Burden of Richmond Evictions Weighs Heaviest in Black Neighborhoods | Retro Report

Tenants Facing Eviction Over Covid-19 Look to a 1970s Solution | Retro Report

New York Tenants Are Organizing Against Evictions, as They Did in the Great Depression | Retro Report

How Decades of Housing Discrimination Hurts Fresno in the Pandemic | Retro Report

2021 Annual Report
OUR MISSION

Retro Report’s mission is to inject context into today’s news cycle. We use the clear lens of history to bring a greater understanding of current events and to fight misinformation.

OUR HISTORY

Retro Report launched in 2013 as a nonprofit news organization, drawing staff from 60 Minutes, Frontline, CNN, ABC News and The New York Times. We’ve produced hundreds of short documentaries and have reached tens of millions of viewers through longstanding partnerships with The Times, PBS, the New Yorker, Univision and other national news outlets. Our work has been recognized with nine Emmy Award nominations, multiple Edward R. Murrow Awards, Webbys and a Gerald Loeb Award. Our documentaries have been showcased at film festivals across the country.

RETRO REPORT IN THE CLASSROOM

After eight years, we took a step back and asked ourselves a simple question: Who needs our work most? As the Covid pandemic hit, the answer became clear. Teachers were seeking new resources to bring history to life at a time when an understanding of American history and civic literacy was diminished. Their needs motivated us to prioritize our education initiative. Teachers, especially social studies teachers, tell us that our videos, lesson plans and student activities solve a growing problem in their classrooms: bringing history to life for their students. In 2021, we expanded Retro Report in the Classroom, a free, easy-to-use resource for middle school, high school and college educators. Our partners include Common Sense Media, PBS Learning, New American History and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

ON THE COVER Retro Report’s “Hitting Home” series gave viewers historical context on housing issues that the coronavirus pandemic brought into focus. We covered apartment buy-back programs. Our look at the #CancelRent movement and compared it to tenant activism in the Great Depression. We reported on redlining and discriminatory housing policy in Fresno, Calif., and on rising evictions as a reflection of decades-old racist housing policies in Richmond, Va. (Images, clockwise from top left: Retro Report; Alamy (Scherl/Süddeutsche Zeitung); University of Richmond (HOLC); Retro Report.)

STRATEGIC VISION

We are building a resource for students, teachers, journalists and the general public that illuminates connections between the past and the present. Retro Report’s growing archive of over 250 short documentary videos makes use of first-hand accounts and rich archival video to provide deep, fact-based historical context. This work fosters critical thinking and civic-mindedness. Of the hundreds of educators who have attended our webinars, nearly all say they will use more of our resources. After this early success, we are eager to increase our impact. We currently reach about 12,000 educators each month through conference presentations, webinars and a newsletter tailored for teachers. We have developed a plan to create new materials and meet an ambitious goal of connecting with 100,000 teachers and 5 million students by 2025. We invite you to explore our progress at RetroReport.org/Education.
Message from the Executive Producer

Dear friends,

2021 marked the second year that we reported, filmed and edited our stories under difficult circumstances. I remain in awe of the work and commitment of every member of our extraordinary staff.

I’m particularly proud of the work our team did bringing the housing crisis to light as the coronavirus pandemic spread across the country. “Hitting Home” is a four-part digital reporting initiative that provides a window on the history that shaped America's housing policy in New York, Richmond, Va. and Fresno, Calif. The capstone of the project is a feature-length film that will document the story of the eviction crisis through the eyes of those affected: renters, sheriffs, landlords and judges.

In July we took our education initiative, Retro Report in the Classroom, to the next level by hiring David Olson as director of education to shape the direction of our work in schools. For the first time, we produced two series especially for the classroom. One explored the impact of the Cold War, including the Berlin airlift, the space race, the Korean War, McCarthyism, and the threat of nuclear war. These videos reached hundreds of middle- and high school students as part of a free online course through the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. A second series was produced to help teachers discuss the anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, an event that occurred before any of today’s students were born.

I’m also proud of the work we released with our news partners this year, including a broadcast film about the El Mozote massacre in El Salvador with PBS “Frontline” and ProPublica, an investigation into Black maternal morbidity and the history midwifery with the New Yorker, a story about the war in Afghanistan with The New York Times, and a look at the history of health and weight with Scientific American.

Thank you all for your support.

Best,

Kyra Darnton
President and Executive Producer
Stories From History, Lessons for Today

Studies show that U.S. history and civics education is in crisis. A recent National Assessment of Educational Progress report card revealed that only 24 percent of eighth graders are proficient in civics knowledge, and just 15 percent are proficient in U.S. history. These are critical deficits: researchers have identified a clear link between students’ civics education and adult civic participation, particularly when it comes to voting. Teachers are struggling to capture the attention of middle- and high school students who spend hours watching YouTube videos, and who may not understand the relevance of history and civics to their world today.

Preparing today’s students to expect and participate in informed discussion is a vital challenge. We understand that an effective way to reach this digital-native generation is through deeply reported videos rooted in history. Watching digital videos is the way Generation Z communicates with and makes sense of the world. Our work provides context backed by the rigor and professional standards of Retro Report’s experienced journalists. Educators use our work to teach fact-checking, interviewing and research skills, empowering students to become engaged citizens.

