

# ISABEL O'BRIEN

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Investigative journalist specializing in climate, finance, and infrastructure. Proven track record uncovering complex systems and holding power to account. Work in over a dozen publications including *The Guardian* and *Freakonomics Radio*. Open to additional freelance work, but primarily seeking full-time newsroom roles. NY-based with an international edge.

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## EXPERIENCE

### Freelance Investigative Journalist

*May 2020 to present | Remote*

- Bylines in *The Guardian* for original reporting on TikTok's carbon footprint and tech emissions. Additional bylines in *Mergers & Acquisitions*, *CleanTech IQ*, and more for reporting on things like NAV fraud and biodiversity finance.
- Launched *Portco News* after spinning out from Privitas, continuing investigative coverage of private equity management practices for the same audience.
- Uncovered data and narrative-driven stories using open records, FOIA requests, and field interviews.

### Editor-in-Chief of Portco News (self-published, formerly part of Privitas)

*March 2025 to present (concurrent with freelance work) | Remote*

- Established Portco News as an independent extension of Privitas following its loss of funding.
- Maintained editorial mission, readership (97% subscriber retention rate), and publishing schedule independently.
- Directed investigations into private equity practices and operational transparency.

### Editor at Privitas

*July 2024 to March 2025 (concurrent with freelance work) | Remote*

- Led content for Privitas's editorial arm before transitioning it into Portco News.
- Produced a weekly newsletter and biweekly trend articles with an average 50% open rate.
- Directed coverage of private equity operations and edited in-depth research reports.

### Reporter, Americas at Infrastructure Investor (PEI Group)

*December 2021 to May 2024 | New York, NY*

- Broke exclusive stories on infrastructure investment trends and their policy implications.
- Published deeply reported features, including a data-driven series on energy transition.
- Regularly investigated ESG reporting inconsistencies and industry lobbying efforts.
- Produced investigative podcasts and moderated panels highlighting underreported issues.

### Researcher and Intern at Freakonomics Radio

*January 2020 to October 2022 | Remote*

- Developed investigative angles for episodes on economics, public policy, and education.
  - Assistant-produced pilot of *People I (Mostly) Admire*, contributing deep-dive research.
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## EDUCATION

*Completed a selective Dual BA program, earning degrees from both Sciences Po Paris and Columbia University.*

### Columbia University, School of General Studies

*BA in Economics, Minor in Creative Writing | October 2021*

Dean's List (Fall 2019, Spring 2021)

### Sciences Po Paris (IEP Paris)

*BA in Politics & Government, Minor in Int'l Finance and Trade | October 2021*

Henri de Castries Laureate (full-tuition merit grant)

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## OTHER

### Skills and Interests

- Investigative reporting, FOIA/open records, CMS, Adobe Creative Suite, podcasting, event moderation
- Languages: English (native), French (fluent), Spanish (proficient)
- Interests: Climate accountability, narrative nonfiction, global infrastructure

### Affiliations

- Co-founder and President, The Association of Women in Business Journalism (2024 to present)
- Trustee, The Monette-Horwitz Trust (2025 to present)
- Mentor/Editor, DIME Program (2024 to 2025)

### Honors

- "Emerging Leader," Marquis Who's Who (2025)
- Semifinalist, Athena Film Festival Writers Lab (2024)
- Aviva Investors Sustainability Media Award | "Best Real Assets Publication" (2022, 2023)