

# Ryan M. Jacobs

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## **CURRENT ROLE**

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### **The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

September 2018-Present

*Head of Writing*

I am Bill and Melinda's head speechwriter at their foundation – and oversee the ghostwriting for the foundation's CEO and presidents. I also built – and run – the foundation's writing and editorial shop, which employs more than a dozen freelance writers around the world. I manage a \$600,000 annual budget for the purpose of crafting stories about the foundation's work – particularly as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In my time writing for Bill and Melinda, they've delivered addresses at, among other places, the general assemblies of the United Nations and African Union; they have published articles in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, and *Foreign Affairs*.

As Head of Writing, I am responsible for all external-facing (and most internal-facing) written communications from the foundation, including speeches, op-eds, blogs, and all-employee e-mails.

I also lead the foundation's thought leadership effort, which helps clarify the foundation's position on important policy issues like climate change.

And I serve on the communication division's internal review board to help improve processes and procedures.

## **PAST EXPERIENCE**

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### **IBM**

November 2016-August 2018

*Strategic Communications Advisor, Office of the CEO*

- Ran the speechwriting operation for Chairman & CEO, Ginni Rometty as well as various executives in her Senior Leadership Team.
- Led the company's messaging effort around artificial intelligence and blockchain.
- Helped pilot IBM's first content hub – a storytelling website about technology
- Assisted in drafting of the company's annual report to shareholders.

### **2016 Campaign Cycle**

August 2015-November 2016

*Writer & Communications Consultant*

Served in a variety of communications and consulting roles during the 2016 campaign cycle, including:

- Communications Director to Mayor Steven Fulop of Jersey City as he explored a run for Governor of New Jersey; I managed a team of six and oversaw all aspects of the Mayor's and city's communications.
- Co-author of a book (*We're Still Right, They're Still Wrong*) with political consultant, James Carville – the Ragin' Cajun.
- Senior Advisor to the campaign of now-Congressman Josh Gottheimer, which flipped New Jersey's 5<sup>th</sup> District from red to blue for the first time in 84 years. In this capacity, I liaised with top-tier outlets, including *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* – and led a team of two full-time employees and dozens of volunteers.

### **The U.S. Department of Transportation**

November 2013-August 2015

*Chief Speechwriter*

- Appointed Chief Speechwriter at the U.S. Department of Transportation during President Obama's second term

- Served as an aide to Secretary Anthony Foxx, helping him develop the administration’s messaging on everything from automated vehicles; to the history of systemic racism in America’s transportation system; to the relationship between income inequality and poor infrastructure
- Oversaw a team of roughly a dozen writers throughout the foundation, and directly edited and managed a deputy writer for the Secretary.
- Recognized by the Secretary with a departmental award for contributing to the passage of the “GROW AMERICA” Act – a \$478-billion transportation funding package.
- Promoted from “speechwriter” to “chief speechwriter” for outstanding performance.

**West Wing Writers**

July 2011-November 2013

*Associate*

- Wrote speeches, articles, op-eds and other messaging for a wide range of clients – among them, politicians at the highest levels of government, Fortune 50 CEOs, heads of non-profits, and celebrities.
- Managed the account of the firm’s largest client by revenue.
- Helped lead the hiring process for the firm’s interns.

**2012 Democratic National Convention**

August 2012

*Speechwriter*

- Served on the 12-person convention speechwriting team at the convention re-nominating President Obama for a second term in office.
- Assisted in the editing of remarks for the convention’s keynote speaker, Joaquin Castro.

**EDUCATION**

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**Columbia University, New York, NY**

2017-2019

*Master’s in Business Administration*

**Note:** earned an MBA on the weekend while working at IBM and the Gates Foundation

**Honors:** won a product-development competition hosted by executives of *The Wall Street Journal*; selected to appear on Columbia “BizCast,” a podcast that profiles interesting alumni and professors.

**Yale College, New Haven, CT**

2007-2011

*Bachelor’s in History*

**Honors:** Phi Beta Kappa, *summa cum laude*, the Yale Writing Center’s award for best history writing