

FRANC GABRIEL CONTRERAS

Documentary Filmmaker & Television Correspondent

CONTACT

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CURRENT FILM PROJECT

Writer, director and co-producer of *Water in the Desert (The Plume)*, an independent documentary about a Mexican American community in Arizona, whose underground water source was contaminated by carcinogenic chemicals. The film will be a community portrait narrated in large part by Franc and by women activists who have been working to solve the problem for nearly 40 years.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

China Global Television Network, Sept. 2012 to Current

Writer and director of short-format documentaries for current affairs programming. Responsibilities include producing television news reports and analysis on daily deadlines; live segments on political, economic and cultural aspects of life in Mexico and Central America; long-format video reports on social issues in Mexico and Central America.

Al Jazeera English television correspondent, 2006 to July 2012

On-air contributor of documentaries, news reports and live analysis for AJE global network news covering major social issues in Mexico, Central America, South America and the United States. Emphasis on political reporting, economics, immigration, drug trafficking and related violence and other social conflicts. My work has included hundreds of live breaking news reports done in the interview format and video packages.

Latin America radio correspondent for The World, 1996 to 2006

Reported every major breaking news story in Mexico and Latin America during a decade, including the end of one-party rule in Mexico in 2000, FARC rebels and paramilitary clashes in Colombia, the arrival of UN troops in Haiti following Aristide's decision to flee in 2004 and social tensions in Venezuela during the presidency of Hugo Chávez. Filed hundreds of highly produced digital audio reports on social, economic and cultural issues for this program, heard across the United States and co-produced by the BBC World Service.

Mexico Freelance Reporter/Producer, 1996 to present

Coverage of major news events and social issues since 1996. Frequent contributor of news wraps and highly produced feature-length radio reports; live reports of breaking news with analysis from Mexico and around Latin America for the BBC World Service, BBC Radio 5 Live, CCTV China, National Public Radio (US), CBC Radio and Television in Toronto, France 24 Television, Latino USA Radio (NPR) and Marketplace (US). Freelance reporter for the Associated Press and Cox Newspapers. Specialties: Latin American politics, economics and cultures.

Freelance television documentary producer, 2011 to Present

Field Producer in Mexico for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Produced "A Country at War with Itself," a documentary about the drug war in Mexico for CBC television's flagship news program, "The National." Produced network coverage of Mexico's 2012 presidential election.

INTERNATIONAL RADIO PRODUCTIONS

News reporting and analysis of political, economic and cultural events across Mexico and Central America for "5 - Live," an international broadcast heard globally on BBC World Service Radio.

Highlights include: Coverage of two presidential elections in Mexico including the historic 2000 presidential election that ended one party rule in Mexico; Presidential elections in Bolivia that brought Evo Morales to power award-winning coverage from Venezuela under Hugo Chavez; Mexico's 2006 presidential election and post-electoral crisis; Social conflict in Oaxaca state, 2006; the Zapatista indigenous rebellion in Chiapas state; hurricane coverage in Mexico & Central America; drug trafficking and related violence; immigrant smuggling rings at Mexico's northern and southern borders.

Special radio series for The World on the U.S. hand-over of the Panama Canal in 1999; Venezuela's 2004 referendum vote of the presidency of Hugo Chavez; Bolivia's 2005 presidential campaign leading to the election of Evo Morales; 2003 coverage of violence in Colombia; 2004 coverage of arrival of UN peace keeping forces in Haiti.

RELATED WORK HISTORY

Editor/Producer, Latino USA radio, 1993-1996

Weekly newscast Presenter and Editor. Assigned, edited and produced weekly news and feature segments heard on Latino USA, a nationally broadcast public radio program. Emphasis on analytical script writing, script and audio editing.

Production Assistant, National Public Radio, 1991-1993

Audio production of news and feature segments on daily deadline for *All Things Considered*. Also collaborated on Weekend Edition Saturday with Scot Simon, and Weekend All Things Considered. Field production with hosts of All Things Considered with special emphasis on Latin America and issues affecting Latinos in the United States.

Production Director, KUNM-FM radio, Albuquerque, 1990-1991

Produced live news and analysis broadcasts; directed live music programs, tape editing, script writing, and production of live talk-shows. Trained 150 volunteer producers in studio production and live on-air ethics. Award-winning documentary, feature and news spot news coverage from New Mexico for National Public Radio and the Pacifica radio network.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

November, 2017 – University of Arizona, School of Journalism guest speaker. I delivered 2 hour presentation about my work as a correspondent and filmmaker based in Mexico City.

February, 2014 – Panelist of foreign correspondents speaking to students during a colloquium on the future of news media by the University of North Carolina's School of Journalism and Mass Communication and Mexico's prestigious Tecnológico de Monterrey.

May 24, 2011 - Panelist, Carlos Septién School of Journalism, Mexico City. A discussion by leading foreign correspondents covering Mexico. Spoke about my work as a correspondent with Al Jazeera English television.

May 19, 2011 - Keynote speaker, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. Conference on the future of journalism and its social impact. Focus on my work as a correspondent for Al Jazeera English television.

November, 2009 - Keynote Speaker, San Francisco State University, Dept. of Raza Studies. Raza Journalism class with Dr. Katynka Martinez. My work as a freelance correspondent in Mexico.

November, 2009 - Guest Speaker, the University of San Francisco, Dept. of Media Studies, Dr. Dorothy Kidd.

November, 2006 - Guest Speaker, University of Chicago, Center for Latin American Studies & the Katz Center for Mexican Studies.

Delivered a public speech: "Changing the Rules," about contemporary politics in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca.

November, 2006 - Guest Speaker, The University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. Delivered a public speech: "Changing the Rules," about contemporary politics in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca.

Sept. 15, 2005 - Guest Speaker, The University of Iowa's Hispanic Heritage Month activities. Delivered a public speech entitled, "Crossing Borders: One Correspondent's Personal Journeys in Latin America."

EDUCATION

Masters Degree Studies, 1987-1989 (not completed)
International Journalism with emphasis on Latin America
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

B.A. double major, graduated 1987
Double major: Mass Communications & Western Philosophy
Saint Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa

Sunnyside High School, graduated 1981
Tucson, Arizona

Related Skills

Digital Audio and Video Editing
Deadline experience with Final Cut and Premiere Pro
Voice narrations for radio and television
Script writing in Spanish and English

JOURNALISM AWARDS

First Place Radio Reporting
National Association of Hispanic Journalists, 2003

First Place AP Radio Documentary, 1993

Mark of Excellence Society of Professional Journalists, Region 9,
Depth Reporting, 1992

First Place AP Radio Feature News, 1991
First Place AP Radio Documentary, 1991
First Place AP Radio Feature News, 1990

Alumni of National Public Radio's Advanced Reporters & Producers
Symposium, 1991

LANGUAGE SKILLS

First language: English

Fully fluent in written and spoken Spanish

RADIO DOCUMENTARY SAMPLES

La Otra Frontera: Immigration on Mexico's Border with Guatemala
<http://www.afterthewars.org/segment04.html>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/franc-contreras>