

CODELL RODRIGUEZ

Houston, TX | 618.534.1411

codell.rodriguez@gmail.com | codellrodriguez.journoportfolio.com

Writer & Editor

20+ Years of Combined Experience Supporting & Managing Operations for Major News Organizations

Collaborative, accuracy-focused editor proven in driving impactful content to readers for high-circulation publications. Award-winning writing and editing background for breaking news and in-depth enterprise pieces. Broad editing experience including fact-checking, page design and writer leadership. Sharp acumen of digital platforms. Engaging communicator skilled in building relationships and leading journalists.

Areas of Expertise Include:

- Feature & News Writing
 - Copy Editing
 - Staff Management
 - Story Ideation & Development
 - Reader Insights
 - Process Improvements
 - Relationship Building
 - Strategic Communications
 - Social Media Engagement
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Public Safety Editor

Houston, TX

July 2022 – Present

Moved to lead public safety and breaking news in the fourth largest city in the country. Leading a public safety team through major crime and court news of local and national interest. Training young reporters and greatly improved copy with a seasoned eye. Led new Surge team focused on quick, breaking news and temporarily ran local government team.

- Leading an understaffed public safety team through major court news, natural disasters, major shootings, police department scandals, law enforcement leadership shakeups and national news affecting Texas' largest city.
- Temporarily led a government team while permanent editor was hired. Tasked with leading an election popup team focused on City Council. Planned careful, informative coverage and helped lift up underutilized reporter.
- Led experimental Surge team focusing on quick turns and breaking news. Ensured stories had reader value beyond clickbait while helping reporters reach full potential and clearing out a path for growth in the newsroom.
- Was tasked with helping Hearst Fellows learn and grow as journalists. Served as a mentor in Hearst leadership program, advising and meeting with reporters regularly.

EL PASO TIMES | USA TODAY NETWORK

Enterprise Editor | Content Coach

El Paso, TX

November 2018 – July 2022

Moved to a larger market to lead on enterprise reporting and breaking news on the U.S.-Mexico border. Guided a team of reporters covering immigration and border issues, education, environment, U.S. and Texas state government, El Paso city and county government and business. Guided staff in developing exciting content of local and national interest, while working to find better ways to tell stories digitally. Edited copy with a careful eye while looking for holes in stories and opportunities to answer questions not previously thought of.

- Led a team that kept a close eye on hot-button border issues that have become major factors in national politics. Help plan out enterprise coverage on issues such as immigration, disparity of air quality for minority populations, voting restrictions.
- Helped lead a team during Aug. 3 El Paso mass shooting that killed 23, one of the worst mass shootings in American history and one of the deadliest attacks directed against Latinos. Helped direct coverage in the weeks following the massacre, directing reporters to hospitals, news conferences, funerals, presidential visits, etc. and coaching them in finding the most important stories. Organized coverage for each anniversary of the shooting.
- Planned and budgeted enterprise stories months in advance; closely worked with reporters on planning, reporting and constructing a compelling narrative; communicated with digital team in planning online content for peak presentations.
- Collaborated with media such as the New York Times on special reports and coordinated with USA Today Network on national projects such as organizing statewide selection of Texas women of the century.
- Led team to multiple statewide awards, including Texas APME honors, including best team effort for Aug. 3 anniversary coverage.

QUAD-CITY TIMES
Planning Editor

Davenport, IA
 October 2017 – November 2018

Moved to a larger newspaper to plan news and feature coverage. Coached and supervised a team of talented, forward-thinking, young reporters, helping them develop story ideas and innovative features. Oversaw the builds of Weekend, Food, Outdoors and Economy sections. Lead initiatives to reach new audiences online and in print. Also managed a smaller daily, The Muscatine Journal.

- Worked with staff to create a music performance series to be featured on the newspaper's website and social media.
- Guided reporters in developing exciting new content for feature pages, challenging them to look beyond simple features and tackle often ignored issues that affect our readers.

THE SOUTHERN ILLINOISAN
NIGHT EDITOR | SLOT & COPY EDITOR

Carbondale, IL
 2012 – October 2017

Promoted to Night Editor in 2015 to orchestrate news copy development and writer performance against stringent deadline and accuracy requirements. Interfaced with writers and editors, ensuring positive workplace culture and clear objectives. Devised and assigned news pieces. Write and edit news, entertainment and magazine content for print and digital dissemination. Collaborated with publisher, managing editor and staff to define and achieve organizational goals.

- Co-led newsroom-wide transition to outsourced page design process; traveled to out-of-state design center to meet with key leadership; coached internal team on new policies and procedures.
- Spearheaded newspaper redesign and trained staff on changes to ensure minimal impact on quality.
- Won Third Place for Headlines from the Illinois Associated Press Media Editors.

NEWS REPORTER

2007 – 2012

Assigned to high-visibility beats covering breaking news, city council meetings, crime, Southern Illinois University and features on various individuals, businesses and events. Conceptualized and executed articles on contentious university topics, including labor disputes, enrollment dips and investigations into statewide power struggles. Worked closely with assigning editors to uncover story ideas and identify key sources.

- Two awards for “SIU Owes Trevino Nothing,” including First place News Reporting-Single Story, Division E for the 2009 Illinois Press Association Excellence in News Contest.

- Multiple awards for “Du Quoin Firefighter Dies Battling Pinckneyville Blaze,” including Third place Breaking News, Division B for the 2012 Illinois Associated Press Editor’s Association Contest.
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EDUCATION

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