

KELLY ORIAN

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PROGRESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GEORGE WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF LAW, Washington, D.C. <i>Associate Professor of Clinical Law, Director, Prisoner & Reentry Clinic</i>	July 2026-present
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF LAW, Charlottesville, VA <i>Assistant Professor, Director, Decarceration and Community Reentry Clinic</i>	January 2022-June 2026
THE FIRST 72+, New Orleans, LA <i>Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director</i> • Responsible for fundraising, organizational development, and communications • Responsible for growing the organization from \$0 to an annual budget exceeding \$1,800,000 and a staff of 22, with full healthcare benefits for all staff. • Responsible for program development and coordination • Responsible for media strategy and press communications • Supervising attorney for Reentry Legal Clinic	2015-2021
BARD EARLY COLLEGE OF NEW ORLEANS, New Orleans, LA <i>Adjunct Professor</i> • Courses Taught: Entrepreneurship and Social Change; Represent The City	2017-2020
ORLEANS PUBLIC DEFENDERS (OPD), New Orleans, LA <i>Staff Attorney, Special Litigation Division</i>	2015-2016
UCLA LABOR CENTER, Los Angeles, CA <i>Law Clerk</i>	2014-2015
LOS ANGELES BLACK WORKER CENTER, Los Angeles, CA <i>Law Clerk</i>	2014-2015
ORLEANS PUBLIC DEFENDERS (OPD), New Orleans, LA <i>Summer Law Clerk</i>	Summer 2014
NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH LAW (NCYL), Oakland, CA <i>Summer Law Clerk, Juvenile Justice Project</i>	Summer 2013
JUVENILE JUSTICE PROJECT OF LOUISIANA (JJPL) & CITIZENS FOR SECOND CHANCES (CFSC) <i>Campaign Coordinator, Campaign to End Life Without Parole Sentencing for Juveniles</i>	2008-2012

EDUCATION

UCLA School of Law
Juris Doctorate

Aug. 2012-May 2015

- Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy; Critical Race Studies Program; Business Law and Policy Specialization
- **Clinics:** El Centro Legal – Executive Director; Re-Entry Clinic – Co-Chair; Skid-Row Legal Clinic; Community Economic Development Clinic; Affordable Housing Transactions Clinic
- **Activities & Service:** Criminal Justice Society – Co-President; Experiential Clinical Learning Faculty Committee – Student Representative.

University of Colorado at Boulder
Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude

Aug. 2004 – May 2008

- Majors: Political Science, Women and Gender Studies
- Minor: Ethnic Studies

FELLOWSHIPS & PROFESSIONAL HONORS

- J.M.K. Innovation Prize 2020 – J.M. Kaplan Fund
- Top 50 Leader in Law, 2019 – New Orleans City Business, Leadership in Law Issue
- Michael Rubinger Community Fellowship 2018 – Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Global Good Fund Fellowship for Social Entrepreneurship 2018 – The Global Good Fund
- Richard Cornuelle Award for Social Entrepreneurship 2017 – Manhattan Institute
- Echoing Green Fellow 2015 – Echoing Green

PUBLICATIONS

“Convicted by Twelve, Or Carried by Six”: Firearm Rights Restoration as Harm Reduction for People Living with Felony Convictions.

in Penn St. L. Rev. (Forthcoming).

Legal Education as Liberation: Lessons from Jailhouse Lawyers (In progress)

Community-Based Re-Entry: Breaking the Cycle of Reincarceration

in TRANSFORMING CRIMINAL JUSTICE: AN EVIDENCE-BASED AGENDA FOR REFORM (Jon B. Gould and Pamela R. Metzger, eds., 2022) (co-authored with Troy Rhodes)

In Defense of Reentry: A Response to Shreya Subramani’s Productive Separations,

47 FORDHAM URB. L.J. 993 (2020) (co-authored with Thomas Frampton)

“I’ll Say I’m Home, I Won’t Say I’m Free”: Persistent Barriers to Housing, Employment, and Financial Security for Formerly Incarcerated People in Low-Income Communities of Color,

25 NAT. BLACK L.J. 23 (2016)

- Cited in *State v. Kelliher*, 854 S.E.2d 584 (N.C. 2021)

One Year Later: State Level Response and Implementation of Miller v. Alabama,

23 YOUTH L. NEWS No. 3 (2013)

BOARDS & VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- Central Virginia Community Justice (CVCJ), Legal Advisory Circle September 2023 – *Present*
- Fountain Fund – Board Member, Loan Application Review Committee October 2021 – *Present*
- The Haven – Board Member July 2025 - *Present*

BAR ADMISSIONS

Virginia, District of Columbia, Louisiana, W.D.Va., M.D.La.