Teaching About 9/11 Collection

The September 11 terrorist attacks occurred more than 20 years ago, before any of today’s students were born. This collection of resources contains four original short films, each accompanied by a lesson plan and a student activity.

The films include:

- 9/11 Heroes: Surviving the Biggest Attack on U.S. Soil
- How the Military Response to 9/11 Led to Two Decades of War in Afghanistan
- Wrongly Accused of Terrorism: The Sleeper Cell That Wasn’t
- He’s the Only CIA Contractor Convicted in a Torture-Related Case
Each of our lessons is grounded in Retro Report’s archive of over 250 short documentary films that incorporate first-hand accounts, archival video and compelling narratives. Lessons cover topics in world history, civics, science and media literacy.

Retro Report videos are produced by award-winning journalists. Our education initiative is led by a nationally recognized former teacher, and guided by advisory teams of teachers from across the United States. We have attracted a growing community of thousands of educators, with the goal of reaching 100,000 teachers and 5 million students by 2025.

Teaching About the Cold War

The ideological standoff known as the Cold War has had lasting repercussions across the globe. This collection was featured in an online class with The Gilder Lehrman Institute’s History School and a 2018 Gilder Lehrman National History Teacher of the Year.

By talking to individuals who were involved 40 years ago, you show how their thoughts changed over time. I ask my students after showing the video: Did this change what you thought about this matter?”

— A U.S. History teacher

Retro Report makes students feel as if they were experiencing the event. The experience is brought to them.

— A U.S. History teacher

I have been using Retro Reports since 2014 or 2015. I personally love your videos. They are well researched, factually verified, and you do a good job in summarizing the topics. And it’s free.

— A U.S. History teacher

My students really like Retro Report videos. When I have ‘Video Clip’ on the daily agenda, they always ask if it’s from the cool video site – meaning Retro Report – or if I’m showing them something boring from YouTube.

— High school teacher

The films include:

- How a Cold War Airlift Saved Berlin with Food, Medicine and Chocolate
- The Cold War on TV: Joseph McCarthy vs. Edward R. Murrow
- How the Korean War Changed the Way the U.S. Goes to Battle
- Why the Cold War Race for Nuclear Weapons Is Still a Threat
- How the Cold War Arms Race Fueled a Sprint to the Moon
In Fresno, Calif., the coronavirus pandemic has magnified harm caused by decades of racially discriminatory housing practices. Residents of some of its predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods face eviction at a higher rate than their white neighbors. Fresno’s history of housing discrimination has reinforced a cycle where new investment is concentrated in predominantly white parts of town. The repercussions during the coronavirus pandemic have been catastrophic.

This video was released in partnership with Fresnoland and was supported by the Pulitzer Center, the James Irvine Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“"You could overlay a heat map of where the cases are most concentrated in the city of Fresno today with that 1918 general plan map and see the same places being impacted.”

— Tania Pacheco Werner, health policy researcher

After enduring decades of unfair housing practices and economic hardship, Black residents of Richmond, Va., now disproportionately face the risk of homelessness. Black residents have long been cut out of political decision making and redlined into zones where banks wouldn’t offer mortgages. The coronavirus pandemic is magnifying those disparities. Even after controlling for income and property value, researchers found, the most decisive factor in Richmond’s evictions is race.

This video was supported by the Pulitzer Center, the James Irvine Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“If you want to know what’s going on in African American communities in the 21st century, you’ve got to walk through the fire of Jim Crow segregation. There are residual effects from the public policies in the mid-20th century that still resonate profoundly in the 21st century.”

— Julian Maxwell Hayter, historian University of Richmond

“I’ve looked into the eyes of people who’ve said, ‘This created fear in me. This created intense shame and guilt for me and your book was, kind of, in my head and shaped, you know, the way that I viewed myself.’”

— Joshua Harris, Author, “I Kissed Dating Goodbye” Later renounced the purity movement
**Bringing Midwifery Back to Black Mothers**
Released: May 13, 2021

*PRODUCER:* Sarah Weiser  
*EDITOR:* Anne Checler  
*ASSOCIATE PRODUCER:* Charu Raman

The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among wealthy countries, and Black women are dying in childbirth at more than double the rate of white women. Midwives — specialists in caring for women during pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period — are using skills honed over centuries and working with obstetricians to improve those odds.

This video was released in collaboration with the New Yorker and supported by Solutions Journalism Network.

“Part of what led to the elimination of midwives was just by stereotyping people as ignorant, dirty, illiterate. The fact that this workforce was mostly Black women and that those that weren’t Black women were immigrants, this really was about race and class.”  
— Michelle Drew, Certified Nurse-Midwife

**We’re Catching More Diseases From Wild Animals, and It’s Our Fault.**
Released: Jan. 27, 2021

*PRODUCER:* Scott Michels  
*EDITOR:* Brian Kamerzel  
*ASSOCIATE PRODUCER:* Charu Raman

For more than a decade, scientists have been sounding the alarm about the increased risk of a pandemic caused by viruses that jump species from wild animals into humans. Most scientists believe the interaction between people and wild animals led to the Covid-19 pandemic, and they say the pandemic shows that we haven’t learned the lessons of past outbreaks.

