

# BRANDON SMITH

Accountability journalist, university instructor, and FOIA technician with 13 years' experience

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**ProPublica.** New York, NY Jan 2019–Present

- Reporting an investigative project of my genesis, on a part-time contract, regarding white supremacy inside law enforcement across the U.S. The project uses FOIA extensively and currently involves 22 jurisdictions. It might expand to 120+ jurisdictions. The project is in the vein of work by A.C. Thompson and overseen by Thompson's editor, Joseph Sexton.

**The American Prospect.** New York, NY June 2019–Present

- Reporting an investigative feature of my genesis, with oversight by Executive Editor David Dayen, on a large Wall Street-based bank that allegedly committed large-scale fraud in its trading practices.

**The New Republic.** New York, NY June 2019–Present

- Reporting an article on new Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and her sometimes-confusing and often-conflicted relationship to police reform in that city.

**University instructorship.** Various institutions. Jan 2016–Present

- Instruct undergraduate and graduate journalism students in FOIA, source protection, and other aspects of journalism, on a regular basis, at several universities around the country.
- Teaching relationships (usually one lecture or workshop per semester) with j-schools at Northwestern University, University of Maryland, Ithaca College, and DePauw University.

**The Capitol Forum.** Washington, DC Feb–July 2017

*An investigative newsletter read by regulators. Served as correspondent / FOIA expert.*

- Uncovered evidence of public companies behaving in ways that violate laws or rules, or could otherwise land them with government sanctions or lawsuits.
- Provided FOIA expertise and wrote the organization's request boilerplate to educate responders on their duty under the law as concerns exemptions we anticipate.
- Taught courses for attorneys in the U.S. and Europe about the most misused FOIA exemptions. My courses qualified for "continuing legal education" credit with their respective bar associations

**Independent Journalism.** Chicago, IL July 2012–Jan 2017

- Filed a successful FOIA lawsuit to expose the cover-up of the killing of teen Laquan McDonald. This resulted in the ouster of Chicago's police chief and what the U.S. DOJ called the largest civil rights investigation it had ever undertaken.

- Met with several members of Congress and their office staff, following litigation and a series of columns, to discuss police interaction and constituent concerns.
- Published articles in the following outlets: The Chicago Tribune, The Guardian (US & UK), Daily Beast, Al Jazeera America, In These Times, Chicago Reader, Green Building & Design
- Selected as a McCormick Fellow at the New England Center for Investigative Reporting. Studied and reported on the Affordable Care Act and its implementation.

**Springfield News-Sun.** Springfield, OH June 2011–June 2012  
 General assignment reporter. Wrote stories on corporate pollution, public health crises, school lunch nutrition, and government transparency. Assigned to cover Springfield City Hall. Assisted the joint newspaper and television “I-Team” on two investigations spanning 17 Ohio counties.

**Wilmington News-Journal.** Wilmington, OH May 2008–Aug 2009  
 Editorial assistant and contributing writer. Wrote original projects, including a three-part investigation into local pollution. Reported on state and local meetings of public bodies, their deliberation, and outcomes.

**Record-Herald.** Washington Court House, OH May 2006–Aug 2007  
 Editorial Assistant. Reported, photographed, and wrote breaking news, feature stories, columns, viewpoints, and editorials.

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

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**Ithaca College Park Center for Independent Media, 2016**  
 Izzy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Independent Media

**Freedom of the Press Foundation, 2016**  
 Transparency for Police Fund Award

**National Lawyers Guild, 2016**  
 People’s Law Award

**Associated Press Society of Ohio, 2011**  
 Second place winner for Investigative Reporting

**Brown Publishing Company, 2007**  
 First place winner for Editorial Writing

## **EDUCATION**

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**Columbia College Chicago.** Chicago, IL Aug 2009–May 2011  
 Pursued Bachelor of Arts in Science Journalism

**Cedarville University.** Cedarville, OH Aug 2007–May 2009  
 Pursued Bachelor of Arts in Communications