



*Dream of
Travel Writing*

Article Nuts and Bolts: Putting Together an Interview Piece

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop setting. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to
talk about...

1. The most important criterion of (most) profiles that you can't ignore in your pitch

2. Interviews have “kinds.” Know them. Maximize them!

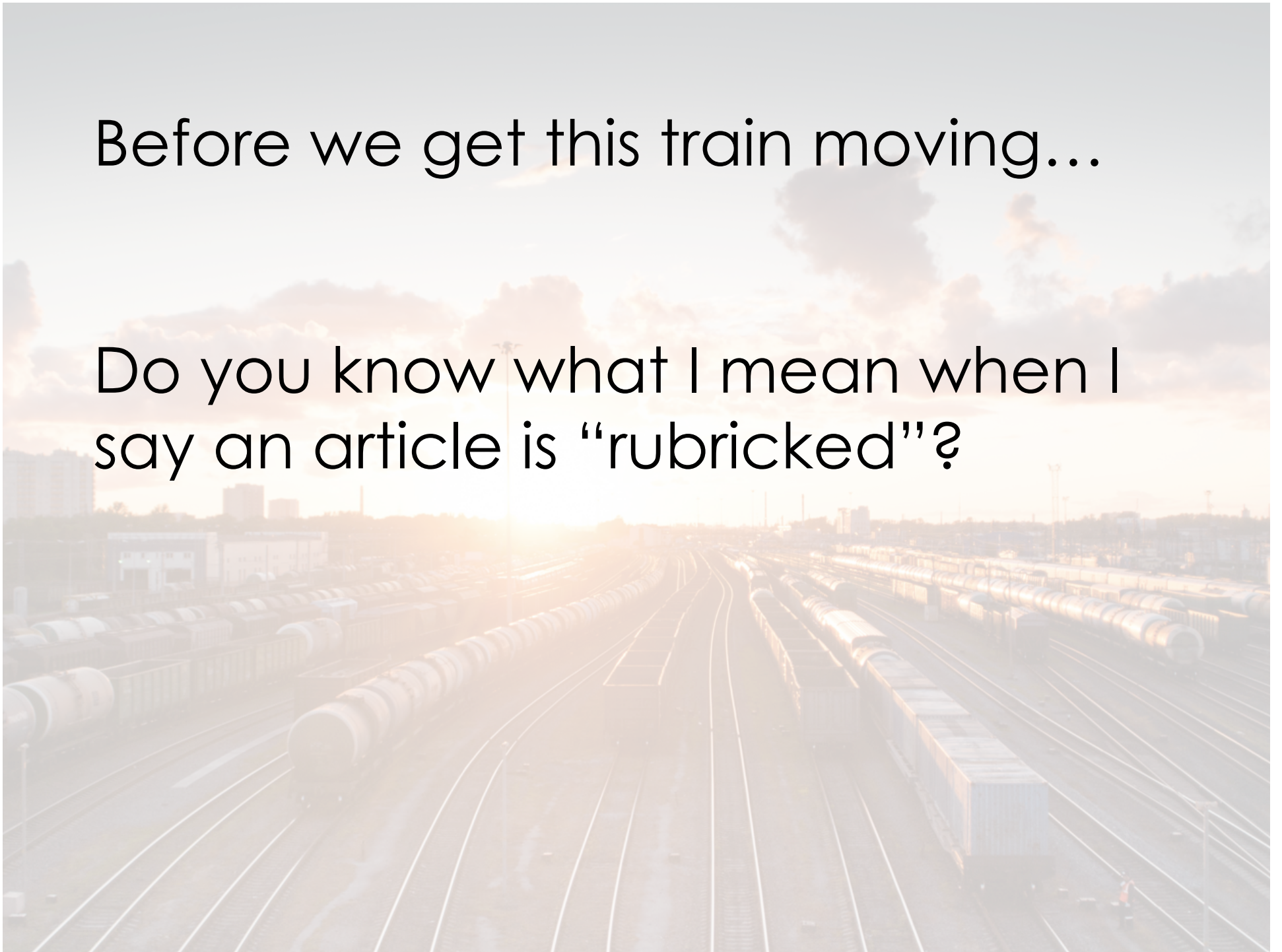
3. What does this look like as a full article?

4. Pitching FAQ



Before we get this train moving...

Do you know what I mean when I say an article is “rubricked”?