PRESENTATIONS & PANELS

Bringing Research & Innovation into the Debate on Guns in Society (BRIDGS) Symposium. *Gun Rights, Gun Control, and the Politics of Race*. February 27, 2026. (Presenting my article, “*Convicted by Twelve or Carried by Six*”: Guns, Race, and Harm Reduction.)

The GW Defenders. *Professor Panel*. September 23, 2025

Law Students for Justice In Palestine, GW Defenders, Immigration Law Association, GW American Constitution Society, and ACLU-GW. *Chilling Free Speech: Immigration Consequences & Criminalizing Dissent*. September 30, 2025

Law as Science. *Beyond Recidivism: Measuring Rehabilitation, Reentry and ‘Success’ After Incarceration*. October 21, 2024.

Welcoming America. *The Role of Policy in Cultivating More Welcoming Communities*. October 8, 2024.

Virginia Festival of the Book, *Coffee and Crime with Sarah Weinmann*. March 22, 2024.

University of Virginia School of Law, *Shaping Justice Conference*. February 2, 2024.
Panel discussion on creative solutions to the criminalization of poverty.

University of Virginia School of Law, *Paths to the Legal Academy*. November 6, 2023.
Panel discussion on diverse paths to becoming a law professor.

Association of American Law Schools. *Unshackled: Stories of Redemption and Hope in Post-Conviction Work in Parole & Clemency Cases*. January 5, 2024.

University of Virginia School of Law, *Panel: Community Activism in Cville: A Focus On Reentry*. November 14, 2023.

University of Virginia School of Law, *Host: The Visiting Room Project*. April 6, 2023.

University of Virginia School of Law, *Shaping Justice Conference*. February 2022.
Panel discussion on Advocating for Formerly Incarcerated People.

Orleans Public Defenders. *Parole Revocations: Process and Advocacy* (CLE Instructor). October 2021.

ACLU of Louisiana. *Panel on limiting pre-trial detention time and guaranteeing a right to counsel at preliminary hearings (HB 46 campaign kick-off)*. March 2021.

Tulane University, Taylor Center. *Social Venture Accelerator Program: Choosing the right entity structure for social enterprises*. November 2016, March 2017, February 2018, February 2019, February 2020, February 2021, March 2022.

Sixth Annual REAL Help Conference. *Reentry Legal Services* (CLE Instructor). April 2019, October 2020.

UCLA Business Law and Policy Program, *Founders Series*. October 2020.

UCLA School of Law, Critical Race Studies Program, *Dismantling Racism: Critical Race Studies in Action*. July 2020.

Credit Builder's Alliance – 2020 Symposium. *Reducing Recidivism Through Asset Building: Strategies for Supporting Returning Citizens*. June 2020.

Echoing Green – All Fellows Conference. *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Resisting and Dismantling White Supremacy in Social Enterprises*. November 2019.

Echoing Green – All Fellows Conference. *Progress towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*. November 2019.

Fordham Urban Law Journal Fall Symposium. *In Defense of Reentry: A Response to Shreya Subramani's Productive Separations*, November 2019.

Louisiana State Bar Association, Access to Justice Commission. *Reentry Legal Services* (CLE Instructor). December 2015, February 2019, July 2019.

TEDxTU (Tulane University). *Supporting formerly incarcerated people pursue entrepreneurship*. February 2017.

Law and Society Association, Annual Meeting. *"I'll Say I'm Home, I Won't Say I'm Free": Persistent Barriers to Housing, Employment, and Financial Security for Formerly Incarcerated People in Low-Income Communities of Color*, June 2016.

New Profit: A Gathering of Leaders, Annual Conference. *"I'll Say I'm Home, I Won't Say I'm Free": Persistent Barriers to Housing, Employment, and Financial Security for Formerly Incarcerated People in Low-Income Communities of Color*, September 2015.

