

KATE RAMSEYER: Hello, my name is Kate Ramseyer and this is the *Vox Insider*. Today, I'll be talking to Vox writer Sarah Goodson about writing her essay, *Rise of the Childless Cat Ladies*.

The essay is a response to the term Vice President J D Vance used to describe female Democratic party leaders in 2021. In her writing, Goodson explores why more and more women are choosing not to have children. I chatted with her about why she wanted to write about it. Take a listen.

RAMSEYER: So what's your connection to this story?

GOODSON: I have been really big into abortion and women's reproductive rights, especially in the past few years, so I wanted to write something kind of along those lines. But also I was talking to my editors, and we saw like a decline in birth rates. And thought, you know, what can we do with that? And so this story was born. I also have two cats who I love, so the childless cat lady thing, yeah, it just it all fits together, and it worked out perfectly.

RAMSEYER: When did you think of the story and pitch it?

GOODSON: So I pitched the story idea in September to Laura Heck and Jen Rowe, shout out to them, because they are amazing. And we kind of went, you know, we took one idea. I don't remember the original idea exactly, but we kind of took that idea, I think it was, had to do with abortion and reproductive rights, and we kind of just thought, you know, what else can go along with this? And what are people talking about right now? And I think that this is a very important topic to talk about, because we don't realize how many things actually go into having a kid. I mean, there's just so many factors that that's why people are having them lately. So, yeah, I guess that goes along with Why did you want to tell this story? So as a woman only 23 years old, I have my whole life ahead of me.

Honestly, if I were to have a kid right now, or I feel like any time in the future, I think it might ruin my life. I think a lot of people can relate to that too.

You know, maybe I'll change my mind in the future, but especially too that, you know, abortion rights, they could be taken away at any second.

That's just, it's scary, and that's what a lot of the women that I talked to, they said the same thing.

RAMSEYER: So was it ever emotional when you were working on the story?

GOODSON: Yeah, so it was emotional talking to women in Columbia. And also just the other sources that I talked to as well, they all had really great things to say.

And I kind of especially the women at Columbia. I did relate to them a lot. What was your favorite part of working on the story? My favorite part about working on the story was just being able to use my voice, because I haven't been able to, like, use my opinion and my writing so far, it kind of showed me that this is what I want to do. Maybe write more about politics, maybe use more of my voice.

But, like, my absolute favorite thing was the JD Vance hate.

RAMSEYER: Is this the first time that you've written something with that kind of voice, you know, kind of an opinion piece,

GOODSON: yeah, this is actually my first opinion piece that I've done. I've written, I mean, for the Missourian, that's pretty straightforward news. And for Vox, I've been there for a year now,

which I wrote a bunch of entertainment articles, but none. I really got to use this voice. And I also worked with STL bucket list too, but that was also just blogging. So there wasn't really much of a voice. There was an extent, but like, not as much as this, which has been really cool to see. Yeah, is there anything else that you wanted to talk about? So I have been a writer for Vox the last two semesters, and now for my capstone, I am an editor, so the whole process has been completely different, but also getting to see my story go through, like print production was very cool. I got to see the behind the scenes, even, like help the other editors edit it and answer their questions right then and there. And it was just a very cool process. And I'm glad I got to see I got I'm glad I got to see all that, because not a lot of writers would get to see that process.

RAMSEYER: So how did seeing that process make you feel?

GOODSON: Yeah, seeing the editing process honestly made me way more excited for this story. I mean, it's just been like an anticipation of, I mean, I pitched the story six months ago, I think so it's been like half a year, like process and just getting to see it go through all the stages. I mean, I woke up this morning and I was like, I need this story published now. I need to see it now.

So just the anticipation was just so cool, and now I get to share it with everyone, and I'm gonna be annoying about it. It's gonna be everywhere for a while.

RAMSEYER: So is that what you tend to follow kind of a combination between, like political and commentary stuff, or do you tend to see a lot of that?

GOODSON: I think I kind of read a mix of both of entertainment, especially like women's interest and politics.

But I also think that we should have more women writing about this stuff, especially now, I feel like the media is just so oversaturated with just like, hard hitting news that like it's it's doing its job. It's scaring us, and I don't know, with this piece, like having more of like, that sassy vibe of, I hate the politicians right now and like this is why, and all that type of stuff. I think we need more of that because I think it could also give, like women a feeling of, you're not alone, and maybe, like a little bit of hope and knowing that, like, I'm on your side. Millions of other women are on your side.

RAMSEYER: That was Sarah Goodson on this episode of the Vox Insider. The article we discussed today is live now on Vox Magazine dot com. Make sure to check it out, and keep tuning in to Vox Insider.