

EDITORIAL LEADERSHIP · STORYTELLING · PRODUCT BUILDING · AUDIENCE

An innovator, a dreamer, and an *executor*.

I'm a veteran editorial leader, storyteller and builder. I lead teams, find the story inside complicated subjects, create content products, build the systems that sustain them, and figure out how to get the work in front of an audience.

My career started in newsrooms, but the operating instinct has always been broader: see the opportunity, build the thing, test it, improve it, and hand it to a team that can make it last.

Everyone and everything has a story. My job is to make someone a hundred miles away care.

NEWS DIRECTOR · WKAR · MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN



ANDREW GILLFILLAN
NEWS DIRECTOR, WKAR
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

+101.6%

Daily-average active-user growth on wkar.org across the documented comparison period.

JAN 1, 2025 – JUL 31, 2026 VS. PRIOR
577 DAYS

8.1%

The Signal click rate across 30 original editions — roughly 7× the media-publisher median.

LAUNCH TO DATE · FEB 1 – AUG 9, 2026

30+

Employees recruited, hired and onboarded during my CBS News Miami tenure.

TOP-15 MARKET · 100+ EMPLOYEES

I like building what doesn't exist yet.

Find the opportunity. Shape the editorial idea. Build the product and the workflow behind it. Put names and faces on the work. Measure what the audience actually does, then improve it. That sequence has been the job in every newsroom I've run.

01 Editorial products

THE SIGNAL · ELECTION 2026 · HEADLINERS · EIGHTWEST

Four content products I conceived or shaped, each with its own audience promise, cadence and identity — a newsletter, an election destination, a stream-only weekly review and a daily lifestyle show still on the air.

02 Platforms

BROADCAST · DIGITAL · STREAMING · NEWSLETTERS

Twenty-five years across commercial television and public media, including the launch of a 24-hour streaming channel and early OTT experiments on Apple TV and Roku.

03 Operating systems

OPERATING MANUALS · CONTRIBUTION MODELS · CADENCE

Ideas are cheap. I write the manual: who contributes what, when it is due, how a unit is structured, how the voice works, and how the thing gets assembled and shipped every week without me.

04 Audience

REAL-TIME DATA · AUDIENCE RESEARCH · SEARCH · DISTRIBUTION

I live in the audience data. I bring the numbers to the team constantly — they are our barometer — and I build content plans around what is actually driving audience and what people say they want. Real-time data and audience research are how I decide, not how I report afterward.

05 Experimenting & building

AI TOOLS · EDITORIAL PLANNING · PROTOTYPES

I don't just read about new tools — I build with them. I test constantly, prototype the thing I wish existed, and carry a roadmap for what a product should become next.

PROTOTYPING WITH AI

I prototype with AI tools rather than just read about them. I'm not a developer — I'm an editorial user who wants to know what they make possible, where they fail, and how judgment turns them into real capacity.

WHAT I'VE BEEN BUILDING

Working prototypes for editorial research, story discovery and planning — built hands-on to test what genuinely expands a small team's capacity. Several are still in development; I'm glad to walk through them.

CLAUDE · CHATGPT · GEMINI · CODEX · GROK

Editorial leaders need to understand AI by using it. Used responsibly, it gives understaffed teams more time to tell stories.

ANDREW GILLFILLAN

Building has always been the pattern.

Four products across nineteen years and three organizations. Different formats, same instinct: find the gap, design the thing, write the workflow, hand it to a team that can sustain it.



2007 eightWest

A daily lifestyle show at WOOD TV8 I conceived and launched — editorial concept, production workflow and brand. It remains on the air today.

ORIGINAL SHOW · WORKFLOW · BRAND



2022 The 24-hour stream & Headliners

I oversaw the launch of the CBS News Miami streaming channel, then conceptualized and launched *Headliners*, a stream-only weekly review, in two weeks — proof a 24-hour channel needs its own programming.

