

Following the Money



COURTESY OF CNBC

Kayla Tausche '08 had dreamed of joining the foreign service and seeing the world. Discovering journalism during her sophomore year at UNC changed her professional path, but the second part of her dream came true: The rising star for financial news network CNBC regularly reports from far-flung capitals and beyond.

And the world sees her: Tausche's stories for CNBC reach approximately 390 million

homes worldwide, including more than 100 million in the U.S. and Canada.

Financial news is TV reporter's ticket to see the world

She covers banking, corporate finance and mergers and acquisitions — a plum beat for the 26-year-

old who was hired at 24, making her currently the youngest on-air reporter at the leading financial news network. Tausche works alongside anchors and reporters twice her age, as are the captains of industry she interviews regularly. None of it fazes her.

"There's a degree of judgment that every person will face, regardless of age or industry, and the only thing that will make my position easier is to enter every meeting or conversation as prepared as possible," Tausche said. "Show people you've done enough homework for them to trust you. Still, it doesn't always work perfectly. A

senior Wall Street executive once told me, 'By the time you matter, I won't.' The only emotion I felt after that was a desire to be as successful as possible."

Before joining CNBC, Tausche worked in New York and London for *DealReporter*, a *Financial Times*-owned online news outlet, and Bloomberg News. For CNBC, she's covered major stories such as the News Corp. phone-hacking scandal, bankruptcy of MF Global and Hurricane Sandy. At an annual media conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, she interviewed Google Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt, News Corp. Chairman Rupert Murdoch and Sony CEO Kazuo Hirai.

Tausche — an Atlanta native, Carolina cheerleader and sorority sister at Alpha Delta Pi — majored in journalism with a minor in international studies. She spent one semester in Brussels, where she expected to intern with the European Union but instead was placed at The Associated Press. She was hooked on journalism, propelled in part by the thrill of interviewing European heads of state at a summit, including then-French President Jacques Chirac.

Sharing secrets

Tausche works long hours and shuttles between Manhattan and CNBC's studios in nearby Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Some mornings she leaves so early that parties

are still in line for the clubs near her Chelsea apartment. CNBC is owned by NBCUniversal, so Tausche also appears regularly on NBC's *Today* show and MSNBC.

But cultivating sources and getting scoops are what drive her.

"Breaking news is the true adrenaline rush," she said. "If you can get your hands on a story that's breaking, it's like a personal secret, something only you and your producer and editor — as well as your sources — know. And getting to be the one to deliver that to an audience is a powerful feeling."

Nik Deogun, her boss at CNBC and a former top editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, personally recruited Tausche.

"Kayla has the unique ability to seize any story and make it her own," said Deogun, CNBC's senior vice president and editor-in-chief. "Whether she is covering the protests at Occupy Wall Street or the frenzy of the Facebook initial public offering, she delivers every story with passion, poise and probity."

Jim Cramer, CNBC's frenetic, stock-picking host of *Mad Money* who has become a household name in America, is a strong believer in Tausche, providing constructive feedback on reporting and presentation.

"Once I was co-anchoring the morning show *Squawk on the Street* and Jim passed me

Kayla Tausche '08 has been described as “a throwback to the hard-nosed stuff most television journalists have forgotten how to do.”

a short note: ‘Have more fun.’ That note’s tacked up at my desk to this day.”

‘A throwback’

The *Huffington Post* praised Tausche’s tenacity, naming her one of the “25 Most Dangerous People in Financial Media”: “The Street was probably not ready for this — a knockout beauty TV newser with both the chops to deliver a well-researched story and the stones to chase [former MF Global CEO, New Jersey governor and U.S. Sen.] Jon Corzine down a courthouse hallway. Kayla’s a throwback to the hard-nosed stuff most television journalists have forgotten how to do.”


While at the UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Tausche focused on the news-editorial sequence and credits Chris Roush, the professor who oversees the school’s business journalism program, with pushing her in that direction. At the advice of her parents, she took Assistant Professor David Cupp’s “Voice and Diction” class senior year to learn how to choose broadcast-friendly vocabulary and work on on-air delivery. Roush, now senior associate dean at the school, keeps in touch with Tausche and is proud to watch her excel.

“Kayla is one of the best young business journalists I have ever encountered,” he says. “She is tireless, and she easily grasps new concepts. She is extremely smart and intense as well.”

Tausche is coy about her ambitions, but it’s a safe bet that television viewers will see her for a while.

“I love broadcast because even as the media landscape changes, it’s still the place where people consume the most news and obtain the bulk of their information about the world,” Tausche said. “That’s an important position to be in. And it means you get to tell great stories to the most people, especially with the platform of NBC News. I don’t plan on leaving broadcast anytime soon.”

— *Andy Trincia '88*

 **ONLINE:** Tausche spoke on campus in late February as part of the journalism school’s Women in Media Leadership Series, talking about her experience as a student and as a reporter. It’s available online at bit.ly/Kayla_TauscheJOMC2013.





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