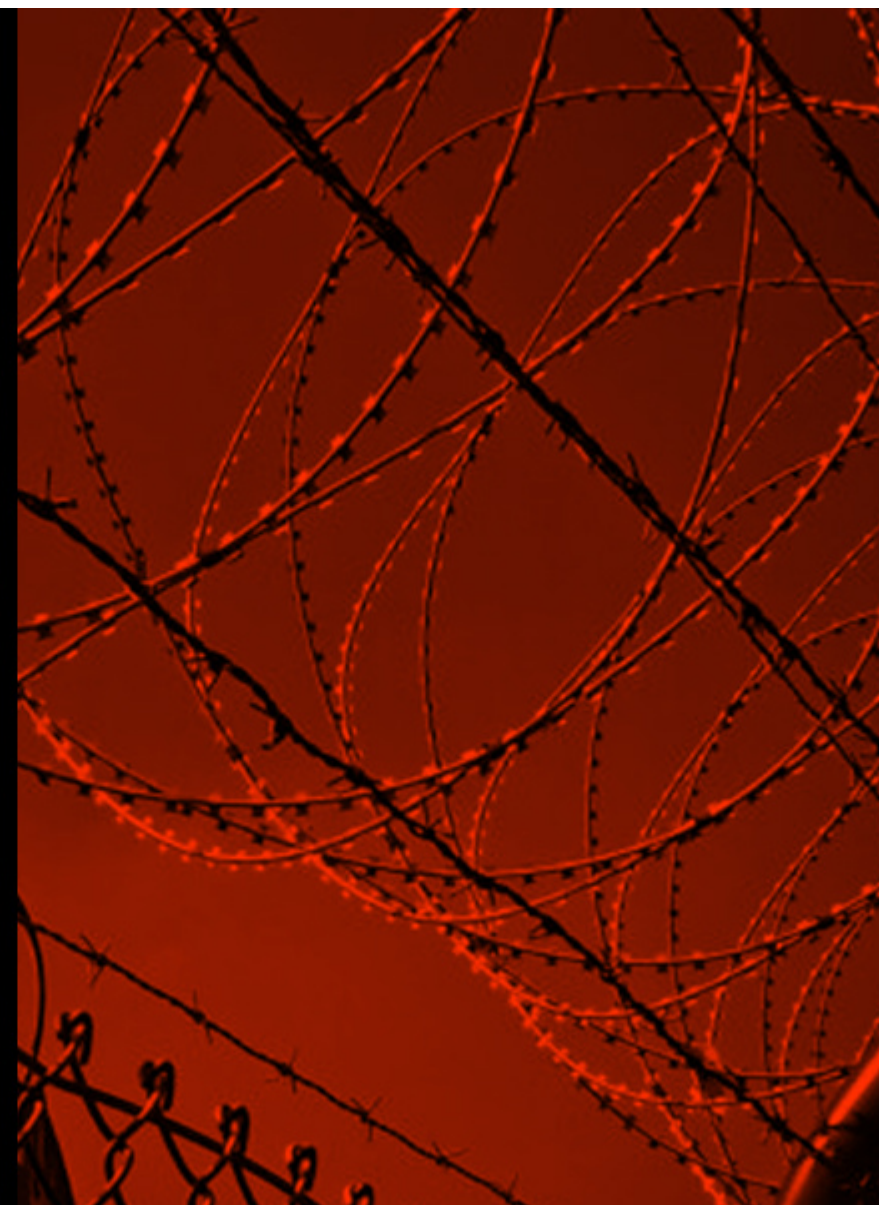
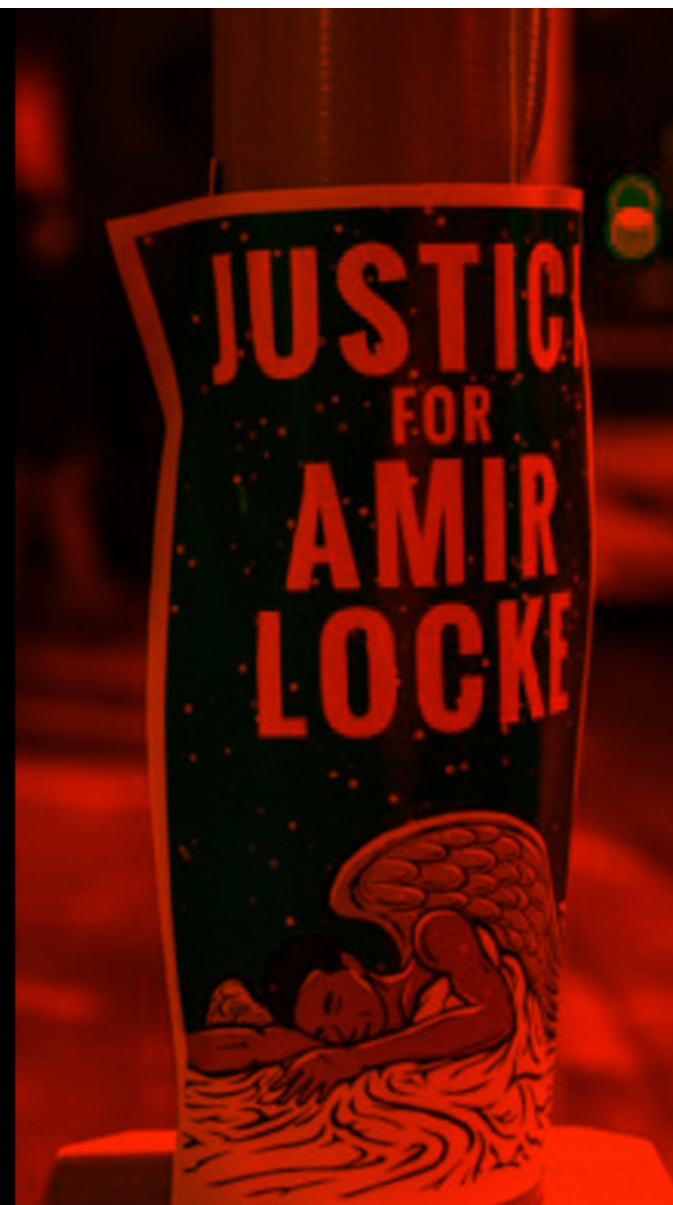


