



Lovisa Stannow and Frank Mendoza.

FRANK MENDOZA IS ONE of my heroes. Sitting next to Mendoza at JDI's Congressional briefing, I watched his hands shake, pearls of sweat forming on his brow. Although nervous about testifying before such an audience, he was determined to do it.

When his turn came, Mendoza spoke clearly and powerfully. In that moment, I admired him so very much — for his courage, his dignity, and his insistence that no one else should ever have to go through what he did.

"I lost my job at a law firm and was arrested for public drunkenness," Mendoza explained. "I had never been arrested before. I was scared of other inmates — I did not know at the time that I had more reason to fear the Los Angeles jail staff."

"The abusive officer entered my cell, beat me, and raped me. When the officer on the next shift saw me naked and bloodied in my cell, he asked what happened. I told him I was raped and he just told me to get dressed. Even though I was never convicted of a crime, I received a life sentence of pain and hurt."

Nobody who heard Mendoza speak will ever forget him. And he will never forget those still behind bars, struggling to keep safe.

Thank you everyone, for continuing to support our work!

Lovisa Stannow
Executive Director

Survivors to Eric Holder: End Rape in Detention Now

Members of JDI's Survivor Council in Washington, DC for Congressional Meetings and Briefing

On June 23, 2011, JDI's Survivor Council members showed again that they will not stand idly in the face of government dithering. Highlighting the one-year anniversary of Attorney General Eric Holder's failure to finalize national standards mandated by the Prison Rape Elimination Act, eight courageous survivors of prisoner rape descended on Washington, DC. On the agenda: meetings with Congressional staffers and a Congressional briefing about sexual abuse in detention.

Survivor Troy Isaac's message for Julia Mas-simino, Chief of Staff for Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA), was clear and concise.

"I'm here because I need your help to stop rape in detention." Afterward, Isaac reflected: "She listened, she really listened, and she knew so much about the Prison Rape Elimination Act. I think I made a difference today." Isaac was abused repeatedly while in juvenile detention and adult prisons in California; his first assault took place when he was 12.

Another Survivor Council member, Jan Lastocy, met with staff in Reps. Dan Benishek's (R-MI) and Nancy Pelosi's (D-CA) offices and spoke at JDI's Congressional briefing. She described her two days in Washington, DC as "something I'll always remember. I was proud to be able to share my experiences.

See Survivor Council, continued on page 3



Left: Jan Lastocy, who was raped repeatedly by an officer in a Michigan prison, getting ready for her presentation at JDI's Congressional briefing in Washington, DC. Right: Survivor Cecilia Chung, who was raped in a San Francisco jail, embraces Frank Mendoza, who was raped in a Los Angeles jail, after Mendoza's presentation. Photos: Tamela Kemp

Review Panel on Prison Rape: **Jailers Call Prisoner Rape Cultural Delusion, like UFOs**

Denial: a psychological defense mechanism in which confrontation with a personal problem or with reality is avoided by denying the existence of the problem or reality. (Merriam-Webster)

THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2011 HEARINGS of the Department of Justice’s Review Panel on Prison Rape were a stark reminder that official denial, which has allowed rampant sexual abuse in many prisons and jails to continue for decades, still exists despite powerful government data proving the magnitude of the problem.

The Review Panel on Prison Rape was created by the Prison Rape Elimination Act, with the goal of publicizing best practices and systemic problems in U.S. corrections systems. Officials from Orleans Parish Prison in Louisiana and Clallam County Jail in Washington had been called to Washington, DC to testify after surveys by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) found that their jails had shockingly high rates of sexual abuse.

These officials tried to call the BJS statistics into question, denying that their facilities had serious problems. Orleans Parish Prison officials claimed that inmates falsely reported abuse in return for “bags of cookies” offered by the survey administrators. This assertion

prompted lead BJS researcher Allen Beck to point out that there was no difference in average rates of sexual victimization between cookie and non-cookie facilities.

Clallam County Sheriff, Bill Benedict, went even further and equated inmates’ reports of sexual abuse to other “cultural delusions,” such as UFO sightings. (Despite this, Sheriff Benedict later acknowledged that sexual assault does happen, and detailed steps his department is taking to fulfill the Panel’s recommendations.)

