

Zoe Lumpkin

Dr. Pettigrew

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Journalist Interview Paper

For this paper I decided to interview Angel Sohu. Sohu is a mutual acquaintance of mine and I've spoken with her on several occasions, but never regarding our academic or professional pursuits. I conducted my interview with her via phone and received a lot of insight regarding her experiences as a journalist, as well how the passion behind her work impacts her experiences with media relations and working with PR people.

Sohu will be graduating at the conclusion of this semester from Ithaca College in New York with her bachelor's in journalism. She's currently a writer at Flaunt Magazine and focuses on fashion as well as art and art culture. "Fashion is such a fundamental keystone in my life," said Sohu, "I knew whatever path in life I took I was going to pursue it—journalism just happened to snap perfectly in place for me." Sohu began writing for Flaunt Magazine in January of 2020. Up until that point her college experience had been entirely based in New York, but she was thrilled to have been accepted for an internship position at Flaunt Magazine in Los Angeles, California. Unfortunately, the emergence of the pandemic caused both her internship and academic experiences to go remote, which left her to return back to her home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "It was a roller coaster of emotions. In many ways L.A. felt like home to me and in a flash my experience there was cut short." Sohu expressed bittersweet emotions toward the effects of the pandemic as she recounted her brief experience living in L.A. However, she strongly emphasized that despite the shortcomings of the situation, she couldn't be happier with

the experience she's gained writing for Flaunt and feels assured in the pursuit of her career and future with fashion writing.

Sohu has written over 40 articles for various publications, and has had a hearty mix of good, bad, and downright weird interactions with people in PR. We bonded over the stresses that come from an email inbox bursting at the seams. "PR people contact me all the time and honestly most of it is garbage," Sohu lamented, "I remember a restaurant emailed me wanting to do a press release about a new sandwich they had coming out. Like c'mon— I write for a fashion magazine." Sohu went on to discuss how she turns down many pitches and PR people because they don't "get her." I asked her to elaborate on that and she said many people who pitch to her just don't even do the bare minimum to find out what she writes about. Even when a pitch is related to her beat, it's apparent to when someone doesn't follow her as a journalist and is just focused on their needs instead of her and her audience. I asked her how she sorts through all of the nonsense and if she's had positive experience with PR people as well. "It means a lot when someone has done their research and pitches something that will genuinely appeal to my audience," Sohu stated, "I have a handful of PR people bookmarked to have their emails sent to a separate folder so they don't get lost in the rest of the B.S." She also emphasized that when a PR practitioner sends her something that makes it very apparent they know nothing about her or her beat, she has no inhibitions about hitting the block button.

To close our interview, I asked Sohu what advice with media relations she has to give me as a PR practitioner moving forward in my professional career. Sohu responded, "The best advice I can give is to make yourself stand out by doing more than just knowing a journalist; you need to really get them." She spoke about how it's not as simple as sending out a bunch of pitches to people on a given beat. There are nuances to journalistic writing and niche subject

matters that writers will focus on that they're really driven to report on. Overall, Sohu was a delight to interview and definitely gave me some perspective about the non-PR side of media relations. I think she had some great advice and has a very promising future in her career field.