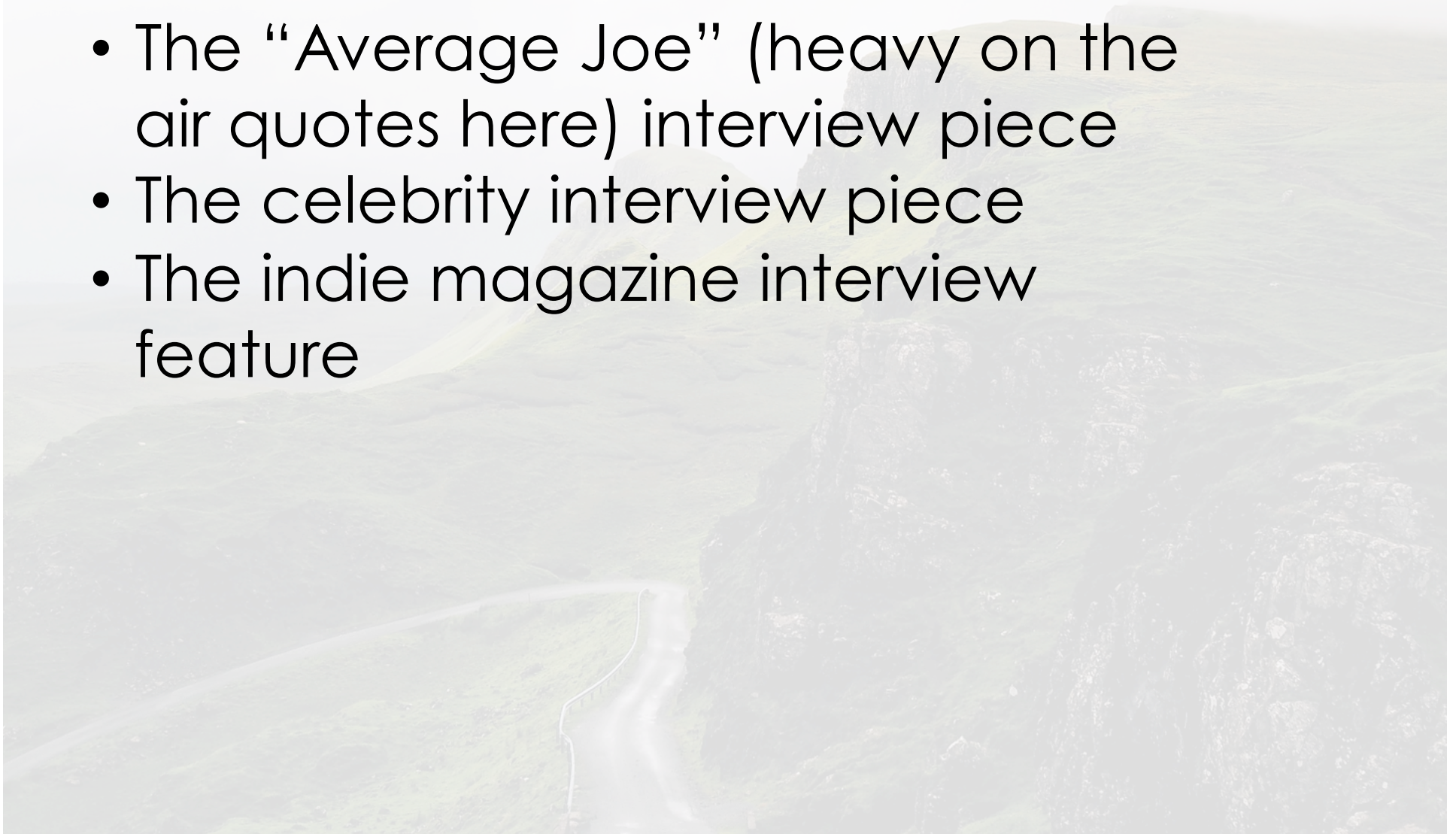
You can publish more than one
interview on a person in different
magazines.

Mind blown?



There's Three Main Types

- The “Average Joe” (heavy on the air quotes here) interview piece
- The celebrity interview piece
- The indie magazine interview feature



Let's have a look at real examples in each category of what editors are publishing!



A person with a backpack walking on a trail. The person is wearing a blue jacket and a blue backpack. The backpack has a "GRANOLA" logo at the bottom. A blue folder or book is visible in the backpack, with the text "Travel Planet" and "Master USA" on it. Another person with a red backpack is visible in the background. The background is a blurred landscape with mountains and a path.

