HEARING THREE

COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND ABUSE

IN AMERICA'S PRISONS

DATE: November 1, 2005
TIME: 8:30 a.m. to 3:37 p.m.
PLACE: Washington University School of Law
Anheuser-Busch Hall, Room 310
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

Personal Accounts
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DR. DUDLEY: Good morning. We've begun each of our hearings with a kind of a personal account where we've taken an opportunity to hear from individuals who have a very deeply personal experience related to the theme of each hearing. We were going to continue that this time. The four panelists for our personal accounts panel include Mr. Lou West, Reverend Jackie Means, Ms. Asha Bandele, and Ronald Kaschak.

Mr. West is a corrections officer, I think as you heard already, in St. Louis Justice Center, who's worked in the field for 25 years. He will describe for us how St. Louis is working in a direct supervision environment and will talk about the positive impact of that as it relates to inmates as well as officer safety.

Our second speaker will be the Reverend Jackie Means, who is the director of prison ministry for the Episcopal church. She'll address various issues associated with working in the prisons and her observations in that regard as well as her experiences as a mother of a female corrections officer and
balancing those experiences.

Our third speaker and witness will be Ms. Asha Bandele. She is the author of The Prisoner's Wife and a staff member of the Drug Policy Alliance. She'll describe some of the difficulties that she's encountered in maintaining a relationship with her husband, who's a New York State prisoner, and the importance of prison superintendents in trying to mitigate or making more difficult the challenges of maintaining a family when one of its members is incarcerated.

Then our fourth witness, Mr. Ron Kaschak, is a former deputy sheriff at the Mahoning County Jail in Youngstown, Ohio, who obeyed a supervisor's orders to beat an inmate and then cover up the beating. He later assisted authorities in the prosecution of the supervisors, and will talk to us about his experience in that regard. Mr. West.

MR. WEST: Good morning. I'm here today to shed some perspective and insight on some of the experiences of working in the jails past and present. The first experience of working in a linear style institutions, I was there in the 1980s, and probably the best description that I can give how the inmates felt came from a quote from the author George Louis
Jackson, who was a member of the California State Penitentiary in the seventies who said that, "Try to think about the worst day of your life. That is how I feel all the time."

The physical structure of the jail set the tempo and the stage for the aggression and violence that was always present in this environment. Even though I grew up in the streets of St. Louis, there was nothing to prepare me for the graphic violence that was experienced on an everyday experience.

Some days just in taking the count in coming in to work, you would immediately view inmates trying to destroy each other with all the might and aggression that they could muster. The despair and desperation was increased whenever there was any hint of injustice or opportunities taken away that always seemed to increase.

In this environment the officer was like a human buffer for all of the aggression and stress that the inmates had manufactured by the fact that they were facing a lot of time. It seemed like everything was done in intense anger, and it caused a personal reaction for me also in my home life, outbursts of anger for no seemingly reason at all.

I knew it was a reflection of where I
worked, and many times I found myself being disturbed in my sleep because I always felt the presence of something evil coming towards me. So it was always the escapism of trying to be prepared and fight, and I've torn up many a stereo equipment and personally have grabbed my wife on occasion in the early part of my career.

So this environment dealing with the safety of the inmates basically was understood that we had to make periodic tours of the jail. They were -- all the cells were all lined up side by side. But we were never required to just stay in front of the cell. So those inmates who experienced charges dealing with women and children, which were very hostile in the jail environment, were the ones that faced probably the most harm for their safety, and anytime the five o'clock news came on and their pictures were able to be flashed across the screen, we had extreme violence.

So the number one instrument of safety that I employed that I used was a concept called the interpersonal communications skills. And this meant your ability to personally relate and communicate to all those that were involved on your walk. I always felt that if you know the person there, know what they're feeling, know some of the problems that they
were going through, you could personally address this on a human issue, and it will cause you to have a lot of feedback and cooperation.

Now, this concept in turn was frowned upon back in the early days for fear of becoming too familiar or being manipulated by persuasive inmates who had that power and ability. But I always felt that if you knew what a man was going through, if you understood that the jail system was probably the worst place that a human being could ever be in his life, if you came in there on a positive note and the inmates knew that you were not there to add to the tension, add to the chaos, it created an atmosphere of peace.

Now, this did not always work because problems and situations came up all the time that always seemed to strip a man of his human dignity. There was always a fight for what was right and what was belonging to them, and the only line of defense between the inmates and the staff was the line officer, the correction officer that worked back there on the tier.