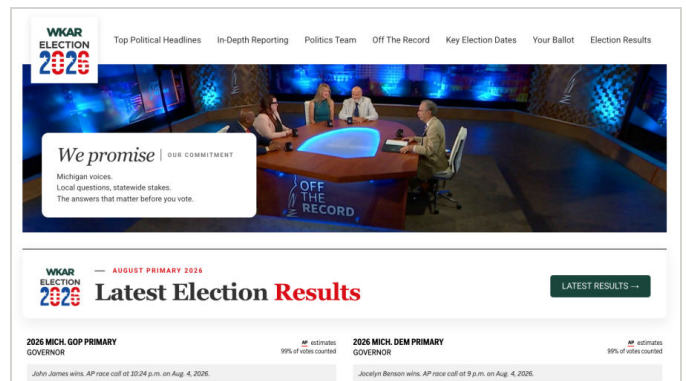
STREAMING PRODUCT · ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING



2026 The Signal

A weekly briefing for mid-Michigan: I identified the audience opportunity, shaped the identity and editorial architecture, led a four-week launch, then wrote the contribution system that sustains it.

NEWSLETTER · PRODUCT · EDITORIAL SYSTEMS



2026 Election 2026

A dedicated election destination built from the 2026 strategy I wrote: product structure, sections, editorial promise, service tools, and a full-time political reporter recruited to anchor it.

CONTENT ARCHITECTURE · SERVICE · STRATEGY

MULTIPLATFORM OPERATION

Strategy made operational.

I arrived in June 2025 to a strong newsroom with a digital front door that was not yet doing it justice. Since then I have set direction for two newsletters, a dedicated election destination, a digital-first audience strategy and a freelance reporter system that helped protect capacity after federal funding cuts. During that work, the digital audience roughly doubled.



+101.6%

Daily-average active users on wkar.org during the strategy I led.

8.1%

Click rate on The Signal across 30 editions, roughly 7× the media-publisher median.

3

Editorial products launched inside one year: The Signal, The Signal+ and Election 2026.

THE OPERATING CHANGE

Five changes to how the newsroom and its products operate

EDITORIAL DIRECTION

A clear promise for what WKAR News covers and why, published where the audience can hold us to it.

AUDIENCE STRATEGY

Analytics moved out of the management report and onto the newsroom floor. Everyone sees what the audience reads and what it ignores.

EDITORIAL STANDARDS

Depth in every story, every day. In-depth reporting became a standing commitment rather than an occasional special project.

TALENT & CAPACITY

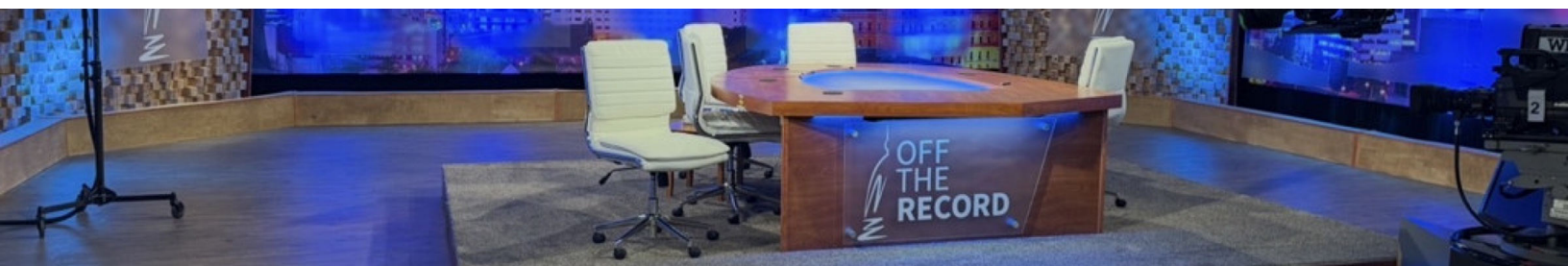
Full-time staff plus a freelance reporter system implemented on arrival, which helped protect coverage capacity after federal funding cuts.

