

FIJ – SUPPORTING INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD

People in this Issue

Angelika Albaladejo
Annie Avilés
Roy Gutman
Jane Kay
María Martin

News from FIJ

- The Fund for Investigative Journalism is proud to support the work of its two newest diversity fellows, **María Martin** and **Angelika Albaladejo**, as part of a yearlong collaboration between FIJ and two of the country's leading nonprofit newsrooms.



Albaladejo

Albaladejo will be working with [The Marshall Project](#), while Martin will partner with [Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting](#). Each fellowship comes with a \$15,000 grant, which Martin and Albaladejo can use for reporting expenses and other costs.

This is the third year that FIJ is offering diversity fellowships. Martin and Albaladejo join 11 other journalists who have taken part in the program, which is designed to boost diversity and inclusion within the ranks of investigative journalism – as well as increase opportunities for reporting on communities that don't always get the attention they deserve.

"For 50 years, FIJ has financially supported some of the nation's best investigative journalists. We're proud to help María and Angelika report on these important issues facing marginalized communities," said FIJ Board President Marcia Bullard.

Albaladejo is an independent multimedia journalist based in Los Angeles. She has focused on social justice, crime, corruption and security in the Americas.

Martin, an independent journalist based in Antigua, Guatemala, has a career spanning more than four decades. She has spent much of it expanding public radio coverage of Latino issues and improving U.S. listeners' knowledge of Latin America.

[The Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting](#) will play a supporting role by providing fellows with additional training and support.

[Click here](#) to read more about the fellowships and their history.



Martin

News from FIJ cont'd.



making program for domestic investigations in 2019. What a way to kick off the year!

Investigation Spotlights



PKK-led Syrian Democratic Forces force a family to flee Jarablus in advance of the American bombing in Raqqa, Syria. Photo by Roy Gutman

and a founding member who also deserted the group, 15 years ago.

- FIJ is pleased to announce that a long-standing supporter, the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, has awarded \$75,000 to support its grant-

making program for domestic investigations in 2019. What a way to kick off the year!

Investigation Spotlights

- [In a story for The Intercept](#), Roy Gutman interviewed four Syrian deserters from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) who recounted recruitment at gunpoint; recruitment of child soldiers; jail terms for relationships with women; sending conscripts to the front lines; and conscripting family members to replace deserters. The PKK – an ally in the U.S. fight against ISIS in Syria – restricts media access, so Gutman interviewed the four in northern Iraq. The four also spoke of the PKK as a movement – one that is listed as a terrorist organization by both the U.S. and E.U. They say its decades-long armed struggle for an independent state has not improved the lot of Kurds in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Reinforcing that thought is an interview with Osman Ocalan, the brother of the jailed leader of the PKK, and a founding member who also deserted the group, 15 years ago.



Frosty Peak in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Ash Adams for Reveal

would harm extraordinary, irreplaceable wilderness and that patients could be transported via water instead. Interviews and documents obtained by Kay show that the intent of local leaders was to link the town's harbors to ship fresh fish. The agreement allows the road to be used by small businesses, which can sell tens of millions of dollars in seafood yet still qualify as "small." Local leaders pushing for the road all own commercial fishing boats.

- A year ago, the Trump administration approved a land swap allowing a road to be built through a remote national refuge in Alaska. The road was supposed to be a route for evacuating sick people from a small Aleut town. But an investigation revealed a little-known loophole in the agreement that allows for transport of millions of dollars of seafood.

[In an article for Reveal](#), grant recipient Jane Kay and photographer Ash Adams explore the impact of the road on wildlife and the people of King Cove.

At the personal urging of President Trump, the Interior Department ignored two federal reports saying the road

Investigation Spotlights cont'd.



*Photo of Stonington, Maine,
by Bob O'Connor for Pacific
Standard*

- In the wakes of hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency contracted private firms to redraw coastal floodplain maps across the United States. In Maine, those new maps dramatically increased the number of homes and businesses at risk of catastrophic flooding, and exposed many towns to new insurance fees, lost commercial zoning, lowered property values, and lost tax revenue.
But the new maps weren't necessarily accurate, and only towns with deep pockets could afford to contest them.
“These are truly a disaster,” said Kathleen Billings, the town manager of Stonington, Maine, one of the few towns in the state with a working waterfront.
- [In a story for Pacific Standard](#), grant recipient **Annie Avilés** followed how Stonington fought to redraw its flood maps over the past few years with the help of a local environmental systems consultant who has regularly proven the FEMA maps wrong. She also shows how other towns never even realized they had that option.

The FIJ Newsletter was compiled by Jerry Redfern.

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