

ELAINE “LAINEY” LUI/LAINEYGOSSIP.COM BIO

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Elaine Lui writes, unapologetically and relentlessly, about celebrity gossip. Or as she calls it, she “talks sh-t for a living”. Long considered the thinking woman’s gossip blogger and reporter, Lui has been applying her unique voice and perspective to celebrity gossip since 2005. Her wildly popular and addictive site, LaineyGossip.com, examines how celebrity images are manufactured and contextualizes the critical place gossip occupies within modern pop culture. *LaineyGossip* is one of the most successful gossip sites in the world reaching about 1.5 million avid readers each month. Depending on the celebrity, Lui oscillates between über-cynic and gushy fangirl and is known for both her connection to her readers and her very personal tone. Regular visitors are familiar with the cast of characters who inhabit Lui’s own life and none is more memorable than her mother – a.k.a. The Chinese Squawking Chicken – the hilarious, demanding, wise, domineering, lovable architect of her daughter’s life. Recently, Lui wrote her first book, *LISTEN TO THE SQUAWKING CHICKEN: A Daughter’s Blueprint Of Life From a Mother Who Thinks She Knows Best*, about her mother’s advice, warnings, and the unconventional love that has guided Lui. *LISTEN TO THE SQUAWKING CHICKEN* was published by Putnam in the U.S. and by Random House Canada in April 2014. The ebook edition of *Listen to the Squawking Chicken* is available from the iStore, Kobo, Kindle, and other major book retailers.

Lui spends much of her time interviewing stars at parties, junkets, and on red carpets from Toronto to L.A. to Cannes, but more often can be found dissecting the celebrity ecosystem on her laptop from her home in Toronto’s Beaches community (wearing her monogrammed pajamas) or at CTV’s studios preparing for one of her two daily, national television shows, CTV’s *The Social* and *etalk* (in full hair and makeup).

What would become *LaineyGossip* began with a series of emails sent to a small group of friends with Lui’s take on Hollywood gossip. Lui followed her then-boyfriend, Jacek Szenowicz, to Vancouver in 2000, but returned temporarily to Toronto to care for her ailing mother in 2002 and began sending the email updates. The recipients forwarded her emails to more friends – soon the distribution list of more than 10,000 followers crashed her server – and *LaineyGossip.com* was born.

In 2005, she joined *etalk* (Canada’s number one entertainment program) as a reporter after a CTV executive was persuaded by his physiotherapist to read her blog. He hired Lui immediately. By 2006, the site was consuming all of her free time, so Lui left her fundraising position at Covenant House, a homeless youth shelter where she still volunteers. Szenowicz left his job to manage the business end of the site full-time in 2007. Since that time Lui and Szenowicz have grown the company steadily and have counted among their sponsorship partners major brands such as vitaminwater, American Express, McDonald’s, Proctor & Gamble, and Magnum.

Lui has reported on virtually every major entertainment story, the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games, and the Royal Wedding, and is increasingly called upon to provide commentary on breaking entertainment news stories to media outlets including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Access Hollywood*, *The Globe and Mail*, *CNN.com*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. Lui has broken exclusive stories and scooped publications such as *People* and *US Weekly* – she was the first to report that Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt planned to have their child in Africa, for example – and cultivates sources in and outside of Hollywood to ensure her reporting is always reliable. When Katie Holmes first released information about her divorce from Tom Cruise, Lui did what she always does: she immediately began working her sources, checked her facts, and by delaying her post, was able to provide new, exclusive information and context to her readers that competing outlets didn’t have.

Lui prides herself on her ability to keep a healthy distance from the celebrity PR machinery and would “rather be hated than beige.” And though she doesn’t consider it a badge of honor, celebrities have banned her from interviewing them. She’s learned the polarizing effect her reporting and opinions can have on readers (and publicists) but she places integrity and accuracy above popularity and doesn’t shy away from controversy.



Lui's efforts to elevate the level of gossip discourse are not limited to *LaineyGossip* and television. She frequently takes her message – that gossip is good and that gossip exposes much about who we are as a society – on the road. In 2012, Lui gave her first TEDx talk on “The Sociology of Gossip” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFDWOXV6iEM> and addressed students at the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Law on privacy issues. For many years she has hosted Smut Soirées, up to 1000-person events held in cities across Canada at which she dishes about celebrities in their “natural habitat”, puts her feminist spin on the top celebrity stories of the day, and reveals the players behind the blind items on her site. On her Faculty of Celebrity Studies tour (participants earn “degrees”) she's changing the way we think about talking sh-t by removing the stigma attached to gossip.

Lui says gossip is in her DNA: *“My grandmother ran a Mahjong den in Hong Kong. My mother played, that's what they do — they play Mahjong and they talk sh-t, all day and all night. They smoke cigarettes and send out for food and talk sh-t some more. That was how they communicated. Gossip is communication. That's how I was indoctrinated.”*

In 2011, the site was expanded to include new sections and voices, providing readers with more opinions and topics, including Sasha's fashion (*Sasha Finds*) and life advice (*Sasha Answers*) columns; Sarah's industry insider features; Duana's Hollywood editorials and the popular Baby Names features; Dean's take on Hollywood from the perspective of a gay urban male; Hayley's fitness advice; and Maria's celebrity editorials on Hollywood's commercialization of motherhood, among other topics.

After more than a decade in Vancouver, Lui and Szenowicz returned to Toronto in 2013 so Lui could join CTV's new daytime talk show, *The Social*, as one of four co-hosts along with Traci Melchor, Melissa Grelo, and Cynthia Loyst. Inspired by social media, *The Social* aims to bring a fresh perspective on the up-to-the-minute pop culture and lifestyle topics and allows Lui to more directly explore a wider spectrum of her interests including sports, feminism, and politics. In 2014, Lui was recognized by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television for “her contribution to digital innovation as a Social Groundbreaker.”

Lui was born and raised in Toronto and spent many summers in Hong Kong. She attended middle and high school at the Toronto French School and completed her secondary education at Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute. She majored in French and History at The University of Western Ontario, graduating in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts.

When not actively crusading for gossip, Lui is frequently on the golf course or at home with Szenowicz, her husband and business partner, and their two beagles.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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