PRODUCT & DISTRIBUTION

Two newsletters and an election destination gave the reporting a clear audience promise, a repeatable cadence and stronger paths to readers.

THE RESULT

A newsroom that runs on written standards and clear ownership — and a digital audience that roughly doubled during the transformation.



OFF THE RECORD · WKAR STUDIO, EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN'S LONGEST-RUNNING POLITICAL PROGRAM

CONCEIVED · STRUCTURED · LAUNCHED · SYSTEMATIZED

The Signal

A weekly news briefing for mid-Michigan, launched in February 2026 and sent every Sunday morning since. I identified the audience opportunity, conceived the product, shaped its identity and editorial architecture, and led a four-week launch. Then I wrote the contribution model and module system that allowed a small newsroom to produce it consistently and extend it into The Signal+.

Every edition is built around named journalists and staff from across the whole WKAR operation — news, politics, education, arts and classical. It tells mid-Michigan what the week ahead looks like rather than recapping the week behind, and the bylines and faces are the reason people open it.



The in-house identity: The Signal wordmark and broadcast-signal mark, plus The Signal+ lockup for the midweek edition.

01

OPPORTUNITY

Mid-Michigan had no Sunday briefing telling readers what the week ahead would look like.

02

CONCEPT

The idea was mine: a weekly briefing built around named journalists and their beats.

03

ARCHITECTURE

I defined the identity, voice, module system and repeatable editorial cadence.

04

LAUNCH

The first edition shipped four weeks after the decision to proceed, with no additional headcount.

05

THE SYSTEM

The product is not the launch — it is the system that keeps it moving. I wrote *Producing The Signal 101*, the manual the newsroom runs on.

The week ahead, not the week behind

AS SENT · SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2026
SEVEN NAMED JOURNALISTS ACROSS THE OPERATION · THREE SHOWN

WHAT ROTH'S WATCHING

The Week Ahead · August 9



Andrew Roth, WKAR News politics reporter, is an award-winning journalist and photojournalist whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone* and *TIME*. Hear his reporting on 90.5 FM and track it online.

01 Healthcare Action Plan proposal in East Lansing

MELORIE'S TRACKING

Your Meetings



Melorie Begay, Morning Edition host and producer (weekdays 5–9 a.m. on 90.5 FM) and part of our political team, tracks the public meetings that matter across mid-Michigan. Here's where decisions are being made this week.

MONDAY 8:00 P.M. Dansville, East Lansing (Special), Williamston

GETTING LOST WITH EMMA J

Get Lost! In St. Johns

By Emma J Nelson WKAR NEWS



We send Emma J to towns across mid-Michigan unannounced to see what they stumble into, unlocking the character, history and small surprises that make each place its own. Want Emma J to get lost in your town? [Email Emma J.](#)

THE EXTENSION · THE SIGNAL+

A free midweek political briefing launched in late July 2026. Its first two editions averaged 52.0% opens and 4.1% clicks — a young product, disclosed as such, and proof the production spine works for more than one cadence.

CONTRIBUTION MODEL

Named module owners, standing deadlines, one assembler on rotation. Every unit carries a byline, a headshot, a beat and a reason to click.

CADENCE

Sunday briefing, Wednesday midweek update, one shared production spine that survives vacations and staffing changes.

