Kurt Martin

COMM 360-01

Informational Interview #1

**Interview Overview:** My informational took place on September 26 at around 2:15 p.m. I interviewed Ben Cates from The News and Advance newspaper out of Lynchburg, Va. which was my hometown newspaper growing up. I read Mr. Cates’s work quite often as he covers high school sports from my hometown area. I gained a relationship with Mr. Cates through my time with the Rustburg High School Boys’ Basketball Team, as I was constantly in contact reporting scores and statistics for the team. The questions that I planned to ask in the interview were as follows:

How many hours of sleep do you get per day? (Work and Life View)

You’ve been a writer in a college setting, how did you manage your time to achieve optimal success? (Workview)

How do you meet your deadlines when you are working on multiple stories at once? (Workview)

What got you in to sports journalism in the first place? (Life and Work Views)

What would you recommend to someone who is trying to get into the journalism field? (Workview)

Do you still have time to do leisure activities outside of work? (Lifeview)

What are the folks that hire people at the News and Advance look for in an employee? (Workview)

How did you get over the phobia of asking tough questions to dig deeper into stories? (Workview)

Lastly, I will ask, as a sports writer, what is your favorite and least favorite things about the job? (Could be Work or Life View)

**Interview Summary:** After my interview, I learned that being a sports writer is a total grind that you have to be both: mentally and physically invested in to find success. Mr. Cates said he only gets around five to six hours of sleep per day, and is used to working around eight to 10 hours per day in the office. Mr. Cates is a former sports editor for Liberty University’s student newspaper, so he understood my standpoint of being a college student working with both academic and paper deadlines. Mr. Cates said that is a sports fan but that wasn’t the reason he wanted to become a sports writer, he wanted to look into the lives of high school athletes and why they do the things they do. Why do they play sports? How do they balance their time? Or, finding interesting sports stories from the Central Virginia area. After talking to Mr. Cates, I am still very interested in becoming a sports writer because that has always been my dream. I feel like if I could work with Mr. Cates he would be a great mentor and teacher to help me improve my skills and find the best stories. The only negative thing I could see from being a sports writer is a lack of free time. With such a high dedication that is needed to be successful in this field, I’m going to have to find a way to balance my relationship with my girlfriend and work.

**Applying what you have learned:** I am very interested in becoming a sports writer and I feel the work I am doing now is only going to help me when I actually look for a job in the field. I am a sports writer for Longwood’s only student run news organization, The Rotunda, in which I write one to two articles per week. Having that direct experience in the field, balanced with school I feel is only going to look better on my resume. I possess a few skills that I also think could be a big help as I peruse this career. I am team oriented. I will gladly work in a team to achieve something greater, and will work with others to improve writing and relationships on both sides. I am driven. I simply want to be the best at everything I do, so I want to go into this career and make the best out of it, and still put out quality content each and every time. I am also detail oriented. I have always been one to look into small details, and how they can make things better to higher levels of expectations. On the other hand, to be successful I still need to develop the skill of time management. Right now, I’m having a hard time balancing school and extracurricular activities. Instead of quitting something, I want to stay the course and work it all out successfully. I feel if I work hard now then I will know what it takes when I get a real job in the field when I get done with school. Also, I could be less timid when asking questions. Sometimes I am nervous to ask tough questions because I don’t want the subject reacting in a negative way. I just get nervous, so getting over that and having a little more courage I think will help out a lot as I make my way toward this career.

If I had to choose a field that was close to the sports journalism field, then it would be sports broadcasting. I have always had a dream of being on camera, reporting sports for the Washington Redskins, or Virginia Cavaliers. I feel my ability to talk on camera, and in front of large groups of people would go a long way. Right now, I am a member of Lancer Central and I work with the Big South Network as a color commentator on Division I sports action. These are jobs that again, are directly in the field of sports broadcasting that could help me build a resume for a career outside of school. I love being energetic about sports topics, so my enthusiasm could really help out, and also, I feel like I can easily be myself on camera and fully get my emotions across. Sometimes with writing I struggle because I’m not getting instant feedback like I would while being on camera.

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