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01:29:21:22 MS: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Susie, I think you're right. I think this is the biggest turnout we've had for the lecture series in a long time, and more people with notebooks. Mike, I think there's gonna be a lot of note taking today.

01:29:41:13 Good morning and welcome to the last of the museum spring 2005 lecture series. This series this spring has been titled "Now For Something A Little Different", and certainly today is gonna be a little different from our usual presentations.

01:29:54:25 We're gonna talk a little bit about retirement. The museum is about old things. Oh, I'm sorry Mike. I don't even think he heard me. Retirement today does not have the same definition that it used to have. Forty years ago it meant a rocking chair and the grandchildren. But today retirement means simply moving on to your next career.

01:30:17:26 One of the benefits of a career with DEA is that it provides special skills, knowledge and of course that magic word connections, a valuable commodity worth

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it's weight in gold. Special Agent retired Mike McManus has made the transition into his own business and claims that he's learned some valuable lessons that he's going to share with us and those that will follow him.

01:30:41:11 Just a bit of biographical background. Mike became a DEA agent in 1983 working in the Ft. Lauderdale, Florida district office. In 1991 he became Assistant Narcotics Attaché in the Bahamas. Then went back as a group supervisor to the Miami Field Division. From there he came here to headquarters in 1999 as a staff coordinator in the office of public affairs and then was promoted to operations to Chief of the Mexico Central America section in 2001.

01:31:10:18 Mike finally pulled the plug in August of 2004 and is currently the director of investigative services for the McCloud Consulting Group in Florida. Ladies and gentlemen, Mike McManus. (Applause)

01:31:37:00 MS: Okay. Can you hear me in the back? Alright. Can you hear me now? That's what we do at NSA. Any

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time we visit NSA walk around can you hear me now?  
Thank you very much, and it's a pleasure to be back  
here. It really is. It's always fun to come back and  
see old friends. I do not and will not stand behind a  
podium. I'm a pacer. I like to work the crowd as  
they say.

01:31:59:24 So I want to take a moment to say hello to everybody  
and again I've missed all of you. I really have. I  
tell the story about the last day walking out of this  
building and the emotional experience that you go  
through that some of you have already had. Like Joe  
Amanza and a couple other people that have left.

01:32:19:12 But when Susie asked me if I would come up and speak  
to DEA I initially said no. I said I'm not gonna come  
back and talk to DEA about drugs and stuff like that.  
I go out and do—I do demand reduction lectures, and I  
go out and do different presentations around the  
country and around the world.

01:32:34:20 But I'm not gonna come back and talk to my peers who  
know just as much as I do if not more. They said

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Mike, we don't want you to talk about drugs. We don't want those type of—that type of information. We want to know the other side. What's like it after DEA? What are the experiences? I says well I can tell you about a lot of mistakes that I've made.

01:32:56:01 I says as long as I can come here and make fun of myself and let you know how stupid and naive I am then I'll be more than happy to because let me explain. We have no idea how much we really know and what we're— what we can do in the private sector once you get out there.

01:33:18:24 It is amazing the money and the checks that people will write for the stupidest things. So with that in mind, and I am not directing this just to the agent workforce. I am speaking to the intelligence division, to the support staff, to the ladies who put briefing books together, the whole nine yards because I initially wanted to come up in a suit, hand out talking points and do a Power Point presentation.

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01:33:49:11 I know that that would have been your worst nightmare. Okay, having to sit through another Power Point presentation. This is nothing but off the top of my head from the seat of my pants telling you about the experiences that I've had.

01:34:02:01 Now, let's go back a little bit. I'm a group supervisor in Miami back in the mid-90's, and I didn't understand all these stupid taskings coming out of headquarters wanting to know the minutia of certain things. I used to say to my ASAC who was later the SES Assistant Special Agent down there, associate, and Billy Sylvestri and Mike Cane.