You could stop many a problem or conflict by just listening to what the problem was, and being able to articulate it to your supervisors in a peaceful manner. Because back in those days we did
not have the mace and all the high-powered equipment
that we had, and any time you opened those gates and
went in there and had to deal with them, it was like
hand-to-hand combat.

This concept probably resulted in the early
1990s with one of the worst riots we had in county jail history, where the SWAT team had to actually come in when we were in stage one of our more fierce battles at night because of the institution of not having smoking in the institution. It caused a great deal of chaos and stress. That night came to a conclusion with the SWAT team surrounding the building, and finally the prisoners gave up. And we believe because of that riot, there was several more before that, that this is what led to direct supervision.

Now, direct supervision style is a more humane setting for the prisoners. We do not have any bars. The inmates are allowed to come and sit in a day room area, watch television, interact with each other without that confinement placed upon them. The safety of the inmates was dramatically increased because the officer now was inside the pod with them, whereas in the other style we were allowed to sit on the outside.
The problem is the officer was now on complete display, and we probably like to describe it as customer service in hell because it seemed like as soon as you open the gates, 67 men would approach you at different times, not with the courtesy that you might have working in a retail store, but with all of their frustrations and aggravations on front street regardless of the man next to them.

So an officer required on a number of professional roles to be a psychiatrist, trying to figure out some of the personality disorders that inmates had. A constant social worker. Have to constantly provide the needs, the paperwork, the hygiene items. A role model, a father figure, a humanitarian, a disciplinarian, an academy award winning actor, and a fireman because you had to constantly put out conflicts.

While all this was going on, at the same time you had to maintain a computer and make sure that you know where each and every one of these men were at any given time of the day, and it always seemed like everything happened at the same time. On any given day they would call for the courts at the same time, the clinic people, the GED, and this constant moving, constant motion always calls the officers to have a
great deal of ability to be an actor.

Now, I use that word actor because if you can just place yourself in a situation that every single day that you came to work you were faced with extreme problems of 67 grown children who wanted you to be their caretaker and solve everything that they had. And even though we are not required to be legal consultants, the inmates never trusted themselves. They were always asking you or running over their scenario of their case and how they were innocent just to see how it sounded even to themselves.

So the opportunity to say that I would never compare a correction officer's job with the police officer's, but I do believe that we are the first cousins of the law enforcement police officers. This is why a correction officer is really offended by the media when they refer to us as jail guards because if all we had to do was sit and watch something, we would be in very good shape indeed.

A correction officer is required to have a multi-facet of skills that he must call upon every single day that he works. And the very same people that the police officers arrest, have to subdue or shoot at, we live with them on a daily basis unarmed. And there's nothing but air and opportunity that will
prevent them or yourself from being taken hostages.

Now, as I mentioned before, the technique that worked in the linear style jail is the exact technique that still works to this day, and I know it to be effective, and that is your ability to relate to your fellow man and emphasize and put yourself in his situation. By you being able to do this, you are not adding to the stress and tension that's always there.

We always said don't never go looking for a fight in correction. The environment exists. All you have to do is just be prepared. But it seemed like when things happened, even though we have a timely system where officers arrive, it takes only a matter of seconds before things can become a complete chaos.

Now, I wanted to close in saying that maybe the general public is not aware, but most of the members of our society who have committed crimes are usually in the same category as me and you. Usually five or ten minutes of anger can change the course of a person's whole life. And if you're able to understand that only by the grace of God have you been blessed to not be in this situation, if you can relate that to them, this is the number one thing that keeps your safety intact. Because you are not viewed as a hostile opponent of the system. You are viewed...
exactly what your title says, correctional officer, which means "to make right."

MR. SESSIONS: What's linear style jail?

MR. WEST: The linear style jail is the symbolic that you see on television with the bars and the locking of the doors and the racking. That is considered linear. Where direct supervision is in an open setting, or open seating.

DR. DUDLEY: You described the benefits of this direct supervision model. I was wondering if you had any thoughts that you wanted to add about how corrections officers could be trained so they would be better prepared to handle this sort of model, and/or any other sorts of things that can be done to make the direct supervisor model any less stressful for the officers working there.

MR. WEST: We have an excellent training staff that prepares us on a number of topics and issues dealing with human behavior and different dynamics of situations, but there's some -- some things that cannot be trained. If you know your personality is not going to deal with a lot of other people's problems, that you are -- maybe you are impatient in regards to having a vulnerability to listening and just hearing complaints all the time, it
makes it somewhat difficult. But you can acquire that
immune system by being able to just kind of relate and
put emphasis on how you would feel in that situation.

