



Kris Wernowsky

Portfolio 2023

About Kris

Award-winning journalist and editor Kris Wernowsky has more than two decades of experience creating dynamic content across various ever-evolving media platforms. They include marketing, advertising, journalism, podcasting, video and documentary production, social media, and artificial intelligence.

His work overseeing a staff of criminal-justice-focused reporters uprooted policing and corrections in Northeast Ohio through deep investigations into inhumane jail conditions, police misconduct and political corruption.

Not one to remain in office, he found himself on the frontlines of violent civil-rights protests in the wake of high-profile police killings. Still, he's equally comfortable sitting with a small group of creative people developing long-term content strategies.

Most recently, he helped produce a series of documentaries on potential technological breakthroughs that might help shepherd humanity through climate change.

He resides in Cleveland, Ohio, with his partner and their two dogs, Trudy and Mabel, but is willing to take on remote work or relocate for the right opportunity

Skills Include:

Editing, copywriting, podcast and video production, podcast hosting, web analytics, social-media strategy, live-event production, artificial intelligence, web design, ideation, team management, critical thinking and thriving on deadlines.



Marketing & Content Creation

A person in a blue jacket stands on a grassy hill, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape. The sky is a mix of purple and pink, suggesting dawn or dusk. The overall mood is contemplative and expansive.

HUMAN ACTIVITY

A three-part docuseries

Distance

Bayer | Human Activity

A client challenged us to help them reinvent the look and tone of how they talk about technology's role in creating a sustainable planet. "Human Activity" is a three-part docuseries that allowed us to pick the brains of some of the most forward-thinking scientists and minds tackling issues that include addressing hunger in Africa and developing climate-resilient crops that can withstand our changing environment.

I was involved in every aspect of the docuseries' production and led the creation of companion web and social content with an ever-shrinking budget and tight deadlines. We created three remarkable episodes (I was working on the fourth when our agency cut positions) that look and feel, unlike anything Bayer has ever produced.

The project also involved creating landing pages and social content you can read here:

[Episode One: Out of Thin Air](#)

[Episode Two: Beneath the Surface](#)

[Episode Three: The Weight of Water](#)

Highlighted Skills:

- Screenwriting
- Production
- Casting
- Editing
- Web/Social Content Creation



Episode 1: Pulling fertilizer out of thin air

We tapped scientists, innovators and partners to explore how crops in hard-to-grow areas are helping them combat climate change. In the first episode, guest expert Howard Tong, Director, Biotech Research (D), Jason Kelly, and Jessica Christensen, Head of Sustainability at Bayer Crop Science, explain why harnessing the power of plants and microbial inoculants to reduce the use of nitrogen fertilizers, decreases the impact on the environment and revolutionize agriculture.

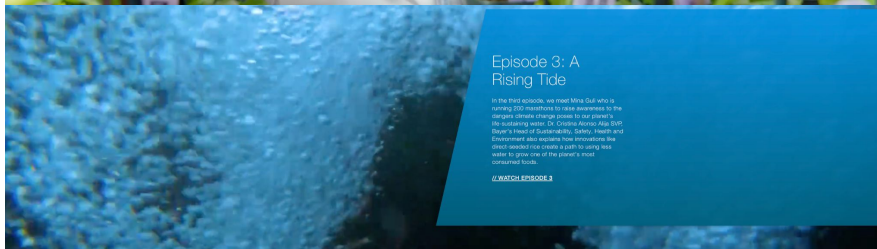
[// WATCH EPISODE 1](#)



Episode 2: Beneath the Surface

In the second episode, Heidi, former Minsky and Justin Johnson, explain why they are not a typical conventional farmer and how their practices help fight climate change and conserve the land for the next generation. CropCares generalist Helen Christie and plant scientist Mike Madrone discuss how plant science and traditional breeding are creating new crops that help grow national or protecting soil health and generating bio-carbon dioxide.

[// WATCH EPISODE 2](#)



Episode 3: A Rising Tide

In the third episode, we meet Ming Qui, who is helping CRO revolutionize change to make rice farmers' lives more sustainable. In the final episode, we explore Bayer's focus on Sustainability, Safety, Health and Environment and how these pillars are driving the most needed role: create a path to using less water to grow one of the planet's most consumed foods.

