SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:
UNFINISHED BUSINESS
REPORTING FELLOWS SEPT 28-29, 2022

*Photos and bio info for some fellows were unavailable.

(in Alphabetical order)
CARLOS BALLESTEROS
Carlos Ballesteros is an award-winning reporter at Injustice Watch, where he covers police, politics and immigrant communities, often using data to enhance his reporting. He previously worked at the Chicago Sun-Times, covering the South and West sides of the city, and at Newsweek in New York as a breaking news reporter on the digital desk. Carlos was born and raised in Chicago and also lived in Mexico on-and-off as a kid. He holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Claremont McKenna College in California and is willing to go back to school if it’s for free.

CHANDRA BOZELKO
Chandra Bozelko is a syndicated columnist, freelance opinion writer and thought leader. Her weekly column, The Outlaw, now appears in over 150 daily and weekly Gannett/Gatehouse Media papers through its syndication company More Content Now. Since its start in 2018, The Outlaw column has won awards from the National Federation of Press Women, the Connecticut Press Club, Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists (CTSPJ), The Illinois Press Association, The New Hampshire Press Association, and the Newswomen of New York. Chandra was the first inmate to write a regular newspaper column from behind bars, which The New Haven Independent named “Prison Diaries.” It won the People’s Voice Webby Award in 2018 and 2019 for Personal Blog/Website, has won two awards from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists (2016 and 2018) and from the Alliance for Women in Media (2019). Her book of poetry entitled “Up The River: An Anthology” (BleakHouse, 2013) won American University’s Best Book Award in 2015.

STEPHANIE CASANOVA
Stephanie Casanova is a criminal justice and breaking news reporter at the Chicago Tribune. Starting her career in 2014, she’s been a reporter and copy editor for local newspapers in South Dakota, Kansas and Arizona. In her most recent roles, she has written about police reform including how police departments are responding to homelessness, drug use and mental health. She has also written about the experiences of people in jail and prison. Stephanie is a two-time fellow of John Jay College of Criminal Justice symposiums and a 2022 SPJ Dori Maynard Diversity Leadership Program fellow. She has participated in SPJ’s Future Leaders Academy and is a Maynard 200 alumni, a Maynard
Institute program for journalists of color that focuses on making newsrooms equitable and anti-racist. Stephanie is a Spanish speaking bilingual journalist who is passionate about storytelling that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of the communities she covers.

**CASSIE CHEW**

After almost a decade as a Capitol Hill reporter, Cassie is pursuing explanatory reporting projects that explore policy impacting economic mobility. Cassie earned a master's degree in Journalism with a focus on business news and multimedia from the Medill School at Northwestern University. Recently she served as reporter in the Sojo.net Election 2020 pop-up newsroom. Her work this past year also can be seen in *The Crime Report*, *ABA Journal* and *Civil Eats*. She is a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism where she studied multimedia, feature and business news reporting and the University of Illinois where majored in English, Art and African-American literature along with study abroad in Guanajuato, Mexico.

**SONIA CHOPRA**

Sonia Chopra is a freelance reporter and author based in Cincinnati, Ohio. She has been a reporter for twenty-seven years on the general assignment and criminal justice beats. Her work has appeared in *New York Newsday*, *The New York Times*, *The New York Post*, *Greenville News*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *Teen Vogue*, *Salon. Com*, *Huffington Post*, *Juvenile Justice Information Exchange*, *Youth Today*, among others. She is fluent in Hindi and Punjabi and has contributed stories and editorials for *India Today*, *Indian Express* and *Rediff.com*. In 2018, she won a National Headliner Award for her story in *Cosmopolitan* magazine for her story on the Brooke Skylar Richardson case. She recently published her first book about her reporting on the case *Saving Skylar*: The Brooke Skylar Richardson case. She is a 2018 John Jay Justice Reporting Fellow.
Shabnam Daneesh
Shabnam joined WMBD in Peoria, Illinois in January 2021 as a reporter. Originally from Rhode Island, Shabnam came to Peoria from Washington, DC after graduating from American University with her master’s in journalism and public affairs. Prior to journalism, she was a criminal justice researcher and legal administrator. A former John Jay justice reporting fellow, she also holds a master’s in criminal justice, bachelor’s in psychology, and paralegal certificate.

Micah Danney
Micah Danney is a freelance multimedia journalist based in Brooklyn. He covers human rights issues, criminal justice, international affairs, religion and the environment. He has reported locally in the New York City region, in the Middle East and is currently an editor at the New York Daily News and a freelance writer with Juvenile Justice Information Exchange. He is a formerly incarcerated person, having served time in New York’s prison system for a drug conviction when he was 21.