Average Joe(ish) Interview Sections

Pub: Mindful

Focus: tips and inspiration for meditation and mindfulness in everyday life

“Walk the Talk” profiles someone who works in the meditation industry in some way. In about 700 words, the piece appears as a structured Q&A. After a short third-person introduction covering who the person is and what they do, there are about six questions which cover their career, how they got into mindfulness and meditation, how it helps them or other people, and any future plans.

Recent examples of people profiled include Carlos Alberto, a meditation instructor and nightclub doorman in New York City, Gretchen Rohr, a mindfulness instructor and law professor, and Giselle Jones, a psychotherapist and social worker who uses mindfulness to help people open up.

Pub: Men's Journal

Focus: men's health, fitness, gear, adventure, lifestyle, outdoor culture, and travel destinations.

There are about two uncategorized articles found in "Notebook" which usually take the form of a profile. Articles are 500 to 1,000 words long and can appear as third-person articles with quotes throughout or as structured Q&As. The tone is conversational and informal and sometimes more than one source is included in third-person articles.

Examples from a recent issue include "Location is Everything," which profiles movie location scout Alex Gladstone on defining moments in his career, and "Master of Form," a Q&A with writer Thomas McGuane on his new story collection and life in Montana.

Pub: Blue Mountains Life

Focus:

“People” is made up of four articles which covers locals in the Blue Mountains area of New South Wales, Australia. In 1,000 to 1,200 words, they most often take the form of a profile outlining one or two people from the area and something interesting they’ve done or are doing. This is written in third person with quotes from the person profiled throughout. Topics covered can include their childhood, career, future plans, and thoughts about the Blue Mountains area. Occasionally the profile can appear as a Q&A or as a first-person article. Q&As follow a similar format to the third-person profiles by covering an interesting local and their career, influences, or experiences.

Examples from a recent issue include “Hawkesbury Girl’s Country Music Success,” which profiles country music singer Imogen Clark covering her childhood, how she got started in country music, and what she thinks of her hometown of Hawkesbury, “Bathurst Brushstrokes,” a profile of retired couple Bruce and Barbara Holmes from Bathurst who both create art representing the area they live and covering their previous careers and artworks, and “Where the Light Glows of Mountain Snow,” a first-person article about the writer’s experience teaching and volunteering in Nepal on a school trip from Bathurst covering information about the country and what volunteering work her school group did there.

Pub: Sawasdee

Focus: custom magazine from Thai Airways

“Spotlight” takes the form of a profile of an interesting person, either someone from Thailand or a person living or working in the country. After a short third-person introduction, which highlights who the person is and what they’re best known for, the article takes the form of a Q&A. In about 700 words, the questions cover their career, connection with Thailand, and any personal anecdotes from work or their personal life.

Recent examples include “Fabric of Life,” which profiles fashion designer Linda Charoenlab on her latest collection and identity as Thai, “Universal Appeal,” which profiles model Chalita Suansane who made it to the final six in the Miss Universe 2017 pageant, and “Eyes Wide Open,” which profiles photojournalist Sebastião Salgado who is holding an exhibition in Bangkok.

Pub: Hobo

Focus: profiles, art, culture, and travel

“Interviews” takes the form of a Q&A with famous creative people, similar to the interviews found in “Cover.” Articles range from 1,500 to 4,000 words long and use a third-person introduction to outline who the person is before using a Q&A style.

Questions mainly focus on the person’s career but also include some questions covering their person life, inspirations, and opinions on humorous topics. People recently interviewed for this section include [biologist and photographer Paul Nicklen](#), [writer and poet Gary Snyder](#), and novelist and [screenwriter Patrick DeWitt](#).

Pub: oh comely

Focus: creative and personal stories around a different theme each issue

“Three Questions” profiles an interesting person in about 400 words. After a short third-person introduction, describing what the person does and a bit about their backstory, the article takes the form of a structured Q&A with three questions. The questions can cover on their career, a big change in their life, or thoughts on a particular topic.

Recent examples include “Three Questions With... Victoria,” which profiles Victoria Philpott who left a career in publishing for gardening, covering how to find calm in a city and how to find the courage to change careers, and “Three Questions With... Emma,” which profiles artist Emma McGuire covering what inspires her art and her recent exhibition in New York.

Celebrity- focused Interview Sections

(but what
does celebrity
really mean?)



Pub: Hemispheres

Focus: custom magazine for United Airlines

The Hemi Q&A” takes the form of an interview with a celebrity. There is an introduction of about 200 words, which covers what the celebrity is best known for in third person.