THE APPEAL



IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022

REPORTING THAT CATALYZES CHANGE IN THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

In August 2021, Reginald Randolph was sentenced to prison for up to four years for stealing cold medicine. Reginald was almost 60 years old, and for most of his life he had struggled with substance use disorder, mental illness, and chronic homelessness.

When The Appeal's reporter, Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg, first spoke to Reginald, he had already spent more than 800 days at the Rikers Island Jail Complex in New York City. Blind in one eye and losing vision in the other,



**AFTER YEARS LOCKED UP FOR STEALING
COLD MEDICINE, REGINALD RANDOLPH
IS RELEASED**



Reginald Randolph (right) and a member of his Legal Aid team on the day of his release in January 2022.

he was scared about his future as he awaited transfer to state prison.

The article Elizabeth wrote did what so much journalism about incarcerated people fails to do: It treated Reginald like a person. From a traumatic childhood to life on the streets, Reginald's story was that of someone who needed support but was criminalized instead.

This story is not only about Reginald. It's also about the nearly 2 million people, disproportionately Black and brown, who are locked up in jails and prisons on any given day in the United States. It's a story not only about injustice, but also about what could be different.

Elizabeth's reporting showed how the Manhattan District Attorney's Office had opportunities to break the cycle of incarceration and spare Reginald from Rikers, but chose not to. The story sparked a public outcry and prompted state lawmakers to call for clemency.

Within two months, the DA agreed to release Reginald into a supportive housing program.

But this story almost didn't happen because several months earlier, in June 2021, The Appeal shut down.

Staff knew the impact of The Appeal's journalism was too important to let go, especially at a time when backlash to criminal justice reform was on the rise. So we came together to continue our vital work.

We rebuilt from the ground up as a new nonprofit newsroom with an innovative, worker-led model. It took four months of working without pay before we were able to resume publishing. When we did, Reginald's story was the first we told.

Since then, our journalism has contributed to key changes in the criminal legal system, from a judicial ruling against criminalizing abortion in Arizona to a Department of Justice investigation into the New York Police Department's pattern of mistreating sexual assault survivors.