01:34:28:29 I used to sit lunch with them. I said you know God help the day I get to headquarters because things are going to change. (Laughter) Now, they did exactly what you just did. They laughed at me and they said you have no concept as to what you're getting ready to walk into. I said there can't be this amount of bull shit up there.

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01:34:55:14      So I arrive in Public Affairs and I meet Sean and everyone else and I begin to learn my way around headquarters in September of '99. Now I realize. I mean I remember going to the grade three clerk just to try to get some things—to get a sparking sticker and all this other stuff.

01:35:14:14      I said well you know I'm a GS-14, staff coordinator. I'm here. I need all this...hey, let's go. Next. I said well how soon can I get it? I need it right away. Come back in a week. It'll be ready. Yeah, but I'm a fourteen. I mean I'm a staff coordinator, you know. I carry a gun and a badge.

01:35:30:24      Hey listen pal. You guys come through every two or three years. Just keep moving. Keep moving, okay. Absolutely no respect. Okay, and I understand that. They're here. They're institutionalized. We just are the revolving door. But you begin to understand the mentality of what's going on at headquarters.

01:35:49:02      So I get up to public affairs and I'm all energized. Terry Parr (ph.) is my boss and Sean and everybody.

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We're all working together in museum staff, and it was an exciting time. Mr. Marshall had just stepped in as the Acting Administrator. He was getting ready to be confirmed. SOD was putting together international investigations with our offices overseas.

01:36:09:00 We were really starting to promote DEA. We were hold press conferences in here and we're getting a lot of publicity, and it's a great time because I'm sitting at my pod and my job is to read the newspaper all day. Now they're paying me a lot of money, and I have no employees underneath me. I have no performance appraisals, no flash roles, no op plans, and they're paying a six figure income and my job the first thing in the morning is to deliver newspapers on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor.

01:36:43:17 I am the most expensive paid newsboy that you could ever imagine. I actually sat down with Terry Parr, my boss. I said is this serious? We actually deliver newspapers. That's part of my job? We have to be in there at six thirty, and you deliver Ritchie Fiano his

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newspaper, and he gets the *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Miami Herald*.

01:37:02:03 Then we go to Julio Marcato who gets *The New York Times*, *The New York Post* and the *USA Today*. Mr. Marshall gets a different set of newspapers. So you had to know where every—and God forbid if you mixed 'em up. I mean that was hell to pay. Who in the hell gave me *The New York Post*? What the hell do I want to read that rag for?

01:37:20:26 So, this goes on for about a year, and we have a great time. But I begin to understand the interworkings of Public Affairs and more importantly the advantage of knowing how to sell yourself and how to sell the organization you're working for. Don't lose sight of that because we have a great story to tell. We really do.

01:37:43:18 I mean people beg for the inside story. They beg for information that we have to offer. But what happens is they're always looking for the next story, for the

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better story. Thus as some of the guys in inspection will hear me, the Andrew Chambers story, okay.

01:38:00:15 Now Andrew Chambers was a CI that worked for us that went bad, had some problems. But ultimately there was a lot of baggage and a lot of bad writing about it. But the guys on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor took a lot of hits. I mean I can remember Ritchie Fiano sitting down with Connie Chung, and we said Mr. Fiano we should probably brief you ahead of time and let you do a dry run.

01:38:22:03 No, no. I did *Sixty Minutes*. I know what to do. I said okay, Ritchie. But I'm telling you. Well, we go into the museum, we set up, and Connie Chung just comes out like Hi, how you doing Mr. Fiano. Thanks for seeing me today. Okay, lights, camera, action. BOOM. She's all over him like a cheap suit.

01:38:40:02 Let me tell you something. We stop the cameras about half-way through and Ritchie looks over and says is there a cut man here? I mean she just beat him to death. But it taught us a very important lesson. You as ASAC's or associate SAC's or future SAC's be

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prepared. The press is not looking for the fluff story.

