



Game Over Commission Hearing 2019

[00:00:00] The first day of hearings for the first set of hearings of the game. Over a permission. The game over commission is a commission of independent experts, leading experts in the country who have gathered together to ask the following. How was it? Hostable that every institution that should have protected the victims of Larry Nassar in the USA gymnastics universe did not, this is not a story about the Catholic churches, internal mechanisms, which have been studied to death.

We now know for certain how things have happened there, but it's one institution, although empowered by other elements of society. This is a group of children that went through a system in which a major university, Michigan state university, a major source of, uh, power in the United States, the us Olympic committee, us America, USA, gymnastics gyms, across the country for children, parents, nobody had the tools or the weapons that they needed to make sure this didn't happen to this many children.

And so this commission has been put together to answer the question, how can we make sure this doesn't happen again? Um, so part of the focus is on sport. It is an arena that we have not focused enough on, and it's an arena that's rife with opportunities for abusers to get access to children. But part of it is just the whole culture that we ignore children and we prefer, and we protect adults and we continue to do that.

So let me just start by thanking the commission, uh, which is an extraordinary, um, collection of individuals, um, that have volunteered their time, uh, which I've just, um, am incredibly grateful. Uh, I know how busy I am. I know how busy you are. Um, I know you don't want one more email from us, but here we are.

Um, so I thought that we would start today by starting with Joanna silver, would you just briefly, um, introduce yourself and your affiliation and then we'll go down the line. Cause I want each, I want this to be documented. Every aspect today is being live streamed and preserved. It will be preserved permanently on, um, the game over commission database, which will be publicly available.

My name is Dr. Juliana Silberg, I'm a clinical child, psychologist and forensic psychologist specializing in child sexual abuse. I'm the president of a nonprofit called the leadership council on child abuse and interpersonal violence. And we educate the media about everything that can interfere with the protection of children.

And we advocate for science that promotes survival and, uh, healing for all survivors of trauma. Good morning, I'm Phil Scrivano. I'm a child abuse pediatrician and section chief of safe place the center for child protection and health here locally in Philadelphia at the children's hospital of Philadelphia.

And I'm a professor of clinical pediatrics here at Penn

I'm Monica Roland. Um, I'm the regional director of USA in one, I was previously an elite athlete and served on the AAC for eight years, as well as, um, part of team integrity. And I've been working towards change at the USO level. So that's kind of the expertise cyber in to this committee. Well, I'm a professor Daniel Pollock and a social worker and an attorney, and very involved in the legal aspects of cases that come up in terms of being an expert witness.

My name is James Marsh. I'm an attorney founder of the martial law firm in New York, also founder of the children's law center in Washington, DC. I've, uh, focused my practice on children, the



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wellbeing of children, both in state systems and with child abuse and neglect and child sex abuse for the last 30 years and graduated from the university of Michigan law school and the child advocacy law clinics.

I've been doing this a very long time and, uh, I'm also president of the board of child USA. So very happy to be here. And thank you Marcy for making this happen. Hi, I'm Theresa Weezer. I'm the executive director of national children's Alliance or the national association and accrediting body for nearly 900 children's advocacy centers around the country that serve around 400,000 child victims of sexual abuse each year.

What about you? Oh, who need to know okay. Marci Hamilton. I'm a professor at Penn, but I'm also the founder and CEO of child USA. Uh, and, uh, the chair of the game over commission. My name is Kathleen Colborne Fowler. I'm the Marion Elizabeth blue professor of Marita, the university of Michigan school of social work, the rival university.

Um, and, uh, I've been working in the area of child sexual abuse for about 35 years. Um, in terms of research, um, best practice, um, and actual evaluating children who may have been sexually victimized.

My name's David Corwin. I'm a professor of pediatrics at the university of Utah director of forensic services there, uh, I'm a child, adult and forensic psychiatrist. And I currently serve as president of the American professional society on the abuse of children and also on the board of the academy on violence and abuse, which is an international organization of healthcare professionals focused on educating professionals about the linkage between experiences of violence and abuse and health issues.

Hi, my name is Dr. Sharon Cooper. I'm a developmental and forensic pediatrician. I'm in North Carolina. I'm on the faculty of the university of North Carolina at chapel hill. Uh, I also am on the board at the national center for missing and exploited children and have worked with them for almost 20 years, with respect to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Uh, in particular, I'm very focused in the area of abusive images and the impact upon children and adults. Who've had that type of victimization experience. I also am on the international working group for the Canadian center for child protection and work quite a bit with Interpol, with respect to victimization of individuals.

Good morning, everyone. My name is pat Shiraki and I'm a former television news anchor at the CBS station here in Philadelphia. And my background is covering extensively, the clergy sex abuse scandal. That's how Marcy and I got to know each other. And so this seems to be a wonderful next step in terms of being able to focus issues and communications on, on this particular issue.

Thank you. Uh, hello, my name is Jim carpenter. I've been a prosecutor for the last 25 years. Um, I was with the Philadelphia district attorney's office as chief of their sex crimes and domestic violence office. Um, I'm very excited to hear from these survivors who are so courageous, um, and ways that we can improve the justice system across the country to make it more, um, accepting of survivors and more supportive of survivors.

Um, it's nice to be last. My name is Steve Berkowitz. Um, I'm a professor at the university of Colorado, um, and I'm a child psychiatrist. Um, and I was here for 10 years. I've worked with a lot of people, Marcy and I got to know each other. Um, I was an expert on, I don't know how many clergy abuse cases, um, and I moved to Colorado to begin a new trauma program lifespan.



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Um, and I work a lot with the state in terms of trying to make a more friendly, uh, justice system for children and victims. And I really appreciate you being here. So thank you.

So, uh, it would be impossible to put together, uh, a more qualified and more expert panel to be able to investigate these issues. Uh, for our first set of hearings, we're going to hear today from a variety of perspectives from survivors, uh, through the media. Uh, but we're going to start with the survivors as we should.

Um, and I wanted to thank each and every one of you for taking the time to do this, uh, this is not your full-time job. I'm aware of that. Uh, and you are such brave women to be able to come forward. So this doesn't happen to other children. So we thank you. Um, as I told you, before we got started, if there is anything you don't want to say, don't say it.

Um, if there is something you'd like to clarify, please do, this is not going to this isn't, this is not congressional. Um, and, uh, none of us will be seeding time to each other up here. Uh, we're just going to be a friendly group, uh, that, um, that wants to get to the bottom of the truth. Uh, we asked each of you because you have wildly different stories about someone who ran through the system, uh, and made it possible to inflict harm, to so many differently situated children.

So, um, we've asked each of you to speak for 10 minutes today. Uh, we'll let you know when you're at nine minutes, uh, and, uh, please know that we're here for you, um, to be supportive of you. Uh, but also, uh, we hope that you will stick with advising us and letting us know what, what the commission's doing right.

And what it's doing wrong. So, okay. Um, if you would please introduce, uh, each of yourselves as you start your testimony, um, and how you came into this sphere. Um, the, uh, each of the commissioners has a written up version of your, uh, initial story. Um, but this is for purposes of the camera. So please introduce yourself.

We'll start with Megan and, um, thank you so much for coming. Thank you. I need to move this or can you hear me okay. This is okay. Just let me know. Um, hi, my name is Megan Hallett. I'm originally from Ohio. I'm based in Los Angeles right now. And I started gymnastics when I was two. It was my greatest love.

Um, I encountered a lot of emotional abuse that led to the sexual abuse by Larry, that I'll talk about today. Um, but right now I work for the foundation for global sports development, specifically on a campaign called courage first, which is intended to inspire and educate adults to prevent abuse and protect the kids in their lives.

So just get started in.

As we deal with the aftermath of our cases, a huge piece that is left out of the conversation is how mental, emotional, and physical abuse and gymnastics and other elite sports directly informs sexual abuse. I want to be very Frank and that I believe competitive gymnastics and other elite sports break children.

Sexual abuse is truthfully one of the least surprising things that could happen in this environment. This is one of the main keys to the culture shift we're trying to make happen, but it's often met with confusion as the sports gatekeepers, feign ignorance, and view kind, positive coaching as weak and ineffective.



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This is a fallacy. Psychological abuse is so often ignored because it's less tangible and less easy to see and understand it's inconsistent. This is the type of abuse that causes you to lose your sense of self, your body, autonomy and ownership over your choices. Your body becomes a tool, a prop, a mechanism to be used by adults to propel your body, to win.

Naturally. This makes a perfect environment for a predator to thrive athletes and more pressurized situations with verbally abusive coaches are much less likely to speak up when anything feels wrong. Athlete's instinct to remain safe is not to tell anyone. And yet, so often athletes are victim shamed for not saying something sooner.

This is how the cycle of abuse begins and repeats itself over and over and over again, even though this room of people is doing incredible research to ensure that what we went through won't happen again. I think you'll find a great deal of elite athletes. Don't want to talk to you, which tends to be an obvious red flag that they have also undergone some type of abuse.

What you have are a lot of trapped kids trapped by their love for the sport and their desire to be great. And the coaches who claim that they can make them great. Who dangled their dreams, a full ride scholarships and the Olympics in front of their faces and use it as an excuse to create pain. I decided as a kid, I would never let my child, my future child touch the sport with a 10 foot pole.

It became something I just bared through. And I think we forget that love and pain, unfortunately can co-exist beginning at the age of nine, they began experiencing years of screaming, bullying, emotional abuse. We were required to ride our food down for approval each day, train on injuries. We bled all over the equipment.

We were bullied and named called. We underwent extreme conditioning as punishment. We were called weak, dumb, not good enough worthless. We were [00:30:00] ignored and our coaches stormed out of the gym or competitions when we made them. And the unfortunate circumstance we told our parents what was happening at practice.

And our coach has found out we are separated from the group the next day and be rated for doing so you might've guessed it, but this is the exact environment that teaches kids not to speak up, to visualize, imagine an NFL quote, an NFL coach, like bill Belichick, like getting in the face of a grown man on the football field and just screaming and letting them have it an inch from his face.

And this is a grown man. This is what's regularly, regularly happening to nine year olds and 10 year old and 11 year olds and 12 year olds. As you can assume from that visual kids are even more eager to please these sorts of coaches because they feel intrinsically. It could lead to less abuse if you just smile and deal with it.

So by the time I walked into Larry Nasser's office, as a teenager with a fractured spine, there was literally no hope. I was a shell of a human. And not only did I accept the fact that I couldn't safely speak up, but I accepted the shame. And the discomfort is normal. As part of the torture chamber, that gymnastics was to me, I knew I was a strong kid and that I was supposed to use my strength to stay quiet.

Arguably talent in the sport is one of the most dangerous things a kid can have making them ponds to the greater system of abuse that's at work. What is also overlooked is how the hierarchy within club gymnastics makes it impossible to get help. When parents see a specific team winning meets, they flock to that gym.



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When parents see coaches screaming at kids, they figure this, this must be normal. This must be what it takes to win because they're winning parents participate in this emotional abuse of kids by accepting and accepting it as the key to winning because that's so often, unfortunately what happens.

Parents become more invested in the future. Then the kids and parents obsess over winning at this point, a child can feel chained to the sport trapped by their parents, enabling, and the fear of what might happen if they quit by rewarding this behavior, we literally create prisons for athletes. Overall, there is an unwillingness from people in power to quantify emotional damage, broken systems, create broken athletes.

I would argue that if a gym or organization, isn't fostering positivity, that they are actively creating the opposite. USAID really does not want to change and resent us as we fight for it. And I think that they have proven they are willing to go down as long as it means clinging to the archaic abuse systems that they enabled to put it simply what you have as adults preying on children, throw sexual predators into this mix and they thrive.

This is an environment made. I would encourage you to look very closely at cult psychology and methods of brainwashing to better understand how this abuse continues so easily in the sport and why there's an obvious unwillingness internally to change it. This is all, or this also explains how athletes and parents feel trapped within certain gyms and why kids even begged to remain at those abusive gyms.

Like I did myself similar to when you take the mask off an alcoholic, this revelation is not one that's met kindly. I think we have to accept that and just move forward. There's a lot of repetition that also happens within these containers of abuse and misbehavior that really causes athletes to lose a sense of what is real, what pain is and parents the same.

I also encourage you to study the Traumatology of emotional and psychological abuse to understand why kids reach a point where they just shut down and quit. This is another unfortunate and obvious clue that abuse has happened after I was abused by Larry Nassar, I was forced to quit gymnastics due to my injuries.

I eventually found a new love diving. I actually trained for one year and got a full ride scholarship to this school that we're sitting at right now, Drexel university. But my junior year I was tired. My mind was tired. My body was tired. I was tired of being screamed at time and time and time and time again.

So to the dismay of everyone around me, I quit. I gave up my fully paid education to be free. This is just one tiny piece of what trauma does to a human unsurprisingly. My choice was met with more shame and criticism from coaches and guardians who shaped me into the athlete I was, but it was right. It was a hard decision and it was right.

And that's what a lot of this stuff is. It's willingness to look at the dark except that it exists and then forge forward with the, like, we'll continue to fight for those who can't fight for themselves. So thank you for all the work that you do. Thank you, Megan. Thanks, melody. All right. Um, I'm melody Vanderveen.

I'm also based in Los Angeles and I was initially a competitive gymnast and then due to so many injuries, transitioned into competitive dancing and then went on and got my degree in dance in college. So, uh, three years have passed since I learned that I was sexually abused for six years of my childhood by Larry Nassar.



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Since then I've had a front row seat to the criminal justice system, institutional abuse and the pervasive fight for truth and joy. Our case stands as a success story. For many reasons, the detective and prosecutor assigned to our case took our allegations seriously and pursued them. Vigorously justice was actually served, which is an incredibly rare thing.

In these types of cases, people are still talking about our case, learning about it and studying it to prevent this tragedy from happening again to future athletes and children. While there are many aspects of this case to celebrate, there are equally as many heirs or missteps that occurred throughout this journey.

Some of which are still in motion, particularly with Michigan state university and USA gymnastics today, my testimony will not be centered on the main institutions under analysis, but on the criminal justice system. Um, and what it was like as a survivor with great trauma navigating an institution that was foreign to me by no means is this account intended to minimize the outstanding work and dedication the prosecution team brought to this case, rather it is to highlight the importance of providing adequate resources and support to survivors who choose to hold a perpetrator accountable.

The day after Andy star broke the news, I called the reporter mark Alicia to share my experiences and gave him permission to use my allegations anonymously and following news stories through mark, I was connected to Rachael Denhollander who explained that filing a police report would be incredibly beneficial to moving the criminal charges forward through Rachel.

I was then connected to detective Andrea Mumford and filed the police report. Andrea encouraged me to also file a title nine report and gave me the phone number to MSU office of institutional equity. When I contacted them, I was sent from one person to another and eventually received assistance to file my report.

All of these interchanges transpired within five days of each other with little to no explanation how my reports were going to be used or what my legal options were after detailing my experience three times over, I was extremely traumatized and did not receive a follow-up from a victim advocate. In fact, there was a complete absence of victim advocates throughout the entire process until sentencing in January, 2017 because the law enforcement team assigned to the cases overloaded due to the mass number of women coming forward, I looked to mark a reporter to understand what was going on.

He would often call me before the news would break developments in the case. So I wouldn't have to look to news articles to learn what was happening. He gave me a heads up before the public learned about the first arrest of NASA when child pornography was found in his trash. And then finally, when he was arrested the second time without bail, I knew if I did not aggressively seek answers and leverage the minimal resources available to me, I would have remained entirely in the dark.

This is far from the standard of support that survivors who come forward deserve in early 2017, I was notified that the prosecutors were choosing the strongest cases to be brought before the court. And mind was one of the nine they desired to include. I agreed to participate in became victim F in the criminal case during the months between prep, the preparation meetings and trial, there were no check-ins about how I was doing mentally, uh, which I believe is the most critical aspect of preparations for a case, uh, with my anxiety and fear mounting, I ultimately decided to drop my charges two days before preliminary trial.

It wasn't until October, 2017 a year after I had reported that I learned of all the legal options available to me. And this was through a childhood friend who happened to know my fellow survivor, Larissa



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Boyce through Larissa. I was able to find a lawyer and participate in civil action. She quickly became the person in my corner who lived it, who could resonate with me, shared similar fears.

And frankly understood me. The criminal justice system at present has no mechanisms in place to connect survivors of the same perpetrator. And that's the aspect of our case that in the end received the most notoriety and my experience having this type of support early on would have likely provided me with the strength I needed to continue in the court hearings fast forward to December, 2017, in order for the plea deal to occur survivors who filed police reports had to give their approval.

Despite the fact that my police report was still included in the case, I was not given the opportunity to give approval, but learned about this after the fact and January, 2018, I did identify publicly for the first time and gave my victim impact statement in judge courtroom. On that day, one of the members of the prosecution team came up to my mother and told her my report was the one that connected them to NASCAR's home, which resulted in the discovery of the child pornography.

After Rachael Denhollander made the final victim impact statement at the Ingham county sentencing. I ran up to thank her and she quickly shifted the narrative from her. To me, she relayed the exact same information, um, about the importance of my report to the case and to thank me for my participation, I was shocked to say the least the discovery of child pornography was the critical turning point in the case that not only shifted the public's perception of NASA, but led him to plead guilty to three federal counts of receiving and possessing child pornography and ultimately agreeing to the plea deal.

In our case, learning this information about my report would have undoubtedly affected my decision, whether to continue or to drop my charges. My experience is just one among hundreds of other women who in this case like me navigated their way through all or some parts of the legal process based on what I've shared with you today.

These are the suggestions I would offer regarding the criminal justice system. First prosecution teams need to have trauma informed training and adequate human capital to support survivors, especially in class action cases. In order to protect children from predators, the criminal justice system has to have a survivor centric approach and adapt.

The systems that at present are far from trauma informed. This will require innovation, a willingness to question processes, and most importantly, an openness to shift from the way that things have always been done. Second SU reporting should be a one-time event. Putting words to your experience is incredibly traumatizing and systems of justice need to account for this.

A solution could be a one in-person meeting with all parties in attendance who need to document the allegation. This practice is already in motion at child advocacy centers, and this should be the norm for all cases, no matter the age. So not just for children, but for adults as well. If this solution is not a viable option, then we need to get more creative within the limitations of the law.

Third, no matter the size or scope of a criminal case, every survivor that files a police report deserves a victim advocate. This advocate then becomes a survivor's point person for all questions and updates concerning the case. Journeying alongside the survivor until sentencing is complete. The victim advocate can adapt to the survivors needs in terms of language about the perpetrator in the abuse, educate the survivor on the case ahead of the public and assist in connecting survivors of the same perpetrator media cannot achieve such safe options to close.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to child USA and game over commission for your tireless work and fighting childhood abuse. And for using this case as a launching pad to instill structural change.



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Thank you. Emily. Good morning. My name is Emily Mikey, and I was a competitive gymnast as well. Um, I am now based in Sarasota, Florida, and, uh, want to use this platform and my experience to make sure that we are moving in the right direction, learning from our mistakes and hopefully making some policy and procedure changes in the future so that this never happens.

Again. I want to start today by thanking you for inviting me here and thanking you for sharing my desire to seek the truth as to what transpired over decades, allowing Larry Nasser's abuse of hundreds of women and girls, to say that there had been widespread institutional failures is an understatement.

In fact, I would challenge anyone to name a group or organization involved that acted appropriately and having the proper procedures in place. Following those procedures and investigating the claims in a timely manner. I was a competitive gymnast, as I mentioned in the 1980s and 1990s. And I'm a NASA survivor today.

I will not be telling my story, but addressing some of the situations that were present or not present during that time of abuse that enabled this, his behavior to continue as well as address some of the struggles we are facing today in our attempt to understand the full story, I'd like to discuss three institutions in particular who share responsibility.

And as you will see, there are several common themes and patterns of behavior that were present time and time. Again, I ask you to think about the following things as I review the events that occurred, lack of oversight, lack of communication, lack of a sense of urgency, lack of transparency and lack of accountability.

First let's look at Michigan state university and the role key figures that the university had enabling the abuse. MSU was first notified of Nasser's abuse in 1997, when Larissa Boyce confided in her coach, Kathy detailing. What happened during her appointments since coaches aren't required to report under state law in Michigan, Gus did not report Larissa's allegations to law enforcement.

Although MSU policy states that a title nine report is to be filed, Vegas failed to do so. Instead she reached out to NASA to discuss the situation, then made a determination that the treatment was legitimate. Larissa was confused and didn't understand the procedure. If coaches were mandated to report.

And if Clegg is what have turned the information over to the proper authorities, it's conceivable that Larry would have been stopped before some of his younger victims were even born. This was the first of many failures at MSU. Secondly, lack of enforcement of proper protocol regarding the manner in which Nassar treated patients at the MSU sports medicine clinic is astounding.

He was allowed to see patients in the clinic after hours and bring them into the building through the back door, without signing in at the front desk. This meant there was no record of the appointments. He also was allowed to treat patients in rooms with no supervision whatsoever. Rarely was another medical professional presence.

Additionally, he treated patients in the basement of Jennison field house, where he was given free rein. This is not new information as it was communicated by many survivors and their victim impact statements in court, but it's worth highlighting as it was a clear disregard for protocol. The manner in which the title nine investigation was handled is another misstep by MSU.



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Instead of seeking an opinion from an outside qualified physician, the professionals who were interviewed were colleagues of NASA and had close ties to the university. In fact, he was given the opportunity to weigh in on exactly who we interviewed. Do you think this set the groundwork for an independent review of NASA practices?

Once again, it was determined that the patient did not understand the nuances of the treatment. Of course, we also can't visit this topic without mentioning the two different reports were generated. One filed with the university and another version that went to Amanda Thomas show, once Nassar was cleared following the title nine investigation, NASA, his boss Dean strainful put into place policies.

He was to follow when seeing patients such as mandating a chaperone in the room, or at least another person. However, those restrictions were nothing more than a formality. There was no oversight whatsoever to ensure that the protocols were being followed. We know this from survivors who are patients before, during, and after the title nine investigations to date survivors are still seeking cooperation from MSU transparency in the form of handling, handing over all pertinent documents to the attorney General's office in an effort to truly discover who knew what information and when is imperative until the 600 plus documents are made available.

It is impossible to pinpoint all the ways the university failed the survivors. It's also impossible to comprehensively review the policies and procedures in place and revise them in an effort to prevent the same thing from happening. Again, not only at MSU, but globally. It's incredibly frustrating that MSU is hiding behind attorney-client privilege as an excuse, not to cooperate, they have the option to waive privilege.

