doing...But, antagonist?

**MC:** So, like, do you remember like way back when they would teach about like there's man versus man. And then like man versus nature. Man versus...Maybe it is just man versus man, man versus nature. Oh man vs himself. And then Man versus...let me Google it. I think there's four of them.

**CM:** Because it's not like I was trying to prove anything, or at least I felt that way.

**MC:** Man Versus man, man versus nature, man versus self, man versus society, man versus fate.

**CM:** Hmm, I guess...I feel like this is taking it in like the way we were describing earlier of like society...because it was different. Yeah, I wouldn't say that the society isn't other teams saying bad things really bothered me. But I guess that would be a thing. My own teammates never said anything negative about my gender playing or what I was doing was bad, because I was doing good for them, but I know other teams, clearly, like the things they would say, but they talk like that to everyone so like I guess that would be society.

**MC:** Do you think that at all it was versus self? Or no?

**CM:** Um, well, I was thinking, like, the reasoning why I did it in the first place was to get...I really just wanted a state championship, also I felt like they could get me there. So, would that be a conflict, that like I wanted it? And so, I had to prove myself that I wanted it. Yeah, okay. That.

**MC:** Oh, then this question is similar, but who should my favorite character be?

**CM:** Um, I guess me. Is that bad?

**MC:** No, it's not bad. I was hoping you would say that. I didn't ever tell you to say that you could say yourself but...

**CM:** Okay, because I don't know. I was trying to think of like...I was like Troy? But then I was like well Troy? Troy? But I don't talk about Troy for a while.

**MC:** I'd say it's you. Um, so, okay, we talked about like the character part a little bit and like, who we're rooting for and who we like. What is it then that we're rooting for?

**CM:** I would say that like in the beginning, the development of character and then towards the end just the goal of winning a state championship. But I think stressing like how we got there and like the attitudes and the discipline that they took to get there.

**MC:** So then obviously the story's about a football season, but what is the story actually about?

**CM:** I think that it's more about like an example of like the way those boys treated me and the way that they handled themselves in the offseason before things even started and just how to win a championship. I think they really, you could tell before we were even in season that we were going to do it. So, I think they had...see, I keep saying character but like I think there's more to that. They all were on board with the same thing of what they wanted to do, and they didn't just talk about it, they did it. And you could see it. So, it was kind of the way, I guess, teaching the way of that excellence and greatness that you could see from the beginning that a lot of teams lack. I think they had it. And to teach how to do that.

**MC:** Okay, so that was kind of the first part of the part one. So now the second part of the part one is more about the actual editing of the book. So, this is more, this is my selfish moment where I have to ask you about the edits. Why do you think that your book should be edited? Like, why, what value do you see in doing it at all? Like, I guess, why did you say yes?

**CM:** I think there's a lot of times where I think something is well written and then I'll look at it in like a few weeks and be like, Oh, wow. That was horrible. Or I'll be looking back at the first chapters. I literally. I'm like, why the heck did I put my PR in here? That was four years ago. So, like, that's why I think I needed one, someone else. And then someone else like you, because you know my story more than anyone else, or just the way I am. So, I think, you know, the way I would think. Also, just because I'm not an English major, or any sort of like editing anything, but I was kind of hoping you'd lean towards this. I kind of thought about it too before so I didn't want to ask you, but I was kind of hoping this is something you could do, because I thought it'd help you career wise.

**MC:** Yeah. Well, I appreciate your willingness to let me read your work of art.

**CM:** I also wanted it...wanted you to help do it because it was like, yeah, I had this hometown thing. But then I get to include what I did after and then include, like pull someone with me, I guess from college, which is from a different team.

**MC:** So then, what kinds of edits are you hoping to gain just like overall, what are the areas of the book that you're hoping to have edited the most?

