



## **SPEAKERS & MODERATORS**

# CASH REGISTER JUSTICE

**John Jay College**  
**Center on Media, Crime and Justice**  
*March 7-8, 2018*

### **Dami Animashaun**

Dami Animashaun is an attorney at Civil Rights Corps, where he works on litigation challenging debtors' prisons, abusive private probation and diversion schemes, and wealth-based pre-trial detention. Prior to joining the Civil Rights Corps, he was the Marvin M. Karpatkin Fellow at the ACLU's Racial Justice Program. He is a graduate of Rutgers University and Harvard Law School.

### **Samuel Brooke**

Sam Brooke is deputy legal director of the Economic Justice Project at the Southern Poverty Law Center, where he leads a team of legal advocates in challenging public and private systems that trap people in poverty and punish them simply for being poor. He has litigated civil rights cases throughout the South, challenging unlawful practices related to debtors' prisons, suspension of driver licenses for non-payment of fines and fees, pre-trial detention, and private probation, as well as litigation to maintain access to social safety net programs. He is based in Montgomery, Alabama.

### **Nusrat Choudhury**

Nusrat Choudhury is deputy director of the ACLU Racial Justice Program. She received her B.A. from Columbia University and is a graduate of Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and Yale Law School. Prior to joining the Racial Justice Program (RJP), Choudhury worked as an attorney in the ACLU National Security Project and a Marvin A. Karpatkin Fellow in RJP. Choudhury also served as a law clerk for Judge Barrington D. Parker in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and for Judge Denise Cote in the Southern District of New York.

### **Beth Colgan**

Beth Colgan is Assistant Professor of Law at UCLA School of Law. Her primary research and teaching interests are in criminal law and procedure and juvenile justice. Prior to joining the Law School, she was a Thomas C. Grey Fellow and Lecturer in Law at Stanford Law School. From 2006-11, Professor Colgan worked as the Managing Attorney of the Institutions Project at Columbia Legal Services, representing juveniles and adults confined in prisons, jails, mental health facilities, and immigration detention in civil rights litigation, collateral appeals, and legislative advocacy.

### **Becca Curry**

Becca Curry is research & policy counsel for the ACLU of Colorado. She came to Colorado in 2015 after working as the Policy Director at the ACLU of Mississippi. Originally from Houston, Becca earned a degree in Evolutionary Biology from the University of Colorado before graduating from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. During law school she worked with International Bridges to Justice in Cambodia promoting indigent defense in rural prisons, for which she received the Gillis Long Public Service Award. In Colorado, she works towards a fair criminal justice system, focusing on municipal courts, reducing jail populations, debtor's prisons and bail reform.

### **Jessica Feierman**

Jessica Feierman oversees projects and programs at the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia. She also engages in litigation, *amicus* efforts, and policy advocacy focused on juvenile and criminal justice reform. Jessica currently leads a national effort to end fines & fees in the juvenile justice system and is engaged in litigation aimed at ending solitary confinement and other abusive practices in juvenile facilities. Her deep interest in community and youth activism led her to launch Juveniles for Justice, a program of Juvenile Law Center that supports justice system-involved youth in becoming advocates for change. Jessica presents and publishes regularly on these issues.

### **The Hon. Lisa Foster**

Lisa Foster is co-director of the Fines and Fees Justice Center. She is a retired California Superior Court judge and the former director of the Office for Access to Justice at the U.S. Department of Justice. As a judge in San Diego for 10 years, she presided over criminal, family and civil cases, and served as the Presiding Judge of the Court's appellate division. In 2015, Foster joined the U.S. Department of Justice where she led an effort to address fines and fees. Since leaving the Justice Department in January 2017, Lisa has traveled extensively in the U.S. and Canada speaking about issues related to poverty and justice and works with state and local courts to address these issues.