It's not only these immediate impacts that are important. Crucially, The Appeal's reporting also influences how other media cover criminal justice and shapes the public discourse to transform prevailing ideas about public safety.

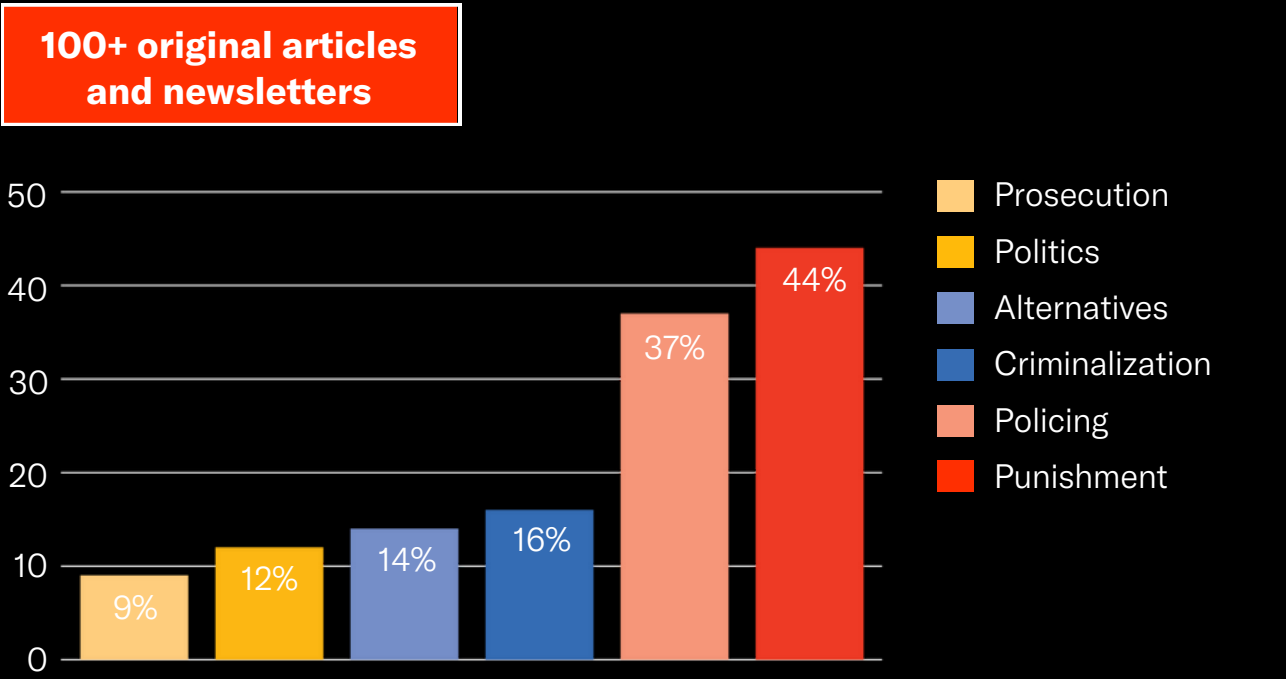
We envision a world where systems of support and care, not punishment, create public safety.

Getting there requires rigorous reporting that challenges injustice and catalyzes change. This is the path The Appeal is blazing.

OUR MISSION

- Expose** the harms of a criminal legal system entrenched in centuries of systemic racism.
- Equip** people with the information necessary to make change.
- Elevate** solutions that emerge from the communities most affected by policing, jails, and prisons in the U.S.

OUR REPORTING



Most read

AFTER 51 YEARS IN PRISON, LOUISIANA’S LONGEST-SERVING INCARCERATED WOMAN IS FREE

Most shared

‘IT’S A MONEY GRAB’: BILLIONS IN COVID RELIEF GOING TO FUND POLICE AND PRISONS

- Equity in focus
- 50+ freelancers across the U.S.
 - 32% BIPOC
 - 14% incarcerated or formerly incarcerated
 - Pay \$1 / word

- Audience listening
- Surveyed 200+ readers to learn how our reporting can meet the needs of the communities we serve.
 - Launched an “Alternatives” section to report on public safety models that don’t rely on policing and incarceration.

