

Broadcast Journalist of the Year Portfolio

Ava Richards

Creating and telling stories has been at the center of my existence for as long as I can remember. When I was in elementary school, I spent countless hours making movies with my dad, always passionate about the adventures we could conjure up on our TV screen. When middle school rolled around, I dreamt of becoming a filmmaker, so I created a YouTube channel to make these dreams a reality (if you could call it that). The process of coming up with a video idea, filming it, and then editing for several hours was one that I quickly fell in love with. So naturally, when I decided to join my high school's broadcast journalism program, I was thrilled that my love of videomaking had real-life applications, and could actually have an impact on my community.

The only problem with this, however, was my confidence. Up until this point, I couldn't even order a coffee at Starbucks by myself. The thought of having to speak to a stranger that was perfectly capable of judging my every word was terrifying to me. While I knew I could talk to the camera myself, I struggled with the idea of having to interview unfamiliar people and didn't know if I was fit for the job. So for my first video piece, I decided to rip the bandaid straight off to test if my anxiety could bare the task.

I chose to cover the annual Martin Luther King Jr. march in San Francisco, knowing that there would be vast crowds. With sweaty palms and a pounding heart, I walked up to the first unsuspecting victim of my shyness to ask for an interview. And to my extreme surprise, the subject was more than happy to talk with me. While listening to their in-depth answers to my seemingly simple questions about the march, I learned (and heard) how passionate people can become if you allow them to talk about the topics that genuinely matter to them.

Since then, discovering the passions of my subjects has become one of my favorite parts of creating a story. I've found myself investing in people and stories that I otherwise wouldn't have known or cared to learn about. Interviewing all of these contrasting people has allowed me to be a part of the many unique worlds that my community has to offer and share the special parts of them with others.

While I still worry about being shot down by potential interviewees, I ground myself with the thought that it's better to risk my embarrassment than miss out on an incredible story. Through this mindset, I've hunted down the perfect sources who are more than willing to let me in and teach me about the intricacies of their lives. I am constantly reminded of all of the meaningful stories that I have been able to tell, through the new friendships, and their art that they have allowed me to keep (a glass pumpkin, if you were curious).

My peers in the program have encouraged me to experiment with my mediums as well. I've had the privilege of co-hosting a podcast and making stand-alone audio stories that have pushed me to think of new ways to edit and compile the stories of those around me. These opportunities have given me the chance to expand my love for broadcast journalism and taught me the patience

and dedication it takes to create high-quality pieces. If not the chances that my peers took on me to create those podcasts, I would never have entered the NPR Student Podcast Challenge, nor would my team and I have won honorable mention in said contest.

These moments and victories have paved the way for me to become the never-before-seen role of Managing Editor of Podcasts for my school. I can't wait to help develop a program where people can explore the increasingly popular world of audio and become talented broadcast journalists. I aim to inspire my team to push for the best sources and think outside of the box, for broadcasting is truly an opportunity to let your creativity shine in a way that can change the world around you.

There is no doubt in my mind that being a part of this team has thoroughly changed my life. I am more motivated to leave my comfort zone and chase down meaningful stories that have yet to be broadcasted to the world. While I used to sit by and watch events happen around me, I now have the chance to be a part of the story and give it the justice it deserves. And instead of asking my mom to order a coffee for me, I can now confidently say that I can do it on my own, and I would not trade that for the world.

<https://scotscoop.com/great-glass-pumpkin-patch-melds-art-and-community/>

Great Glass Pumpkin Patch melds art and community

I discovered the Great Glass Pumpkin Patch by complete accident, surprised to learn that it had existed for more than twenty years in my community and yet I had never heard of it. This annual event brings together glassblowers from around the area to showcase and sell their work to help support local art-based nonprofits. Through interviews with the founder of the pumpkin patch, a glass artist, and an attendee, I was able to bring light to the origins and true meaning behind the popular event. I was blown away by the myriad of colors, styles, and techniques I saw and tried to capture the beauty of this fascinating and underappreciated sector of the arts through every shot in my piece.

<https://scotscoop.com/asbs-publicity-commission-paints-a-colorful-scene-for-heritage-fair/>

ASB's Publicity Commission paints a colorful scene for Heritage Fair

The Heritage Fair is an annual school-wide event that ASB holds for our school. Its purpose is to share the cultures and talents of our student body through all of the many clubs that our school houses. However, one aspect of the assembly that often goes unnoticed is the decorations that are made by the Publicity Commission, which take up to two months to create. I wanted to film this feature story to highlight the immense dedication and creativity the commission puts into each decoration that turns our gym into a lively experience for all. I used a variety of wide, medium, and

close shots, along with photographs from past years to help tell their story through the intricate details of their work.

<https://scotscoop.com/reap-what-you-sew/>

Reap What You Sew

This podcast is a feature story that I wrote and edited with the help and contributions of three other journalists in my class. It tells the story of a girl in my grade, Auva Soheili, that owns her own clothing line, using all of its profits as donations to local charities and organizations that help people in our community. Throughout my interviews with Auva, I could hear the pain in her voice as she talked about the social injustices in the world that angered her, and it really struck a chord with me. My team and I became truly dedicated to spotlighting her story, spending weeks hunting down interviews from all sorts of people and organizations, trying out different editing techniques, and composing our own music to fit the theme of the narrative.

<https://scotscoop.com/theatricult-episode-3-risks-and-responsibilities/>

Theatricult Episode 3: Risks and responsibilities

Theatricult is a podcast that I co-hosted with fellow journalist Ruya Yaman that aimed to educate people about the world of technical theatre. In this episode, we wanted to tell an honest narrative about some of the dangers of this field of work. With equipment that requires intense training to operate and a constant need for extreme situational awareness, it can be easy for technicians to stress or become anxious. We wanted to reflect these chaotic emotions in our editing, by having two speakers switch back and forth to tell a single story, and merge various theatre horror stories together into one layered audio track to really draw the listener in.

<https://scotscoop.com/hating-on-the-vsco-trend-wrongfully-shames-girls/>

Hating on the VSCO trend wrongfully shames girls

I filmed and edited this commentary piece in August when the viral trend of making fun of a group of people called “VSCO girls” gained serious traction. These girls were portrayed as annoying and fake environmentalists that only wanted to follow trends, but I saw a broader issue in all the supposed “jokes.” Utilizing interviews with my peers and research about the VSCO community and trend as a whole, I constructed a piece that discussed how negative our culture has become and urged the audience to have a positive outlook on each of our differences.

