

CODELL RODRIGUEZ

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Editor & Writing Coach

20+ Years of Combined Newsroom Leadership, Editorial Strategy and Award-Winning Writing

Dynamic, accuracy-driven editor with proven success in guiding high-performing newsroom teams, shaping impactful content and driving readership across digital platforms. Expertise in breaking news, enterprise reporting and editorial project management. Adept at mentoring reporters, elevating copy and building engagement strategies that resonate with diverse audiences. Broad editing experience including fact-checking, page design and writer leadership. Engaging communicator skilled in building relationships and leading journalists.

Core Strengths

- Editorial Leadership & Coaching
 - Breaking News & Enterprise Coverage
 - Copy Editing & Headline Writing
 - Digital-First Content Strategy
 - Story Development & Reader Insights
 - Staff Management & Mentorship
 - Strategic Communications
 - Public & Media Engagement
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Houston, TX

Public Safety Editor

July 2022 – October 2025

Oversaw public safety and breaking news coverage in the nation's fourth largest city, leading teams through high-profile events with national impact. Directed reporters on major crime, courts and government coverage while ensuring accuracy and relevance for readers.

- Directed coverage of immigration enforcement, police scandals, major shootings, leadership shakeups and disasters, consistently elevating quality and depth.
- Trained and mentored emerging reporters; served as a Hearst Leadership Program mentor.
- Hosted online public forums and interviews with government officials, boosting community engagement.
- Led experimental "Surge Team" for breaking news, balancing speed with reader value to strengthen newsroom reach.
- Temporarily managed local government and election teams, designing strategy for City Council coverage.

EL PASO TIMES | USA TODAY NETWORK

El Paso, TX

Enterprise Editor | Content Coach

November 2018 – July 2022

Guided reporters on immigration, environment, government and education coverage along the U.S.–Mexico border. Balanced enterprise reporting with breaking news, shaping local coverage with national resonance.

- Directed coverage during Aug. 3, 2019, El Paso mass shooting, one of the deadliest U.S. attacks, managing reporters on the ground and coordinating long-term coverage including anniversaries.
- Planned and edited enterprise projects on immigration policy, voting restrictions and environmental inequities.
- Partnered with national outlets (New York Times, USA TODAY Network) on investigative and enterprise collaborations.

- Consistently improved quality of reporting, leading to multiple Texas APME awards for enterprise and team coverage.

QUAD-CITY TIMES

Davenport, IA

Planning Editor

October 2017 – November 2018

Directed planning for news and feature coverage across Weekend, Food, Outdoors and Economy sections, while managing The Muscatine Journal.

- Developed new digital-first content strategies to reach broader audiences.
- Created innovative features, including a music performance series for web/social media.
- Coached young reporters, strengthening story depth and creativity.

THE SOUTHERN ILLINOISAN

Carbondale, IL

NIGHT EDITOR | SLOT & COPY EDITOR

2012 – October 2017

Promoted to lead nightly production, overseeing breaking news coverage and editing for print and online platforms.

- Spearheaded redesign of newspaper and transition to outsourced page design.
- Enhanced staff adaptability through training, minimizing impact on workflow.
- Earned **Illinois APME award for Headlines**.

NEWS REPORTER

2007 – 2012

Covered breaking news, government, university affairs and features. Recognized with multiple awards for investigative reporting and spot news.

AWARDS

Editor

- First Place Team Effort, Third Place for Feature Series for 2021 Texas APME, “One Year Later, Walmart Mass Shooting.”
- First Place Business Reporting for 2021 Texas APME for story on Walmart cashier coping with pandemic a year after surviving the 2019 shooting.
- First Place for Star Breaking News Report, First Place for Online Coverage, Third Place Star Online Coverage and Third Place Team Effort for 2020 Texas APME for breaking news coverage of El Paso mass shooting.
- First Place for Short Feature for 2020 Texas APME for story on Camilla, the border-crossing wiener dog.
- Second Place Star Breaking News Report of the Year and Second Place Feature Writing for 2021 Texas APME for Walmart shooting’s mystery hero.
- Second Place for Deadline Writing for 2020 Texas APME for “El Paso helps widower say goodbye to victim.”
- Second Place for Business Reporting for 2020 Texas APME for “Fort Bliss Hospital Costs rise to \$1.4 billion.”
- Second Place for Freedom of Information and for Star Investigative Report at 2022 Texas APME for series on migrant youth shelters.
- Third Place for Deadline Writing for 2022 Texas APME for “Haitian migrants wait on border.”
- Honorable Mention for Deadline Writing for 2022 Texas APME for death of ex-UTEP President Diana Natalicio.
- Honorable Mention for Community Service for 2022 Texas APME for deadly conditions for pedestrians in El Paso.

Reporter

- First place News Reporting-Single Story, Division E for 2009 Illinois Press Association.
 - Third place Breaking News, Division B for 2012 Illinois Associated Press Editor's Association Contest.
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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Journalism, 2002, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL