

The New York Times

Bre Payton, Conservative Writer and Fox News Commentator, Dies at 26

By **Mihir Zaveri**

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Bre Payton, a writer for a conservative online newsmagazine and a guest commentator on the Fox News Channel, died on Friday in San Diego. She was 26.

Her death was confirmed by the online newsmagazine, The Federalist. Ms. Payton had the H1N1 flu, also known as the swine flu, and encephalitis, according to her family.

Ms. Payton started writing for The Federalist in April 2015. The site said she quickly became a “rising star” who was regularly featured on Fox News Channel and Fox Business Channel.

“From the moment we started talking I realized she was a potential star,” Ben Domenech, the publisher of The Federalist, said in an essay on Saturday. “She was raw, yes, but that could be honed. She was eager to learn, to write, and to go places — not because of ambition, but because she wanted to change the world.”

In December 2016, Ms. Payton wrote a critique of a music video produced for Kanye West’s song “Famous” in which the artist depicted a row of nude celebrities, including Taylor Swift and Donald J. Trump, before he was elected president, asleep in bed.

“Kanye’s latest work isn’t an artistic product of genius-level trolling, it’s the manic work of a browbeater itching for a fight by violating a group of individuals in a very personal and grotesque way,” Ms. Payton wrote in the critique, which had the headline “Kanye West Is a Bully.”

Her last published piece on The Federalist website, dated Dec. 20, described a senior living center in Chehalis, Wash., that told its residents that they could not use nativity scenes, the Star of David or a crucifix to decorate common areas.

She also made appearances on MSNBC, CNN and NPR and her work appeared in The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, among other places, The Federalist said.

Ms. Payton was born on June 8, 1992, in California to George and Cindy Payton. She went to Western Christian Schools Private Satellite Program in Covina, Calif., and graduated from Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Va., where she earned a degree in political journalism.

“Bre is a great model for aspiring young journalists everywhere; she showed that it is possible to be a faithful Christian and a great journalist,” Les Sillars, a journalism professor at the college, said in a statement.

Ms. Payton had recently moved to Washington, but traveled to San Diego this month to guest host a show called “Tipping Point” on One America News Network.

Ms. Payton’s friend Morgan Murtaugh had asked her to stay with her for Christmas. She said she found Ms. Payton in her room at her apartment in San Diego unresponsive on Thursday morning.

Ms. Payton is survived by her parents and siblings — Jack, James, Cheekie and Christina — according to The Federalist.

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