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth, Annual Convening. *Campaign Communication between Lawyers, Community Organizers, and People Most Impacted*. 2011.

United States Human Rights Fund, Annual Convening. *Developing Campaign Infrastructure and Decision Making Protocol* (co-presented with Jamil Dakwar). 2011.

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth, Annual Convening. *Telling Your Story: Communicating with Allies, Opponents, and Media*. 2010.

Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Law Review Symposium 2010. *Louisiana's laws regulating the transfer of juveniles to the adult criminal justice system* (CLE Presentation).

Media Mentions

Below are links to articles, broadcast news, and radio segments featuring my work

The Atlantic: How the Formerly Incarcerated Re-Enter Society, September 2015
<http://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/404221/prison-re-entry-programs/> (VIDEO)

Colorlines: I'll Say I'm Home, I Won't Say I'm Free, August 2014
<http://www.colorlines.com/articles/out-prison-not-free-video> (VIDEO)

WDSU Making A Difference Series: The First 72+ and Rising Foundations. March 2016
<http://www.wdsu.com/news/local-news/new-orleans/making-a-difference-organization-seeks-to-help-released-inmates-transition-to-normal-life/38342964> (VIDEO)

Public Radio International: Getting Out of Prison is Hard to Find a Job, why Not Help Ex Prisoners Start Their Own?, October 2016
<https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-07-31/getting-out-prison-its-hard-find-job-why-not-help-ex-prisoners-start-their-own>

National Public Radio – WWNO
Us Helping Us: Formerly Incarcerated Men Assist One Another Through The First 72+
<https://www.wwno.org/post/us-helping-us-formerly-incarcerated-men-assist-one-another-through-first-72>

WWLTV
<http://www.wwltv.com/mobile/article/news/local/orleans/the-first-72-gives-ex-cons-a-chance-at-a-second-life/490993710>

USA Today: Series on Policing in America
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/policing/reentry/podcast/2017/11/06/preview-derrick-perique-left-prison-and-did-last-thing-you-might-expect-defying-odds-big-way/834931001/> [Podcast]

Rising Foundations and The First 72+ Win the Pitch It Innovation Challenge!
<http://www.bizneworleans.com/October-2017/Rising-Foundations-The-First-72-Wins-GNOFs-Pitch-It-The-Innovation-Challenge/>

WWLFM Radio: Discussing the Pitch It Innovation Challenge
<http://www.wwl.com/media/audio-channel/community-matters-pitch-it-innovation-challenge>

Washington Post
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/brand-connect/breaking-out-of-the-prison-cycle/>

St. Charles Avenue Magazine, Youngbloods Profile
<http://www.myneworleans.com/St-Charles-Avenue/January-2017/Rising-Foundations/>

Times Picayune: 5 Education Start Ups to Watch
http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2016/12/new_orleans_education_startups.html

NPR Story Corps
<http://wwno.org/post/storycorps-justice-series-adjusting-life-outside>

WWLTV: From Prison to the Pulpit
<http://www.wwltv.com/news/investigations/from-prison-to-pulpit-brothers-overcome-killings-gain-redemption/436206362>

The Advocate: John Legend Tours The First 72+
http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/crime_police/article_d61b4b48-f632-11e6-b1c1-0fe073de160e.html

PBS: The State We're In
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/chasing-the-dream/uncategorized/louisiana-the-state-were-in/>

Forbes: Rising Foundations and The First 72+ Win The Richard Cornuelle Award from The Manhattan Institute

<https://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/?toURL=https://www.forbes.com/sites/howardhusock/2017/09/26/not-going-back-to-prison-a-rising-foundation-in-new-orleans&refURL=https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/not-going-back-prison-rising-foundation-new-orleans-10649.html&referrer=https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/not-going-back-prison-rising-foundation-new-orleans-10649.html>

NBC News

Louisiana is shedding its reputation as U.S.'s biggest jailer

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/louisiana-shedding-its-reputation-u-s-s-biggest-jailer-n822981>

PBS Newshour

How 'the incarceration capital of America' embraced criminal justice reform

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-the-incarceration-capital-of-america-embraced-criminal-justice-reform#transcript>

WWL TV

Life after prison? The first 72 hours are critical

<https://www.wwltv.com/article/news/crime/life-after-prison-the-first-72-hours-are-critical/289-607939646>

