

airwaves

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**TACKLING
IMMIGRATION
REPORTING
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A 3-year-old from Honduras peers through a fence at the U.S.-Mexico border while her family waits to apply for asylum. (Jesse Costa/WBUR)



WBUR's Shannon Dooling speaking with Rashid Mahmoud and his family just as they arrive in Manchester-Boston Regional Airport as refugees fleeing from the war torn country of Syria. (Jesse Costa/WBUR)

TACKLING IMMIGRATION REPORTING

SHANNON DOOLING IS one of the busiest people in WBUR's newsroom. As the reporter focused on the issues swirling around immigration, she regularly chases down stories that are at the epicenter of the most polarizing issues in America today.

You may have noticed some of Shannon's recent reporting about a federal program called 'medical deferred action,' which allows immigrants to avoid deportation – and stay in the U.S. for two-year periods, generally beyond the terms of an existing visa – if they can prove extreme medical need. When the Trump administration, with no warning, quietly moved to

end the program in August, Shannon was among the first reporters in the country to break the story. And she stayed on it. As the administration sought to explain its position, public outcry mounted and Congress held hearings. Ultimately, the government reversed its position, and for the moment, has restored the humanitarian program. Shannon is watching closely for any new developments.

From the travel ban and DACA, to the border wall and critical changes to asylum law, covering immigration news these days is like drinking from a fire hose. Shannon opened up her notebook to help

WBUR's Members understand how she covers the beat.

How do you decide what to cover?

There are countless narrative threads to pull from within this massive immigration beat and it's easy to feel overwhelmed from time to time. **Dan Mauzy**, our managing editor, is my secret weapon. At least once a week, I bring my notebook full of story ideas to

I'M FOCUSED ON FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN REACTING TO IMPORTANT NATIONAL NEWS AND BREAKING IMPACTFUL LOCAL NEWS.

Dan and we prioritize my reporting based on things like originality, timeliness, access and potential for impact. One of the most challenging aspects of this beat is the speed at which news is happening. It's dizzying! I often find myself having to blow up my daily or weekly plans to pivot, covering a new court ruling with wide-ranging impact, or diving into a new federal policy that affects Boston's immigrant communities. I'm focused on finding a balance between reacting to important national news and breaking impactful local news.

Talk about your time at the border. How has it informed your reporting and understanding of the issue? Do you have any more reporting trips planned?

I think immigration is one of the most polarizing forces in our public discourse today. We hear the political rhetoric out of Washington, D.C. and we're confronted with opinions from advocates on opposing



Immigrant advocates and members of Massachusetts' Southeast Asian communities gathered outside of the Burlington office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to protest against planned detentions of Cambodians. (Shannon Dooling/WBUR)

sides of the argument. My job is to filter through all of this – to report the facts and place them within a larger context of why it all matters. Traveling to the border and throughout Central America helps me tie all of this together, allowing me to witness American immigration policy at work and the very real factors driving migration to the U.S. This is a complicated system of rules and policies but at the end of the day, it's about our shared humanity. The more time I spend out of the newsroom, the more I understand this.

As for future travel, I'm proposing a trip that will bring me back to Central America soon. The goal is to have our listeners and readers feel like they're truly along for the journey.

Immigration will be a key issue in the 2020 presidential race. What should WBUR listeners and readers pay attention to?

The U.S. hasn't seen anything resembling comprehensive immigration reform since 1996. If there is anything the left and right may agree on when it comes to immigration, it's the need for an overhaul of the system. So, I'll be paying attention to the candidates' plans and visions for immigration policy reform: where they fall on pathways to citizenship for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and DACA recipients; worker visa programs; refugee and asylum resettlement; and financing of the immigration court system. ■



Isidro Macario waits at security as his travel documents are processed by ICE officers before boarding his flight. (Jesse Costa/WBUR)

NEW ADDITIONS AT WBUR



BETH HEALY
SENIOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

WBUR's investigative team has hired its second member. **Beth Healy**, a senior investigative reporter, comes to WBUR after 19 years at The Boston Globe, where she was a member of the award-winning investigative team, *Spotlight*. At The Globe, Beth worked on the six-part series and podcast, "Gladiator: Aaron Hernandez and Football Inc.," a finalist for IRE's Award for Sports Investigations. She was also part of the team that wrote "Debtors' Hell," a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

"Beth is one of the country's premiere investigative journalists," says **Tom Melville**, WBUR's executive news director. "As a station we are committed to telling stories

that hold the powerful to account, and welcoming Beth – a professional of the highest possible caliber – is another demonstration of just how seriously we take this work."