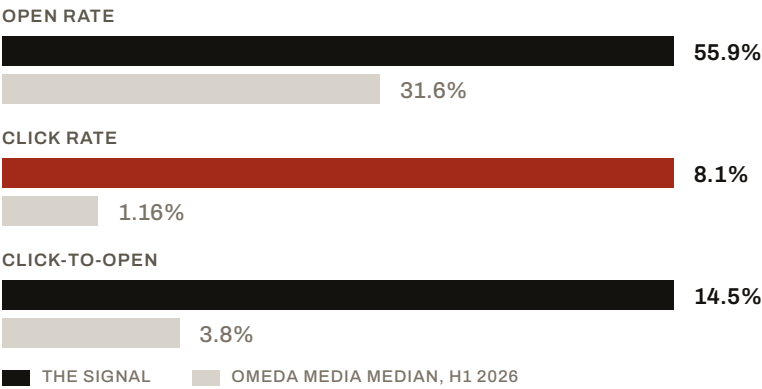
PERFORMANCE

The clicks are the story

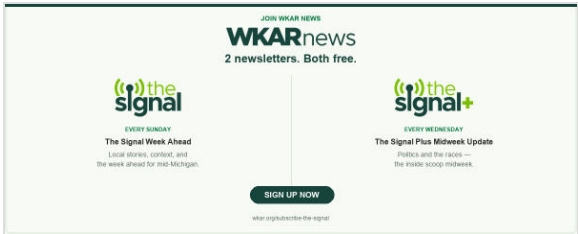
Open rates industry-wide are inflated by Apple Mail Privacy Protection. Clicks are not. So the click and click-to-open numbers are the ones I lead with, and they are where The Signal separates most.

55.9% Open rate across 30 original editions. ≈ 1.8× MEDIAN	8.1% Click rate. The number Apple's privacy changes cannot inflate. ≈ 7× MEDIAN	14.5% Clicks per unique open. The cleanest comparison available. ≈ 3.8× MEDIAN	+29.9% Recipients per Sunday send, 1,288 at launch to 1,673 on August 9, while engagement held. UNSUBSCRIBES AVERAGED 0.21%.
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THE SIGNAL VS. THE MEDIA-PUBLISHER MEDIAN



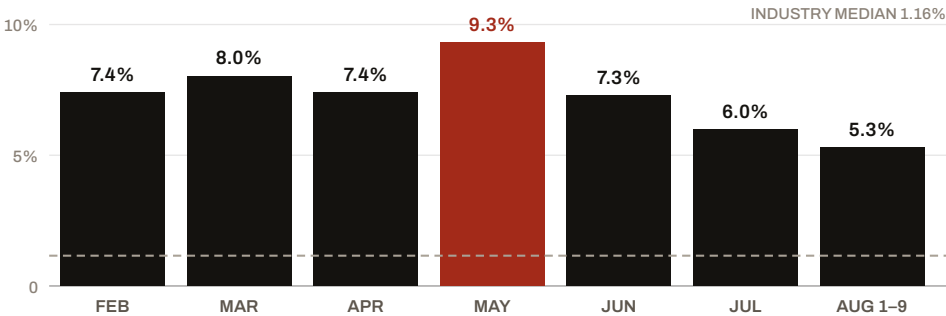
DISTRIBUTION IS EDITORIAL WORK



Twelve promotional units supported launch and ongoing distribution across IAB display, social, site banners, sidebars and studio screens. A product needs a clear path to its audience.

Every month, well above the benchmark

MONTHLY CLICK RATE SINCE LAUNCH



Aggregate results across 30 original editions: 28 Sunday editions plus the first two Signal+ editions, February 1 – August 9, 2026, Mailchimp bot-filtered. Benchmarks: Omeda Newsletter Benchmark Report for Media, H1 2026 — 31.6% open, 1.16% click, 3.8% click-to-open across 1.95 billion sends. No credible public-media-specific newsletter benchmark exists, so no such comparison is made here.

