

Tips and Trends

From ICJE, Inc. <jimrechel@icje.ccsend.com>

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To Phillip Calvert <PCalvert@faulkner.edu>



Sifting Through Our Lives



I wandered toward the refrigerator the other day while my wife was in the kitchen, sifting flour. She was preparing another recipe to provide

“healthy” options for her husband — a man who still believes Chips Ahoy and Oreos are essential elements of the food triangle.

Always curious, even about simple things, I paused to watch the flour drift through the sifter. It made me wonder: what exactly does sifting do, and why is it necessary for some recipes but not for others? What was immediately obvious was the flour was of a different composition having been put through the sifter.

Not unlike life itself, we too are sifted, by unexpected challenges and hardships that test what remains within us. I was reminded of this a few days after the terrible ice storm that struck Nashville and several other states. A text arrived from the phone of my former roommate at the FBI Academy and lifelong friend — but it wasn't from him.

The message told us he had fallen on the ice, fractured his neck and hip, and suffered a brain bleed. He was in Vanderbilt Hospital. I was stunned. Just the day before, we had spoken and all seemed well.

The next day he had noticed a small water leak in his driveway and, curious to find the source, stepped into the street — unaware of the black ice hidden beneath the sheen of water. A passing Good Samaritan found him unconscious, covered him with extra coats, and called 911.

Although he faces months of recovery ahead, his doctors believe he will heal without permanent injury. When I spoke with him last week, his voice sounded weak but determined — firm in his commitment to rehab. Later, he texted that the emotional toll has been harder than expected, as he's always known good health.

As I offered words of encouragement, I thought again of the image of my wife sifting flour.

In Luke 22:31–32, Jesus tells Peter: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.” The act of sifting symbolizes the intense scrutiny and spiritual trials that reveal both our weaknesses and our strength.

Just as sifting separates the chaff from the grain, life's trials reveal the enduring faith that survives adversity.

Often, those challenges refine us — making our faith, character, and focus stronger. May we use that strength to live more purposefully and do God's will each day.

Much like the healthier loaf of homemade bread my wife baked this weekend.

Let me know what additional enhancements you would like to see, and I'll try to get it done.

Thanks,
Jim Rechel
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Training Desk: Educational Opportunities

ICJE specific training has been submitted to the Alabama Crime Prevention Clearinghouse, however we are still awaiting all of the necessary funding approvals that go through a myriad of hands within the state. Hopefully in March we'll have a list of ICJE specific training opportunities. In the meantime, here are a few other opportunities:

(Hover over the titles and click for link to program websites)

Additional private sector training will be provided next month as well.

ACTIVATE Program

ICJE provides instructors to the **ACTIVATE** program, a partnership between the Alabama Community College System and the Alabama Department of Corrections.

ACTIVATE helps Department of Corrections employees prepare academically and physically before entering the 10-week APOST-required Corrections Academy.

In calendar year 2025, ICJE supported 110 students in the program. Of those, 101 successfully completed the **ACTIVATE** requirements, and 96 went on to successfully complete the Corrections Academy.

Most participants who did not complete the program or academy withdrew due to illness or injury. We are proud of this program's strong success rate and look forward to its continued growth."



The inaugural ACCS ACTIVATE career readiness program for correctional officers holds its first graduation - CentrAL Inc!

An archived article that highlighted the first class in a new career readiness program at ACCS for Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) correctional officers graduated.

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Alzheimer's Initiatives

IACP's Alzheimer's Initiatives is committed to helping first responders improve their knowledge and skills to enhance their response to community members living with Alzheimer's Disease.

The link above provides access to the website with short roll call videos as well as many other resources for first responders.



ROCIC - 3 Day Gangs and Narcotics Conference - Nashville, TN

Mar 9-11, 2026.

The 3 day conference comences on Monday the 9th. The discounted hotel rate cutoff was Feb 13, or until the room block is filled.

CrimeDesk: Crime and Society



Crime Is Down. So Why Does It Feel Worse?

The gap between falling crime rates and rising public fear is real — and it's driven by more than just bad headlines.

By nearly every measurable standard, the United States is safer today than it has been in decades. Murders dropped more than 20% in 2025 alone—possibly the largest single-year decline on record—and violent crime rates have fallen broadly across cities large and small. Yet polls consistently show that most Americans believe crime is getting worse. Something significant is lost in translation between the data and daily life. Five distinct forces help explain the disconnect.

1. The Media Effect: "If It Bleeds, It Leads"

Crime is the most widely consumed local news topic in America, second only to weather. The 24-hour news cycle and social media mean that a violent crime from across the country lands on your phone within minutes, making the world feel more dangerous regardless of local conditions. Researchers call this sustained exposure to crime coverage "mean world syndrome"—a phenomenon where prolonged consumption of violent media leads people to perceive the world as more threatening than the facts support, no matter where they live or what the local data shows.