[// WATCH EPISODE 3](#)

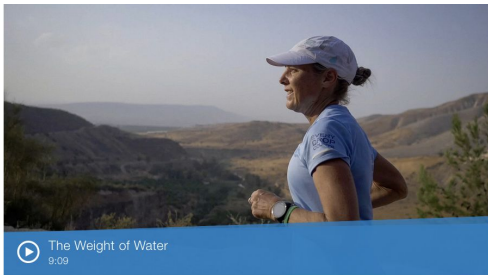
Web Content

[Watch Episode One](#)

[Watch Episode Two](#)

[Watch Episode Three](#)

- Protection
- Health and Safety
- People
- Management & Governance
- Transparency
- Societal Engagement



Roughly 2.2 billion people don't have access to safe water, and nearly two-thirds of the population already face water shortages during at least one month of the year.

"Many of the problems that we see, and we feel with water nowadays, are a consequence of the climate change that we are living in. And water is the first area where we as human beings perceive climate change so close," said Dr. Cristina Alonso Aljia SVP, Head of Sustainability, Safety, Health and Environment at Bayer. "It's either too little water, or too much water, or water at the wrong time."



“We know that agriculture is one of the big impacts in climate change. And usually where you have big impacts, you also have opportunities for big solutions.”

Dr. Cristina Alonso Aljia, SVP, Head of Sustainability, Safety, Health and Environment at Bayer

Bayer is a partner of the "RUN BLUE" campaign led by water advocate and athlete Mina Gull. She aims to raise awareness that while human activity and population growth threaten our most foundational natural resource, there are ways that human ingenuity can help us adapt.

Gull began running the first of her 200 marathons in the spring of 2022 in the lead-up to the United Nations water conference on World Water Day, March 22, 2023. Nearing the end of her journey, she described some concerning things she witnessed as she circled the globe. The Pantanal wetlands of South America are drier than they've ever been. Farmers in Turkey work around massive sinkholes that opened due to the overuse of groundwater. The women and girls of India risk their lives each day to fetch water. There is almost no place on the planet that remains untouched.

"Climate change is water change, and climate risk is water risk," said Mina Gull.

Imagine being told something doesn't exist, then stumbling across it in nature.

During a research trip to the Oaxaca Valley in Mexico in 1980, plant scientist Howard-Yana Shapiro observed a strain of corn twice as tall as any he'd ever seen. Its roots dripped a gel that piqued Shapiro's curiosity. Puzzled by how corn could grow this tall in a place without access to modern agricultural conveniences, the man who tended the fields told him, "There's no fertilizer in this community."

What Howard observed changed everything.

Share: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [+](#)



For a plant to grow and thrive, it needs sufficient nitrogen. It is vital and serves as an engine for plant growth. However, most crops don't produce their own nitrogen but must be fertilized. Synthetic fertilizer production — popularized in the early 20th century — supports the food systems for about 1/3 of today's global population. But the process is responsible for about 3 percent of global greenhouse gasses. So, while we can't change the fact that most of our crops need food, we can change how we think about feeding them.

Although it took two decades for science and technology (and skeptics) to catch up with Howard's ideas, genomics and technology like CRISPR means it's possible to take what Howard observed and breed those traits into other plants so they use less fertilizer. That's good news for the air, the soil and the water.

Human activity is often seen as the culprit in the story of **climate change**. But it's ideas like Howard's that illustrate how human activity also holds the key to changing course.

"We absolutely have to drive agriculture as a **climate smart solution**," said Jessica Christiansen, Head of Sustainability, Bayer Crop Science. "We are going to be one of the biggest, if not the biggest lever to create positive change. To do that, we need to work together with several different partners across the industry."

Social

Bayer AG @Bayer • Jan 17
Human activity is the root cause of #climatechange. But what if it's also the answer? Watch part 2 of our docuseries on how it is key in the fight against climate change. #sustainability

CoverCress Inc. @CoverCress • Jan 17
We're honored to be featured in @Bayer's new docuseries, **Human Activity**! Click the link below to learn about the importance of carbon sequestration in agriculture & how we're working towards a more sustainable & profitable future for farmers. #AgTwitterzoo/QERY

Bayer AG @Bayer • Nov 22, 2022
Human activity is the root cause of climate change. What if it's also the answer? Meet some of the incredible humans who are setting out to change the world, and our impact on it.

