

Marc J. Ambinder

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

I bring 20 years of communications leadership, with experience at the highest levels of journalism (ABC News, CBS News, the Atlantic), of industry (Disney/ABC, Facebook) and of academia (Penn, USC). I influence national conversations about national security, combating disinformation, digital security and technology ethics, mindfulness and meditation, politics and journalism.

I teach at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, where I am also the executive-in-residence for digital security. I created the Annenberg Digital Security Initiative, which provides advanced digital security and threat analysis training to hundreds of student reporters and communicators. As part of USC's Election Cybersecurity Initiative, I developed a comprehensive counter-disinformation curriculum for election officials and political candidates.

I've developed several courses for Annenberg, including its first course on national security reporting. My third book, "The Brink: President Reagan and the Nuclear War Scare of 1983," was published by Simon & Schuster in 2018. I spent 11 years in Washington, D.C. as a television producer, a White House correspondent and as a long-form magazine writer, and for several years I was politics editor at The Atlantic.

As a consultant, I developed the communications strategy for Facebook/WhatsApp's endpoint encryption roll-out, helped Palantir tell its employees a (complicated!) story about that company's values and aims, created a branded content strategy for a start-up in the talent and people space, and I've written speeches for corporate CEOs along the way.

I've gained an execution-level knowledge of cutting-edge visual storytelling technologies and techniques. I've managed teams of reporters, consultants and students and I've co-created several innovative digital news products. I've become a trusted influencer in the worlds of politics, national security and investigative journalism.

I'm co-editing a volume of scholarly articles on national security and journalism for the Center for the Rule of Law at the University of Pennsylvania and Oxford University Press.

In 2018, I was awarded a Nuclear Security Innovation fellowship from the N Square collaborative, a cross-disciplinary group of scientists, entrepreneurs, technologists and communicators working to transform how we educate younger minds about nuclear policy. I'm also a consultant for the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Foundation, where I'm helping them develop an immersive educational experience centered on presidential decision-making during crises.

On the side, I work with Spycraft Entertainment to develop espionage-based television series and movies.

My B.A. is in American History from Harvard (2001)

Core Competencies

Content Development	Editorial Leadership	Teaching	Writing	Editing
Investigations	Interviewing	Speechwriting	Mindfulness	
News Management	Television Production	Podcasting	Policy	
Executive Communications	Resilience	Storytelling	Story Development	

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lecturer in Journalism / Executive-in-residence for digital security, University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism -- Los Angeles, CA, 2019 -- present

Tasked with building and then executing a digital security curriculum from the ground up for one of the nation's best schools of communication and journalism.

- Developed a comprehensive counter-disinformation curriculum as part of the USC Election Cybersecurity Initiative; traveling to all 50 states and training hundreds of officials on how to fight against harmful disinformation
- Secured partnerships with industry (Yubico) and a leading SME (the Freedom of the Press Foundation) to catalyze the initiative and speed projects to completion
- Developing the nation's first course in digital security aimed at communications professionals
- Conducting research on best practices and knowledge retention rates
- Training hundreds of students in digital security

Adjunct Professor of Journalism / Fellow in Journalism, University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism – Los Angeles, CA, 2016 to 2019

Created Annenberg's first-ever course on national security reporting. Developing a "Defense Against The Dark Arts" curriculum to protect journalists, their sources, their editors and their families from threats, domestic and external.

- Secured funding from a major think tank to bring students to Washington, D.C.
- Recruited to execute the strategic vision for a multi-million-dollar news and education operation run by USC students, managing teams of undergraduate and graduate students as they produced high-quality journalism and content for live and digital platforms.
- Worked with school partners, faculty and staff to develop, and then teach curricula for spot news, crime coverage, Facebook Live, distributed digital products, VR, motion graphics and media literacy
- Directed, and then published an in-depth study of Facebook's news feeds
- Developed, and then managed and taught a post-election curriculum for truth-in-news coverage
- Directly supervised and edited the broadcast and digital journalism products produced by dozens of students each week
- Significant live event control room supervision experience

Journalist-in-residence

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA LAW SCHOOL – Philadelphia, PA, 2017

- Convened a major conference on national security, law and journalism sponsored by the University, wrote policy papers, grant and publication proposals.

- Main editor of a volume for Oxford University Press on the intersection of national security and the media.