And what do you, so if they are genuinely, genuinely interested in making MSU a safer place for students, athletes, and faculty, unfortunately the current board of trustees refuses to comply. After announcing this summer that they intended to hire a firm to continue to conduct an independent investigation, to seek answers.

They then decided to pursue the investigator. I'm sorry. They decided to cancel the investigation just a week ago. Nancy slipping resigned from the board stating she cannot work with individuals who are not interested in transparency and moving the university forward. Lastly, I want to mention the mismanagement of the healing fund that MSU set up to help survivors as it's still a challenge for us today, when it was clear that MSC was responsible for the devastation of so many women and girls, they announced that they would provide a \$10 million fund for survivors to access in order to pay for much needed therapy, medications and medical bills.

As a result of the mistreatment by NASA. Unfortunately, due to the mismanagement of the fund, fraudulent claims that were made and the fund was shut down. This meant that survivors were once again left with no assistance during a time of right need presently. A new version of the healing fund is set up, although it has been extremely difficult for survivors to access.

I'd like to shift focus now to the next group who bears responsibility USA, G and the U S soci hundreds of girls have been abused under the oversight of USA, G and gyms at competitions at training camps and in hotel rooms back in the late 1980s and early 1990s NASTAR was treating girls in the back room of the gym at great lakes, gymnastics club, as an athletic trainer before he was even admitted to medical school.

I know this because I was one of those girls. The training room was located in the corner of the gym behind two heavy metal doors with small rectangular windows, usually covered. So nobody could see in my parents were never asked to sign a waiver, allowing him to treat me at the gym. It was just





understood that if you needed any medical attention during practice or competition, you were to go see NASA.

Not only was there a lack of oversight by USA regarding coaching practices in the gyms, but there was a lack of oversight regarding environments in which gymnasts were seen by athletic trainers. We all know that he was able to treat girls at the Karolyi ranch and their cabins unsupervised and in hotel rooms when they were on trips.

Both nationally and internationally as detailed by several national team members and Olympians. It is the responsibility of USA G to ensure a safe environment for its athletes period, and they failed to do so for decades. In July of 2015, when Maggie Nichols reported the abuse to us Agee, instead of immediately notifying law enforcement, Steve penny instead hired a human resources specialist to investigate the situation.

It was only after her allegations were echoed by two other teammates that the allegations were reported to authorities. It was five weeks between the time USG was first made aware of the abuse to the time that they forwarded the complaint to the FBI. How many women and girls were abused in those five weeks when penny finally contacted the FBI, one of his first concerns focused on how they were going to manage the media response.

Where was the sense of urgency and concern for the athletes at this point, it's pertinent to note that per the ropes and gray report released Scott Blackman and Alan Ashley at the U S Sosi were also made aware of the July, 2015 NASA abuse upon receiving that information. USC not only failed to pass it along to their internal department, that specifically handles sexual assault cases.

Um, but also failed to report to law enforcement directly. They never investigated whether or not NASA had abused athletes at the Olympics, nor did they take steps to ban him from USA, OSI events or facilities. Instead, they worked with penny to preserve their mutual interests, which included allowing Sr to resign from his position in order to preserve a positive image, neither USAID, nor the USFC responded corresponded with MSU to alert them to the abuse of allegations.

Lastly, I want to examine the role of the FBI in the, in the investigation. It is here that I have more unanswered questions than insight into the events that transpired out of all the institutions involved over the decades. I am most shocked by the lack of urgency and follow through from the FBI, MSU USA G and the U S O C had reputations in pocket, but to protect, but law enforcement agencies have no bias or hidden agendas surrounding this matter.

NASA remained employed at MSU for 420 days after the bureau was informed of the abuse. Why did it take so long for the bureau to interview the girls? Was the case not seen as a high priority? Was it lack of resources? How many women and girls were abused in that. There was a total lack of communication between the Indianapolis Indianapolis field office and the Los Angeles field office, both apparently working on the case.

Additionally, neither of them bothered to notify the Lansing field office or call MSU to alert them that Nassar was under investigation. I look to you to help us gain clarity on these unanswered questions so that we can learn from the past and make the necessary changes and policy to hopefully prevent this atrocity from happening again.

Thank you so much for your commitment to the survivors in this investigation. Thank you, Emily.
Uh, Amanda.



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Hi. Thanks for having me. My name's Amanda, Tom Michelle. I'm the founder and executive director of survivor strong. We are an organization that seeks to end gender based violence and abuse by providing education, advocacy and healing opportunities for survivors and the surrounding community. Um, I'm here today because I'm a survivor survivor of abuse, sexual violence, institutional betrayal, and Larry Nasser.

I know that his name is what got me in front of you, but I hope that for the time that I'm here, we can focus not on him, but instead on all of the systems that allowed for the unrestrained sexual violence to flourish for decades, because it's still happening just day one bad guy behind bars does not end systematic problems that allowed for such abuse to exist in the first place.

Right now, we live in a country where a woman stood up in front of the entire world to answer questions about a sexual assault. She experienced at the hands of a man who was shortly thereafter sworn into the Supreme court. We live in a country where one of the most powerful people has been overheard making comments about casually grabbing women by their genitals and, um,

whatever. And it's excused as just locker room talk. We live in a country where women are literally denied access to certain medical rights because groups of men have elected themselves more capable of making those decisions. We live in a country where the criminal legal system is strict and tough on perpetrators of every crime, except for those of sexual domestic and child abuse.

If your car is stolen, the police immediately believe you. But if someone rapes you, you have to prove it. This is the culture that already exists, just floating around in the world around us today. So naturally when I reported Larry in 2014 and he spun some magical tale of healing people's backs through their vaginas, the school that needed him for money and reputation took his side and dismissed me the 24 year old doctor's office employee slash pre-med student with an in-depth knowledge of medicine, human, sexuality, and gynecology.

I spent the last five and a half years thinking about all of the ways things could have gone differently in 2014, when I reported. All the ways the girls that came after me, could've been saved. I think about all the things that we can do to make sure that this never happens again. And all of the ways we can help other people who have already been affected by this kind of trauma.

So I'm very excited to be sitting here today in front of you talking about exactly what we can do better. It's the first institutions, obviously a bunch of institutions allowed for this to happen at best. They were just oblivious. And at worst, they knew when they looked the other way, what exactly happened is what you guys get to figure out either way, a culture existed at both MSU and USA, G where this kind of abuse could thrive without consequence for decades.

I literally reported a sexual assault directly to the school. There's a pretty good chance that even the president of the university had some sort of idea of the details of the report and the go-to concern. Wasn't for the safety and wellbeing of every single patient that came in contact with the doctor.

But instead for the school's liability, if a patient was traumatized, it makes me so sad to think that if, [01:00:00] about what would have happened, if they were more concerned with keeping, uh, if there were less concerned with keeping the Spartan brand clean than they were with keeping patients, other students safe, the alternatives are, they were just playing negligent or they were intentionally clearing the way for his behavior.

Neither of these options are good. We may never know exactly what happened again. I'm hoping you all can figure it out, but we know the possible factors, which means we know things we can fix.



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Imagine if instead of a lawyer protecting the company brand an impartial investigator with knowledge about grooming sexual violence and abuse with experience and trauma informed practices had been given the information I gave Christine Moore in 2014, I've seen her handwritten notes.

I know that I clearly disclosed a sexual assault to her in no uncertain terms. If the priority had been protecting others, I'm guessing dozens of women who would have been saved from abuse, but what did we think would happen in a world that prioritizes dollars in reputation over safety and human lives?

Can we really expect university employees to jeopardize their jobs and expose harmful cultures that enable abuse with the way whistleblowers are treated in our society? So I guess that leads me to my recommendation. Number one, unbiased well-trained independent sexual assault investigators at institutions dedicated to Institute in education or anything.

Really. I actually think there are a lot of systemic problems with the way educational institutions are run. Like they're more like businesses instead of places of learning and growth. And I think a lot of our cultural issues can be traced back to this, but I digress. So education. Uh, the other problem with our education system that is directly relevant is the lack of education about things like healthy sexuality, relationships and boundaries.

I know we all know this is a problem. We can't get schools to talk about this stuff. Parents don't want it taught. We're all terrified that if we talk about sex in school, kids are going to want to try it. But the reality is at a certain age, kids are going to want to try new things no matter what. So let's talk about it.

Let's normalize it. Let's remove the stigma associated with normal human desire. So it's not scary and it can't be used as a weapon anymore. I really am in the camp of there's nothing wrong with sex, rape and assault. I have problems with obviously, but I fully support non-coercive consensual sex. I just worry that a lot that if all we say is sex is bad and we don't talk about it a little more in depth, people are going to keep having a lot of questions.

If we don't answer those questions for them, they might feel like they have to find the answers for themselves. I think we also need to start talking about things like boundaries and relationships in schools at and at home from an early age, I never learned about, um, communication or how to establish a hunch, healthy boundary.

As a child. I knew what I read in books. I knew what was modeled for me. So a lot of yelling, throwing things. So naturally when I got into my first long-term relationship that was full of being yelled at and having throat things thrown at me, I thought it was normal. He made me feel worthless, his language married and his language, marriage, the language I heard all of the time around me.

So how was I supposed to know what was wrong? It took other friends with experience in our healthy relationships, witnessing my ex abusing me and then protecting me from it and telling me it was wrong before I actually understood the situation I was in. Because honestly, if no one teaches us what healthy looks like, how are we supposed to know?

That's why we teach healthy diets in school, right? To keep kids healthy. So why not teach kids healthy or ways to stay healthy in other ways, too, I would love if there was actual mandatory programming for kids every year built into curriculum requirements with yearly age appropriate material, covering boundaries and then relationships, and then sexuality backed up budget line items to fund and support it.



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Because I know that so often when we implement things like education, there's no dollars behind it. So can I add that to my list of recommendations? I also think we need more funds appropriated for prevention in general. Just really doesn't make sense to me that we don't see sexual assault as a public health issue in this crisis.

In this country, we all know the statistics about abuse, abuse, and sexual assault, leading to mental health struggles, addiction problems with criminal legal system, increased likelihood for future assault and even perpetration the damage doesn't just end when the assault is over, it continues for the rest of the victim.

And how would this kind of fund funding and education help prevent perps like Larry from getting away with abusing hundreds of women and children for decades? Well, I think about how I knew to report him and why I did it in 2014 and what I have done at 10 years younger, or even five years less experienced in life.

And honestly, I don't think I would have, I didn't know I had the right to tell someone, no, until those same friends I mentioned earlier told me I had the right to get out of abusive relationship. I didn't get the education. I needed to recognize abuse from my parents or school. I got it from real life and from friends in the months before the assault, without that knowledge and empowerment I got from them who knows what would have happened.

So bottom line, we really need more education. We need justice that is accessible to everyone, not just ideal victims. I ask you to take a second and just maybe look around the room and think about who are you inviting to the table for these conversations? Are you inviting everyone? Um, I think often certain voices are left out of these conversations and we don't keep in mind all of the intersectionalities that come into play with sexual assault and abuse.

And I think that those are really important as well. Um, I worry that maybe we're missing those even here today. Um, and last I want to go off of, uh, talk a little bit more about the justice system, the criminal, well, the criminal legal system, I call it cause I don't really see justice in there. Um, I, when I reported, I obviously had a horrible experience with the legal system.

I wasn't believed my perpetrator went on to continue to abuse dozens of women and children after me. Um, and then luckily he was taken care of and he was put behind bars, but I had another experience after that with a different criminal justice system. Um, I was, as I've mentioned a victim of domestic violence as well.

And in that system after reporting my perpetrator, I saw the same system failures that, um, the melody talked about. The there was no advocate for me. I, um, the advocates that I did have were barely available, the prosecutor at one point told me not to look angry on the stand because then the judge wouldn't take me as believable or credible.

Um, my, the everything kept on getting pushed back. My perpetrator was eventually given time behind me. The plea was moved down from a gun charge to a misdemeanor. And when they were released from jail, 77 days later, nobody called me to tell me I was left without any protection. They draft the PPO, they dropped all of the orders.

So again, and this is like best case scenario. My perp was put behind bars, I got justice and I still don't feel safe. And I think that we need to think a lot about how are these systems affecting people who don't really have access to them? Um, how can we make a report? I mean, if they believed me and





everything right away, and they treated me with respect and I still was kind of failed and re-traumatized by the system.

Imagine if I was in a position where I thought that may be a cop would hurt me, or if I didn't trust the establishment, I, I can't imagine how people that are not in all of my places of privilege navigate through these systems. So I think we really have to keep that in mind while we are moving forward in this investigation.

So I think I was given my one minute reminder awhile ago. I went to wrap up now. Thank you so much for having me. Thank you for, um, each and every one of your presentations. There's my cough syrup coding night. I need my mother. Um, thank you. Um, so, uh, each of you have highlighted exactly, um, where you hope that will go.

Right. And, um, so there are so many flaws in the system that you've told us about. Um, so what I'd like to do is to open it up to the commission, um, the commissioners to ask questions. Um, and do we, uh, Simone, do you have a list for me? Or

just, can we start bill? We'll start with,

am I on? Yeah. You have to fight for the mic. No, I think she's just going to, you're going to go accordingly. No, either we will get your word. Um, first of all, thanks. Thank you. All of you, um, your, your power, you are powerful women, and you need to remember that for what has happened and what you're doing with it.

And it reminds me of the children that I see. Um, I, as I mentioned, I'm a child abuse pediatrician. I've seen over 10,000 kids coming to our clinics with issues and experiences of sexual abuse and physical abuse. And so I know a little bit about. When a child comes and what it takes for them to make a statement what that means.

So thank you for your bravery. Um, and thank you for your willingness to continue to fight the battles. For many kids had a question as a child abuse pediatrician and in the healthcare system, um, by virtue of your experiences and the media, and what transpired in the ultimate verdicts, uh, many health systems were grappling with how we could do better to prevent and to identify, uh, prevent child abuse and to better identify, uh, perpetrators in our midst.

And I'm curious, Amanda, you had mentioned about the issue of education. Um, there are times where pediatricians and other healthcare providers may need to do and conduct sensitive examination. And we here at children's hospital have provided an empowering message to our patients and families. Thousands of letters went out by virtue of your efforts and testimony to ensure that they know what they should expect from their providers, chaperones using gloves, being in an exam room, all the basics that were not given to you.

Um, but basics that should be an expectation for every patient who comes to see a doctor. I'm struck with the challenge of how we can earn and maintain a trust with our patients and still work through the realities of the risks that exists. Uh, for kids. I'm not going to be playing any illusion to think that there are not perpetrators in healthcare and in medicine.

Um, we know there was one serious person that, um, obviously is why we're here today, but can you help me to understand and give us some recommendations? And Dr. Cooper is the other physician on the, on the commission to help us to frame this a little better, uh, in that space. Cool. Um, well I think





that starting the, the letters that you said, you know, what to expect that, you know, there needs to be a person, another medical professional in the room.

It's going to be in an exam room. This is why we need to have the procedure. Those are really great. First steps. What I would also suggest. Um, my, my biggest concern is that there isn't an oversight within a medical office. So to tell the clients like we are on this and we're watching it and actually name that we get that there are perpetrators who act like they're physicians.

So instead of just saying, oh, this is what to expect upfront, say we see it it's happening and we're not going to let it happen in our office. And this is how we ensure it's not happening in our office. And so for instance, with my situation, I went in numerous times after hours all the time. So just talking about how, you know, we're checking the cameras, uh, we, you know, we're doing whatever quarterly reviews of people's charts.

I don't care what it is, but that you are calling and asking, you know, clients, if there was some sort of fishy thing, maybe like on a camera, what was going on. And so you're just showing them that you're not just going to be reactionary, but you are so proactive. And these are, I don't know, five main steps that you take on a daily basis in your office to make sure it's not happening.

So it's not just, here's what to expect. It's also, we are dealing with this. We're aware it's happening, not in our office, hopefully, but we get that. This is a concern. And to S to label the concern, because I think a lot of offices are afraid to actually even use the word abuse and you need to label it.

That's what I would suggest. Thank you. I would also maybe suggest in addition, um, offer for a consult with another physician in the office, maybe just to discuss the procedure and what the expectations are, um, to hear it from two different people. Um, although, you know, at MSU at the clinic, unfortunately some of his colleagues were also duped if you will.

Um, but as far as your procedures and globally in the medical field, maybe that's something that would make patients feel and families feel more comfortable as well as to hear the same exact thing from multiple physicians, not just the one that they will be seeing. And I think that maybe the common theme here is communication.

Um, I think that that is how you're going to build trust with patients, um, communicating with them that we know that there are problems that could arise and we are being active about them and proactive, obviously communicating with other doctors, but having a, like, fostering an environment where there's communication, where people who raise concerns are, um, listened to and where I think that often there's this idea that, you know, it's, you don't want to be the bad guy and go against the grain and be like the whistleblower, but to foster environments where.

Truth and accountability are, um, really highlighted and things that are people are excited about. I think that's probably really important. And also being able to communicate with the patients again, just having that healthy communication, I think it's really important. Thank you.

I was just going to say really briefly to Amanda's point in communication, just consent as a policy. I think like, even when I go to the gynecologist, like, they're not asking, like, it's just it's happening. Like before you do that thing where you hit somebody's knee, like, can I do that thing before? I, you know, like it's like a question it's not an assumption.



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And I think those simple permissions along the way as a policy are vital. Thank you. If I could jump in for a second here and I'm going to turn this back on the panel, because I think this really gets to the heart of our discussion today, not to put you on the spot, Phil, but this was a great reactive response to what happened here.

And I guess my question for the physicians on the panel are how can we move from reactive responses? Because this is what we're seeing here is, you know, after the fact we look back with a new lens and we see, oh my gosh, how could we have missed this after the fact you sent out this letter, which is a great thing, but why did it take this scandal to get these issues on the radar screen?

I'm going to talk more about the legal responses, which is my shop, but for the doctors on the panel, how can we move from reactive? We're always fighting the last war. We're always fixing the last problem to something that's more proactive in terms of child safety and ensuring that something like this doesn't happen.

So we'll start with Dr. Cooper and Dr. Berkowitz, right? So one of the things that really needs to be, uh, ingrained in staff, um, training medical staff training is not to assume that every person who comes into medicine is a well-intended person. That's, that's the assumption and that's not true. And, um, I often have to remind residents and interns that, uh, if there is a staff member who causes them to have concerns, we should not, uh, disregard that on the part of, um, residents and interns who are noticing one person who has a bizarre behaviors of the case of Dr.

L Bradley was an excellent example who, uh, was seen as problematic by many nurses for years, and yet despite their, uh, statements to hospital administrators, um, he, his Dr. Ship was held higher than the, than the, um, level of expertise of the nurses. And so I think that that's one part. And I think the other part is from a credentialing perspective, we should be much more, um, careful in our credentialing of new physicians and ongoing credentials, usually an annual phenomenon to make sure that we are making sure that there are not subtle, um, statements or complaints that have been brought up that we've just chosen not to pay attention to.

Um, I think it's a much larger question and we're, um, and I want it to, you raised all of you raised, um, what I see as our long history of institutional racism, misogyny, um, auntie child feelings, um, and these institutions that you're talking about medical institutions are just as responsible and just as misogynistic and racist as any institution in the country.

Um, and I would argue the criminal justice system may be the worst. Um, so it's not about medicine, it's not about the law, it's about our culture. And I think it's really important to go off of that, um, a community that has been historically marginalized, our children, and we don't necessarily, we don't always think of that as a marginalized community, but so often again, our voices were not listened to because we were children because we had a marginalized identity.

Uh, and so I'm going to, I'm going to argue that we need to, we need to raise that if we're going to make the changes that you're asking about that we really need to get at, what I would say is, you know, a systemic approach to any of these issues. Um, and I thank you for that. And I would also want to add that one of the things I am hearing over and over again is what sticks with you is the trail.

And it's our institutions that have betrayed you and everyone, frankly, in this regard. So I think we should talk a little bit more about that. Um, because I think that's what sticks, that's what stays long after the sexual abuse and trauma is resolved. So there's no question that what we're dealing with as a children's civil rights movement, uh, and the capacity to empower children, to be protected from the harm that adults can inflict on them.



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Um, and it's it's society, which you, which is why we need a commission and it wasn't enough for ropes and gray to investigate. Um, so again, thank you for your statements and for being here and taking our questions, um, so that we can learn from this. I have a number of questions, but I'm going to start with two.

So I'm not dominating the panel. The first one making you really talked about competitive sport and the truly toxic culture. That is a part of that. And my first question, um, is whether you believe that it actually can be saved because I think the level of child labor exploitation, among many other things that is a part of that is just so deeply concerning.

And there was a part of me that when you were talking, I thought, why don't we just burn it down and start over? So with that, I'll just ask you, do you think itself. No,

not even a little bit, it's so deeply ingrained. And Marcy says that too all the time, just like burn it down. And I totally agree. We have to start fresh. I, I won't even dance around it just to know. I know. All right. My next question was so wonderfully sustained.

you were talking about the lack of victim advocates, um, and the fact that you really experienced so little support through the criminal justice process and, you know, having the association of children's advocacy centers, I believe resonated with what you had to say about that, because your experience is really what it was like in this country for children 30 years ago, before there were so many of those.

So to see adult survivors experiencing the repeat of that horrible history is deeply disturbing to me. But I'm wondering if you are aware personally, of whether others, other, um, survivors as a part of that case had access to victim advocates, or if in fact it seemed to be widespread that it was very sporadic in terms of that context.

Yeah. From my understanding up until sentencing, I have not heard of anyone who had a victim advocate. So I think it was pretty dead until sentencing. And I think because sentencing, it was there so many people were coming that's when they're like, oh, we probably should have a victim advocate when there's hundreds of women coming.

So you had, how many do you think were there for three or four at a sentence advocates? Yeah, I think there were, maybe I thought there were two, but one of them wasn't actually an advocate. She was, there was one legitimate victim advocate for hundreds of women in context, our victim advocate. It was her first case.

And so she was being trained on the job by another, uh, former advocate. Well, she was helping us. So who was responsible for, um, what was it, the judge that said we need a, an advocate for the sentencing or what was the mechanisms? So there was actually, oh, so I'm not sure exactly the mechanism, but I do know that a woman who had, um, formerly worked with victims, her name was Angela Olsen shoes.