01:39:02:21 They're looking for the story behind the story. That's all the—that's what you need to be prepared for because when you're gonna stand up in front of the cameras and they're going live at five with you you better have your act together.

01:39:16:26 Know your facts. Be prepared to say, know what you want to say and what you don't want to say because it will sink you in a heartbeat because the last thing they want to do up here is read about you stepping all over yourself in a news story. So you have to be very careful of that.

01:39:35:26 So then I moved from Public Affairs and my ego got the best of me, and instead of going home I says okay. I want to go—I'll take the fifteen. Mike Fahillo (ph.) promotes me into International Operations. Now mind you I had come up to headquarters without my family. I was of those commuters.

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01:39:55:02 Honey, don't worry. It'll be okay. I'll be back in a year or two. Everything will be fine. Okay? Well, two years turned to three years, three years turned to four years. Five years, I'm still here. So and then the famous myth. You're too important, okay.

01:40:11:20 You have too much institutional knowledge. Now I'm the section chief of Mexico and Central America. We can't afford to let you go now. Don't worry we'll take care of you. Okay. Now, this is all about how naïve I am, okay. So, anyway the bottom line is as we fast forward and I've done my four years on the Mexico Central America desk and everybody says it's a one-year job. The burnout rate is one year.

01:40:39:00 I did four. But, what happens is it's now December 19, 2003. I just turned fifty years old that day. Now I realize as I'm sitting at my desk, and I'll never forget this. This is eleven o'clock in the morning. My staff says Mike, we want to take you out for lunch for your birthday.

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01:40:58:28 I says time out. I'll be back in a minute. I go down to personnel and I walk in and I say to them...I don't even get the sentence out. Today is my birthday. She says sit down. I know what you want to know. I sit down with personnel, very nice lady, and she begins to run the numbers.

01:41:15:13 If you leave today this is what you're going to leave with. This is your retirement check. I says don't tell me my gross pay. I want to know what my take-home pay is. Than I begin to ask some important questions that you all need to be thinking about.

01:41:32:03 What about the insurance? What about the annuity? Do I take the 25% annuity? Do I take the 50% annuity for my spouse? I have to take some form of annuity for me to continue with my life insur—or my health insurance. These are things that unfortunately personnel can give you only so much information.

01:41:52:23 But it really is a matter of sitting down with a financial specialist who can answer those questions to help prepare you for this. What do I do with my TSP?

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Is it safe just to leave it or am I better off rolling it over into an annuity type thing or into a mutual fund or whatever the case may be?

01:42:10:18 Am I gonna need that money? Because the important question is and everybody wants to know forget about what your annual leave check's gonna be because everybody's trying to get that three to four, five hundred hours built up. That check is gonna come, and it's gonna come within six weeks just like OPM said it is.

01:42:27:11 But what happens is you get that first retirement check and it's about half of what you were expecting. At least you hope you're expecting more. Then the next one comes and it's a little bit higher. Then the next one's a little bit higher. It took seven months before OPM got my retirement right.

01:42:45:28 So then you begin to say what are these people doing? So I call OPM after about the third or fourth month after talking to personnel, and let me tell you

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something. Our personnel people are great. But it's OPM that controls the checkbook.

01:42:58:13      So I said to personnel how can this be? What's the problem? They said well Mike, they're showing your high three as \$105,000 a year. I said but I as in ASAC. I was a grade 15. I was making \$125,000 a year. How can my high three be \$105,000. Here's a number. Call OPM. I call OPM. I say listen, my three it's not right.

01:43:20:04      They said oh yeah, you're right. You were making \$125,000. You're high three's \$105,000. We made a mistake. We'll correct it. The next month my check was up like twelve dollars. So I call OPM and I said listen we have another mistake. They said no, we've corrected. Your high three is now \$108,000, and I said but I was in ASAC for five years, for four years.