In addition to her work with *Spotlight*, Beth covered the financial sector for nearly a decade at The Globe, and joins **Christine Willmsen**, who launched the investigative team in the newsroom earlier this year. A data visualization journalist will join the team at some point in the near future. The unit is already producing stories on topics related to the environment, criminal justice, social services and public infrastructure. The investigative team will also help grow a watchdog culture in the newsroom. ■

PHOTO: ROBIN LUBBOCK/WBUR



TONYA MOSLEY
HOST, *HERE & NOW*

WBUR Members may know **Tonya Mosley** from her time as a senior education reporter at the station in 2016. Now she's back – as *Here & Now*'s third host, based in Los Angeles.

Tonya has spent the last few years as the Silicon Valley bureau chief for KQED, the public radio station based in San Francisco. She is also the host of the podcast "Truth Be Told," an advice show made by and for people of color.

"Tonya's inquisitive nature and top-notch reporting skills make her a great complement to our current co-hosts, **Robin Young** and **Jeremy Hobson**," says **Sam Fleming**, WBUR's interim general manager. Tonya will offer *Here & Now*'s

national audience wider coverage of stories rooted on the West Coast.

Prior to her posts at KQED and WBUR, Tonya was a reporter and anchor for several television and radio outlets, including Al Jazeera America and KUOW, the public radio station in Seattle. She's won several prestigious journalism awards and honors, including a John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University, an Emmy Award in 2016 for her televised piece "Beyond Ferguson," and a national Edward R. Murrow award for her public radio series "Black in Seattle."

Here & Now reaches more than 5 million listeners weekly and is distributed by 475 NPR stations across the country. ■

PHOTO: LIZ LINDER PHOTOGRAPHY

2020 ELECTIONS: YOUR RESOURCE

WE WANT OUR coverage to be rooted in our listeners' concerns. Perhaps you saw, or even responded to, a recent survey we conducted in partnership with MassINC polling. We asked our audience two questions: "What issues matter to you in the election?" and "What do you want the candidates to talk about?" The insights we glean from this data – our "citizens' poll" – will help shape our coverage in the months to come.

WE WANT TO COVER THE CANDIDATES FROM MASSACHUSETTS.

The Massachusetts candidates running for president include Senator Elizabeth Warren, former Governor Deval Patrick and former Governor Bill Weld. Our location, sources and knowledge allow us to pursue in-depth stories that can educate voters about these local candidates' past experiences and priorities. We want to be a news source people turn to, nationally, for an inside look at our hometown politicians.

WE WANT TO FOLLOW THE MONEY.

Boston is a frequent fundraising stop on the campaign trail for Democratic candidates. We'll take note of candidate visits, track FEC reports and pay special attention to the activities of grassroots fundraising organizations, such as the Somerville-based ActBlue, which is a major player in raising funds for Democratic candidates and issue campaigns.

WE WANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM IN MASSACHUSETTS.

The road to victory in New Hampshire goes through Massachusetts. Or, it seems likely that the grassroots energy we've seen on the left in Massachusetts will find an outlet in New Hampshire, where the state's Democrats are singularly focused on toppling President Trump. We'll be watching as resources and volunteers travel north – during the primary in February, as well as during the general election, where New Hampshire's four electoral votes will be up for grabs.



Voters enter and exit Morning Star Baptist Church on Election Day. (Jesse Costa/WBUR)

WE WANT TO MAKE OUR COVERAGE ACCESSIBLE ON ALL PLATFORMS.

Of course you'll be able to listen to WBUR's reporting on the radio and on demand, via the WBUR Listen app, and read our coverage on wbur.org. But you can also discuss it with us in person. CitySpace at The Lavine Broadcast Center is preparing a multi-part event series on key issues in the race, including health care, immigration and climate change. These forums will be an opportunity for WBUR's community to ask questions of the reporters and analysts about the issues they care about most.

WBUR will also respond to breaking news. There will be a wide array of political analysis and commentary on our broadcasts and through written opinions via *Cognoscenti*. We plan to publish voter guides and other pieces of explanatory journalism to help listeners and readers better understand the candidates and the issues. For example: we recently launched a weekly politics newsletter – arriving in inboxes every Thursday – written by our D.C.-based reporter **Kimberly Atkins** (you can subscribe to it here: www.wbur.org/news/politicsnewsletter). And leading up to the nation's first presidential primary early next year, we'll partner with national NPR and member station NHPR in New Hampshire to ensure we are leveraging all the quality journalism happening within the public radio network. ■