Executive communications consultant

MARC AMBINDER, INC. – Los Angeles, CA 2012 to present

Current clients include:

- Spycraft Entertainment
- The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

I've advised media and technology companies ahead of major product roll-outs, written highly-visible speeches for corporate CEOs and board members, and managed branded content projects for start-ups. For **Facebook**, in concert with the co-CEOs, the communications team and company lawyers, I helped devise and execute the global public relations and communication strategy for **WhatsApp's** end-to-end encryption roll-out. I helped ensure that WhatsApp's brand was protected, and multiple sensitive corporate equities were well tended-to.

- For **Workpop**, I created the branded content strategy for this innovative, growing and well-regarded start-up in the people-hiring-and-managing space and currently manage several content projects, including talent recruitment and quality control of editorial products and white papers.
- I wrote a major speech (MIPCOM in Cannes) for the President of the **Disney/ABC Television Group**
- I helped establish **Airbnb** as a thought leader in a challenging market (Los Angeles) by reporting, editing and publishing an in-depth white paper on housing shortages; this became a launch marker for their strategic engagement efforts with political and community stakeholders in L.A.
- I rewrote and reformulated biz dev pitches for **Cognitio**, a cyber security firm, helping them expand their roster of clients.
- I advised the founders of **RYOT.org** as they worked to differentiate themselves in the competitive emerging marketplace of virtual reality journalism
- For **Palantir**, I pitched and won a contract for a law-enforcement-related internal communications project subject to a non-disclosure agreement.
- Documentary consultant for various production companies; multiple on-air appearances on *America's Book of Secrets* (History Channel, 2014), *Bin Laden: Shoot To Kill* (Discovery Channel, 2012)

White House Correspondent

NATIONAL JOURNAL – Washington, D.C. 2009-2011

- Anchored White House and political coverage for one of DC's most respected and influential publications, breaking numerous stories with worldwide impact.

Politics Editor

THE ATLANTIC – Washington, D.C. 2006-2010

- Created and stood up new Atlantic Politics web vertical, part of that historic magazine's award-winning, industry-path breaking digital relaunch; created the first online-only political news blog, "Hotline On Call;" reported and wrote cover stories for the magazine on topics ranging from the U.S. Secret Service to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal to the future of obesity.

Chief Political Consultant

CBS NEWS – Washington, DC 2008 to 2001

- On-air and off-air reporting for the entire network, prepared anchors for interviews with national political figures, worked with senior news executives to train and manage field reporters covering campaigns and politics.
- Worked with Katie Couric and other anchors extensively
- Won a Dupont Silver Baton Award

Field Producer/Off-Air Reporter

ABC NEWS – Washington, DC 2001 to 2005

- Became a force in political journalism; managed field reporters covering two major elections; co-created the nation’s first digital political newsletter, The Note.

MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

- 2018: *The Brink: President Reagan and the Nuclear War Scare of 1983* (Simon & Schuster) - the definitive history of an overlooked hinge point in both the Cold War and Ronald Reagan’s political evolution. It reads like a “Tom Clancy novel,) according to Kirkus and The Wall Street Journal. Publisher Weekly, in a Starred Review, called it “spell-binding.”
- 2012: *Deep State: Inside the Government Secrecy Industry* (Wiley and Sons) - a forward-looking investigation of the national security state, including a comprehensive examination of privacy and government surveillance.
- 2011: *The Command: The President’s Secret Army*: (Wiley and Sons): a concise history of the transformation of the Joint Special Operations Command, America’s secret and largely un-governed military within a military. Released as a Kindle Single, and optioned by 20th Century Fox as a television series.

AWARDS

- EMMY, Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Award of Distinction (news division), 9/11 coverage (2001)
- Webby (2003, 2006)
- Online News Association Golden Dot (2008)
- Columbia University School of Journalism Dupont Silver Baton (2010)
- EMMY (individual nomination): Outstanding Interview (2006)

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE

American politics Global affairs National Security The U.S. Secret Service
 The U.S. intelligence community Emergency Preparedness Encryption technology platform ethics
 The Joint Special Operations Command The White House crisis communications Nuclear policy

OTHER JOURNALISM

More than 100 articles in publications (FiveThirtyEight.com, Foreign Policy, Vice, Vocativ, The New York Times, The Washington Post and others.)

TECH SKILLS

All MS Office software, G Suite, Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Premiere Pro, AfterEffects, Audition), VPNs, TOR, various digital security technology.