

# 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 *Investopedia*, *The Guardian* and *Freakonomics Radio*.

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## EXPERIENCE

### Freelance Journalist

October 2022 to present (concurrent with roles at PEI and Privitas) | Remote

- Bylines in *The Guardian* for original reporting on TikTok's carbon footprint and tech emissions. Additional bylines in *Mergers & Acquisitions*, *Investopedia*, and more for reporting on things like NAV fraud and biodiversity finance.
- 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 to September 2025 | 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 | 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.

## EDUCATION

### The London School of Economics and Political Science

MSc in Environmental Economics and Climate Change | expected graduation September 2026

### 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)

## 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

- Seed grant awardee, the Fund for Investigative Journalism (June 2025)
- "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)