FROM THE WKAR NEWS 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

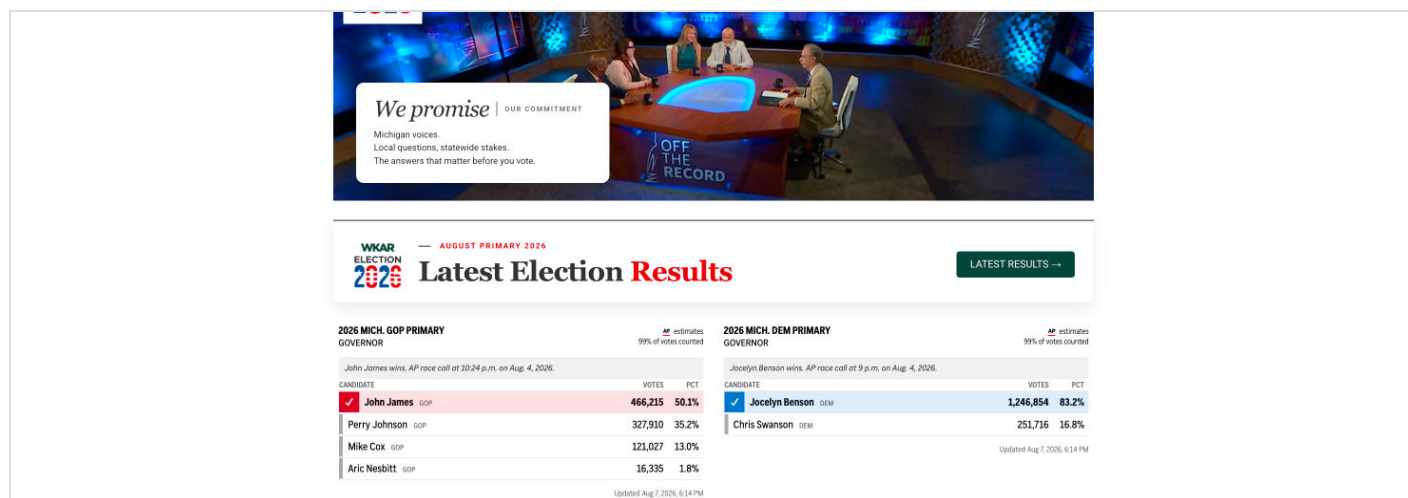
Election 2026

WKAR did not have a dedicated election destination. Building one was part of the 2026 strategy I wrote. I set the product structure, sections and editorial promise, recruited a full-time political reporter to anchor the coverage, and handed a clear plan to the launch team for execution.

It launched ahead of Michigan's August primary and now connects local questions with statewide reporting, election results, voter tools and the state's longest-running political program. The same identity runs through the site, both newsletters and on-air — one brand, three channels, and a plan for how they feed each other.



The launch team produced the brand system across the site, newsletters and on-air. I set the strategy, product structure and editorial promise behind it.



LIVE · WKAR.ORG/ELECTION-2026 · CAPTURED AUGUST 9, 2026

THE PROMISE, ON THE PAGE

Michigan voices. Local questions, statewide stakes. The answers that matter before you vote.

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

No ten-second soundbites. Hosts ask the hard questions and give candidates time to answer.

BEYOND THE CAPITOL

The small towns and outlying counties where the stories are just as consequential and far less told.

TOOLS TO TAKE ACTION

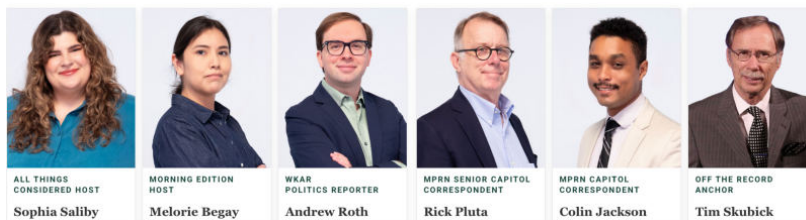
Registration deadlines, early voting, sample ballots and polling places — service journalism as a first-class section.

INDEPENDENT. ALWAYS.

Coverage guided by public-service standards, not political or commercial pressure.

TALENT AS THE FRONT DOOR

Six journalists, named and pictured, before a single headline. The politics team is the front door, not a staff page buried three clicks down.



GROWTH THAT HELD, NOT A SINGLE SPIKE

The floor moved.

WKAR had a strong newsroom and an underserved digital front door. I led a digital-first strategy built around deeper reporting, audience data, search and stronger distribution. During that transformation, daily-average active users roughly doubled, and the monthly floor rose well above the previous high.