This is then followed by a structured Q&A with questions covering the celebrity’s career and any new projects. Articles range from 2,000 to 2,500 words long. Recent interviewees include anchorman [Dan Rather](#), screenwriter and director [Aaron Sorkin](#), and actor [John Lithgow](#).

Pub: Family Traveller

Focus: traveling with children to destinations worldwide

“Celebrity Q&A” takes the form of a Q&A with a famous person covering family travel topics. Questions include the celebrity’s past travel with their family or their own childhood trips, their future holiday plans, and any tips for traveling with kids. Articles run to about 1,000 words long.

Recent celebrities interviewed include DJ Sara Cox, actress Emilia Fox, and makeup artist Bobbi Brown.

Pub: High Times

Focus:

There are six features per issue with one being a pre-established category of “The High Times Interview.” “The High Times Interview” takes the form of profile of a famous person. After a short third-person introduction, the article appears as a Q&A covering topics like the person’s career, personal life, and thoughts on cannabis, the cannabis industry, and their personal experiences with the drug.

The tone is often very conversational, informal and humorous. People recently profiled include the rapper Redman, comedian Doug Stanhope, and author Lee Child.

Pub: trujetter

Focus: New Delhi-based custom magazine
from TruJet Airlines

“Face2Face” is an 800- to 1,500-word interview with a prominent Indian, ranging from actors and artists to politicians. The story is either in third-person narrative form with a conversational tone, including some quotes from the subject, or a Q&A format. There are one to two interviews per issue.

Recent interviews include actor [Rana Duggubati](#), politician and human rights activist [Shashi Tharoor](#), and classical singer and composer [Shubha Mudgal](#).

Pub: Qantas

Focus: custom magazine from Qantas Airways

“Tripping With” profiles a celebrity in the form of a Q&A covering travel related topics. In about 800 words, the questions cover topics like their favorite locations, childhood holidays, and their favorite style of travel. Again, the questions focus on the more personal side to the celebrity and rarely mention their work or fame.

Recent examples include “Tripping with Jamie Oliver,” “Tripping with Mark Seymour,” and “Tripping with Teresa Palmer.”

Pub: Hobo

Focus: profiles, art, culture, and travel

“Cover” is made up of a profile of a celebrity, usually an actor, artist, photographer or musician. In 2,000 words, there is a third-person introduction which covers who the person is and what work they are best known for, this is then followed by a Q&A.

There are about 12 questions which primarily focus on the person’s career and briefly touch on their personal life. The tone is conversational throughout and humor is often used. Examples of people recently profiled include the actress Michelle Williams, photographer Cass Bird, and musician Benjamin Clementine.

Pub: Cross Country

Focus: free flying sports around the world

“Naked Pilot” takes the form of a Q&A with somebody interesting in the world of free flying, usually a successful competitor. In about 700 words, about eight questions are asked covering the person’s relationship with the sport. This could include how they got started, how they train or compete, highlights and lowlights, and plans for the future. The tone is informal and conversational with humorous anecdotes often being shared.

People recently profiled for this section include brothers Allen and Shane Tighe, who just entered their first acro-hang gliding competition, Krischa Berlinger, discussing his place in the Red Bull X-Apls paragliding competition, and Kari Ellis, who placed as the second woman in the FAI Paragliding World Championships.

A hand holding a green pencil is positioned over a blank white sheet of paper on a light-colored wooden desk. The scene is decorated with a bouquet of white and yellow flowers, green leaves, and a yellow mouse. The text "Indie Magazine Interview Pieces" is centered on the page.

Indie Magazine Interview Pieces

Pub: Upstate Diary

Focus: profiles of artists and creatives who work close to nature

There are about 10 features per issue which take the form of profiles of artists or creative people. In 1,000 to 2,000 words, these profiles can either appear as a third-person article with quotes found throughout or as a Q&A.

Q&A's begin with a short third-person introduction which is followed by the structured questions. Both types of profiles cover the person's career, childhood, and personal life but focus on their art and inspirations. There is usually a link with nature, with either the artist living in a rural location or drawing inspiration from nature.

Examples from a recent issue include "The Practice of Letting Go," which profiles ceramicist Young mi Kim on her childhood in South Korea and her work with clay, "The Ingredients of Zac," a Q&A with fashion designer Zac Posen on his new cookbook *Cooking with Zac*, and "Who Knew? The Country Life of Diana Vreeland," which profiles retired diplomat Fredrick Vreeland, the son of fashion editor Diana Vreeland, on her private retreat in Brewster, New York.

