

# Meet Tom Taylor, News Director at Bloomberg Law

We sat down with Tom Taylor, news director at *Bloomberg Law*, to discuss his role in the newsroom and the state of the media industry. Tom, a self-described “recovering lawyer” and “Supreme Court nerd,” cut his teeth covering the Supreme Court and still manages *Bloomberg Law’s* Supreme Court team. The broader scope of his work now focuses on managing the legal news desk for *Bloomberg Law* and coordinating its coverage of high-profile litigation and legal industry news.

**Q: Can you tell us a bit about the merger between BNA and *Bloomberg*? What are some of the biggest differences that both PR professionals and lawyers should know about?**

The merger between *Bloomberg* and the former Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) is coming up on almost a decade. In that time, things have changed a lot. Being part of *Bloomberg* has given us the resources to enlarge our news operation and invest in new technology and media. This investment has allowed us to build on BNA’s long and strong legacy. Working with *Bloomberg* and being part of the *Bloomberg* family has allowed us to do things we never would have accomplished a decade ago.

**Q: How has becoming part of the *Bloomberg* “family” affected your coverage?**

Everything that we write and produce is written with our subscribers in mind: the legal industry, lawyers, professors. An added benefit is that the coverage makes it to the *Bloomberg* terminal and occasionally Bloomberg.com. Essentially, we haven’t changed much of what we cover and why we cover it; we have just given it a much-larger platform—and hired more reporters to cover it. Our goal is to provide vital and essential news that our audience needs daily. The beauty is that we get to reach into other audiences and industries. And it is great for our reporters, editors and staff to get their names out and build their personal brands, not just with the core audience but with folks on the terminal and mainstream news consumers. I love being able to tell young reporters that they have the potential to reach so many more people. It is a highly motivating tool to have that available.

**Q: Speaking of young journalists — as the media industry has shifted, what mentoring advice do you give to new reporters?**

First, they must understand that, given the space that we work in, we deal with complex issues. The topics we cover are very tough to report on. We are not a mainstream news type of outlet. We cover things that, in essence, lawyers need to do their jobs. That means that our reporters need a deep understanding and deep commitment to going out and getting it right. A few words off and liberties with phrases can change the impact of what you are writing and can have significant consequences, given the work that our readers do. That said, I don’t want journalists getting bogged down [by] thinking they need to know every little thing. If they are using their time wisely, they will be talking to the people we write for and cover in daily news life. Part of having the *Bloomberg* name attached to BNA



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is that we have access to some of the top legal minds out there. Most people are happy to hop on the phone and give insights into complex issues, even if it is on background.

**Q: What is the best way to pitch your team? What is your preference for story ideas?**

Generally speaking, timeliness is king – being right on top of a major breaking decision out of SCOTUS or the Federal Courts of Appeals and [providing access to] someone who can speak freely and openly about what it is going to mean to attorneys and why they should call their clients to tell them about it. There are levels of that. The decision happens; an email says we have “the expert.” That is often going to get a response, but the absolute, optimal way is to get out in front of it.

Let’s say the Supreme Court will be hearing a particular case this term. We welcome PR folks to get in touch ahead of time and say, “I have an expert; we would love to set up a time for coffee so you can get to know them before the case comes down.” Preparation and planning are really key so you don’t have to do the day-of email. It really makes everyone’s life so much easier. There are a million people out there who are beyond qualified to comment about every given case; what makes the difference is the relationship that is already in place. The more thought leaders can make themselves available ahead of time, the more dividends it will pay down the road.

**Q: What is your biggest pet peeve as an editor?**

In particular with covering the law and the legal space is people who don’t rely on their own expertise and experience to pick and choose what they are going to cover in a particular story.

If I am covering a decision that was just handed down by a court and it is 150 pages long, it is terrible when you get to the first draft of the story and it is just a condensed outline of the decision. Reporters must choose what is the most-valuable part to pull out for the reader. The job isn’t just digesting everything the courts do, but conveying what the readers need to know. Our materials might help someone craft a brief or argue a motion, so it is essential that our reporters use their best judgment to tease out what is really important.

**Q: In 2020, what are some of the legal trends you are looking to cover?**

As a newsroom, we cover a wide variety of different topics; some that I am directly involved with and some that I leave to my colleagues. We cover everything from tax to environment to IP to the Supreme Court in detail. We have a large labor and employment news desk that is probably the best in its class when it comes to legal news. We have really worked to strengthen our Insights department, which is where we solicit outside author pieces from all walks of life in the legal profession. In the past two years, we have changed how we recruit people to write, streamlined the process of how we work with authors, and are able to showcase a broader section of opinions and viewpoints. We tightened up writing requirements, making articles more-accessible to readers and easier for authors. We are putting out a much-better product and have gotten a terrific response.

One area that we are aggressively growing is the business of law and legal industry coverage. There are a host of incredible legal topics in that area, from the discussion of access to justices to the changing face of who can practice law and the rules governing how to practice. We are also watching “the Big Four,” as they make inroads into legal

markets and what that means for firms in the U.S., UK and around the world. In general, we are looking to grow as much and as fast as we can in covering the legal industry as a whole.

**Q: Outside of the office, do you have any hobbies?**

In addition to spending as much time with my wife and two children as possible, I also practice yoga and Brazilian jiu jitsu. It really keeps me focused and humble. Tackling the workday after a really tough workout makes some of the daily hiccups feel a little less stressful when I've already got that under my belt.