

# Example of report on professional experience interview with lou michel

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



## **Professional Experience Interview with Lou Michel**

Lou Michel is a reporter at The Buffalo News. Currently located at 1 News Plaza Buffalo, NY 14203 and reachable at 716-849-4444, Mr. Michel has worked as a reporter for over three decades. Prior to the Buffalo News, he worked at the Tonawanda News just north of Buffalo.

An inspiration to budding journalists, he is the recipient of several Associated Press awards. He is both a local and national celebrity as a frequent speaker at schools and as a guest on many local and national radio programs. Mr. Michel has also appeared on Good Morning America and ABC World News Tonight. He is the co-author of the 2001 biography *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*. His coverage of the Oklahoma City bombing and other stories as a lead crime reporter has brought Mr. Michel much fame and notoriety.

Speaking with Lou Michel about his life and career was inspirational for me. His down to earth manner and accessibility makes me believe that others such as myself can be as successful as he has been.

A New York native, Mr. Michel is proud to have remained in his home state. He is a graduate of the journalism program at Buffalo State, State University of New York (SUNY). The Buffalo State program has an illustrious history as the only journalism program within SUNY that is recognized by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). The high standards, which the ACEJMC require from its accredited institutions, insured a solid academic experience for Lou Michel. In addition to his studies, Mr. Michel told me that he benefited from working at the college newspaper. Not only did the experience help him as part of his

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education, it provided a way to socialize and work with others of similar interests. By providing a solid foundation for his career, this practical experience better prepared him to be a journalist than if he focused on study alone. If he could start college over again, he said he would have made greater use of tutors, focused more on grammar and taken more courses not directly associated with communications. With the experience of working on the college paper, Mr. Michel decided not to attend graduate school, but to embark on his fulltime career as a journalist.

When asked to recollect the time he first decided to become a journalist, Mr. Michel fondly recalled a television program that aired shortly after high school graduation. The 18-year-old Michel watched a master investigative journalist who would become a hero to him; Jimmy Breslin. Examining Mr. Michel's career reveals how much Jimmy Breslin inspired him. Breslin's career included stints as a columnist for the New York Herald Tribune and the Daily News. Indeed, it was Breslin reading one of his own columns on television that inspired Lou Michel to decide that he wanted to write for a living. With a love for creative writing in grammar and high school, Michel says he was inspired to see from Breslin that journalistic writing could be so creative.

Discussing his first job after college, Michel recalled starting at Tonawanda News and after only two weeks being told by a friend that his grammar was not up to speed. Taking this constructive criticism to heart, he went to the library and studied. After a while, he started to see significant improvement in his writing.

The next step in his career took him to the Buffalo News. As a reporter for

this paper, he has risen to be a world-class crime reporter. Covering local and national stories has gained him a reputation throughout the country as a talented journalist. In addition to reporting for the Buffalo News, Mr. Michel has authored books and like his hero Jimmy Breslin, appears on television and radio.

Lou Michel still enjoys being a journalist. He currently covers mostly crime related stories for Buffalo News. The best part of the job he says is the chase. Covering crime gives him a chance to get embroiled in the mystery along with the police, lawyers, government and victims. Despite the large volume of work he produces, Mr. Michel finds the hardest part of the job is writing. It is not the deadlines that are the worst part, but rather the constant high level of critical thinking that writing demands.

Outside of work, Michel enjoys reading. Not only entertaining and educational, reading helps to improve critical thinking. It also improves ones abilities as a writer. This is why he recommends to beginning college students that they should read extensively.

As a college student studying communications, I was inspired by my interview with Mr. Michel. It is especially heartening to see that he struggled at times and made some mistakes along the way. The important thing is that he learned from his mistakes. From his comments on professional experience, I see that learning is a lifelong process for a journalist. By keeping up-to-date through reading and the use of other media, a writer can help improve his or her ability for critical thinking. Looking further into the process of critical thinking, I see how important it is for writing. I also learned from interviewing Mr. Michel the importance of work experience early on in

your studies. Not only for the practical experience, but also for the joy of working with others who have the same interests. Although it is common to think of writing as a solitary task, working with other writers cannot only improve skills, but increase enjoyment.

I am also coming out of this experience with an appreciation of the challenges there are when interviewing someone for a story. To do this as a career certainly requires that one is not shy. It does not feel natural to pick up the phone, or walk into someone's home or office and ask them questions about their lives. Beyond just being nervous, a challenge I found is to know how to get the person to expand on their answers. Thinking of the right follow-up question at the time is a challenge. However, it is clear that to be a successful journalist requires one to be adept at interviewing.