

SUMMARY

Thomas Sawano is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker with over six years of experience leading production teams and reporting stories worldwide in the mediums of print, video, and audio. He was trained at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism and is based in Oakland, California.

EXPERIENCE

- Associate Producer **NOT IN OUR TOWN** Jan. 2025 — Present
Oversaw all aspects of pre-production and production of *Minneapolis Neighbors*, an upcoming series of documentary shorts about the everyday people standing up to ICE incursions in the Minnesota Twin Cities. Shot, ran sound, interviewed participants, and conducted extensive research during the series' weeklong production run, and currently manages its post-production. *For reference, contact Patrice O'Neill at poneill@theworkinggroup.org*
- Photo Intern **THE SAN FRANCISCO STANDARD** June 2025 — Sep. 2025
Made photographs and cinemagraphs for over four dozen assignments throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, and occasionally stood in as a photo desk editor, coordinating photography assignments and designing layouts for stories in the publication's CMS. *For reference, contact Taylor Le at tle@sfstandard.com*
- Co-Director and Producer **THE GLACIER WEDDING** July 2024 — May 2025
Managed the research, pre-production, fundraising, production logistics, styling, and cinematography for *The Glacier Wedding*, a 26 minute documentary about a rural community in northeast Pakistan that bands with local researchers to revive an ancient glacier stewardship ritual. Coordinated with multiple stakeholders, including film subjects, funders, and external consultants.
- Visual Intern **THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE** June 2024 to Aug. 2024
Photographed and created short format documentaries on topics ranging from the San Francisco Pride Parade to the plight of gig workers in San Jose to a day of homeschooling between mom and daughter. *For reference, contact Emily Jan at emily.jan@sfchronicle.com*
- Production Coordinator **BLUPRINT FILMS** Mar. 2023 to Aug. 2023
Researched potential characters and conducted pre-interviews for [A Good Medicine](#), an upcoming documentary series that interrogates the science behind alternative medicine. Also authored pitch materials and grant applications for the series, hired freelance crew, worked as a production assistant during shoots, and shot interviews while attending a conference with main characters in Tbilisi, Georgia. *For reference, contact Libby Spears at libbyspears@bluprintfilms.com*
- Correspondent Intern **LOOKOUT SANTA CRUZ** Aug. 2022 to Dec. 2022
Covered beats ranging from electoral politics in Watsonville, CA to the science of food waste disposal. Also contributed to the outlet's atmospheric storm live blog coverage, for which *Lookout* won the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News. *For reference, contact Tamsin McMahon at tamsin@lookoutlocal.com*

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Master's of Journalism, Documentary Filmmaking, 2025

- Philomathia Foundation Grant recipient: *The Glacier Wedding* (thesis film)
- Departmental Fellow, 2023-24
- Graduate Student Instructor, Fall 2024

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ

B.A. in Philosophy, B.S. in Cognitive Science, 2022

- Reporter and City Desk Editor for student weekly *City on a Hill Press*.
- **University of Edinburgh** semester abroad in Fall 2021.

SKILLS

- **Research & investigative reporting:** interviewing sources, filing public records requests, factchecking, basic coding (HTML, Javascript)
- **Documentary pre-production:** Fundraising, team management, styleguiding, production logistics
- AP Style newswriting
- Non-fiction cinematography
- News photography
- Photo editing (via Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop) and news filing (via Photo Mechanic)
- Video editing (via Adobe Premiere and Final Cut Pro)
- Video motion graphics (via Adobe After Effects)