Amazing. She caught that there was a big miss that we weren't getting services. And so she, um, I know something happened at the, um, at Pam, the prosecutor and association office of, uh, Michigan. Yeah. Whatever that is and where they then got us an advocate and trained her on the job at sentencing. So nothing is really the, I mean, part of the problem just for background, part of the problem is that Michigan had the single worst statute of limitations for child sex abuse in the country.



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And I have to say that having testified in Michigan on Sol reform, it was the least. Informed media members and, um, society that I've ever been in. Uh, the, uh, there was absolute hostility toward the concept that it's pervasive, that child sex abuse is pervasive. And I think I'm speaking about why I believe victim advocates are so important.

Just the fact that I kept trying to highlight is why do I have to keep looking to the media for answers as in the actual reporters, like they were doing the job of the victim advocate while they're also covering the story. Otherwise I have to search out media stories, see his face, his name repetitively, and all of the comments about whatever the public thinks about this case, which is so traumatizing to have to do that for a year and a half.

So either I look to that reporter, I get traumatized or I get nothing. And that is why the victim advocate is so important. Okay. Thank you and Monica too. Well, as soon as I, so I'm actually still involved in, because I still have to testify again at some point indefinitely for the rest of my life. I'm not sure.

And, um, I, they have, I have an advocate, um, and it's the same advocate as the case and, and she's present, but I still like, she gives me the information, but they still don't have any information for me. I don't know when I'm going to have to testify. I have no, I was told that this was going to be handled, taken care of back in February of 2000 of this year.

And I'm so there's just no communication even still to this day, while we're still dealing with the same case. I'm, I'm getting very little input. So this question kind of piggybacks on that, who do you think is responsible for providing that victim advocate or that athlete advocate? Is it because there's such a lack of communication, there's so many different pieces to the puzzle, universities, USO, PC, you know, local gyms who, at which point, which one of those institutions would be responsible for providing that, you know, safe sport, who is it based?

You know, either as an athlete or as a parent, who would you look to to provide that? It's when you police report, you'd get a victim advocate, they go together. So it's with, when you call the police file, that report immediately, that's where that's tied. And I think especially the gymnast who went up into the elite levels can speak on the gymnastics side.

Cause I think that also needs to help in there. But regarding the criminal justice side, I call, I make my report, I get a victim advocates, their job. That is my perspective. It should be part of our victim's bill of rights. Yeah. I mean, how long is the bill of rights for the accused versus for the victim?

We have no rights. So you could just add one maybe, and you even look to the highest levels of the sport. Like Simone Biles is continually talking, speaking out about this and she's so unsupported. No one's helping her like, and I just, if she can't get help and she didn't have help from the beginning, like it's just, the whole system is broken again.

Right. And it takes so long to change this kind of a system, um, especially with the U S OPC, so focused on winning metals. Um, and what can we do in the meantime to ensure that, you know, um, athletes are protected. So that's what I want to comment about as well as, um, you know, I, I never reported, uh, I didn't tell anybody until I went to court and told my victim impact statement.

My mom knew three days ahead of time. Um, but as far as the athletic side goes, if there was something present that would allow me to a non-US anonymously report, what was going on, um, in the gym. And I also dealt with an abusive coach, um, and that fostered this relationship with NASA.



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Um, but if there was a way to anonymously have said something, there's a chance I would have considered doing that, but there wasn't, and there was nobody I felt that would ever be in my corner.

Um, and so I'm not sure exactly who that person would be, what organization they would work for, but I definitely think that that's something, um, that needs to be pursued and it has to be anonymous because people are terrified of their coaches to this day. Right. I think that all comes back also to the accessibility of the criminal legal system.

Um, I think that [01:30:00] if you aren't able to make an, uh, a report and also protect your identity, it prevents you from making a report. And so for child advocacy centers are amazing places where so many kids can go to heal, but if the kid doesn't know how to report or doesn't want to report the parent that is also providing them food, or has seen cops come into their community and, you know, murder their neighbors, why are they going to make a report?

How are they going to even access the services and the legal system? Um, if they don't feel safe and protected in the initial step, Emily, are you suggesting that it would have been more helpful if there would have been an anonymous reporting system through the sport? Yes. In my case specific. So like the gym.

So if you've been assigned somewhere that it's. If you're concerned about your coach anonymously, here's your tip line or whatever. Exactly. Um, and because that was my world, you know, and I was a child, I, you know, and at that point, it's not like you got on Google and were able to find numbers or organizations, you know, that were no.

Exactly. Um, you know, and it's interesting because professional sports have those things in place. You know, you walk through a clubhouse and there's the signs that say, you know, if you're a victim, if you're concerned about this, here's your number and it's anonymous and they're protected. The athletes are protected in my score.

There was none of that. And so not only did you have the fear coming down from the coaches, um, but you know, you're, as you talked about your child, you don't know if you're going to be believed and you don't want to make waves. And so if there was an anonymous way to do that, and you were assigned someone that could help walk you through that, because remember most of us were very small and really probably couldn't have, even, I'm not sure I could have even communicated what was going on in words that made sense to adults.

And so I think that advocate, especially in our situation, um, needs to also be someone who understands children and maybe has that psychological background and communication as well. Right. Uh, David, thank you. I want to thank you for your adding your brave voices to the cause of human rights and overcoming those in our society who continue to pursue money, power, and exploitation, which are, who are a significant minority.

I think in these last 40 years, we have, we have gone through a transition so that now a clear majority, um, understands that abuse is wrong and wants to do something about it. And so we're here to try to talk specifically about what could be done to improve and prevent situations like what you've been through.

And as I listened to your stories and I make this quit, I give this question to all of you. It seems like reporting is really a core issue and loopholes in, in this diversity of state reporting systems that allow people and institutions to say, well, our institution is accepted. We don't have to record that.



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Anybody who learns of what is concerning with regard to possible abuse of children or anyone should report. Yeah. And we need clear laws and clear protections for those individuals. So it seems to me, I'd be interested in your comments, all the different ways that, that. Uh, in the experiences that you've had.

So thank you. Um, I think maybe let you guys take the lead on this one first. Okay. Yeah. Um, well, as I detailed in mind, just like the reporting process was quite extensive and having to go through so many loopholes. And, um, Amanda started talking about the education piece. I, uh, was 20 years old when I needed to make this report in 2016.

And I had no idea about the criminal justice system at all. I didn't even know, obviously knew like what title IX was, but not a title nine report. I didn't understand. I could barely even view what happened as criminal, even though I was, I knew it was wrong. And so the fact that I'm a 20 year old, I was valedictorian of my high school.

I've got three degrees in college, so I'm quite educated. And how do I not know this? And so this speaks to the fact that there is no conversation about this in the educational process. And so, um, yes, the reporting systems, like I talked about trying to have it be in that one place, like a child advocacy center does, but for adults, that's my suggestion, but also the education so that I know if something happens, what's next.

I, the only reason I knew this is because I saw an article call mark Elisia called him. He had to connect all the dots for me. What if I didn't have a mark Elisia? You know? Um, so I think it's about that education piece. I should know immediately if I'm assaulted what what's next. So that's what I would really want to see change.

Yeah. And I think that's exactly. Okay. So what I was hoping we would touch on knowing the reporting and knowing what happens, because I think from what you said, it sounded like maybe making like mandatory reporting laws, um, for everybody on campuses or some, or, you know, heading in that direction. And again, that's, while that has great intentions, I also worry about the implications that we'll have for survivors like melody and myself who make reports, but don't know the implications of that report.

So if you, um, if I asked if I disclosed to somebody who I thought was a, just a person that I was talking to one-on-one, and I didn't think that it would trigger a, you know, an investigation, if we have to make sure that we are keeping, um, the app, when somebody discloses a sexual assault, they get to have the control from there on, and sometimes I worry that mandatory reporting laws, again, take the control right back away from the victim.

So we're running out of time, unfortunately, but one last question. Okay. So again, thank you for, um, doing this, helping us. Um, I want to go back to one of the things that Megan talked about when she was talking to. Coaching and the behavior of coaches. And maybe you can tell us a little bit about the etiology of that.

Um, but also, you know, you've talked all the panel members have talked about, um, the importance of trauma informed systems. What about trauma informed coaches so that they don't engage with this kind of behavior, which facilitates all kinds of, you know, harms to the children whom they're coaching? Well, I think we blindly followed that Karoly model that like Eastern European, like very intense, like almost feels like North Korea and those gyms sometimes it really does.



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So I think, and those coaches aren't even true. Like those aren't candidates to even be trauma informed because they're blinded by success and they really do prey on talent. So I just, I wish there was some more oversight even beyond safe sport who I've been working with, um, investigating these guys for a good year.

So, um, yeah, I I'll think on that a little bit more, but it's just, it's tough. I think, you know, in Dominic Marciano spoke out about this a long time ago, a lot of people blew the whistle and they were totally, I mean, made to be the bad guy, like the gymnast's were the bad people for bringing that up early on.

So it's just really looking at the way that we treat people and yeah, ask ourselves the hard questions. I mean, we know that this kind of abusive behavior is harmful. Why can't it, why, you know, why can't coaches and it, and it does it's counter-productive as well. Um, why can't coaches be trained to be trauma informed in how they coach that's exactly what I was going to propose or suggest actually is that, um, maybe it's a scenario where if a gym wants to be a member of USA, G the coaches have to attend X amount of hours of training about, you know, communication and psychology with children and you know, how, how some of those damaging behaviors affect children, uh, and how it creates the negative cultures that we've seen.

Um, I don't know, uh, how far that would go or if it would be falling on deaf ears, but it it's at least a step in the right direction. Um, and it's something that I would love to see supported. I think that a lot of coaches, uh, use the same tactics and it's all intimidation and control. Uh, whereas as we know, most girls, I think, uh, thrive on positive reinforcement and lifting you up and those type of tactics as opposed to what we've seen in the past.

But unfortunately, I don't think that. The culture of most successful coaches, unfortunately. And maybe we can shift into that direction in the future. Yes. Sounds like some of these individuals are trained perpetrators of trauma and manipulation through trauma.

It feels a lot. We operate a lot like, oh, maybe we shouldn't be teaching the coaches necessarily the trauma informed practices, just because they might be perpetrators, maybe talking to parents about, um, warning signs and things to watch out for. Because I mean, from, I did not do gymnastics because after they, I kept on getting hurt and they kept on making me get back up and try things again.

And I was like, absolutely not. This is ridiculous. So I like never really wanted to, um, be a part of that culture. I think that a lot of coaches that want to be a part of that culture are not going to benefit from, um, trauma informed practices. I think if anything, they'll learn how to hide their, the trauma they're inflicting.

I hate to say it, but we have to, we could definitely do this for the rest of the day and cancel the other three panels. Everybody can go home, but no, nobody in the audience goes home. Uh, but the next panel will be about coaches for looking from the inside. Um, and so thank you so much for your thoughtful recommendations.

We will stay in touch. Thank you so much.[02:00:00]

They have hearings at the university of Pennsylvania for the game over commission. This is the second panel. Um, the topic here is the role of the coach for young athletes in situations. And one of the goals of the commission is to use what we learn to make sure that we can protect athletes in every arena.



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And so we are blessed today to have with us, uh, both, uh, Courtney Keel, who was going to talk about the situation with respect to gymnastics, but also Sarah Powers, Barnhart, who, who is a leader, uh, in the country. She was a whistleblower in 1996. Um, and her coach was not removed until 2018. So we need to hear from her and understand how, um, the system just doesn't listen to the, the athletes.

So, um, we also have, uh, uh, we, we have someone who's going to testify, uh, who was a coach. Her name is Lisa Aguirre. She's actually in Hawaii. Um, and so we have a videotape, but the sound didn't come through. So our child USA legal fellow Alice Boone has very kindly offered to read, uh, as we watch her video.

Um, and she can't be here because she's too busy in Hawaii. Um, but, uh, we'll be able to submit questions to her, um, following the, this, but I really did want to have one coach at least at these hearings. And, uh, we'll have even more out of the Denver hearings, frankly. So, um, so let's get started. Um, each of the commissioners, as they have questions is going to signal me and I'll keep a running list of, uh, people to ask questions and, uh, let's start with, um, Courtney, um, and the gymnastics universe.

So please introduce yourself. And, um, my name is Courtney Keel. I'm a former elite gymnast and advocate who has worked with victims, survivors of sexual and domestic violence for 15 years, a member of an interdisciplinary research team, developing an art based therapy workshop for victim survivors and studying the impact of trauma on the body.

An attorney who represents victims, survivors and civil litigation and a victim survivor of child sexual abuse by my former gymnastics coach, I'm also a fellow for child USA working on this commission. Larry Nasser understood the dynamics of the gymnastics community and the relationships involved really well.

He was an expert in taking advantage of them to produce worthwhile recommendations. This commission needs to understand the relationships involved as well as heated. There are specific narratives that have dominated this conversation and they aren't wrong, but they are incomplete. The cultures of fear and abuse produced by certain coaches in some gyms is not wrong, but to understand the dynamics, we need to comprehend all of the relationships involved.

These include athletes, relationships with their own fans. With their teammates. And of course their personal coaches, which will be the focus of my testimony today. I had a handful of coaches during my years in gymnastics. Most of them were incredible. They were firm, but supportive. I never doubted their desire to bring out the best in me.

Then there was Robert and Kristen, their methods were incredibly damaging, but I did. And maybe still do believe that they wanted me to succeed if for no other reason, because anything I or any of their gymnastic well reflected on them, I was sexually abused by Robert Schaller from the age of 12, until just before my 14th birthday, I was extremely sheltered, but I did watch law and order.

I'm not sure if that had anything to do with the reason why, but from the first time he assaulted me, I knew what was happening and I knew it was wrong. Most importantly, I had loving parents and never doubted. They would believe me if, and when I decided to tell them people who don't understand having a passion for a sport, like gymnastics might wonder why I kept going back.

This isn't about blaming myself, but about understanding the position I and other athletes may find themselves in. He knew I was a safe choice. Gymnast are not all created equal in their abilities, nor in





their love for the sport. There are athletes who love gymnastics. They cannot wait to practice every day.

They love vacations and illness because it means separation from the gym. That was me. Their agenda is who gets a high school and continue because they've already invested so many years, they're comfortable and are close to what a great number of competitive gymnast seek a spot on a college team or even a scholarship.

There are also gymnasts who come to practice because their parents make them. I took my first gymnastics class at three years old. I only ever went to one gym, 10 minutes from my childhood home. Gymnast began very young. Most of them don't start off dreaming of being an elite athlete. Parents take them to a local gym where they can stay for the duration of their career or through high school graduation.

Robert wasn't always my personal coach, but he was there from the time I started at the gym. As children, we learned to trust adults were around for long periods of time. By the time he started sexually abusing me, I had already known Robert for nine years. I was so involved and invested and attached to this sport and my gym, my teammates, and my family that I knew it would take something extreme for me to tell someone about the abuse.

I didn't have the strength to do it on my own because then coming forward, I felt I was going to be giving up everything that mattered. I did not have many adult role models in my life, aside from my coaches, my parents and my teammate's parents. I began to homeschool around the age of eight to D C to dedicate more time to gymnastics because I homeschooled and spent so many hours at the gym.

I didn't have time or the opportunity to interact with other adults or even kids my own age, aside from my. My world was very small. All I knew was that Jim, I was comfortable and it always felt safe there, which is why the abuse was especially confusing. My experience was the equivalent of being abused in my own home.

Yes, I did go home to sleep at night, but most waking hours were spent in that gym. The world of gymnastics is just that a world, an all consuming small community that is much more like a family than I've seen in other contexts. And my work, I represent victims, survivors of abuse in all types of institutional settings.

After a certain level, the role of the coach in gymnastics is not analogous to that of a teacher, student relationship. We're all familiar with schools and youth serving organizations where parents or guardians entrust their children to the care of other adults. After a period of time, a gym coach starts to feel more like an aunt or an uncle.

The main, uh, the main difference in a sport like gymnastics, as opposed to other in Loco parentis settings is the level of control that coach has over the athlete. Typically, a teacher, a clergy member, or a scout leader, do not monitor the food. A child eats how often they use the bathroom, drink water or sleep.

The idea of agency as a child is already confusing because a child is not in control. Particularly when you start gin so young as most children do, you likely don't have a sense of being controlled or understand that control might be inappropriate. Where's the line between a coach educating athletes on how to feel their body in a way that is going to serve them best and controlling the food and athlete eats to an unhealthy extreme.



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When my coaches would ask me what I ate for each meal, when I would ask for permission to go to the bathroom, to have a drink of water or really to do anything, my young preteen self did not feel I was being controlled. I felt it was my choice to follow their instructions. And I did so believing it was necessary to achieve my goals.

So in my experience, the level of control my coaches had over every aspect of my life was completely normalized. My coaches knew how much I loved the sport. Unfortunately, that love became a trap for me. And Robert knew that better than anyone in my mind, coming forward meant giving it all up. I knew everything would change and there will be no going back to my life.

As I knew, it sounds dramatic, but I was 12 years old and had spent three quarters of my life focused on one thing, the thought of losing it all terrified me. And that's why it took other teammates telling me he had abused them for me to come forward. All of that being said about the gymnastics community, the nature of it does allow for incredible opportunities on behalf of coaches to help their athletes become strong individuals in all aspects of their lives.

There are better ways to coach and run a gym. Lisa, uh, Gary who's testimony, you will hear an X as one example. After I came forward, I retired from gymnastics. Most of what I fear did come true. I could not continue as a gymnast and launched, lost touch with a lot of people. I really cared about that physical place, how so many painful memories, but it's also where I grew up and became 13 year old girl who stood up to her coach and said no more.

I still have a great deal of love for the sport. It's the one thing I can always think of that will make me cry. Um, coaches and club owners, like Lisa are doing it right. I'm so grateful. It was her who took over my gym after my coach went to prison. Um, as I stated previously, there is a better way and change is possible.

Thank you.

So, uh, we'll now, uh, have, uh, Sarah read the transcript of, uh, Lisa, uh, Gary, who was it? Coach herself. So

my name is Lisa. Uh, Gary, I am a gymnastics coach and the owner of bay Ariel's gymnastics in Fremont, California, for as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to own my own gym. Doing gymnastics became my passion and then teaching and coaching. It was so natural for me. I am fortunate that at such a young age, I found something I was great at and that I knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life doing.

I coached in many programs over the years and through this path, I was able to constantly take note of what I would do differently and better for me. It was first all about how the owners treated me as a coach. I am and always was a very compassionate and loving coach. So I did not worry about the young girls.

I always made sure they were emotionally safe after starting a family and wanting to go back to work. I started coaching again at a gym called Cal west. This was exciting for me because this gym was up and coming and very competitive with all of the high level gyms where I had previously worked at CalWest.

I worked with a few other young, very motivated coaches, and it really seemed like it was the perfect fit. The first day I walked in, I looked around and thought, wow, this place needs some warm touches.



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If I owned it, I would put a welcome sign or something sweet and motivational at the front desk to start little did I know that I would own it someday.

The inside of the gym was gray, dark gloomy smelled like feet, and wasn't no way warm and welcoming. I loved teaching and coaching and I wanted to coach the team that was up and coming as the weeks passed, everyone was talking about the team and the elite athletes. CalWest. The team started winning more.

And I started to notice that the energy and the coaching at the levels above me was toxic. Again, I knew as long as I continued to train my gymnast's in the lease away, they would be safe. I started to notice unconventional things going on and grew very uncomfortable. These were issues of control over the athletes.

I noticed the athletes came into the gym, not talking or laughing like normal young girls. They were very serious and did not look happy. They lined up at the beginning of each practice. And you could sense a bit of fear if you want it to be the best gymnast you could be. And if you wanted the best coaches, you never questioned the methods.

You did not tell your parents because they would complain. And then you would get in trouble for complaining. Robert would line up the girls for a gym bag check. I never understood this. The girls would go to the locker room and come out with their bags and get lined up. Robert would say, okay, take out your grips and show me, take out your emergency money and show me, take out your hair clips, gel and water.

Take out your extra leotard and put it on. I wondered why he needed to see their leotard on. I wasn't afraid of him. And so I asked, he said he needed to make sure their extra leotards that them, that was my first warning sign. The second warning sign was when one of the girls were bangs and was told she needed to grow them out to abide by the team uniform everyone's hair was the same, pulled back in a tight bond with lots of gel and hairspray banks were simply not allowed at that time.

I kind of got it, team uniform, but then I started to get bugged by the whole thing of everyone in line. No one speaking, doing their assignments, crying through practices, and then going home robots, no one could show their own personality. And all of this was to show respect, respect to Kristin and Robert.

Each day I saw Courtney on the side injured and doing rehab. She didn't look too injured to me, but I could see she wasn't happy. Her spirit was broken slowly. A few others showed the same signs. Parents started to complain, but I'm not sure about what all I heard and also believed was that parents weren't happy with the gymnast's performances.

So they started blaming the coaches. This made sense to me. I even believed that the girls were being bratty and we're probably going home and complaining. That was until one day I saw it and I knew something was bad. We were in the airport flying to a meet and as we were getting ready to go, Robert scratched a gymnast from the competition.

They still had to fly with the team and go, which I didn't understand. The gymnast's mom went ballistic and it was a horrible scene. This was the start of the end. Nothing could match the punishment and embarrassment to that family. The next week, I got a call from Kristen that her husband was getting arrested and she asked if I would buy the gym who would want to buy a gym from a child abuser who would want to take on the trauma from the athletes, families, and the community.



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This has been the hardest 14 years of my life. My husband and I have been determined to change the culture and everything else in the facility. We changed the name, painted the brightest colors possible, got all new equipment and mostly all new coaches though. We did keep a few. The first thing we did inside was take down every door so that no one could ever be alone anywhere except the bathrooms.

The second thing was to try to get the community of Fremont, to trust us and to bring their children to our facility. We opened our arms and our facility to provide a fun, positive, safe family, friendly atmosphere, and named our gym bay. Ariel's changing the interior of the facility and the name was not enough.

The overall culture of the gym needed to change. Over the years, I have instilled to every coach working for me that we will only coach and teach using positivity. We will not control these little girls. We will be open to communications. And most of all, we will collaborate with the parents. We will teach them how to face their fears, how to make their own goals, how to work through obstacles and how to get up after they fall.