I said myself if somebody was in my family
that was incarcerated, I would certainly hope that
somebody would take the time out to turn them around
and show them a positive influence in jail. There are
techniques and training measures and classes that you
can take in dealing with the human behavior, but it's
something that has to be inside you as you have to
willingly want to explore because if you don't have
it, the job can be extremely difficult.

DR. DUDLEY: Are you saying recruitment and
selection of corrections officers is equally as
important?

MR. WEST: Yes, it is. It's hard when
you're interviewing people for the job to really
determine what type of personality they have that can
really endure this because even the most patient of
people have problems in this setting. No matter what
style of management you have, just being in an
environment where you're constantly in demand has its
drawbacks.

So it's really to difficult to determine --
and it really has nothing to do with size. Some of
the biggest guys that we ever had, they run clean down the street dealing with all the personality that we have. Some of the smallest officers in the building have a presence and a command that they can convey to the inmates that lets them know that they're in charge and they are professional. So it's really difficult to determine exactly who is fit for the job.

DR. DUDLEY: Thank you very much. Reverend Means?

MS. MEANS: I think I want to thank you for giving me the time this morning to speak to you. I'll let you know later. As you know, my name is the Reverend Jackie Means. I'm currently director of prison ministries for the Episcopal Church in the USA. I spent the last 35 years ministering prisoners, staff, correctional officers, and families of both, a calling that became even more personal when my daughter made the decision to become a corrections officer more than twenty years ago.

In the early 1970s I was doing a semester of field work at the Marion County Jail in Indianapolis, Indiana in the women's section, and after hearing the stories about the atrocities at the women's prison, knowing it is indeed the oldest women's prison in the United States, I decided I'd
take a peek inside and see what it really looked like.

In those days the women were still using slop jars and were not allowed to use telephones. They had no privileges.

Knowing that they didn't have a chapel and they were the only prison in the state of Indiana that didn't have a chaplain, the first time I went into the institution I snuck in behind the Catholic chaplain that was doing mass and his singers. They thought I was a singer. They didn't check very much in those days. Of course, they didn't let many people in the prison system in those days.

I slipped in right through his coattail, and I felt pretty good about it until I got inside and realized that all those women looked just like me. They didn't have uniforms on. And all I could think was what am I going to do if I don't get out of here and they do count tonight and they have one extra person. How do I explain that?

Soon after going in with him I made an appointment with the warden of the prison, and asked if I could begin coming in and doing some chaplain work for the women. And I also went to the Episcopal church and to my bishop, and soon afterwards I was put in the budget and I was paid as a full-time chaplain
at the Indiana Women's Prison.

I was there for twelve years, and in the meantime my daughter, as I said before, became interested in being an officer, and just as I was leaving my position as the chaplain she began her job at the prison. For the very first few months she had a real hard time because our jobs were different. They knew that she was my daughter.

We look almost exactly alike, and the officers, the staff, would also compare her to me. But anyway, especially the inmates. And they'd say, "You're not like your mother." And of course, she -- her job was different than her mother's. My job was not to make sure they were locked up. My job was there as a spiritual advisor. And I think that that bothers her still to this day. She still has that position.

I can't blame her position as an officer for the drinking problem that she developed. The stress of the job and the lack of support for the officers didn't help the situation. There are statistics that say divorce and alcoholism are the major problems facing officers. Then when you have reached the top, whatever that means in corrections, maybe it's being a warden, this changes to heart
problems.

There's also a study that shows one year -- or one year after retirement, one year before and one year after retirement, the incidents of death from heart attacks are very high. As I was talking to a warden just last week, he told me that he was one year from retirement, and was also -- always and was that day becoming anxious about his health and was he going to survive the retirement. Not the job. The retirement.

The prison system is like no other in the world. It is militaristic, and those in charge for many years kept the secular world out as much as they could. This frame of mind continued until the population explosion in the '80s and continues even as the crime rate has gone down.

As the mother of someone working in the prison culture, I watched my daughter as time went by becoming more like an inmate every day. Staff snitches on staff. Inmates snitch -- snitch on each other and staff, and it becomes a vicious circle. The sense of collegiality does not often exist. Then you add in the families and friends of the inmates and they too are a source of contention.

