HOW CRIMINAL RECORDS ARE STORED + SHARED

National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
FBI digital clearinghouse hosting multiple federal databases. Accessible only to law enforcement.

FBI system linking state + federal databases
FBI-approved handlers
fingerprint-based background checks by authorized users

US district + appellate courts
PACER electronic federal court records
local/county courts
tells police in which states/counties to look for records

Police arrest
federal cases
majority of criminal cases

privately-owned databases
commercial background screening firms (most employment and tenant screening using personal identifiers)
state/territory databases + repositories (hold records of arrest + prosecution)

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