We will not force them to do it. It has been very difficult to find high level coaches who are willing to let the parents have a say in the plan for their daughter. It has always been that the parents should not question the authority of the coach. I have educated my staff personally, on the latest sports psychology training to better help them to guide our young athletes.

Our gymnastics community quickly drank the Kool-Aid from the success of our Russian leaders, Bella and Marta. We created an American training system that set our young ladies up to open doors for abuse. When all of this hit the news, why wouldn't everyone want to immediately stop and change the system?

Because it worked. It created champions. So I settled on happy. Gymnast's happy families and coaches who were unhappy because we were not winning training athletes in a positive manner with intrinsic motivation takes a lot more planning and patients, the results are not as instant as coaching with total control of your athletes behaviors.

The most important thing that I have done is to stand firm on my principles and not ever let a coach stay on that I did not think was doing the very best for every child. The hardest part of this for me is when I've let so many coaches go on the spot causing my staff and myself grief, being sure to coach has a tremendous imposition on the program.

It's also extremely difficult to explain to your parents why you let their coach go. The coach, they trusted with their little girl's life. When I kept having to let coaches go. So did those families not understanding why they wanted to win? And so they followed that coach or went to the closest to Jim that was winning.

The culture is not going to change without more education for the adults involved, the adults have to be willing to change and they have to accept that a better way as possible. When you walk into my gym, you can feel the positive energy. You can see it on the smiles of all of the kids and you know that we and I are making a difference in their lives.

Uh, so Sarah Powers barn, hello, my name, you see Sarah Powers. Barnhard um, I was sexually abused by my volleyball coach at the age of 16 to 18. When I left his program, I want to tell you a little bit about this program. It was a very, um, intense, controlling environment, just like we've heard. Um, the past two speakers talk about, we practiced four to six hours a day, depending on the day.



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Um, there was, this was a time when there was no cell phones. When you were gone at practice, you were gone at practice. We had days that we didn't the morning practice. We didn't do it. Right? So that was three hours. We stayed to do the morning practice, again, three more hours. And then the afternoon practice, three more hours.

And your parents just knew you were gone at volleyball. You weren't calling them. You weren't telling them you were gone. And that's what was trusted. Our coach, um, had weigh ins. Um, I didn't realize this until somebody brought it to my attention just recently. The weigh-ins were, um, every practice and he would give you a five pound leeway when you had your period.

And I thought, oh, okay. So I just tried to say, I had my period every time, because the level he had me trying to get to was low. But if you look at that, um, that's an abuser way to know when you are, um, you can get pregnant because he never used any protection with any of us. So I didn't realize that. And that, that was told to me, and it quite bothered me.

And I realize now what he was doing, um, we didn't wear makeup. We didn't wear nail Polish. As I said, we didn't go to dances in the gym all the time. So my sexual knowledge was probably that of a twelve-year-old, even though I was 15, I did not date. I don't think I even had kissed a boy yet. So understanding the environment when you hear the age, it's a different, um, 15 to 16 year old.

Um, one of our, um, one of the, our victims was only 14. She hadn't even had her period yet and actually had to go to the library to research what happened to her because there was no cell phones and computers. So it was a different time. Um, um, he sexually abused me. He groomed me when I was 15. The grooming is huge.

I'm sure we've all heard that word. My parents were grown. My friends were groomed. Other coaches were, grew. My teammates. I was completely alone. And I was super aware that I had a big secret that I had to keep. Um, there was no one to tell. He made sure of that. And he made it very clear that I'd lose all my goals and dreams to play at the next level.

If I told anyone, no, I didn't tell anybody. I came from a blue collar family of four kids. So I knew I needed that college scholarship. And so did he, I'm one of five of us that have come forward about our abuse by him and there's others, but they're too afraid to come forward. Um, I've been in the volleyball world for 40 years and I am a director and an owner of a club.

And I coach I never have a closed practice ever because of what happened to me. I have an entire upper area that parents are allowed to come. I do not let my young male coaches ever alone. There's no communication communication with any player, unless there's two on that text, we do everything we can to protect our kids and protect the coaches.

Um, so that is my, my rules and my gym, three of us came forward in 1994 in Illinois at the ages of 29, 27 and 25. That's pretty young considering when the abuse happened, the statute of limitations in Illinois was long gone. There was one girl still within the statutes and our abuser's new wife threatened her.

You better not come forward or else. And she was too afraid and didn't come forward. Um, she since come forward and joined the fight and I'm really proud of her. Um, I was victim one. We had another girl Christine was victim to, and Julie decided to give her name to the process back then, this was all really new back in 1995, when we first stepped up, um, Julie came forward because she spoke about it.



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And, um, with her therapist and the therapist, one, it reported, she asked many of us if we'd come forward. And Christina and I were the only ones who said, yes, I was the first one. That was a secret to be abused out of many of us. So I knew what happened with you. And Christina and I talked and we said, we knew what happened.

We saw, I saw it happen. I saw him grooming her. So I felt like I had to. And so did Christine, we couldn't leave her out there alone. So we covered ourselves with victim one and victim two. Um, Julie felt comfortable saying her name, um, 20 that's, 24 years ago, we came forward to USA volleyball. We went through a year of an excruciating process because there really weren't any bylaws or rules that were in place that protected us or that he would have broken.

So lots of going back and forth, revisiting your abuse. You know, I got into therapy, it was a lot to endure. Um, for short time, our abuser used the excuse that USA volleyball didn't have anything written into their bylaws stating he couldn't abuse his players. Of course, that excuse didn't wasn't accepted.

But how awful to hear this was abuse coming out back then was just not easy, was not believed. And these were, these are the things we endure. So in 95 we were flown to Illinois to testify. Okay. I was terrified, um, to be in that hearing terrified. I asked to sit by the door. I didn't know what was going to happen, but I knew I had to be there.

He was allowed to bring in character witness after character witness to, to say how great he was. My memory is that a lot of big men fathers of these girls in his program kept coming and telling everyone how great our abuser was and how, what happened to us did not happen to us after that. He was allowed to speak for 90 minutes and tell us about himself and how great he is.

I doubt hearings would go that way for victims these days. Um, it was not fun to sit through afterwards. Um, I testified, I actually testified first cause I was victim number one. I was very scared, terrified, very timid when I was speaking. And then something came over me and I got really angry. I gave times I gave dates.

I gave specifics. I wasn't going to let him get away with his lies. He actually said at one point he hardly remembered me. The others told their stories too. We were believed and he was banned from USA volleyball in 1995. Uh, interestingly, we were not ready for the aftermath. Um, we were sent a letter that we still have by the USA volleyball attorney.

In essence, it said we did what you wanted, but if you talk about it, we're going to reinstate him. I have that letter to this day. This is how we at that. And five years later, he was blacked out. We did not realize fan for life meant five years to USA volleyball. They covered their themselves with a stipulation that he could not coach.

He would just be given an, uh, uh, a position as an administrator USA, volleyball compromised for our abuser because USA volleyball is our national governing body. And technically, technically he was let back in other organizations, such as AAU and JVA, let him coach underage girls. Their excuse was he's not banned from coaching anymore by our NGB or anywhere else.

So they saw no reason to ban him from coaching underage girls, even though there's credible information, that he was an abuser of young girls, no one would step up to see how long this was [02:30:00] because of this. I was away from the volleyball world to have my children. And a lot of people don't go back to the arena.



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They were abused and I did because my daughter wanted to play. So I did it in a way that I could protect her. I started my own club because of this. I would go to the national championships in different tournaments and my abuser would be there. And it was excruciating to see him. I have a memory of going in the cafeteria and getting my food and sitting down and not really looking at anyone and hearing his voice and realizing he was very close to me and was back to me.

I got up fast, dumped my whole tray in the garbage and left. I couldn't eat and I didn't want him to see me. I just, just, it was a reaction of, of fear. Um, four years ago, I was approached at this national tournament in Orlando to fight him again. Cause I was the only one still in the volleyball world.

First. I said, no way I not doing it again. I did this, I did the, he said, she said it doesn't work. I'm not doing it. I was told Sarah, you have an opportunity to help hundreds of thousands of kids, not just volleyball players, all kids in sports. Can't you see the injustice of these organizations doing what they're doing.

Uh, after long talks with trusted people, I agreed on the condition that that would be my platform present and future kids. So I came forward on ESPN, outside the lines in 2015, with my biggest secret of my life. So I imagine everyone has secrets. Now go on national television. I maybe told a handful of people because I was victim one.

I was protected before. Just want to put that out. When we allow victims to be protected, I understand it to keep them safe. It's fearful. You also hide their story. So we have to make it safe for victims to come forward because my story and our story was pretty much hidden because we couldn't bear to say it.

And he got to tell lies for years because we weren't comfortable coming forward back then. And you can see. I also sued AAU volleyball in 2016, as they continue to let him coach this lawsuit actually is still ongoing and viable in the courts. Right now, I have been accused of doing this for money. If I win this lawsuit, I will get \$16 and an apology on AAU letterhead.

So unless somebody thinks that's a lot of money, you know, I can buy a good frame. So not really Starbucks latte and the cheap frame so that it isn't about that. It's, it's the precedents. And to point point out the problem, the three of us, and two more of us came forward and we pressured you to save volleyball to them again.

After a two year hard emotionally tolling fight, he was finally banned again in January of 2018, by USA volleyball permanently for life. After this AAU and JVA followed suit and banned him to the fights, not over, he still coaches young girls in his own facility today, changing statutes, providing programs like safe sport and allowing look back windows for victims are some of the only ways we can limit abuse and protect our children.

We'll never stop abuse completely, but we can work hard to limit it and help the victims feel safe and confident that there'll be heard when they do come forward. Our opinion is if we don't stop the top of, in our volleyball arena, how will we ever stop anybody else? That's why the fight is ongoing. Um, I still believe we have a ways to go.

I testified at a Illinois Senate task force in Springfield, Illinois. In 2018, I was asked what I thought would help. I asked them to think through a way to have first reporters who see the first signs and decide to look the other way and say nothing to have a financial fine, something that takes it out of their hands.



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I'm sorry. My friend coach that is abusing someone and I see the red flag I had to report, or I was going to be fine. That makes sense to me. I brought that to them. I also thought about first reporters being protected from backlash like the whistleblowers act for government employees, give them the right to Sue.

If they report abuse and they have backlash, this was well received by the Senate task force. And I appreciate it. Our abuser is arguably the most successful junior volleyball coach in the country. He's made millions in the arena. He is hunted in. People were afraid to make him mad. People were afraid to step up against him.

We had to change it. We've limited them in coaching. We've not backed down. We've earned trust, support, and being consistent in our story and truth for 24 years, people see, this is the truth. If we don't take. This man, I don't see how we can ever stop this from happening. We use abusers. We don't sit in our world as abusers, as abuse used to victims.

We sit in our world as survivors and we try hard to think outside the box that help the problem. That's why I'm here. I don't like the word victim. I like the word survivor. This is not about us anymore. We've told our stories over and over and over. This is about present and future kids. We have to keep them safe if necessary.

We'll keep coming forward, telling our stories. We'll keep fighting for them. We need to make these sports arenas safe for the children to enjoy competition and without going through what we had to endure. Thank you. Thank you, Sarah. So, uh, we've taken a different lens, uh, here, uh, to see the problem from the coaching aspect.

Uh, one of the things Sarah didn't say is that Rick Butler won nationals. Oh yeah. Several times you asked me to give you the dates. He's won nationals in USA, volleyball and AAU, countless times. We, I couldn't tell you how many, so right there, it gives him credit. You know the word I hear it. The words I hear often are as if he can't be an abuser, look how successful he is.

And I keep telling everyone being a good trainer. I never say good coach because good coaches don't abuse their players. I say being a good trainer doesn't mean he didn't sexually abuse us one. Doesn't negate the other. Why are we saying that? So that's really hard for people to understand. He's so successful.

We can't possibly be telling the truth. So Joanna, you had a question. Okay. Yes. Um, my question, are we able to ask Lisa questions? Is she able to hear us? No, no, no. She's she's okay. Well then I'm going to throw it out there hoping that the two of you might have an answer. So, um, I was struck, um, with what Lisa was saying about developing a positive environment.

And it seems to me there's kind of an inherent abuse potential that I wonder how you can mitigate. And that abuse potential is the power to select who's going to compete. So that is such an incredible level of power that how can you mitigate that? So that coaches don't end up exploiting that. And then I, I have a related question, which is, is it possible to create a curriculum for athletes that teaches them when an injury is really an injury you can't get up on?

And when bleeding is too much or which kind of injuries are absolutely, you know, never like it. Information that could be shared. So that type of proactive thing we were talking about with the pediatricians could also be given to the young women so that they have autonomy and ownership of their own bodies.



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So they can say, no, this injury hurts too much. I can't actually do anything. So it's two related questions. Um, so the first question was on coaches having the power to select who gets confused and whether that creates a conflict, as I would say, I know she, she, she mentioned that a gymnast was scratched by my coach by a former coach before that typically didn't happen.

And the coaches typically didn't choose who competes just in like club level gymnastics. That's not really how it works when you get to elite levels and, you know, national team members fighting for spots on those competitions. That's a whole other thing. Um, and that is an issue because they're fighting for a limited number of spots, but as far as most gymnast in the club level, um, your, your coaches aren't really, uh, unless maybe they think like the week before you're not hitting something well enough and it's sort of a punishment not to get to compete, um, because they don't think you're going to do well or reflect poorly on them and your team, but that wasn't really something that we experienced very often.

So, and then the other one was about a curriculum to teach about when injuries to grade and how you can, where they're teaching ownership and autonomy to your own body would be a proactive thing that could be done. I think, um, that's a, that's a really good idea the way it was when I grew up. And I think the way it still is for leases, Jim, and probably a lot of club gyms is the athletes are relying on their own personal doctors that they go to.

You know, the Larry situation was kind of unique to Michigan and those those club Jen's because he was there. But typically you will go to your own doctor. You you'll rely on your own doctor. There was a lot of, I had a lot of injuries sort of after my abuse started. Um, for a couple of years, I was just constantly injured.

So they would ask me like, rate your pain on a level of one to 10, but that's right. What does that do? So if it was over a seven, they would say, okay, you're not going to do your skills. You're going to do some rehab or some conditioning. But, um, I wouldn't say there's, there's, there's so much room for education.

I think the other, so the athletes would be relying on their own doctors on their coaches who really don't have training in, in what's appropriate and what you should be training through. And then, um, there are other teammates, older teammates who you kind of look to for guidance and see what are they training on or, you know, what, what does this feel like for.

But, and one more thing. Thank you so much for your bravery and your courage and your speaking out. And it's just so it's overwhelming to see the power that you're taking, both of you. Thank you. I want to speak real quick for the volleyball thing about getting scratched. Um, my abuser and I, and you can see the potential for it used manipulation if you'll play or not, by how he was happy.

I mean, I had to learn to navigate really early. If I made him upset in the relationship, I got caught hell in the gym. If I didn't perform well in the gym, I caught hell in the relationship. So you Teeter between that. And the manipulation was, was pretty big for me. I mean, I'm a six foot Latvian strong woman that, that was rare back in the day when I played.

And he made me believe that he had every right to take away my power. I'd probably could've played anywhere and been great and gone to college. And he didn't know that. So his manipulation in the gym was scary, but, and also you talked about the fact that, uh, he was using the, the promise of being able to go to college, college, the Olympics, anything he, you, you must trust me.



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You must believe in me. You must follow me blindly. That was taught to me early, right away. Follow me blindly. I had a hard time with, and he broke that out of me. I learned that I better not, this is the same message for me too, but I was so young when it started, I didn't know anything else. So it was like, okay, this is what I have to do.

This is what I have to do, David, thank you very much for your brief testimony to listen to you. To me, it underscores how these coaches occupied particularly powerful positions of trust and authority. And it seems to me that they should be held to higher standards with regard to criminal culpability, civil liability for harming those within their control.

Uh, and I'm wondering about your thoughts about where, where are the gaps that could be addressed through legislation and strengthening both our criminal and our civil law? Uh, I like the statutes have changed a lot that has helped a lot. Remember back when I was in Illinois, Marcy would, they were very young weren't they like very, very short.

So that's not sending any kind of a message. Um, people ask me there's more victims. My opinion with him was because he got caught. There was a timeframe, he was on the spotlight. He waited five years. Statutes were gone for the girl that was threatened five years. They let him see him come back into coaching.

Um, it was like this five-year mark. He was good. So I don't doubt there's more victims. He just took the. And these victims aren't ready to come forward yet. They're not comfortable. That's my opinion of it. So statutes being longer, it is, it's like a warning sign. Look, you do this. There's people have a while to come back at you.

Um, so I like that change. That's huge. The look back windows, that's huge. Also the more you show punishment and, um, an opportunity to be caught. You got to think that's going to detour a little bit. Um, so I was actually gonna follow up on what, uh, uh, Dr. Corwin said with regard to other remedies for your perpetrator.

Um, so the first thing I thought of of course, was criminal prosecution. This is against the law, but perhaps it was beyond the statute of limitations. Um, but the other is civil litigation, which, you know, that's damages that's harm to you. Um, it's painful to undertake that. Um, but nevertheless, it is a remedy.

Um, presumably he has insurance. So he has some, uh, resources that you could go after. Yeah. And we are, we, we are doing that. Um, right. Do you want to speak on the MRC? What we're so, uh, for full disclosure, Sarah's my client. Um, and we've been talking for years. Uh, Sarah has tried to Sue in Florida. Uh, we talked about Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, um, New York, uh, California overseas.

Um, and every single time she was blocked by the statute of limitations. Um, but the remarkable thing is right now, she has to make a choice between New York and California, because they both have windows open as a very unusual situation for someone to be in. Um, but I was moved by Sarah's situation so much that I wrote to Disney, um, because he was being permitted to go to the ESPN center where all a lot of national championships are as recently as two years ago.

And he won it on ESPN grounds. Uh Disney's ESPN grounds. And so I wrote to Disney and I said, you should ban any team or system that shows up with a coach who has been credibly accused of sexual abuse. And I thought that was a no-brainer and we laughed about it. We thought that was a no brainer letter to the general counsel of Disney.



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Um, he did respond and they agreed to ban Rick Butler. They did not agree to ban in the future known child abusers. Um, so, so Sarah is an amazing coach, um, and mother, uh, but she has been trying since, as she told you, 94 to get this coach out of business. And so, uh, not only did every system let down the victims of Larry Nassar, but this is a sport wide problem.

It's just a problem in sports, uh, and everywhere else. But, um, for Sarah, it really has been, she's just taken on a crusade and it's too much to ask of one person in my view. Yeah. I have a question for a little lawyers given the diversity of jurisdictions that these teams travel compete in multiple states.

Why isn't this a federal civil rights issue with regard to the violation of their rights? Well, I mean, part of we'd, haven't been able to address a lot of legal issues here, unfortunately today, because it's a much wider subject, but there is for example, no federal rape statute, there is no federal. So the criminal law is basically rooted in state law, you know, writ large.

So any of the hands-on offenses, any of the, uh, rape or sexual exploitation and, uh, those are state offenses. And the only federal offense which may apply here would be a trafficking charge. But even that, which is the old man act, which was used in a highly racial form back in the thirties, mostly to prosecute black men with white women.

So it has a troubled past. Um, but the reality of that is one of the primary purposes of the travel has to be to engage in the sexual act. And if you're going to a competition, you could make a credible argument under federal law that your reason for going to the competition was to compete. And the sex was just a corollary to the competition.

So there are some problems in, in, in the law. And I think one of the problems that was most pointed out in the first panel was the lack of communication between these various jurisdictions that this is taking place. And as you saw from the testimony that we didn't get into the FBI as an imperfect organization to police that.

So we've got a lot of structural problems here and even just a knowledge that this is even going on, as Marcy found out what the Walt Disney world, they had no idea that there was even someone there. So I think it's a really complicated system-wide problem without sort of an easy solution. I think I don't, I don't think there really is a system cause you're dealing with, you know, totally different jurisdictions in all respects.

So it's hard to get jurisdiction to store together, even if they're in the same state, you're talking county, city, county state. So it's hard to coordinate. I mean, right. You're in town for one weekend for a competition and it has sex with somebody under age and then you leave and never come back. Right.

Who's gonna, you know, but we, we have begun looking at this. Through the lens of child trafficking during the Superbowl. I mean, that's a model, that's gotten a lot of attention, you know, that this is going on, this is happening. There are taskforce, there are people on the ground, uh, you know, looking for this, searching for this.

And there's this, this it's just a matter of priorities also. Yeah. So it's potential. I mean, if you have a gymnastics team for the purpose of just, can you talk into the mic, please supposed to keep the mix away from us now, but certainly you see, I mean, it could be the gymnastics is a mechanism for trafficking children, even if it's for your own purpose.



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I had two questions one first, uh, especially Sarah, what thoughts were there about going into the criminal system with regard to that? And also I was struck by how much, how big an impact it had on our previous panelists with regard to their family relationship when they came forward. And if you could just briefly address those issues, what did you mean about the criminal?

Well, was there any thought in 1994 of going to the police about it? Yes, we, um, we went to DCFS first. Okay. So we did try every aspect. We could DCFS that was the whole year long, started there and, and forward, um, the statutes were short. Here's an interesting note. He was trying to adopt a baby. This baby was a player's child who was in college at 18.

So we tried to stop that it was a boy, but we tried to stop it. And we were told by the judge, I want nothing more than to stop this adoption, but my hands are tied to this day. I don't know what to be true or not, but my opinion is, I'm not sure it's not his, she was 18 years old. So, um, that was happening parallel to us reporting what happened to us.

So the avenue that we all veered into was all we had was USA volleyball hearing at the time. So we did try the one girl under age that was in the, under the, in the statute that could have criminally put them in jail, um, was threatened to stay quiet. And she, um, to this day, she's chained DOE she still won't come forward, but she did.

Um, she has given us her story. We have her story. I know her really well. Um, side note right into your next thing, her family, um, really believed that it didn't happen to her. And it had, she was 14. The father came started to understand things weren't going right. And, um, confronted Rick when she was 16 and they felt they had stopped it from happening.

So they would attend. She did not want to leave his program, which you can probably understand when you're within a program that you believe is going to get you to the next level to walk away no matter what doesn't feel like you can. So she said, I'm finishing my senior year. I'm not going to leave. It doesn't look right.