Kelly Davis
Kelly Davis is a freelance investigative reporter who writes about incarceration and vulnerable populations. For the last several years, her work has focused on deaths in San Diego County jails, prompting a state audit and a new law to address deficiencies in jail medical and mental health care. She’s also written extensively about law enforcement oversight, San Diego’s efforts to address homelessness and attempts to reform California’s juvenile justice system. Her stories have appeared in The Guardian, The Intercept, The Crime Report, Voice of San Diego, the San Diego Union-Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, The Imprint, The Appeal and U.S. News and have been honored by the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies, the San Diego chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement.
KEVIN DAYTON
Kevin Dayton covers Hawaii prisons and jails for an online, non-profit investigative reporting publication called Honolulu Civil Beat. He is the former Capitol Bureau chief for the Honolulu Star-Advertiser. He was formerly Capitol Bureau chief and Big Island Bureau chief for The Honolulu Advertiser, which was Hawaii’s largest circulation daily newspaper until it closed. He also worked as executive director for Hawaii County Mayor Billy Kenoi, and is a U.S. Army veteran. He holds a master’s degree in political science from the University of Hawaii Manoa, and a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Arizona. He and his wife Mahealani live in Hilo and have seven children, five of them grown. They have been state-licensed foster parents since 2009.

MARIA DILORENZO
Maria DiLorenzo, based in Brooklyn, NY, is a contributing writer to The Crime Report. She received her MFA in English/Creative Writing from Hunter College in 2011. Recently, she founded the website Beyond the Crime, which shares stories of those incarcerated for murder to gain a deeper understanding of criminal behavior and the criminal justice. Her work in true crime has been chronicled in podcasts and documentaries, including an appearance on ABC’s 20/20. For the last eight years she has spent her time researching and writing a true crime novel about the life and crimes of Maksim Gelman, which is forthcoming.

DAVID DUDLEY
David is a journalist, educator and playwright. A staffer at St. George News in Southern Utah, he's written for the Christian Science Monitor, Zenger News, the Barton Chronicle, North Star Monthly, and The Northland Journal, among others. He has covered various beats, including breaking news, courts and crimes, sports, and arts and entertainment. His writing on theatre appears regularly in American Theatre Magazine, Contemporary Theatre Review (UK), Conjunto (Cuba), and HowlRound.com. David’s play, 800 Days of Solitude, about the ways in which solitary
confinement affects juveniles and their families, was awarded the 2018 Christian Moe playwriting prize. He earned a BFA with summa cum laude honors from DePaul University, and holds an MFA in playwriting from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He was a CMCJ Southwest Justice Reporting Fellow earlier this year.

**TATIANA FLOWERS**

Tatiana Flowers is a reporter writing stories about inequality for The Colorado Sun, a journalist-run-and-owned news outlet, focused on deeply-reported stories. She has covered crime and courts plus education and health in Colorado, Connecticut, Israel and Morocco. Tatiana received a bachelor’s degree in visual journalism from Penn State and a master’s degree in international reporting at CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. She is an IRE co-award winner and an SPJ award winner. Her goal is to help readers understand that news stories don’t happen in a vacuum. The systems and structures in place lead to the current power imbalances shaping the lives of people in Colorado, and across the country. Her one year anniversary at The Colorado Sun is on September 27, and in this next year, she plans to help elevate her news stories by focusing on finding news through public records requests and through datasets.

**WISTA JEANNE JOHNSON**

Wista Jeanne Johnson is an independent podcaster and blogger. Her podcast, “In the Name of Justice,” is listed among “Best Criminal Justice Podcasts You Must Follow in 2022” by feedspot.com. She blogs on criminal justice, pop culture, and writing at wistajohnson.com. While in New York City, Johnson reported on prisons and the courts and interviewed persons involved in the justice system, yet with the incarceration and untimely death of a son in prison, her interest became personal.

She holds a BA in communications and media from the City University of New York. Johnson has held editorial positions with Essence, Food and Wine, the Amsterdam News, and the New York Village Voice. Her articles have appeared in POZ, Black Enterprise, Today’s Black Woman, Beauty Digest, The City Sun, and St. Petersburg Times. Johnson is a previous Ford Foundation Fellow in Educational Journalism, who reported on public school health education programs in six cities nationwide., and a previous John Jay Justice Reporting Fellow
AKELA LACY
Akela Lacy is a Politics Reporter at The Intercept. She was previously The Intercept’s inaugural Ady Barkan Reporting Fellow; prior to that, she was a Politics Fellow in the D.C. Bureau. She has also worked at Politico, covering breaking news and immigration. She produced Politico’s flagship newsletter, Playbook, and co-authored the afternoon newsletter, Playbook PM. Prior to that, Lacy worked in international reporting at the Pulitzer Center. She graduated from the College of William and Mary with a B.A. in sociology and Italian. She is based in New York City.

