

Drew Philp

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Overview

My journalistic and written work regularly reaches millions and has been published both nationally and internationally, including appearing in *BuzzFeed*, *De Correspondent*, and *the Guardian*, the latter where I served as Rust Belt correspondent. In 2017, Scribner published my nonfiction novel, the award-winning *A \$500 House in Detroit: Rebuilding an Abandoned Home and an American City*. The Star Tribune called it “maybe the most inspiring book” you’ll read all year and it was excerpted in the Guardian. In 2017, I delivered an official TED Talk at TEDNYC that has reached more than 1.3 million people worldwide in a dozen languages and was featured on the TED Radio Hour.

I’ve worked in the film industry, writing two feature-length dramas on contract including a collaboration with a regional Emmy Award-winning producer. I have written unsigned book reviews for *Publishers Weekly*, am formerly the theater critic for the *Metro Times*, and as of December 2020, I was awarded a grant by the Knight Foundation to co-write a new play entitled *A Midsummer’s American Dream* with the founding director of Shakespeare in Detroit.

I was selected by Michael Pollan and the University of California, Berkeley as an 11th hour Food and Justice Reporting Fellow in 2016, as a Kresge Artist Fellow in 2017, and as a Kathryn Davis Fellow for Peace at Middlebury College in 2019. My essays and profiles have appeared in books and collections in the United States and Europe, both trade and academic, and I have worked as an adjunct writing professor at Oakland University. I’ve made dozens of public appearances in support of my work including at the National Writers Series, CSPAN, Google, and dozens of universities. I am a professional member of PEN America.

My most recent work has consisted of intensive language learning and study of video game narrative, a novel in progress awaited by my publisher, professional game writing for London gaming company Shades of Vengeance, and as the editor and organizer of the inaugural yearly fiction edition of the *Metro Times* supported by Kresge Arts in Detroit. I have also recently worked as a narrative consultant for social-impact brands such as the crowd-solutions investing platform WaterWorksFund.

In addition to my work as a journalist, screenwriter, and copywriter, I am recognized internationally for building my house with my own hands, as an expert on Detroit, and as a speaker and writer with great sensitivity to issues of race and class. I am also a certified diesel mechanic. I am located in the Eastern Time Zone and am 34 years old.

Select Literary and Academic Publications:

- Collin Harrison, Editor-in-Chief of Scribner Publishing, acquired at auction the rights to my memoir about purchasing an abandoned house in Detroit at the age of 23 and the racial and socioeconomic realities of the city and region. [A \\$500 House: Rebuilding an Abandoned Home and an American City](#) was published on April 11, 2017. The book received the Stuart and Vernice Gross award for literature, and reviews include a glowing and starred piece from [Kirkus](#), with the Star Tribune calling it, “maybe the most inspiring book” you’ll read all year. An excerpt was published in [the Guardian](#). 2017.
- "Make Sure You're Helping: Experts, Solidarity and Effective Partnering with Locals" was published in [Can't Forget the Motor City: What Happens in Detroit Matters for the Urban World](#) edited by professor Brian Doucet of Utrecht University and published in the United States and Europe by Policy Press. The volume includes work by prominent academics, writers, and thinkers on Detroit. 2017.
- The essay “Poletown” was published in the [Detroit Neighborhood Guidebook](#), Belt Publishing. 2017.
- The essay “Like Stones Dropped in a Pond” was published in *Detroit: An Archive of Experiences* by [Expodium](#), Holland, in the Netherlands, Greece, and Portugal. 2010.
- PEN America professional member in good standing. Current.
- Represented in New York by Jenni Ferrari-Adler of [Union Literary](#). Represented in Los Angeles by Kassie Evashevski. Current.

