Reveal empowers the public through investigative journalism and groundbreaking storytelling to spark action, improve lives, protect our democracy and foster a more equitable and just society. This year, Reveal published some of the most ambitious projects in our 44-year history. The stories you will read about below – about migrant kids, warehouse workers, domestic abuse survivors and formerly incarcerated women – were not easy to tell, but they catalyzed real change in the world and in the lives of our audience.

Our work – our impact – is only possible because of the generosity of individuals and foundations who understand that a free press is an essential part of building an engaged citizenry and upholding our democracy.

Just as this report is going to print, Reveal is launching our second podcast serial, Mississippi Goddam: The Ballad of Billey Joe. A deep dive into the circumstances around the death of a Black teenager in Mississippi, this project exemplifies the empathy and rigor we bring to telling stories that need to be told with compassion, care and a unrelenting quest for justice.

Whether you are a past, present or future supporter, we thank you for your trust and confidence. We’re heartened to be able to share the impact from the stories with you, and we hope you’ll keep reading, watching and listening.

By the Numbers

571
Public Radio Stations
Airing Reveal

Podcast/Radio Audience:
Over 2 Million Listeners

A Sampling of our 2021 Partners

APMreports.  typeinvestigations  The Guardian  Los Angeles Times
FAULTLINES  BuzzFeed  THE VERGE  KQED
Mother Jones  The Center for Public Integrity  Wired  KHN
Vox  PRX

“Reveal makes me a better citizen.”
– Reveal Listener
This year, Reveal’s ongoing investigation into Amazon delivered significant changes in safety protections for workers and inspired a wave of media coverage of workplace safety at Amazon and other major companies.

Our series, Behind the Smiles, exposed a serious injury crisis in Amazon’s warehouses, despite the company’s claims that it is “Earth’s Safest Place to Work.” Over the last three years, our reporting showed how Amazon’s injury rates were far worse than the national average for the warehousing industry. Former Amazon safety managers blamed the company’s production demands, which are enforced under threat of discipline or termination. Workers, whose pace is constantly monitored down to the second, said they had to break safety rules to keep up. Some said they even developed urinary tract infections because they had to avoid going to the bathroom to hit quotas.

Lawmakers, regulators and other journalists are acting on this reporting. Now there’s a groundbreaking report from regulators in Washington state that validates our findings, imposes a rare fine on the company for its policies and has the potential to fundamentally change how Amazon warehouses operate. In response, Amazon announced it would be overhauling one of its key productivity metrics.

Months later, California went a step further. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a groundbreaking new law in September that prohibits warehouse companies from enforcing work quotas that prevent workers from going to the bathroom or doing their jobs safely. This law is directly aimed at stopping Amazon’s unsafe practices.

This new law is a major win for workers: in addition to prohibiting unsafe work quotas, the law also gives workers the right to sue Amazon to overturn unsafe quotas and any discipline they receive for not meeting them. And the law says that if a worker is punished within 90 days of making a complaint about a quota, it will be considered unlawful retaliation.

This story is a great example of Reveal’s commitment to uplifting the broader investigative reporting community. We’ve made our records, data and hands-on training available to the more than 1,100 local reporters who are part of the Reveal Reporting Networks so that they can investigate how workers are treated in their communities. This has led to 16 local stories across North America, including award-winning investigations from The Fresno Bee and The Toronto Star.

Until recently, employers’ injury rates used to be kept secret by the federal government. However, after we sued, a federal judge ruled that these records must be made public. As a result of our lawsuit, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration now posts online injury data for more than 200,000 workplaces, allowing companies to be held accountable for their safety records. The Washington Post used this newly accessible data to highlight Amazon’s latest rate of serious injuries, which declined in 2020 but remains much higher than at non-Amazon warehouses.

2021 Awards Include:

- **Edward R. Murrow Awards**: Podcast winner, network radio division, for American Rehab
- **Gerald Loeb Awards**: Audio winner for American Rehab
- **RFK Journalism Awards**: Cartoon winner for In/Vulnerable: Inequity in the Time of Pandemic
- **Sidney Hillman Foundation**: Hillman Prize for web journalism for The Disappeared
- **Overseas Press Club of America**: David A. Andelman and Pamela Title Award for Justice for Halla
Reveal continues to be one of the only newsrooms in the country that investigates the treatment of kids in the immigration system. While the issue got significant attention during the Trump presidency, it remains a vital issue – and the system continues to be full of abuses regardless of who is in the White House. Our reporting has continued to have a major impact on government agencies and the individual cases of immigrants.

In June, our reporters exposed how a number of the government’s shelters for unaccompanied migrant children have been turning to police to manage the sort of behavior that could be expected of children, especially isolated refugee children. The reporters obtained bodycam footage from a Texas sheriff that showed just how badly those encounters could go: With little investigation and no clear provocation, a deputy tased a 16-year-old for 35 seconds after he’d broken some things because he didn’t want to go to class. The boy was immobilized, arrested and transferred to a juvenile detention facility.

