

Multimedia Journalist of the Year Submission 2022-2023

Podcast series: [Exploring the City](#)

My audio journalism journey began with this podcast series, a project I picked up in January 2023. Although I have lived in the bay area my entire life, I realized I didn't know anything about our central city, which was just a 20-minute drive away. How could I call myself a bay area local if I couldn't even navigate the neighborhoods of San Francisco? So, I decided to physically go into the city and talk to different people about their experiences.

From the start, I knew I wanted to create a radio-style podcast featuring multiple backgrounds from a particular ethnic/social group within one episode. I interviewed people about their experiences in the diverse city of San Francisco and learned how their social or racial group impacts their view of the city. I also utilized music and nat sound to add dimension and created a final product showcasing the different experiences of people in San Francisco.

Multimedia Feature: [The streets of the city](#)

Ever since conversing with someone close to my family who was homeless as a young person, I've longed to advocate for the homeless youth in this country. I realized a considerable tool for advocacy is storytelling. My research led me to discover that the issue pervaded especially the streets of San Francisco, and I wanted to cast a spotlight on those who don't have a chance to get resources due to age restrictions and legal issues. Through my breakdown of the problem, I found a bright side when I talked to organizations working to help the crisis. I utilized infographics to illustrate the issue and created a resources page so readers could comprehend necessary information in a simple format. In addition, I utilize audio clips which added another dimension by displaying the humanity of my sources and the story they're telling.

Data Journalism: [Out of control: the pattern of gun violence in the US](#)

When an incident of gun violence occurred just 20 minutes from our school, a team in our publication came together to create a multiplatform story. I had to think critically about the crucial multimedia elements as the package needed a digestible way to display the issue to the readers. I dug through endless amounts of data sets and mastered Flourish and Google Sheets to create graphics demonstrating the weight of the problem and the need for action. I produced three interactive graphics on top of the audio recordings for the multimedia aspect of this narrative. The first graphic displayed the weight of the issue and showed the amount of gun violence within the states as a running race, indicating the running total growing each year. The second graphic identified the annual causes of gun violence and pinpointed the most significant factors of violence in the country. The third graphic showed the alarmingly high amount of gun violence disturbances that happened only within 2023 as of March in California, which demonstrated how just locally, the issue is pervading our lives.

Video Production: [Hometown Days](#)

I didn't intend to create this video at first, as I went in as a community volunteer on the first day of the event. On this day, though, I ran into all my neighbors, and many of my friends, and that's when I saw how much this annual event united the people around me.

I decided to produce a video showcasing my community's unity. There was an extensive list of activities that I could film and attend, and I interviewed different individuals who all had a unique love for their community. I wanted to capitalize on the advantage video storytelling has and emphasize the visual appeal to tell the story of an experience I consider dear to my heart.

Timeline Storytelling: [Mahsa Amini: The fight for change](#)

When a young woman tragically lost her life during protests in Iran in 2021, outrage erupted worldwide, and the oppressive conditions and human rights violations of individuals in Iran were brought to attention. I realized that we needed to shed light on the issue, and our publication needed to get the international story to our community to bring justice and accountability. In our multimedia package, I curated an interactive timeline that demonstrated the pervading issue and created a digestible version of the incident for unfamiliar audiences.

Personal statement:

I was a storyteller before I knew anything else about this world. My days in the elementary grades were filled with me writing and illustrating my own books, which later evolved to typing up my own short stories in Google Docs once I gained internet access. I cherished crafting narratives centered around characters and devoted my time specifically to exploring distinctive personalities. However, I wouldn't have imagined I'd be able to share my stories with the world; these stories stood tucked away in my closet or saved in my files.

Immersing myself in journalism gave me a voice I kept for myself my whole life and forced me to break out of the timid shell that initially encapsulated my personality. To succeed, I had to escape the personal bubble I restricted myself to and speak to new people to write their stories. My days weren't filled with my own thoughts anymore, but rather, I was always on the lookout for unique matters to create stories to share with the world.

As I cruised through my journalistic journey, it dawned on me that storytelling transcended the limitations of mere words. Since I had this newfound journalistic voice, I could use it literally, and I knew exactly what I wanted to do.

Within the labyrinth of memories that make up my mind, the most prominent ones are observing the people around me; I was inquisitive about the concept of people. My earlier recollection of my conscious thoughts is from my time on flights. I'd look out the window at the minuscule houses and buildings that dotted the land and experience *sonder*, just wondering about all the people living in those houses; how did their lives look? What was going through their minds? What were they doing while I was 30,000 feet up in the air? I was so mesmerized by the individuality of everyone.

Engaging in extensive contemplation provided me with the understanding that every individual possesses a unique narrative. When I began writing articles, I embraced the interview process not because I was comfortable talking to new people but because I was curious to get their

stories. When I began brainstorming ideas for my podcast, I realized that I could tune in on this interest.

In close proximity, there exists a vibrant hub teeming with captivating individuals, owing to the immense diversity and range that permeates throughout the city. San Francisco is a mesmerizing city to me; while it's filled with a startling amount of tech companies, it's also filled with a manifold demographic and robust distinct social communities. I wanted to uncover what makes San Francisco unique to all the modern cities today and talk to people to see how the diverse makeup is reflected within the city goers' experience.

Right from the first episode, I pushed myself out of my comfort zone by going into Chinatown and conducting multiple spontaneous interviews with people wandering the streets. Everyone had their own story to tell, and I'm glad I was able to document the peculiarities of individuals through this podcast. I was able to interview the characters in the story of San Francisco, and my childhood stories came to life as I tuned in on these narratives.

Every episode focused on a different experience, and I gained insight into the numerous perspectives within each episode. Although I couldn't get the stories of 815,000 citizens, I was able to talk to multiple ethnic and social groups, ranging from the Chinese experience in the ethnic conclave of Chinatown to the LGBTQ+ experience in the once-gay mecca of America to the Latino struggle through gentrification. I took on a new aspect of journalism on my podcasting journey. The pivotal moment that made me fall in love with multimedia journalism was when I realized that using audio allowed me to convey emotion to the readers in a way that writing couldn't.

Not only was I able to satisfy my younger self's curiosities about different people around me, but I also satisfied her nature to tell stories as well.

My experience as a journalist has been instrumental in my personal growth, as it enabled me to break out of my previously shy demeanor and develop essential skills for interacting with strangers and conducting interviews. Through regular practice, I honed my ability to express my thoughts clearly and concisely, not only during interviews but also when communicating with my peers. This skill set has proven invaluable in my role as an editor, as it allows me to effectively articulate constructive feedback to my writers. Additionally, my experience as a journalist has fostered successful collaborations with fellow editors on the editorial board, contributing to a cohesive and harmonious working environment.

My journey most certainly does not end here, and I still have much to learn about journalism and the various forms of media that will further help me tell stories. I grappled with the ever-changing technology to dive into data journalism to create interactive reports emphasizing pervading gun violence issues in a [feature package](#). Furthermore, I leveraged the power of visual storytelling by [utilizing a camera](#) to capture the essence of an annual event that showcased the unity within my community, harnessing the visual medium to create an immersive and visually compelling

narrative. However, I'll still explore other techniques to become a full-fledged narrator of our world.