**CM:** Well, I'm glad first that you helped me, thankfully. I needed just the understanding. I guess I sometimes can be a little too like elaborate with my sentences and sometimes I need simplified to reach an understanding that I mean it to be, because I can be too dramatic with when I write. So, I think that's one thing is just making sure it's understandable. The way I want it to be like, I don't know. I just feel like you're very good at that. Like you can simplify something. And then yeah, making sure what I say is okay to say because you know I could be a little bold sometimes and I wanted to make

sure that, like what I say is okay, and it won't cause controversy. That's another thing. So, I guess just like grammatical things and then like the style, but then also content. Just like if you were a reader and being like, huh, you can't say that.

**MC:** Okay. Cool. What is the strongest part of your story?

**CM:** I don't really think it's the ending. But I think, I think like, in the middle, well middle towards the beginning when I like I tried to decide, like if there was something I wanted to do. I go like back and forth on if I wanted to be the kicker. And as much as I was all in before I went there, I went there, and I was like what the heck did I get myself into. And I think there was a lot of back and forth of that. That or the injuries where I had to like...I sprained my ankle in cross country. And then I got really weak. And that's still really frustrating to me today because I didn't listen to myself and I ended up kicking a lot worse than I thought. Which doesn't sound like a good ending. But that's why, I don't know, um, but I think the strongest part could be like more of a teachable part to the reader, rather than content-wise, so the journey. The strong part? I don't know, the parts that I had to push myself that wasn't physical pushing yourself.

**MC:** So then, on the flip side, what's the weakest part?

**CM:** Yeah, that was not the strongest moment of me getting injured. That was pretty bad. I think the weakest moment was probably that I didn't play in the finals. But that's also being me. But I didn't play in the state final, and I was really bummed about that, but that's because I injured myself and didn't listen to myself so I think, yeah, with all the teachable moments that like I could have had in the book. I kind of lost a bit of credibility. I think when I didn't let my ankle heal and I went straight back and then it became weaker and weaker. And then I had really a lot of trouble kicking the few days before the state final and they're like, oh, we just have do two points. We don't want you to embarrass yourself. So, I think the weakest point is that I kind of lost a little credibility and that's just me and my weaknesses in general.

**MC:** So then, what is your favorite part? Like, what do you think you did really well when you were writing it? It could be a section or, I don't know, I think the way I described something was really good. It could be anything.

**CM:** I really think I liked that I put a lot of credit on the linemen, which is something rare, but you never hear about them. They're always the ones who aren't in the news and I mean as a goalkeeper, I understand that. So, I really tried to give a lot of credit to our linemen because they were so good. And they were never in the news. And I do talk about Troy and Sebastian, our quarterback and running back, and they're really big in our program because we do a lot of running but I think that's something I really liked that I tried to do. And then I don't know how great this will be in the story, but I really liked that I put rowing in the epilogue. Because it's something I think, I don't know, I just didn't want to not include it.

**MC:** Yeah, I think it's cool to show how you transitioned out of it.

**CM:** Yeah, I liked that part.

**MC:** So, the last question of this part, which I mean you kind of already talked about it, but how willing are you to edit your manuscript?

**CM:** Yes, I am very willing to edit it.

**MC:** So, um, that's the first part. And then the second part has about the same amount of questions. So, the aim of part two is to understand the author's personal history and how it manifests in the manuscript.

Question one. Why do people love sports?

**CM:** People love sports because it brings the best out of people. And it teaches them different ways to overcome obstacles with a positive mentality and teaches teamwork. There's just so many positives to sports. I just love it.

**MC:** Love it. That's a great answer. What makes a champion?

**CM:** Football wise or just in general, wise? I guess, um, I think there's a lot that makes it, but I think mentality is a general way of answering that, because you could have all the talent in the world. If you don't have the right mentality, you won't win anything. I think the people that are always looked up to on the team, or like the captains of the team, are the ones that have the best mentality, even if they don't have the best genetics or talent. So, I think champions are always the ones that do the little things and they always are the hardest workers. But you can't, at least in the sports I've done, you can't really be a champion without the other teammates around. So, I think it's when more than just that one leader embraces that mentality of a champion.

