

Internship with The Daily Caller

This summer I interned in Washington, D.C. for The Daily Caller. The Daily Caller is an online 24-hour news publication that prides itself in providing its readers thought-provoking reports and breaking news. The Daily Caller tends to cater to a politically conservative audience as it was founded by Tucker Carlson, a political news correspondent with Fox News, and Neil Patel, a former adviser to former Vice President Dick Cheney. During my role as an intern, I was given a unique opportunity with The Daily Caller. I was able to actually write stories, have them published, and accredited to me. Other news publications may not provide their interns the chance to have stories published on their own. Along with getting the privilege to write and be published, I had other common intern roles such as front desk duties, kitchen duties, and editorial aide shifts. Editorial aide shifts require comment monitoring on featured articles, site fixes which entailed reporting flaws in the site's function, and copy edit where we are responsible to go through articles and find any typos or mistakes in the article to fix.

Thanks to The Daily Caller, I gained the skills and knowledge a real journalist needs in order to be successful. The biggest lessons I learned had to do with the process of being published, how to write not just well but provokingly, and the real work that goes behind a great piece. The process of being published is one that I just never thought to take into account. Going into my internship, I knew that having your name associated with a certain article was a big deal and something to be proud of. However, I did not realize all the work that goes behind it. If I were to find an article that I wanted to write about, I had to “pitch” my ideas to the editors and wait for the go-ahead to write it. Once approved, it was up to me to not only write the article, but provide a headline, subtitle, cover image, choose what section and category it would fit on our site, and the SEO Pack (an SEO Pack automatically makes the article available to search engines like Google). This process, at first, took a

very long time but with more practice, it became a habit when writing.

Journalism is not just for good writers, but the writers that can cater to and entice their readers. For The Daily Caller, a good article is almost like a formula and it all starts with the headline. Without a good headline, a perfectly good and informative article can fall short of its potential. Admittedly, it took me a while to really get the hang of a good headline but, as always, it got easier and easier as my internship progressed. Another key addition to the article formula came as more of a surprise.

Intuitively, I had started writing my articles with a few introduction sentences attempting to draw in the reader and make them want to read further. With The Daily Caller, though, these introduction sentences seemed superfluous. They would always say that these editorialized sentences weren't necessary; I just needed to get to the point. It wasn't my job to entice the readers through extra sentences or leading up to the story. It was how I wrote the story that would grab a reader's attention. It was all about sentence ordering and word choice, really. If there was a certain feeling or reaction that I wanted to elicit, I had to do it in an already existing, information packed sentence with a few choice words mixed in.

This skill really helped me hone in on the concept of research for my articles. It wasn't enough to find a story and basically re-report it. New information buffed up a story making it much more likely to be viewed. This, also, was my biggest lesson learned throughout my summer internship. Take a big story, for example, a "headliner". The big articles are often covered by a ton of news publications already which means there really isn't much that can be further discussed in the storyline. Rather than leaving that story alone and giving it to the big news outlets, The Daily Caller taught me to really dig deep into the story to bring a new perspective by making otherwise unseen connections, picking up on a seemingly small detail and blowing it up, or diving head first into research that the other news sources have left untapped. I never expected research being the highlight of my summer, or, frankly,

something that I would even remotely enjoy. However, my favorite piece this summer came from dedication to minute details, a stubborn persistence, and finding my own research.

In the middle of June, I happened to stumble across an article that discussed the troubles of drunk driving. This issue continues to be an increasing problem not just for our country, but, specifically, my generation. This article talked about the possibility of adding technology into our cars to, at least, minimize the accidents. I thought this was a very interesting approach and one that I, personally, had never considered. I pitched it immediately and anxiously awaited an editor's response. Once I got the approval, I decided that the story needed something more to it. What I had read only discussed the technology's potential but, since it is a concern of mine, I thought an interesting perspective would be getting the approval of organizations against drunk driving, and then to the organization itself of how the technology would work. The best place to look turned out to be the groups called Mother's Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Dad's Against Drunk Driving (DADD). Not only are these two groups strongly opposed to drunk driving, but they may not have heard of this technology. To me, that last point made it even more important. I was going to be the one to describe the technology to them for the first time which would provoke a truly genuine response and not one that has been prepared or practiced. When I called both MADD and DADD, they were excited by the idea of this new technology! They hadn't heard about it yet and were so eager to give me their positions that they sent over several fact sheets, statements, etc. It was incredible! I felt like a true journalist. Not only was this 700 word piece the highlight of my summer, it led me to the conclusion that this is what I want to do for my career.

Without this internship I would have looked at journalism as just writing. Writing for writing's sake. I probably never would have gone into journalism for my career. Now, after a full summer of

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journalism, I can't see doing any other profession. Journalism really fits who I am as a person. I've always loved to write, so a career and livelihood from it is the perfect solution. Journalism has the potential to take me anywhere in life. I can live anywhere and know that my profession is not only wanted but needed and that's a pretty great feeling. Thanks to The Daily Caller and my summer internship, I know that I want to be a journalist.