01:43:41:15      I was making \$125,000. How could that possibly be? I said I don't think you're including my AUO. Then it's like the scariest answer. What's AUO? So I said oh my gosh. So, personnel and I begin to get on the

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phone. We write e-mails. We get this straightened out. The bottom line seven months later it finally happens.

01:44:02:24 But as I'm sitting in personnel that day on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2003 fifty years old, twenty years on the job. I could walk out the door. I have formally just joined the K&A club. What happens is I'm getting up from the chair, and this is the most important thing personnel did for me. I get up from the chair and the woman says do you want to know what it would be for fifty-five?

01:44:28:10 I said yeah, that's a great idea. So I sit back down and she runs the numbers for age fifty-five if I retire in another five years. She says this is not including your TSP, and she shows me the numbers and I look at it and I says this has got to be a mistake. I said that's only another eleven hundred and fifty dollars.

01:44:46:14 She goes yeah, that's what it is. I says I'm gonna stay for five—you want me to stay for five more years

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so I can collect another eleven hundred and fifty dollars and my wife and kids are in Florida and I'm commuting every two weeks? It's costing me more than that just to live across the street at River House Apartments.

01:45:02:20 So they said sorry, these are the numbers. So then it really dawns on me. I get on a plane that night and I'm home for Christmas holidays, and I sat down with my wife and she goes hey. That you're a nothing but you've been gone for about four and half years now. I mean this whole thing about I know you guys are good bullshitters and everything, but enough is enough.

01:45:21:26 I says you know, you're right. I'm fifty years old. I really need to be thinking about the other opportunities. That's when I started my research, and this is whenever you begin to think about is it time for me to go? And you begin to run the numbers and you've done your homework.

01:45:37:24 Then you begin to think about well what do I want to do when I make that next step? Where do I want to go?

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In my line I had always had the idea that I wanted to have my own private investigation agency. I wanted to be able to do a variety of different things. I didn't want to be sitting behind a desk.

01:45:55:09 I didn't want to be the director of the security of Caesar's Palace or anything like that. I wanted to do something that every day is gonna be a little bit different. So I start doing my homework. I call some attorneys that I know in south Florida, guys that used to be prosecutors, now in private practice. Guys that used to be criminal defense attorneys, are now civil attorneys. I begin to say what's—what are you seeing for private investigators?

01:46:21:04 They said Mike, we don't have anybody in town that's got your background. Retired Ft. Lauderdale policemen, retired VSO detective, former homicide investigator from the Hollywood Police Department. Nobody with any ties outside Broward County. They said somebody coming here with the international contacts that you have we would scoop up in a minute.

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- 01:46:45:16      So then I begin to look at the hourly rates, and I made cold calls to private investigative firms around town. And I began to research how much do you charge to do this, this and this. And it's anywhere from basically fifty dollars an hour to a hundred dollars an hour.
- 01:47:01:23      Interestingly enough you go thirty miles south into Miami and the rates go up from seventy-five to a hundred and fifty. There are retired DEA guys in Miami, and they're billing at \$200 an hour. So the money is there but they're working for large law firms, and they have deep pocket clients and deep pocket attorneys that they can afford, and they're doing a lot of international cases.
- 01:47:26:06      So then the question becomes do I and can I retire? I sit down with my financial consultant and I begin to run the numbers and ask the questions that all of you need to think about. What about that spousal annuity? Do I take the 25% versus the 50%? What about the health insurance and what do I do here? Should I be buying life insurance rather than the 25%?

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01:47:49:19      And I then go to the DEA retirement seminar, and I get a lot of those answers—those questions answered as well. But as I sit down with my financial advisor I then begin to realize what we have to offer because he says Mike, you're only fifty years old. What do you want to do? You've got three kids. You've got two of them in college, another one on the way.

01:48:11:27      I said well this is my business plan because you have to have at the very least in your mind a business plan. Where do I want to go? When you begin to look at the numbers, and if I billed at \$100 an hour and I only billed twenty hours a week that's a hundred a four thousand dollars a year. You take two weeks vacation. You've made a six figure income.