In stark contrast to those from Orleans Parish and Clallam County, officials from Miami-Dade County Pre-Trial Detention Center in Florida — which also was found to have very high levels of sexual abuse — did not dispute the BJS numbers. Instead, they emphasized the many changes they have made at their facility since the survey results came out. Rather than denying their problems, they told the Justice Department that they had begun working with JDI to solve them.

“The widely diverging testimony at the Review Panel hearings was a reminder of how far we’ve come, and how far we still have to go in ending sexual abuse in U.S. jails,” noted Chris Daley, JDI’s Deputy Executive Director.

Miami-Dade and JDI Work Together to End Rape in Detention

JDI is pleased to announce the launch of a new project at the Miami-Dade County Pre-Trial Detention Center in Florida — a jail plagued by sexual abuse (see article to the left).

Large city jails tend to be noisy, crowded, and chaotic, with people cycling through for as little as a couple of hours. Straight off the streets, some detainees arrive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, some still bleeding from a fight, and some having been homeless for weeks or months.

Jails hold many inmates who are among the most vulnerable to sexual abuse: nonviolent, first-time detainees lacking even basic prison savvy, often picked up for disorderly conduct, or failure to make bail — many never even charged with a crime.

For many of these detainees, a couple of days in a local jail results in a lifetime of trauma. But sexual abuse, even in crowded jails, is not inevitable. On the contrary, such violence can be prevented through strong management, sound policies, and proper training.

Officials from Miami-Dade County have committed to working with JDI to implement such policies and training at their facilities, aiming to make the Miami-Dade County Pre-Trial Detention Center a model for large jails nationwide.

Testimony from Orleans Parish Prison

ADAM WAS 30 YEARS OLD when he was arrested in New Orleans for nonviolent offenses. When placed in general population at Orleans Parish Prison, he was scared. As a gay man, he knew that he was likely to become a target for abuse by other inmates. He asked staff to keep him away from general population for his safety. But they said no.

Adam’s worst fears were realized his first night in an overcrowded cell. He remembers his cellmates attacking him: “I called for help, but there were no guards around and no one responded to my screams. I refused to do what the inmate was telling me to do, but then he kicked me while another inmate held a knife to my back. I decided that I had better do what he wanted in order to save my life.”

Over the next two months, Adam was choked, set on fire, and repeatedly raped and beaten by other inmates. He filed six grievances, and turned in some 25 requests for medical help.

“Not only did the guards sit by and do nothing while I was being raped on a regular basis, they made it even worse by not helping me when I complained.”



Clockwise from left: JDI's Senior Program Officer Christine Kregg and Esmeralda Soto (raped in immigration detention), Garrett Cunningham (raped in a Texas state prison), Jan Lastocy and her husband John (Jan was raped repeatedly in a Michigan state prison), Hope Hernandez (raped in a Washington, DC jail), Kimberly Yates (raped in a federal prison) and Troy Isaac (raped in California youth and adult state facilities). Photos: Tamela Kemp

Survivor Council *continued from page 1*

My ability to prevent others from getting raped is the one positive consequence of my own nightmare.” Lastocy was raped several times a week for seven months by an officer in a Michigan state prison.

In each Congressional meeting, JDI's Survivor Council members shared data about the prevalence of sexual violence in detention, offered suggestions for how to end this abuse, informed staffers about the Attorney General's missed deadline for adopting national standards, and asked that each Representative tell Attorney General Holder to bring a greater sense of urgency to his department's protracted review process of the standards.

“These amazing advocates did much more than put a face on sexual abuse in detention,” said JDI's Executive Director, Lovisa Stannow.

“They provided facts, policy proposals, and first-hand wisdom. They reminded lawmakers that, as members of Congress, they have a responsibility to do everything they can to protect inmates from abuse.”

While in Washington, DC, Survivor Council members also spent an afternoon developing policy recommendations for community rape crisis centers, with the aim of making their services more accessible to formerly incarcerated survivors of sexual violence.

