

The Daily Caller was started and is currently run by Tucker Carlson and Neil Patel. It was the result of a casual conversation about the need for a conservative news outlet that turned into a serious business venture made possible by Carlson's connections in the news world and Patel's legal background. Their goal was to create a website that would report stories of interest to people on the right, a niche that did not have any strong competitors and an audience that had long been ignored. The website launched in 2010 and today, Carlson and Patel have made The Daily Caller a profitable business, unlike most news outlets.

The office environment at The Daily Caller is unlike anything I could have expected. Interns sit at a large worktable in the middle of the newsroom, surrounded by writers who also sit at tables. Cubicles are non-existent. Large flat screens cover the walls, with MSNBC and Fox News permanently playing in the background. Writers in the office are all intelligent and ambitious 20-somethings with full autonomy to pursue stories that they find interesting. That freedom was also granted to interns, which enabled me to write stories about a variety of topics and figure out what I was really interested in.

The most basic aspect of my internship was learning how to operate every component of Wordpress, the program that The Daily Caller uses to run their website. Strong knowledge and ample practice with that website is a tool that I will most likely use throughout the rest of my professional career, and a skill I can add to my resume. As an intern, I was expected to monitor and delete comments with foul language or references to violence, edit copy submitted by writers, and test different site functions such as "share" buttons that linked to social media and links within articles to other websites. There were also occasions where I would clean up the kitchen or make "emergency" runs to CVS when the coffee supply ran out, but these were few

and far between. I worked as the front desk receptionist once a week where I improved my telephone skills and learned how to calmly deal with hostile readers.

The most exciting and rewarding part of the internship, naturally, was writing original articles. I was able to write over 30 stories this summer, most of which focused on religion, guns, or veterans; all topics that are well received by the readership. My most popular article was about a female veteran who found an angry note on her windshield after she parked in a veteran's parking spot at a grocery store. I did not break the story, but after finding and communicating with the woman via Facebook, I was able to break the story about an anonymous apology note she received in the wake of the coverage. Fox News picked up my story and linked to it in their online coverage. That story received over 23,000 hits and was a top performing article from the summer interns.

A mind-numbing, but incredibly important part of the internship was creating slideshows. While the content of these were typically scantily clad women, the traffic on slideshows significantly contributes to the ability of the website to profit. A slideshow I created about the "25 Hottest Women Over 40" received over 28,000 hits and was the best performing intern article of the summer. When given a hard time about the silly slideshows, the senior entertainment writer reminded the office "these keep the lights on and pay your salaries."

Some advice I was given before heading to Washington was to be the first intern into the office and last intern out of the office every day. I made that a personal mantra for the summer and writers quickly noticed that I was going the extra mile. On my first day in the office, I met with Alex Pappas, a Sewanee graduate working there, and asked for tips on how to make the most of my internship at The Daily Caller this summer. He told me to spend as much time in the newsroom as possible, because that is where I would learn the most. Conversations with other

staff members who had been interns for the outlet said the same thing. I took their advice and made sure that I was a constant fixture in the office. While many interns spent their days on Capitol Hill “chasing stories” and taking advantage of the autonomy we were given, I reminded myself that my position as an intern meant that my first and foremost responsibility was not to write stories. Instead, I needed to make sure that the office and the website were running smoothly. My constant presence in the office helped secure the respect of writers in the newsroom.

Another folly I made strides to avoid was pitching stories that would not appeal to the reader base. Some interns would pitch any news story they came across, without thinking about if it would be a good addition to our website. These were constantly turned down and frustrated the editors, as irrelevant pitches are a waste of time. Being picky about what I pitched earned me the appreciation of the editors, who I quickly learned were people you wanted on your side in the business.

Weekly softball games against other offices in D.C. provided comedic relief from the news day, as offices in Washington take intramural sports very seriously. Participating in every game that The Daily Caller competed in landed me invitations to dinners with staff members, and put me on the fast track as someone they liked to have around. As a naturally outspoken person, I quickly became comfortable with speaking up in the newsroom and developed friendly relationships with the writers. Having those relationships helped me throughout the summer; anytime I had a question or was stuck on a story, staff members were more than willing to help me in whatever way possible.

Overall, this internship gave me great clarity in regards to what I would like my future career to look like. The office hosted weekly luncheons for the interns and brought in successful

journalists to talk about how they ended up in their field and give advice on how to succeed in the news industry. These were especially intriguing and helpful to me, as many of the speakers talked about how their original career plan was to go into politics in some form, but quickly realized that jobs in that field could be highly mundane and frustrating. Hearing from adults who had once been exactly in my shoes helped me re-evaluate the idea that I wanted to be a political consultant. This internship showed me that I would not enjoy a job that was repetitive in nature, and journalism offers a unique career in which every day is different and one can never truly know what to expect when they get to work. A job in journalism is exciting, but also proved to be emotionally exhausting, something I am grateful I got to experience first hand. Watching cable news for nine hours a day can be downright depressing, and I learned quickly that someone in the news industry has to compartmentalize their emotions, so as not to become overwhelmed by tragic events.

In closing, this opportunity gave me clarity, experience, and an amazing summer. On my last day in the office, the senior political editor talked to me about freelancing for The Daily Caller throughout the school year and urged me to return as a second year intern next summer. I plan to seriously explore both possibilities. I cannot express my gratitude enough for the support that you have extended to me; without this internship I would not have known that my passion for politics might be best carried out in a way that I had not previously considered.