And so an adult went to every practice and in every she was with an adult at all. So for her to come forward now is an embarrassment for her to tell her parents and her family, because they thought they stopped it and they didn't. So for me, it was my father loved Rick. He stored stuff at my house. He was part of my family.

So when I came out in 95, I was horrified. I didn't talk about it with my mom and dad. My mom wanted to talk about it. I couldn't, you're embarrassed, you're ashamed. Um, you're taught to not talk about it. My father passed away and we never talked about it. And I know it probably hurt him to his core to know I begged him for the \$500 to play.

This club begged him. Can I please? I want to play that. I want to play in the next level. I want to go to college. Like my brother didn't football. I think he was a blue collar man that worked for the Tribune on the maintenance. He was a maintenance machinist on the big presses. That's a lot of money and he gave it to me so I could play and I got sexually abused by the guy he trusted.

So, yeah. So I don't know if that answered your question, but yes. So one of the things I'm struck by is, again, the institutions that, you know, not only permit this, but in some ways encourage it. Um, five years later, he's back doing the same thing. Um, and, uh, you know, we haven't really addressed that. You know, it's, you know, if you're a pedophile and you get support from the institution to continue doing it, why stop?



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Like what what's, what's the downside? Are you surprised? A successful white man are being accommodated.

it's not just, it's successful white men. It's others as well, but, uh, excuses where he literally and people took it. Um, th one of Christine was a disgruntled ex-girlfriend that, that was one of the parents said that they went on that, oh, she's just a disgruntled ex-girlfriend Christine produced written letters in his handwriting to show you 16 love letters.

And he's, he's, uh, talking about Thornbirds in these letters. So when we show the letters. Yeah, yeah. So he's referencing that when we show the letters that is started to appall people like, wait, that's not a girlfriend, she's 16. What are you writing here? But no one believes you unless you had this hardcore proof that that's so wrong.

I mean, we are, it's changing. I mean, shoot, it's like turning the Titanic though, very slow. But you know, back then it was like, she's a disgruntled girlfriend until they would read for themselves. These letters from this adult male who was 15 years older than her. No, no, he's not her boyfriend. So unfortunately we have to adjourn.

Um, but I want to add with respect to, um, uh, the volleyball scenario. I think there are so many parents. With the, um, Nasser scenario. Um, but the other one is that when they came forward, it was reported in sports illustrated. It was the sports story of the year selected as a sports story of the year. And we often think that when the media gets the story, it kind of ends the career of the bad person.

And in her case, um, she was still fighting tooth and nail well over a decade later just to get them removed. Um, but no, who else is in this picture? It's not just USA volleyball. It's also AAU. And AAU is the least accountable child serving organization in the United States. They have absolutely no policies.

They don't care. Uh, and Sarah has tried to Sue them and let me just repeat. They don't care. So, uh, so we're dealing with, you know, we started at the USO sea level. We're going all the way down and these children are at risk, right from the day they start these sports. It's just, it's tragic. Thank you so much to both of you.

Thank you. Thank you. We will take one hour off for lunch and we will be back at one 15 to talk about safe. Sport

is available for everybody along the hallway. Nearest you turn, go out and turn right. When.[03:00:00]
[03:30:00]

First day of hearings for always my voice, my first day of hearings for the game over commission. Uh, as I said earlier this morning, uh, we will be holding hearings here at Penn today at, uh, university of Colorado medical school. Thank you to Dr. Steven Berkowitz, uh, April 30th through May 2nd two in, uh, 2020, and then we will be having hearings in Michigan.

So this is a fact finding investigation, uh, to resolve in, uh, analysis and proposal for making sure this doesn't happen again in any sport. And what we're focusing on is how every single institution led all of these children down. Uh, not just one, uh, but every one that should have been on protecting them.

So one of the response, so, but before I move on, Jill do not go anywhere. So I want to thank publicly, uh, on live streaming, uh, Julian rock, who did an amazing job,



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herding cats of the commission, herding cats [04:00:00] testify. I mean, just, just she's running for the door, Marcy so thank you, Joe. Thank you. Uh, and of course, the rest of our team, uh, Simone Walla here, uh, and where is Shana? Shana Fisher, not kids are our live Twitter, social media guru. Um, so this afternoon, we're going to start, um, for our first panel talking about the answer that has been given by the U S OPC and Congress to the problem of sex abuse in elite sports, it's called safe sport.

And, uh, it has been an ongoing process and it certainly has not solved, um, many of the problems yet, but we have an excellent panel this afternoon to lay out for us what they know about, uh, how safe sport has been operating, but also, uh, about how maybe other, other ways for us to attack the problem of, uh, child sex abuse in sports.

So let me just hand it over to you for each panelists. Please state your name clearly for the record. This is being permanently recorded and, um, and then we will ask each of you to speak for 10 minutes and, uh, Simone right there. We'll give you the one minute left if, if you're at nine. Uh, and then the panel, uh, the commission will have, uh, the opportunity to ask questions.

Okay. All right. So Jeremy, please. Hello everyone. My name is Jeremy Fuchs. I'm a reporter, uh, most recently with sports illustrated spent the last few years reporting on sex abuse in sports and in particular in the Olympics. Um, so the topic for today is about fixing the USO, PC and safe sport. And I come to you with a particularly unique viewpoint on the ladder.

I've been reporting on safe sport in one form or another since June of 2018. In June of 2019, I became the first journalist to visit the safe sport headquarters in Denver. I spent two days, two days there in long discussions with its senior leadership for an upcoming story with sports illustrated, that visit to say a sport came after months of the month of reporting, speaking to over a dozen victims who have reported their abuse and harassment to save sport.

My overarching question has been, is safe sport and effective response to the vast problem of sex abuse and the Olympic movement. And if not, what can it be done differently? It's worth first noting the scope of the problem. When I arrived in Denver into the offices there, I was immediately escorted into a small conference room, just off the entrance, the office.

It should be mentioned as small of a commercial Boulevard in a corporate building. That one employee described to me as looking like a retired jail. Its offices are small. There are groupings of cubicles in the middle with other offices died in the perimeter. The Rocky mountains are visible out of most of windows.

After the exchange of pleasantries, a PowerPoint was brought up on the screen. It showed the number of reports to say sport by quarter, since its inception in March of 2017, it goes as follows quarter 2 20 17 85, quarter 3 20 17, 70 quarter 4 20 17, 126 quarter 1 20 18, 374, quarter 2 20 18, 414, quarter 3 20 18, 500.

Quarter 4, 20 18, 550 quarter one twenty nineteen seven hundred and four. These numbers are staggering, but they do not even come close to scratching the surface. Those numbers haven't yet been updated to reflect quarter two and quarter three reporting and quarter four numbers are still ongoing. The numbers do not cover people who haven't reported to safe sport.

Yet they do not cover people who have yet to tell anyone of their abuse, let alone save sport. They do not cover people who haven't even heard of safe sport, which is significant. They do not cover the abuser is currently grooming their next victim. They do not cover the person in a gym with a new coach who was looking for the next person.



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It is in short, a very incomplete list. The juxtaposition at the heart of safe sport is this. The numbers of sexual abuse is only rising yet. The staff employed by safe sport to respond to it is stagnant. Standing at numbers that are nowhere close to being adequate enough to address the problem. Say sport employees, eight full-time investigators, each assigned 15 to 17 cases at a given time.

That means there are thousands of cases that have yet to be even addressed. In fact, I've spoken to some whose claims are not even been acknowledged. There are six people who respond to calls and emails they claim to read and respond to every call and email. Although I know that in at least a few cases, that's not true.

Even when there isn't an initial outreach from someone at safe sport to the reporting party. That's often the only communication months, even years ago, before a resolution is reached. In some cases, a resolution has not been reached. The abuser is still out there. I come to this issue as a journalist. My job is to ask questions and to find the truth, whatever that might be as such, I feel slightly uncomfortable offering prescriptions or commentary on what I think should happen with safe sport.

Of course, I'm human. It would be inconceivable to me to not have opinions, but in my view, it is the voice of the survivor that is most important, much more important than my, my own. And it is the great responsibility of a journalist to communicate their opinions and their experiences. So I will let them talk from countless conversations, with multiple survivors in different sports and from different walks of life.

I have yet to find anyone satisfied with safe sport, even with when their abuser is banned. They're not satisfied. They're beyond upset with the lack of communication, the feeling that their case does not matter. They're beyond upset that their abusers are not banned or even if they are they're outraged at the arbitration process.

I cannot tell you the amount of times that I have heard some variation of the following phrase say sport has led me down. The system has let me down. It is beyond clear that safe sport does not have the resources needed to properly address this problem. It's not clear that safe sport is even the right model to address this problem.

Recent legislative efforts in Congress have not been appealing to advocates and the time for legislative action, at least in this current session, it seems over for the time being the status quo seems to be in place. It's been a little under three years of safe sport. How do we properly judge something that's undertaking such a massive mission?

What is the timeline to give a fair. That question is tricky on the one hand, as you all know, this issue is not an overnight fix. On the other hand, with each passing day, there are more and more victims. I think it's best to defer again to the survivors who have experienced safe sport firsthand. It is they who say sport is trying to help.

So it is their voice that must be amplified the loudest and their voice time and time again has been saying this safe sport is not working safe. Sport must be fixed and say sport isn't enough. Those are the voices we must be listening to. And those voices have been loud and clear. Thank you.

Good afternoon. My name is Han Shaw. I'm the chair of the athletes' advisory council, the United States Olympic and Paralympic committee. Um, for those of you who are unaware, what the AAC is, it is a group of elected athlete representatives from every single sport within the Olympic and Paralympic movement.



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Um, I am their elected, uh, chair of that body. Um, a lot of people are going to talk specifically about safe sport today in the center for safe sport. I'm going to come with a little bit different angle and put forward the idea that our Olympic and Paralympic system as a whole is in many ways, founded upon built upon the idea of a lack of accountability and the lack of oversight.

Um, we all sort of have been sold this idea that sport is special and unique and in a lot of ways it is. But when you're looking at the Olympic and Paralympic system, it's selling us a dream, right? Not only individual dreams, but a collective dream of what sport can do for society. And that sales pitch includes the idea that we're supposed to assume good intentions, and that we don't need to put sports at the same level of scrutiny as as many of the other things in society.

Um, so that culture of a lack of accountability, and I mean, that flows from the top down. So, I mean, we can look at if I'm an individual athlete and I start from the bottom. If I have a grievance that I want to bring forward in my individual sport and my NGB, I already face a significant amount of barriers at that point.

Um, so this can be sexual abuse, but this can also be something very minor. If I'm going to bring forward a grievance. First of all, my NGB is setting the rules for how that grievance is going to be adjudicated, how that's going to be heard. I don't have much of a say at all in terms of how, how I get my day in court.

Um, those are set within the bylaws of the NGB. Uh, so in a lot of cases, they'll say you get an athlete on your hearing panel, but we've seen even that be used against the athlete in TaeKwonDo and gymnastics now saying we're going to delay it because we can't find an athlete willing to serve. So right away, you're facing a large amount of disadvantages there.

If you decide not to go through an official channel, as we've seen, if you decide just to go to someone that you might trust within the NGB, you're now depending on that person to just do the right thing. Um, but no matter what happens, whether you're successful in getting your grievance heard or not, the fact is there is the fear of retaliatory behavior afterwards.

Um, even if you're successful with your grievance and a lot of these sports, you're now labeled not only by the NGB, but your community as a troublemaker, uh, your blacklist, and in a lot of ways, there are not a lot of athletes. Now, whether they're a lead or whether they're in the pipeline who are willing to take that risk.

Um, so put their careers that are Olympic or Paralympic dreams on the line for that. So I want to take it a level up from there to say, you know, we all want the NGB to act responsibly and ethically in dealing with any grievances that are put forward, but who's supposed to be responsible for making them act that way.

Who's going to hold them accountable. And the answer is obviously the U S OPC. They're supposed to do that, but you can say that one level up and say, well, who's the U S OPC accountable for, for doing that job. And a lot of us might think it's its Congress, right? It's the United States government. It's a federally chartered nonprofit and enjoys a certain amount of protections.

But I would argue that it's not, it's actually the IOC, it's the international Olympic committee that really exerts a lot of power over the U S OPC in particular, because it's the IOC that has the ability to recognize the national Olympic committees. Without that you don't have anything, you don't have access to the brand.



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Um, and essentially the, the IOC can pick another organization to do that job. So most people aren't really familiar, but according to the Olympic charter, um, the IOC may recognize it as NOC is national sport organizations, the activities of which are linked to its mission and role, all NOC is, and associations of NOC is shall, have, or possible the status of legal persons.

They must comply with the Olympic charter. Their statutes are subject to the approval of the IOC. So the IOC is where I think a lot of these problems flow down from you have an organization who is the IOC accountable to, I think the answer to that is very unclear or non-profit out in Switzerland.

There's a real lack of transparency. Um, they're not governmental, they're not intergovernmental. They're not a corporation. A lot of the things that tends to govern other types of bodies don't apply to the, to the IOC. And they argue actively that it should not apply to them. If you look at the IOC, you know, they are very, very much against any sort of governmental interfere.

And that flows down from there. It's a very top-down hierarchical structure. The IOC actually specifically states in the Olympic charter that they don't want governments meddling and the Olympic and Paralympic movement. So if you look, they will actually say that they, they can actually go and decertify or, or, you know, stop recognizing a national one that committee, if the government starts to interfere, they say in the Olympic charter, the IOC executive board may take any appropriate decisions for the protection of the Olympic movement in the country of an NOC, including suspension of, or withdrawal of recognition from such NOC.

If the constitution law or other regulations enforced in the country concerned, or any act by any governmental or other body causes the activity of the NOC or the making or expression of its will to be hampered. So I'll just let that sink in for a second. But what that says to me is we don't want governmental interference.

Our attitude towards government is cooperate, but don't interfere in what we're doing. So I'd like to just put that forward that really the, the entire Olympic and Paralympic system is built upon a lack of governmental interference, a lack of oversight, a lack of accountability. And when you look at this top-down hierarchical structure, the IOC holds power over the NOC is through use of funding through the use of sponsorship money, through the use of influence within its member of constituency.

If you don't play ball, we're not going to give, we're not going to have your country's officials as part of these important committees, whether it's marketing, whether it's something else, uh, elected positions, you're not going to get those. So it holds power of the NOC. The NOC is whole power of the individual sports, the individual NGBs through the use of funding and through the use of influence the NGBs hold power over athletes.

There are power imbalances all the way down, and there are no checks and balances, no oversight anywhere. So when we're talking about holding these organizations or organizations accountable, I think we have to recognize that sport in general has operated under the auspices of not being held accountable in any way, especially by governments.

I think we do see some light at the end of the tunnel in terms of governments, starting to realize that we do have to do something we've seen with the FIFA investigation in particular, that sport corruption is something that they're paying attention to. But I do think that we have to start domestically and start looking at how do we give people power so that these decisions that are being made are not these top-down decisions with no checks or balances anywhere.



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How do we give the athletes power? How do we give youth sports power? How do we give these other stakeholders, the even NGBs? How do we give them power so that when they see something that's not right, they have the ability to push back. Um, but I think until we start answering those types of questions, I think we're just waiting for another scandal to happen, whether that's sexual abuse or whether that's something else.

Thank you. Thank you. Uh, Stacy. Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Stacy pen Darvis and I'm the program director at the moaning bar foundation for children, an organization dedicated to protecting children from abuse, exploitation, bullying, and other types of victimization through prevention, education programs for youth, I would like to thank the game over commission for their ongoing work-related to Larry Nasser's abuse of hundreds of young girls and women, and for the invitation to testify today.

Interestingly, I began working in child protection during my first year of graduate school as a guardian ad litem volunteer. When I heard commissioner Dr. Sharon Cooper speak in the 24 years since I have focused solely on prevention, and I have studied, read developed, and tested prevention, methodologies and programs.

During that time, I have seen many child abuse cases, spark anger, and even outrage, including the Catholic church, Jerry Sandusky. And of course why we are here today, Larry Nassar, but the anger and outrage always seems to fade. And the abuse of children continues as a society. We have allowed this perpetration and injustice to children, whether it is from a lack of awareness or understanding, or from turning away from that, which scares us or that, which we don't really want to admit exists.

We have not done a very good job of protecting children. I would like to say it's because we still think of perpetrators as evil lurking strangers, but I believe that image has changed with the very public cases of abuse by priests, coaches, and doctors. Most people now know that perpetrators are kind helpful, upstanding community members, just like you and me.

They have notable careers. They have families, many have children and they blend easily into society. They are youth workers, pastors, teachers, doctors, parents, coaches, and family members. And they are often overlooked. Larry Nasser was one of those people and his crimes like those of so many others were overlooked as well.

However, unlike many other abuse scandals in the past, the Nassar case prompted legislation and ongoing conversations such as the ones here today, perhaps that is because of the value we place on athletes in society. But regardless I still ask, is it enough? I understand that the vast majority of citizens do not think about child sexual abuse on a daily basis.

If your job is to teach children, you go to school and you teach children. If your job is to develop youth athletes, you go to the gym or the field and you coach children. Our goal at the Monique BARR foundation for children is to create a world where every day, every citizen not only thinks about the protection of children, but ensures the protection of children from sexual abuse and other types of victimization.

The sole mission of the Monique BARR foundation for children is to provide the best prevention programs for youth and to partner with schools and organizations to reach the children they serve with those programs. And we have been doing that successfully for 22 years. We have reached more than 3 million children in schools, across the country with our evidence-based and evidence informed comprehensive programs.



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And we have data to show them their effectiveness, but as a prevention specialist and as a mother, it is the stories I hear on a daily basis that rather than the results of any actual research study that tell me these programs are protecting children from sexual abuse, bullying, digital dangers, and more.

We know that child focused prevention is just one piece of a much larger comprehensive strategy needed to protect children. And that is why we partner with many other organizations, but we also know that educating and empowering children is an effective strategy. And yet historically it has been the least often mentioned or sanctioned method across the board with the passage of the protecting young victims from sexual abuse in safe sport authorization act of 2017 among the reporting requirements and the designation of the U S center for safe sport.

There are other requirements included as the commissioners. Well, no, the legislation includes several points on training and education, including the U S center for safe sport shall maintain an office for education and outreach that shall develop training oversight, practices, policies, and procedures to prevent the abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of amateur athletes.

Participating, participating in amateur athletic activities through national governing bodies and Paralympic sports organizations. Additionally, it says applicable amateur sports organization shall offer and provide consistent training to all adult members who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors and subject to parental consent to members who are minors regarding prevention and reporting of child abuse to allow a complainant to re report easily an incident of child abuse, despite flaws in the language within that law, it was a step in the right direction yet how many youth athletes have received such prevention education since the passage of that act while there is no single repository for information on such education available or provided our observations have been that very little has been done.

I think it's important to provide reporting guidelines and methods and to investigate and remove abusive coaches in an effort to protect children. It is also important to educate adults, but it is equally important to educate youth conversations and awareness campaigns are a good start, but they don't do much to protect children awareness.

Plus action equals prevention and prevention is what is needed. Now, when we talk about the failure of institutions to protect children, we must also talk about the societal failure to educate children and empower them with self protection and reporting. Perhaps, this is because there are some who believe children cannot learn and should not bear the responsibility to protect themselves from manipulative abusive adults.

I think we can all agree that adults are responsible for keeping kids safe, but research shows that children can and do learn protective concepts and as such, it is irresponsible not to educate them. However, when we teach children to report red flags and or abuse, we must be able to trust that those who receive the reports will do what is right and needed to protect those children.

And as we know with Nasser's victims, this is not what happened. The sports world finds itself in a situation similar to that, which the educational system found itself a decade ago from Vermont in 2009 to Illinois in 2011 and the 35 states since 37 states and all have passed Aaron's law or a similar act requiring schools to provide child sexual abuse prevention, education to youth, while it is not the primary function of schools to teach these topics.

Many schools now teach children red flags and safety rules to help adults keep them safe. Many schools have overcome the obstacles, including the fear, lack of resources, lack of time, and many





now see value in prevention education. I understand there are significant differences between the educational system in the sports world.

Schools are used to oversight and regulations, sports owners and coaches are not in schools have addressed similar topics like drugs, mental health, bullying, suicide in school shootings where sports programs have not. We know there are many child protection and youth serving organizations with a mission to protect children.

And some of them are working towards the same goals. We are. We also know there are roadblocks and there is fear and hesitation, but every day that goes by without educating youth athletes means more children will be sexually abused. It's easy for those of us who aren't victims to say the word sexual abuse, we know what it is yet.

We do not live with the details victims do. In fact, they suffer every single act every single day, perhaps every single minute of their lives. And we need to do better. The Monique BARR foundation for children has prevention programs based on research and best practices that were developed for schools, youth serving organizations, and now the youth sports world and the programs are available now are sports focused program.

MBF athletes safety matters in addition to teaching healthy versus unhealthy relationships, boundaries, and red flags for all four types of abuse, addresses, abuse, dynamics prevalent in sport, power trust, grooming, and more. And it speaks to the situations and the players unique to sport. Will it be hard?

Yes. Will it require change? Yes. In fact, we know that there are already challenges. We have worked in several venues and have had to go back and modify what we've created because there are challenges with addressing youth in sport. But what we don't need to do is spend time determining what to do. We know what to do.

We also don't need to reinvent the wheel and we don't need organizations that just want to check a box. Every single sport organization can do something today to protect their youth athletes. And moving forward, youth sports organizations need to be held accountable and prevention. Education needs to be mandatory.

One organization that is doing something now is the United States All-star Federation for cheer and dance. As the national partner for USASF MBF has seen firsthand their commitment to putting their athletes first and to providing prevention education. What we need to see as others doing the same thing.

The simple truth is that athletes are valued in our country and the world is watching. They are watching to see what we will do to protect youth athletes in the aftermath of Larry Nassar. And to date, we have not done enough. Now is the time to act. We can maintain the status quo, or we can set the fear and excuses aside and step up, step up and do what needs to be done to protect children in closing.

I would like to thank again, the commission for their efforts. It is my sincere hope that the work of this commission, my testimony, and that of the others who are also speaking here today will move the conversation towards solutions and actions that will make a true impact and propel us from being reactive, to being proactive and showing that we value and protect all children.



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I also hope the reach is much farther than sport. That all systems in our country will act to protect children and stop their abuse and exploitation research shows that prevention education works and it is available to begin using today. And it can be done even in the sports world, if we are strong enough, committed enough and relentless enough to make it happen.