They, like the inmates, have their own
issues to deal with: A sense of guilt, anger at the situation, and the feeling of helplessness. Not knowing who to believe, they are frustrated at the system that is not likely to change. Generally speaking, the officers are not offered any continuing education, nor do they have any choice in overtime. It is mandatory. My daughter works twelve-hour shifts, and for a single parent this is very difficult.

I had a conversation with a female officer at a male facility who was around fifty years old. She has a hard time on her third day on rotation. She says she's completely fatigued and wore completely out.

There are more safety issues. In a conversation with a superintendent of two prisons in the Midwest, I learned that his main concern was the lack of adequate staff. He has dorms of 400 men with three officers per shift. This is bad enough, but when these men are a mixture of long-timers, lifers, child molesters and those with short time, in the prison culture it is usually the young, short-timers who cause ninety percent of the problems. The superintendent is very concerned for the safety of his officers and the inmates.
There have been instances where an inmate has been accused and filed a complaint against an officer accusing him or her of inappropriate behavior. There is a hearing and also an investigation done by staff members that is either done in a hurry and sometimes not at all.

And the officer's job is on the line. If an officer does a good job and follows procedures to a T, inmates are frustrated and often set the officer up. That is not to say that officers are good or bad people, but sometimes there is a fine line between the inmate and the staff.

In most states if the officer is the head of the house, has a family and is the only one working, they can and have qualified for welfare. When I was at the Indiana Women's Prison, because they were not paying my salary, I was able to do some very interesting things. I had a friend who was a prominent wealthy lawyer in Indianapolis who made the mistake of how he might help me.

So I played on his guilt because he was very rich and very prominent. He took two cases where both women were doing life, both black, and both could not read or write at the time of their crimes. One woman was convicted of shooting her boyfriend, no
weapon was ever found on the scene, and there were no
witnesses. My friend took the case back to court and
she was released immediately. And the judge
apologized to her for the thirteen years she had spent
in prison.

The other woman was sent to prison for
strangling her infant two days after she was released
from a mental hospital for severe postpartum
depression. When my friend took her case, he was very
doubtful that anything could be done because an infant
was involved. He said to me on the way to Evansville,
Indiana, "Baby, I don't think we're going to win this
one."

When doing research on the transcript of
the trial, he discovered that it was the medicine that
was prescribed during her hospitalization that put her
in a psychotic state, and that's when she strangled
her baby. She did fourteen years and was released
immediately by the judge.

Both of these women are still out and doing
well after seventeen years. They could today still be
behind bars if someone had not spoken out on their
behalf. And by the way, they both got the basic
education GED while they were in prison.

Had I been an employee of the Department of
Corrections, I could not have intervened. I spent a lot of my time talking to the staff being aware that the women inmates resented the time I spent with them.

It's a lonely profession. Generally speaking they have very few people to talk to that understand the stress and pressure of the job. They also have a lack of trust as to the inmates.

A woman at the Indiana Women's Prison was doing life. The woman had been on death row. At a time of high stress in her life many, many years ago she had shot eight people. The governor commuted her sentence from execution to life, and she had been in the Indiana Women's Prison 23 years when I first went there as chaplain.

Every day as I walked to my office, she was out in the yard working. This is what she did. She put flowers and she took care of the yard. I always greeted her with a big hello and got no response, not even a nod, for four years. I took her on as a challenge.

Then one day as I walked in the prison she looked up at me and said, "Good morning, chaplain." I almost fainted. I went over to speak with her and asked why today of all days she finally acknowledged my presence. She looked me straight in the eye and
told me she finally figured out that I wasn't like all
the do-gooders, that I was what I said and nothing
kept me away. And in other words, I could be trusted.
I want to add a note to that that she had come up for
parole for several times during the time of her
incarceration, and every time she came up was denied.
The women in the prison supported her and
they were -- they were like her children. She was
like a mother to everybody. One evening I was privy
to have dinner with a member of the parole board, told
her about this lady, said, "I wish you would give her
more consideration. I think that she -- I don't think
she would hurt a thing. She's been there forever."
Like how much -- how much time do you spend, how --
how long do we have to pay?
When she finally went up for parole
hearing, all the women in the prison were waiting
because they waited for her for so many years and she
came out and she'd been crying. Well, when she came
out this time she was screaming and she was laughing
and she had tears, and all the women in the prison
came out in the yard. I remember at this time we only
had about 120 women, and they were all so joyful. She
was released. And she still is doing well.
The frustration that I felt was a sense of
dealing with a system that was not fair and was most certainly racist and sexist. Because of its small size, the Women's Prison then only had three vocational classes, an ABE and GED. The vocational classes were such that even if they were completed, there was not a job that was much better than working at Wendy's.