The story was picked up globally. As a result of the reporting, U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro demanded that the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the inspector general for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services investigate what he called “clearly an example of over-policing with respect to asylum-seeking youth.”

The Bexar County Sheriff’s Office is conducting an internal investigation and the deputy who tased the boy has been placed on administrative leave. We continue to fight for public access to the records behind the case, but the Sheriff’s Office has been recalcitrant. In fact, before we published the story, the office asked us to destroy the bodycam video and threatened to ask for an injunction from the Texas attorney general’s office. We did not destroy the video; we believed it was vital for the public to see, and the boy’s family did as well. He has since been released from government custody.

With new data and tips, our team continues to dig into vital, uncovered stories about how the United States treats migrant children.

About every 16 hours, a woman is fatally shot by a current or former intimate partner. And abusers who have access to a firearm are five times more likely to kill their partners. Recognizing that stricter gun laws can prevent domestic violence killings as well as gun-related homicides, Congress and most states have passed laws prohibiting felons and domestic violence abusers from possessing firearms. In October, we published a new investigation showing how loopholes in these laws have allowed offenders to keep their guns, which they use to kill their intimate partners – often orphaning children and shattering families.

From 2017 through 2020, at least 110 intimate partners, children and bystanders were killed by offenders using guns they weren’t allowed to have under federal law, and, in some cases, state law as well, according to our analysis of domestic violence homicide data from 21 states. This project included a documentary we produced with Al Jazeera English, which was screened for lawmakers in Washington, D.C., just days after it was released.

America needs journalists. Your work is vital to our democracy. Keep it up. Keep holding power to account and keep speaking the truth.

– Reveal Listener
RACIAL DISPARITIES IN GOVERNMENT’S COVID-19 ASSISTANCE

The Paycheck Protection Program was designed to be a lifeline for businesses trying to cope with an unprecedented pandemic. But our investigation found that not everyone had the same access to those urgent loans. We analyzed over 5 million loans and found rampant racial disparities in their distribution.

In addition to our story, published in partnership with the Los Angeles Times, we built a wide network to allow local journalists to do investigations into what was going on in their specific communities. NPR’s California newsroom used our analysis to develop localized versions for public radio stations across the state. And thanks to the Reveal Reporting Network, 14 reporters delivered local versions from Wisconsin to Utah. Our local partnerships ensure that our stories reach affected communities and that reporters on the ground can keep the pressure on to help drive change.

In response to our report, U.S. Rep. Judy Chu called on the Biden administration to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Paycheck Protection Program and urged SBA Administrator Isabella Guzman and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to immediately address racial disparities in PPP lending.

REPARATIONS FOR PRISON STERILIZATION

Sometimes, impact can take a long time. Back in 2013, we broke a story about the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation sterilizing hundreds of incarcerated women without the required approvals from the state. Federal and state laws ban inmate sterilizations if federal funds are used, reflecting concerns that prisoners might feel pressured to comply. California used state funds instead, but since 1994, the procedure has required approval from top medical officials in Sacramento on a case-by-case basis. We found that doctors in two prisons had sterilized nearly 150 women between 2006 and 2010 without those approvals. Incarcerated women and prisoner advocates told us that prison medical staff coerced the women, targeting those they deemed likely to return to prison in the future. In July, California passed a groundbreaking law: The state signed off on financial reparations for people who were sterilized without their consent in prison and in a 20th-century eugenics program.

COORDINATING EVACUATIONS FROM AFGHANISTAN

In August, as the Taliban took control in Afghanistan, thousands of people scrambled to get out of the country. Along with dozens of other newsrooms, we worked to help journalists and fixers who have aided Reveal’s reporting efforts over the years, along with their families, leave under the P-2 visa program. We sponsored five families; one was evacuated to Sweden soon after the takedown of Kabul and the other four were evacuated Aug. 30 out of Kabul’s airport just before U.S. left. This last extraction was an immense effort taking multiple days of nearly around-the-clock work. The families spent nearly four harrowing days on a sweltering bus to gain entry into the airport, despite being repeatedly turned away, shot at and even beaten. One of the families was on one of the last planes out of the airport.

While organizing on the ground, our team was also completing countless pages of paperwork to ensure our contacts would be able to leave if they could get into the airport. U.S. officials tried to dissuade our bus from entry multiple times, and the Taliban denied entry at multiple checkpoints. At one point, the Taliban encircled our group, threatened them with guns and beat up a university professor who was part of the group, forcing everyone to leave the airport. We were able to communicate with our contacts on the ground— and finally and miraculously, using intel from an official there, got our group into the airport. They boarded planes that night. Three of the families that were in Doha, Qatar, were subsequently moved to Ramstein Air Base in Germany and are now being processed as refugees.