

## Pick of the News

July 20, 2017

**Trump throws Sessions under the bus.** The President told reporters that he never would have nominated Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions to be attorney general if he had known Sessions would recuse himself from the Justice Department's investigation into the Trump team's ties to Russia. [The New York Times](#) Trump also blasted former FBI Director James Comey, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and special counsel Robert Mueller, whose investigation, the president says, is rife with conflicts of interest. Asked if he thought he himself was under investigation the president said: "For what? I didn't do anything wrong." [The New York Times](#) **Related:** Why was Trump surprised at the recusal? [The Washington Post](#)



**Nine lessons: What Washington can learn from the states when it comes to criminal justice reform.** There is little reason to think that the Trump administration is going to usher in a new era of federal reform. But Congress and Attorney General Sessions can learn a lot from what state reformers have done -- often led by states that lean Republican. TMP's editor-in-chief Bill Keller surveys the landscape six months into the new federal regime. [The Marshall Project](#)

**Hot judge in Texas issues cool ruling for inmates.** An angry federal trial judge Wednesday ordered state prison officials to provide air conditioning for the rest of this summer to all elderly, disabled, and other heat-sensitive inmates near Houston. The judge, who had visited the "Pack Unit" himself to evaluate the level of heat, blasted prison staff for what he said was their "seeming indifference" to the suffering of inmates left in sweltering cells without moving air. [Houston Chronicle](#) **Related:** Rural county officials say to judge: bring those overheated inmates here to our empty, air-conditioned prison. [San Antonio Express-News](#)

The Justice Department makes it official: **new federal rules are designed to let police evade state laws that limit asset forfeitures.** The Trump administration overturns

Obama-era rule designed to protect property rights of citizens. [Huffington Post](#) It's a boon to cops. [The Washington Post](#) One Republican lawmaker is not happy. "Instead of revising forfeiture practices in a manner to better protect Americans' due process rights, the DOJ seems determined to lose in court before it changes its policies for the better," said Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah). [Buzzfeed](#) **Related:** How the feds announced the news. [Justice Department](#) Unjust and unconstitutional, says Mark Holden of Koch Industries. [Freedom Partners](#)

**Pennsylvania went too far with new sex offender registration laws, says state's supreme court.** In 2012 state lawmakers amended the "Megan's Law" there to require lifetime registration requirements. Several men who long ago were convicted of sexual offenses, and who had fulfilled the 10-year registration requirement in place at the time, sued, arguing the new law violated their constitutional rights. On Wednesday, they won their case. [Allentown Morning Call](#) **Related:** Read the decision. [Supreme Court of Pennsylvania](#) **More:** Background on the case. [Allentown Morning Call](#)

**Ready or not, O.J. Simpson will be back on your television today.** The celebrity murder defendant (and former football and movie star) will plead for parole in Nevada Thursday and many legal experts believe he may get it. He's 70, has led a trouble-free life in prison, and has served nearly a decade in confinement on a robbery charge. One of his victims will argue on his behalf and prosecutors are not expected to object to early release. [USA Today](#) **Related:** Remember F. Lee Bailey, the legendary defense attorney on the Simpson team? He's had a rough go of it these past two decades. [Town and Country](#) **More:** The ever-fascinating saga. [Los Angeles Times](#)

N/S/E/W

A black cop shoots an unarmed white woman in **Minnesota** in dubious circumstances and suddenly familiar outrages are turned upside down. [CNN](#)

A vote to build a new juvenile detention center in King County, **Washington**, has spawned a broad debate over how best to decrease the number of teenagers behind bars. [The Stranger](#)

A **Maryland** man who survived the ambush that killed his infant son was shot to death in Baltimore. Police are investigating whether the two episodes are connected. [The Baltimore Sun](#)

**North Carolina** moves to limit solitary confinement amid an uproar over conditions of confinement. [Charlotte Observer](#)

Federal immigration officials in **New York** are using prostitution diversion courts to locate undocumented immigrants for deportation. [Village Voice](#)

Commentary



**Same planet, different world.** A new poll says white Americans are as confident in the police as ever. How can that be? Here is original analysis from TMP Commentary Editor Donovan Ramsey. [The Marshall Project](#)

**A pain in the asset.** Jeff Sessions blows up federalism, intrudes on property rights of Americans, upsets bipartisan coalition against asset forfeiture. [The Atlantic](#) **Related:** Criminal justice on a hunch. [Democracy/Cato Institute](#)

**Too much of a good thing.** We want the FBI to be independent. But not too independent. [Lawfare](#) **Related:** How can special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation be impeded? Let us count the ways. [Slate](#)

**The cop, the bodycam, and the killing.** Why was Mohamad Noor still on the beat in Minneapolis given the trouble he already was in? [Daily Beast](#)

**Time for Congress to step up its oversight of the Bureau of Prisons.** The BOP isn't going to reform itself, as a new inspector general's report proves. [The Hill](#)

Etc.

**Video of the Day:** Did a Baltimore police officer plant drugs at a crime scene to implicate a defendant? Sure looks like it. [Buzzfeed](#)

**Question of the Day:** What is the Justice Department going to do about police misconduct in Ville Platte, Louisiana? [Mother Jones](#) **Related commentary:** Louisiana exceeds expectations, adopting sweeping justice reforms. [The New York Times](#)

**Prison Rule of the Day:** Visiting hours at the Tulsa jail will be sharply curtailed, say officials there. Is it because of budget problems? Or security? The story keeps changing. [Tulsa World](#)

**Theory of the Day:** The "procedural justice" citizens feel after encounters with the police is directly related to the trust they have in the cops in their community. [The Crime Report](#)

**Victims of the Day:** New questions arise over an old Michigan law designed to compensate crime victims. Some say it's being applied too narrowly. [Detroit News](#)