

Struggling and Suffering in the Underrepresented: The Path to Success With Boris Sanchez

Sylvie Feldman

SANCHEZ, Syracuse, Oct. 11, 2023 - Addressing the persistent issue of ethnic diversity within the news industry, the struggle for recognition and success emerges as a common narrative. Individuals lacking representation find themselves compelled to endure adversity and prove their worth. The event, Fireside Chat featuring Boris Sanchez '09, held virtually via Zoom at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, offered a profound examination of Sanchez's journey to becoming a CNN co-anchor despite being underrepresented in the industry.

In an effort to shed light on the challenges faced by underrepresented individuals in journalism, Luisana Ortiz, a student at Newhouse, orchestrated the Fireside Chat and posed questions aligned with Hispanic/Latiné Heritage Month. The event aimed to provide students with an opportunity to glean insights from Sanchez's career trajectory, with Sanchez having double majored in Magazine News and Digital Journalism and minored in International Relations at Newhouse.

Ortiz asked Sanchez "What is the hardest part about reporting?" Sanchez's reflections during the event emphasized the necessity of maintaining a focus on facts in reporting. "It's a muscle, something you develop and grow at the potential risk of being callous to news," Sanchez said. He stressed the detachment required in the journalistic endeavor, characterizing it as a skill developed at the potential risk of becoming callous to news. Sanchez acknowledged the difficulty of stepping aside for meaningful conversations, highlighting the importance of

(more)

understanding one's emotions to prevent them from influencing more objective political discussions.

Sanchez's passion for journalism traces back to childhood aspirations, sparked by his admiration for Rick Sanchez, who he considered the epitome of a captivating storyteller. Inspired by familial connections and the courageous stance of his grandfather, a political prisoner, Sanchez embarked on a journey into the industry.

Recognizing the cutthroat nature of the journalism profession, Sanchez expressed his willingness to support fellow industry professionals while underscoring the need to put oneself out there, endure challenges, and earn respect. He recounted personal experiences of working on holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, performing various tasks as a "custodian of the news studio," a concerted effort to be taken seriously, especially considering his ethnicity and the scarcity of similar representations in the industry at the time. Sanchez felt the responsibility of being an "ambassador of his culture."

An illustrative incident from Sanchez's career involved attending a Trump Rally, where his presence among few immigrants subjected him to heckling, targeting and animosity. The rally attendees made assumptions about his physical appearance and expressed resentment towards the CNN microphone, indicative of broader issues related to identity and beliefs about Americanism.

Despite the challenges, Sanchez asserted his presence in an industry marked by a lack of representation, viewing it as a necessary step to address the imbalance within his community. Sanchez's conversation served as an inspiring narrative, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and passion in pursuing one's dreams, irrespective of race or ethnicity. His journey, recounted with an uplifting tone, is poised to motivate future Newhouse students to follow their aspirations with conviction.

(more)

In a significant contribution to CNN's breaking news coverage, Boris Sanchez tackled a range of topics. This included thorough reporting on former President Donald Trump's legal challenges, the Oceangate submarine implosion near the Titanic wreckage, and impactful Supreme Court decisions addressing affirmative action and LGBTQ rights.

As a national correspondent based in both Miami and New York, Sanchez played a pivotal role in CNN's success. His efforts were instrumental in securing the network's receipt of the prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award for breaking news coverage in 2016. This notable recognition was a result of Sanchez's comprehensive reporting on a riot in Charlotte, North Carolina, during his tenure.