01:48:34:08      That's working twenty hours a week at a hundred dollars an hour. That's not high because that is now what I'm—we're seeing more and more of is the average. So when I go into these law firms and I deal with the support staff in the law firms ladies and gentlemen who are here who are not the criminal investigators.

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01:48:54:14 Let me tell you something. These are not rocket scientists. What—the skills that you have learned here within DEA and the disciplines that you have learned putting these briefing books together, talking points together, I mean all the Power Points that have to be done.

01:49:12:11 Let me tell you something. You are worth your weight in gold in the private sector. The biggest thing that you need to understand today walking out is do not under any circumstances sell yourself short. I had lunch yesterday with a retired ASAC, and another ASAC had told him this once before.

01:49:33:00 Everybody's afraid to jump off the high dive because they're not sure that they can swim. But let me tell you something. DEA has taught all of us how to swim. If you jump off the board you are going to survive and you are going to swim. It's just a matter of taking the skills that you know and begin to market yourself and how do you do that?

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01:49:58:01      The next step is creating that resume. Some people charge you fifty bucks to create it. Some people charge you \$500 to create it. But whatever you do create the resume because people are gonna want to see what you've done and the skills that you can bring.

01:50:16:14      There's a lot of question about well is it one page, is it two page, is it four pages? It's very difficult to tell—put twenty-eight years of your life into a one-page document. I suggest that you sit down and you do—you're gonna do ten different drafts before you finally get it right and you feel comfortable.

01:50:35:16      Then you have to realize who is my target audience? If I'm a support staff personnel and I want to go into a private law firm or if I want to go for Shell Oil Company or if I want to go work for Xerox, there may—you may have to kind of adjust that resume for your target audience.

01:50:52:24      But coming out of the government, coming out of an agency like DEA and with the respect that we have in the outside world, you are going to be marketable

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because they are looking for people with your discipline and with the knowledge that you have. Trust me, I've seen it out there and I know.

01:51:13:15      So as I sit down with my financial consultant it's now beginning to move into January and February of 2004. Now I really have to start thinking about what am I going to do and walk out that door. So then I've now got the numbers. I now know what it would—I could earn potentially as a private investigator.

01:51:36:29      So then I begin to think about well what's my overhead gonna be? What about renting an office space? Do I actually need an office space? What are the tax advantages of setting up an office in my own home? What about a car? What about gas? What about different equipment?

01:51:55:12      Well guess what? Now you need to think about going to the next level, starting your own corporation. An S corporation or an LLC corporation because when you establish—I personally have established an S corporation. You get the government—government credit

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card—if you get your own personal credit card and you—  
everything is now becoming a write off.

01:52:20:23 Your car, your gas, your office space, your computers,  
your lunches. This all becomes an expense to your S  
corporation which is taken off your personnel taxes.  
So you have to think about getting that accountant,  
and then you have to establish yourself as an S  
corporation if you're going to work for yourself.

01:52:42:11 That is a real tax advantage because all of a sudden  
all these cars, gas, all these different things that  
you were normally paying out of your own pocket your  
company's paying for it now, not you. So as I begin  
to run the numbers, establish the S corporation and  
I'm provided then—my financial consultant steps in and  
says listen, I love your business plan.

01:53:10:09 This is a great idea. Investigations, security and  
consulting. This is a great opportunity. Guess what?  
You can't do it. I say why? I gotta—I think I have a  
pretty good plan here. Goes no. I want to do it. I  
said what are you talking about? He says I'm hiring

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you right now. You come to work for me, I'm paying everything.

01:53:32:25 Go get an office, go get a car, go do this, go buy computers. You're working for me. I said but I was gonna work for myself. He says no. I want to do it. So then as we go into negotiations he says listen, I'll tell you what. You do the PI stuff because I'm concerned about deep pocket law suits, things of that, and we will do the security and consulting side together.