Bayer
4,846,146 followers
1mo • Edited • 🌱
"Sometimes to make big, global, substantive change, you've got to show people the power of what's possible." - Mina Gull, CEO, Water Advocate, Ultramarathoner ...see more

Bayer
4,846,146 followers
3mo • Edited • 🌱
The #WEF23 focused on climate action. In the climate change debate we tend to pit progress and prosperity against the environment, as if less human activity would be a good thing. But the world doesn't need less activity. Espe ...see more

If we till or plow the ground, we release this carbon back into the atmosphere.

537 4 comments • 29 reposts



Defining Sustainability

Sustainability is defined by what's called the Triple Bottom Line: People, Planet and Profit. In other words, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and economic sustainability.

Bayer | Sustainabilities



Notable brands are moving away from discussing climate change, instead focusing on how the population can adapt to how that planet is changing. "Sustainability" is the idea of the moment, and it takes a lot to cut through the noise of how brands address the growing consumer demand for sustainable products.

With "Sustainabilities," I developed an almost overwhelming amount of content to communicate Bayer's pivot toward running a sustainable company while highlighting other big ideas transforming everything from agriculture to our day-to-day lives.

What resulted was 100 cards Bayer featured on its website and across its various social channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Reels).

Highlighted Skills:

- Research
- Content writing
- Creative thinking
- Social media storytelling
- Design

Paradowski | A.I.

The agency encouraged us to experiment with A.I., not as a way to create less work for ourselves but as companion technology that aids in visualizing ideas during brainstorming. So I decided to learn how to build A.I. image models since, as someone focused on writing, it's often helpful to bring ideas to life during pitches.

What resulted was an idea I planned to pitch to one of our major clients.

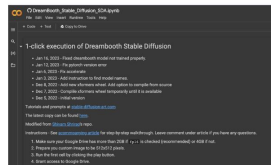
Highlighted Skills

- Artificial intelligence (Google Colab, Midjourney, ChatGPT)
- Product development
- Design
- Creative thinking

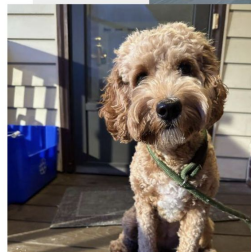


Meet Trudy

Trudy is a 1-year-old Cavadoodle (a mix between a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel and labradoodle). Her favorite things to do are take long walks followed by long naps in the sun, playing tug-of-war with her favorite toys, and running away from her owners in the backyard.



With limited knowledge of the tech, I used about 30 photos of Trudy and Dreambooth to create an AI model, and DiffusionBee to build the AI images.

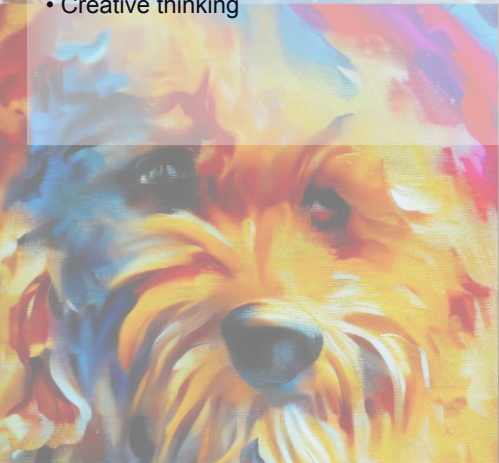


FurryTales

Pets are a **\$261 billion** global industry. The pandemic saw a massive surge in pet ownership and adoption rates. This increase marked a windfall for veterinarians, groomers, spas, pet hotels, pet toy makers and anything that helps illustrate the bond between pets and their humans.

FurryTales would capitalize on that bond by creating unique pet adventures through AI. Owners submit clear photographs of their pets and unique stories and ideas about what kind of adventure they want their pets to experience.

We can then train an AI model to create a personalized storybook (through a partnership with a company like Shutterstock) that can be cherished for a lifetime. This could easily be something a major pet brand could put its name behind.



Journalism & Editing

Cleveland.com | Generation Tamir

The shooting of Tamir Rice in 2014 marked a turning point in my then-short career as an editor at Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer. I helped lead a team effort to pivot our publication away from daily crime coverage and focus more on criminal and restorative justice, civil rights and jail conditions.

My 8-years of overseeing coverage there involved a variety of digital storytelling, including breaking news, web writing, editing, video and podcast production and classic line editing.

