

April 14, 2026

**VIA EMAIL**

Dear Brendan,

On behalf of Unifor, I want to extend my sincere congratulations on your 2026 Hillman Prize Award.

Your reporting on the abuses at Maplehurst Correctional Complex stands as a powerful example of journalism in the public interest and the ability to remain tenacious when shut down by government roadblocks.

In the face of government resistance, institutional silence, and attempts to discredit your work, you remained steadfast, using your sources and your instincts, in your pursuit of the truth. That persistence not only brought disturbing facts to light but ensured they could not be ignored.

By uncovering the existence of critical video evidence and fighting for its release in court, you helped expose serious misconduct and a troubling lack of accountability within Maplehurst, an institution entrusted with a duty of care to its inmates.

Your work compelled action, from courts to oversight bodies, and underscored the importance of a free press in democracy.

At a time when trust in institutions is being tested, your reporting reminds us that courageous and dogged journalism is indispensable. As Justice Colette Good said in her ruling, the media are the “eyes and ears of the public.”

Your work exemplifies that responsibility with clarity and integrity. Congratulations again on this well-deserved recognition.

Unifor represents more than 320,000 private sector members across the country, with 9,000 of them working in the media sector.

We, as a union, are proud of your ongoing work as an 87-M member at the *Toronto Star* and are grateful for your commitment to investigative journalism.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lana Payne".

**Lana Payne**  
**Unifor National President**

Cc: Julie Kotsis, Unifor Media Council Chair  
Randy Kitt, Unifor Media Director

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