

# Impact Report



## "The Throughline"

One of our hallmarks has been following the longer arc of a story across time and stitching together the throughlines other newsrooms fail to see.

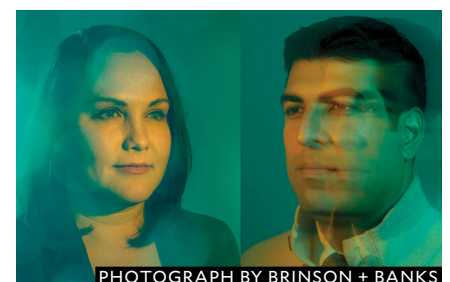
- **In July 2013**, CIR was among the first to report about [forced sterilizations in California prisons](#), with nearly 150 sterilizations occurring from 2006 to 2010 and perhaps 100 more dating back to the late 1990s. One of those women, Geynna Buffington later sought reparations from the state. As [KQED reported](#), after her requests were denied four times, a judge ruled in her favor in 2024. That ruling may have implications for other women subjected to forced sterilizations and denied compensation by the state.
- **In *Mother Jones'* 2020 story "She Said, He Sued,"** Madison Pauly examined the legal backlash to the MeToo movement, with some accused of sexual assault and misconduct filing lawsuits against their accusers. Victoria Burke, a California lawyer who survived sexual assault, began researching other MeToo defamation cases and found Pauly's investigation. Burke submitted the "[Right to Speak Your Truth Act](#)" to California legislators, creating a legal privilege protecting disclosures of sexual assault and harassment. The act was signed into law in October 2023 and has helped usher in similar proposed legislation in [Illinois](#), [Arizona](#), and [New York](#).

## Introduction

# Trust & Truth

The November election showed just how ascendant autocratic forces are in America. To paraphrase *Mother Jones'* David Corn, [it can happen here, and it did](#). But while the guardrails protecting our democracy may have buckled, they're not broken—and independent, fearless journalism can reinforce those guardrails in the weeks, months, and years to come.

The aftermath of the 2024 election represents a crossroads moment for American democracy, and the stakes could not be higher. The incoming Trump administration promises to [deport millions](#), [exact revenge against rivals](#), [reverse the most significant climate progress in decades](#), [gut access to reproductive care](#), and [tear down the divide between church and state](#). The need for fierce, independent, accountability journalism has never been greater. *Mother Jones* and *Reveal* were built for this work.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRINSON + BANKS



ILLUSTRATION BY MOTHER JONES; EVAN VUCCI/AP

### Disinformation

## On the Ground, Combating a Campaign of Disinformation

The days leading up to the election prepared the nation for a historically close race, but the results—recapped on a special edition of *Reveal* the day following the vote—reflected the seismic shifts in voter behavior that could best be understood on the ground. Reporters from *Mother Jones* and *Reveal* branched out across the country to provide insight and analysis. Tim Murphy, [ensconced with Arizona Democrats in a Phoenix conference center](#), chronicled an evening of deflated expectations, while Stephanie Mencimer’s reporting—from Trump’s West Palm Beach victory party—gave a [firsthand account of the MAGA festivities](#). Kiera Butler was there in an Atlanta suburb when [evangelical supporters of Trump laid hands on the candidate](#), and in the midst of it all in Washington, DC, David Corn predicted just [how strong Trump’s appeal would be for his supporters](#). And at the national level, Garrison Hayes provided context and perspective on [Election Night Live with Brian Williams](#).

A critical but underreported facet of any election is state ballot measures. [Abortion rights were on the ballot in 10 states](#), and while Abby Vesoulis reported on [Missouri voters opting to undo the state’s near-total abortion ban](#), Sarah Szilagy recounted the [fate of Florida’s abortion rights amendment](#) as it stopped short of the 60 percent threshold the Republican administration required for its passage. Ari Berman, building on numerous recent appearances, including Seth Myers’ [A Closer Look Back](#) and Stacey Abrams’ [Assembly Required](#) podcasts, detailed the lengths that Ohio Republicans went to defeat an anti-gerrymandering initiative with misleading ballot language meant to sow confusion.

In the lead-up to the election, our newsroom was out in full force, providing perspective on the candidates and issues. Jamilah King appeared on *Frontline*’s “[The Choice 2024](#),” drawing on her years of experience reporting on Kamala Harris dating back to the VP’s time as a district attorney. Mark Follman discussed his [reporting on the Trump campaign’s escalating rhetoric inciting violence on The Michelangelo Signorile Show](#). Video correspondent Kat Abu explained how social media can hold the right accountable on the [Young American With Dylan Douglas](#) podcast, and Garrison Hayes’ reporting on Black conservatives was cited by [The New Yorker’s](#) Jelani Cobb.

### Awards

- **Victim/Suspect**, CIR’s documentary film that investigated law enforcement agents who charged victims of sexual assault with filing false reports, [won an Emmy](#) for outstanding documentary research. In October, PBS aired Rachel de Leon’s follow-up investigation about a young woman who was sexually assaulted by her adoptive father as a young teen and was charged with false reporting. She ultimately documented the assaults on her phone and her abuser was sent to prison. In addition to the *Newshour* audience, the story saw over 2 million [TikTok views in one week](#).
- **Samantha Michaels’** yearlong investigation into the death of a Crow Nation boy following a police chase, featured in *Mother Jones’* [March+April issue](#) and accompanied by an [episode of Reveal](#) and a [short film](#), earned the [Excellence in Social Justice Reporting award](#) from the Online News Association.
- **Jackie Flynn Mogensen** was recognized with the prestigious [Eric and Wendy Schmidt Award of Excellence in Science Communications](#) in the Early Career, Science Journalist category from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. Her 2023 article “[The Venus Flytrap and the Golf Course](#)” also received an honorable mention from the Society for Environmental Journalism for [Outstanding Feature Story](#).
- **Reveal’s** “[America Goes Psychedelic, Again](#),” was listed as a finalist for the Association of International Broadcasting’s [health and social audio program award](#).



