

# Javier Zarracina

VISUAL JOURNALISM LEADER | INFORMATION DESIGN & DATA VISUALIZATION

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Senior visual journalism leader with 30+ years driving high-impact visual storytelling at leading U.S. and international news organizations. Builder of creative teams inside large institutions; strategic partner to top newsroom leadership. Deep, hands-on experience integrating cartography, data visualization, interactives, motion/video, and 3D across platforms—from breaking news to long-form enterprise. Known for mentorship, innovation, strong editorial standards, and clear visual explanation.

## EXPERIENCE

### **THE WASHINGTON POST — Department Head, Graphics (2025–2026)**

Led the Graphics team for daily and enterprise coverage, editing data-driven graphics, interactives, and visual storytelling for breaking news and investigations. Advocated for a stronger and more consistent presence of visual journalism on the homepage, working closely with editors across Politics, National Security, Business, Sports, and Investigations to integrate graphics earlier in the reporting process.

### **USA TODAY NETWORK — Senior Graphics Director (2019–2025)**

Led the Graphics Department across the national USA Today Network, partnering with national and local editors; elevated ambition and impact of visual storytelling.

Contributed to a ~20% increase in traffic to graphics-driven stories; attended daily Page One and planning meetings with editors and leadership.

Brought multimedia formats to scale across newsrooms ; hands-on on major newscycles, including COVID-19, Jan. 6, elections, and Ukraine coverage.

### **VOX.COM — Graphics Editor (2015–2019)**

Produced and edited digital explainers with strong information hierarchy, clear annotation, and accessible data visualization in collaboration with developers and editors.

### **LOS ANGELES TIMES — Data & Graphics Editor (2013–2015)**

Expanded multimedia capacity and workflows for explanatory, digital-first story packages.

### **THE BOSTON GLOBE — Graphics Director (2007–2013)**

Led visual transformation during the shift to responsive digital publishing; produced high-pressure explanatory coverage, including Pulitzer-winning team work.

### **THE SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS — Deputy Graphics Director (2004–2006)**

Led graphics through a digital transition; supported daily and enterprise storytelling across print and digital.

### **Earlier career & global consulting**

Graphics Director, El Correo (Bilbao, Spain), 1990–2003. Before joining U.S. newsrooms, I spent more than a decade in Spain in graphics leadership roles. Across the full arc of my career, I've also freelanced and consulted globally, contributing to science and technical explainers and helping publications strengthen graphics standards and visual communication.

## CORE SKILLS

- Information design and data visualization (charts, maps, diagrams and formats)
- Analytical rigor and visual QA; clear sourcing and uncertainty handling
- Cross-functional collaboration with subject-matter experts and stakeholders
- Strong editorial judgment: clarity, hierarchy, and narrative structure
- Scalable templates/standards for consistency across reports and decks

## TEACHING:

- **Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona** Instructor, Visual Journalism (2003-2004)
- **Universidad Don Bosco** Visiting Instructor, Graphic Design post-graduate program, El Salvador (June 2003)
- **El Correo Post-Graduate Master** Instructor (associated with Basque Country University, (1998-2002)

## TOOLS (selected)

- Adobe CC (Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop)
- Affinity Creative Suite, Canva
- Data visualization: Datawrapper, Flourish, D3, Raw charts. ai2html
- 3D: Luxology Modo, Blender, SketchUp
- Mapping: QGIS, Mapbox, Map4News
- Analysis: R/Python (basic)
- Motion/Video After Effects, Premiere, Apple Motion, Final Cut X, Cavalry

## SELECTED RECOGNITION

- Pulitzer Prize 2014 (core team) breaking news. Boston Marathon Bombing
- National Press Foundation –Innovative Storytelling. Political polarization in congress
- Majeri Award for leadership on data visualization
- Multiple SND/Malofiej honors, European Design Awards

## EDUCATION

- Bachelor's Communication Sciences, University of the Basque Country, EHU1990

## LANGUAGES

- English (fluent)
- Spanish (native)

## SELECTED TALKS & JURIED COMPETITIONS

I've spoken internationally on visual journalism and information design, including the National Press Foundation "Widening the Pipeline" workshop (2025), ABRAJI (São Paulo, 2017), Aalto University's "Visualizing Knowledge" (Helsinki, 2017), Harvard School of Public Health (2013), and the Malofiej Infographics Summit (multiple years). I've also presented at SND workshops in the U.S. and Scandinavia, and served as a judge for major competitions, including Head of Jury for the International News Design Competition (2025), SND Best of Digital Design, Malofiej, and the Gabo Foundation Awards 2021