2. The Partisan Lens

This may be the most powerful distorting factor right now. In 2024, 90% of Republicans surveyed said national crime rates had risen over the prior year. By 2025, after a change in administration, that number dropped significantly—while Democratic respondents shifted in the opposite direction. The actual murder rate, meanwhile, had

been falling since 2023, well before any new policies took effect. The data did not change; the political context did. People's perceptions of crime safety are increasingly filtered through partisan identity rather than lived experience or objective statistics.

3. Disorder vs. Crime — A Critical Distinction

This is perhaps the most underappreciated nuance in the entire debate. Official crime statistics measure arrests and reported offenses—they do not capture the texture of daily life in public spaces. Visible homelessness, open-air drug use, encampments near transit stations, and erratic behavior in shared spaces are not "crimes" in the statistical sense, but they powerfully shape how safe people feel walking to their car or through a downtown corridor. The numbers say crime is down; what people see and experience on the street often tells a different story. Both can be simultaneously true.

4. The Data Itself Has Real Limitations

Even the "reality" side of the equation is murkier than headlines suggest. The FBI's official annual crime statistics lag real-world conditions by nine to eighteen months. Additionally, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report and the Bureau of Justice Statistics' separate Victimization Survey—which captures crimes that go unreported to police—have sometimes pointed in different directions since 2020. National averages also obscure significant variation: while homicides fell sharply in most cities, some metro areas saw increases in specific categories like aggravated assault or rape. The headline number is real, but it is also a simplification.

5. A Near-Permanent Psychological Baseline

The disconnect between data and perception is not new, and it is not driven by any single administration or news environment. Since 1989, Gallup has asked respondents whether they believe there is more or less crime than the year before. In 21 of 22 years surveyed, a majority said more. Americans expressed this pessimism consistently throughout the great 30-year crime decline of the 1990s and 2000s. There appears to be a near-permanent psychological tendency to overestimate personal safety threats—perhaps rooted in evolutionary risk-aversion, or simply in the way vivid anecdotes outweigh abstract statistics in human cognition.

The Bottom Line

Headlines are not exactly lying—but they are not the main culprit here either. The gap between falling crime rates and rising public fear is driven by a convergence of forces: media incentive structures that reward alarming stories, political polarization that colors how people interpret the same facts, the real-but-unmeasured experience of disorder in public spaces, data that is inherently lagged and

incomplete, and a deep-seated human psychological tendency to overweight threats to personal safety.

The data says we are safer. But feeling safe requires more than statistics—it requires trust, civic order, and a media and political environment that accurately represents reality. On all three fronts, there is still significant work to do.

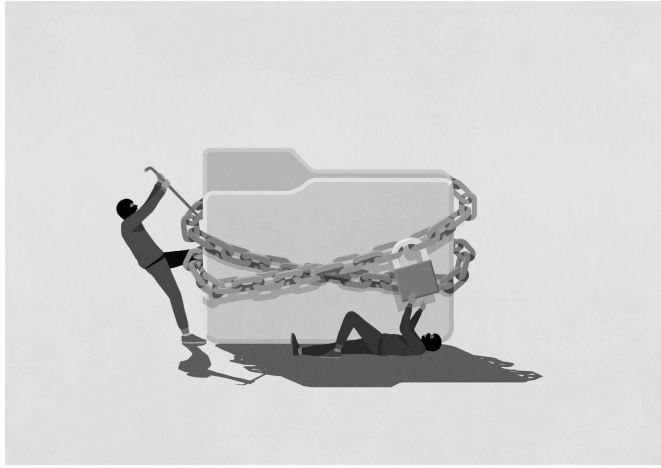
References: Council on Criminal Justice Year-End 2025 Report | Gallup Crime Survey | Bureau of Justice Statistics



How Fraud's Industrial Revolution Will Fuel The Golden Age Of Scams

If 2025 was the year fraud industrialized, 2026 will likely be the year it automates to its true golden age.

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Why governments need to treat fraud like cyberwarfare, not customer service

Fraud has become industrialized and weaponized by syndicates and hostile states. This op-ed argues it's a global security threat and outlines a new US-UK-backed public-private task force to fight it.

