

March 10, 2017 - Farha is a student in Calgary, Alberta and the anonymous creator of the popular Tumblr, thebootydiaries.

As told to Brandon Stosuy, 1474 words.

Tags: Writing, Process, Multi-tasking, Identity.



Farha (thebootydiaries) on building a popular Tumblr

What do you hope to achieve with your Tumblr?

I don't really know what I want to achieve, because it feels like I've already reached my goals. I guess I just want to be a memorable blogger, and not have people forget me after I'm no longer relevant.

Also, I get better at writing and comedy with practice. My posts at first were probably not funny at all, and when I go back and read stories I'd written years ago, I cringe. The more I experience seeing what makes people laugh, and pick up writing strategies, the better I get over time. I hope to get so good at writing that people remember my name.

But you go by just your first name. Do you plan to eventually write under your full name?

Possibly down the road. I want to receive full credit, but also not meet creeps.

What kind of strategies have you come up with?

I give my writing a twist by adding something like irony. For example, instead of a post that's like "that moment when you're sad" *sad cat gif* I'd turn to something that's like making fun of the superiority complex that a lot of Harry Potter fans have by pretending to be one of them but getting the names wrong.

Half the fun of my posts is the response I get from people, so instead of trying to make people laugh at what I say, I try to make people laugh from an entire conversation. The reaction from offended fans makes my posts even funnier, which is something I didn't discover until much later.

Another way I add dimension is by using sarcasm. I could've responded to an Islamophobic anonymous message with a straightforward educational answer, but I decided to use sarcasm to make the response memorable and entertaining, along with educational.

My strategy is just adding things that make my writing stand out; whenever I'm about to answer or post something that's straightforward or typical, I try to change it up by adding something that makes it less forgettable.

Why do you think your Tumblr took off? You have more than half a million followers.

I'm still not entirely sure why my Tumblr took off. I started 2016 with like 60k and ended it with 550k. The way I got to 60k in the first place is because I started off following every blog back. So until I reached about 3k followers, I was following 3k blogs. Then I made a post and some Islamophobe commented on it, talking about my hijab, and I gave a snarky comeback with my face as a reaction and it blew up.

This's initially what gave my blog a boost. That post alone took me from 3k all the way to 12k. Then it was just a process of gaining from my posts (the ones with my face always made me gain followers). Then at like 50k I made a post distorting English, an obvious joke, and someone took it seriously and I replied in an even more exaggerated way, using "sweaty" instead of "sweetie" and it blew up and people wanted more, so I made a ton of posts like that.

The reason I gained so many followers is because of the "sweaty" posts and the funny Islamic posts. They're both unique to my experience.

A response you made to an Islamophobe resulted in stories on the Huffington Post and Buzzfeed. Did these result in any kind of noticeable bump in readers?

Both articles created bumps in followers for Twitter and Tumblr. It created a different kind of audience. Usually I get teenagers following for funny posts, now I also have authors and writers following for pieces on religion. It's nice, though, because it's like I'm getting credit for being more than just an idiot, and people think I can actually write. Before the articles, I was more known for my ways of messing up the English language for humor. I've always wanted to be more than just some shit-post account and now

it feels like I've achieved it.

With the new readers, do you feel compelled to change the direction of the blog?

Not really. I've been posting things related to Islam in a comedic way for most of my Tumblr journey, so it's already in the mix; the only difference is that more people will pay attention to them now.

Do you see your Tumblr as a creative outlet from your studies? Or is it its own project that will continue when you're out of school?

It could be both, I made my Tumblr like three years ago because I saw screenshots of funny Tumblr posts and thought, "I could've thought of that." I remember a famous Tumblr user back then had hit 50k followers and they posted a screenshot, and at the top corner it said "iPod," and I didn't have a phone at the time so I thought "If that person doesn't have a phone and they can get famous from just Wi-Fi, I can do it, too." I didn't expect it to blow up the way it did, I just made it because I wanted to make people laugh. Now it's more of a fun break from school and a way to logout of reality for a bit. It's so much easier to think of posts now that I know I have an audience.

Tumblr is definitely a side project for me. It's more of an escape from reality, and reality is what I actually live-i.e. school. The only times it doesn't feel as much like a side project are when the escape and reality overlap; when people from Tumblr recognize me in person and come talk to me. So in a way it fits together.

Have you ever wanted to try to monetize it in some way, or would that mess up what have?

I'm considering it since I'm in uni and I have loans to pay.

Why does Tumblr appeal to you as a platform?

Tumblr appeals to me because the majority of the people who use it are open minded and welcoming. Statistically with 570k followers, you'd expect much more anonymous hate mail than the amount I receive. And when I answer Islamophobes, 99.9% of them are supportive and encouraging.

Do you have any rules about how many times you post a day or just as something strikes you as worth posting?

I have a queue on Tumblr set up to reblog 100 posts a day, but for original posts, I just post them as they come to me. I think of funny things as I'm going about my day and write them up as drafts. When I go through my drafts, if I still find it funny, then I post it.

Do you ever get bored of maintaining the site?

I do get bored sometimes, or I'll be busy with school, and at times like that I just rely on my queues.

How has the internet influenced the way you write?

The internet influenced my writing in the way that I incorporate humor and what's relevant. Instead of writing with rigid guidelines like I used to do when I was younger, I explore other ways to give my writing dimension, because I have more of an idea about what people like to talk about from what I read online.

Do you ever delete the older posts that make you cringe?

I'm guilty of deleting old cringey posts.

Can you imagine doing comedy writing on different platforms? Like, writing for television, or whatever?

I've thought about it. So many people ask me to make a YouTube channel, but I don't want to get into the entertainment business because I feel like it'll make me stray from religion.

Maybe a memoir?

I'd consider a memoir. The entertainment business, from what I know, can get to people's heads. The fame goes to their heads. I feel like a lot of it is also trying to stay relevant and doing things because you think that's what people want. On the internet I have control and I don't feel pressure to do those things, it's just an outlet. I don't do it for the praise, I do it because I want to.

For you, what's the point of comedy?

The point of comedy for me is to make people laugh. There's nothing more rewarding than knowing that people remember me for making them laugh.

The things I love are... by Farha (thebootydiaries):

Islam

comedy

the different ways of manipulating the english language

Nouman Ali Khan's hilarious YouTube lectures (I always link his videos to people who are curious about Islam)

my mom's lasagna except when she adds onions

Name

Farha

Vocation

Tumblr Creator, Student

Fact

Farha is a student in Calgary, Alberta and the anonymous creator of the popular Tumblr, thebootydiaries.



The Creative Independent is ad-free and published by [Kickstarter](#), PBC. See also: [Terms](#), [Privacy Policy](#).



↑