



John Owens

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Summary

An award-winning writer and communicator specializing in documentary production, videography, video editing, news writing and reporting, television and web content production, newsroom management and education. A published author and multi-platform storyteller with expertise in a variety of subjects, including urban affairs, arts and culture and general human interest stories. Possesses managerial skills to motivate and lead high-performing production teams.

Experience

MULTI-PLATFORM PROGRAMMING PRODUCER - ABC OWNED TELEVISION STATIONS (CHICAGO)

AUGUST 2022 - PRESENT

A writer and producer for both short-form and long-form video content, half-hour programs and live programming specials for Chicago's top-rated television station, one of the eight ABC-Owned and Operated outlets in the U.S. As part of the ABC 7 Chicago Creative Services programming team, also responsible for writing and producing segments for Localish, the ABC Owned Television Stations' lifestyle network.

PRESIDENT - NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES (CHICAGO-MIDWEST)

SEPTEMBER 2020 - PRESENT

The president of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences' Chicago/Midwest chapter, the second-largest of the 19 NATAS chapters in the U.S. This chapter is the gatekeeper of the regional Emmy Awards for eight markets in Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana – including Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison and Green Bay. Responsible for overseeing all awards events in the chapter. Also oversaw the launch of a 30-member Junior Board –the first of its kind among all NATAS chapters– in May 2021. Also responsible for overseeing the revamping of the chapter's website in the spring of 2021

WRITER/PRODUCER – WEIGEL BROADCASTING (DECADES NETWORK/ME-TV)

MAY 2016 - JULY 2022

A writer and producer for the Decades Network's daily one-hour news program "Through the Decades", hosted by Bill Kurtis, responsible for documentary segments about important events in history, combining new interviews, original footage and archival footage from CBS News and other sources. Also, a writer and producer for special series on Decades, including "1968" and "Comedy Through The Decades". The Decades Network is a joint venture from the CBS Corporation and Weigel Broadcasting, available on over 50 percent of televisions throughout the U.S., including the New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles markets. Also, a writer and producer for programming on Me-TV, including the weekly reality series, "Collector's Call" and the daily morning entertainment program, "Toon In With Me".

SENIOR VIDEO PRODUCER/REPORTER – CHICAGO TRIBUNE

SEPTEMBER 2008 - JANUARY 2016

Produced and oversaw production of Tribune-branded content for a variety of platforms.. Produced long-form Tribune-branded documentaries for broadcast and online, including award-winning features, "Kenwood's Journey", "Chicago Under the Gun" and "Lost Friends." Produced multimedia content for award-winning online presentations: "Kenwood's Journey," "Chicago Under the Gun," "Lost Friends," "Across the Border, Beyond the Law" and "Pension Games." Trained and oversaw reporters and photographers on all aspects of video production. Served as news and features reporter for newspaper, covering enterprise stories in the Chicago area and Midwest. Supplemented print stories with complementary videos and photos for online and print. Performed additional duties as photo assignment editor and online photo editor for the newspaper's website.



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Experience (Cont.)

WRITER/PRODUCER – SELF-EMPLOYED

AUGUST 1987 - PRESENT

A free-lance writer, reporter and researcher with published news stories in the Los Angeles Times, Illinois Issues, Nieman Reports, Chicago Reader, New City, Block Club Chicago and Screen. A free-lance producer for broadcast and online, responsible for television and web documentaries, podcasts and audio reports for PBS (WTTW-TV Chicago), NPR Illinois, Slate (“Placemakers” podcast series) and Link TV. Also, served as the executive producer and producer of the Chicago/Midwest Emmy Awards show from 2012-2015, which ran on WYCC-TV 20 (PBS Chicago) and CLTV (Chicagoland Television), responsible for the overall show presentation, while overseeing a cast and crew of over 50 people. Co-author of the 420-page book “Chili Dog MVP”, published in 2022 by Eckhartz Press.

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR - CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

AUGUST 2010 - PRESENT

Teaches basic and advanced interactive media courses and broadcast writing to students pursuing associate degrees at Kennedy-King College, one of seven City Colleges of Chicago.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/NEWS EDITOR – CHICAGO TRIBUNE

JANUARY 1998 - SEPTEMBER 2008

Served as executive producer for electronic news division from June 2004 to August 2008, overseeing a group of videographers who created content based on Chicago Tribune stories. Produced documentaries under Tribune brand to run on WGN-TV, CLTV, PBS, Link-TV and chicagotribune.com. Highlights include:

- Produced news and feature segments for chicagotribune.com, CLTV, and WGN-TV.
- Wrote and produced award-winning documentaries and online multimedia presentations, including “The City’s Pastime,” “A Tank of Gas, A World of Trouble (Oil Safari),” “Off-Loop, On Stage,” and “Football in Chicago.”
- Created and produced “Tomorrow’s Headlines Tonight” segment from 1998 to 2005 on WGN-TV, CLTV and WGN-AM.

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR/PRODUCER – CHICAGOLAND TELEVISION NEWS

OCTOBER 1994 - DECEMBER 1997

Developed and assigned news stories to reporters and videographers for 24-hour news channel owned by Tribune Company. Worked with producers and executive producers to determine story placement within news show. Produced segments for news shows.

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR/PRODUCER - FOX NEWS CHICAGO (WFLD-TV)

OCTOBER 1994 - DECEMBER 1997

Developed and assigned news stories to reporters and photojournalists. Worked with photojournalists covering enterprise and breaking news stories for nightly newscast.

WRITER/EDITOR - CITY NEWS BUREAU OF CHICAGO

JUNE 1990 - OCTOBER 1992

Covered and wrote stories for news wire service in Chicago area. Rewrote and edited stories submitted by general assignment and beat reporters.



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Education

BOSTON UNIVERSITY - BOSTON, MASS

B.S., Broadcasting and Film, Minor in English, 1986

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY - KELLOGG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT - EVANSTON, ILL.

Professional Certificate from Maynard Institute's 1999 Management Training program at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management

ROBERT MORRIS COLLEGE - CHICAGO, ILL.

Professional Degree in Multimedia, 2000

Awards

NATAS CHICAGO-MIDWEST EMMY AWARDS (PRODUCER-WRITER)

- Outstanding Cultural Achievement for Documentary Programs (2014-2015) for "Kenwood's Journey."
- Best Documentary of Historic Significance (2004-2005) for "The City's Pastime."

NATAS NATIONAL SPORTS EMMY AWARDS (PRODUCER-WRITER)

- Best Broadband Documentary (2006-2007) for "Football in Chicago."

TELLY AWARDS

- Best Documentary (Bronze) for "Lost Friends" (2015)

DIGITAL EDGE AWARD – NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

- Most Innovative Multimedia Storytelling (circulation more than 250,000) for "A Tank of Gas, A World of Trouble" (2015)

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATED PRESS AWARD

- Best Sports Report for "The City's Pastime."(2004)

PETER LISAGOR AWARD

- Best Documentary for "The City's Pastime."(2004)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS' AWARD

- Best Documentary for "Here's Harold: The Election of Harold Washington." (2003)

CHICAGO WRITERS ASSOCIATION - 2022 BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS

- Honorable Mention - Indie Non-Fiction ("Chili Dog MVP", Eckhartz Press, 2022)

Affiliations

BOARD MEMBER – NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

2009 - 2023

BOARD MEMBER – FUND FOR INNOVATIVE TELEVISION

2010 - 2022