**MC:** So, then, what does it mean to be an underdog?

**CM:** Sometimes I don't like underdog, but I think underdogs always think that...see if you constantly have this underdog mentality, I don't think that you're going to become a great underdog. But I think secretly, underdogs have a mentality that they're going to do better than they think. And that's what makes them the success stories of underdogs. But I guess putting them at a disadvantage for some reason, and then turning around and making it an advantage is what an underdog would be.

**MC:** So, underdog or champion?

**CM:** Champion. A lot of underdogs can easily become champions, but it's just the way they perform, I guess.

**MC:** What are your top three personal sports moments?

**CM:** Okay, top three.

One being, or not number one place, because I don't know, but we went to shoot out in the regional finals and I was, I think, a sophomore and we won because I saved three PKs. That was like the coolest thing in the world. Because everyone sprinted over and I was just like, I got hugs. It was so exciting. That was probably the highlight because I just love saving goals, but that was one that I love, I love shoot-out so much, which is another mentality thing because a lot of people hate them. Oh. That was like really one of the coolest I've ever had.

And then the second, my first game of playing football versus West Catholic. I felt like that was like a state championship because one, I had to prove myself. And then I was proving myself like by a lot. I was kicking them really high, and everyone was like, excuse me, and everyone was super hype and the crowd was insanely hype and our boys were really, really, really excited because they really wanted to win this game. They're division five state champs, we're six. So, it was like all year long. All summer long, we're trying to beat this team. In the last seconds, they had the opportunity to go and score, but then our line stopped them multiple times with like two yards to go or something. They just stopped them and kept stopping them. And that's how we won. And it was so cool because everyone, we were running the clock, looking at the clock and looking at the field. So, and then once the time ran out, we were going crazy. So cool.

So going crazy moments are also my favorite thing, but then the other one is when my sister won the state championship because again, an injury. What the heck is wrong. So, she couldn't run because she injured herself during the season. But when they found out they won. Oh my gosh, it was the coolest thing ever because coach called one of the seniors and was like, we won. We won. So, then she turned around and told it to the girls and they were crying, hugging each other, they would hug me, and I was in middle school. And they're like, Oh, you gotta realize, oh my god, this is, it was the coolest thing ever.

**MC:** Okay, so the last one for this is: what have you learned from your time on the team and your time as an athlete, in general?

**CM:** I think I learned how much the community is behind us. Especially with women. I did learn sadly the differences between sports. Like we were interviewed all the time. And there was so much press about us every single game and it was a really big deal. Well, I kind of thought it was a bummer that, you know, our cross country team is successful and we would be lucky if we got one press thing on it. I kind of learned there was a difference. Which I don't really like saying a lot but like that and at the same time the community really was behind that football team. And they're really into it and like the kids were really into it and I thought that was really cool. So, I learned, how I don't know the community is really behind them.

But I guess I also should be saying that I learned a lot about the respect and how I had been a part of that. I had my own part of the team that I thought fit well as a puzzle piece with the other boys because I was able to talk to them when they got hurt and they were able to cry, and they didn't feel like I would judge them. And I think if I was one of the other boys, that they wouldn't have done that. I think there was a lot of moments where I was used as like a tool of success that some of the boys couldn't just because I was a girl, and I don't say that was a negative thing. I think it was an element that made us better because there are just some situations that they felt comfortable coming to me, but they wouldn't feel comfortable coming to another boy because they felt like they were able to share more, I guess. So, I guess I learned that we can fit together and make it really positive. I think we worked really well together.

**MC:** Mm hmm. Okay. Well, that's a good segue into this part. Okay, so is there anything significant, you just talked about this a little bit, but is there anything significant about your role as the only female member of your football team?

**CM:** Yeah, I definitely think I had a role that it wasn't just kicking, and then the boys had to be more respectful. And I was different. I wasn't a boy. I think sometimes people were like, oh, she's just one of the boys. I wasn't. I was different. But yeah, I think my role was different because I had to, well, I had a lot of young girls looking at me in elementary schools and I had to not be one of the boys.

