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Rising Star: Jon Sindreu

By [Kirsten Ballard](#) August 7, 2018

Rising Star Jon Sindreu started out majoring in computer science. He was attending undergrad in Barcelona when the self-proclaimed news and politics junkie realized he didn't find the idea of coding and math to be a fulfilling profession.

"I wanted to work on things I was passionate about," he says, explaining that he started a second degree program in journalism. He began covering politics for the local news and upon graduation, interned at financial newspapers.

In 2012, he won a scholarship to study abroad and moved to London. He did a one-year program at City University and got hired as an intern at *The Wall Street Journal*. He's been there ever since.

He spends his days covering the global markets, taking over the bureau in Hong Kong until the U.S. bureau takes over. He interviews people who move money to understand what's going on and what trends they're seeing.

"Many days, are you trying to come up with new ideas, and follow one's curiosity," he says.

Before he begins a topic, he looks at all the numbers and data to see which narratives make sense and which don't. His tech background gave him an edge covering data-heavy topics. "It's always complicated [to break down economic ideas]," he says. "The issue with numbers is you can read them any way you want... Most ideas I discuss come from a series of basic and age-old assumptions (like supply and demand). I try to break it down in a simplistic way that people can understand."

He is known for his graphics that accompany his articles. "I think to see things visually is very important. I don't come from a finance background—these things are interesting to see, you need to translate them in a way that's not just words. If you want to give people the notion that 3 percent is very high, you show it to them. So much of financial journalism has to do with visualizing."

Last year, he was challenged by reporting on stories of unrest in Spain and Catalonia, where he is originally from, giving him a chance to dive back into the political realm.

"It was a very intense year," he says, speaking about the terrorist attack in Barcelona. As a native who speaks the language, he was mobilized to report on the attack. He spent a few days in Northern Catalonia, where the young terrorists were from.

"I had never done anything like that," he says. "It was tough. People were very distraught. The people committing these attacks, they were teenagers."

Later that year, he was sent back to cover the independence referendum in Catalonia. He grappled with covering political news from the point of view of an American publication. He went to the polling station where the Catalanian president was voting.

"I naively thought it would be very safe," he admits. "It was one of the most violent places; people got removed in ambulances. It was tough. My own family and friends were involved. It was very different from reporting on financial markets in London... It's interesting, these two parallel lives. On one hand, you're reporting, on the other, you're worried about people. Especially once you have filed the story, you have nothing to do, you're in a train and you start checking your phone and seeing your parents are afraid."

Jon doesn't report in his native language, making it easier on him emotionally. He says translating the reality of what was happening into English gave him distance, it became more about crafting than expressing.

He says that English is the language of the trade, but learning to cover economics was like learning a whole new language.

"In high-level briefings, you do feel a bit self-conscious at times (about your English)," he admits. "You learn to overcome that."



Kirsten Ballard



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