Pub: Bedboat

Focus: travel, art, culture, and lifestyle

“Humans” is made up of about five articles which take the form of profiles. These usually appear as Q&As with interesting people from destinations around the world. The piece can focus on one person or multiple people around a theme. Questions often cover the person’s career and personal life and include entertaining or thought-provoking anecdotes. They range from 500 to 1,500 words long and include a short third-person introduction before the questions.

Examples from a recent issue include “The Music Makers,” which profiles multiple buskers asking them two questions each covering questions like how they first got into busking, the best thing about it, or their future plans. “Growers, Makers, and Future Shapers,” which profiles three people who have started movements including Victory Gardens, an initiative in Vancouver that encourages community gardening, a hairdresser who gives free haircuts to the homeless in the U.K., and Sancho’s Dress, an ethical fashion business in Exeter. “Dress in Black, Draw in Colour,” is a further example which profiles Becca Allen, a graphic designer about her career and her home in Cornwall.

Pub: Honore

Focus: fashion, the arts, and profiles of creative people

“The Arts” contains about five features which take the form of profiles of people who work in the arts such as artists, photographers, dancers, and musicians. Profiles range from 1,000 to 2,500 words long. There is a third-person introduction which outlines who the person is and what work they are best known for. This is then followed by a Q&A which primarily focuses on their career including questions on how they got started in their craft, what inspires them, and new work, exhibitions or performances coming up.

Examples from a recent issue include “Portrait of an Artist,” which profiles photographer Friedl Kubelka who takes a portrait of herself every day for a year, once every five years, “The Rehearsal,” a Q&A with Paris Opera’s new Director of Dance Aurélie Dupont, and “Listening to Space,” a Q&A with artist Susan Philipsz on her new exhibition “Lost in Space.”

Pub: Got a Girl Crush

Focus: profiles of inspirational women

There are about 10 features per issue which profile inspirational women worldwide. The women covered are often involved in a volunteering project or activism in some way and sometimes their career is mentioned if it helps women, such as an inspirational politician. Profiles range from 500 to 1,500 words long and can appear as a first-person or third-person article with quotes throughout or as a structured Q&A. The tone is often emotive and personal yet conversational as the piece covers what the person does to help women, how they got started with any projects they're involved with, and often their own opinions on female role models, women's rights, and other similar topics.

Examples from a recent issue include "Ada Colau," which profiles Ada Colau, the mayor of Barcelona, her work in the city campaigning for underrepresented groups, and how the writer has been inspired by her, "Chelsea VonChaz #HappyPeriod," which takes the form of a Q&A with Chelsea VonChaz, the founder of #HappyPeriod, which distributes hygiene kits to homeless women, and "Shydeia Caldwell Black Girl Magik," which profiles Shydeia Caldwell, founder of Black Girl Magik, on the creation of the online community supporting black women.

Pub: huck

Focus: youth counterculture, art, activism, extreme sports, and exploration around the world.

Q&As range from 500 to 1,000 words in length. They are written in third person, and offset by a 50-to-200-word introduction. From anti-establishment politicians and Syrian rappers, to “minimalist advocates,” indie actors and struggling dreamers, Q&A subjects represent a wide range of high-profile or under-the-radar individuals. One recent interview featured Bret Easton Ellis, an American author, who reflects on how the Internet is “driving people insane.” This 1,000-word interview included a series of 13 questions related to Ellis’s take on the digital age, delving into everything from the troubles of social media and smartphone addicts, to podcasts and the democratisation of the arts.

Another Q&A in the same issue profiled party-thrower extraordinaire Mary Nally, who became semi-famous for organizing a cultural biennial off the coast of Ireland. This 500-word interview also featured a sidebar (“How can I de-stress my creativity?”), with Nally offering a series of recommendations on how to disconnect from the digital world. Text is accompanied by several images and pull-quotes. Sidebars are rare.

What Do They Share?

- Tend to be long..and, why not!
- Almost always preceded by a very concise intro that positions the interviewee with why not

What's Different?

