



Amber Miller outside the WATE-TV Studios on one of her many late nights.

Working (more than) 9 to 5

Amber Miller's hard work
and ambition paid off
in a big way.

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It's 7 p.m. on a Saturday night at the WATE-TV, Channel 6 station. The place is virtually deserted as police scanners buzz in the background. Most of the employees have gone to dinner, but a few have stayed, including one ambitious associate producer.

She continues to work through the night, and when it's time for the news to air, she will sit in the booth, making sure the show stays on time. She talks to the anchors on the set and makes last-minute decisions, such as killing certain stories for the sake of time. She doesn't leave until nearly midnight.

This isn't the typical way for a college student to spend a Saturday night, but it was the routine for recent journalism and electronic media graduate, Amber Miller during her last year and a half of school.

Most people enter college with a plan: four years (or more) of school, maybe an internship in the summer, and then, on to pursue an entry-level job in the career of choice.

Miller was right on track. She finished a couple years of school and had an internship at WATE-TV under her belt. But then she abandoned the plan for a better one—she accepted a job as

the associate producer at WATE.

From then on, Miller had full-time college hours on her plate, in addition to maintaining a 45-hour work week on average.

Most nights, Miller maximized her time by eating dinner at her desk instead of going out with her co-workers. She would continue to put together the local 10 p.m. newscast while eating.

Miller claimed that even her friends declared her crazy for taking on such an exhaustive load, but she said it was worth it.

"I love what I do, otherwise, I admit, it would be crazy—if not stupid—to carry the load that I take on," Miller said.

Miller's typical day began at 8 a.m. She stayed on campus until noon either attending class or working on Monday and Wednesday stories for "UT Today," a TVC daily newscast.

Then she would leave campus and head for the WATE-TV station, where she was responsible for deciding what stories will be included in the newscast, in what order the stories will appear and the format of the stories. If that's not enough already, she also

wrote all the stories.

Miller said it was hard when she first accepted the job to cope with her busy schedule, but she learned how to prioritize.

She also said it was difficult to learn that, although her grades were very important, she had to accept the fact that she didn't have to make straight A's. After realizing that, the grades came easier, Miller said.

"It's not easy, I'm not going to lie. I made it work because it's something I want that bad," Miller said.

Although Miller's hard work and ambition have given her a great opportunity, she credits Knoxville and the University of Tennessee. She said UT trained her in writing classes and provided hands-on experience, like the UT Today show.

However, she said the biggest advantage to UT is its location in Knoxville. Miller knew she wanted to work in broadcasting and chose to come to UT because it is a mid-sized TV market. Miller said Knoxville is a good-sized market to start in and allows an intern to get some actual experience

(and a job, in Miller's case).

Miller graduated in May 2006 and intends on expanding her broadcasting career to reporting. Before graduation, she spent her spring break job hunting. "I have talked to a few news directors, and they say they are more willing to hire me as a reporter straight out of school because of my previous experience," Miller said.

"This job has truly been a godsend. It has given me a great understanding of the news business, and I am better able to see the whole picture of how a newscast comes together," she said.

Many students graduate with anxiety about beginning a professional job, but Miller graduated with the security and experience of a professional job, catapulting her career.

Amber Miller may have sacrificed some Saturday nights, but for her, nothing can replace the comfort of the newsroom, a place she plans to stay. The benefit of those extra long Saturday nights will only carry on as she continues to conquer newsrooms around the country.



Miller works at her desk preparing a news broadcast late one Saturday night.

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