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JMC 553

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From Critiquing Films to Editing, Dante Ciampaglia's Awesome Career

Dante Ciampaglia, a now freelance editor, has been involved in journalistic editing since 2003. Ciampaglia has done editing work for Whirl, Scholastic Kids, TIME Kids, Newsweek, College Board, Architectural Record, Sports Illustrated Kids, Metropolis, WIRED and Daily Beast. While Ciampaglia has had many years of experience in editing, he didn't start out that way.

Ciampaglia grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where after his senior year of high school, he desired to be a part of the film industry. Specifically, he wanted to be a screenwriter, as he had a love for writing. After graduating high school in 1999, he attended the local University of Pittsburgh, majoring in film studies. However, Ciampaglia wouldn't enjoy screenwriting as much as he thought and switched to critiquing film.

"If screenwriting doesn't work out, I'll be a film critic." said Ciampaglia when reflecting on his time in college.

Ciampaglia's desires and aspirations would change during his senior year at Pitt, as he got involved in The Pitt News, the school newspaper. He immediately fell in love with being in

the newsroom, and became the senior staff writer for the school newspaper in his fifth year at Pitt. He graduated in 2004 with a completely different goal compared to when he started at Pitt. After a small stint with Whirl, a magazine company in Pittsburgh, he went to Syracuse University for a master's in Arts Journalism. When asked about why he decided to obtain a master's, he said it was to expand outside of the city of Pittsburgh and find more opportunities in the state of New York. Ciampaglia graduated from Syracuse in 2007, and six months later, he got a job to be an editor for Scholastic Kids.

Ciampaglia remembers his time with Scholastic Kids very fondly. Some of the biggest lessons he's ever learned came from his time working with children reporters. Part of his job was teaching them how to be better writers, journalists and mature people. He would be able to do many things with his children reporters, like attend the 2012 presidential election cycle. He and his team of youngsters would even get to attend the inauguration of President Obama for his second term and interview the re-elected executive.

"Working with kids is really hard. You have to be a good person." said Ciampaglia.

After working with Scholastic Kids, he would move to a similar position when he started with Sports Illustrated Kids. While he loved working with the kids, he wanted to improve SI Kids as a whole. One of Ciampaglia's proudest achievements is championing the idea that SI Kids should be an app and not a website. While working with SI Kids in 2013 and 2014, Ciampaglia gave the idea that the best improvement to the SI Kids' website would be to make it an app. While Sports Illustrated itself wasn't ready for the change, the website did experience great improvements while Ciampaglia was there.

When asked what is the biggest challenge as an editor, Ciampaglia mentioned that obtaining resources was the hardest thing to overcome as an editor. At most places he worked, he

desired the company to provide him and his reporters with more resources in order to make everyone's job easier and make people's imaginations and dreams for their work more of a reality.

Ciampaglia gave a couple tips for anyone who is interested in being an editor. First, you got to read. Ciampaglia explained that when people read anything, especially complicated material, can change the way you observe your own writing, let alone other people's writing as well. Understanding that every writer has a voice is important. Maintaining that voice as an editor and not letting your own voice come in is vital.

The second piece of advice that Ciampaglia gave was to have a mentor. Whenever an editor can turn to someone else for advice or constructive criticism is more beneficial than most would think.

While he is now a freelance editor and writer, Dante Ciampaglia has certainly garnered a resume unlike most. Not many editors can say that they have worked with both children and adults. Ciampaglia's career is a great example of how a journalist can succeed in a career in editing. He's worked for many places, but this experience is valuable to him, and he continues to put his best foot forward and do the best work he can.