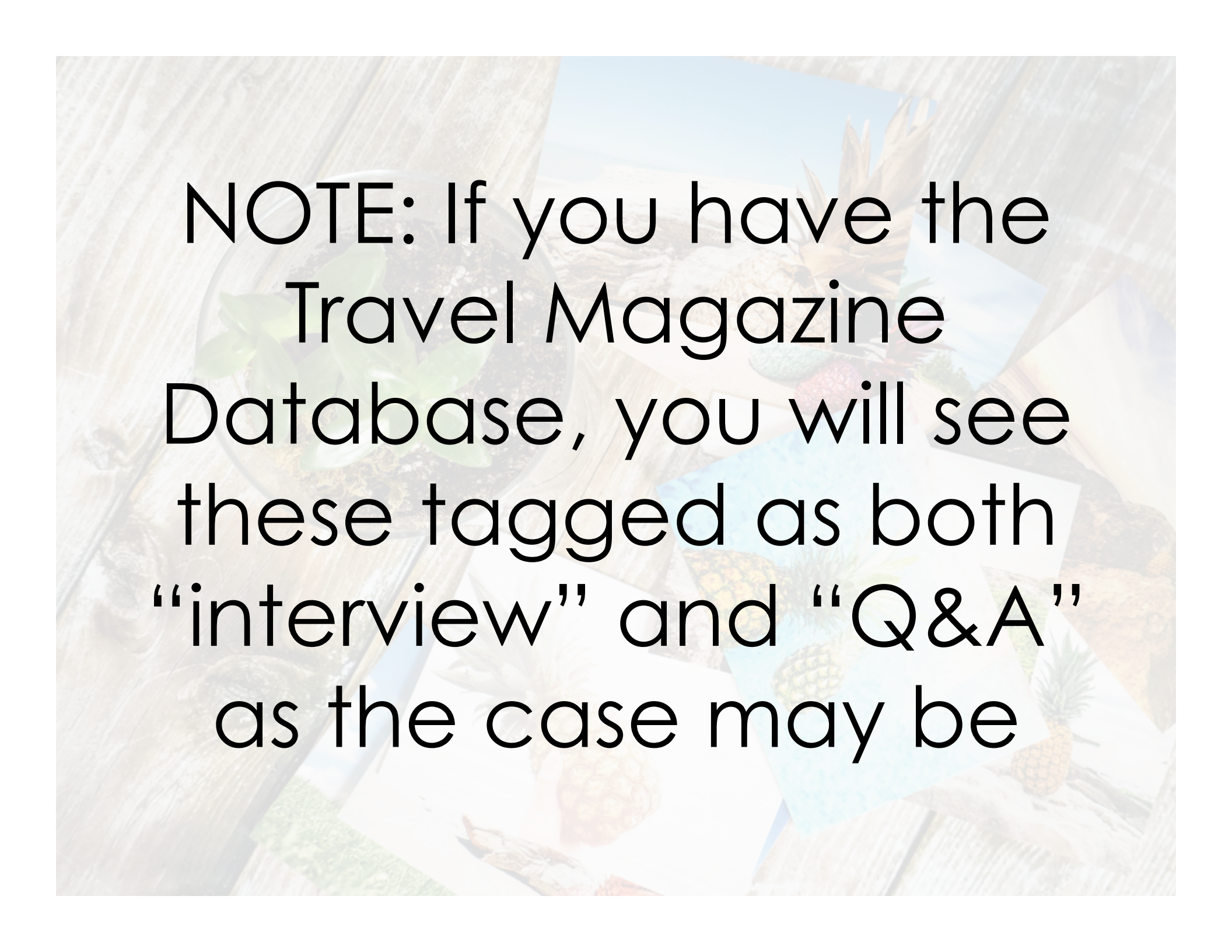
- Indies are less likely to be rubricked and cover people from a lot of disciplines at a decent length
- Front-of-book type profiles are shorter, of course, and can also laser-focused in questions on “newness” or hyper rubricked

A woman with long hair is seen in profile, sitting at a desk and typing on a laptop. The scene is brightly lit, likely by natural light from a window in the background. The image has a soft, slightly blurred quality, and the text is overlaid in the center.

Let's take a look at
some full pieces to see
how this plays out...

Pitching FAQ

- Unlike profiles, you have a much better sense in advance of “what it will be about” even though you haven’t done the interview first
- You do need to get permission to do the interview first
- The thing about celebrity interview pieces and new-to-you editors



NOTE: If you have the
Travel Magazine
Database, you will see
these tagged as both
“interview” and “Q&A”
as the case may be

Thanks so much
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting
travel writing with you 😊

Have a follow up question on this webinar? Email questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com and we'll cover it in an upcoming webinar or in our Monday reader mailbag post on the Six-Figure Travel Writer blog.