DR. DUDLEY: You're almost out of time.

MS. MEANS: I know it. I want to say two things shortly. There are two things of my main concern. One is the maximum security and super maximum. One of the projects that I've taken on recently is having a camp for children who have parents in prison. And this camp allows each child, maybe sometimes for the first time in their life, to be in a place where they're loved and they're special and they're respected.

We're doing these now in ten states, and it's been very successful. We know that if a child has someone in prison, their chances of going are about seven out of ten. If they have both parents, which is sometimes the case, it's 9.5. So hopefully we look at maybe breaking the cycle of incarceration
and give these children a better life than their parents. Thank you and God bless you for what you've done.

DR. DUDLEY: Thank you. Before we let you go, though, any other thoughts of what might make the environment or the experience with the corrections officers --

MS. MEANS: I think they're underpaid. They're not very well respected. I believe that people, especially when they work in the shoe and super-max prisons should have more time off and they should be rotated through. That was my recommendation when I visited super-max and shoe.

And I also really believe that correctional officers should be encouraged continually to take credit courses or to take classes that will make their jobs better and easier. And I think that one of the problems I'm seeing now is that there are changes being made to the system. You have some new people coming in on the scene. It is hard for those that have worked there for a long time to change. That's the big challenge today I think for superintendents and wardens.

DR. DUDLEY: Thank you.

MR. SESSIONS: Reverend Means, do you have
1 a -- you're one employee of the church?
2 MS. MEANS: Yes, I am.
3 MR. SESSIONS: Are there others like you?
4 MS. MEANS: In the other denominations?
5 MR. SESSIONS: No, just in the church alone?
6 MS. MEANS: No, I'm it for the Episcopal church.
7 MR. SESSIONS: Are there in every state --
8 DR. DUDLEY: We've got to --
9 MS. MEANS: We can talk later.
10 MR. SESSIONS: Thank you.
11 MS. MEANS: I hope.
12 DR. DUDLEY: Ms. Bandele?
13 MS. BANDELE: Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about my experiences with specifically New York State's Department of Corrections, which I first came in contact with in 1990. I was a student volunteer, a member of a campus club, and we wanted to create relationships with people who would be returning to the neighborhoods in which we lived.
14 In New York State most prisoners come from seven distinct neighborhoods. Most of us at the City University of New York lived in that neighborhood --
lived in those neighborhoods, and it made sense to us that these men and women who were invested into the community in which they are returning their engagement, that it would be quite different than their previous one. So to that end we visited regularly, we did poetry reading, we ate, we shared our living experiences with one another, and it was a period of tremendous growth for me.

No one ushered that period along with more impact than a man named Rashid. He was serving twenty years to life for a murder he participated in when he was seventeen years old. We developed a personal relationship after two years, and then three years after that we got married.

Let me say this before I go further: I think it's important to continually recognize that prisoners are not a monolith any more than all judges are one thing, all doctors are one thing, all writers or mothers. And I think that the view of prisoners as a monolith really tends to dissolve the opportunity to make the corrections system better. My own husband, you know -- for example, you know, has a master's degree in theology.

The men who grow through that program at Sing Sing have a recidivism rate so low it doesn't
even rank. And so that all prisoners do not need to
be infantilized or directed to do every single little
thing. It's just not true, and I really think it's
important to note that.

But in any case, I never thought that
negotiating a relationship with a man in prison would
be easy, but you know, I was 23. I was very young.
Had a lot hope for our future and, you know, realistic
belief that he would be released. And what we didn't
notice was that our relationship was being slowly and
in a very calculated way undermined.

We weren't undermined so much by the fixed
rules of prison life. You know, you read that and you
accept that and behave accordingly. We were
undermined as people, as individuals, as a family by
rules that were selectively enforced by guards, and
they were so selective you either didn't know they
existed, or there would be these sudden capricious new
rulings that would guide, you know, your interaction
with your loved one in the facility.

So one of the ones that we wives and
mothers complained about the most were sudden changes
in dress codes. So what you wore last week, you
know -- literally I had pictures -- I would wear two
weeks later and that now it's unacceptable. In the
manner in which you're told that it's unacceptable is
humiliating and has the collateral consequence of
making a very vulgar sexual implication about you.
You wind up feeling like you're being sexually
harassed. Whether or not that's the intention, that's
what it feels like.

