

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY | GRAE DRAKE



SHIMMER AND SHINE Grae Drake at the Oscars, getting entertainment coverage for ProSieben, a media company in Germany. Drake got her start in entertainment journalism after attending the University of Texas, where she discovered her love for film.

The untold story of a real-life storyteller

BY ADRIANNA BEAN
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She licked Paul Rudd's face. She once gave Ryan Gosling a dish towel with his face on it, which made him giggle for over a minute. Samuel L. Jackson read her wedding vows, Emily Blunt has threatened to shave her head and Channing Tatum has given her a lap dance.

Her name may be Grae, but she's far from dull. Sporting a bright pink pixie cut and an even brighter personality, she illuminates every interview and endeavor she takes on.

A jack of many trades, talents and star-studded mischief, Grae Drake is an entertainment reporter.

"I am an entertainment nerd with the greatest job in the world," she said.

Drake can currently be found on KCAL news at 9 a.m. and Fox 11 news at 6 p.m. On these channels, she hosts segments that review the latest movies in Hollywood.

"What I do is watch movies and television shows," she said. "I offer my very strong opinions on them and interview the people responsible. I'm sort of a hybrid in the entertainment journalism field."

But it wasn't always this way, as her journey was not a straight shot. Growing up, Drake didn't even know entertainment journalism was a possible career opportunity.

"When I was a kid watching Leonard Maltin on Entertainment Tonight, reviewing movies and talking to the stars, it still somehow did not occur to me that I could also do that," she said "I just sat in my living room watching him thinking he was so smart and so cool. I loved listening to him

talk to people and it made me happy. I don't know why I never put two and two together."

Instead, Drake would find her path in entertainment journalism through her love for filmmaking. She attended the University of Texas where she studied film.

She was soon recognized by Sundance and the Director's Guild of America for her work.

"I love being behind the camera and I love making things," Drake said. "I love the creativity of it and eventually I discovered that. I also ended up in front of the camera and I liked doing that too. And so it kind of all just came together for me eventually, but certainly not right after college."

In the beginning stages of her career, she would film casting interviews for reality television shows and edit them together to send off to networks. She also conducted interviews herself.

"I realized that when I would go out and film people, when I was interacting with them and asking them questions about their lives, we were emotionally connected," Drake said. "That's where I started to realize that I love being connected to people and I love hearing their stories. I am also a fundamentally nosy person. I love learning who people are because I think everyone is fascinating in their own way."

As the puzzle pieces began to merge, the picture of her future became a bit more clear.

"I started a podcast on my own time with no money and no resources, just people that I knew in the industry and my friends," she said. "I got a job as a movie critic. The puzzle started to take shape and that was it."

Later working on CNN as a weekly movie critic, her opinionated nature landed her a job at Rotten Tomatoes as a

Senior Video Editor.

Drake also makes content for her numerous social media accounts, like her Instagram @graedrake, posting reviews, interviews, celebrity interactions and hilarious shenanigans.

More recently, Drake attended the Grammys as a red carpet reporter for KCAL news. As enriching as the job can be, experiences like these have shown Drake the less glamorous realities of her job.

"Covering these events is very challenging," she said. "It's very long hours and it's wildly uncomfortable. You're standing and you're begging people to come over and talk to you and you have to deal with all of the very colorful personalities around you."

However, the positives of the job outweigh the bad, with the experience being a memorable one for Drake.

"What I'll say about the Grammys that made it so deeply fun to me was that musicians are so cool, and the sheer number of nominees at the Grammys is huge," she said. "They get acknowledged for this amazing thing that they've accomplished, and so the vibe is just great. Everyone's so excited and they look amazing because the fashion is sensational at the Grammys."

Even for a seasoned journalist like Drake, jobs in entertainment journalism can be nerve-wracking.

"I have been diagnosed with anxiety, so



MULTITALENTED Grae Drake, an entertainment reporter, at the Grammys. Dubbing herself a hybrid in the entertainment journalism field, she interviews celebrities, reviews movies and TV shows and covers awards shows like the Oscars for local news networks.

having to do a job in the presence of a person whose art I love is kind of a recipe for disaster for me," she said. "My anxiety can run wild. I've been doing this for a long time, but I still get nervous all the time."

Drake's experience allows her to harness her anxiety and channel it towards improving her work.

"Over the years I've started to treat my nervousness as a friend that helps me do my job," Drake said. "The process of welcoming how I feel has been very important in

every aspect of my life and especially my work, because when I stop fighting it, then it doesn't slow me down at all. It really can fuel me if I learn how to appreciate it for what it does."

As fun as the job can be, it's the innately human nature of it all that Drake finds to be the most fulfilling. Her favorite part of her career is making connections with people that she otherwise wouldn't have met.

"I love people's lives, I love hearing about what fires them up, I love hearing about the things they've overcome, I love how much I laugh every day, I love the openness of people, I love their creativity and I love their willingness to play along with me," she said. "Life is full for me, just knowing that someone whose movies have changed my life is someone I can also sit down and laugh with. Everyone's the same, and yet we have these beautiful differences about us. And so to me, that's journalism: getting to talk to people for a living."



STAR-STUDED CELEBRATIONS From L to R: Steve Gelder (Drake's husband), Grae Drake and Samuel L. Jackson celebrate at the Roosevelt Hotel after-party for the premiere of "Captain Marvel."



REPORTING LIVE Grae Drake at the 2024 Grammys, getting entertainment coverage for KCAL CBS. She has worked for CNN as a movie critic and Rotten Tomatoes as a Senior Video Editor.



ENTERTAINING JOURNALISM Grae Drake's job as an entertainment reporter is far from dull, with her interviews culminating in the most chaotic of shenanigans.