Award-winning criminal justice coverage included:

- [The Department of Justice investigation into Cleveland police](#)
- [The implementation of an ongoing police reform efforts](#)
- [The grand jury investigation into Tamir's death](#)
- [Inhumane conditions in our jail which led to indictments of jail leadership](#)
- [Riots and the aftermath of violent police activity](#)
- [Out-of-control community policing leading to indictments of dozens of police](#)

Each of those stories has roots in Tamir's story.

Two remarkable pieces of writing stood out from everything else we did. First, a reporter spent weeks with Tamir's mother and forged this powerful story. "[America has no dreams for black and brown people.](#)"

The second piece, titled "[Generation Tamir](#)," highlighted a group of Black teenagers who were Tamir's age when police shot him. We allowed them to speak anonymously, so they were free to be more open about how their lives changed after Tamir's death.



Highlighted Skills:

- Ideation
- Podcasting
- Editing
- Copywriting
- Interviewing
- Story judgment
- Project management

Cleveland.com | King Kennedy

“You guys are just killing us” — King Kennedy teen

Years after Tamir’s death, a group of children from a local Boys & Girls Club near a major public housing development watched housing police shoot and kill a young man they looked up to [named Arthur Keith](#).

The story echoed the Tamir shooting, including that a grand jury declined to bring charges against the police involved in the killing.

By now, I was part of a daily podcast, “Today in Ohio,” and I convinced a reporter to create this [remarkable bonus episode](#) that captured the haunting reality of violence and police harassment children in this community confront almost daily.



Highlighted Skills:

- Ideation
- Podcasting
- Editing
- Copywriting
- Interviewing
- Story judgment
- Project management



Cleveland.com | Award-Winning East Cleveland Project



The Cleveland suburb of East Cleveland (it's confusing, but yes, that is the official name of a different city) has a problem with police chases. Unfortunately, the city has a lot of problems. You might remember it from season 2 of the popular "Serial" podcast, where many of the stories my staff covered over the years found their way onto the national stage.

After all that national attention went away, things got worse. Over several weeks, I started to notice a pattern. [Police undertook a staggering number](#) of high-speed chases that often ended in crashes several communities away. We looked at the data and discovered many chases over minor traffic violations, and the police had lost so much public confidence that people refused to stop. This series won us a second-place award from the [Associated Press Managing Editors](#) organization.

Highlighted Skills:

- Ideation
- Podcasting
- Editing
- Copywriting
- Interviewing
- Story judgment
- Project management

Cleveland.com | Restorative Justice/Radiolab

One area where I challenged traditional thinking in newsrooms was through Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer's introduction of restorative justice efforts to our work.

I had a heavy hand in Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer's policies enacting a [Right to be Forgotten](#) and discontinuing the use of criminal mugshots. Both efforts were met with skepticism by the broader journalism community, and some of those criticisms are perfectly valid.

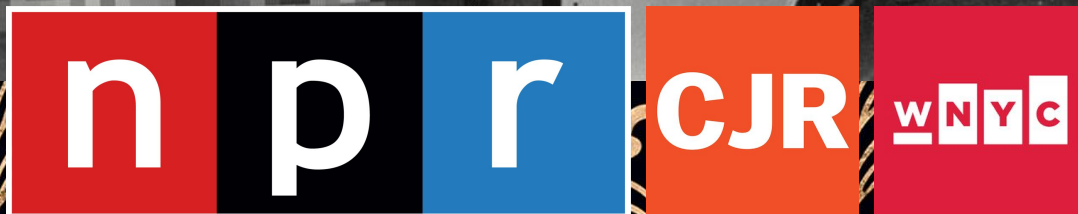
But doing so helped us restore some confidence in a part of our readership whose concerns are often overlooked by community leaders, news organizations and police. Here is a sampling of some of the national attention our initiatives received:

- [Radiolab](#)
- [WNYC](#)
- [Columbia Journalism Review](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [The Washington Post](#)



The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness


Radiolab



Cleveland.com | Politics

I became politics editor in my last year at Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer. Doing so required managing coverage of the [culture-war-heavy](#) 2022 GOP U.S. Senate primary that eventually saw J.D. Vance emerge victorious.

Reporter Andrew Tobias won an award for covering a \$60 million energy scandal that led to the [Ohio House speaker's indictment](#) and eventual conviction. He also became a statewide leader in his in-depth coverage of the [legislative redistricting](#) process that allowed the state GOP to assume a supermajority.

