



JOHN JAY COLLEGE
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

For Immediate Release

For more information call:

Chris Godek 212-237-8628

Doreen Vinas-Pineda 212-237-8645

***New York Magazine* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* Investigative Team Win 2011 John Jay/H.F. Guggenheim Excellence in Criminal Justice Reporting Awards**

New York, NY – January 12, 2011 -- Jeremy Travis, President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, today announced that Robert Kolker of *New York Magazine* and Craig McCoy, Nancy Phillips, Dylan Purcell, John Sullivan, and Emilie Lounsberry, of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* are the winners of the John Jay/Harry Frank Guggenheim 2011 Excellence in Criminal Justice Reporting Awards.

“This year’s winning entries demonstrated once again how criminal justice journalism at its highest level can lead to changes in public policy and community awareness,” said Travis.

The awards presentation will take place on Jan. 31st 2011 at an awards dinner in New York City, held in conjunction with the 6th annual Harry Frank Guggenheim Symposium: Law & Disorder: Facing the Legal and Economic Challenges to American Criminal Justice, hosted by John Jay’s Center on Media, Crime and Justice (CMCJ).

Robert Kolker of *New York Magazine* won the 2011 Excellence in Criminal Justice Reporting Award (single-story category) for his investigation into the 1992 case of New York State resident Frank Sterling, who served 19 years for a crime he didn’t commit after making a false confession to the police. In his reporting, Kolker explores the troubling impact of false confessions on the criminal justice system. “As a result, copies of his article, “I Did It,” were circulated at the first of several hearings by a subcommittee of the New York State Justice Task Force discussing the issue of tape-recording interrogations.”

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* investigative team of Craig McCoy, Nancy Phillips, Dylan Purcell, John Sullivan, and Emilie Lounsberry, won the 2011 Excellence in Criminal Justice Reporting Award (series category) for “Justice: Delayed, Dismissed and Denied,” a multi-part series on a big-city criminal justice system in crisis. The four-part series exposed flaws in the Philadelphia court system, including an epidemic of witness intimidation, a court debt of \$1 billion dollars in bail owed by defendants who skipped court, and the highest fugitive rate in the nation.

As a result of the *Inquirer* series, then Senator Arlen Specter announced a Senate Judiciary subcommittee investigation into the “broken court system.” The chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Philadelphia District Attorney ordered a series of reforms and reorganization blueprints. The series was “quite simply a primer on the purpose of the First Amendment, a trumpet call to citizens to cease learning about their world from television crimes shows and infotainment,” commented one juror. Added another: “Other news media organizations should take a cue from the *Inquirer* and look at their local court systems.”

Honorable mentions in the single-entry category were awarded "Overdue Justice," by Jim Schaefer, of the *Detroit Free Press*, for an investigation of victim restitutions still held in state coffers years later. Two submissions were tied as runners-up In the series category: Charles Piller of *The Sacramento Bee* for his series, "The Public Eye," focusing on prison reforms; and "Law and Disorder," an investigation of the New Orleans police force after Katrina by the Pro-Publica, *New Orleans Times Picayune* and PBS Frontline Investigative Teams.

"The fact that our runner-up category was tied this year for the first time since the prize was established six years ago illustrates the superb quality of criminal justice reporting in this country, even at a time of continuing pressures on the news industry," said Stephen Handelman, director of John Jay's Center on Media, Crime and Justice.

This year's Excellence in Criminal Justice Reporting Awards, presented annually by the John Jay College Center on Media, Crime and Justice, recognizes work published between November 2009 and Oct 2010. Established to honor journalists whose reporting informs and enhances the public's understanding of issues related to crime in America, the awards are open to U.S.-based print and online journalists. The prize comes with a cash award of \$1,000 in each category.

The distinguished panel of six judges for the 2011 awards included: **Alexa Capeloto**, professor of journalism at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a former Enterprise Editor at the *San Diego Union-Tribune*; **Joe Domanick**, veteran Los Angeles-based crime author and reporter and Associate Director at the CMCJ; **Ted Gest**, president, Criminal Justice Journalists; **Todd Clear**, Dean, School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University; **Greg Donaldson**, John Jay professor, author of *Zebratown* and a former *Newsday* reporter; and **Larry Olmstead**, former managing editor of The *Miami Herald*, president of Leading Edge Associates in San Jose, CA.

The award is supported by a grant from the H.F. Guggenheim Foundation, a private grant-making foundation that aims to shape support research on violence, aggression, and dominance. The winning entries will be posted on the John Jay Center on Media, Crime and Justice web site, <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/cmci/>.

About **John Jay College of Criminal Justice**: An international leader in educating for justice, John Jay College of Criminal Justice of The City University of New York offers a rich liberal arts and professional studies curriculum to upwards of 14,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 135 nations. In teaching, scholarship and research, its faculty are the College approaches justice as an applied art and science in service to society and as an ongoing conversation about fundamental human desires for fairness, equality and the rule of law. For more information, visit www.jjay.cuny.edu.

The Center on Media, Crime and Justice, established at John Jay College in 2006, is the nation's only practice- and research-oriented think tank devoted to encouraging and developing high-quality reporting on criminal justice, and to promoting better-informed public debate on the complex 21st century challenges of law enforcement, public security and justice in a globalized urban society. For more information, visit <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/cmci/> or www.thecrimereport.org

The Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation sponsors scholarly research on problems of violence, aggression, and dominance. The foundation provides both research grants to established scholars and dissertation fellowships to graduate students during the dissertation-writing year. For more information, visit <http://www.hfg.org>.

For More Information, Call

Chris Godek, 212.237.8628

Doreen Vinas, 212.237.8645

Cara Tabachnick, 212-484-1175

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