Thank you. Thank you, Nancy. I sort of want to applaud after each of these speakers. Um, I would like to thank all of you for coming together and taking this issue. So seriously, the issue of not just Larry Nassar, but the issue of sexual abuse in sport, um, and how it's different from the church or schools or other venues.

Um, so, um, what I'd like to talk to you all about is, um, um, why hasn't it happened? Why ha why do we still have such an incredible problem? What are the impediments to, to having money burgers that, you know, Stacy's the training that she talks about, uh, having come forward and that is, there is, there are entrenched into.

That very much so want to keep the current system the way that it is. So any efforts to, for example, get the Monique Burr training out in front of, uh, of clubs is going to run into roadblocks. If you don't get buy-in from the coaches associations and from, um, from the national governing bodies and, and more, um, and, and that's incredibly hard to do incredibly hard.

So, um, I want to tell you a couple of stories here. One is, um, so I started working in this area in 2010. I wasn't yet smart enough to know that I needed to have a lot of child protection groups to come and do this work as well. And, um, there really, as far as I know was not anybody else who is doing this work.

So I wrote the first draft of what the U S center for safe sport was just a look alike. And I, um, I, um, was successful in going over Scott Blackmun's head and going to the, to the board of the USC and getting the rule required that, um, coaches shall not have romantic and sexual relationships with the athletes they coach, regardless of age or consent.

So, yay. We got that rule passed. Um, one of the things that we found out in the boarders commission, not the borders, the, um, in the ropes and gray commission was that, that the USC then did nothing to make sure that their national governing bodies were actually following that. So that was 2012, 2014. Um, uh, I was successful in getting Chuck while guys, he used to be the head of swimming out of the hall of fame, because he had done such a terrible job.

I've taken care of the issue of sexual abuse in sports. I represented 19 victims of abuse. You would've felt like, well, that would be enough to be able to make changes. And, um, not only, so this was like front page news of USA today and other, other, um, outlets. And, um, the board of USA swimming came out and said, what an amazing job that Chuck wog has had done.

And then two is they honored him shortly thereafter with, as being the best, that the best head of a national governing body of all the right. So while an outsider, while we could do a lot, really those insider groups, I think it's hard to underestimate how badly they don't want things to change. Um, so then, um, Tim Hinchey took over for Chuck wildest, Tim.

One of the first people that he went to go see was John Leonard. Um, he is head of the coaches association and John has been on the record. I was saying in sports illustrated all in lots of different places that, um, all coaches fall in love with our athletes and just some of them don't, won't admit to it, but it's, you know, it it's just happens and right.



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There's nothing you can't legislate love is what he will say. And, um, and so consequently USA swimming, um, has done very little. So, uh, me and there's a woman named Danny Bostik. She was [04:30:00] abused by her coach. He is currently in prison. Um, and she and I went through all of USA swimming's, um, materials together.

And we, we showed just how bad they were. I mean, just embarrassingly bad. There was a whole, there was a coloring book that just talked about like promoting the sport of swimming. And, um, there was all these materials about, you know, how parents shouldn't interfere, um, and how parents, you know, sorta shouldn't cause problems.

And, um, like there were some materials there that you could kind of piece like two and two and two together to kind of come up with like what the policy was, but how difficult that, that was. And Marcy and I wrote a one pager that is really simple and easy to understand. I've been giving it to all these coaches associations it's free it's you don't have to pay us a consulting fee or anything, and it's not picked up.

Um, and it, it isn't picked up because people want the system the way that it is the, um, so the first thing that Tim Hinchey did was he, uh, got on a plane, went to go see John Leonard and John Leonard essentially forwarded, uh, everything. So publicly there is this public side of USA swimming that, uh, testifies in the United States Senate about here's what we're doing to address sexual abuse.

Here's our safe sport program. We have the gold metal standard. We do it better than everybody else. And, um, um, and then right now there's litigation going on as we speak in California, where a 12 year old is raped by her coach where Tim Hinchey is, is being deposed. And he says, the answer is, I don't know, to just about every question, including, um, have you looked at the code of conduct for coaches?

Have you looked at what your abuse policy is? Have you looked at? I don't know. No, I have, I don't know what that is. I have not done it. I right. So one thing that he says to the Senate and he says something totally different, they have this safe sport that, uh, is supposed to be this great training for all over the country.

They spent, uh, just on the videos alone, they spent half a million dollars. It's only a \$30 million organization a year. So it was. A half a million dollars as a chunk of their budget is really significant. And, um, um, and, and because they don't require it, they have, um, it's like less than 2% of the clubs are quote unquote safe sport clubs.

So, um, so the system is the way that it is because people really want it that way. I'm going to tell you my personal experiences is actually the first time I've been public with this. Um, but, um, um, so I had been working, I, I had grown up in an organization called the women's sports foundation and in between my junior and senior year in college, after the Olympics, I went and I interned there.

And, um, and, uh, you know, it was, was got phenomenal mentoring. And, uh, as I went through law school, I was the vice president. I was the president and I was on the board of stewards. And then I was their legal advisor. And then I was their senior director of advocacy. So I was with this organization in a very substantive way for a long time, there were very few policies on their website right now that don't have my name attached to them.

And, um, so after I was working after I'd done all this, what I thought good work, uh, uh, we, um, I got, uh, I got my contract was, was up for renewal and this one was different than the other ones. This one had a paragraph that said



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as a condition of this letter of agreement, extending the role of the, the advocate on, uh, um, uh, the, the, the advocate shall not discuss opine or participate either verbally or in writing as an advocate expert or spokesperson regarding sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or sexual allegations, or any other issue related to sexual conduct in any manner, shape or form, whether said participation is done as an individual, as a private person, as a spokesperson for a party on behalf of the women's sports foundation on behalf of any other party.

Wow. I was, I was literally like, I just thought like, well, w you know, does not compute, right? Like, yeah, this was my job. I was the senior director of advocacy. And so, and I had been reporting onto the board of directors and we had a separate advocacy committee. And so I could, I just kept thinking, like, you know, somebody doesn't understand, there's been a breakdown of communication there.

And actually it took me a while to figure out that they really weren't kidding that this is really what they wanted. What year was it? 2014. Wow. Yeah. And, um, and so. Exactly. Hold up way way of the story gets worse. I hate to tell you, okay, so then I said, okay, well I'm due a sever and Sandra, my agreement.

They said, okay, if you want your severance, you have to agree to give us everything that you've ever worked on with the women's sports foundation and agree never to rely on it or refer to it again. Wow. So these are like, I mean, I've written law review articles and I had written books. I wrote the book on title nine.

I there's just virtually no way that I could have done it. That the contract said prior to the termination date, uh, to WSF, uh, uh, hogs had make our show return all originals and copies of papers, notes documents in any medium, including computer disc, whether property of the WSF or not prepared, received, or obtained by hogs had made car during the course of, and in connection with services to the WSF and all equipment property, blah, blah, um, uh, in, in hogsheads, uh, home or elsewhere, including all such papers, work, papers, notes, documents, and equipment in the possession of Hogshead maker, which WSF property shall include, but not limited to items set forth.

And there was a schedule hogs said, make her agrees that she and her family shall not return retain copies of such papers, notes, and documents. Okay. So if I had accepted the severance, um, I would have, I would have essentially not been able to be speaking to you all here today. Okay. I would have completely gutted me.

So yeah. So you gotta be kidding. Like, how did this happen? The women's sports foundation raises their annual budget by having a big dinner every year and the USA swimming. And the USFC said, if you don't shut Nancy up, it wasn't just like fire her. It was, if you don't shut her up, then we're not going to send our athletes there.

And we're not going to buy tables at your dinner or their tables, or like, but you know, between 10 and \$25,000 each. And, um, so we're not going to be doing that. So, um, so again, um, the system is the way that it is because this is what people want that, right. It's, it's, uh, it's intentionally structured this way.

When you look at how USA swimming was structuring its insurance contracts, as an example, the insurance contracts, or number one separate from the rest of the liability and the insurance contract, uh, was, um, what's called a wasting policy, which means the defense fees come off the top. So number one, it was, it was only a hundred thousand dollars.



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And so if the defense can just sort of keep the plaintiff's attorney at bay for, uh, you know, just sort of run out. Thank you then, um, then, then they can avoid, um, having any payments, sort of the word gets around the plaintiff's lawyers around the country that there's really no money here. You can't really do anything for your client.

And then they engaged in this thing, scorched earth litigation tactics. Um, right now it is no coincidence that, um, that all these national governing bodies and the USO PC are now being federally investigated by the department of justice and by the IRS and by two state attorneys general, um, these are through a layered series of structures, um, have built a system that is not conducive to changing.

There's a Facebook group right now that I encourage all of you to get on, which is called a safe sport overhaul. And they are trying really hard to, uh, gut the U S center for safe sport. And they were like 3000 people on this, um, um, in this group. And, um, if you need any screenshots, I have them all, um, right.

But it's really shocking how they say over and over again that it's not constitutional and there, they don't want even the possibility that an athlete will get smart. Okay. Based on Stacy's training and then make an allegation, they don't want that possibility. And if you don't have that possibility, then you're not going to have safe kids.

Right. So, um, uh, what's that, so I'll, uh, I'll look forward to talking to you more in the question and answer period, but again, I just want to thank you all for taking your time being here together for, uh, um, for this purpose, because without doing the deep dive and without recognizing, it's not just about training, it's not just about recognizing the eye.

The IOC right now will not recognize the human rights of athletes. There is the UN GP, the, uh, United nations, uh, general principles regarding, uh, business. And, um, it will not adhere to them. Athletes do not have normal human rights that that others do. And what what's you're going to find is that you can't solve sexual abuse without also solving, uh, financial abuse that an athlete, most of Allie Reisman's career, she made a thousand dollars a month.

The executives were making seven figures. You can't solve one without the other. It's a power issue every bit, as much as it is a, uh, sexual abuse. Thank you. Thank you, Nancy. So, uh, I'm going to take the chair's prerogative and add a footnote to Nance. What Nancy just told you to explain how determined the USO C is not to help in this process.

So, uh, child USA is doing a study of elite athletes, the incidents of abuse and neglect among elite athletes. You can see hon size sigh of relief. We just finished. Uh, we will not be harassing any more elite athletes trying to get them to answer the survey. You have no idea how hard that is. Um, but due to Han, uh, in his office, we actually have quite a large number of responses and we look forward to analyzing those.

But I was approached in Los Angeles by retired Olympic athletes who were very eager to be part of the survey and they wanted to have, they were going to help us distribute the survey. And, um, so we were going to have a cohort of retired athletes and current athletes to be able to compare. Uh, one of them said, you know, I really we're sponsored by the USFC.

So we'll ask the USC and the USC, absolutely for bad them from participating, accepting, or seeing the survey. So we will not be doing a comparative of retired athletes and current athletes, and it's





because the USC for bad them from doing it. So that's, that's the universe we're in. Um, if you need a translation, I can give you a whole book of translations, USO, C Vatican.

Um, but I mean, I think thank you. It it's a top down organization that's troubling. So in any event, every single one of you have, uh, introduced, um, such important aspects of the problem that, uh, let me just start, because I don't know, I'm sure we have a lot of questions, so we'll start with Teresa. Sure. Um, one of my questions is for Jeremy and it's in regard to safe sport in your, um, experience in terms of interviewing them and your investigative reporting there.

And I'm just wondering, setting aside the issue of resources, which we know are limited inadequate and all of that, but with what they have and with the cases that they are actually investigating, what is your opinion or what is the window that you have had on the appropriateness and throwing us of those investigations?

Uh, that's a good question. It depends on who you ask. Um, there are some athletes who have been horrified by their experiences with safe sport in terms of the investigation, part of it, let alone the communication or anything else where it turns with the questions they're asking. I've had athletes tell me that they.

Continue with safe support because they feel that the process is going to trigger them in such a way that it makes it makes more sense for them to not do it than to see their coach banned. The emotional trade-off is such, um, I've yet to encounter somebody who's had a good experience with the investigation.

Now, safe sport will tell you that they produce these thousand page documents, which they showed me of the final reports of a coach. They had banned 300, some odd coaches, um, which is better than nothing. Um, from what I can tell the investigations are as thorough as they want them to be. Um, athletes who are, they don't feel satisfied by the, the length, the duration or their involvement in the investigation.

I mean, they're, they're not even really talking to the investigators and if they do it's once or twice and that's it, and they don't hear anything back with follow ups or anything like that. So the, in terms of the effectiveness of the investigations, not so great. Thank you. And one other question for both Han and Nancy, you've talked a lot and eloquently, I would say about the power imbalance that exists and the degree to which that contributes to the experience of childhood sexual abuse.

That's ongoing. What do you believe that would be most helpful in writing that imbalance?

Oh, go first go. You can go first though. I'm ready to answer. There's not one answer to that question, to be honest. I mean, there are so many areas where that power imbalance can manifest. I mean, we've seen it with Nancy mentioned financials. Um, you have it with team selection, which I think people have mentioned in gymnastics is a sport like gymnastics or figure skating.

If you have team selection processes that can be very easily abused by the people who have power there. Then, I mean, that's yet another dynamic for me. One of the core things that I'd like to see change is having the third party investor, investigatory power oversight, and the ability to provide reports and recommendations as to what is actually going on.

When somebody has an allegation, when a whistleblower says there's a power imbalance in the sport, that's being exploited by certain individuals. Where does that person turn to? Because right now, I



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don't know where that place is. It's certainly not safe sport, right? Because you're talking about the people who are in need in a lot of cases, the people who are enabling sexual abuse, not the people who are actually perpetrating it.

Um, and in a lot of cases, if you have an allegation, you're finding that, you know, if you're brave enough to talk about it, there's a lot of misinformation going out there. There's a lot of smear campaigns. So if people just, it becomes a, he said, she said of your word against the NGB or your word to get against someone within your organizations.

It never really. I've never really seen it turn out well for the person who is bringing that forward. So for me, even like, regardless of what the actual imbalance is someplace where you have the investigatory authority, you have someone who can figure out what's actually going on getting to the bottom of it and reporting back to someone who is empowered to do something about it, whether it's Congress, whether it's, I don't know what that looks like yet, but you have to have something like that.

Um, so I am co-chair of a group called the committee to restore integrity to the USC. And we represent, now we have 160 Olympians that have signed on, we have several NASCAR victims, as well as the army of survivors. We have Marcy, we have other experts in child protection, and we have sport leaders that if you lived in my world, you'd say, oh my gosh.

So, um, we, and we wrote out 12 recommendations and we wrote out a whole nother series of, um, materials when it came to the U S Sosi to change its bylaws. And basically it's, it's all power dynamics right now. Um, the, the, the, the sports act was written back in 1978. This is back in the world of amateurism, which does not exist anymore.

And, um, and in, in the world of amateurism, you had NCAA athletes who had zero power, and you had professional athletes who had 50, 50, right? And so the safety of the, the, um, sports act, the Ted Stevens, Olympic and Irish sports act was supposed to be this compromise between the two of them. So they got 20% of the votes.

And, um, one of the ways that Scott Blackmun, former head of USC, one of the ways that he, he gutted any protection that the athletes had was number one, he picked the athletes who are on the AAC slash uh, uh, you know, on the USC board and, and all the committees or whatnot. So if you weren't sort of a go along type, if you weren't gonna play ball, then it wasn't going to happen.

Uh, then you were not going to go forward, um, to his, um, well, I could go on there, but, um, but essentially what are our recommendations are, is that, um, athlete con can be any athlete, um, can, can serve on the USC board if they're elected. So right now it's a 10 year age group. Number two is, uh, having 50% of, um, uh, uh, 50% athletes.

And so they would have that kind of bargaining power to be able to get things done. Sarah Hershel and the new CEO of the USC came on board and right away was like, I'm going to be different. And we all tried to let her make changes. One of the first. She does. She came on in August, by January. She put new people onto the USC board for four year terms that Hans group, the AAC had said that they did not want on the board four year terms.

Right. They're not, there's not even is never gonna, like these people sort of replicate themselves on who it is that they want on the board. And Han does not have the power to put somebody on the board. So he makes reports to the board and they often say to him, I'm sorry if I'm stealing your thunder, but, but they, they often say to him, well, I mean, are all the athletes, are they unanimous on this?



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And you're never going to have that. Just the same. It'd be like asking a congressional representative. Are all of your constituents in favor of this particular vote? Well, no, but they elected me. Okay. The athletes elected him. So when he speaks, they shouldn't be trying to second guess him as to whether or not he has the authority to be able to speak that way.

Um, anyway, so, and, and another really important thing that we say is, um, if you're going to keep this, this arbitration system as a way to protect an athlete's right to compete, what they were thinking of when they wrote this part back in 1978 was is that if they didn't follow the procedures for naming who the team was, or it was issues like that, it was not not to address sexual abuse at all.

But, um, but right now there's no attorney's fees provision. So, so w you know, we say, you know, you need to have an attorney's fees provision because it makes the defendant, it makes the NGB act very differently if they're going to have to be responsible for these fees, if they mess around. Um, right. So those are just some we had, we have a bunch.

Um, but right now, the USO PC deals with law firms who are very anti athletes. And if they're anti athlete in one way, you better believe that sexual abuse is part of that. Yes. Yeah. Go ahead. Dr. Corwin, Dr. Cooper.

I want to start with a question because what I have heard from the four of you sounds like an, or an international organized crime syndicate that is without oversight or control. That's what, that's what I have. Well, even, yeah, that's what I've heard. Now. That's a comment. It's a question now. Um, what you also described is the essence of abuse.

It is the use of power and authority to exploit the less powerful to meet the needs and benefits of the more powerful taken at the highest level. It is the root of violence and war. Not to be overly grandiose. I would like now to ask you, what are the present benefits that those in power doing this exploitation receive from the present status quo?

That's my question. Such a good question. My question to, well, when I, I'm going to add something here again for, for a framing purpose, because I think you've hit upon it. When I hear what Han and others say. The media thing that I think about is sex abuse within the military. And if you turn back, if you turn back the clock five or 10 years ago, what you had was a situation which you described precisely you have the chain of command, you had no clear lines of responsibility.

You had no reporting and you had no protection. And what has happened at least within the military in the past five years is they put in place all of those protections. Not that it's a perfect system, but there is oversight. There's clear lines of reporting. There's clear lines of responsibility and there's annual oversight by Congress.

So when we're looking at solutions and how to put this problem into a model, at least from a congressional standpoint, this really, to me reflects this condition in the military very recently, and the, uh, oversight that has been put in place where you know who to report to, you know, what protections you're going to be accorded.

You know, who in the chain of custody, uh, chain of command is going to be responsible. You have the commanders rated on the, on the success of those programs within their units. And you have strong congressional oversight where they have to produce numbers, reports, and responses to this problem within their ranks.



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So I just encourage us as we look at this congressional solutions, they always like a model. Well, this to me sounds like the military five years ago, but go ahead and answer the question. Yeah. Can I I'll I'll jump in and say that what they get out of it is two things, power and money. The five rings are one of the three top most recognized marks in the world.

Um, the first two being the crucifix and the swastika, right? So when you include the five rings, those are the three most recognizable non-commercial marks. So not including McDonald's and Nike and right. But those, and so, um, what Congress gave the, um, what Congress gave the Olympic committee back in 78 is you get to use these marks.

Okay. You and only you get to use them in perpetuity. And then, um, it turns out that the USO PC, not only are they, do, they have a monopoly on being able to sell those marks, but they also have a monopsony they're the only buyer of athlete services. So, right. So they control both ends of the market here and.

Um, if you work in the Olympic movement, they pay very well. And essentially what Scott Blackmun and others did was to be able to use there's a lot of prestige associated with, uh, the Olympic movement and the rings. I think if you, you know, did a marketing survey of what do they connote, you know, it would be this, you know, the ideals, the best of humanity, um, which I agree with actually, but they, they want to have that meaning for themselves.

Right. So rather than having to go to the athlete, they want it to be them. They are right. So even the, the, um, Twitter handle for the USO PC is team USA. Okay. You're not team USA. Okay. You know, Han and I, our team USA. Okay. We're w we're who represents the United States, um, and, and other athletes who have worked for the Olympic committee, I have not, um, will tell you that they are sort of jealous of athletes and that they actually, that they're looked down on if they have an athlete, um, background, if they, if they were an elite athlete.

Um, I mean, at this stage you have athletes who are really the tippy top in their field, almost whatever, whether or not you're talking about publishing or fundraising, or, um, you know, um, law or, you know, business or whatever it is, right. In all these different areas. And they're all members of team integrity.

Um, so what, so, um, the group, the, the Olympic committee treats itself, not just so they get high salaries, but they also treat themselves very well. The stay in the nicest hotels, and then, okay. Meanwhile, athletes are staying in dormitories. Um, athletes are not getting good medical care athletes really, um, get very different, um, standard of even, you know, believe it or not.

The USO PC has health insurance that doesn't cover an athlete once they get injured or pregnant or sick. Right. Like, and what is it? Therefore, if, I mean, these are like the healthiest people on earth, and until they get, you know, injured, there is no such thing as an athlete that doesn't get injured. So, um, so they, they sort of have gotten all the cookies that come from the Olympic movement and given it to a small number of people, as opposed to, for the benefit of sport in the United States.

And they really want to keep it that way. Sarah Hersch, Lund wants Scott Blackmun's job. They D they don't want power shifting. So you have no idea how much I hate to say this we've run out of time. Um, we could continue as with the earlier panels for another couple of days, Um, uh, but let me just say, we would like to be able to follow up with each one of you on each of the things you've talked about.



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In fact, Stacy, I'm very interested in finding out frankly, what didn't work with athletes. Um, because, um, I thought Monique Burr was brilliant in that they floated a survey and it didn't work and they pulled it back and they reconfigured it. You know, we, this is the model of what we need to understand.

There isn't some perfect system out there. Um, but I would just like to close as I'll put on my former hat as a constitutional law scholar. I remember back to those days, uh, and say that this is Congress's problem. Congress created the U S Congress can take it right out. Right, right. Um, and they didn't, the pending legislation is a joke.

The Blumenthal Moran legislation is a joke. So, um, so we have a lot that we can recommend. So thank you so much. You have wonderful panel. Absolutely.