Reporter Laura Hancock's coverage of the contentious battle over the fate of public education uncovered a little-noticed plan by the governor to [gerrymander the state school board district](#), and her attention to the board's hiring process revealed that the man in charge of hiring the new state superintendent ensured he would get the position. [He resigned after 11 days](#).

As statehouse editor, I was also responsible for writing, editing and publishing a daily email newsletter called [Capitol Letter](#), which more than 30,000 people across the state, including most of the political class, read first thing every morning.



Highlighted Skills:

- Ideation
- Podcasting
- Editing
- Copywriting
- Interviewing
- Story judgment
- Project management
- Newsletter management
- Public relations

Slate | Personal Essay

While the past decade in journalism saw me serve in management and editor positions, a friend who works at Slate tapped me to develop [a long-form piece about my father's untimely death](#) in the wake of the high-profile deaths of Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain. It's one of the more personal things I've written in my entire career, and it's something I still get the occasional email about.

M MEDICAL EXAMINER

What Suicide Leaves Behind

My father killed himself seven years ago. I'm still trying to understand him, and what I could have done differently.

BY KRIS WERNOWSKY JUNE 14, 2018 • 5:58 AM



The author's dad. Photo illustration by Slate. Photo by Kris Wernowsky.

Cleveland.com | Video Editing

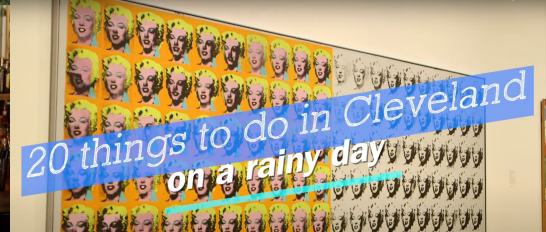
Now for some lighter stuff.

They made me a video editor when Facebook convinced mainstream news organizations to make the ill-fated “pivot to video.” The job came without a mandate, so the videographers and I experimented. One of the most successful ventures was exploiting one videographer’s love for the outdoors, resulting in a series of evergreen videos highlighting “things to do” around Cleveland.

You can check out his outdoor videos [here](#); his videos of some of the region’s major attractions [here](#); his ongoing documentation of every bike trail in the region [right here](#), and his fun retro videos that mine the region’s nostalgia with everything from shuttered theme parks to long closed shopping malls, [found here](#).

It helped launch the sports broadcasting career of a friend and former fellow comedian. We discontinued the [Gray Skies & Brown Mustard](#) series because of the pandemic and because he took a job with Barstool Sports.

One odd idea that never really took off, but I could not go without mentioning, is my friend Zachariah’s strange [talking baseball hat-comedian named Sticky T](#). He now co-hosts a B-movie horror show on one of the local TV affiliates, and it’s garnered [a lot of national attention](#).



Highlighted Skills:

- Ideation
- Adobe Creative Suite
 - Video Editing
- Headline writing
 - SEO
- Team management
 - Project planning



The background is a dark, textured brick wall with white mortar lines. A diagonal shadow or gradient effect is applied, starting from the top left and moving towards the bottom right, creating a sense of depth and lighting.

Event Production

Flyover Comedy Festival | Co-Founder

Co-founding St. Louis' first comedy festival pulled from every corner of my skill set. Dubbed the [Flyover Comedy Festival](#), it also required learning about running a non-profit, grant writing, marketing a successful venture and finding a group of talented, driven people and directing them into creating something that only gets better every year. I had my hand in every aspect of the process, from casting the headliners, parsing through submission videos, picking the name, helping select the logo, figuring out what merchandise to produce and how to actively promote a multi-day event before, during and after it's over.

Highlighted Skills:

- Ideation
- Creative criticism
- Project management
- Social media curation
- Event production
- Budget management
- Design
- Grant writing
- Public relations



Sorry, Please Continue | Creator



Founded in 2012, [Sorry, Please Continue](#) is the longest-running stage show in St. Louis. The still-active live storytelling show/podcast is a simple premise: Four storytellers take on a single topic. Each gets 10 minutes to tell their story. The catch: Three comedians sit on stage and interrupt storytellers by asking questions and making jokes. We featured everything from ordinary people to performers who are now household names as we toured the show in New York City, Los Angeles, and across the country.

Highlighted Skills:

- Creativity
- Quick thinking
- Good humor
- Promotions
 - Booking
- Live event production
 - Tour planning