And instead of taking a break between meetings, they all sat down and wrote personal notes of hope to hundreds of survivors who remain incarcerated. “JDI helped save our lives. Now it's our turn to help someone else go from despair to hope,” explained Kimberly Yates, who was raped by a guard in a federal prison.

216,600 and Counting

June 23, 2011 marked the one-year anniversary of Attorney General Holder's failure to meet the statutory deadline for adopting national standards to end prisoner rape. That day, JDI launched a campaign — “216,600 and Counting” — highlighting the number of people who are sexually abused behind bars in the U.S. every year. This number comes from the Department of Justice's own inmate surveys.

Every day, JDI gets letters from survivors of rape behind bars. Every day, until the standards are adopted, JDI will send the Attorney General a quote from one of those letters. Please help by sending your own e-mails to the Attorney General, at www.justdetention.org.

Campaign: One Letter, One Life

Letters from Survivors Daily Reminder of Horror – and Hope

CAN A LETTER SAVE A LIFE? Just ask Martin, who was considering committing suicide after being raped repeatedly and sold from one gang to another in a Texas prison.

You want to know what the turning point was for me? It was the book JDI sent, Hope for Healing. Believe it or not, your book saved my life. Your caring saved my life. So thank you from the bottom of my heart.

JDI gets letters from people like Martin every day. Incarcerated survivors cannot call hotlines, cannot reach out to a trusted friend or family member, and cannot go online to find out about their rights or how they can heal. Most are forced to suffer in silence. JDI's staff respond to each survivor letter by sending a packet with self-help information and a letter of encouragement from another survivor of rape behind bars.

These packets from JDI are a lifeline for prisoner rape survivors who are scared, alone, trapped with their abusers, and desperate for help. Through a new campaign — “One Letter,

One Life” — JDI is aiming to raise \$216,600: \$1 for each person who, like Martin, is sexually abused every year while in U.S. detention.

The funds raised through “One Letter, One Life” will be used to:

- Provide information to survivors of rape behind bars, so that they know how to get help;
- Build peer education programs inside prisons, so that inmates can learn about their rights and become leaders in sexual abuse prevention;
- Help local rape crisis centers work with prisons to provide counseling to survivors, before and after their release; and
- Help survivors become powerful voices for change, so that no one else has to go through what Martin did, ever again.

Help JDI save a life today. For more information about “One Letter, One Life,” visit www.justdetention.org.

Letters from Inside

In September 2011, just like every month, JDI received scores of letters from prisoner rape survivors. Here are a few excerpts, illustrating the horror of sexual abuse in detention, but also the enormous impact of JDI's work.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you for standing with us, caring about us, and helping us fight for justice.” *Anonymous woman, abused by an officer in Indiana*

“I was scared. Humiliated. So I didn't come forward right away. Since I did come forward it's been hell. I've been treated badly by everyone from the warden to investigators. I have received no mental health counseling at all. I'm mentally drained, paranoid, and scared for my life. No one

seems to care.” *Anonymous man, raped by an officer in Oklahoma*

“Tears are building up in my eyes from the pain and humiliation. I'm shocked, angry, enraged, I don't know what to do.” *Alexander, raped repeatedly by staff and inmates in California*

“Every day, I take time out of my day to go over the packet you sent me. It's my daily meditation to help me heal. I have no outside support, so I depend on organizations to give me hope. If it weren't for the packet, I probably would have given up and gone on to hurt people, but the JDI packet gave me a change of heart.” *Cornelius, gang raped by inmates in Florida*



JDI Top-Rated by Charity Navigator and GreatNonProfits.org

JDI is a top-rated nonprofit organization, both in terms of financial management and transparency. Once again, JDI has been awarded four stars by Charity Navigator – the highest possible score. JDI has also earned a spot on GreatNonProfits.org's list of Top-Rated Social Justice Nonprofits, based on positive reviews by JDI supporters.

As a small organization seeking to end an enormous human rights crisis, JDI takes pride in spending every dollar it raises with the utmost care. With 87 percent of funds going straight to program work, financial statements posted on its website, and a strict policy of never selling or trading our donors' personal information to anyone, ever, JDI lives up to its core values of accountability and transparency.



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