Just being on the team showcased to the other kids the amount of respect that they [the football players] had and how disciplined they were and that they weren't here to fool around because they had to constantly be respectful. And I think it was important that I could show, I don't know, I think they showed just how respectful they were. I never carried my own bag, they always opened doors for me, and I think that kind of highlighted their attitudes.

**MC:** So, then we do you have anything to add to the question, about gender and the experience, or is that what you would say for that?

**CM:** Yeah, I would say that, but then also I didn't just play, like we said earlier, like I didn't play because I was a girl. They didn't have a great kicker in their position, and they didn't want to play someone who played both sides of the ball. Because they were those early choices, a kicker. So, they were kind of like we don't really have a kicker. But I still had to compete against other boys. So, it wasn't that I played because I was a girl. If someone was doing better than I was, he was going to play. But the reason why he didn't play was because we competed against each other every practice. We did like, you had five kicks, you backup yards every kick and then whoever got the most won that day. And so, I had to actually compete for it.

**MC:** So then why do you think that football has remained a predominantly male sport? Why don't you think there's girl football teams?

**CM:** Yeah, this, this is definitely I think a biological thing. I think it's good that they let me play with them. And I think it's good that women get to play these sports. But football is very dangerous, like, oh, we've had a woman play the line at Lumen, I think. Apparently, we had a girl on the line, way back when. And she was huge in like she had the body that was built to be on the line, but our bodies are not the size to be on the line. Maybe a position like running back would be alright, or like quarterback because you're tall, or kicker. I think those positions are good for girls, but I don't think on the line. It's not really that safe.

Yeah, um, I wouldn't say that has stopped people if they have that body type. Go for it. You can be out with the boys, but it's also hard because you're going to put your best person out there and if your body type doesn't fit, I'm just thinking, you're gonna put your best person out there and beat all the boys in that position to try out for that team, you're just going to be like gender discriminated if you just step in front of them.

**MC:** Do you foresee an all-female league?

**CM:** I guess. I don't think the NFL. I don't think we have a professional team. We could, but I just think more the money is not there, because we struggled to have our NWSL soccer teams. Yeah, we struggled, and they're aired on Lifetime or something, we struggled to make that happen. So, I'm not sure about that. I really don't know about that one, but I think like recreation wise, like, I don't know, Emma's sister plays rugby. Like, I think it's possible.

And even like those younger kids. I bet when you're younger playing. I know there's some girls who started playing in our Jackson area. Playing with the other boys when you're younger, I don't really see a problem with that because they're kind of all the same at that age. But yeah, I think that we could have those leagues, but maybe not pro just because we don't have the money for it. Yeah, we just haven't seen the money for, I guess.

But I think there'll be more kickers, more girl kickers, that's like a common thing and it has been for a while to see. Even though they kind of make it sound like it's not common. But yeah, it's not uncommon. I mean, I lived it. We had one girl come try to kick, but she never played. I mean, I don't know. I don't really think it's uncommon. I think one of the middle schoolers, when I played, she started doing it after I did. I don't really think it's that uncommon.

**MC:** So, okay, we talked about your role as a girl. But then what was important about your role on the team as a multi-sport athlete? What do you think that brought to the team?

**CM:** Sometimes, I think that wasn't a great decision. I don't know. Mainly because I got injured. If I hadn't been injured, it probably would have been great, but I got injured in cross country. So that probably wasn't great for the team. I don't think it was great that I did cross country at the same time towards the end when we were peaking and my body was kind of changing. I was a little more frail at the end because I was peaking, but I mean, I guess it's a good thing to teach just like how I was able to keep up both at a high level. I didn't put one down. I was still going all out at both practices. And I didn't feel like I let any other any part of the team down because I did both sports. Definitely not cross country. I didn't miss any practices of cross country. Football, I just came at the end and kicked at the end and then practiced on my own after they left. But I, that's all I really needed to do.

