



John Jay/Solutions Journalism Network Reporting Fellows 2015

Susie An is a producer for *WBEZ's* news desk in Chicago. She works with reporters and editors to produce content for daily newscasts and *WBEZ's* website. She's also an interim anchor, delivering news during midday programming on *WBEZ*, and directs *WBEZ's* "Schools on the Line" monthly call-in show. Her work has also been heard on *NPR*, *CBC* and *BBC*. An joined *WBEZ* as a news desk intern in September 2007. Prior to joining *WBEZ*, she worked at the *Peoria Journal Star*, and as an acquisitions editor for Publications International, Ltd. An has a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Originally from Huntsville, Alabama, she lives in Chicago's Avondale neighborhood with her husband Demian.

Kelly Byer is the night reporter for *The Repository* in Canton, Ohio. She covers Jackson, the county's second-largest township of about 40,000 people. In addition to daily coverage, Byer manages *The Repository's* social media and is a photographer and videographer. She previously covered the effects of Casper, Wyoming's controversial public smoking ban, major development projects and energy dependence for its nearly 60,000 residents. Byer's in-depth reporting on the area's homeless population earned second place in the annual reporting awards sponsored by The Wyoming Press Association. She worked at *The Lima News*, graduated with honors from Kent State, spent a semester in Northern Ireland, was chosen for an international storytelling class, and travelled to China for a story on Internet censorship.

Mike Carter is a 35-year veteran journalist working as the federal courts and legal-affairs reporter at *The Seattle Times*. He is the senior reporter on the team that spearheaded the paper's Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of the 2009 murders of four Lakewood, WA, police officers and the tragic landslide in 2014 that killed 43 residents of Oso, WA. Carter shared a 2014 Investigative Reporters and Editors Award for the newspaper's breaking-news investigation into the cause of the Oso slide, and a First Place for news writing in the 2015 Best of the West competition. Carter, 60, is married with two daughters in college (Go Vikings! And Cougs!), and two dogs and a step-son at home. He is an avid skier, golfer, outdoorsman and wannabe blues guitarist.

J. Brian Charles has reported on the criminal justice system, politics, education, and poverty. He is a Professional-in-Residence at Louisiana State University and a freelance reporter. Previously, Charles reported on the gang truce struck before the civil uprising in Baltimore. He covered the nation's largest school district for the online education website *Chalkbeat*. He spent

several years working for *Digital First Media*, covering an array of topics, including the 2014 Connecticut governor's race and Connecticut's income divide. He examined the constitutional issues surrounding the use of gang injunctions in California, and uncovered a pattern of police misconduct in Pasadena, CA. Charles earned numerous awards for his reporting including Best of the West (3rd place, 2014) for News Writing, AP California/Nevada Breaking News (1st place, 2009) and the 2013 Digital First Media Journalist of the Year for midsized newspapers.

Robin Erb is a medical writer for the *Detroit Free Press*, covering health and aging issues. She began her career at *The (Toledo) Blade* in Northwest Ohio, covering politics, city hall, and police and human services over 15 years. She joined the *Detroit Free Press* in 2007, and in 2008 was the lead reporter on an Emmy-winning, multi-media project chronicling the lives of more than a dozen legal orphans who had been legally separated from their parents. As a health reporter, Robin has examined a number of issues related to Michigan's changing healthcare landscape, reported on a number of complex research efforts at its major universities, and explored the demographic shift as the state's baby boomers begin to retire. She is now charged with framing the *Free Press* examination of the impact of violence on children.

Anthony Ray Everette, Jr, writing under the pseudonym **Penny Ray**, is an award-winning journalist with more than 14 years of experience in the media industry. He worked as a radio broadcaster for several years before transitioning to a writing career. In 2012, he was hired by *Homicide Watch D.C.*, where as editor he managed a staff of writers who covered the courtroom beat as it related to D.C. murders. The following year, he was hired as a breaking news and crime reporter for *The Trentonian* in Trenton, New Jersey, where he is currently employed. He's also the editor of *Homicide Watch Trenton*, which is staffed and operated by *The Trentonian*. Penny Ray enjoys storytelling and enterprise reporting that tackles controversial issues. In 2015, he won two journalism awards for investigative reporting, and one award for public service journalism.

