

News Roundup

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Categories : [Uncategorized](#)

Date : March 23, 2018

The hunt for a serial bomber in Austin, Texas, who killed two people and injured several others with homemade package bombs was this week's leading national criminal law news story. After a weeks-long investigation involving state and federal law enforcement agencies, authorities came to suspect that 23-year-old Mark Conditt was the bomber. As officers closed in on Conditt, he killed himself by detonating a bomb inside his vehicle. The New York Times has an [article](#) describing the meticulous police work that cracked the case, and the Austin Statesman has [full coverage](#) of the terrifying bombing spree. Keep reading for more news.

Every Step You Take. The New York Times article discussing the police work in the Austin bombing case notes that police were able to get data from Google that helped in their search for Conditt. Last week, WRAL published a [report](#) that discusses the use of Google data by North Carolina law enforcement agencies. One point of interest in the report is that some agencies are employing a tactic where they ask for warrants to search the Google data associated with every cellphone that comes within a certain proximity to crime scenes.

SRO Acts Fast. There was [another school shooting](#) this week. A 17-year-old boy shot two fellow students at Great Mills High School in Maryland. Luckily, each victim survived the shooting. [Reports](#) say that the incident likely would've been more tragic if not for the actions of Blaine Gaskill, a SWAT-trained school resource officer who immediately responded to the incident and exchanged gunfire with the perpetrator.

Gaskill's actions are the latest data point in the ongoing debate about school security. A school resource officer at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School has been [sharply criticized](#) for taking cover outside the school during last month's school shooting. [Last week](#), a California teacher and reserve police officer was showing his gun to students in a high school advanced public safety class when he accidentally fired the gun into the ceiling, injuring one student. In a [separate incident](#) last week, a school resource officer at a Virginia middle school accidentally fired his gun inside his office. No one was injured in the latter incident.

Prison Safety. [WRAL](#) says that a new Prison Reform Advisory Board is helping the North Carolina Department of Public Safety identify ways to improve safety and security in the state prison system. The board, which is composed of corrections experts from around the country, held its first meeting this week. Reports following violent incidents at Bertie and Pasquotank correctional institutions have identified various security problems in the prison system. A [story](#) in the Charlotte Observer this week says that staff shortages, one of the issues contributing to the dangerousness of North Carolina prisons, have worsened over the past year in some facilities.

Death Penalty. Reuters [reports](#) that Attorney General Jeff Sessions sent a memo to federal prosecutors this week instructing them to seek the death penalty in drug cases when appropriate. The instruction follows President Donald Trump's [statements](#) earlier this week that his administration was going to "get very tough" on drug dealers and that the strategy would involve increased use of the death penalty.

Oversharing. Brianna Lofton just knew that her Facebook followers would get a kick out of her latest video of her one-year-old child; who wouldn't want to see the toddler being encouraged to smoke marijuana? As it turns out, everybody – folks on Facebook didn't want to see it, Wake County Child Protective Services didn't want to see it, and the [Raleigh Police Department](#) certainly didn't want to see it.