

Nomination for MADD Media Award – John Lancaster of CTV

John Lancaster has been a veteran in the news business for over 15 years. He first began his career in a small radio station in Peterborough, before moving very quickly to CTV, where he spent the bulk of his time as a journalist. He began at the assignment desk and then became a field producer before stepping out in front of the camera in 1998 as an official news reporter. Mr. Lancaster covered all news events from sports to breaking news, but most of his reports were based on court cases and crime. He won the Radio Television News Director Association award in 2005 for a feature he did, and then in 2006 the National award of the same association.

Mr. Lancaster began digging into cases of impaired driving after receiving a lot of complaints from police and victims of drunk drivers about how the justice system was very lax and geared towards offenders rather than victims. Lancaster's team began digging into this subject, which led him to the Shawn Hall case. Shawn Hall was a man that was charged with drunk driving, but was acquitted based on the bolus drinking or "last drink" defense. Lancaster was the first to film footage of Mr. Hall exiting the courts after being set free and jeering at the camera. This is an example of exceptional news coverage, as no other news station got footage of the moment Hall was released. Mr. Lancaster also followed the case from the time Shawn Hall was convicted to the time he was released. When asked about his coverage on the case, Mr. Lancaster said, "We wouldn't believe that there were some issues that the government wanted to address and this was basically to expose some shortcomings. It is a glaring example of how one man used the system for years to evade the jail sentence."

The Shawn Hall case was also an example of how easy it is to beat the court systems, especially in regards to the Carter Defense, which was also part of his acquittal.

Mr. Lancaster is now working for CBC as a daily news reporter, since he moved from CTV in April 2007.