

lending practices. Since the policy was supposed to be a balm to the 1960s uprisings — much like the ones we're seeing now — it serves as a reminder to remain vigilant when policymakers promise change.

A Terrible Thing To Waste: Environmental Racism And Its Assault On The American Mind by Harriet A. Washington

From lead poisoning to toxic waste, Americans of color are disproportionately harmed by environmental hazards. This is detrimental to physical health — air pollution is linked with higher COVID-19 death rates, [according to Harvard researchers](#). But Washington also argues that environmental racism is causing cognitive decline in communities of color. A deconstruction of IQ and an indictment of EPA rollbacks, is a stirring read.

From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America by Elizabeth Hinton

The origins of mass incarceration — which disproportionately puts black people behind bars — are often pinned on Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon. But Hinton argues the carceral state was erected "by a consensus of liberals and conservatives who privileged punitive responses to urban problems as a reaction to the civil rights movement." The 1965 Law Enforcement Assistance Act, part of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society plan, led to today's police militarization. This account of history poses relevant questions for today's land of the free.

Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police and Punish the Poor by Virginia Eubanks

Algorithms are made by humans, so they are susceptible to human biases. From deciding which neighborhoods get policed to who gets welfare benefits, discrimination has gone digital. By scrutinizing statistical models and telling personal stories, Eubanks shows that machines do not correct racist systems — they only shift blame.

The End of Policing by Alex S. Vitale

In the wake of high-profile cases of police brutality, the same ideas for reform are trotted out — implicit bias training, body cameras, police-community dialogues. But Vitale argues that this fails to get to the root of the problem — policing itself. While calls to abolish the police are often met with skepticism, academics and activists have long-discussed alternatives to addressing homelessness, domestic disputes and substance abuse.

white voters and decimate social programs. makes the case that not only does this strategy endanger people of color, but it also hinders economic mobility for all Americans.

Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology by Deirdre Cooper Owens

The foundational knowledge of American gynecology relied on the exploitation of enslaved black women's bodies. In Cooper Owens centers the stories of black women that have been overshadowed by the "discoveries" of white male doctors who experimented on them. Baseless theories about black inferiority and higher pain tolerance still permeate medical schools today.

interviews from two Little Rock Nine members, the documentary asks how far we've really come.

[*Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise*](#)

In this two-part series, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. chronicles the last 50 years of black history through a personal lens. Released days after the 2016 election, some themes of the documentary took on a deeper meaning amid Donald Trump's win. "Think of the civil rights movement to the present as a second Reconstruction — a 50-year Reconstruction — that ended last night," Gates said [in an interview with](#)

[*Floodlines*](#) from

An audio documentary about the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, [is](#) told from the perspective of four New Orleanians still living with the consequences of governmental neglect. As COVID-19 disproportionately infects and kills Americans of color, the story feels especially relevant. "As a person of color, you always have it in the back of your mind that the government really doesn't care about you," said self-described Katrina overcomer Alice Craft-Kerney.

[1619](#) from

"In August of 1619, a ship carrying more than 20 enslaved Africans arrived in the English colony of Virginia. America was not yet America, but this was the moment it began." Hosted by recent Pulitzer Prize winner Nikole Hannah-Jones, the [audio](#) series chronicles how black people have been central to building American democracy, music, wealth and more.

[*Intersectionality Matters!*](#) from

Hosted by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a leading critical race theorist who coined the term "intersectionality," this podcast brings the academic term to life. Each episode brings together lively political organizers, journalists and writers. [This recent episode](#) on COVID-19 in prisons and other areas of confinement is a must-listen.

[*Throughline*](#) from

Every week at [our](#) pals Rund Abdelfatah and Ramtin Arablouei "go back in time to understand the present." To understand the history of systemic racism in America, we recommend "[American Police](#)," "[Mass Incarceration](#)" and "[Milliken v. Bradley](#)."