



Both incarcerated people and guards at the Marshall County Correctional Facility, in Mississippi, faced danger from chronic understaffing by Management & Training Corporation. JUAN BERNABEU FOR THE MARSHALL PROJECT

## The Marshall Project tracks the impact of our journalism on lawmakers, advocates and other media. A few recent examples:

**TAKING OVER** The state of Mississippi is taking over control of the Marshall County Correctional Center, a short-staffed prison run by the for-profit Management & Training Corporation. In an investigation focused on the prison, The Marshall Project [described a perverse financial incentive](#) unique to private prisons: while having fewer workers means more danger for staff and incarcerated people, it can create more profit for companies like MTC.

Our investigation showed that MTC violated its contract with the state, which stipulated a set number of guards on every shift. When a mandatory position goes unfilled, the company is required to repay the state the wages, plus a 25% penalty. State officials did little to collect those penalties, and instead continued to pay MTC for absent, or “ghost,” workers.

Days after the story was published in December 2020, the state’s auditor launched an investigation. In May 2021, the Mississippi Department of Corrections sent 43 employees to work in the prison, collectively putting in 1,700 hours over several weeks. Commissioner Burl Cain and four of his top deputies each logged 20 hours. In August, Cain

announced the department would take over the prison, hire adequate staff and reduce the prison population by more than half.

**SHOW ME THE MONEY** Our [investigation](#) with [NPR](#) into agencies pocketing benefits intended for children in foster care prompted action in several places. State representatives from Nebraska to Montana to Michigan have contacted The Marshall Project to get the data on their states. Prompted by our reporting, the U.S. Congress held hearings on the issue in June, and advocates have met with the Biden administration to share our findings.

In Los Angeles, County Supervisor Hilda Solis responded to our story by co-sponsoring a motion to ban local agencies from keeping federal funds meant for foster kids. The bill, which was unanimously approved, also ensures that a no-cost, interest-bearing bank account is created for the social security benefits of each eligible youth in foster care. The Board of Supervisors also

asked for data on how much is collected in Social Security benefits for foster youth and where that money goes.

**LOCKED UP FOR LIFE** In partnership with the Dallas Morning News and NBC, The Marshall Project [investigated](#) the flawed public defense system for life-without-parole cases and how, as a result, a woman

named Shuranda Williams spent a year in jail without even talking to a lawyer, facing a potential sentence as serious as death. Weeks after our story was released, Williams was assigned a new lawyer and finally got her first bond hearing. The judge reduced her bond from \$500,000 to \$100,000, with conditions of electronic monitoring.

**PULITZER PRIZE** Our investigation into the life-altering injuries caused by police dog bites continues to have impact. There have been changes to policy in [Indianapolis](#) and [Baton Rouge](#); states from [Massachusetts](#) to [Washington](#) have reviewed their use of police dogs; and our stories prompted a national police think tank to begin work on national guidelines for K-9 units. In June, this 12-part series won the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting, shared among The Marshall Project and our media partners

AL.com, IndyStar and the Invisible Institute. Supporting local media is one of The Marshall Project’s key objectives.



**UNCOMPASSIONATE** U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) filed a bill to improve compassionate release from federal prisons using data from [our story](#), which showed even fewer requests were approved during the pandemic than before it. Schatz was joined by Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT), demonstrating how criminal justice data can move politicians on both sides of the aisle. More than a year into the pandemic, and after more than 200 prisoners had died, wardens had approved only 1.2% of applications for compassionate release. Only 0.1% of those were accepted by the federal Bureau of Prisons.



People incarcerated at Texas' Darrington Unit, named after an old slave plantation until it was renamed the Memorial Unit in 2021. TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE



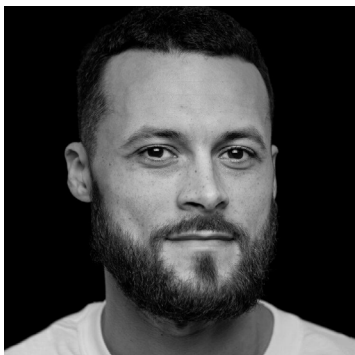
**MONITORING MARSHALS** The Department of Justice ordered federal agents with the U.S. Marshals, as well as other agencies, to wear body cameras when making a pre-planned arrest or executing a search warrant. The policy change comes four months after [our investigation](#) into the U.S. Marshals and its high shooting rates, which also highlighted several of the agency's outdated standards.

Our analysis revealed the U.S. Marshals Service is responsible for more shootings per year than major police departments like Houston and Philadelphia — but with less accountability. On average, 31 people are shot each year by a U.S. Marshal, a member of their task forces or a local cop assisting them in an arrest. The agency admitted that no marshal had ever been prosecuted after a shooting.

**STAY OF EXECUTION** An Idaho court halted the execution of Gerald Pizzuto, Jr., a terminally ill 65-year-old sentenced to death for the 1985 murders of two gold prospectors. Pizzuto was featured in [our story](#) about how executing the terminally ill is becoming more common as the appeals process grows longer and many of the people facing capital punishment age and become ill. The Marshall Project was the first to report that Pizzuto's execution had been scheduled for June, and our reporting shaped subsequent media coverage of the issue.

**NAME CHANGE** The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has decided to rename three more prisons, in addition to one announced in June. As The Marshall Project [noted last year](#), many prisons across the South were named for Confederate leaders and staunch segregationists. Two of the renamed Texas prisons bore the names of former slave plantations.

**BIDEN AND DRUGS** A coalition of 142 organizations, led by the Drug Policy Alliance and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, submitted a letter to the White House and the attorney general, urging them to change how fentanyl crimes are prosecuted. The letter prominently cited [our reporting](#), which showed how Biden Administration policy could make it easier to punish people for low-level drug crimes — and put them in prison for longer, with less proof.



**SUCCESSFUL REENTRY**

A reader of News Inside, our publication for incarcerated people, wrote to tell us about the impact it had on him:

“When I discovered News Inside in 2019, I was immediately and highly impressed by the content and mission... connecting incarcerated people, well before release, with news, resources, guidance and especially encouragement to re-enter society prepared to succeed as whole and healthy humans... News Inside [has] been [a] supportive partner in ... correcting the narrative about the successes, humanity and agency of people with criminal records.”

— Shannon Ross, Executive Director of *The Community*, a newsletter in Wisconsin prisons