15 minute break. And then we will come back for the final panel today, which is media and to the commission.[05:00:00]

Thank you so much for being here today for everybody staying for four panels, uh, of the game over commission's first set of hearings, uh, being held here at the university of Pennsylvania, uh, we have had, uh, three quite amazing panels, uh, so far, uh, talking to survivors, talking about the coaches and talking about, um, uh, essentially the failure of the U S Olympic community to introduce the kind of child protection measures that are needed.

Uh, the only reason we know a lot of what we know is because of the media. Um, and this is a huge, uh, problem, uh, the Larry Nassar scandal, if you will. And, uh, we invited, uh, major reporters from major publications covering this to help us understand how did you start talking to this? I mean, H how did we find out about this?

Cause we found out about this from you, but how did you get started on these issues? Um, and what, what did we miss and what don't we know? So I thought I'd just start, uh, and have each of you, um, introduce yourselves, um, and your news organization just, uh, uh, have it on the record since this is being permanently, um, recorded.

So we'll start with will, and then we'll go down the line, right? Uh, I might as well hop some, excuse me. Uh, I'm a sports Porter for the Washington post I'm Tim Evans. I'm an investigative reporter at Indy star, Rebecca O'Brien. Uh, I cover law enforcement, uh, for the wall street journal. Do the reminders, um, formerly of Deadspin, I guess everyone's formerly of desk Lorene green, um, sports reporter with sports.

So as you can see, this is a very, very impressive group. Um, so let's just start, I just want to ask a very simple question. We're trying to know what does not have a shorthand answer, but how did you personally, as a reporter get on this bead and on the Nassar story, um, and we'll start with will and, uh, and then we can we'll work down and then we'll go backwards.

So chronologically Tim's would probably be the first person. Okay. All right. Tim is the first one that called me. I'll say that. And I, you know, a lot of my heroes are here and I'll get emotional, but Marcy and the survivors and all that, but anyhow, um, unfortunately I've covered child abuse and child neglect for almost 20 years.

And this is a continuation of that coverage. Uh, Andy stars had a long commitment to that, um, uh, issue, uh, And one of the common teams was failure to report failure report and not survivors



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reporting, but people who know, and in child abuse and child neglect, somebody almost variably knows. And I don't know how many failure to report stories.

We've written. The USA gymnastics is based in Annapolis and my colleague Marissa, quite Caskey, uh, who I recruited in the star do cover child abuse because I had it up to here and I was, you know, kind of, it was it's a grind. And so Marissa was writing a story about a coach, uh, in Indianapolis, a basketball coach who had a sexual relationship with a cheerleader.

Well, we know there's no such thing as a sexual relationship between adult male and in a teenage girl, but, um, like so many other cases, they were passing the trash, uh, let him resign quietly, be somebody else's problem. Didn't do anything about it. So Marissa started investigating why didn't they report it around that same time we had, uh, an incident involving a guidance counselor, one of the Annapolis high schools who was having sex again, having sex with a teenage male student.

And they had failed to report on that. So we were looking, taken another dive. Let's go see if we can find the answer, why don't people who know report it's the law. It's simple. It's the right thing to do, you know, and an attorney who happened to be in Indianapolis and probably you all know him now, but, um, John Liddell said, you need to look at USA gymnastics.

If you want to see a bad problem about failure to report. And from there we found a lawsuit in Georgia and I won't go too long cause I can talk the whole hour. But, um,

a lot of did read about sexual abuse in sports, sexual abuse in gymnastics, Don Peters, lots of people have done great work, but it was mainly about the, the, the one actor th the, the bad actor. And we were trying to look at, are there policies in USA, gymnastics in this national government body? Are there policies, are there things that allowed this kind of thing to happen that covered up for it to hit it?

And in that lawsuit, there were hints of that in depositions where, uh, they, they acknowledged USA gymnastics, Steve penny, and his predecessors acknowledged. They did not report every year incidence of child abuse. It was reported to them despite mandatory reporting, reporting law in Indiana. Um, so I'll answer other questions, but go ahead.

Uh, okay. So, so why don't we we'll start and go back down though the row? Mm. I was working with a smaller sports outlet at the time and had a really supportive editor who told me, um, just after the Indy star report broke, keep digging, keep digging, you'll find something. And eventually we both moved on and I was freelancing the piece and eventually landed it with sports illustrated and they let me continue pursuing it for 18 months as a freelancer and another 18 months of being on their staff.

So if you could just summarize what was the angle that got sports illustrated, really interested in it? Um, they originally wanted me to write with. Could he have been stopped, but they also didn't have anyone reporting the story at all. Um, which surprised me because it's a major outlet and I didn't think I'd be able to land a story because they should have had someone working on it already.

Um, so I got really lucky in that aspect. So I've read about gymnastics for several years, almost 10 at this point. And like everyone else, almost everyone else here. I saw the indie star reporting at the time I was actually working in a marketing job, but decided to start freelancing. I had a long-standing freelance relationship with Deadspin and then I quit my marketing job.

And I went into Desmond full time and basically spent my, almost my two year tenure. Most of my output was about Larry Nasser in this case. And was there encouragement from within Deadspin to



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be, to be covering it? Was that oh, absolutely. I think, you know, it was very clear to me when I was brought on, like, that was really why I was brought on was to make it sort of, not my full-time job, but the majority of my job.

So I guess that was a huge investment in the story to sort of bring someone on to do it even more heartbreaking. The Deadspin no longer exists. Yes. Sad. No, seriously. It is very sad. Um, so I was, uh, when the Indian star stories broke, I had just started a job. Um, I'd been at the journal for two years, covering New York city law enforcement, um, criminal courts and stuff like that.

And I moved over to sports. Um, I was a terrible sports reporter. Um, but I, I, I sort of understood immediately when that Indy star story broke, that this was more than a sports story. And I remember being particularly struck by, um, USA gymnastics, um, response, which was that they report. Um, as soon as we heard about the athlete allegations about Larry Nasser, uh, we reported it in, in the summer of 2015, and this was in the fall of 2016.

At this point we reported the matter they changed the language to the FBI and law enforcement, depending on what, who they were responding to. And I thought that doesn't, that must be a typo because that can't be true and that's a year. And there's no way that if this was going on with Larry, that was what was reported.

If it number one, uh, you know, did USA gymnastics report it to law enforcement? Um, what did they report to law enforcement? What did law enforcement do that meant that this went on for so long and he hasn't been charged yet. Um, and then of course he was charged and then he was charged with, um, uh, child pornography.

And so in the, you know, December, 2016, early 2017, the journal, you know, I started, I had been working sort of following it. And by the end of the year, beginning of 2017, I was working on a story that aimed to answer the question of why did it, why has it taken so long? Um, and you know, I can get into that more later, but I, um, from that our entry point was really, and we published our first sort of big story about that.

Breaking down the timeline of. Women, uh, one gymnast first athlete day first came to a USA G in June, 2015. And you know, what exactly it started to fill in the pieces, fill in the blanks, um, you know, who had reported what to whom? Um, and there were, we still are learning more about that every day. Um, but we approached it, um, as, um, a nice continue to cover it as a law enforcement story.

So, um, and that's three years ago. Well, okay. Uh, so I'm a national sports, uh, sort of accountability, investigative reporter for the post. Um, so later when I was here, you know, when, when Tim and his colleagues broke that story in Indianapolis, uh, we, uh, wanted, we try to attack it sort of from a national view of why did the sex abuse scandals keep happening in Olympic sports?

Uh, and, um, what are the kind of structural, you know, policy reasons informing that? So we did a series of stories being a colleague named Steven Rich, um, did a series of stories in 17 and three 18 about, about those issues. So Tim, did you get pushback and, and, and who, who was the responsible for pushback on this story?

You know, when the first, uh, Catholic sex abuse stories came out, uh, there was a lot of how dare you say that about my church, right. All over the place. Um, no one says that anymore. I could only have so many grand jury reports. Um, did you, did, did the indie star feel a pushback about saying such horrible things about the, the saintly USC and USA?



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When we got, we got pushback before our first story even ran. And, um, before I get into that, these guys and their colleagues did fantastic work. We probably wouldn't be here if it was just in the star writing about it. And my other plug in Indiana, we're in the 18th century steel, and there's no cameras in the courtrooms cameras in the courtrooms just to show the survivor's testimony is what blew this up into an international story.

It had been a major story, but it was kind of under the surface. And, you know, I knew, I knew the survivor stories of what happened to him, but I didn't know the survivor stories in the world didn't know what, how it affected them. And that that's what made this blow up. Now back about two months into our reporting, uh, a cops reporter, Danny star, who has good connections to the police department, got a call from a detective, a sex abuse.

Detective said, uh, Evans. And those guys are barking up the wrong tree and, uh, We hadn't even talked to the Indianapolis police department. So we went and you know, what's going on with this? And so we go back to Vic and say, Hey, can you hook us up with him? And he said, sure. So the guy met us that afternoon, which we should have been, should have known right there.

There was something that he met us at a Starbucks. He had, he was in plain clothes, but he had his pistol on his side and he went, started, tell us how USA gymnastics handled anything, everything perfectly. Uh, they wanted to talk a lot about Marvin sharp, who was in Annapolis coach, who, uh, was arrested for sexual, uh, abuse and committed suicide in jail and how they'd handled that case perfectly.

Uh, couldn't have done anything better, even though they'd been worn for years earlier about Marvin sharp. Um, and, uh, during that conversation, I, one of us referred to Steve penny by the last thing he said, well, penny said this and he goes, you mean Steve? And we go, yeah. And he goes, well, Steve and I are buddies, you know, and mark kids are in gymnastics together.

And so from there, and he, and Annapolis is a small, is a little big town, um, very proud of a sports heritage. And we wanted to be the amateur sports capital of the world. We recruited NGBs and that kind of thing. And, um, there's, it's very inter interconnected, uh, uh, people from the Pacers, people from the Speedway, people from the mayor's office, all tied into this network of Ella, our sports, uh, industrial complex.

And, um, it's been interesting. I've, I've been, uh, Marissa and I have been around the world. Speaking about this, not once as anyone in Annapolis, ask us to speak or talk about it other than a writer's group. Um,

not my safety, but my reputation, my connections that the prosecutor's office knew that, um, I think you revealed the five week way maybe. Um, we, we took them a copy of that article. Here's Steve penny waits five weeks to report is Indiana law. There's a Supreme court decision that says, uh, superintendent waited four hours waited too long.

You know, what are you gonna do about this? And this was before our terribly short statute of limitations is expired and they sat on it and they sat on it. And the prosecutor whose cell phone number I had and who had been my buddy former, uh, journalists at the star, you know, I, I am persona non grata. And so as the rest of our group, you know, so the way we were retaliated against, I don't feel like physically or safe, but I'm certainly we were, we were this merged.

Hm. And did any of the rest of you get internal pushback or external, uh, you know, name calling or anything like that, right? No. Well, I've been called every name in the book. I don't think this is really



fair. I mean, I guess I, I, I, I should say, um, no, not nothing internal. The journal has been fairly, um, supportive of this reporting.

Uh, it took us a while to get really like to put it on the front page. And I finally just marched into our Boss's office one morning. And I was like, if I see somebody else put this store in the front page, I will quit. And I, um, I, I was extremely upset and we got a big I, then I know one, we also have, we don't write long stories and I got like a 4,000 words about McKayla Maroney on the front page of the journal, which was really exciting.

Um, but I'm not exciting, happy, exciting, but exciting. Good for the story. Um, uh, we have, you know, there's been a few times when people have sort of, um, once you start writing about the USC and the big names there, I think that they have fancier lawyers and they, you know, they sort of try to nuance things.

They don't threaten things, but they'll be like, oh, I don't know. I don't, I think I would change that wording. I don't think you're right about that. And they do, they exercise power in a very different way. Um, which can be more, um, more Dane, I mean, just, just as dangerous, different than physical threats, but you have to be on alert for, you know, um, kind of manipulation of your reporting at that point.

So, well, because I assume that each one of you, you weren't just talking to the victims. Right. And you're calling us associ and USA G right. I mean, so how, how did those calls go? How did talking to the other side is some of us might call it go well, uh, I mean, it was unpleasant, I guess. Um, but, um, but I w I want to jump off a point that Tim made, which is, you know, it was, uh, the importance, the important role that the sentencing hearing played.

Uh, and I think the galvanizing role that played in, in getting the public interested in this story, um, you know, we wrote a bunch of stories about this case at the post, and we're very sensitive to, um, uh, digital traffic. So I'm, I'm aware of how many people were reading, what I'm writing and, uh, we couldn't get people to read those stories, right.

And to the point that we were on the fence about if we were going to cover this at the sentencing hearing live, I was going to go to Michigan. And we said, well, you know, it'll obviously be a very emotional experience, so let's do it. And I, I got there and I didn't stay for the entire week. I came back halfway through, by the time I got, I was landing in DC and my editors were, their bosses were pissed.

I wasn't spending the entire week there. They wanted, and people, I remember the times hadn't covered it. They scrambled jets and sent like four people there. So getting back to the point of, um, the conversations with the press folks, uh, before that sensing hearing, there was a lot of pushback and fighting from the UFC folks from the USA gymnastics folks.

And, uh, after that, after that, that in hearing, after, uh, the public outrage, and I think that really kicked in congressional outrage, uh, it it's, it's an entirely different conversation. In what sense? I mean, it's now more forthcoming or it's just none not, I mean, there was, uh, people who, um, were outraged at even just quoting critics of Scott Blackmun, um, are now there, there's an admission of wrongdoing and, um, uh, There was, there was an analogous situation and the problem with the Catholic church and it has to do with the bankruptcy of the Los Angeles art diocese and the turnover of the documents showing knowledge has similar role because what you're describing the sentencing hearing, uh, well actually the Los Angeles archdiocese did not declare bankruptcy.

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Um, they set aside 51 pieces of property and paid for it out of property, not used for, um, religious uses. Um, but I digress. Um, so, uh, both of you had covered sports before I take it. Yes. Um, so what was it like, you know, this [05:30:00] transitioning from sports says sports to, um, talking about sex abuse. It was, I mean, for me, I had primarily covered sports like gymnastics and figure skating, but really from the athletic point of view and not really always looking at like some of the bigger issues.

So it was, I had to learn real fast, like dyno, Moscow has basically taught me how to pull, like how to pull documents and how to do FOYAs. Cause I did not know until I got there, I was, cause I never had to do that before. And also just, you know, for me having spent, I, it was a really terrible low-level gymnast, but gymnastics was like very important to me in my life.

So sort of starting to report for me a little bit on my own community. That was a really challenging experience. I mean, it was necessary, but it was challenging Lauren. I had spent most of my journalism career covering women's soccer. So making the jump to gymnastics entirely was a, uh, a really interesting experience because primarily I didn't realize going into it just how tiny the community was and how difficult it was going to be to get anyone to even agree to speak to me at all on the record, off the record on background, um, I knocked on a lot of doors, got a lot of nos, a lot of just straight up, not answering.

And so that was the, I think the biggest challenge jumping from one sport entirely into gymnastics, which I'd watched off and on growing up as a kid. But other than that really hadn't delved into coverage. So it was a very quick learning curve. So I, you know, I think that the public loves to read about the Olympics, right.

And we all love the Olympics and the, uh, rings and everything. I agree, Nancy, I love the, the five rings and what they stand for, even if they're debased by the people who won't it. Um, but, um, did you have to get around when, when you were talking to your editors, you don't have to name your editors. Uh, but, but did you have to get around kind of the assumption of the, how the public loves the.

And loves everything about, you know, elite women's gymnastics, and may not want to hear this story. Did that play into any of the coverage for anybody, Tim? No, not at all. I mean, there were tags that Desmond like death, the IOC already and Betsy COC. So that was that wasn't a hard sell we're much more conservative at Indianapolis.

So, um, but we had had a great support from our editor. Jeff Taylor's a USA today now. And he, he took money from our sports department, which is like the golden child, uh, stopped sending as many people to football games and started sending us around the country. Um, but there was within we're owned by, uh, a national chain and there were people in our chain who weren't so happy with us stirring things up in the months before the Olympics.

And, you know, we have an Olympic rider at the star and he's much more a good reporter, but it's more booster. Here's the local Olympian, you know, that kind of thing. And there was great concern that we were going to poison the well for their access. And, um, there was also some, some probably petty jealousy that some Hicks out in the sticks were breaking a story that maybe should have been a national story.

And, um, but yeah, I'd say that that's probably where I had to quit the, the, uh, Hicks and the sticks. I'm going to steal that one. I liked that one. Um, I, I actually, we had the opposite. I think that as soon as the story became, um, uh, when we were reporting out the, the five week delay and then the FBI dropping the ball, um, our editor, my, our sports editor kept saying, this is bigger.



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This is bigger. The USO's he's involved. We have to find out what they were doing and what they knew. And they're going to start answering, you know, once you start asking them questions and, you know, when did they find out, how did they, you know, if you go back and look at your old statements, um, they start to get, they started to get nervous.

Um, too. So there was a lot of support actually from, um, just going at them, which is from inside inside. Yeah. Well, did you have the same experience at the post or? Yeah, so, I mean, I think the divorce point is correct in that, um, the, uh, it was not a hard sell to want to do, you know, accountability stories about the UFC.

And, um, we did not have a built-in, um, belief that, oh, they're, you know, they're involved in the Olympics, but what possible wrongdoing could they be connected with her? And maybe we're in that. Yeah. Oh, it is Washington, but it's also the era, right. I mean, if the bishops can be responsible and so can anybody else I got, I guess that's, that's where we've landed.

Um, so how so I think it's interesting, Tim, that you said, you know, there were some locals who thought that this was a national story that, you know, maybe it's local, it's just a local newspaper, but in the era of the internet, there is nothing local anymore. Right? I mean, The Indy star story hit. It was everywhere.

Right. As you can see from the many reporters who read it and started taking immediate action, how did that change the, um, perspective of the coverage at the indie star now that this story was global? Really, we got lucky, um, USA today was starting at, uh, uh, network, uh, the kind of feed stories up from the is always, so investigations always had come from USA today and were published in there in the papers around the country.

Ours was the first one that was fed from the bottom up. And so, um, we, it was finally published in about a 70 to a hundred papers USA today, all published simultaneously, you know, we wrote four different versions of the story. So we had a, you know, an AP style version of short one medium versions. And we also, at one point were in a room and I think there were nine editors from different positions, all weighing in on how we should edit and finalize this story.

Yeah, it was about as well as it sounds. And then two of our editors were ire and they were in a conference room there. So it was crazy, but it, it, you know, the internet, uh, that, that reach is what got us started. Again, I met many, it would have come out and, and our star wasn't even about Nasser, our first story.

So, right. No, I know, I know that we've talked about, so what I tell everybody what the first story was? Well, we were looking at was again, this broader failure to report policy and that USA, gymnastics officials weren't reporting all the, all the claims that came to them. And in the, in the, in the two and a half years, we did this, we never had a personal or phone conversation with anyone from USA gymnastics.

Everything had to be submitted in writing an email questions and they would answer or send back statements. And so it was maddening as a reporter because they wouldn't necessarily answer something, but anyhow, the policy was they, they treated athletes, you know, they, they made a statement. They athlete is just as much a member or the coach is just as much as a member, as the athlete.

And they were using a standard that was how to, uh, for grievances about competitive issues. And they were using that standard. I believe I got that right, Nancy, um, to adjudicate sexual abuse



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complaints. And so it was two different things. And then they were relying on that weird interpretation of the Ted Stevens act to try to kind of remove themselves a few steps.

And so, you know, we, we were writing, we wanted to find coaches who had been accused of molesting kids, USA, gymnastics knew about it. They let them keep coaching and they came back and they molested more kids. And we found four and, and, um, Courtney was, uh, one of the first supporters when no one in gymnastics would talk to us.

It's such a tight knit, small community, um, and, and a couple of others. Um, and after our first story ran, we get the, the, the famous call from Rachael Denhollander, who are the email who said, you know, I know you're looking at coaches, I have a story. You might be interested in it, but it involves a doctor.

And it. And then there was a little tugging war there because we got a ton of responses and we had a list of maybe a dozen or two dozen people to up with. And Rachel was one of them. And then, uh, John Manley representing Jane DOE then, but Jamie dancer, uh, Jessica Howard came forward suddenly we had three women who different parts of the country, all telling us about Nassar now.

So we kind of made her veer, you know, from all of our plans. And that's how it came on and asked her, you know, just dumb luck in some ways, you know, good reporting. But again, if Rachel hadn't made that call, you know, Nasser would've come out, uh, I think manly was getting ready to do a lawsuit or who was coming, so it would've come out.

But the reason we got it was just, you know, timing and somebody saw our story in Louisville and it's called us. So, uh, let's open it up to the audience. I know that, uh, Jim carpenter had your hand up. Yeah, please. And thank you for unwinding this tale, but can you tell us what you think would be good in your experience in terms of our work?

Do you see anything that would be affected? I'll jump in and my soap boxes, you know, when we first started looking at those coaches, we looked it up between 150 and 200 coaches we suspected or knew had been involved some sexual abuse. And there were so many commonalities. Many of them were photographers and they took the little girls into closed rooms and took pictures and they couldn't let mommy in because mama would make the girls self-conscious.

They kept the parents out of gyms. They had closed practices, they went back and treated girls behind the closed door. Somebody, you know, it's stuff that everybody here talked about today, you know, the closed doors with the windows taped over. I mean, it was like there was a menu or a script out there for, for child molesters to follow it there.

The commonalities were, were, were, were shocking. And, you know, it's still kind of, even though I've written about this so long, you know, it's still sticks with me. And so I think those kinds of things, the one-on-one the relationship that gifts, the, the, the coaches who gave kids bracelets and told them they loved them and wrote them notes or bought them bicycles or jackets, you know, uh, the, the, the one-on-one texting, somebody talked about, you know, uh, was talking about that.

It's just so many of those things. I think you've, you've got to have at least two sets of eyes on, on a kid and never a one-on-one alone people sending their kids. They're eight and 12 year old kids to Florida with their coach and spend the time together in the same hotel room. You know, it's just, it just goes on and on, but it's that there's gotta be this set of extra sets of eyes.



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So the, the question on the table is, uh, as reporters, now that you've seen this up close, it can't help, but, you know, lead you to, to some conclusions. What did you see that you thought, um, could be cured in the future? So. Did you see avenues to prevention through the reporting? Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, one of the main issues that, uh, that we identified as just these Olympic organizations, um, they, the people in charge, uh, were largely lawyers and sports marketing executives.