## **Ashley Gantt**

For the last five years, Ashley Gantt has worked in the heart of the social justice movement, first as an organizer with B.L.A.C.K. Currently, she serves as chair of the Advisory Board for the YWCA of Rochester, New York, where she works with families affected by homelessness, addiction, and domestic abuse. Ashley is also co-leader and diversity chair for Action Together Rochester, where she fights for progressive causes through collaboration, education, equity and advocacy in the community.

## **Emily Gerrick**

Emily Gerrick is a senior staff attorney at the Texas Fair Defense Project, a legal nonprofit dedicated to alleviating the unfair consequences of poverty in the Texas criminal justice system. Emily focuses on helping low-income Texans who are criminalized and driven deeper into poverty because they cannot afford to pay criminal fines and fees. Emily uses a combination of individual representation, impact litigation, and policy advocacy to change local and state practices. During the last Texas legislative session, Emily helped to pass legislation that expanded alternative sentencing and limited arrest warrants for nonpayment of fines and costs, and is now working to repeal and reform license suspension programs that keep over 1.6 million Texans from driving legally due to inability to pay fines, fees, and surcharges.

## **Stephen Handelman**

Stephen Handelman is director of John Jay's Center on Media, Crime and Justice and executive editor of *The Crime Report*. An award-winning veteran journalist, columnist and foreign correspondent with more than 30 years of experience reporting and editing, including at *Time* magazine, he has been a consultant to U.S. law enforcement agencies and the United Nations, and has lectured and taught at universities around the U.S.. He is the author of four books, including *Comrade Criminal: Russia's New Mafiya*.

## **Alexes Harris**

Alexes Harris is a professor of sociology at the University of Washington. Her research focuses on social stratification and inequality with an emphasis on juvenile and criminal justice processing and outcomes. Her research has been published in a number of academic journals, including *The American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Law and Society Review* and *Symbolic Interaction*. Since 2004, she has taught undergraduate classes on social problems, race and ethnicity and juvenile justice, and senior research practicums on payday lending, monetary sanctions, and sports and higher education. Dr. Harris is the author of *A Pound of Flesh: Monetary Sanctions as a Punishment for the Poor*, which investigates fiscal sentences imposed on felony defendants and the consequences for legal debtors.

**Shyara Hill**

Shyara Hill is the Juvenile Law Center's Youth Advocacy Intern for Youth Programs and Policy. She has been an advocate with Juveniles for Justice (J4J), a project of Juvenile Law Center, for six years. Shyara participated in the Juveniles for Justice program advocating for policy reform for youth who have had experience in the juvenile justice system. She has done specific work on eliminating harmful juvenile costs, fines, and fees, speaking nationally on the issue. She holds a Youth Membership position as part of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) committee for Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. She is also an Emerging Leader with Coalition for Juvenile Justice, Emerging Leaders Committee.

**Brook Hopkins**

Brook Hopkins is executive director of the Criminal Justice Policy Program at Harvard Law School. She has over 10 years of experience working on a broad range of complex cases at all levels of state and federal court. She has represented criminal defendants, death row inmates, plaintiffs in civil rights cases, and immigrant victims of domestic violence seeking work authorization. She has experience working with prosecutors, public defenders, advocacy organizations, and scholars in the criminal justice field.

**Marc A. Levin**

Marc A. Levin is the vice president of criminal justice at the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) and Right on Crime. An attorney and accomplished author on legal and public policy issues, Marc began the Foundation's criminal justice program in 2005. This work contributed to nationally praised policy changes that have been followed by dramatic declines in crime and incarceration in Texas. In 2010, Levin developed the concept for the Right on Crime initiative, a TPPF project in partnership with Prison Fellowship and the American Conservative Union Foundation. Right on Crime has become the national clearinghouse for conservative criminal justice reforms and has contributed to the adoption of policies in dozens of states that fight crime, support victims, and protect taxpayers.

**William Maurer**

William Maurer is the Managing Attorney of the Washington office of the Institute for Justice. He was the lead counsel in a class action challenging the use of tickets to raise municipal revenue in the city of Pagedale, Missouri. The suit resulted in a groundbreaking federal consent decree that fundamentally reformed the city's ticketing and municipal court system. He speaks and writes about the criminalization of poverty and has participated in summits on fines and fees convened by the White House and

Department of Justice, as well as acting as an advisory board member of the Fines and Fees Justice Center. He has successfully argued constitutional cases across the country, including at the U.S Supreme Court.