+101.6%

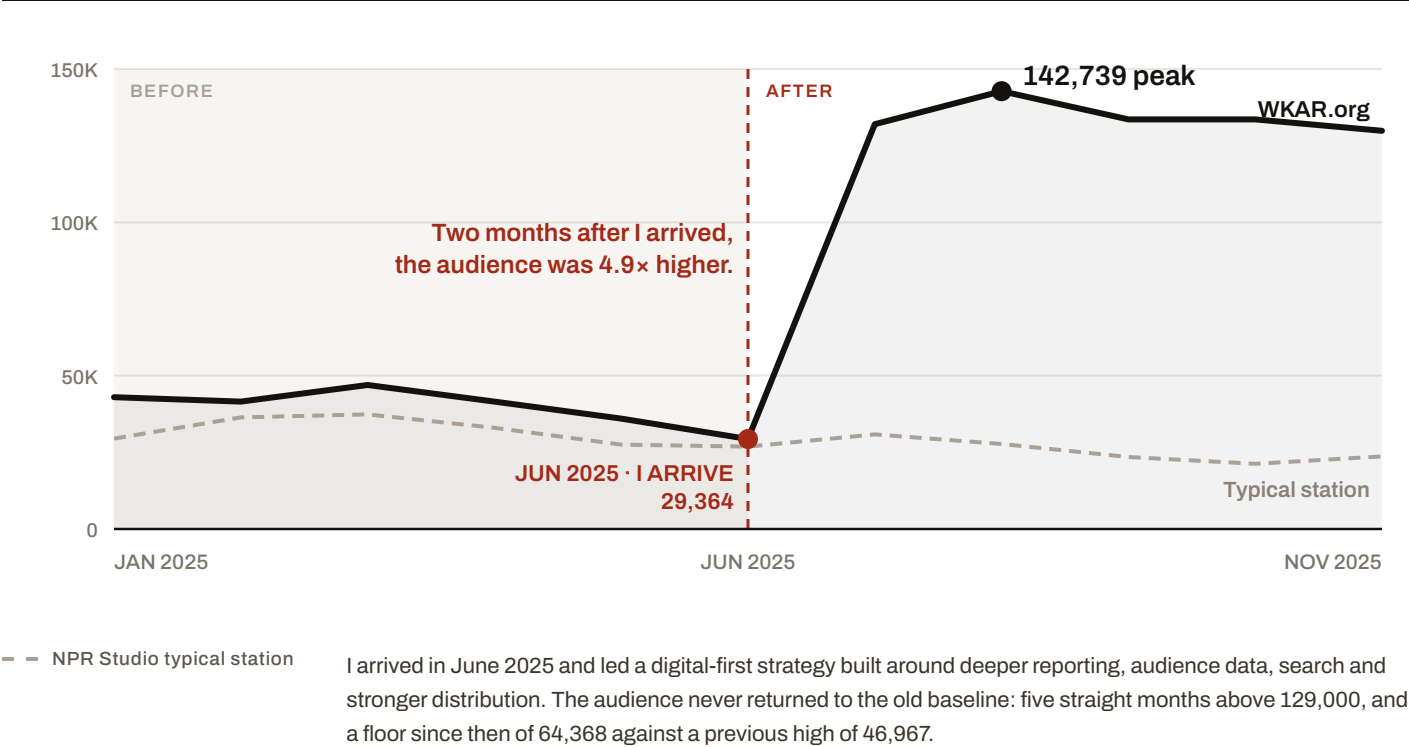
Daily-average active users, Jan 1, 2025 – Jul 31, 2026 vs. the prior 577 days.

≈ 3×

Recent monthly active users versus NPR Studio's typical-station benchmark.

MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS · WKAR.ORG · THE MONTHS AROUND MY ARRIVAL

JAN – NOV 2025



Google Analytics via NPR Studio / Looker Studio, monthly active users. Benchmark line: NPR Studio typical-station monthly active users. Figures after November 2025 are summarized below.

