

John Toolan

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - PRODUCER - VISUALS EDITOR

New York, NY

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office

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.

Long-Term Clients

Director of Photography

New York, NY
Feb 2020 - Present

Popular Science

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.

Director of Photography

New York, NY
Aug 2011 - Present

Field & Stream/Outdoor Life

I handled every aspect of photography, 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've 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'd never held a bow or wet a line, and made sure every image generated 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.

Freelance Photo Editor

New York, NY
Jan 2010 - Jul 2011

People

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 here. 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 had no idea about them, 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

New York, NY
Jun 1996 - Nov 1997

People

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.

Freelance Clients

Freelance Photo Editor

This was a challenging, exciting, and mind-opening time in my career. I learned to work faster, be more flexible, grab a project and run with it, blend into very different work environments, and adapt to new workflow systems quickly. My clients included: Vanity Fair; Entertainment Weekly; Fortune; Newsweek; Maxim; Men's Fitness; Life; Time Inc. Content Solutions; Story Worldwide.

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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