

An illustration of a journalist's desk. In the center is a laptop with a person's hands typing on the keyboard. To the left of the laptop is a stack of papers with a pen resting on them, a pair of glasses, a notebook labeled 'NOTES', and some paper clips. To the right is a microphone, a newspaper with the word 'NEWS' on it, a red pen, a USB drive, and a small electronic device. The background is a teal color.

Freelance Journalism

A guide to how I got here

What I do:

- I am a freelance journalist and I specialise in live music, film and food, although over the years have turned my hand to lots of different subjects, most notably politics along with cultural and current affairs.
- I submit pitches of articles (or "ideas") to editors of reputable publications, and if/when accepted, we agree on things like word count, general tone, and the price I shall be paid for my efforts. We discuss and agree on a reasonable deadline, and I then write and edit the feature myself, and submit to said editor. I invoice them for my labour and instruct them how to pay me.
- This is my step-by-step guide that I stick to each month. I usually take on no more than 5 features or article per month.



How Did I get Here?

School

I enjoyed school very much and walked away with a healthy amount of results, including seven Highers and two Advanced Highers. It should however be noted that while my results helped with my further education, they have made little to no impact on my actual profession. I have always been confident and comfortable with English as a subject and knew that this would be the subject I eventually focussed on.



How Did I get Here?

Work

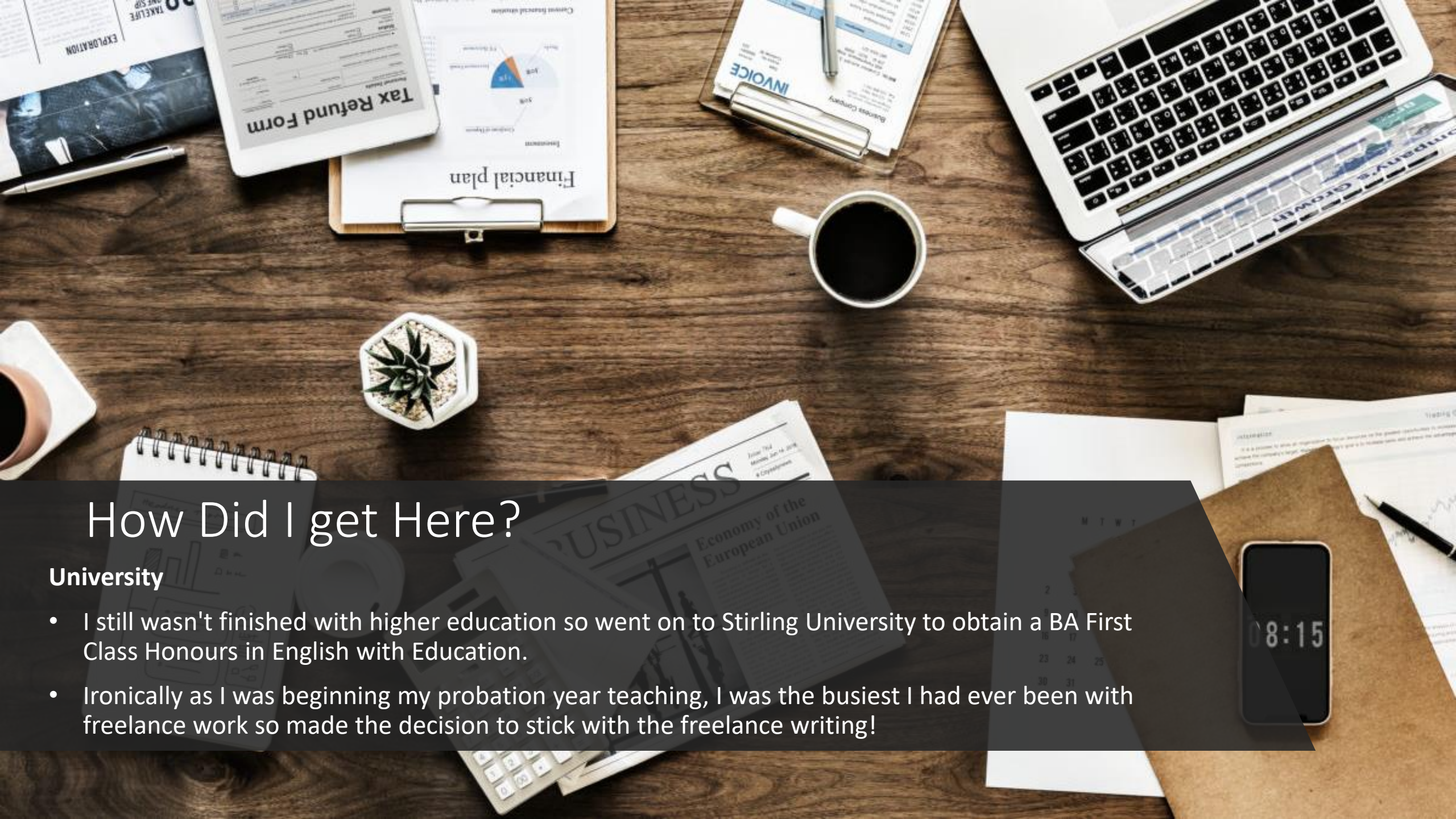
- Instead of going straight to university when I decided to take a year out to work in an office, for some life experience, and also because I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do.
- I worked in an office for more than four years at this point, and ended up learning so many transferable skills that I still use today.
- I would advise anyone to always remember that their path will be long and winding, and that all jobs are assets to your CV. A freelancer can also be a life with an unstable income and I have had many "side hustles" over the years where I have used the skills that I learned in that very first office job.



How Did I get Here?

College

- I eventually left my job to go back to college where I studied for an HND in Practical Journalism. I learned most of my craft here including networking, shorthand, and ethics.
- I enjoyed it immensely and graduated with distinction, and it was during this course when I was still a student that I began to pick up little writing jobs on a freelance basis, reviewing live music gigs etc.



How Did I get Here?

University

- I still wasn't finished with higher education so went on to Stirling University to obtain a BA First Class Honours in English with Education.
- Ironically as I was beginning my probation year teaching, I was the busiest I had ever been with freelance work so made the decision to stick with the freelance writing!



Challenges

- There are many challenges to my job, however it is always worth it!
- An unstable income can be worrying, so financial management and confidence is key.
- Most of my work since 2016 onwards has been online. This is a massive difference from my early days writing as print media is in a decline, so online literacy is also a great asset.
- My greatest challenge and focus is always networking in my industry, it is key to being well known and respected in my field.