PREVIOUS HIGH

46,967

March 2025 · the previous high

LOWEST MONTH SINCE

64,368

March 2026 · still 37% above that high

PEAK

142,739

August 2025 · five straight months above 129,000

NEWSLETTER BENCHMARK

≈ 7×

The Signal's click rate against the media-publisher median

THE OPERATING SIDE OF THE JOB

The newsroom is the product.



Strong editorial operations are built around people, ownership and systems. Every number in this portfolio traces back to who was hired, what they were coached to do and whether the operation gave them room to lead. At WKAR that has also meant making journalists' names, beats and expertise more visible to the audience.

30+

Employees recruited, hired and onboarded during my tenure at CBS News Miami.

100+

Employee operation I helped oversee as assistant news director in a top-15 market.

200+

Stories produced annually by Michigan State's Focal Point student newsroom, with selected work integrated into WKAR coverage.

New

Freelance reporter system, implemented when I arrived at WKAR.

RUNNING IT

Hiring, coaching, capacity

A FREELANCE REPORTER SYSTEM

Implemented when I arrived. It helped protect coverage capacity after federal funding cuts and created a repeatable model for adding expertise when needed.

COACHING FRAMEWORKS

Hiring pipelines, written coaching frameworks and section ownership. I develop reporters into beat leaders who bring judgment and initiative to the work.

REMOTE AND HYBRID

I manage a distributed workforce through structured asynchronous workflows: written standards, clear ownership, and rundowns that survive people working in different places.

CLEAR OWNERSHIP

Named owners for sections, products and modules, with standing deadlines — so the work does not depend on one person being in the room.

THE STUDENT PIPELINE

Mentorship on the Focal Point student newscast, with selected student work integrated into WKAR coverage under professional editorial standards.

ATMOSPHERE

Newsrooms run on morale. I create environments with clear expectations, trust and room for people to grow — and I invest in talent others may have overlooked.

I know how to help the people I lead become leaders themselves.

ANDREW GILLFILLAN

PEOPLE

09 / 12

GRAND RAPIDS TO MIAMI, THE BAY AREA AND BACK

Twenty-five years, nine newsrooms.

A WOOD TV8 internship in Grand Rapids became a full-time job before graduation. I worked every seat in that building — producer, executive producer, assistant news director — and directed days of continuous coverage when Gerald R. Ford died and came home. It taught me what sustained coverage really costs: not one big day, but a plan that survives the fifth day.



WITH HELEN THOMAS · WOOD TV8

The dean of the White House press corps, who covered ten presidents. She visited her niece Suzanne Geha, our main anchor — and hearing her talk made the profession feel bigger.

25

Years leading and developing multiplatform newsrooms.

9

Newsrooms. Major, mid and small markets, coast to coast.

2

Top-10 markets, plus two top-15 markets.

100+

Employee operation in Miami, one of the busiest breaking-news markets in the country.

MIAMI-FT. LAUDERDALE · WFOR, CBS NEWS MIAMI · 2021-2023

We turned it into an impact-first newsroom

THE IMPACT FILTER

We shifted coverage away from commodity crime and press releases toward accountability journalism. During that period, the 11 p.m. newscast climbed to #1 in the market.

THE 24-HOUR STREAM

I oversaw the launch of the CBS News Miami streaming channel: staffing models, workflows, original programming and daily editorial execution.

WEATHER OVERSIGHT

I oversaw the weather department and helped launch NEXT Weather, a hyper-local brand built around disruptive weather rather than daily temperatures.

REBUILDING CAPACITY

30+ employees recruited, hired and onboarded, rapidly rebuilding newsroom depth, plus coaching anchors and reporters toward original storytelling.



WALL-TO-WALL STORM COVERAGE FROM THE MAIN SET · CBS NEWS MIAMI

Coverage under pressure

IAN · SURFSIDE · NEXT WEATHER · ELECTION NIGHT



TRACKING IAN · CATEGORY 4



SURFSIDE · ONE YEAR LATER



NEXT WEATHER LAUNCH · WATCH



ELECTION NIGHT 2022 · WATCH

NEARLY SIX YEARS ON THE WEST COAST

Fire, fog and the orange morning

Executive producer of *Today in the Bay*, the flagship weekday newscast in one of NBC's most competitive local newsrooms. California is where I learned microclimates and how to cover quakes, the tech world of Silicon Valley, firestorms, rain storms, drought and California politics.