So it was -- hard as this was to take prior
to becoming a mother, it was nearly impossible to take
once I became a mother because I always have to be
aware of what I'm modeling for my daughter, and what
does it mean for her to look at her mother being
humiliated in this particular way and have no
recourse. What is she learning about how to negotiate
her space in the world as a woman and, you know, that
fear began to envelope me and really make me want to
limit my interaction with the facility because, you
know, it wasn't okay to have her mother's private
parts openly discussed and disparaged.

So the most egregious example was this
summer. It was maybe, I don't know, 98 degrees. It's
July in New York. I had on a dress that was down to
my ankles with a collar that was up here, but I had
these very sexy naked arms in this 95 degree weather
and so did my daughter. And they literally ran from
the room where you process in and said, "You can't
come any further" and stopped -- and we were stopped.

And, "Look at you, your arms are all out here."

So luckily there were Muslims there who had seven layers of clothes on. They gave them to us and we were able to go in. But you know, other than that, we wouldn't have been allowed. The reason that was enforced was there was a new deputy superintendent, a woman, who decided that naked arms would cause the men to riot, and she walked around the facility that day in a tank top and shorts.

Incidents like these would send me spiraling back to the office searches that took place when I would go on conjugal visits. And when the guard would sift through my clothes and would often pull your underwear up and shake it out as though I could hide something in it. They do it while a company of men were walking by. I will never be convinced this made the facility more secure. Indeed, the treatment of family members has the potential to make the facility less secure because it can lead to severe tension between a prisoner and a guard who humiliated or otherwise violated his wife.

From the time I became a mother, maltreatment by guards seemed to intensify. Perhaps this was because it wasn't just me, but my infant
child being treated with total disdain, so I would have to argue about how many bottles I could bring in. Bottles became contraband and a change of clothes for an infant became contraband, and even the fight over not having my six month old stamped with ink that I don't know what's in it, you know, became a huge fight.

Once inside the facility there are very few places for children to play. I think one facility there is a room where kids can play, but in most of them you have to send your child into the playroom alone. You're not allowed to interact. So it, you know, completely takes away the idea that a father or mother and child can -- can bond. And I'm asked as a mother to allow two men I don't know to have oversight over my child. That's bananas to me.

But one of the worst things that happened that really destabilized our families and I think created a whole lot of tension was Rashid was moved six times in the five years since my daughter was born. In the previous ten years that I'd known him he had been moved three times. He was also denied at the parole board for no other reason other than the crime itself.

So it wasn't like you could do good time
anymore, and then have that be the reason you would be paroled. And, you know, just forced us to live with a certain amount of fear about what was coming next, what would the next day hold. And I think that, you know, if you walk away with anything, I really want to stress that we know intact families are a strong contributing factor to a prisoner successfully reentering society. We know that children who were provided a measure of safety, security, and stability grow into happy and productive adults. The prison system, as I experienced it, works completely to undermine both of these ideals.

It's not true of all facilities. I certainly experienced two in which the leadership, the superintendent in one case, Robert Kuhlmann, in other case I have a lot of hope for William Brown, who is now running Eastern Correctional facility. Their leadership was one of respect for families of prisoners and for staff and that flowed. There were very few instances of violence and the like.

So it makes me wonder, you know, why then when there is actual and anecdotal data to suggest that respectfully running the facility makes everyone's lives easier would there be people who chose to go another route. My conjecture is that they
come into work with sets of prejudices, and those
prejudices are not at regular intervals being trained
out them.

So for example, you see people constantly
in family situations treated really badly. If you
have a mixed race couple, especially if the man is
white and the partner is black, staffers who leave the
facility because they fall in love with prisoners are
treated very badly, same sex couples. You know, women
like me who was fairly prominent, you know, an author,
you know, appeared to have some means, you know,
Rashid was told, you know, basically, "She will be
brought down to her level. She's no better."

One of the guards said something about me
while he was strip searching my husband, you know,
obviously looking to provoke an already tense
situation. So -- which is a huge problem in that
they -- often the people who are in the visiting room
monitoring us are the most hostile people you can ever
meet. Which in a place already ripe with emotion, it
seems to confound, you know, me why that's there.

So the confluence of all of these factors
combined with my ineffectiveness when it came to
protecting and advocating for my husband contributed
to the dissolution of my marriage. Earlier this year,
for example, my husband broke his hand while playing basketball. It took fully 25 days for him to be diagnosed, three months to have any kind of real treatment. No painkillers. And I was helpless. I couldn't do anything.

