

In a world increasingly devoid of any privacy, it feels as though in-depth profiles as we know it is slowly dying out. More celebrities are sharing their information freely to anyone who'll listen and those that don't seem keen to maintain their privacy. The days of spending large chunks of time with your subject appear to be less common with publications like The New Yorker and New York Magazine among the few that still do it this way.

The profile has been around for longer than daily vlogging or social media influencers. It was a way for people to get a peek into the lives of those they admired most. It is an artwork that, when done right, is really something special.

Some writers just have the talent. When Gay Talese wrote *Frank Sinatra has a cold* he did not go with the intention of following the man around for three months. Sinatra wasn't going to give him what he needed for his original piece, so he found a new angle. What he then produced is arguably one of the best profiles there has ever been.

The beauty of it is that Talese wasn't trying too hard to make it something else. He didn't go in there with an agenda, he simply observed. He found out everything he needed to know without ever talking to Sinatra himself, focusing on the people around him for his information.

He kept pieces of cardboard that perfectly fit in his coat pocket on him at all times so he could scurry away and take notes when something juicy came up. The decision to never write in front of anyone meant he was there for moments that were far more honest than if they had felt his journalistic presence.

Talese's rich storytelling and ability to grip the reader means that it is hard to dislike the article. It seems hard to believe that it didn't make much of an impression at the time. Had Talese chosen to use conventional techniques instead of what we now call new journalism, the article would've been a flop. He knew how to really craft a sentence.

One can't talk about profiles without mentioning Lilian Ross. Her nearly 60-year portfolio is packed with masterful profiles of everyone from the late actor Robin Williams to Harry Winston, the diamond king. But it is her one of Ernest Hemmingway that everyone remembers.

Despite being friends with him, her writing did not show a bias in any way. In fact, she was so honest in her storytelling that many believe it created the "hatchet job" profile, much to her and Hemmingway's surprise. She chose to be on the reader's side, telling them as it was, not as she or her subject wanted it to be.

Both writers have been credited as the parents of new journalism. Their blending of non-fiction writing with creative techniques changed the way we write forever. The way they can write with such elegance and honesty is a talent many spend a lifetime chasing and is why, years later, they are still constantly referred back to.

As we move further into the future and parts of journalism become replaced by more efficient forms of media, it is unclear where the written profile fits into that landscape. On

the one hand, there is the ease of the visual narrative, documentaries and short videos provide a powerful experience in a similarly engaging way. YouTube series like Vogue's *73 question with...*, or GQ's *Things I can't live without* are filling the spaces profiles once occupied. One can only hope that there is room for both.

There *are* writers out there whose talents are comparable to those of Talese and Ross, with even more on their way to be. While they may not be as prolific as before, truly good profiles are still out there and with the work of these two great writers to guide us the art of the profile will hopefully last for another 60 years.