OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS OF COMMISSIONERS

THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning. We will now convene the fifth public hearing of the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission. This particular hearing will focus on the issues of the reporting, the investigation, and the prosecution of prison rape cases and what needs to be done to make those efforts successful.

I would first like to thank the chief judge of this Court, Chief Judge Bernard Freedman for permitting us to use this facility. And, obviously, we appreciate that graciousness.

The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission, for those who are not familiar with the commission, was created by the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act. The act was created by an act of Congress and signed off by the President.

Our responsibility as commissioners is to study the issue of prison rape and to ultimately report to Congress and the President our findings, and to make recommendations to those who propose
standards that are national standards. We will be holding public hearings probably for the next year or so throughout the country assessing various aspects of the problem of prison rape with the hope that we will be able to ultimately have a profound impact on the incidence on prison rape.

I think as a nation we have a proud history, but we obviously have to appreciate that this is the problem that exist in America and a problem that America will not tolerate.

I would first like to introduce the commissioners, at least have them introduce themselves. There are two commissioners who, unfortunately, can not be here. One is Mr. Pat Nolan, who is the president of the Justice Fellowship, which is a policy mark of Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries. And the second individual who could not be here is Gus Puryear, who is executive vice president, general counsel, and secretary of the Corrections Corporation of America.

We'll start on my far right and I'll have my
fellow commissioners introduce themselves.

COMMISSIONER FELLNER: Good morning. I'm Jamie Fellner, commissioner obviously on the Commission. And in my day job I am the director of the U.S. Program Human Rights Watch.

COMMISSIONER STRUCKMAN-JOHNSON: Good morning. I am Professor Cindy Struckman-Johnson and I teach psychology at the University of South Dakota. My background is in conducting research on prison rape.

COMMISSIONER AIKEN: Good morning. My name is James Aiken. I'm the president of James E. Aiken & Associates, a prison consulting firm.

COMMISSIONER KANE: John Kaneb. I'm from the Boston area and I'm in private business.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: Good morning. My name is Brenda Smith. I'm a professor at American University, Washington College of Law.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I am Reggie Walton. I'm the chairman of the commission. I also serve as United States district judge in Washington, D.C.

Our first panel are two survivors of prison
rape and I'd ask the two of you to identify
yourselves in turn and please present your
statements to us.

We welcome you and we thank you for your
willingness to appear and make public statements on
this issue.

I'm sorry, we need to swear you in. Would you
stand?

SURVIVOR TESTIMONY

(Survivor members sworn.)

MS. RAGSDALE: Good morning. My name is
Dana Ragsdale and I am pleased to be here this
morning. I want to thank you for giving me the
opportunity to share my story with you.

My experience is different because I was not
sexually assaulted while in prison. Instead, I was
a survivor of sexual abuse prior to entering
prison, and I reported to prison staff person for
sexual misconduct. Apparently, I was not taken
seriously because a number of women were assaulted
by this corrections officer long after the report
was made. I hope that my experience dealing with