



A day in the life ... of a freelance journalist

[Julie E. Houston](#) • Bankrate.com

Hey now, you're an allstar. At least this guy is.

I met Kevin Raub, senior reporter for "allstar" magazine backstage at Woodstock '99. While I was hiding my useless "media compound" pass, Kevin stood nonchalantly with a neck full of "all access" and "backstage" passes. As he scribbled notes, he seemed oblivious to the music stars orbiting the area. His "old hat" attitude was intriguing.

Woodstock '99 is just one gig in a flurry of concerts and trips this reporter hits in a year. After spending four years in the business, he's unfazed by the fact that he's got what would be, to many, a dream job.

"I've met just about everyone [in music]," he says and then spouts off a list of the talent he interviewed. The highlights include L.L. Cool J, Bush, The Cure, and Michael Hutchence of INXS (shortly before his suicide).

"Oh, and I ate vegetarian with Lisa Loeb," he adds, making their meeting his first experience in a vegetarian restaurant. However, after quizzing him on what Dave Matthews is really like, I learned he hasn't quite met *everyone*.

Take it all in stride

Don't think it all goes to his head. He's a cool cat, and he gets giddy like the rest of us when faced with a celeb. "I still get star struck. I love meeting these people," he admits.

Plus, now that he is free-lancing for such publications as "Rolling Stone," "Bikini," "Maxim" and "American Way" (the in-flight mag of American Airlines), he's entering the realm of Hollywood stars.

He was enchanted during his interview with 17-year-old actress Jessica Alba, from "Idle Hands" and "Never Been Kissed," and Mary McCormack, most recognizable from her role as Howard Stern's wife in "Private Parts," left him starry eyed.

"Rock stars are rock stars," he notes, "but Hollywood actors are from a different sort of world of glitter and glam."

Kevin knew from an early age that fame was in his future. "I wanted to be a rock star as a kid, but I have no musical talent and no voice," he says. So he opted for ditching classes in high school to join the yearbook staff for photo

Name
Kevin Raub
Age
26
Occupation
Senior Writer
Company
"allstar" --
CDNow's online
music magazine,
based in Los
Angeles.
Salary
Editorial
Assistants start at
around \$20,000.
Reporters work
their way up to
"the high 30s."

ops.

Later he attended Indiana University in search of a criminal justice degree and wrote music reviews of The Connells and L.L. Cool J for the annual. He later transferred to the University of Georgia, where he switched his major to magazine journalism and kept up the extracurricular activities with the school's publications, which helped him score his internship with "Men's Journal" in New York City. "I ditched exam week and graduation and headed to New York," he says.

He spent his internship fact-checking and transcribing. Not the most fun job, but he was getting a paycheck, right? "Hell no," he answers. After he spent his days at the magazine, he pulled in a paycheck as a waiter in the evenings.

He later scored a job as assistant editor with "Rolling Stone Online" (they are owned by the same publishing company as "Men's Journal") putting together their Web page. "There's a law in New York that says you can't freelance for a company over a certain number of hours, so they had to hire me," he says. That's a new approach to employment.

During his two-year tenure at "Rolling Stone," he actively looked for freelance work. Because of connections, he picked up an assignment at "Bikini." "It's a lot easier when you're sending out letters on "Rolling Stone" letterhead," he says, "and my boss at "Rolling Stone" knew the editor at Bikini. I got lucky."

Although Kevin admits that the salary as a freelance reporter isn't the best, the benefits are definitely a bonus -- like the time Guinness sent him to Ireland to cover a story called, "Getting drunk in Ireland."

But don't break out your pen and passport yet. Kevin warns budding journalists that not everyone will be as lucky. "It's a difficult business to break into. If you don't know someone at a magazine, you could go for years unnoticed," he says.

Hey now, you're an allstar

After getting fed up with New York, Kevin quit his job at "Rolling Stone" and headed to L.A. After freelancing for a few months, he was courted and hired by "allstar." Now he spends his days writing news pieces on your favorite bands for the online magazine and fending off invitations to concerts and dinners with the rich and famous.

He starts his day by reading his mail. "I get bombarded by e-mail, faxes and press releases," he groans. Then it's time to start "pounding the pavement" for music news. Kevin generally writes two to five stories before his 2 p.m. deadline. While his musical preferences are rock and alternative, he writes stories on every genre. Once his stories are filed, it's time to start looking for the next day's news.

Meanwhile, he's receiving invitations to have dinner with publicists hired by the bands and their record companies. "You get invited to all kinds of stuff. They want to take you to dinner and lure you to go to concerts. I get sick of seeing shows every night," he huffs. (Yea, kiddo, life's rough.)

While he passes on many of the concert tickets that come his way, he does credit the free food, CDs, beer and concert tickets as high points of his job.

Oddly enough, though, the low point for him is the writing. "The writing is the worst part. Sitting down to write is boring," he complains. "A lot of people live to do the writing; to me, music is what keeps me alive."

I smell sex and music

But music isn't the only thing that keeps him going. The other is sex -- reporting on it, that is. "It's my second favorite thing to write about," he admits.

He has covered stories on a S&M-themed restaurant in New York, a Las Vegas brothel and a sex cruise in the Caribbean. Such experiences left his former girlfriend questioning his loyalty and his mom offering the motherly, "Oh, Kevin."

"She thinks I'm crazy sometimes," he admits.

But the escapades don't seem so crazy when you consider that Kevin is paid to cover these stories. His inspiration came after meeting a Vegas brothel "worker" online. She thought it was a great idea for him to write a story about the brothel, and so did his editor. "Within two days, I was flying out to Las Vegas for the weekend."

After reading the piece in "Bikini," two men who run a sex cruise enticed Kevin and a photographer to hit the high seas for four days in the Caribbean. Kevin gives the details: "They have escorts. When you arrive, you pick your girl and she spends the weekend with you."

But don't think that he decided to become an "investigative" reporter. "I didn't hook up," he quips. "I try not to sleep with hookers."

The cruise aboard a catamaran, which usually runs about \$3,000, was paid for by the cruise line. Kevin says this about his days of cruising and drinking Dom Perignon: "It was probably the coolest thing I have ever done."

With a cool job like Kevin's, that's saying something.

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