I couldn't do anything when he was molested by a guard at Attica who during -- when he was being pat -- pat-frisked, you know, grabbed his testicles and penis. It happened on more than one occasion, and I think that I'll close by saying, you know, something about being a witness to abuse, especially of someone you love, when you're helpless. That is deeply scarring.

You know, it's from this place of depression, of helplessness and hopelessness that I'm asked to raise a happy and well-adjusted little girl. And I do my best, but you know, there are no crutches. There are no processes for families of the incarcerated, and when the prison population is hovering at over two million, what does it mean for our society at large to have so many walking wounded among us, and what does it mean for our children?

Thank you.

DR. DUDLEY: Thank you. I was wondering before we let you go, you mentioned two places that
you thought maybe things were better, and I was wondering if you wanted to mention or note anything specific about those places or any other thoughts that you've had about ways of doing things differently that were better.

MS. BANDELE: Sullivan Correctional Facility during the 1990s was run by a man named Robert Kuhlmann. He was an advocate for prisoner education and program. He encouraged interaction between prisoners and outside members of society. He ran a fair prison, a by-the-book prison in that, you know, you didn't get special favors or treatment, but you also didn't have these surprise shocking rules that didn't, you know, exist before. So it was in that way a stable and predictable environment, and because it was stable and predictable everybody had a chance to sort of grow and mature and do better and think rationally without, you know, the unpredictable environment you're always thinking in this fear and defensive mode.

DR. DUDLEY: Thank you. Mr. Kaschak?

MR. KASCHAK: Good morning. I worked for Mahoning County Sheriff's Department for six years, from October of '98 to June of 2004. I held the position of deputy sheriff. I had several different
responsibilities in the time that I worked for the sheriff's department. I worked at the correction division, the records and warrants, and I also worked patrol division.

The incident that I will be sharing with you happened while I was working in the corrections division of the MCSO. On December 28th, 2001 there was an incident that occurred that changed my life forever. On that Friday afternoon I was assigned to the float position of the jail. A float position means that you are there to help other deputies.

My shift began at two o'clock that day. At three o'clock in the afternoon I received a signal seven on my radio. A signal seven is a fight between inmates. The call came from the fourth floor housing unit, which is a felony floor in our facility. The fourth floor holds the most dangerous and violent criminals. This is where the rapists, murderers, and armed robbers are housed.

When we arrived on the scene, the fight had already been broken up and the inmates were going back to their cells. After the inmates were locked down in their cells, we then learned that a female deputy had been assaulted by an inmate. The female deputy had walked around the pod to point out which inmate had
struck her. It was in P-32, which is where the deputy pointed out inmate twenty as the inmate who struck her.

At this point my supervisor instructed me to open his cell door. Two other deputies entered inmate Easterly's cell and escorted him downstairs. The two deputies along with five other deputies and a corporal, who is my supervisor, took the inmate into the gym. I did not go into the gym at this time because I did not believe it was inmate Easterly who had struck the female deputy. I later learned that the deputies had put a beating on inmate Easterly while he was in the gym.

After they were done in the gym with the inmate, they took him back into the pod and placed him into his cell. At this point I shut the inmate's door and went down to the booking area with the other deputies. I then went to find the female deputy who had been assaulted. While I was there, I learned from other inmates that it was indeed inmate Easterly who had struck the deputy at the time.

At this point I had returned back to the booking area. While I was in the booking area I was sitting in the bridge, which is an office in the booking area. At the time I was speaking with
Sergeant Blue, who told me that Major Bud had called downstairs and asked him, "Why the fuck is inmate Easterly not in the hospital?"

At this point the phone rang again. It was Major Orange. When the sergeant hung up the phone he said Major Bud -- Major Orange wants us to go upstairs and move inmate Easterly into the hole and take care of the situation. At this point the other deputies and myself went to his cell and instructed the deputy to open inmate Easterly's door. Deputies Yellow and Green went into the inmate's cell while another deputy and myself walked behind them.

When we left -- we left one pod to go to the other, it was there in the hallway that Deputies Yellow and Green took inmate Easterly to the floor while Deputy Purple and myself each held one of his legs down. Deputies Yellow and Green started punching inmate Easterly, and I delivered three knee strikes to his leg. At that point I stood up. The three other deputies continued beating inmate Easterly at the time. This continued going on for another minute. This is when they stopped.