HARRISON MALKIN
Harrison Malkin is a politics reporter at Illinois Public Media (NPR) in Urbana-Champaign. He’s currently focusing on elections across the state, particularly the 13th and 15th congressional districts and the gubernatorial race. Malkin has contributed to Tablet Magazine, Afropop Worldwide, CounterPunch, and Sports Illustrated, among other publications. He studied Politics and Communications at Ithaca College, where he was a nightly newscaster and reporter for WICB News.

THOMAS McMORROW
T. E. McMorrow has covered the criminal justice system on the East End of Long Island for over a decade, first for The East Hampton Star, then for the East End Independent, and now for the Express News Group. His work has been recognized for its excellence by the New York State Press Association. Tom’s reporting goes beyond press releases and “according to the police” to ask, what are the facts in the case? What are the underlying issues? What are the almost inevitable dueling points of view? Tom’s ultimate goal as a journalist covering the criminal justice system is to take the reader beyond Who? What? When? Where? questions to hopefully arrive at an understanding of why. Tom’s illustrated children’s book, “The Nutcracker in Harlem” published by HarperCollins in 2017, illustrated by James Ransome, was named a Bank Street College of Education Best Children’s Book of the Year.
CLARK MERREFIELD
Clark Merrefield joined The Journalist’s Resource in 2019 after working as a reporter for Newsweek and The Daily Beast, as a researcher and editor on three books related to the Great Recession, and as a federal government communications strategist. He was a John Jay College Juvenile Justice Journalism Fellow and his work has been awarded by Investigative Reporters and Editors.

TARIRO MZEZEWA
Tariro Mzezewa is a freelance reporter based in Atlanta. She previously worked for The New York Times as a national correspondent, travel reporter and staff editor. She writes about a wide range of topics, including politics, culture and business.

PATRICK RILEY
Perhaps best known for his work as a freelance, senior field producer at “The Oprah Winfrey Show” for over 13 years – including ABC network credits on “Oprah’s Legends Ball” and “Building a Dream: The Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy”, award-winning broadcast journalist, multi-media personality and author, Patrick L. Riley hosts his own digital show "INSPIRED with Patrick L. Riley" which currently streams on the Civically ReEngaged Women’s digital streaming platform CREW-TV and soon-to-launch NABJ Black News and Views (BNV) platform (A recipient of the National Association of Black Journalists 2021 Black Press Grant). With career credits that among others include BET, NBC, Black News Channel, and TV-One, his hard-cover book “That’s What Friends Are For: On the Women Who Inspired Me” (Dorpie Books) is a 2019-20 certizied Outstanding Literary Work by NABJ which just awarded him the 2022 LGBTQ Visibility Award. Patrick has a half dozen assignments – as writer, reporter, and podcast host – under hist belt from Youth Today and Juvenile Justice Information Exchange.
SALVATORE RODRIGUEZ
Sal Rodriguez is the opinion editor for the Southern California News Group, a group of 11 newspapers in Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County and Bernardino County. Previously, he worked with Solitary Watch (solitarywatch.org), where his work on solitary confinement has been widely cited by fellow journalists, academics and activists. He currently serves on the Board of Advisors of Young Voices, a nonprofit talent agency for pro-liberty students and young professionals. He is also a commissioner of California 100 (california100.org), a University of California and Stanford University-backed effort to envision long-term policy reform in the Golden State.

IVY SCOTT
Ivy Scott reports on policing and police misconduct across the state of Massachusetts, as well as issues impacting the criminal-legal system for the Boston Globe. Her interests include alternatives to prosecution and incarceration, criminal-legal reform for emerging adults (18-25), and the widespread use of restorative and transformative justice practices as alternatives to punitive measures in schools, workplaces, and community settings. Her year-long investigation into Rhode Island's opioid epidemic was featured on The Public's Radio.

VIDA VOLKERT
Vida Volkert has been covering crime and corruption, social issues, agriculture and the environment for the Gallup Independent, a newspaper in Gallup, New Mexico, since 2010. A graduate of Florida State University, Vida started her career in journalism covering Native American issues and the immigration beat. Born and raised in Peru, Vida is very passionate about issues impacting indigenous people. Her work has appeared in the Los Angeles Times, the Miami Herald, the Washington Times, the Houston Chronicle, Arizona Republic, and U.S. News & World Report.