

# Zach Weiland

**Hometown: Bismarck, ND**

**School: Bismarck State College**

**Internship: Bismarck Tribune**



Earlier in the year, I applied for an internship at the Bismarck Tribune, the local newspaper in my town. I was not expecting to be hired but I needed to find an internship for my degree program at Bismarck State College. I was excited about the idea of being in the newsroom for a newspaper I had been reading for years. Lucky for me, I was hired, and I had a great experience.

My start was really quick. Right away on my first day, I was off to early voting to record a video. I was not expecting to do video when I first applied for the internship, but I did have experience with videos from my program at school. I immediately found a way to get in trouble while at early voting. Unshockingly, election officials are weary of people filming polling stations, which is valid with our current political climate. I had a press pass on my desk by the end of the day.

The next week, I got to observe the newsroom during election night. While the election was merely a primary, I still was able to observe other reporters while they eyed election results and made calls to congratulate winning candidates.

I worked on my first articles that same week and over the next couple of weeks. I was surprised with the process of getting articles out. While I knew that it would be different from my college publication, I did not know what to expect. The editing process was much more centralized than I have experienced at BSC. The process was also much more digitized.

I had my first major controversy with an article at the beginning of July. I was assigned to report on a large Fourth of July parade. After going out and reporting and returning to the newsroom to write, we received a press release about an accident that occurred during the parade. It was decided that we would include a small section about the parade at the beginning of that article, and that decision did not go over well with some readers. This was the first time I received backlash from the public on my work.

I received numerous emails, calls and even a few Facebook messages complaining about the article. It was an eye-opener, but it is part of the job sometimes. I did a better job at distancing myself from the comments than I thought I would, and I am proud of myself for that. I think it prepared me for what I could experience again in my career as a journalist. An assignment that stood out to me was when I reported on the first meeting between two men that were both affected by a famous serial killer back in the 1980s. I largely focused on human interest stories all summer, but this one was my favorite one to work on. The family was very kind to me during the whole process of that story, and I felt pressure to do that story justice. It took a lot of research and pre-writing, and I was happy with the story I assembled. I was even happier when one of the family members texted me after it was published to thank me for covering the story in the way I did.

My favorite experience by far came at the end of my internship. I was assigned a photography assignment that put me in a Black Hawk helicopter during a military flyover of a baseball tournament. This was the first time I had ever flown in a helicopter, and it made it even more special that it was in a vehicle that civilians usually are not allowed access to. I took some incredible photos, but unfortunately missed the one photo I was assigned to take. I did still produce a nice column out of the experience.

Overall, interning at the Bismarck Tribune was an incredible experience, and I am so grateful that I was allowed to be in their newsroom for the summer. I learned skills that will be important as I start a career in journalism. The internship helped me to cement my interest in the industry, and I hope to be back in the world of print news soon.