

Rufai Oseni:

Bringing Spark to Journalism in Nigeria.



In the high-stakes arena of Nigerian media, where politicians often dance around truths and power brokers wield influence like weapons, one journalist stands out for his razor-sharp interrogations and unapologetic pursuit of accountability. Rufai Oseni, the co-host of Arise TV's flagship Morning Show, has become synonymous with a brand of journalism that refuses to bend. On October 7, 2025, Oseni found himself at the center of yet another viral confrontation, clashing live on air with Nigeria's Minister of Works, David Umahi, over the stalled Abakaliki-Enugu road project. As Umahi snapped, "Who are you? Keep quiet!" Oseni remained unflinching, pressing for specifics on timelines and budgets—a moment that encapsulated his fearless ethos and reignited debates on the role of the press in holding power to account. Oseni's journey to becoming a media firebrand is as unconventional as his interviewing style. Born in Lagos in the early 1980s, he grew up in a Nigeria shaped by military rule and economic turbulence, experiences that likely honed his skepticism toward authority. Contrary to the polished paths of many broadcast veterans, Oseni holds a degree in Animal Anatomy and Physiology from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (now Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta).

Critics have seized on this non-traditional background to question his credentials, with some labeling him an "opposition candidate journalist" or even suggesting he lacks the formal training to uphold journalistic ethics. Yet, Oseni has transformed this perceived outlier status into a

strength, entering the media world through radio and quickly rising as a radio personality and on-air host at stations like Voice of the People. His pivot to television marked a turning point. Joining Arise TV—a Pan-African network known for its global reach and unfiltered coverage—Oseni co-hosts The Morning Show alongside Reuben Abati and Ojy Okpe, dissecting everything from economic policies to electoral controversies. But it's not the glamour of the studio that defines him; it's his undiluted commitment to probing deeper. Oseni's interviews are less conversations and more surgical dissections. He arrives armed with data, fact-checks in real-time, and deploys rapid-fire questions that leave guests squirming. "I must express my concern," he often begins, a polite prelude to dismantling evasions—a tactic that has earned him both admirers and adversaries. What sets Oseni's pattern of journalism apart is its fearlessness, rooted in a belief that truth-telling trumps decorum. Take his Ibadan talk in September 2024, titled "The Radiance of Journalism in an Era of Information Shadows," where he lamented the "shadows" cast by misinformation and called for journalists to illuminate facts with unrelenting clarity.

This philosophy plays out vividly on air. In one memorable 2023 exchange, Oseni grilled a high-profile guest on fiscal mismanagement, refusing to let platitudes slide and prompting a national conversation on transparency. Social media erupted, with users hailing him as the "King of Nigerian journalism" for his wisdom and courage. More recently, his back-and-forth with Umahi highlighted the risks: the minister's outburst underscored the tensions when journalists refuse to "keep quiet" in the face of delays that affect millions. This boldness hasn't come without cost. Oseni has faced threats, accusations of bias toward opposition figures, and even professional scrutiny.

Detractors argue his style borders on confrontational, potentially alienating sources and fueling partisan divides. In a polarized Nigeria, where media outlets are often accused of slanting coverage, Oseni's Arise TV tenure has drawn fire for perceived anti-government leanings. Yet, supporters counter that his "undiluted" approach—unfiltered by corporate or political pressures—is exactly what ails the industry needs. Praising his work alongside peers like Channels TV's Seun Okinbaloye: "Base on their undiluted journalism hard working towards achieving New Nigeria." Beyond the screen, Oseni is a multifaceted figure: an author, public speaker who's addressed Ivy League audiences like Cambridge, a tech enthusiast. Whether clashing with ministers or championing press freedom, Oseni isn't just reporting the news; he's reshaping how it's confronted. In a nation yearning for change, his undiluted fire might just be the spark it needs.