



Stephen Hlavaty '06 goes behind-the-scenes at ABC and CBS networks in Los Angeles, as part of his fall 2005 internship experience.

Stephen Hlavaty '06 knew he wanted to work in television when he took his first media production class in 10th grade. He credits his teacher, Joe Frontera of West Seneca East Senior High School, "as the single reason" he chose to pursue a career as a television producer. Hlavaty says, "He taught me so much and encouraged me to chase my dream." ¶ Hlavaty is well on his way to making that dream a reality thanks to some unique Canisius connections. The digital media arts major spent the fall 2005 semester as an intern at both ABC and CBS networks in Los Angeles. ¶ "The Canisius College Alumni Association put me in touch with **Bill Cunningham '78,**

coordinating producer of ABC's "Good Morning America" (GMA), who offered me a three-credit internship," says Hlavaty. ¶ Then, Barbara J. Irwin, PhD, chair of communications studies, contacted him with a second internship opportunity at CBS' "The Young and the Restless" (Y&R). ¶ "Dr. Irwin thought I might get behind in my course load while I was away so she put me in touch with the associate producer at Y&R, with whom she is very close friends." ¶ Hlavaty worked full-time between the two internships. He chronicled his experiences in a journal, which he shared with *Canisius College Magazine*. Here's your backstage pass to learning on the job in Hollywood.

ABC / Good Morning America

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

This was my first official day as an intern at "Good Morning America." It was tough because both producers, Bill Cunningham and Brian O'Keefe, were in New York. They are in charge of the interns at GMA.

Danya, the intern who works the shift before me, gave me a brief rundown of what she did. I spent the majority of my day looking for news stories in newspapers and Web sites that would be deemed GMA story possibilities.

Tuesday, September 13

Today was my third day at GMA and the day I started my internship for real, in my mind. Bill came back from NY and gave me some guidance about the internship. He then had me research the Emmy nominees. GMA is covering them on Sunday. I also was fitted for a tuxedo because I will be attending the Emmy's!

Thursday, September 15

Bill sent me to Emmy headquarters today to pick up GMA's credentials. Credentials, as I came to find out, are the passes needed to access certain areas during the Emmy's, such as the red carpet, the press room, the tech room and the one-on-one room. Bill secured a universal pass for me, which gives me access to anywhere I want to go that night!

Sunday, September 18 (Emmy night!)

We drove up to the Shrine Auditorium and I was literally in awe. My assignment was to take a GMA camera and tape red carpet arrivals. I thought I was dreaming. I took the camera and made my way to the GMA spot on the bleachers. The biggest shot of the night was going to be the arrival of the "Desperate Housewives" stars, since they were the odds-on favorite to win. I did get three of the four arriving.

Afterwards, Bill had me videotape celebrity departures. (Everyone who was up for big awards and didn't win left out the back door.) The first big celebrity to leave was Quentin Tarantino. Ellen DeGeneres was another big exit. I also met Donald Trump, Conan O'Brian, Dan Rather, Craig Ferguson, the cast of "Lost" and Tony Shalhoub, from "Monk." This was a night I will never forget.



With Mariah Carey at the American Music Awards



With Tony Shalhoub after winning his EMMY award

Tuesday, September 20

Tonight I went with Bill on a remote shoot. We taped post-show interviews for the ABC hit "Dancing with the Stars." The show aired live on the East Coast. We sat outside in the press tent and watched from closed circuit television but were allowed in after the live show ended. Bill interviewed the judges; Kelly Monaco and her partner; and John O'Hurley and his partner. I helped where I could with the audio and camera but for the most part, stood back and watched how things were done.

Tuesday, October 11

Bill called late Monday night to see if I wanted to join him at a movie premier Tuesday, for the film *Domino*. Of course I did! The premier took place at Grauman's Chinese Theater. We were there to do interviews with the woman about whom the movie was loosely based (Sandra Scott, a bounty hunter) and other stars.



Brian McKnight and me

Bill did the first interview with Sandra. She compared being a bounty hunter to an actor because “you have to sometimes put on a front.” Bill then asked if I had done interviews before, which I had not. He told me tonight would be my night to learn. About five minutes later, I did my first red carpet interview with actor Stephen Baldwin! I asked him to respond to Sandra Scott’s comparison. He agreed with Sandra’s comparison and then talked about why it was true. I thought he gave me some great footage and Bill agreed.

Thursday, November 3

I met Bill at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in Pasadena today to scout an interview location for Gale Ann Hurd, who produced such movies as *The Terminator* and *Alien*. The interview wasn’t until Monday but Bill explained that it’s important to scout interview locations beforehand so as not to waste time the day of the interview. He also showed me how to look for the best shot. Bill explained that although the area we were standing in (the rose garden) was amazing, the viewer would only see a small portion of it on TV so I had to look closely at color and location. He also told me to take into account where the sun would be at the time of the interview. This was a very intricate process and I learned a lot from Bill today.

Thursday, November 10

Bill told me today that I would attend the American Music Awards (AMA). He was not going to be in town for them, so he put me in charge of a few details for the night. I have to pick up everyone’s credentials for the show, as I did for the Emmy’s. He also asked me to help the producer coordinate the night’s assignments. He said, “Since I did such a great job at the Emmy’s, (I) can help delegate jobs with the producer on AMA night.”

