JOHN TOOLAN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

New York, NY

jtoolan@gmail.com

My goals: being part of a team, making great images, finding and nurturing new talent, having fun, taking it seriously, getting things organized, getting messy, seeing things I've never seen before, solving problems, bridging gaps, laughing, and playing with as many Golden Retrievers as possible.

Experience

Freelance Photo Editor

Jan 2024

Current clients: Magnit Global (photo editor at Apple) and Field & Stream. Previous clients have included Outside, Southern Living, The New York Times, Vanity Fair, Men's Health, Entertainment Weekly, Fortune, Inc., Newsweek, Maxim, Men’s Fitness, Life, Time Inc. Content Solutions, ESPN's The Undefeated and Story Worldwide. Jobs have taken place at various stages through my career starting in January 2005.

Director of Photography

Field & Stream / Outdoor Life

New York, NY
Aug 2011 - Nov 2023

I handled every aspect of photography for both iconic outdoor brands, including coordinating with editors, writers and designers, managing budgets and contracts, fee negotiation, location scouting, hiring talent for all projects, existing image research, managing an extensive prop collection and growing a roster of outstanding photographers. I worked extensively with portraiture, documentary, still life, wildlife, outdoor/adventure and conceptual photographers. I created a budget tracking system that streamlined planning and expenses for all editorial departments. I explained the intricacies of hunting and fishing to many talented photographers who've never held a bow or wet a line, and made sure every image was authentic, accurate and on-brand. I was a key member of the Field & Stream team that won the 2014 ASME General Excellence award for Active Interest Magazines.

Director of Photography

Popular Science

New York, NY
Feb 2020 - Nov 2023

I took this role on in addition to my existing responsibilities as photo director of Field & Stream and Outdoor Life. I was a one-person photo department, which included conceptualizing, coordinating with editorial and design teams, budget management, research, hiring photographers, finding new talent, interacting with agencies, negotiating fees and contracts, and seeing every project through from initial discussions to final high-resolution files. I was part of the team that won a 2022 ASME award for single-topic issue.

Freelance Photo Editor

People

New York, NY
Jan 2010 - Jul 2011

I worked in the celebrity group. My assignment was to produce cover and feature shoots and conduct research. I worked with publicists, hired grooming and styling talent, secured studios and locations, handled permits, managed budgets, and negotiated fees and contracts--all while staying up-to-date on who was winning Dancing With the Stars.

Deputy Photo Editor/Contributing Senior Photo Editor

New York, NY
Aug 2007 - May 2009

Condé Nast Portfolio

I joined Condé Nast's fledgling business publication a few months into its existence. Starting as a freelancer and working my way up to deputy photo editor, I managed a staff of eight, coordinated story solutions with the edit and design departments, produced cover and feature shoots, conducted research, negotiated fees, hired grooming and styling talent, secured studios and locations, facilitated permits and managed budgets.

Contributing Photo Editor

New York, NY
Dec 2005 - Aug 2006

Men's Health

I produced cover and feature shoots, managed front-of-the book sections, hired styling and grooming talent, conducted model castings, secured locations, coordinated with publicists, negotiated fees and contracts. I also ate a lot of almonds and came to realize my abs were really lousy. During a shoot, the musician/actor Common complimented me on my ability to come up with good poses.

Deputy Photo Editor

New York, NY
Dec 1997 - Jan 2005

ESPN The Magazine

I was among the first staffers in the door. I played a key role in building the photo department from scratch, starting as Associate Photo Editor and working my way up. We worked hard to establish that a sports magazine could be every bit as cutting-edge as any other brand. I managed a staff of six, produced cover and feature shoots, handled research, managed budgets, negotiated fees, secured studios and locations, liaised with PR contacts, and worked on front-of-the book sections and the back page. I explained sports to fashion photographers who didn't know a baseball from a football, worked until 4am on Super Bowl Sundays, caught passes from Donovan McNabb and watched the Yankees-Mets World Series from the outfield bleacher photo pit. Oh, and I threw a lot of Nerf footballs.

Assistant Photo Editor

People

New York, NY
Jun 1996 - Nov 1997

My first job in magazine publishing, this was a thrill. I started as an intern and was offered full-time employment soon after. I produced shoots of both celebrities and non-celebrities, worked on breaking news stories, reviewed thousands of agency images, coordinated with foreign bureaus, and managed budgets and contracts.

Education

MS Journalism

Columbia University

New York, NY
Sep 1995 - May 1996

MA Studio Art/Photography

New York University

New York, NY
Sep 1994 - May 1995

BA English

Georgetown University

Washington, DC
Sep 1987 - May 1991

Connect

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