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Senior Seminar

Portfolio Reflection

May 13, 2014

I found my calling as a writer my freshman year at York College in two courses, Nancy Eshelman's introduction to writing and Dr. Kurowski's course in creative writing. I was impressed with Eshelman's writing background as a columnist for *The Patriot News* as I have always had an interest in writing for a newspaper. I wanted to impress her with my abilities and really put forth an effort in her class to find interesting topics to write about that would be different than the average freshman paper. One of the first papers I ever wrote was about balloon fetishism where I interview 45 people to learn more about their sexual obsession with balloons. This was the final paper for her class and she gave me a perfect score noting how much my writing had matured in just that term. I look back at that paper and realize from the courses I have since completed it is not a perfect paper, but it was a nice starting point that pushed me to look into Dr. Kurowski's creative writing course. He is the person I give credit to for introducing the world of blogging to me. In his class he used Wordpress to create our schedule and made the simple statement that for \$19 anyone can have their own blog. That is how Girlboxer1970.com started and it has been a wild ride ever since. I loved writing about my personal life and life as a college student and people loved reading what I wrote. This became a tipping point in my life where I realized what type of writer I was, a nonfiction writer. The brutal honesty I wrote with in my blog is what caused over 1,900 people to begin following my blog

site. Some people say what I write offends them but they can't stop reading because they can't wait to see what I write next. I don't see that as a bad trait.

My junior year I took Dr. Walter's nonfiction writing course and that cemented my desire to write in that genre. I couldn't write enough about my own life or other people's stories. I found I was rather good at writing these types of stories and starting using them to enter contests and scholarships, many of which paid off well for me in cash and prizes. When I applied for a job for *The York Daily Record* and mentioned to the editor that I write nonfiction on my blog site, he immediately went to my site while we were on the phone. He liked what he saw and I was hired as a guest columnist for 2014. The professional/workplace example in my portfolio is the first article I wrote for *The York Daily Record*. The editor, Scott Fisher, emailed me that it was a fantastic article and was the 25th most read article online in the Sunday paper. Again, my honesty about my beliefs made a difference for readers. One man wrote me a personal email and said my story inspired him so much he wished to donate his monthly salary as his church's treasurer to HOINA, the orphanage I traveled to in India and wrote about in the article.

The example I gave for a visual representation was for a humanities writing assignment in Interdisciplinary Writing for Dr. Waddell. I made the first figure in that paper to give a better understanding of the caste system in India and then included photos of Dalits, or untouchables, who managed to escape the now illegal, but still practiced, caste system in India. This caste system, represented in the first figure of my paper, is what the entire country revolves around. I wrote all my essays for Dr. Waddell's course about India in preparation for

my trip over Christmas break. It was a worthy topic and prepared me for what I witnessed while in India. The country is just heart-breaking with poverty and the living conditions of its citizen's. Had I been able to have many examples in my portfolio, I would have included more from the India research I performed and wrote about. I found the Interdisciplinary Writing course to be very helpful in preparing my final paper for Senior Seminar and for my final paper choice in my portfolio, the creative example.

The creative piece I chose was from my Language and Linguistics course with Dr. Vause. I had been volunteering at the York County Youth Development Center as part of my volunteer requirements for the service learning course where we went to India. While at the center I heard the youth talking in a lingo I had never experienced before. They had a language all their own it seemed, so when it came time to propose an idea for a final thesis paper having to do with language, I thought of talking to the youth and trying to understand what their lingo at the center was all about. I was very passionate about this project and that passion allowed my voice to come through in the paper, something Dr. Vause commented on as making the paper powerful to read. The requirement for the paper was a minimum of five pages, but I became so involved with the youth and learning their slang I went far beyond the minimum requirement and plan to seek possible publication of this paper in a scholarly journal.

My writing style is unique in the sense that I have reached a point in my life where I don't worry about people judging me by my written words. This ability empowers me to write about the issues in my own personal life, as well as writing the stories of other people, without fearing reader's feedback. On occasion I do get rude, even vicious, comments on my blog

berating me for my writing topics ranging from religion to divorce, child abuse to mental health issues. I embrace them because the fact that the comments exist means someone is reading what I write and after all, that is the goal of all writers; we write so that others will read. I hope that all the writing and controversy I have stirred up over the past four years will be enough that when my first book is published, people will be excited to purchase it making all my hard work worthwhile. I am passionate about writing an autobiography telling my story about falling in love with a narcissist and how my life nearly crumbled into ruin. If sharing this story helps one person pull themselves back together and escape an abusive relationship, then the painful process of writing and sharing my story will be worthwhile.