“*We are aware that things are bad — we're living it. What we want is to see that things can be different.*”

— SURVEY RESPONDENT

MAKING AN IMPACT

The Appeal's journalism achieves concrete outcomes toward transforming the criminal legal system. Since relaunching in 2021, our reporting has:

Spurred action on inhumane law enforcement and prison conditions.

- The Department of Justice opened an investigation into the New York Police Department's Special Victims Division following reporting by The Appeal that the unit's officers routinely mistreat sexual assault survivors.
- After The Appeal uncovered widespread Legionella bacteria contamination in the water in Illinois prisons, local activists launched a campaign for greater oversight of the state's correctional facilities.

Bolstered efforts to change unjust laws and policies.

- A federal judge ruled against an Arizona law criminalizing abortions, based on a legal motion citing The Appeal's reporting on this issue.
- The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights cited three stories from The Appeal in a report that concluded the U.S. bail system "tears apart individual lives, families, and entire communities."

POLICY REFORM

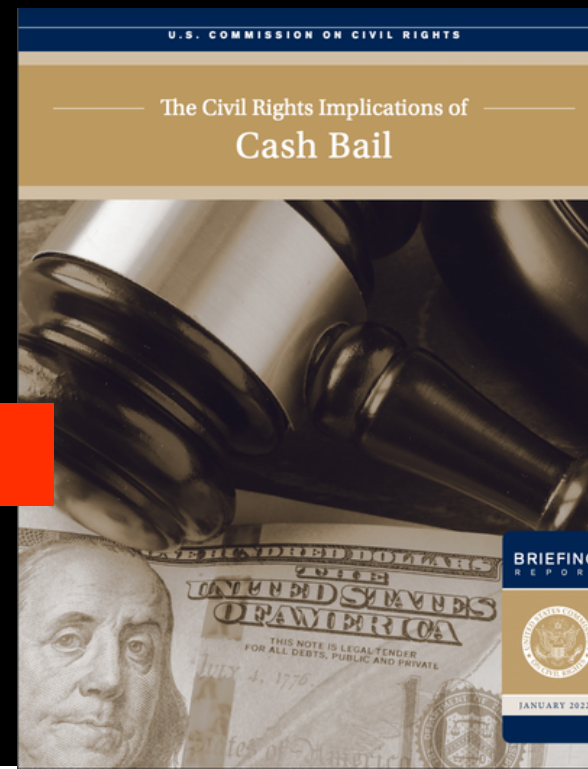
LAWSUITS



Police and protesters outside the Supreme Court

Flickr via Victoria Pickering

ARIZONA JUDGE BLOCKS LAW THAT TREATS FETUSES AS PEOPLE



ACTIVISM



ILLINOIS ADVOCATES CALL FOR ACTION AFTER PRISON OFFICIALS MISLEAD ON CONTAMINATED WATER



John Angel/Unsplash

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION INTO NYPD'S TROUBLED SPECIAL VICTIMS DIVISION

INVESTIGATIONS

SHAPING THE NARRATIVE

The Appeal's impact goes beyond the stories that we publish. We also influence the way news media and pop culture treat criminal justice issues.

- “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver” featured The Appeal’s reporting during an episode focused on debunking copaganda. Reporter Meg O’Connor worked with producers behind the scenes to develop the show, which reached millions of viewers.
- A screenwriter for the CBS police drama “East New York” said O’Connor’s reporting inspired an episode about law enforcement mishandling sexual assault cases.
- The Appeal’s reporting has been cited in dozens of news reports, radio programs, and law review articles.



POP CULTURE



The New York Times

The Washington Post



NEWS MEDIA

PUBLISHING PARTNERS

BOLTS

DISSENT



MAINLINE

MindSite
News

NEW YORK
FOCUS

GAHAN JOURNAL

SOLITARY
WATCH
.ORG

typeinvestigations



AWARDS



Winner:
*How the NYPD's Troubled Sex Crimes
Unit is Set Up to Fail Victims*
by Meg O'Connor



Finalist:
Excellence in Social Justice Reporting
For stories by incarcerated writers
The Appeal published in partnership
with Empowerment Avenue



Honorable Mention:
Best Non-Traditional News Organization

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THE APPEAL IMPACT REPORT 2021–2022

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