Cross-species diseases have existed for hundreds of years, and are thought to be the cause of several modern disease outbreaks, including HIV, SARS and SARS-CoV-2, the new coronavirus.

As the human population expands, clearing forests, trading in wild animals, and otherwise damaging the environment, the number of these so-called “spillovers” appears to be increasing.

“We saw the emergence of a new coronavirus thought to be from an animal. That was a wakeup call that things could spread rapidly around the world.”  
— Dr. David Heymann, a public health expert

**How a Cold War Airlift Saved Berlin With Food, Medicine and Chocolate**
Released: April 4, 2021

*PRODUCER:* Kit R. Roane  
*EDITOR:* Cullen Golden

A Soviet blockade around Berlin cut the divided city off from the West. But in 1948 U.S. and British pilots began to fly food, fuel and medicine to the allied sectors. That effort laid a foundation for international partnerships including NATO that are still in place today. The Berlin blockade was one of the first crises of the Cold War as the United States and the Soviet Union each sought to expand their spheres of influence.

“The candy companies were super. They sent over all I could drop. And we had all our pilots tying up handkerchief parachutes. We even dropped some in Easts Berlin. The Soviets complained about that, so we just kept doing it in West Berlin.”  
— Gail (Hal) Halvorsen, Air Force Pilot
Salvadoran military officers accused of ordering a massacre that left 1,000 people dead have been investigated in recent years, but their trial, and a final reckoning, may now be in jeopardy. The 1981 rampage, perpetrated by soldiers trained and equipped by the United States, took place in and near the village of El Mozote. More than half the victims were children. Despite investigations, courtroom maneuvering and decades of pleas by survivors, no one has ever been held responsible.

New York Times correspondent Raymond Bonner was one of the first journalists to uncover evidence of the massacre, along with the photographer Susan Meiselas. His reporting was roundly — and wrongly — assailed at the time by the Reagan administration, but history has borne out the truth of his first-hand accounts.

Several years ago, a judge in El Salvador began an investigation to determine who should be held accountable. But the current president of El Salvador wants his country to move into the future by forgetting the past.
WE’RE STRONGER BECAUSE OF YOU

Retro Report is stronger than ever thanks to an expanding community of donors and funding partners. Every tax-deductible donation we receive helps us create new documentaries, update those in our library, and expand our outreach to educators. Thank you wholeheartedly for being an important part of our continued growth.

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2021 FINANCIALS

2021 Revenue

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NOTES Figures are unaudited. Totals include in-kind costs but do not include fixed assets depreciation costs. Upon request, we will provide you with a description of our programs and activities for which donated funds will be expended. A copy of our most recently filed financial report is available from the Charities Registry on the New York State Attorney General’s website (www.charitiesnys.com) or, upon request, by contacting the New York State Attorney General, Charities Bureau, at 28 Liberty Street, New York, New York 10005, or us at 633 Third Avenue, 16th Floor, New York, New York 10017. You also may obtain information on charitable organizations from the New York State Office of the Attorney General at www.charitiesnys.com or (212) 416-8401.

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D. Ben Benoit, is the executive director of the Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation. A former senior vice president at U.S. Trust/Bank of America, he assists individuals and organizations with financial, estate and tax planning services.

Barbra Bluestone Rothschild, M.D., a lecturer at Columbia University, has taught medical ethics at the graduate level for 20 years. She is an advisor to the Oak Foundation and serves on the board of Yaffed.

Christopher Buck, the founder and chairman of Retro Report, developed the project concepts in collaboration with co-founder Larry Chollet. He is a former television editor, most recently with the National Basketball Association. He is president of the Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation.

Todd Larsen is president of the global Nexis Solutions division of LexisNexis. In past roles, he was the C.E.O. of Blurb, a digital publishing platform; president of the news, sports and entertainment groups at Time Inc.; and president of Dow Jones & Co., where he oversaw the business operations of The Wall Street Journal.

Justin Nyweide is a founding partner and co-C.I.O. of HMI Capital, which invests globally in technology, media, and financial services companies. Previously he worked in private equity. He serves on the board of Reveal/CIR, a journalism nonprofit.

Richard Tofel, currently a distinguished visiting fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, was the founding general manager of ProPublica and was its president from 2013 to 2021. Tofel was previously the assistant publisher of The Wall Street Journal.

Alexandra Wallace is the head of media and content at Yahoo. Previously, she was senior vice president of NBC News and executive in charge of “Today” and “Meet the Press.” She has worked with Google and The Wall Street Journal and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Paula L. White is the executive director of Educators for Excellence, an advocacy organization serving New York City public school educators. She has taught elementary grades, founded a public charter school, and led efforts toward statewide public school improvement.

Dana Wolfe is a broadcast journalist, documentary and live event producer and podcast creator. She was the founding executive producer of the debate forum Intelligence Squared U.S., and has served as executive director of the Rosenkranz Foundation.

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