ORANGE SKIES DAY · SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 · THE MORNING THE BAY AREA SKY TURNED ORANGE

SHADY FIRE · SANTA ROSA · [WATCH](#)LNU COMPLEX EVACUATIONS · [WATCH](#)

TODAY IN THE BAY · THE TEAM I LED

CRISIS LEADERSHIP

I directed extended multiplatform coverage of the 2017 Wine Country fires, the Camp and Carr fires and the Mendocino Complex — field crews, newsroom operations and digital execution at peak emergency. I worked the orange-sky morning of September 2020, ran storm-and-flood coverage through California's atmospheric rivers, and covered the quakes.

California is also where I learned microclimates: a forecast that changes over a single ridgeline, and a market where one weather story is four different weather stories depending on which valley you live in. Done right, weather is not a segment — it is service journalism with the largest possible audience.

SILICON VALLEY

Learned the technology industry from inside its own market — the companies, the money and the way both reshape a region.

EARLY OTT

Experimented with OTT programming on Apple TV and Roku early, learning what streaming-native audiences would actually watch.

MORNING NEWS, REIMAGINED

Rebuilt morning programming through the pandemic as audience habits broke and re-formed.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Trained at NBC's leadership academy at West Coast headquarters in Universal City.

I covered it — and I lived it

FIELD PHOTOGRAPHS & COVERAGE IMAGES · BAY AREA, 2017-2020



THE SUN OVER MY OWN STREET



MASK IN HAND, WATCHING OUR OWN COVERAGE



MANDATORY EVACUATION · CALISTOGA



SMOKE HARVEST · WINE COUNTRY · THE RUSH TO SAVE THE GRAPES

Six things I actually believe.

Operating principles I use when setting coverage, building products and leading people.

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 01 | Everyone and everything has a story. | My job is to make someone a hundred miles away care about it. That means breaking something complicated down to what it actually means for a person, then telling it differently on each platform so it lands where they already are. |
| 02 | Real voices. Not officials. | The podium is usually the easiest quote and rarely the whole story. I push coverage toward the people living the consequence — and I have been on that side of a bureaucracy myself through the U.S. immigration process. |
| 03 | Depth is the differentiator. | Commodity content is abundant. Depth is the strongest differentiator any editorial operation can create: reporting nobody else has, every day, not only in a special series twice a year. |
| 04 | Distribution is editorial work. | Publishing is not the finish line. Choosing the right platform, presentation and path to an audience is editorial judgment. Great work nobody sees signals a distribution failure, not audience indifference. |
| 05 | Public media has to earn trust differently. | History and mission are not enough. Trust is earned by demonstrating fairness, independence and intellectual curiosity in every story — and by building sustainable products and operating models around how audiences actually consume. |
| 06 | Treat people right, and grow the underdogs. | Teams run on morale and trust. I empower the people I lead, learn what each person is genuinely good at, and invest in talent others may have overlooked. That is how you create work nobody expected. |

WHERE IT COMES FROM

I grew up on a lake in West Michigan, obsessed with weather, and started a neighborhood newspaper at five dollars a copy. Helping my mom through liver disease and a transplant taught me that impact is not a newsroom word — the stories that matter explain something clearly enough that people can act on it. After she died I spent a year on the road through twenty states, listening to how people actually consume media when they are not in a focus group. Nearly six years in California taught me the rest.

WHAT I BRING

Seeing opportunity

The content and audience openings an organization is walking past.

Making the work visible

Putting the reporting, the names and the faces out front.

Building around strengths

Learning what each person is genuinely good at, then building the work around it.

Turning ideas into systems

Workflows, schedules and standards a team can sustain.

CONTACT

Let's talk about
your newsroom or
content operation.

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