Susan Ferriss is an investigative reporter with the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C. She recently produced a piece for *TIME online* and the national radio show *Reveal* that ranked states based on how often schools refer students to cops and courts—and how special-needs youth and students of color are disproportionately criminalized at school. Susan has also reported on: Central American kids' struggles with asylum proceedings; farmworker kids forced into alternative schools that required them to educate themselves at home—while schools collected attendance money. As a John Jay/Tow Juvenile Justice Reporting Fellow (2013-2014), she produced a widely read series on middle-school kids forced into court for disorderly conduct by Los Angeles school police citations that later became the subject of a PBS documentary and led to changes in Los Angeles school policy. Ferriss has also reported on immigration for the *Sacramento Bee* and spent a decade covering Latin America for *Cox Newspapers*. She co-wrote "The Fight in the Fields," a history of Cesar Chavez, and is a graduate of the University of California at Santa Cruz and UC Berkeley.

Amy Friedenberger is the crime and public safety reporter for *The Roanoke Times* in Southwest Virginia. Friedenberger, originally from central Pennsylvania, has pursued her first passion of journalism since attending the University of Pittsburgh to earn degrees in nonfiction writing and political science. She spent a few years in Pennsylvania and Ohio on the business

beat, focusing on the energy and gambling industries, which taught her to love numbers and data. In early 2014, Friedenberger joined *The Roanoke Times*, where she balances chasing breaking crime news with longer enterprise stories, such as youth and police interactions, domestic violence and effects of incarceration.

David Gambacorta has written about crime and police corruption for the *Philadelphia Daily News* since 2005. He has won multiple investigative reporting awards for his coverage of police scandals—one of which ended with the resignation of an allegedly corrupt officer—and of a mismanaged cyber charter school that was closed by Pennsylvania education officials in the wake of his stories. In 2014, *Philadelphia Magazine* named him the city’s “Best Beat Reporter” in its annual “Best of Philly” issue. Gambacorta, 31, is a lifelong Philadelphia resident, and studied journalism at Temple University.

Hannah Garcia is a reporter, photographer and podcast producer for *Law Week Colorado*. She covers the Colorado Supreme Court and Colorado Court of Appeals, the judiciary and public sectors, bar associations and juvenile and criminal justice. She graduated from the University of South Alabama in 2010 before going on to work for community newspapers in coastal Alabama and Colorado as a general assignment reporter, photographer, copy editor, community editor and editorial layout designer. She has been with *Law Week* since May 2014 and has an intense interest in criminal and constitutional law. She has multiple awards for reporting and editorial writing from the Alabama Press Association and the Colorado chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Hannah, a native of South Mississippi, was a 2014-2015 John Jay/Tow Juvenile Justice Reporting Fellow. .

Suzette Hackney is Community Engagement Editor, Columnist and an Editorial Board member for *The Indianapolis Star*. She previously worked at the *Detroit Free Press*, *The Detroit News*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Blade*. Suzette was a 2013 Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan, where she studied emerging technologies in journalism and social media, personal and corporate branding, and building community relationships online. She received a National Edward R. Murrow Award, a National Headliners Award (1st place and Grand Award) and a National Association of Black Journalists Salute to Excellence Award for her 2011 “Living With Murder” special report about homicides in Detroit. Hackney is a contributing author of an academic guide for journalism students called *Covering Crime and Justice*. She was the first African-American woman named editor in chief of *The State News*, the newspaper at Michigan State University, where she earned a B.A. in Journalism.