### **Tara Mikkilineni**

Tara Mikkilineni is an attorney at Civil Rights Corps, where she litigates cases nationally challenging the criminalization of poverty, including driver's license litigation in Tennessee. She began her civil rights career as a special litigation attorney at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, where she litigated cases in the D.C. and federal courts about prosecutorial misconduct, DNA databases, the constitutionality of sex offender conditions, eyewitness identification, and civil asset forfeiture. Most recently, she was a Fair Lending Enforcement attorney at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. She also represented habeas petitioners on death row in California, and worked at a technology startup.

### **Maurice Possley**

Maurice Possley, the designated Journalism Coordinator for this project, won a Pulitzer Prize in 2008 for Investigative Reporting at the *Chicago Tribune*, where he was a criminal justice reporter for 25 years. A three-time Pulitzer Prize finalist for his justice reporting, Possley is senior researcher for the National Registry of Exonerations, a database of about 2,400 wrongful convictions in the U.S. since 1989. He previously worked as a research fellow at Santa Clara University Law School's Northern California Innocence Project, where he co-authored NCIP's report: *Preventable Error: Prosecutorial Misconduct in California 1997-2009*. He is a *New York Times* best-selling author and has written three non-fiction books. Possley has served as journalism coordinator in previous CMCJ projects, including Fellowship programs for journalists on pre-trial detention and rural jail overcrowding, and a media training program for Latin American justice officials.

### **Jeffrey Selbin**

Jeffrey Selbin is a clinical professor of law at the University of California/ Berkeley, where he directs the Policy Advocacy Clinic (PAC). Research by PAC revealed that California counties assessed myriad charges that families often could not afford to pay, resulting in destabilizing debt that became a permanent legal judgment. The findings prompted several counties to end such fines and fees, and legislation that repealed them statewide, relieving hundreds of thousands of families of more than \$200 million in fees. Previously, Selbin served in multiple capacities, including executive director, at the East Bay Community Law Center, Berkeley's community-based clinic. Selbin is active in local and national clinical legal education, anti-poverty and criminal justice reform efforts. He is on the Advisory Board of the Fines and Fees Justice Center.

## **Matthew Shaer**

Matthew Shaer is an Atlanta-based writer-at-large for *The New York Times Magazine*. He is currently working on a book for Metropolitan/Henry Holt about the criminalization of poverty in America. In 2019, *The New York Times Magazine* published *How Cities Make Money by Fining the Poor*, an in-depth examination by Shaer of criminal justice debt in America.

## **Sarah Stillman**

Sarah Stillman is a staff writer for *The New Yorker* magazine. She also directs the Global Migration Program at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, and teaches literary non-fiction writing at Yale. Her recent work has received the National Magazine Award, the Michael Kelly Award for the "fearless pursuit and expression of truth," the Overseas Press Club's Joe & Laurie Dine Award for International Human Rights Reporting, the George Polk Award, and the Hillman Prize for Magazine Journalism. Her coverage of America's wars overseas and the challenges facing soldiers at home has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic.com*, *Slate.com*, and *The Atlantic.com*. She also ran a creative writing workshop for four years at Cheshire Correctional Institute, a maximum-security men's prison in Connecticut. She is currently reporting on immigration and criminal justice issues. She was a 2016 MacArthur Fellow.

## **Anne Stuhldreher**

Anne Stuhldreher is director of The Financial Justice Project for the City and County of San Francisco. San Francisco is the first city in the nation to launch a Financial Justice project to assess and reform the impact of fees and fines on its most vulnerable residents. Since the Project's inception in October 2016, San Francisco has eliminated all local administrative fees charged to people leaving jail, cuts its towing and boot fees in half for lower income people, and created new payment plans and non-monetary payment options for low income people. Overall, the Project has eliminated or adjusted dozens of fines and fees and written off tens of millions of dollars of debt owed by thousands of people. The Project is part of San Francisco's Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector. Stuhldreher is currently a fellow at the Aspen Institute's Economic Security Program.