ILLUSTRATION BY ARMANDO VEVE



ILLUSTRATION BY MELEK ZERTAL

## Politics

## The TheoBros and One Nation Under God

Ending the 19th Amendment. Restoring public flogging. Peeling back the nefarious feminist plot of Taylor Swift. These are just some of the ideas popular among a growing movement of young men hoping to move America in a more theocratic, Christian direction. Kiera Butler's [examination of the "TheoBros"](#) explained the [connection between JD Vance and these figures](#) and the [extent to which these very online Christian nationalist influencers are reaching new audiences](#). The piece hit a nerve, with Butler appearing on the [Faithful Politics Podcast](#) and [The Bulwark](#) discussing Vance's ties to the group while [Talking Points Memo](#), Heather Cox Richardson, popular theology podcast [Blog and Mablog](#), and Joy-Ann Reid raised the visibility of the story and video online. Most notably, Butler and our social video team created a video that was viewed more than 3 million times across platforms.

Butler's article was one piece of our larger online and magazine package, "[Under God](#)," that went deep on Christian nationalists' ascendant influence. It included an [essay from the Reverend Rob Schenck](#), who ran one of the most powerful institutions of the Christian right and has now turned away from his former ideology. Schenck also movingly discussed his evolution in a companion [Reveal](#) episode. The package also included an in-depth [profile of Russell Vought](#), a Christian nationalist, key Trump adviser, and former acting head of the Office of Management and Budget who is likely to play a key role in Trump's gutting of the civil service.

## In Memorium

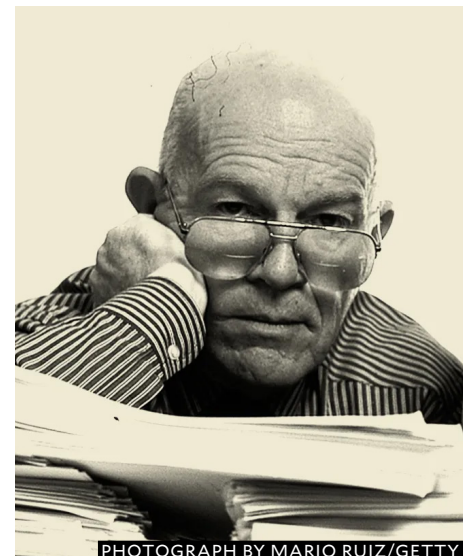
### Don Barlett Memorium

Donald Barlett, whose accolades in the field of journalism included two Pulitzer Prize awards and who, as one half of the legendary Barlett-James Steele investigative reporting team, influenced generations of reporters, passed away at his home in Philadelphia at age 88. As both [Robert Rosenthal](#) and [Monika Bauerlein](#) note, Barlett's work set the standard for great investigative journalism. We are deeply honored that the Barletts have designated CIR for gifts in his memory. When asked about why they chose CIR, Don's wife, Eileen, noted, "I accompanied Don to many of your seminars and programs. While there, a parade of young people would approach Don and Jim thanking them for the inspiration to take up the investigative reporter mantle."



*Don loved what you did. You and the Center support such work. No other place even came to mind."*

Eileen Barlett



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIO RUIZ/GETTY

**Our Unique Reach:**  
September 1 — November 5

Instagram

**2.7 million**  
reached

**2.3 million**  
video views

**750,000**  
content interactions

TikTok

**152,000**  
video views

**17,000**  
likes

YouTube

**1.4 million**  
views

**15,000**  
new subscribers

**119,000**  
hours watched

Facebook

**10.7 million**  
impressions

**140,000**  
video views



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAROD LEW

Domestic Violence

## The Consequences of Cuts to Domestic Violence Funding

Julianne McShane chronicled the [steep reduction in funding from the federal Crime Victims Fund](#) to organizations supporting domestic abuse survivors. This funding, allocated through the 1984 Victims of Crime Act (also known as VOCA), is essential in supporting critical services that include crisis hotlines and shelters. With rates of domestic partner violence growing since the pandemic, and the *Dobbs* decision giving abusers another way to threaten pregnant survivors, the need has grown even as funding has cratered. As the [California Partnership to End Domestic Violence](#) and [Safe Horizon](#) both noted in amplifying McShane's work online, the consequences of congressional inaction are dire. Jaime Yahner, executive director of the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, wrote to McShane, "You highlighted so many critical parts of the crisis and did a beautiful job exposing the impact of funding reductions. Reading about no advocates in Kentucky is the type of stunning situation that has been stopping me in my tracks. You did a great job showing what it looks like to lose services."

Immigration

## Mass Deportation and Remigration

Isabela Dias' reporting on the [implications of Trump's central campaign promise](#)—to deport millions of undocumented immigrants—was featured in *Mother Jones*' [September+October cover package](#) on the Border Patrol and the immigration debate. Dias' calculation of the staggering costs of mass deportations was cited by *Rolling Stone* and *Deseret News*. Her related piece on [Trump's invocation of far-right "remigration" proposals](#) that include mass deportations of nonwhite immigrants and their US-born families was credited by [Media Matters](#) "for properly contextualizing Trump's policy of 'remigration' as an element of ethnic cleansing." Dias' work was lauded on X by [Rebecca Solnit](#) and [Dean Baker](#), who noted, "This is the sort of piece that any news outlet that claims to be covering the election should be running."