Select Longform, Magazine, and Feature Stories:

- Former contract employee at *the Guardian* and Rust Belt correspondent writing feature stories on iniquity in the Midwest. Pieces included a look at how [healthcare changes on the national level may impact people with developmental and cognitive disabilities, civil disobedience in response to mass water shutoffs in Detroit](#), and [hitchhiking the Rust Belt in search of the American man](#). 2017-2018.
- *The Guardian* published [“I walked 170 Miles to the RNC to Talk to Trump Supporters. They Surprised Me.”](#) which chronicled my journey on foot from my home in Detroit to Cleveland to speak to average folks about the election. The story produced more than a thousand comments, and multiple other news organizations wrote about my trip, notably the *Huffington Post* calling me [“A Modern Day Woody Guthrie.”](#) I was also interviewed from as far away as [New Zealand](#). In addition, I wrote dispatches along the way for *BELT Magazine*. 2016.
- *Spirit Magazine* published an influential cover-profile of Samantha White, [founder of Shakespeare in Detroit](#). 2015.
- *BuzzFeed* published [“Why I bought a house in Detroit for \\$500.”](#) at 6,500 words. It received approximately 1.8 million views with about 80% of people reading its entirety. It was at the time the most popular longform story in the history of *BuzzFeed*. *The Atlantic Magazine* called it one of the [best stories of the year](#), among other accolades. Other publicity included speaking engagements with NPR’s [Tell Me More](#), mentions in the *New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. 2014.

- *The Metro Times* published, among many other pieces, an extremely well regarded and influential cover profile of attorney [Joumana Kayrouz](#). The local story was covered as far away as Alabama and was extensively cited in the Arab American community, the Arab Daily News saying it offered “[rare insight](#).” 2014-current.
- *Corp! Magazine* has published many feature stories, including influential pieces on [sports subsidies](#) and data security. 2013.
- The *Michigan Front Page* published multiple cover feature profiles of prominent black locals including poet Jessica Care Moore, and clothier to the stars Marc England. 2012.

Select Criticism, Translations, Newspaper Journalism:

- [Detroit Is It](#) freelance feature and culture writer. 2019-2020.
- Published multiple unsigned nonfiction book reviews for *Publisher's Weekly*. 2016.
- [De Correspondent](#) published, in translation, a feature story about my walk to Cleveland and the RNC. 2016.
- *Vers Beton*, in the Netherlands, published a translated [short feature](#) co-written with Professor Brian Doucet entitled, *Detroit is Meer Dan Ruiines*. A short editorial with similar themes was published in [The Guardian](#) as well. 2016.
- Theater critic for *The Metro Times*, one of the largest alternative newsweekly in the US. Reviews include an influential piece on the Detroit premiere of [White People](#), which was cited nationally, including in [VOX](#); a local production of [Angels in America](#); and a legendary [Detroit improv theater](#). 2015-2016.
- The *Detroit Free Press* published freelance pieces, including the widely influential scoop “[UM Might Tap Detroit as Living Classroom](#),” that covered a groundbreaking partnership between the University of Michigan and the city of Detroit. 2008.
- Intern staff member of *The Bakersfield Californian*, in Bakersfield, California. Wrote dozens of front-page stories and covered everything from a shootout at a hospital to a new ride at Disneyland. 2007.
- Published more than 40 pieces at *The Michigan Daily*, including a profile that won a Gold Circle, the highest award in collegiate journalism. Articles were often reprinted by wire services and specialty publications. 2004-2008.

Speaking Engagements, Radio and Television:

- Delivered an official [TED talk at TEDNYC](#), that was released digitally on TED's Homepage April 5, 2017. The speech has reached more than 1.3 million viewers in nearly a dozen languages. The piece was also featured on the TED Radio Hour. 2017.
- I have given lectures and readings around the world, including at Google, Leaders Quest, and The National Writers Series, appearances at the Littlerock Literary Festival and Harbor Springs Festival of the Book, an international book tour, and other readings at dozens of cultural institutions and libraries across the US. 2014-Current.
- Regularly invited to various universities as a guest lecturer on Detroit, US urban centers, and nonfiction writing. Educational institutions have included The University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, Saginaw Valley State University, Little Rock Central High School. 2014-current.