The deputy working the pod came and opened the door to let us out of the hallway. Deputy Yellow and Green then stripped him of his clothes and drug
him through the pod to his cell. Deputy Purple and
myself stayed in the hallway. When the other two
deputies placed him in his cell, Deputy Yellow yelled,
"This is what happens when you strike a female
deputy."
The deputies involved and myself went
downstairs, and no reports of this incident were
written until September 2002, almost a year later. In
August of '02 I went for a job interview with
Austintown Police. At this point I was given a
polygraph test. One of the questions was, "Have you
ever struck an inmate while on duty?" I answered,
"Yes, under a direct order."
After the polygraph I went home. I
received a call from Austintown Police and asked me to
come back down. Approximately two hours later I went
back down. They stated everything looked good, and
all I needed to do was come back and clear up this
question. When I went back to the station I told them
about the incident. I never thought twice about it
since the person administering the test I have known
my whole life. My father had worked for the
Austintown Police for nearly 25 years and had retired
from the police department.

After I left the Austintown Police
Department contacted me again stating that they were going to send a letter to Sheriff Gray stating what I had told them during the polygraph test. A few weeks later Major Orange had called me into his office. He was the one who had ordered -- who ordered the assault on the prisoner. When I got there he was waving the letter in his hand. He looked at me and stated, "What the fuck am I supposed to do now that this is public record?" He was holding the letter from Austintown Police Department in his hand.

At this point he told me to write a report on the incident, and after I was done writing it he was going to arrest me for an assault. I replied that I would not write anything without my union rep present. He began yelling, "I am giving a direct order to write a report." I again told him that I wouldn't write it without representation.

At this point the major called Sergeant Silver into his office. When he arrived the major said I was being placed on administrative leave. He proceeded to take my gun, my badge, my access card, and my magazines. Sergeant Silver said I had to write a report or the major could fire me.

Major Orange then asked me one more time to write a report. At this point I agreed to write one.
In the report I falsified it so I would not implicate the major. I said the inmate became aggressive and we had to use force to get him under control. I also never mentioned the major's name in my report.

When I got done with the report I took it over to his office and handed it to him. The major then wrote a report and handed it back and gave me back my gun, my badge, my access card, and my magazines. He then stated not to worry about anything, that it was over with, and go back to work.

In November of 2002 the FBI showed up and began asking me questions about the incident. Then almost a year and a half later I got a call from the U.S. Attorney General's office asking me to come in and talk. My attorney and myself met with them on several occasions. We did a proffer.

In March 2004 I made the toughest decision I ever had to make. I made a plea agreement with the government. I agreed to cross the blue line and testify against other cops. They were more to me than just my co-workers. They were also my friends. Many of them were at my wedding. I worked with them every day, and they were the people I trusted who had my back if I was ever in trouble.

Now I was about to send these people that I
called my friends to prison. For me it came down to
two reasons: Number one is my wife and daughter, and
number two was it was the right thing to tell the
truth. It was one of the toughest decisions, but also
one of the easiest.

In June of '04 I resigned the Mahoning
County Sheriff's Department after six years on the
force. My whole life I wanted to be a police officer
like my father. Because of me not thinking for myself
I lost my career and my job. It's hard to explain to
people everything I lost. I lost my career, my house,
and a lot of my friends because I agreed to become a
government witness and testify against other police
officers.

One thing, I have become a parent, though,
and those are the people who truly do care about you,
my parents, my brother, my in-laws, and my wife. I
also believe that even though this incident was a
tragedy it made me a better person, a better husband,
and more importantly, a better father.

I hope that my story can help other people
or other police officers that are put in situations
like I was. When a supervisor gives you a direct
order, you either obey or you get fired. I hope this
doesn't happen to anybody, but if it does, remember
you do have a choice and you can just walk away.

I hope you never have to be in a situation where supervisor has lost perspective about why they are a police officer and gives a command that abuses their power. Remember, you still have a choice, though, so please don't make the same mistakes I made. You have too much to lose. Thank you for your time.

DR. DUDLEY: Thank you. I guess the question is, you know, in retrospect, is there anything that can be done with regard to being in a situation such as this?

MR. KASCHAK: It's the people in charge. I don't know, you know, like because the sheriff's department, you know, we change hands every four years and you never know who's going to be in charge. It's people that abuse the power. I don't really know what can be done with that to make that incident not happen.

DR. DUDLEY: Okay. I'd like to thank each of you for giving up your time to be with us this morning, and particularly for sharing such personal experiences with us. So please know that we are very grateful for your contribution to our work. Thank you.

MR. SESSIONS: Thank you.