Dee J. Hall is the managing editor of the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism. Hall took over the news operations of the nonprofit newsroom in June after a 24-year career as a reporter and editor at the *Wisconsin State Journal* newspaper in Madison. Previously, Hall was a reporter for eight years at *The Arizona Republic* newspaper in Phoenix. She has won more than three dozen national, state and local journalism awards. While at the *State Journal*, Hall specialized in investigative reporting. Hall’s investigatgve reporting in 2001 resulted in criminal charges against five lawmakers and four legislative aides for illegal campaign activity.

More recently, Hall won investigative reporting awards for exposing the improper role insurance companies play in criminal arson investigations. Hall's four-part 2011 series about Joseph Awe's conviction for a fire that consumed his central Wisconsin bar led to Awe's conviction being overturned and his release from prison.

Dan Ivers, a staff writer for NJ Advanced Media, began his career in 2008, when he launched a weekly paper in two small northern Connecticut towns. He since moved on to several other publications in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, covering both government and law enforcement. In July 2014, he was hired to cover police in Newark, N.J. and the surrounding area. His arrival came at a critical time for the city force, which had just been the subject of a U.S. Department of Justice report detailing widespread excessive force and civil rights violations. His time in Newark introduced him to many of the traumas and horrors of violent crime, both for its direct impact on victims and on the community at large.

Jason Kane, a producer for the *PBS NewsHour*, covers health, medicine and health care reform for the national news program's nightly broadcast and website. He joined the *NewsHour* in 2010 after working as an education/general assignment reporter for *The Winchester Star* in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. He has produced stories on an array of global health issues in six sub-Saharan African nations for the *NewsHour*, *NPR* and *Religion News Service*. After graduating from George Washington University in 2007, Kane spent a year teaching HIV/AIDS prevention in D.C. public high schools through the national service nonprofit City Year. He was a 2013-14 National Health Journalism fellow and Dennis Hunt Fund grantee; received the International Center for Journalists' Best Coverage of Infectious Diseases Award, 2013-14; and was a Spotlight Health scholar at the 2015 Aspen Ideas Festival.

Donna Ladd is an award-winning journalist who founded the *Jackson Free Press* in Mississippi in 2002 to change the media climate, especially the coverage of young people of color. Ladd earned an M.A. from Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, specializing in covering children and race. Her studies included courses at Columbia Teacher's College, Law School and the Institute for African American Studies. She also was a teaching assistant in a course on Reporting on Children and Teens. Ladd served as a Packard Future of Children Fellow focusing on discriminatory effects of school discipline, and is now a three-year Kellogg Foundation Leadership Fellow, working to change the media narrative about vulnerable youth to bring systemic change, especially to criminal justice and prevention. Ladd has freelanced for *The Guardian*, *Village Voice*, *Salon*, *Columbia Journalism Review* and others. Her journalism has been featured on *CNN*, *NPR*, *CBC*, *BBC* and *al Jazeera*, and her investigative work helped send a Klansman to prison.

Ashley Luthern is a crime and breaking news reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. She is a regular contributor to *Precious Lives*, a two-year reporting effort examining the causes and consequences of gun violence on youth in Wisconsin. *Precious Lives* was created by 371 Productions and represents a collaboration among several media companies, including the *Journal Sentinel*. Prior to joining the *Journal Sentinel* in 2013, she worked for *The Vindicator* in Youngstown, Ohio, where she earned state awards for coverage of breaking news, crime, neighborhood development and feature writing. She holds bachelor's degrees in journalism and anthropology from Ohio University.

Thomas MacMillan is a Brooklyn-based multimedia journalist with more than eight years' experience reporting on everything from city budgets and public housing to school discipline reform and high-profile murder trials. He is a contributor to the *Wall Street Journal's* Greater New York section where he covers breaking news, crime and courts. Previously, he worked for seven years as a writer, photographer and editor at the *New Haven Independent*, a pioneering online daily news site, where he covered topics such as gang trials in federal court and community policing. During his time there, he won a national award from the Al Dia foundation for breaking the news of systematic police harassment of Latinos in the town of East Haven. MacMillan's coverage led to a federal investigation, the resignation of the police chief, and the criminal prosecution of key cops.

