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## NorCal Public Media’s KRCB-NPR wins several Public Media Journalism Awards

Northern California Public Media (NorCal Public Media) announces new Public Media Journalism awards presented to its news team at KRCB 104.9FM, NPR for the North Bay.

The Public Media Journalists Association (PMJA) today announced the winners of its 2026 Annual Awards Competition, honoring the best in public media journalism produced during 2025. This year’s competition drew 1,586 entries from 134 organizations across the country, with 75 judges evaluating work across 36 categories.

“These awards are a powerful reminder of why independent journalism matters,” states NorCal Public Media president & CEO Darren LaShelle. “As local news organizations face unprecedented challenges - including the loss of federal funding for public media - our KRCB News team works diligently to provide trusted reporting that helps people understand the issues shaping their lives, holds institutions accountable, and engages our community in meaningful ways. We’re deeply proud of our team and their unwavering commitment to serving our communities with integrity, curiosity, and excellence.

**In the Government/Democracy category**, the story “A Flight Too Far?” reported by Noah Abrams won the Division A Second Place PMJA Award. Abrams reported a lawsuit in which a young deaf woman with a rescue animal property joined other local plaintiffs and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to allege that county code enforcement use of drones to view their properties is a privacy violation.





Abrams explains the story captured his attention because, “Modern technology in our digital age is challenging the meaning of privacy. While the 4th Amendment guarantees, ‘the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures,’ that line is easily blurred in the 21st century when even our most basic home appliances can share data on our daily routines, and governments can fly drones just feet from our homes. It’s thanks to brave individuals like Nichola Schmitz that these violations don’t go unchecked, and I’m grateful to

Ms. Schmitz and her interpreter Anna Mindess for sharing their story with me.”

**In the Interview Program category**, KRCB won the Division A First Place PMJA Award for the work of content producer and host Michelle Marques for “*The 707: Creating A Photojournalist; Talking with Writer and Director Erik Castro*,” an in-depth interview in which they explore Castro's unique double life as a stay-at-home father and a freelance storyteller, diving deep into how his personal history shapes his professional eye.

“The documentary *Creating a Photojournalist* by Erik Castro grabbed my attention immediately, and I watched it again right after the first viewing,” Marques says. “The film feels like a memory, and there are such resonant themes about family and fatherhood. I felt a strong connection talking with Castro in studio about his work and the interview at one point became unexpectedly emotional. It was a sweet moment and made our conversation that much more meaningful. Editing this episode was a joy, because I had the rich sounds from Castro’s documentary available to weave into the show, giving the listener a chance to experience his film.”

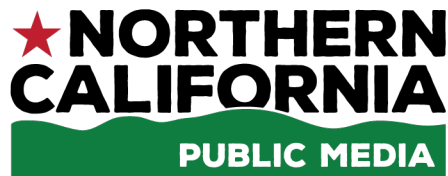


Photo Courtesy Erik Castro

**In the News Feature category**, KRCB won the Division A First Place PMJA Award for work by reporter Shandra Back: “*Sonoma County Father Weighs Self-Deportation After Weeks in ICE Custody*,” in which she details the detainment of an Ecuadoran father whose treatment caused him such personal despair that he considered self-deportation.

"When we see national headlines about immigration, it is easy to feel far removed," Back says. "But sitting in Giovanni’s living room here in Sonoma County, hearing him recount his story with his wife and kids and weighing whether to stay in detention with an unknown outcome or self-deport, brings these national issues into our local community. My goal with this piece was to bring listeners into his story and the decisions this family is facing in such uncertain circumstances."

The Public Media Journalists Association (PMJA) represents public media journalists across the United States, supporting, empowering and advocating for journalists working in public media. PMJA fosters high ethical standards in the practice of journalism, providing training and networking opportunities for members to improve and excel in their work.



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“I’m so proud of our small but mighty newsroom, comprised of a few dedicated audio journalists who take pride in their work and strive to provide the best local news coverage for our audience,” said KRCB radio news director Greta Mart.

“These awards reflect the extraordinary commitment of public media journalists to serving their communities, even as the industry navigates a challenging environment,” said Christine Paige Diers, Executive Director of PMJA. “From covering the human impacts of federal policy shifts to documenting environmental change and celebrating local culture, the work recognized this year demonstrates why local public media matters.”

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***More information and links:***

[Sonoma County Father Weighs Self-Deportation After Weeks in ICE Custody](#)

[Creating a Photojournalist: Talking with Writer and Director Erik Castro](#)

[A Flight Too Far? Plaintiff in Case Against Permit Sonoma Details Intrusive Drone Surveillance](#)

[The 707 Show and Podcast](#)

[KRCB News home page](#)

[Complete List of 2026 PMJA Awards](#)

