

# Olena Lysenko

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Researcher at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. Producer and documentary filmmaker covering Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Contributed to National Public Radio, Vox, The New Yorker, and National Geographic. Head of PR and Communications at a Ukrainian human rights organization.

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## EXPERIENCE

### Visiting Researcher — Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania

October 2022–July 2023 | Philadelphia, PA, USA | Contract

- Conducted [academic research](#) on the Russo-Ukrainian War portrayal in documentaries and analyzed how media impacts public perception of war.
- Presented research findings at symposia hosted by the [University of Pennsylvania](#) and [Princeton](#) University.
- Led a workshop on ethical documentary filmmaking for Ph.D. students.

### Producer, Writer, Journalist — National Public Radio, Vox, National Geographic and others

March 2014–present | USA, Ukraine | Freelance

- Pitched, researched, and produced [stories](#) across multiple media formats: essays, videos, documentaries, podcasts.
- Produced a National Geographic documentary amid the COVID-19 pandemic; reported from Ukraine during Russia's full-scale invasion for NPR, Vox.
- Managed all aspects of production, including budgeting, scheduling, logistics, and correspondence.
- Cultivated a network of sources and contacts for journalistic projects.

### Documentary Filmmaker — [Film](#) was released by The New Yorker Magazine

2018–2022 | New York, NY, USA | Freelance

- Produced a documentary film about a Ukrainian father searching for his son believed to be in Russian captivity.
- Managed all aspects of production including story development, editing, and logistics; contributed to key creative decisions.
- Handled film promotion: crafted pitch letters, handled film festival submissions, and delivered presentations at international festivals.
- Accolades: New Orleans Film Festival, Doc. Berlin, Palm Springs International Film Festival, Kyiv International Short Film Festival.

### Research Fellow — The Professional Fellows Program, American Councils for International Education

April 2021–June 2021 | Little Rock, AR, USA (Remote) | Fellowship

- Conducted research on mental health services at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans' Hospital.
- Presented findings to activists and non-profits in Ukraine working on reforming social benefits for Ukrainian veterans.
- Participated in roundtable discussions, contributing insights that were later used in advocacy efforts and policy writing.
- Attended online lectures on leadership for governmental sector and non-profits.

### Head of PR and Communications — Legal Hundred NGO

February 2017–December 2021 | Kyiv, Ukraine | Full-time

- Led communications for a human rights organization advocating for Ukrainian veterans' rights, [recognized](#) by Chatham House for effective policy communication.
- Managed projects with international organizations including NATO, UN Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme, OSCE.
- Developed and implemented advocacy campaigns resulting in 23 new laws, including legislation aligning Ukrainian military with NATO standards.
- Drafted successful grant applications and reports for USAID, National Endowment for Democracy, and European Endowment for Democracy.
- Created and executed communication plans, including crisis communication strategies.
- Secured 1,000+ media mentions through PR campaigns (BBC, Deutsche Welle, Der Spiegel, Radio Free Europe).
- Grew website traffic to 2 million views; managed social media and newsletter campaigns.
- Designed and conducted training program for aspiring non-profit leaders on advocacy, PR, and social media strategies.

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## EDUCATION

**PhD in Criminal Justice**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine | 2013-2017.

**Certificate in International Economic Law**, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany | Summer 2015.

**Master of Laws**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine | 2012-2013.

**Bachelor of Laws**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine | 2008-2012.

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LANGUAGES: Ukrainian (Native), Russian (Native), English (Fluent).