Christopher Peak is a reporter for *NationSwell*, a New York-based digital media company specializing in solutions journalism. Since starting as *NationSwell's* sole staff writer, he overhauled the site's editorial strategy. He replaced aggregated, feel-good content with in-depth, data-heavy features on proven solutions. The articles have been highlighted by the Solutions Journalism Network, *Huffington Post's* "What's Working Media Honor Roll", *Time*, *The Aspen Institute* and *New Profit Inc.* A Yale graduate, Peak has previously uncovered prosecutors' failed response to domestic violence for the *San Francisco Public Press*, a nonprofit quarterly; covered cops and courts at *Newsday*; and investigated wrongdoing at the Bay Area's last slaughterhouse for the *Point Reyes Light*, a Pulitzer prize-winning rural weekly. An article on the San Francisco police chief's pay raise, which made him the nation's highest paid cop, won a Mark of Excellence Award from the Society of Professional Journalists—Northeast Region.

Nicole Santa Cruz is the main reporter for the *Los Angeles Times' Homicide Report*, which chronicles homicide in Los Angeles County. Since starting at the *Times* six years ago, Santa Cruz has reported on a variety of breaking news events such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the 2011 Gabrielle Giffords' shooting. After covering the Tucson shooting in her hometown, she realized the impact that the media can have on depictions of violence and began gravitating toward crime reporting. Two years ago, she began writing and maintaining the *Homicide Report* and has profiled ordinary people impacted by violence: a grief counselor whose mother was murdered, a woman who killed her husband, and a group of men who strived to live until 25 surrounded by death. Santa Cruz also worked to analyze data to find the deadliest neighborhood in LA County, which led to the creation of a local task force to combat the violence.

Amelia Schonbek is an independent journalist who reports stories, works as a fact-checker, conducts research projects for other journalists, and copy edits. She has reported on social justice and protest movements for *The Walrus* (Canada), covered Toronto city politics, and written about feminist perspectives on science and sports for *newyorker.com*. For the past year she was reporting on sexism in the world of women's boxing. Stories that came out of her reporting have been published at *newyorker.com*, *Pacific Standard*, and *Hazlitt*. Previously, she was the associate editor of *Maisonneuve*, an award-winning quarterly based in Montreal. Schonbek holds an M.A. in Literary Reportage from NYU's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. While pursuing her Master's, she interned at *The New Yorker*, and currently works as a fact-checker

for *New York* magazine and *Discover*. and copy edits photography books for The Aperture Foundation.

Sarah Stillman is a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. She has written on topics ranging from abuses of civil asset forfeiture to the return of debtors prisons, and from Mexico's drug cartels to Bangladesh's garment-factory workers. Stillman's reporting from Iraq and Afghanistan on labor abuses and human trafficking on United States military bases won a National Magazine Award. Her recent coverage of Central American migrant children's kidnappings won a Sidney Hillman Award. She taught creative writing at a maximum-security men's prison in Connecticut for four years, and the criminal justice system remains a central focus of her work.

Anne Sweeney, a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, has written about crime in Chicago for more than a decade, including breaking news and enterprise projects. She covered the federal courthouse and reported on Chicago's highest-profile terrorism trial, Mexican cartel cases and examined prostitution and human trafficking. Most of her work has focused on street violence, tracing the routes taken by guns from Mississippi into the hands of gang members, and interviewing countless victims of tragic shootings. During the past two years, she has increasingly focused on the more quiet trauma this violence causes victims, profiling social workers who administer care in the Cook County trauma unit, and reporting on a unique program that pairs gang members and war veterans for in-depth mentoring aimed at exploring PTSD. Prior to working at the *Chicago Tribune*, she covered breaking news and crime at the *Chicago Sun-Times*. She graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism and holds an M.A. from Trinity College in Dublin.