So, I think the best part was that I didn't allow the other team to distract me from the team's goals at the time. So, I wasn't thinking about football practice when I was at cross country and I wasn't thinking about cross country runs at football. So, I guess I separated them really well, but then I guess a part I don't think I ever did well was getting injured. Maybe more cautious on cool down. I don't know. But yeah. I've always kind of wondered about that because I'm like, should I have done that, I don't know, but also, I didn't want to quit for my cross country teammates because that'd be bad. Also, I was always constantly talking to my cross country teammates about it because if anything, I felt like the cross country team would have felt if I was not giving them equal effort. So, I would talk to my seniors all the time to make sure I'm giving my all. I'm like, Is there anything wrong? Am I sending that message? And they



never thought anything of it because I always was there, there more than football, really. So, yeah.

**MC:** So then, how did your role on the team affect your approach to collegiate athletics? Maybe just like as you are now. How has it affected you?

**CM:** How does it affect me is that we met. You mean right now, or like, when I was choosing?

**MC:** Like right now.

**CM:** Team wise, I guess, doing little things and doing all the traditions and teamwork. Teamwork wise I guess is the best, and soccer and football where you constantly need, you need to always show up. You need to always give your best because you never know what's going to happen later in the season, injury or championship wise. And I think I learned those two in football and how important discipline is and work ethic, being the best in the room.

But cross country, I definitely think, it taught me the most in rowing because that's an endurance sport and it was me and my head. And then how I performed. So like I think cross country. The coach definitely taught this, but how to get through hard workouts and how to keep intervals and how to stay positive, but also like how to push yourself a lot farther than you can. He used to always tell us that you have a lot more than anything in your body. Your body will just shut down, start to tell yourself, No, but like you, you definitely can do more. That's one thing I did.

I used to learn from cross country, but also in cross country, I had Shannon to look up to, which was really big because after intervals, where I didn't like the three quarter mile repeats for some odd reason they just, the middle of a sprint. It was like a sprint or long distance like I didn't understand which one it was. But she always would, towards the end of intervals, she would be maybe the fourth one or something, she would come back and be like, I'll stay in front of Audrey. Okay, you're doing good. Okay. Okay. So, yeah. And then she would go back to the front and then she'd be like, Okay. Like, I know you can see from her. So, you need to push up a little bit more so, like, then she will go back to the front and then I was always like, okay, I need to be this distance from Shannon and I know she's not going to give up, or she's gonna be consistent, this whole time. So, I need to stay consistent.

So, like I guess things I learned were like definitely useful with rowing with like, I learned, or I knew, to not sprint at the beginning. Stuff like that. I think little things I learned in how to overcome my mental blocks and when things are hard. Those are things I learned in cross country. So, I think I learned more in cross country.

**MC:** So, then the last question is: What does this story, your story in your book, teach us or remind us about humanity/being human?

**CM:** Well, I guess going off what I said just recently was that we're able to do a lot more than we think we can. Not just in cross country, which is an endurance sport wise. But yeah, I think there was, I never thought twice about playing football and I

didn't think that I couldn't do it. And I didn't limit myself. I think a lot of people limit themselves.

I also think what should be taken away from this is having a lack of fear. I was afraid a lot in the beginning. In the summer when I walked on that field, I was like, what did I get myself into. I didn't know how to put pads on. I didn't know how to, like, wear my hair, to put the helmet on, little things I was so afraid of all the time, but I was like, you're fine. Like, you can do it. And then I would get over it and be fine. I would go ask a bit embarrassing, like, how do you put these knee pads on, I don't know how to do that stuff.

So, I think a lot of things. There's a lot of fear factor, fear overcoming. So, being fearless is I guess another one. And another one was something my coach used to tell me back then. Sean Brogan, he told me, he said this right after we won the state finals. He came over to me and gave me a big hug and he was like, 'See what you do when you put yourself out there.'

So, I guess that goes with the having no fear, but I think when you actually do something, it sounds so basic, but I guess it's just applicable to a lot of different situations of like either push yourself harder or just not being afraid to be good, like it might hurt. I guess endurance sport wise. But might as well try it, I guess. So that's something that always sticks with me, the quote that he always says. I think those are mine. I hope someone takes away how to treat other people, just what characterizes a champion.