

Impact Report

 The Marshall Project
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Students at the Travis Hill School inside the Orleans Justice Center.
EDMUND D. FOUNTAIN FOR THE MARSHALL PROJECT

The Marshall Project tracks the impact our journalism makes on lawmakers, advocates, and other media. Some recent examples:

PUTTING CURFEWS TO BED Juvenile curfews used to be all the rage. But do they work? For our Justice Lab series, Marshall Project intern Ivonne Roman, who has also served as a Newark NJ police captain, explored a voluminous body of research debunking the widely-held myth that citywide curfews reduce crime. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, Councilperson Demetrus Coonrod had proposed

just such a curfew — until she read our story. An official in the Mayor's office shared it with Coonrod, who subsequently changed her mind and withdrew the proposal.

RAISING THE BAR Earlier this year, reporter Joseph Neff told the moving and tragic story of Henry McCollum and Leon Brown, two intellectually disabled brothers whose compensation for 30 years of wrongful imprisonment on death row in North Carolina was embezzled by their lawyer, Patrick Megaro. In September, Neff reported that the North Carolina State Bar has charged Megaro with professional misconduct, accusing him of pocketing excessive fees despite having done virtually no work, and threatening him with disbarment.

INTENT TO KILL The “felony murder” rule holds that anyone involved in serious crimes resulting in death can be held liable for murder, even if they never fired a shot (think getaway drivers or lookouts). The United States is the only country in the world where the doctrine still reigns—at least in some states. Partnering with the New York Times, we published the first in-depth look at a fledgling effort to narrow California's felony murder rule, bringing new attention to the controversial doctrine and its disproportionate impact on women and young people. Several other media reports followed. In September, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill significantly limiting its use and hundreds of inmates can now ask for reduced sentences.

“The Marshall Project's story on the felony murder rule really galvanized legislators here in California. The piece in the New York Times helped the bill's author push the legislation through and gain attention to the subject. We have a much better new law as a result.”

— ALEX MALLICK, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF RE:STORE JUSTICE





Our front-page USA Today story on victim's compensation.

RECOGNITION FROM OUR PEERS

*Impact is our highest aspiration—but awards are great recognition from our peers. In June, we won the **National Edward R. Murrow Award for Overall Excellence**, and in September the award for **General Excellence** from the **Online News Association**—the second time the ONA has so recognized us. Our documentary series “We Are Witnesses” won **The Dart Award for Excellence in Coverage of Trauma**, a **Salute to Excellence** from the **National Association of Black Journalists**, and was **nominated for an Emmy**.*

deadly punch back in 1993 and was sentenced to life without parole. As the Supreme Court whittled away at harsh sentences for juvenile offenders, finally banning life-without-parole sentence in 2015 and making it retroactive the following year, Taurus's prospects brightened. Our profile brought new attention to his plight, and in October 2018 he was finally paroled. “On the outside, I seem calm,” Taurus told The Marshall Project's Nicole Lewis shortly after his release in October. “But on the inside I am jumping for joy.”

SCHOOL OF LOCK

At an adult jail in New Orleans that federal monitors call “critically unsafe,” a highly unusual experiment is underway: high school. Our reporter Eli Hager got rare access to the Travis Hill program, where incarcerated teenagers face dizzyingly mixed messages. They could receive decades behind bars and a lifetime criminal record...but they also have to learn trigonometry. Hager worked with This American Life on a radio version of the story, which was broadcast around the country. Soon after, we heard from readers who'd successfully crowd-funded bail for Juron, one of the central characters Hager profiled (we withheld his last name because he's a minor). He's now back in school, on the outside.

VICTIMS WHO DON'T COUNT

It's bad enough being a victim of crime. But in seven states, you can't get compensation for your suffering if you have a criminal record of your own. Taking over

a year to develop, reporter Alysia Santo's exposé showed that African-American crime victims and their families are disproportionately impacted by this policy and are denied financial help for bills like funerals, medical expenses, and lost wages. The story dominated the front of USA Today and was reprinted in twenty regional newspapers across Ohio, Mississippi, and Florida. We also produced a radio show on the issue with Reveal, which was broadcast on 645 public radio stations. A month before publication, Ohio's Republican Attorney General Mike DeWine—who was aware of our upcoming piece—submitted a measure to the state legislature that would allow people with criminal histories to get help on behalf of a minor, and reduce the review period from a decade to five years.

FINALLY FREE

In 2016, we published the heart-rending story of Taurus Buchanan, a 16-year-old boy in Louisiana who threw a single,