

Biography of Toby Wagstaff



Toby Wagstaff is a writer, editor, and script consultant in entertainment and conversational AI. He grew up in the United Kingdom and graduated with a first-class honors degree in Philosophy and Modern Languages (Italian) from the University of Oxford. He is currently based in New York.

Studying and teaching in Rome

As part of his degree program, Toby lived in Rome for a year and attended the Università degli Studi Roma Tre, where he completed courses on the history of cinema and the history of art. He also volunteered hours as a teaching assistant in the English department and directed a cast of Italian students in a production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. While in Rome, he worked as a part-time English tutor and developed his skills as an amateur photographer, exploring the city and its history.

London and post-production

After completing his studies at Oxford, Toby Wagstaff began his career in the film industry in London. He started working at Studio 8 Productions and Peace Arch Films, writing script coverage and analysis, coordinating travel and ADR sessions for overseas talent, and creating promotional

material for international film markets. He also interned in post-production for the long-running BBC TV series *Monarch of the Glen*, where he gained experience in film editing, sound mixing, and color correction processes.



On Set in Tuscany

Toby's first significant experience in physical production came in 2004 on the feature film *Shadows in the Sun* starring Harvey Keitel, Joshua Jackson, and Claire Forlani. Shooting in Tuscany and London, Toby played several roles on set, including assistant to the producers, translator between the Italian crew and English-speaking production team, and even occasionally as an on-screen double for the leading actor.

Development and Literary Management

In late 2004, Toby Wagstaff moved to the US to take the position of Creative Executive at Fierce Entertainment, a production company and buyers' rep for international distributors. In this role, Toby was hands-on at every stage in developing and shepherding Fierce's first complete

In-house feature project - *War*, starring Jet Li and Jason Statham - from script to production to cinematic release.

He was also closely involved in expanding and upgrading the company's buyers' rep operation, helping to triple the client roster over his first seven months.

Realizing that writing and editing were his real passions, Toby Wagstaff next joined the boutique literary management agency Original Content, where he focused on discovering and nurturing new screenwriting talent as a manager. In addition to working closely with writers to develop, pitch, and sell original screenplays, Toby more than doubled the active client roster.

His portfolio also included the Ugandan hip-hop documentary *Diamonds in the Rough*, for which Toby supervised the editing process and wrote and directed the recording of the narration track, earning him an associate producer credit.



Screenwriting

Working closely with many writers over the years and chipping away at his own projects in the background the whole time, Toby eventually transitioned to becoming a full-time screenwriter himself. After optioning his first spec script, the high-concept action sci-fi *Arena*, to Summit Entertainment in 2008, Toby Wagstaff signed as a client with the Endeavor Agency and later WME and Verve TLA.

Over the following decade and more, he has continued to offer specs, sell pitches, and win open writing assignments in a variety of genres. His other original feature screenplays include contemporary thriller *The Day I Die*, optioned to Millennium Films; YA drama *Break My Bones*, commissioned by Warhorse Films; and *Powerhouse*, a UK drama/thriller sold as a pitch and commissioned by Lightbulb Pictures.

Toby Wagstaff's projects on assignment include the sci-fi graphic novel adaptation *Shrapnel* for Radical Studios and the romcom rewrites *There Goes the Bride* and *High Heels and Horseshoes* for PixL TV.

Conversational AI and Large Language Models

Following the WGA writers' strike in 2023, Toby began to explore other ways to put his writing experience to use, and soon after, he started work writing, editing, and providing training for a large tech company's conversational AI model. While Toby strongly believes that AI will never take the place of human beings in producing creative writing, technology is sure to have an enormous impact on improving access to and usability of factual information for the benefit of humanity in the century to come. He's particularly excited about its potential applications in helping find novel solutions to address the world's climate and sustainability issues.

Life Off the Page

Wagstaff's hobbies include music, photography, fencing, and exploring nature in the world's national parks. He plays guitar and bass and has written, recorded, and performed rock and electronic music at home and with several bands since he was a teenager. He was ranked among the top 10 youth fencers nationally in the UK and fenced for Oxford University. In his free time, he likes nothing more than wandering through a dramatic natural or urban landscape with his 35mm SLR camera.