## **Bianca Tylek**

Bianca Tylek is director of the Corrections Accountability Project. She combines her expertise in both criminal justice and financial services to combat the commercial exploitation of the criminal legal system. Previously, Tylek was a

fellow at the NYU Brennan Center for Justice, where she researched the perverse financial incentives created by current approaches to corrections funding. Earlier, Tylek worked with various state and local corrections agencies, particularly in New York City where she drafted the young adult plan that eliminated solitary confinement for prisoners less than 22 years of age—a first for the nation. Additionally, Tylek worked for the Campaign to End Mass Incarceration at the ACLU. In 2013, she co-founded College Pathways at Rikers Island, a program for incarcerated students interested in pursuing higher education upon release.

### **Joanna Weiss**

Joanna Weiss is co-director of the Fines and Fees Justice Center. Previously, she was the director of criminal justice at the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. Weiss created and managed the Foundation's fines and fees portfolio, garnering millions of dollars of support for 20 research, litigation and technical assistance projects to address the negative impacts of fines and fees in the justice system. She helped develop projects to measure the scope and impacts of both adult and juvenile fines and fees across the country, the fiscal impacts of various practices for collecting fines and fees, and to study the use of alternative practices including means-adjusted fines and community service. Weiss also worked with litigators to expand their efforts to pursue broader statewide reform strategies and to create a community of practice where litigation strategies, successes and failures could be shared. She also helped develop a program at Harvard Law School's Criminal Justice Policy Program to pilot fines and fees reforms in five states. She is a member of the National Task Force on Fines and Fees, the ABA's Task Force to address fines and fees, and is working with Fair and Just Prosecution to help develop an agenda for fines and fees reform by prosecutors.

### **Amir Whitaker**

Amir Whitaker is an educator, author, and civil rights lawyer, and musician. He is the founder and director of Project KnuckleHead, a nonprofit organization empowering youth through music, art, and educational programs since 2013. Whitaker was introduced to the criminal justice system as a child when he visited both his mother and father in prison. At age 15, Amir himself was arrested and entered the juvenile justice system. Problems at school eventually led to him being expelled. Whitaker has negotiated settlements and policy changes that have improved the lives of thousands of youth across the country. Amir is currently a staff attorney with the ACLU of Southern California and a researcher with the UCLA Civil Rights Project. At the Southern Poverty Law Center, Amir worked on a class action lawsuit on behalf of incarcerated youth receiving inadequate education, mental health, and rehabilitation services.

**Jon Wool**

Jon Wool is the director of justice policy at Vera Institute of Justice New Orleans office, working with government and community leaders on collaborative approaches to improving adult criminal justice practice, especially through a reduction in the overuse of detention and focusing on ending the massive over-use of jail incarceration that has plagued New Orleans and the South by attacking policies that result in locking up mostly poor, mostly black residents. Jon helped open the New Orleans office in the spring of 2008, having started working at Vera in 2002 on efforts to improve public defense systems and serving as senior counsel to the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons, among other roles. Prior to joining Vera, Jon was a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defense Division in Manhattan.

**Paul Wright**

Paul Wright is the founder and executive director of the Human Rights Defense Center. He is also editor of *Prison Legal News*, the longest-running independent prisoner rights publication in U.S. history. He has co-authored three anthologies: *The Ceiling of America: An Inside Look at the U.S. Prison Industry*; *Prison Nation: The Warehousing of America's Poor*; and *Prison Profiteers: Who Makes Money from Mass Imprisonment*. Wright was imprisoned for 17 years in the state of Washington until his release in 2003. During and since his incarceration, he has successfully litigated a wide variety of censorship and public records cases against prison systems around the country. He serves as the National Vice President of the National Police Accountability Project.

# # # #