Uh, they view, they thought they were running sports marketing organizations, uh, that their job was to promote, uh, uh, the sport was a brand basically. Uh, and, um, they had these membership systems that effectively turned them into youth serving organizations. So they went from becoming like, uh, uh, they, um, well, they didn't view themselves as like a boy Scouts of America.

They were, they just didn't have the policies in place. Right. Um, and so, I mean, that, that, that changes I think, happening now, uh, but anything that can be done to, um, uh, keep hammering that home to them, uh, is I think helpful, Rebecca. Yeah. I mean, I think that's the, that's an excellent point that we'll just made.

It's, uh, there's a disconnect, I think, between the people at the top, who of whom were demanding answers in Congress and the, um, the experience of young athletes on the ground. Um, and, and, you know, I think one thing that's, that's, um, encouraged me a little bit about are, you know, the Journal's readership can be kind of terrifying.

Um, uh, there are commenters, I should say. I shouldn't say the readership, the commenters are kind of like, what are we doing here? Um, but I, what I, what I really was struck by was that our, a lot of our readers said, oh my God, my child's, uh, an athlete, I didn't know that they were taking part in, or what does this tell me about?

I didn't realize that my kid was also part of USA swimming because they're a swimmer at a, at a pool. And, and I think that is, um, it's not just about the Olympics. It's about, um, youth sports, um, everywhere, uh, millions of kids. Um, and I think that, um, educating the public and having the public demand more is a big part of this and asking for the people to ask, you know, parents and kids themselves should be asking questions about what they're, you know, what, what's this big, what's the big system we're taking part in and who's running the show.

Um, it's not just something, it's not just one, uh, bad doctor. It's not just every four years. Um, it's, it's millions of people and tens and millions of dollars. So Deborah, I'm not sure I have anything in terms of solutions. I want to jump on the point you made about like, most people are not even aware that they're a part of, like, I did gymnastics at like a level five.

So a very low level when I was younger, I didn't know what USA gymnastics was. So yes, so you can be involved and not know. And so, and parents don't know, the parents drop their kids off and they pick them up. They don't really know what's going on. Maybe you pay some meat fees. Um, and that goes to USA gymnastics, but also to the local state committed.

But really no one looks into this. So I think this is a huge problem as like, you really have to explain to people the set up of the system. And on top of that, you know, when you were saying before that the only people can really step in and do something as Congress. I think we don't have public administration of sports in this country, and it's all these sort of public seeming organizations that are actually private.



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And so we need to really kind of look into a more the government taking a more robust role in the ministrations of sports, because right now it's just all these little fiefdoms that are essentially marketing organizations, or I think that sorta jumping off of what Rebecca said, um, not really knowing a, that you're part of these organizations and be that it's not just one of them, it's not just USA, gymnastics or USA swimming or USA TaeKwonDo.

There are similar issues in so many of the organizations that it's actually harder to pinpoint, which ones are safer than others. Yes. James James Marsh. Yes. Oh, I've got a microphone never been told. I haven't been heard before you got five, five reporters covering the same story. Right. Which is always a challenge.

I'm just curious to know what, what was your break? What do you each consider was your breakout story that you added to the understanding of what happened and was that based on any special, um, um, you know, source of information or a whistleblower or, or someone that, you know, gave you a new perspective on the story?

Let's, let's start with Lauren. So I think that the breakout story for me was getting to write about Maggie Nichols coming forward, um, that there were two lines when the civil lawsuits were updated, um, in summer of 2017 that they G they bothered me. It was about how, uh, USA gymnastics had discouraged her parents from going to law enforcement.

And I'm like that doesn't quite add up. It doesn't line up with anything they've said. And so I asked, um, John Manley's, uh, firm, and they were able to connect me with Maggie's mom, Gina. And that was our jumping off point to where, when Maggie was ready to come forward, we had been able to put in four and a half months worth of work into the story.

So I don't have quite the same investigative shops as everyone else on this panel, but I haven't covered this sport for so long. I have a really like long memory. And so I think for me, my brain. Major contribution would be a story they did, I think in May, 2017 about the camp system and how it emerged and sort of, sort of the disaster of 99 to 2000, I think it's like sort of long forgotten.

You know, we always talk about Jamie dancer. She was one of the first women to come forward. She was also in 2000, the only member of that team to speak out in the press. And she was basically told to shut up and she just kind of went to UCLA and went on her way. And so I sort of took a look at the origins of that system and really sort of how that came to be and how it came to foster and enable Nassar.

Um, I'm going to answer a little bit sneakily with two things. Um, the first was the one I mentioned earlier, the story that we wrote in February, 2017, that sort of broke down that it was a really weirdly written story and it ran inside the paper, I think at 800 words. And it was just like the FBI has interviewed a bunch of Olympians, um, by the way, they also didn't do anything about this for a year, at least.

And, um, this actually began and also USA gymnastics sat on this story, sat on these allegations for five weeks. And that was significant in our reporting because it really scared the daylight out of USA gymnastics. I mean, they would, we kept emailing Leslie King and then one day we got a phone call from their crisis PR firm or lawyers.

And they were like, well, we're gonna, we're, we'll help. We'll help you figure this out. You know, we're going to, and that scared the living daylight out of them. And that's when we knew we had you



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smell blood and you just have to go after it more. Um, but then what followed for, for me at least was 14 months of trying to write, um, McKayla, Maroney, Moroni story.

And, um, I knew that she had was, I knew that she, this is, you know, one of the great challenges of the story was that for, you know, we don't name sex abuse victims is most unless they identify themselves. Um, I knew from my reporting and from sourcing that she was a victim, um, and that was a delicate dance where you're, you're reporting with the most sensitive subject.

Um, and her parents filed a anonymous lawsuit in state court in California and in the summer of, of, um, uh, 2017. And I tried to use that as leverage, but that didn't work to get her to talk to me. Um, I in a very gentle way. Um, and then she, um, came forward and then me too happened that fall and that really sort of spurred things into action and culminating in the, um, uh, in the, uh, the sentencing of Nassar in early 2018.

Um, but finally, you know, to tell, uh, McKayla's story, uh, and, uh, in, in April was this, uh, think for our readers, especially, um, again, the journal is not, you know, we're not known for necessarily like, um, human interests stories. And I think to explain what she'd gone through and to explain what, what meant to be, and I still get kind of teary about it, what her parents had gone through and.

Um, the kind of work and talent that was there and to put a human face on that for our readers for the first time was the most significant and the most rewarding for me, I think her 800 word inside story was, was a game changer to, in, in the scope of things. And I think Steve penny was gone shortly after that, uh, forced resign and it really, it broke down, uh, a critical lie.

Um, so just props on that one, you know, uh, I think probably our first two stories, the one that exposing the policy that they weren't reporting. And in the first story reporting on Nasser, um, are probably the two we, we did, you know, we probably did 50 or 60 stories or lots of other ones. I have proud about certain, but they weren't probably as is broadly acknowledged or known.

Uh, yeah, I mean, anything we did was way, way behind, uh, what, what Tim and Rebecca were doing. But, um, we did a broader look at the issue of sex abuse in Olympic sports that published, I believe in late 17, uh, the dates were all kind of blurring together now, but, um, uh, in which we tallied up, it was somewhere just shy of 300, uh, coaches and officials with, um, uh, in 15 different own export organizations that have been accused of, uh, sexual misconduct dating back to 82.

Um, and the, the thrust of that story was just documenting how many different times these, um, cases arose prior to masseur, uh, and, um, the various levels of ignorance or, um, uh, feigned response that, that came before, uh, before this case other questions. Yes, Steve Berkowitz. Oh, here, this is for the live streaming.

I'm wondering about the national context, um, in terms of being an investigator for Porter the day, um, and fake news and, you know, treason and you were going, you're going after some very powerful people, and I'm wondering how that plays into some of the work you've done or some of the concerns you have about your work.

Um, it's different times in journalism and I'm, I'm just wondering how that, how that has impacted what you're doing and how you're doing it, or if maybe it hasn't,

I'll just say real quick. Um, the USFC, one of the funny things about this is that when we started doing the reporting, there was this perception among the Olympic folks that USAA, the UFC people were



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really powerful. They'd all these connections in DC. And I never found that to be the case. And the proof of that was as soon as Congress actually got pissed about this, uh, head star role in left and right.

And, um, so, so yeah, I think that, uh, and that's another point that I think that divorce made. Um, I think that a point that everyone should keep in mind here is. Um, one major failure that allowed all this to happen was, was a lack of oversight. There isn't an organization that is supposed to oversee the SOC it's Congress.

Um, they just, haven't done a tremendous job of doing it. I know they have a lot on their plate, but, um, I was looking at the clip on the write-up today. It was March of 2017. There was a Senate hearing about Nassar in which the U SOC said, uh, uh, basically, yeah, there were mistakes were made. You should have done a better job.

And, and the exact same members of Congress who a year later were calling for Scott Blackmun's head at that point. We're like, okay, that sounds good. Um, but anyway, one of the first threading letters we got from USA gymnastics used the term witch hunt, which may sampling. And, uh, then we were, uh, threatened by Libby Locke who, if any of you know, her, uh, she's had some success suing people.

And, um, and at the other end of it, it kinda, you know, it's, I think all of us do this because not for the money. Um, and we we'd have some sense of right and wrong. It kind of forces you to redouble your efforts. You know, you wanna fight the good fight. And then at, at the sentencing hearing suddenly, you know, we became kind of darlings of the media world.

Uh, thanks to a few words from the prosecutor about, you know, the, if he'd still be molesting children, if it hadn't been for that first story and you know, myself, one of my colleagues had been around the world talking about this story now because of, because of that statement really. And, um, and it, it, it also showed, I think even a small paper like us there's value in taking on a big story that was a bigger bite than we would normally take.

And I think now they've, they, they see, we can take a big bite to 'em and we just, so it's been, it's been both extremes, I guess. Well, I guess, um, uh, I always feel like when it is, it is can be a little bit scary to be writing about, you know, white collar law enforcement. Um, today in New York is Rudy Giuliani stuff is still going on.

That's what I have to go back to today. But, um, I think that whenever I, you start, you know, there's a media swarm. I was just talking a little about this earlier, you know, on a big story. That's like the Giuliani story or whatever. It's, it's important to also look, look left and look right, or just think about what's knowing outside of the public eye of, of Washington DC right now, and to the reporters who are kind of be, you know, the sports reporters who are doing the hard work on the, on the ground covering these and local journalists.

And, um, like the actual sports, like, you know, reporters who are going to be covering all these events. I always feel like that's actually harder because it's, it's thankless. Um, you don't get asked on Rachel Maddow for your scoops about, um, about, you know, this one bad coach or one, but those are the really important report.

That's the important reporting. Um, and I, I feel like that's the greater challenge for me as a journalist, not necessarily, you know, At some point, the scary lawyers don't scare me as much. Um, and, and what is the bigger challenge is making sure that we're, um, trying to keep an eye on the stuff that no one's paying attention to outside of Washington?



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Well, I think for me, cause I started reporting early into 2017. So several months after the Indy star, I felt, and then all the Michigan local, Michigan press really came in and did such a great job and sort of covered it day to day. And, you know, cause it was a breaking story. I didn't like worry so much because I was like, oh, this is already proven.

Like who's going to Sue me. You know, like these guys have already shown that it's like, I'm fine also I can be oblivious. So that also, so then I never really worried, you know, cause I was asked a lot of publication where like no one would say that to me. And also just because I felt like it was, it was proven like we're learning more about the case, but the essentials are facts that they weren't reporting that Nassar had abused all these women.

We didn't yet know how many women and we didn't yet know all the sort of like ins and outs of the story, but it felt like it was already proven. So I just didn't really worry that much. I was freelancing initially. So it was a little bit, uh, concerning to not know if I was going to have a place to put the story.

And if I was going to have an editor that was willing to support me, if there was any sort of backlash, um, I got very lucky. I had a fantastic editor at sports illustrated who worked with me and navigated several issues. And when all was said and done that part of it made it a lot easier to continue pursuing the story and not worrying that I wasn't going to have someone to kind of watch my back.

Fascinating Sharon Cooper, there've been some articles about health care providers who have sexually abused their patients and the Atlanta journal constitution and had a very large series articles about health care providers who were sexually abusing their patients. What did you think about the fact or did you think it was a turning point when Larry Nassar was found to have child pornography on his computer at home and how that began to change the thought process of people who were listening to, um, victims who were beginning to disclose well from the perspective of law enforcement, that just means he's going to prison for a really long time.

And I think that was this moment where like, it's like you now he's going to go to prison. Um, and that was, I think, um, I guess in, in hindsight it changed a lot of the way the case was prosecuted because, um, I think that it, um, from what I understand and I think we reported and others have reported is now it's been discussed, um, by a lot of the survivors, but they, um, once that onus was off the government to prove a sex crime, a federal sex crimes case, um, it meant less attention.

Again, it had a sort of double-edged sword, um, both that he was assured to be going to prison for a long time and also, um, that they didn't have to. They were relieved of the burden of doing a full sex crimes investigation, which I think might've been a relief to some of the victims who weren't, didn't want to speak.

Um, but also meant that he, he went to prison without some, there was a sense that he didn't, he wasn't going to be held accountable, which was then, um, largely rectified by the state sentencing. But, um, uh, that's when you know that, that was the moment when, uh, and I still remember reading the, um, the FBI agents, uh, testimony at it was, it wasn't an affidavit.

It was maybe it wasn't affidavit. It was, I think it was testimony at his, uh, detention hearing. Um, and the agent was like describing his GoPro camera and, um, what they, how they found it. And I just thought, oh God, this is it's going to get so much worse. Um, before. I mean, that really, I think crystallized how, um, how bad this, um, this had been this bad.



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This was, I think it was a game changer, another Mo moment. Um, because before then, you know, we were, we were besieged with attacks from people in Michigan. Uh, how could we do to assist this Forman and you know, all of this and suddenly those, those calls stopped immediately after that. And it also ended the, the issue of the trial and our, one of our editors.

Great concerns was this story is going to get wrapped up into this arcane argument over what's a proper medical procedure. And it had worked for Nasser, um, repeatedly before he'd been able to talk his way out of it, and he could get his experts against their experts. And, you know, it just is there's going to be a gray area and they're going to, he's going to get off.

And this eliminated that question, because, [06:00:00] you know, nobody can argue that 37,000 images of child porn, you know, and, and I think that really, and that, that opened it up then to let the survivors come forward, who didn't have to be vilified on the stand or blamed for it. And, you know, then that snowball went down the hill.

I feel like the D discovery of the child pouring sort of obviously quiet. A lot of the dissenters it's still remain, you know, you stopped hearing stuff out of the gymnastics community and people defending him at least publicly, but I remember talking to one survivor and she was like, disappointed, you know, at the point where they found the child porn, like, I don't know it was at 25 to fifth, somewhere in 25 to 50 women already come forward.

And it took, you know, finding these hard drives for people to be like, okay, now we believe you. But like all these women's testimony didn't persuade everyone. It took finding the files. And so I think there were some people who felt like, oh, you didn't believe me until you had the proof because my word was improve.

Yeah. I mean, in some ways it's, it's an echo of the bill Cosby scenario, right? I mean, did it take 10, 20 30 took about 62, uh, women before, uh, got the prosecutors got serious about Cosby, uh, other questions from the audience. Yes, Nancy. Yeah. Um, I'm, I'm a little. Having sort of watched the up and the down, uh, you know, sort of the arc of this story is how that now we have some new players who are in the system, but that it's, uh, it's the same system.

So as an example, like I know we'll one of your stories you quoted, uh, Eli Bremmer who said it's not the dictator, it's the dictatorship. So, uh, what I, what the pushback I get on Facebook or whatnot is like, look, we've dealt with Larry Nassar. He's gone problem over. Let's go back to the way it was. And, um, you know, I'm, I'm curious as to all of you, you're thinking of like, how do you go from, uh, having this huge expos a, that is in my mind, this is just a symptom of something much, much bigger of athletes having no power.

And, um, how do you, how do you move beyond merely changing the chairs on the Titanic? Right. I mean, changing the, you know, like we have different people who were there. Right. But it's the exact same system, anybody, uh, sure. Yeah. I mean, I think, um, any legislative change, which, you know, you're, you're a part of, uh, talking to those folks who are, uh, making those changes, but, uh, yeah.

I mean, I think, um, uh, simple, uh, it's not the entire problem, but a one core part of the issue was these organizations that didn't think it was their legal responsibility to have child protection policies in place. And now Congress has told them, no, you, you do so. Um, so yeah, it's real quick and I'm sorry, I'm dominating things, but, um, America has got too short of an attention span and right now everybody thinks Larry Laster is in prison.



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It's over nothing more to see here. And that's where you guys come in because I'm onto my second project investigated projects from, since gymnastics. And you know, I've been not a sports reporter, so I'm on to other things. And so I can't keep beating that drum. Some of, some of you folks are in positions where you can, but somebody has got to pick that up because again, it's so easy for them to say, like Nancy said, oh, we took care of the problem, learn to ask.

There's just the big fish, but, you know, and wherever there are kids, there are going to be people who want to harm them. And you've just got to keep watching on that and somebody's gotta keep pounding. And that's where the commission I think is a great, great follow-up. Well, and I have to say one of the big reasons for the commission, but especially the database which we have built.

So we've invested heavily in this database of putting together all of the materials. So your stories and the depositions and the victim stories and everything that's possibly out there is I had this great fear that this was all just going to dissipate, right? The tide would come in and the tide would go out and there'd be no trace of ever figuring out who, who was responsible for.

Um, but as Nancy says, who's responsible for it. This we are, right. I mean, I, I'm waiting for the person today to say the following, which is Congress is not holding their feet to the fire because the people are not forcing Congress to right. You know, we don't have the American public saying Congress, you're supposed to be protecting kids in sports.

You're not doing it. I think we will eventually when the commission's done with everybody, but, uh, that I think is, is the problem. But, uh, but I also think, and maybe I'm wrong because Nancy talked about the story, you know, the arc, the ebb and flow of it, um, or news organizations still invested in the Nassar story or is it history now?

I guess I don't think of it as, first of all, I don't like calling it the Nassar story cause I feel like it's bigger than it's about everyone else. And, and I, I, um, I don't think of it as, as Nasser's story. I think it's a, it's an ongoing, uh, narrative and, uh, we're definitely still interested because, um, you know, suddenly became a business story.

Um, and now the Walter journals, like, yes, um, like the IRS that's fantastic. Um, uh, or if we just love that stuff. So, um, we're definitely interested and I think, um, you know, the same, you know, a lot of these same people are, are, still are, are, are, are in trouble potentially. So, um, that's one thing that we're paying attention to, is it really hasn't gone away, um, you know, but with, but it is helping that it's the IRS.

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. For the Walter journal. And, you know, I think that there's still a, they're looking, I mean, that, and reported this, it's like, you know, the fact that there's this ongoing, um, and it, it goes beyond sex abuse. It's about, um, about the businesses and, and about the individual actors who are in charge of these entities that no one was really paying attention to.

Um, and, um, so I think that that's, um, and I'm joking about the journal too much. Probably. I hope they're not watching and I hope no one's watching all this won't be anywhere. Um, but know our readers. Yeah. I'm sure Rupert just watch watching and go, who is that woman? Um, but I think that the fact that there is still a business angle and that we're coming up on the 20, 20 Olympics and a lot of this, if this looks the same, if the leadership looks the same, going into 2020, it's going to be pretty embarrassing for a lot of people, I think.

Well, actually that that's, um, a question I have. And then pat, I see you, um, uh, the 20, 20 Olympics is coming and when the, when the Olympics happens, you know, everybody gets on their couch and



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especially the summer Olympics and, you know, we have to watch and, um, it's very exciting, right? Are your news organizations going to let you cover the sex abuse angle as part of the Atlanta.

This time around.

Right. So, uh, I mean, and if you'll get fired, you don't have to answer the question, but I mean, I really am curious whether or not it's going to be okay to cover, to continue to talk about sex abuse in sports, the unaccountability of the U S soci, the unaccountability of USA G and all the rest of them while we're talking about who's the next, you know, miler, I mean, well, do you have a view on that or would you like to not to ask that question?

Yes. It's a problem. No, no, I'm still yet. Yes. We'll still cover that and no, we don't anticipate. Yeah. Um, so, uh, so yeah, I mean, I have the luxury of, um, my colleagues, uh, we have enough bodies of the people who need to do the human interest stories about, um, the next track star can do that. And then I just get the correct.

Well, pat, so I'm a former television news anchor here in Philadelphia, and I have to tell you, I'm so proud of the work that you do, and I'm so proud to have been a journalist alongside view. Really the work that you have done, um, is, uh, is remarkable and inspiring for all of us. Um, and so I guess my story, or my question for you is what is the next big breaking story out of this pool of information that we have?

What do you mean Tim I'm particularly interested? What would you be looking for as the next big thing? We want to know what your next big story coach in Northern Montana and Jada had the Montana and on a plane. Remember, he's now two scandals. Yeah, I understand. Yeah, I know you're teasing them. I understand that, but there's, there's other, there's another breaking component.

I would think that you're looking for to be, to be honest, I am moved on and, and, um, you know, and that's one of the great things about is that there were a lot of people covering it because they can pick up and move on. I I'm into a totally different subject, just as horrible and just as mind numbing. Um, and, but then that's kind of the, kind of the, the way it goes.

We will probably write a, you know, a retrospective kind of bring up as the Olympics come up, where, where what's happened. What have we learned what's been done, but I don't know that we'll be digging in a hard investigative piece. Now, hopefully these guys will learn and we'll nail it. And I would assume it's something to do with the, the structure of the NGBs and the national committee, um, in the, in the specifics, gymnastics, I think what has been under discussed so far is the role of international Federation.

Um, you know, I don't think necessarily knew about Nassar, but they've known about it, abusive coaching practices for decades and that every. There has been very little said about them and they've just put together some commission, but it took them like two and a half, almost three years to get going on that.

And I think it's because no one was putting any pressure on them because the focus was so on much on USA gymnastics and the USO scene, which makes sense. But I think, you know, this is not just a problem in American gymnastics. It might be bigger here just because we have more gymnast almost than any other place.



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And we're the most successful, at least in the women's program. But I think this is a global problem gymnastics. Well, please join me in thanking this really amazing panel on these issues.

and the commission will be back in touch with each one of you, as I said to every other panel. Thank you so much.