Thursday, November 17

Tracey Marx, the weekend producer at GMA, taught me what I have been waiting all semester to learn: how to write a pitch for a story. She gave me an article about Orcas, which were placed on the endangered species list, and asked me to write a pitch to New York for the story. I wrote up a quick pitch based on what I thought it should include and then she gave me some tips on what to keep in and take out. Tracey sent the pitch to NY and now we’re waiting to hear back.

Tuesday, November 22

One day before my departure to Buffalo for the holiday, I had the privilege to work with GMA at the American Music Awards, held at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. My job was to run the red carpet tapes back to GMA at the prospect lot. ABC is not far away from the Shrine but the traffic was horrendous, since it was rush hour. When I came back I saw a few more interviews conducted. The last one of the night was with Mariah Carey, whom I met afterwards.

Thursday, December 8

Today was my final day at GMA. I did research for Bill on a story about a car built to withstand a hurricane. He asked me to locate a horizontal wind tunnel so they could get air to blow at the car, at high speed, and have the camera catch all the moments. Bill then invited me into his office and we had a very good discussion. He told me about his career and how he started producing locally at Channel 7.

Reflections on My GMA Internship

I am so grateful to Bill Cunningham, who really took me under his wing at GMA. He taught me some very specific techniques on how stories are pitched and produced for GMA. (I found out later my pitch to NY about Orcas did not get picked up. I tried.)

I also learned a lot about live TV working at the Emmy’s and the American Music Awards. It’s clearly very stressful producing live television, as opposed to tape. Bill put it this way: “Live television is exciting because you can’t predict exactly how everything will go. Sure, you have a script but that doesn’t mean things won’t go completely different than what you planned.” I thoroughly enjoyed this internship.



// "The Young and the Restless is like the drama in wrestling. Wrestling is like a soap opera for men." //

CBS / The Young and the Restless

Wednesday, September 7

My first day at "The Young and the Restless" was very fast-paced and exciting. Three other interns and I started the day by putting together the scripts left for us. We then had to go down to the first floor to distribute them to the right people. Seeing all the people and places that we have to distribute scripts to was very overwhelming but it was a good first task because I immediately was able to meet the cast and crew, and see the set and the control room. Seeing the control room was like a dream come true for me!

Friday, September 9

There is never a dull moment here. The interns are pretty much the runners for the show. When we're not running scripts, we do episode synopses. The interns split up the scripts from the week and write a synopsis about each scene. These are kept to reference back episodes or certain moments for flashbacks.

Monday, September 12

They did a lot of complicated shots with animals and insects today. I was able to watch for a couple hours. In one scene a woman's cell phone turned into a rat. She had to hold the rat as if it were a phone and then throw it in disgust. The animal handlers

were right there to catch the rat in a blanket. It was all so professionally done.

Friday, September 16

Y&R donates autographed cast photos and partial scripts to charity and it's the responsibility of interns to get these photos signed by the cast. I came up with the idea that we should each wait in the makeup and hair rooms for the cast so they could sign while they were being made up. We had a total of four people sign autographs today, which was a huge accomplishment when you consider we're usually lucky to get one person in a day.

Monday, September 26

The writers finally hit a wall. No scripts came out today so I was able to spend more than two hours on the set observing. One person I spoke with, Clay, is head editor. He gave me advice on the business and let me watch him edit, which was great.

Monday, October 31

Y&R tapes weeks ahead of time so even though today is Halloween, it was Thanksgiving on the set. The big wedding scene between Lauren and Michael will be taped tomorrow so a lot needed to be done. Everything went into high gear. Scripts were being pumped out like crazy. Changes were made, two and three times, to the taping and set schedules. According to Dave, who is a fill-in for crew members, they would "be lucky to get a few hours of sleep over the next three days." I thought he was joking. He wasn't.

Wednesday, November 2

Today was the big reception following Lauren and Michael's wedding. The crew actually tore half of Stage 43 down and set it up to look like a reception hall. I was amazed at how intricate everything was, right down to the napkins on the table! The crew also set up six rows of chairs for people from the office who wanted to come down and observe. I



Stephen tests out the executive office on the set of "The Young and the Restless."

ended up staying an extra hour today to watch the big scene.

Friday, November 18

I am getting so deep into these storylines! I tell my friends back home how much I love Y&R and they don't understand. They are all huge wrestling fans so I try to explain it to them like this: Y&R is like the drama in wrestling. Wrestling is like a soap opera for men.

Friday, December 9

This was it. My last day in L.A. and at Y&R. We didn't have too much of our usual work today because Laura, the internship coordinator, was doing it for us. So I went around and said goodbye to everyone. Personally, I made a lot of friends and it was tough saying goodbye. The day wrapped with the interns being able to go down and observe on the set for a few hours. This was exactly the way I would have wanted things to end.

Reflections on My Y&R Internship

I am so happy I did this internship. Y&R has a very structured intern program. Interns are given a lot of responsibility and need to be very self-disciplined. Thanks to the amount of time I was able to spend on the set, I feel I have a good understanding of all the different production jobs involved in making a successful show.

Overall, I realized that while I like the live aspect of television, it is not my preference when it comes to what I want to do. I prefer the taped and planned aspect of Y&R.



On the set of The Young and the Restless