Krista M. Torralva is a courts reporter at the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* in South Texas. She started at the paper in 2013 as a night breaking-news reporter. Torralva is one of the founding reporters of the "Behind Broken Doors" series which explores domestic violence in Corpus Christi. She studied criminal justice and journalism at the University of Texas at Arlington and interned at *The Dallas Morning News*. Her awards include: the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors' Star Investigative Report of the Year; and the Society of Professional Journalists' Defending the Disadvantaged award, for her series on neglect at a local state supported living center. She enjoys light reading, but also admits to a fondness for reading depositions and lawsuits, before bed or on the beach.

Armando Trull, a senior reporter at WAMU, Washington DC's NPR affiliate, has over 2 decades of experience covering local, national and international news for multiple platforms. He contributes to *Telemundo TV* and *El Tiempo Latino* (*The Washington Post's* Spanish language weekly). Trull has worked as anchor, reporter, and manager for organizations such as *WUSA9 TV*, *UPI Radio*, *Univision*, *Telemundo* and the *Miami Herald*. He's freelanced for *CBS Radio*, *BBC*, *Radio France International*, *Reuters* and *TV Azteca*. His work has been broadcast by outlets that reach diverse audiences in the millions. Trull has reported from Latin America, and has covered White House summits, the UN, political conventions, the Olympics and Pan

American Games, and the World Cup. He was voted Best Reporter by *Washingtonian Magazine*.

Jill Tucker has been covering education and children's issues in California for 18 years, currently at *The San Francisco Chronicle* and previously at the *Oakland Tribune*. Her professional expertise includes education policy and finance, some knowledge of the rules of tether ball, and a good grasp of when someone actually might "solve for x" in real life. She has received national and state awards for her work, including for in-depth stories on children and trauma, family homelessness, issues related to young black males, and inequities in public education. She is a frequent television and radio guest on *KQED's* "Newsroom" and "Forum." A San Francisco Bay Area native, Tucker earned a master's degree in journalism at the University of Colorado, Boulder; and a bachelor's degree from University of California-Santa Barbara. In between, she spent two years in the Peace Corps teaching English in Cape Verde, West Africa. She lives in Oakland with her photojournalist husband and 14-year-old son.

Linn Washington Jr. is a journalism professor at Temple University who continues to work as a journalist. An award-winning reporter, Washington specializes in analytical/investigative coverage of issues involving the criminal justice system and the news media. His reporting has included national and foreign news coverage. Washington's news career spanned positions from reporter to executive editor. As a Temple journalism faculty member, Washington regularly teaches skills courses in reporting and writing. He co-founded Temple's Philadelphia *Neighborhoods.com*, the acclaimed hyper-local news site that has earned over 50 awards, including seven for best college news website. Washington has directed Study Away programs in London and South Africa. His students' news reporting from South Africa won two major international awards. Washington's professional career also included service as Special Assistant to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. He graduated from the Yale Law Journalism Fellowship Program where he earned a master's degree from the Yale Law School.

Spencer Whitney, before joining the *San Francisco Chronicle's* editorial team, worked as the Multimedia Editor at the *Oakland Post* newspaper, where he was responsible for producing daily web-based content while reporting on local politics, community news and education around the Bay Area. Whitney graduated from Howard University in 2011 with honors in Print Journalism where he wrote for the *Hilltop* newspaper. He also worked as an on-air personality for the college radio station *WHBC830AM* and interned at *SiriusXM* Satellite Radio. He then attended UC-Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism and wrote for the hyperlocal news sites *Richmond Confidential* and *Oakland North*. While pursuing a Masters in Journalism, he volunteered at San Quentin Prison to help produce content for the publication *San Quentin News*. He helped inmates improve their stories, and collaborated with other reporters to research recidivism rates.

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