- Appeared on nationally syndicated television in promotion of my work, including CSPAN and WGN as well as a lengthy interview for Google, broadcast on their YouTube channel. 2014-Current.
- Appeared on the radio numerous times for promotion of my work and commentary, most notably NPR's nationally-syndicated Tell Me More and the TED Radio Hour. I have also made multiple appearances on WDET's Detroit today, on NPR stations in California and across the Midwest, as well as at select international venues in Canada, New Zealand, and others. 2014- Current.

Film, Television, Play, Games and Fiction Writing:

- Recipient of a unique monetary award from the Knight Foundation to co-write a new play entitled *A Midsummer's American Dream* with founding director of Shakespeare in Detroit. Full performance slated for 2022. 2020-current.
- Guest edited the inaugural Fiction issue of the *Metro Times*, assembling 25 of the most prominent writers and artists in Detroit. After publication every artist was funded by Kresge Arts in Detroit, and we are currently in talks to make funding annual. 2020.
- Wrote many pieces of fiction for London gaming company Shades of Vengeance, for use in their tabletop games. 2019-2020.
- Participant in the Global Game Jam at the Rochester Institute of Technology. 2020.
- Contracted to deliver a one hour speech about findings in year-long study of game narrative by the International Game Developers Association Ann Arbor chapter. 2020.
- Co-writer of two feature-length scripts on contract for [Knagen Films](#), including with regional Emmy Award-winning producer Charles Cirgenski. Also credited with various other writing assignments and editorial positions on local films and international shorts. 2011-2013.
- Have written a number of yet unproduced screenplays and television pilots. 2011-current.

Fellowships:

- [11th Hour Food and Justice Fellow](#) at the University of California, Berkeley. Selected by Michael Pollan. 2016.
- [Republican National Convention Reporting Fellow](#), Belt magazine. 2016.
- [Kresge Literary Arts Fellow](#), a prestigious yearlong award that includes a \$25,000 grant for personal artistic development in recognition of past work and future potential. 2017.
- [Kathryn W. Davis Fellowship for Peace](#) at Middlebury College. 2019.

Teaching and Professorships:

- Instructed the 400-level journalism course, *Freelance and Magazine Journalism*, at Oakland University as an adjunct professor. Chair called my student evaluations "near perfect" and I received absolutely perfect scores in the section, "This professor encouraged me to do my best work." 2018.

- As a volunteer, taught English as a conversation partner and a civics class at Freedom House Detroit, a live-in facility for victims of war and violence seeking political asylum in the US. 2018-Current.
- Taught English, life skills, and special education classes full-time at ACE Academy, a maximum-security prison for minors in Detroit/Highland Park. I also founded the *ACE Academy Free Press*, a newspaper written and produced by the incarcerated young men. 2011-2012.
- Co-facilitated and taught a course on “White Racial Identity” at the University of Michigan for the Program on Intergroup Relations. 2008.

Select Digital Advertising and Narrative Consulting:

- Have written or overseen the writing of 40K-plus-word website messaging, SEO optimisation, tagline and slogan generation, blog posts, social media management and/or worked as a narrative consultant and coach including for:
 - [The Museum of Northern Arizona](#)
 - [Water Works Fund](#)
 - [Best Practices Institute](#)
 - [Detroit is It](#)

Education:

- Spanish Language classes, Washtenaw College. “A” average. 2020.
- Middlebury College internationally-regarded immersive summer French language program, 2018. Returned on a full, merit-based scholarship as a Kathryn Davis Fellow, 2019.
- Graduated BGS with service distinction from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 2008.
- Graduated the New England Literature Program, a seven-week intensive writing course in Sebago, Maine. 2006

Languages, Volunteer and other Experience of Note:

- Native English speaker. Speak and write French at B level and Spanish at A level, as defined by CEFR.
- As a volunteer, facilitated writing and theater workshops in numerous Michigan prisons under the study of professor Buzz Alexander at the University of Michigan. 2005-2008.
- Studied playwriting under Oyamo at the University of Michigan and co-founded ARTillary Theater Company, writing and performing in plays, most notably co-writing the produced full-length *Sunday Morning*, based on the Wallace Stevens poem of the same name. 2005-2008.
- I hold US driver’s certifications in automobiles and motorcycles.
- Certified in Michigan as a Diesel Mechanic.