

SMPTE Spotlight:

# Wren Wood

BY RUSSELL POOLE

**CURRENT POSITIONS:**

- Freelance Broadcast Engineer, CBS News; IMG Media Lead Engineer, RORSAT

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

- SMPTE United Kingdom, Manager at Large

**DEGREES:**

- DipHE, Media Technology, University of Salford

The next generation of media engineers has been inspired by many great people and even more powerful events. The subject of this spotlight, Wren Wood, has been inspired by everyone from their father to the brave engineers working in active combat zones in Ukraine.

“I remember watching the BBC’s coverage when Russia first invaded Ukraine, and they were anchoring the News at Ten from a basement somewhere,” said Wood. “And at the end of it, they pan out and show all of the crew and all the kit. That just made me ‘wow, I want to make that happen. I want to be able to be on the side of it that is sharing stuff with people.’ It’s getting to share the news from the middle of Ukraine, an active war zone, is something that really kind of drew me to it.”

Wood is a freelance broadcast engineer based in London. She has worked with CBS News and IMG and has experience broadcasting numerous live events. Thriving in high-stakes environments, where creativity, drive, and gumption can make magic happen. It would be easy for an engineer of this caliber to describe the intricacies involved in making these productions work. However, Wood simply describes their work as “Making the telly go.”

“I remember a corporate event I was working where the venue internet fell over,” said Wood. “And

then the 5G connection fell over. So, we had to flip over to satellite, run through the available options, and figure out what we can do. Having the resilience to do that was great, but I also wanted to know what I could do to mitigate that risk going forward.”



Wood didn't work in a vacuum. From the lessons learned from their father in the mobile industry, to their university professor, Laurence Murphy, showing them a tape from the 1986 Mexico World Cup, which explained the broadcasting process, Wood has always been able to absorb the experience of others while forming lasting bonds with them.

"Like everyone post-pandemic,

I was tired of the relentless video calls," said Wood. "That's why I initially got involved with SMPTE. I participated in SMPTE U.K.'s Young Innovators event and presented the deployment of a streaming service. I attended other SMPTE U.K. events and spoke with the engineers who were working with the hardware I wanted to work with. And they let me in on the action. That's what got me involved with SMPTE and what's kept me passionate about it."

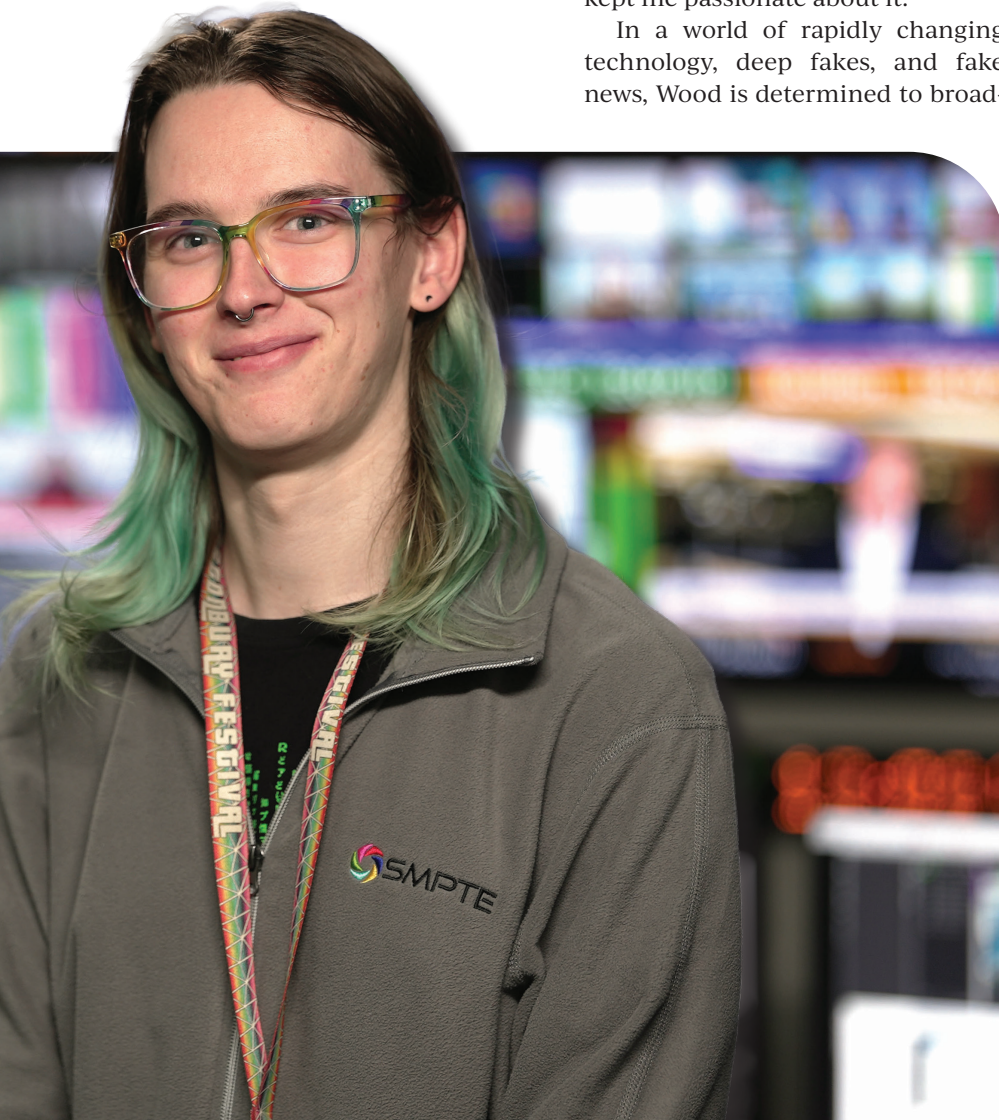
In a world of rapidly changing technology, deep fakes, and fake news, Wood is determined to broad-

cast the unbiased truth. Working in news is their dream role, bridging the gap between those with abundant resources and those with limited reach, capabilities, or opportunities. They hope to be a beacon of information in a world that continually muddies the waters.

"The pace of technological change, especially with the move to cloud, is slightly scary for some people, but at the same time, I'm excited to see what we can do with the technology that's coming out," said Wood. "Being able to share things and be more collaborative is still interesting, and how things will pan out over the next few years, I don't know. But generally, there are still going to be engineers regardless of whatever happens."

Wood also hopes to create opportunities in the industry for those who traditionally have been overlooked, saying, "I'm a trans woman, openly queer, actively participating in the industry. I've had a few peers and other friends who have gone, 'wow, I can do that,' and being able to be that kind of inspiration is great. It doesn't matter who you are as long as you have the skills and you're willing to learn."

Wren Wood loves to travel, exploring new places and embracing new experiences. She has a thirst for knowledge and naturally seeks out new experiences and ways of thinking. These qualities make her a great engineer and member of SMPTE. Currently a Manager at Large in the SMPTE U.K. Section, they will continue to work, innovate, and create a more ethical and accurate world.



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