The Times Picayune

Coming home: The First 72+ provides those freed from prison with lodging, hope

https://www.nola.com/archive/article_3259ecfc-e243-5147-b06d-d444340cba19.html

The Times Picayune

Mugshots to billboards: Formerly incarcerated people launch small businesses with help of nonprofit

https://www.nola.com/news/crime_police/article_4aff2957-3bce-57f5-bd1b-3724254cc7ce.html

The Advocate

His mantra is patience: Tony Green, 46, is rebuilding his life one step at a time with help from strong support group

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/courts/article_8b85b33a-0a2b-11e8-89ac-035dbddddd6b.html

The Advocate

Almost 2,000 Louisiana prisoners released; what comes next?

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_14364936-bf51-11e7-b43a-cb597328a645.html

USA Today

By ex-felons, for ex-felons: Re-entry that works

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/policing/reentry/column/2017/12/19/ex-felons-ex-felons-form-recovery-action-works/933378001/>

Eureka Alert!

J.M.K. Innovation Prizes go to 10 transformative early-stage initiatives

https://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2019-11/asu-jip111319.php

The Advocate

Letters: Louisiana lifers are our safest bet; they ought to get a second look

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/letters/article_6275c72a-1c65-11ea-97fa-43ee3e106d68.html

The Times Picayune / New Orleans Advocate

These 2 New Orleans re-entry groups in running for 7-figure grant

https://www.nola.com/news/article_7c1cf6b1-e6bc-56f7-ab75-8c32884278b8.html

The Daily Advertiser

Life after prison? The first 72 hours are critical

<https://www.theadvertiser.com/story/news/local/2018/10/24/life-after-prison-first-72-hours-critical/1752388002/>

The Advocate

In Louisiana, proposed food stamp changes might hurt some ex-convicts

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_4613af76-bdd8-11e8-92ed-9762ffdecc82.html

The Washington Post

One in 7 adults in New Orleans have a warrant out for their arrest, new data shows

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/one-in-7-adults-in-new-orleans-have-a-warrant-out-for-their-arrest-new-data-shows/2019/09/20/db85a5c8-da3d-11e9-a688-303693fb4b0b_story.html

The Times Picayune / New Orleans Advocate

A criminal record clean slate is expensive in Louisiana, but a new lawsuit aims to change that

https://www.nola.com/news/courts/article_1d8fdea8-2c04-11ea-9c46-c701a11a7646.html

The Advocate

Our Views: Affordable expungements fit the spirit of criminal justice reform

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/our_views/article_6d4e3cc2-2e85-11ea-b551-135b2e9dc5bd.html

The Times Picayune / New Orleans Advocate

How a 1992 Rent-A-Center contract and an outdated warrant landed a man in the Orleans jail

https://www.nola.com/news/crime_police/article_3e2c1a07-ee8-527b-ba97-62c4e2cae079.html

The Times Picayune / New Orleans Advocate

Defunct 'ghost warrants' keep freed people tethered to justice system: report

https://www.nola.com/news/crime_police/article_b5525e74-20fe-5d0b-ad5d-12780ca638df.html

The Grio

Convicted for selling weed, Black man helps start small businesses in NOLA after prison exit

<https://thegrio.com/2020/01/20/louisiana-marijuana-laws-henry-byous/>

ABC News

The first 72 hours after parole can make or break a man. This is how ex-prisoners should spend it

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-14/the-home-for-prison-lifers-reentering-society/11452788>

WGNO TV

Helping the formerly incarcerated one plate at a time

<https://wgno.com/news/local/helping-the-formerly-incarcerated-one-plate-at-a-time/>

The Times Picayune

Murder suspect tries to turn himself in at New Orleans jail, but deputies demand proper ID
https://www.nola.com/news/courts/murder-suspect-tries-to-turn-himself-in-at-new-orleans-jail-but-deputies-demand-proper/article_ca1519c9-17ea-50ca-9eb5-592baf418470.html

Univision

Sin dinero, casa ni comida: los primeros tres días en libertad son clave para regresar o no a la cárcel
<https://www.univision.com/noticias/especiales/sin-dinero-casa-ni-comida-los-primeros-tres-dias-en-libertad-son-clave-para-regresar-o-no-a-la-carcel>