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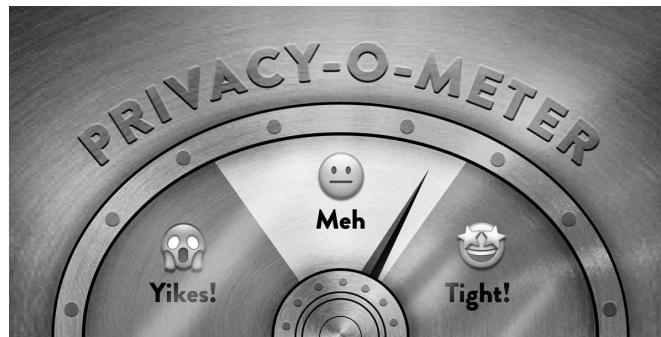
TechDesk: Technology Around Us



The Escalating Threats of Doxxing and Swatting: An Analysis of Recent Developments and Legal Responses - National Association of Attorneys General

Once considered fringe internet behaviors, doxxing and swatting have evolved into sophisticated, technology-enabled tools of harassment, coercion, and public endangerment.

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Opt Out - Daily Tips to Protect Your Privacy and Security

Trying to take control of your online privacy can feel like a full-time job. But if you break it up into small tasks and take on one project at a time it makes the process of protecting your privacy much easier. This month we're going to do just that.

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Digital Exhaust

The recent and continuing investigation into the abduction of Nancy Guthrie introduced the masses to the term "Digital Exhaust", which refers to the amount of data all of the technology we use everyday tells a story about our lives.

With many people having their privacy violated or infringed upon from the doxxing crowd, I thought it might be helpful for those interested in protecting their privacy from hackers, burglars, and others with ill intentions from gathering information from the digital exhaust of our lives.

In addition to the many websites addressing "OptOut" guidance, I created a pdf entitled "Digital Exhaust Output Guide" from an older version created for law enforcement. Using a both Google research, combined with a couple of different AI searches, I created a newly updated version for those who may be interested.

All of the material was from open source sites, although I believe the original guide was first listed as "For Official Use Only", but over time ended up being posted to public sites. With the exception of references to Address Confidentiality Programs that provide LE personnel with a substitute address for use on public records, the information is not confidential or unique to law enforcement. It contains information for anyone interested in limiting their digital exhaust.

[View "Digital Exhaust OptOut Guide 2026"](#)



Criminals are using Zillow to plan break-ins. Here's how to remove your home in 10 minutes.

An 84-year-old was kidnapped from her home. Retirees in Florida had their sliding glass door shattered at midnight. Two teens dressed as delivery drivers duct-taped a couple in Scottsdale. It all starts the same way: Your address is free online, and Zillow shows them the blueprint.

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A sample Opt Out Listing is Shown Below - For Spokeo



Spokeo | People Search | Opt Out

You can easily remove your information from Spokeo by using our online opt out form.

[Read More](#)

Leadership Desk



Delegate Control; A pathway to stronger leaders - Iron Leader Team

A pathway to stronger leaders.

The quality of your leadership is the single most important factor that will determine the success or failure of your organization. As the world becomes increasingly complex, success requires effective leaders who cultivate adaptability and drive performance within their team.

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"Crossroads" Desk

More and more situations arise in which law enforcement officers utilize cellular data in investigations. At the crossroad of personal privacy and law enforcement investigations, Apple is siding on privacy. Time will tell if it is the best decision for our society.



Why Apple's New iPhone Privacy Feature Is Flawed

Apple has moved to reduce the precise location data telecoms companies can access from iPhones, but there are some drawbacks.

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Federal judge denies injunction, leaving TN blocking up-close recording of police activity in place - Feb 17, 2026 Tennessee Lookout

A federal judge will allow Tennessee's police "buffer law" to remain in place while a lawsuit filed by a coalition of media organizations goes forward. State lawmakers passed legislation in 2025 allowing police to order members of the public, including media, to remain 25 feet away from crime scenes, traffic stops and any "ongoing and [...]"

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One Last Thing



For a Night, We Were Human | The Christmas Truce Music Video

I came upon this video while researching for articles or videos that would inspire us to work together to find solutions to our problems. I'm not sure in what context it was created, but the video delivers a powerful message we can carry throughout the year. I hope that the messenger does not blind us to the message.

In the frozen trenches of World War I along the Lys River in 1914, amidst the relentless thunder of artillery, a miraculous unofficial truce unfolded on Christmas Day. British and German soldiers, weary enemies, emerged from the mud and wire to share gifts, songs, and stories of home together in the ruins.

[Video](#)



Jake Jarvis: The Unsung Hero of Hurricane Helene

[Read More](#)

When Hurricane Helene struck the U.S., the communities in its path were left devastated. Yet, instead of giving up, they picked up shovels and began rebuilding their beloved hometowns. Among them, one individual shines especially bright-Jake Jarvis. In North Carolina, Jake has worked tirelessly to repair roads and restore homes, ensuring families can once again feel a sense of comfort and belonging.

It's a 25-minute video, but it will restore your faith in the goodness of those all around us. So many are unsung heroes in every community. The 13:00 minute mark sums it up best: People Helping People.



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