



News — November 2020

Major Stories by Grantees Published This Month

From a growing lead poisoning epidemic in Connecticut to convictions of corrupt law enforcement officials in California, our grantees published stories in November that continue to show the impact investigative journalists can have with the right support.

Connecticut Health Investigative Team: [Response To Lead Poisoning Epidemic Lacks Urgency](#)

As states across the country fight the COVID-19 pandemic, a lead poisoning epidemic is raging in Connecticut, where weak state laws have done little to help the disproportionately Black and Hispanic victims, according to grantee Jenifer Frank's [new report](#).

Although the state adopted the CDC's strict standards for lead poisoning almost a decade ago, its laws continue to require action only when children test three or four times higher than the national standard for lead levels.

Jackson Clarion Ledger: [Life Without Parole for Juveniles Isn't Rare in Mississippi, Despite Supreme Court Ruling](#)

An ongoing series from the Mississippi Center for Investigative Reporting shows that two thirds of juveniles are sentenced to life in prison without parole, even though a 2012 U.S. Supreme Court decision says such sentences should be "rare."

Shirley Smith's [investigation](#) examined the case of Brett Jones, a Mississippi man who appealed his resentencing to the U.S. Supreme Court, which heard oral arguments in the case on Nov. 3. Jerry Mitchell [reports](#) on oral arguments in that case — and notes that all but one of the eight Mississippi juveniles sentenced to life without parole since the 2012 Supreme Court decision are Black.

Columbia Journalism Review: [Burkina Faso's Invisible War](#)

Journalists in Burkina Faso are being muzzled as they attempt to report on the deadly conflict between the state and armed jihadist groups devastating the small West African country, according to grantee Clair MacDougall's new report.

In her story for Columbia Journalism Review, she profiles two leading local investigative journalists, exploring the challenges they face while reporting on one of the world's fastest-growing conflicts, in which the nation's security forces, backed by the United States, France and the European Union, have been accused of grave abuses.

InvestigateWest and Salon: [Profiting From Thrift: Who's Getting Rich off Your Secondhand Stuff?](#)

Sales of secondhand goods are booming, growing about 3 percent each year, faster than conventional retail. And market researchers project this multibillion-dollar industry will grow exponentially.

This surge in secondhand shopping has opened new opportunities for the public to be misled about how much money for-profit retailers are making off the charities they brag about benefiting, according to Francesca Lyman's [new story for InvestigateWest](#), co-published by [Salon](#) and reported with a grant from the Fund.

Center for Collaborative Investigative Journalism: [Poorly Treated Effluent Sends Refinery Water Use Skyrocketing](#)

A failure by the government in Cape Town, South Africa, to maintain a key wastewater treatment plant cost the city a billion liters of valuable drinking water in 2019 as it was emerging from the worst drought in history, according to a new report by Steve Kretzmann and Raymond Joseph, supported with a grant from the Fund.

[Their investigation](#) details how the municipality's inability to address water quality issues in one of the city's main wastewater treatment plants resulted in not only the use of millions of liters of drinking water a day, but also a growing environmental disaster.

Update: SoCal Connected: [New Law, Joint Media Effort on Police Misconduct Leads to Arrests, Resignations](#)

Reporters rushed to parse through police records in California after new legislation made them public for the first time in nearly 50 years, but the task of filing and reviewing thousands of open-records requests was impossible for newsrooms that had seen budget cuts and lay-offs. That's when grantees at [SoCal Connected](#) helped form the California Reporting Project, made up of some 40 news organizations across the state.

The unprecedented collaborative investigation by California newsrooms uncovered hundreds of incidents of police misconduct involving dishonesty, sexual assault, and use of force, as well as a pattern of deceit by investigators from the Orange County District Attorney's Office. The latest development stemming from their reporting is the resignation, arrest and conviction of two sheriff's deputies who falsified evidence and then tried to cover it up.

For a full index of grantee stories published so far in 2020, [click here](#).



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