The Marshall Project

Freed From Prison After 26 Years—Into a Coronavirus Hotspot
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/04/01/freed-from-prison-after-26-years-into-a-coronavirus-hotspot>

The New Yorker

Will the Coronavirus Make Us Rethink Mass Incarceration?
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/25/will-the-coronavirus-make-us-rethink-mass-incarceration>

The Marshall Project

No Photo ID, No Services: Coronavirus Poses Steep Hurdles After Prison
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/05/26/no-photo-id-no-services-coronavirus-poses-steep-hurdles-after-prison>

WWL TV

Friends, family mourn death of Ben Smith, founder of 'The First 72 Plus'
<https://www.wwltv.com/article/news/crime/obituary-founder-of-program-helping-former-inmates/289-6b8f4db8-c617-46ea-99cc-dbe2bd7d14c2>

Announcement by the Mayor's Office for The City of New Orleans

<https://nola.gov/mayor/news/january-2021/city-s-partner-at-t-expands-believeneworleans-initiative-in-new-orleans-east/>

The New Orleans Advocate

Ben Smith Jr., who led New Orleans re-entry organization, dead at 69
https://www.nola.com/news/politics/article_64a9a2fc-2e9b-11eb-be30-7feabbe0574c.html

Buzz Feed News

ID Requirements Are Meant To Stop Vaccine Tourists, But They Can Also Shut Out Vulnerable Residents
<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/stephaniemlee/coronavirus-vaccine-id-undocumented>

UVa Law

Kelly Orians Joins Faculty as Director of New Decarceration Clinic
<https://www.law.virginia.edu/news/202111/kelly-orians-joins-faculty-director-new-decarceration-clinic>

UVa Law

Law Students Help Formerly Incarcerated Regain Civil Rights, Avoid Legal Spiral
<https://news.virginia.edu/content/law-students-help-formerly-incarcerated-regain-civil-rights-avoid-legal-spiral>

UVa Law

A Plea for Forgiveness: Professor's Client Released With Support of Victim's Father

<https://www.law.virginia.edu/news/202201/plea-forgiveness>

UVa Law

Decarceration Clinic's Busy Year Rebuilding Lives

<https://www.law.virginia.edu/news/202303/decarceration-clinics-busy-year-rebuilding-lives>

NBC News

Man walks free after spending 29 years in Louisiana prison for a rape the victim insisted he didn't commit

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/man-walks-free-spending-29-years-louisiana-prison-rape-victim-insisted-rcna83738>

Rolling Stone

I'm Serving Life in Prison. It's a Slow-Motion Death Sentence

<https://rollingstone.com/politics/political-commentary/life-in-prison-opinion-1234879659/>

Dwell Magazine

This Housing Center Provides Sanctuary for Starting Over

<https://www.dwell.com/article/ben-smith-welcome-center-opening-prison-system-first-72-13617865-e29be52d>

UVa Law

Students Teach Business Classes to the Incarcerated

<https://www.law.virginia.edu/news/202405/students-teach-business-law-classes-incarcerated>

The Daily Progress

Students future in jeopardy after UVA denies access to Grounds citing protest

https://dailyprogress.com/news/local/education/students-future-in-jeopardy-after-uva-denies-access-to-grounds-citing-protest/article_cd6c4ec6-1a05-11ef-b5b6-eb317d3dd61c.html

CBS 19 News

Grant funding supporting business law course for inmates

https://www.cbs19news.com/news/grant-funding-supporting-business-law-course-for-inmates/article_9a20385c-e8a4-11ef-9234-43c68d3f3235.html

UVa Law

Students Participate in Simulation Focused on Life After Prison

<https://www.law.virginia.edu/news/202411/students-participate-simulation-focused-life-after-prison>

Richmond Times Dispatch

Low recidivism rate touted by Va. actually due to pandemic

https://richmond.com/news/state-regional/crime-courts/article_e6a8a299-93bb-4cfd-8ddd-289d1022e445.html

Radio IQ WVTF

State law requires autopsies following in-custody deaths. Records show they don't always happen.

<https://www.wvtf.org/news/2026-06-03/state-law-requires-autopsies-following-in-custody-deaths-records-show-they-dont-always-happen>