CITYSPACE AT THE LAVINE BROADCAST CENTER: HIGHLIGHT

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020, we are planning a robust series on the issues most vital to voters in the presidential campaign: health care, immigration, climate change, gun control, the opioid crisis, election interference and income inequality. To complement this series, we are having conversations with authors who have recently published books exploring American politics, the Trump presidency and the challenges facing our democracy. These include “Goliath: The 100-Year War Between Monopoly Power and Democracy” by Matt Stoller; “In the Deep: The FBI, the CIA, and the Truth about America’s ‘Deep State’” by David Rohde; and “American Oligarchs” by Andrea Berstein.” ■



Matt Stoller is the author of “Goliath: The 100-Year War Between Monopoly Power and Democracy.” (Sophia Lin)



Andrea Berstein is the author of “American Oligarchs.” (Matthew Septimus)



David Rohde is the author of “In the Deep: The FBI, the CIA, and the Truth about America’s ‘Deep State.’” (Fuzheado/ Creative Commons)

CITYSPACE BY THE NUMBERS



150
EVENTS



22
FREE EVENTS



44
SOLD-OUT
SHOWS



~25,500
ATTENDEES



\$20
MOST TICKET PRICES
AT \$20 OR LESS

CitySpace is a forum for public conversation, a civic space for community gatherings and a venue for storytelling across sectors. There’s nothing quite like it in Boston, and it wouldn’t exist without support from our Members.

"Endless Thread: *Infectious*" continued from page 8 (back cover)

ENDLESS THREAD

**INFECTIOUS: THE STRANGE PAST AND SURPRISING
PRESENT OF VACCINES — AND ANTI-VAXXERS**

They're looking for the grave site of Cotton Mather, the prominent Puritan minister who is often credited with helping to stem a brutal smallpox epidemic in Boston in 1721. Mather learned then about a process called variolation, a medical leap (at the time) that helped to pave the way for vaccination.

**THERE ARE LOTS OF
PLACES THAT VALUE THIS
KIND OF JOURNALISM,
BUT NOT EVERY OUTLET
CAN DEDICATE THE
RESOURCES.**

What follows in that hour-long episode — and the full series — is a quirky, informative and dead-serious investigation of vaccines and the growing anti-vaccine movement.

Ben and Amory didn't know that vaccines would be dominating the headlines just as "Infectious" hit people's podcast feeds. But measles outbreaks in Marion County, Oregon; Clark County, Washington; and Rockland County, New York — all communities where the anti-vaxx or "vaccine-hesitant" movement has a significant following — made the series' topic even more relevant.

In many ways, Ben and Amory found that the raging cultural debate over whether or not to vaccinate is indicative of a pattern that is pervasive in today's political culture: people choosing what to believe and writing the other side off completely. One early goal of the series was to offer more nuanced, in-depth storytelling on the topic — to explore the arguments of anti-vaxxers, while also staying true to the fact that science overwhelmingly supports vaccination.

"It was really important to us to produce something that wasn't going to immediately alienate people who were vaccine hesitant," says Ben. "We wanted to explore their concerns in a way that brought people into the conversation. It was a big challenge, but also a big success."

The investigative series was a departure from a typical *Endless Thread* episode, which often focuses on odd and unexpected stories generating attention on Reddit. The series also helped *Endless Thread* and WBUR find a new audience. The five episodes of "Infectious" were downloaded more than any other single episode in the show's catalog. WBUR's newsroom aired five segments from the series on WBUR's *Morning Edition*, reaching our regular listeners. And the *Endless Thread* team hosted a special event at WBUR's CitySpace — an embodiment of the station's commitment to be on air, online, on-demand and on stage. The show has also garnered critical acclaim, and was named an Online Journalism Awards (OJAs) finalist for "Excellence in Audio Digital Storytelling."



Ben Brock Johnson and Amory Sivertson are the hosts of Endless Thread. (Liz Linder Photography)

It's rare that any journalist has the time and resources to run a months-long investigation, but that's what the *Endless Thread* team was able to do, thanks to the support of WBUR's Members. Over three months, the team went all-in, interviewing dozens of people and taking one cross-country trip to the center of the measles outbreak in the Pacific Northwest.

"There are lots of places that value this kind of journalism, but not every outlet can dedicate the resources," says Ben. "We're incredibly fortunate that WBUR understands what this work requires, and backs up its commitment."

Visit www.wbur.org/endlessthread to learn more. ■

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ENDLESS THREAD

**INFECTIOUS: THE STRANGE PAST AND SURPRISING
PRESENT OF VACCINES — AND ANTI-VAXXERS**

THE FIRST THING you hear in podcast episode 1 of *Endless Thread's* five-part series "Infectious" are its two co-hosts, **Ben Brock Johnson** and **Amory Sivertson**, creeping through a Boston cemetery on a frigid winter day.

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