

Broadcast Journalist of the Year Portfolio- Chaney Kelly- Lovejoy High School (Lucas, TX)

My introduction to video production came 4 years ago when I was searching for a fun elective to finish off my 8th-grade schedule. Convergent Digital Media was marketed as a class where we would learn how to make professional broadcast packages to share with the school. Like many other students, I interpreted that to mean that we would learn the ins and outs of creating the best Minecraft YouTube video possible. Saying that I was wrong would be a drastic understatement. During the year, my knowledge of journalism along with technical production grew tremendously. Every day I would go home excited to show my parents the new tricks that I had learned in Final Cut Pro. That excitement remained throughout the year, but after I had finished the final project for that class, I thought that I was done making videos forever. For the next four years, I would be stuck in high school — a place filled with hard classes and no fun.

I had only made it a week into summer when my mom got an email from my middle school adviser, Barb Smith, asking if I would be interested in joining the Broadcast Journalism team in 9th grade. It was an offer that I couldn't refuse! I would be able to keep making videos in high school without taking the tedious prerequisite class that scared many prospective student journalists away. Needless to say, that prerequisite proved useful in teaching aspects of production that I didn't even know existed, so I was at quite a disadvantage going in. Luckily, my partner, Grant Dennis — guided me along the journey of becoming a confident reporter. During my first trip beyond the walls of the school for the purpose of journalism, Grant took me to a comedy club and told me to film the action. I found myself huddled behind the crowd, taking dozens of shots from the same angle, with the only variation coming from the camera's zoom. This shyness persisted all year. My partner would be crouched in front of the stage getting reaction shots of the crowd, ignoring what others may think of him; while I crouched behind the audience hoping nobody would notice me. As the show came to a close, I sat there looking through my footage, and only then realizing that I had filmed 30 minutes worth of a 10-second shot, while my partner had hundreds of unique clips. I figured that it would be easy to fix that issue, I just need to be more confident — allowing myself to put myself in awkward positions for the sake of the shot. What I didn't anticipate was the stress of filming an interview. I still remember the visible anxiety plastered on my face as I set up the camera. My mind was racing as I tried to remember all of the steps: attach XLR to the camera, power supply to XLR, and microphone to the power supply. Check white balance, focus, and zoom. Frame for the rule of thirds. Keep talking space in the shot. Fix audio levels so they don't clip. I was overwhelmed and confused. After what felt like 5 hours of fumbling with cables and plugs, I was finally ready to start the interview.

In that comedy club, talking to a man who was three times as old as me, I realized that being a reporter wasn't about achieving technical perfection. While it still helps the broadcast run smoothly, the key to journalism is getting to know your subject. The key to strong reporting is conversing with them, not interrogating them. As the interview went on, the questions that I had spent hours on had all been asked, but the interview was far from over. As we continued to talk, the interviewee began to share things about him that would not come out if I stuck to the script, but instead, by simply talking to him, Mr. Daniels offered me insights into his struggles, his philosophy on life, and his desires for his small business.

Ever since the first interview for the first video that I made for the Lovejoy News Network, it has been my goal to replicate this experience with every interview that I conduct. Through the years, my technical skills have improved, my knowledge of journalism has grown, but the same simple phrase has remained paramount in my reporting philosophy: If you take the time to get to know your subject, your subject will take the time to talk to you. As I get ready for my role as Associate Producer next year, I hope that I will be able to share this same idea with all of my fellow student journalists at LHS.

1. [When Life Gives You Limits](#)

“When Life Gives You Limits” is a feature story that I filmed and edited for Leopard Spotlight. After hearing that Precalculus teacher, Andrew Stallings has been battling cancer for the past decade, I

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knew that LNN needed to produce a package telling his story. After speaking to him, we discovered that his battle with cancer has encouraged him to become a better father and teacher.

2. [Talent To Spare](#)

“Talent To Spare” is a sports feature story that I filmed and edited for Leopard Spotlight. After hearing that Lovejoy High School was home to a back-to-back state champion bowler, I looked into different ways of reporting the story. I decided along with my group that we should produce a sports feature telling the story of Noah Cooper’s lifelong love of bowling. I interviewed Noah along with his mother and coach in order to understand his commitment to the sport.

3. [Teacher’s Pet](#)

“Teacher’s Pet” is a feature story on Tank, an emotional support dog at Lovejoy Elementary. I had heard stories of a lab mix that roamed the hallways of LES but had never met the dog until I went to Mrs. Nicholson’s 1st-grade classroom for an interview. Through the interviews of Tank’s owner along with one of his “classmates,” the story of a class pet grew beyond the walls of G108.

4. [Clever Campaigning](#)

After the outbreak of coronavirus, LNN’s primary broadcast (Leopard Spotlight) had to be put on hold as we did not have access to our equipment. Our solution was creating a new broadcast known as Leopard Pause that aired numerous 30-second to two-minute-long videos aimed at social media sharing. “Clever Campaigning” was a feature story that I filmed, exploring the inner-workings of junior, Tajvir Singh’s NHS candidacy.

5. [Virtual Pop Show](#)

“Virtual Pop Show” was a news story for Leopard Pause which detailed Lovejoy Choir’s adaptation to an online performance of their highly anticipated Pop Show. I interviewed both choir directors along with a student who performed in the show in order to fully understand the reasoning behind the change along with the plan of execution for a show that is totally different than anything that they had done before.