



'Case Cleared' wins investigative journalism award from Society of Professional Journalists

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CINCINNATI – The Society of Professional Journalists has selected “Case Cleared,” a joint investigation from Newsy, Reveal from the Center for Investigative Reporting and ProPublica, as the recipient of a Sigma Delta Chi Award for excellence in journalism.

“Case Cleared: How Rape Goes Unpunished in America” won in the online investigative journalism category.

The investigation, released in 2018, uncovered how dozens of cities in America are making many rape cases look as if they are solved without actually arresting a suspected rapist. “Case Cleared” found that in those cities, exceptional clearance, a type of clearance intended to be the exception, has instead become the rule for closing rape cases.

For the project – reported by Newsy’s Mark Greenblatt and Mark Fahey; ProPublica’s Bernice Yeung; and Reveal’s Emily Harris – reporters requested data from the 100 largest police jurisdictions and analyzed more than 70,000 rape cases. Almost half of those who responded cleared more rape cases by “exceptional means” than by making an arrest.

The investigation also uncovered a major flaw in the FBI’s new system for tracking crime reports, the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Cases classified as “unfounded,” where police either do not believe the victim or do not believe the crime occurred, are no longer tracked – erasing any trace of this practice in the FBI’s new system.

The reporting led the FBI to expedite a process to reform NIBRS rules in a way that is expected to require the nation’s police agencies to report unfounded crimes. A key advisory board will vote on the recommendations in June. If approved, they will go to the FBI director for implementation. Local police departments across the country also are looking at their process and making changes to how sexual assault cases are cleared.

“‘Case Cleared’ is helping bring accountability and transparency to how crimes are closed,” said Ellen Weiss, vice president and bureau chief of the Scripps Washington Bureau. “It’s collaborative journalism like this that can drive important change and empower citizens to hold people in positions of power accountable for acting in the public interest.”

“Case Cleared” aired on two episodes of the [“Reveal” podcast](#) and public radio show and on Newsy’s cable channel and over-the-top streaming platforms in November 2018. Newsy aired the investigation via an hourlong special report on Dec. 15 and 16 on its cable channel. The investigation also can be viewed at [newsy.com/casecleared](https://www.newsy.com/casecleared).

The Sigma Delta Chi Awards date to 1932, when the Society of Professional Journalists first honored six individuals for contributions to journalism. The winners will be honored at the National Press Club in June in Washington, D.C.

About Newsy

[Newsy](#) is the next-generation national news network that provides “news with the why,” built to inform and engage by delivering the top stories across every platform. Newsy can be watched in more than 36 million cable homes; on over-the-top services including Hulu, Roku, Apple TV, Sling TV, Pluto TV, Amazon Fire TV, and Google Chromecast; and on connected televisions including Samsung, VIZIO and LG. Newsy is also available via its mobile apps and at [newsy.com](#).

About Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting

Founded in 1977 as the nation’s first nonprofit investigative journalism organization, The Center for Investigative Reporting has developed a reputation for being among the most innovative, credible and relevant media organizations in the country. Its award-winning journalists hold the powerful accountable and reveal government fraud and waste of taxpayer funds, human rights violations, environmental degradation and threats to public safety.

About ProPublica

ProPublica is an independent, nonprofit newsroom that produces investigative journalism with moral force. With a team of more than 75 dedicated journalists, ProPublica covers a range of topics including government and politics, business, criminal justice, the environment, education, health care, immigration, and technology.

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