01:53:53:03 Go get your own office, do this stuff. So I actually sit down with my financial consultant and end up with a job thus the McCloud Consulting Group. So now I begin to build the company, and I now have to consider marketing myself. How do you get somebody to walk in your door? So I'm thinking and it's now becoming April.

01:54:13:00 It's time for me to let DEA know it's time for me to go. I think they could begin to tell by my attitude because I was getting a little sassy, you know. I was

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actually beginning to question management. Imagine that, okay. I was telling people that their ideas were ridiculous, and they were looking at me like I had two heads because we come to this building and you don't want to ruffle feathers.

01:54:38:04 You don't want to be on anybody's bad side. You don't want to piss off a career board member. Okay. So everybody goes around the room in the 8:30 meeting. Yes sir, yes sir, yes sir. Boom to this. For those—give me—raise the hand for new staff coordinators who've been at headquarters for less than a year. Okay.

01:54:56:08 This is directed to you. When you go to the 8:30 meeting, okay, and everybody goes around the room and we've seen it time and time again. I can remember Joe Keefe who was, just came in after Ritchie Fiano, and he always liked to pick on one guy, and no matter what this poor guy, I won't mention his name but all the guys who have been here know who he is.

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- 01:55:17:21 They would turn around and he would report 4,000 ki's of coke seized off the north coast of Haiti and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah and everything went well. Joe Keefe would say how big was the boat? You know, what was the name of it? His stan—it was like you could almost mouth what he was gonna say. I'm sorry sir, I'll have to get back with you on that.
- 01:55:37:08 But it was just his way—I mean—and the key to success, and guys used to bust my chops at like eight thirty. They used to call me Dan Rather. But the key to success in the 8:30 meeting don't tell them everything. Only give them 75% of what you know because they'll come back and they'll ask you a question and you don't know the answer but you give them the other 25%.
- 01:56:00:10 Then they just move on. But you just have to be prepared for that because it's like they have to pick on somebody. They have to ask somebody a question. Then God forbid if you actually do too good of a job because then it turns into an AG note. All you wanted was maybe I can get by with an e-mail.

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01:56:16:01      The e-mail turns into a blue note. But now I did such a good job at presenting this it's going to the Attorney General of the United States. So you gotta be careful as to how you present it and what you do. So I'm at that point now where okay DEA, guess what? I'm gonna leave.

01:56:32:14      It's time for me to retire. I'm pulling the plug. June 25<sup>th</sup> is gonna be my last day. Now, this is the tough part. I begin to mentally prepare myself for I'm stopping twenty-eight years of my life, and I'm walking out the door. So I've now—I'm trying to be excited about this. I'm going home to my family. I get to start a new career. It's now come to, it's that day.

01:57:02:23      It's Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. Happens to be my daughter's birthday. I've walked around. I've shaken the hands. I've said goodbye to everybody, hugs and kisses. The last guy that I saw was the security guy here at the front door. I'm handing him my building pass. He goes Mike, what are you doing?

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01:57:20:09 I shake his hand. I says listen, this is it. I'm done, I'm retiring today. He goes no, you're kidding me. I said no, I'm done. So I lived two blocks away over at the River House, and I walked and I swear to you that was longest walk of my life. When I walked out this door it was one of the toughest days of my life.

01:57:39:29 I got to my apartment. My wife calls me on the cell phone. She goes how you doing? I said I can't talk. I cannot talk about it. I literally sat in my apartment and I started crying. I mean it was the toughest thing you'll ever experience because you are not only leaving your friends for the past five years or in some cases twenty-eight years that you've known these people.

01:58:04:15 And you're moving on and you're starting a new chapter of your life, and don't underestimate the emotional impact it's gonna have on you and on your family. So I remember going to bed that night and up the next morning and it was like an awakening. I was a new

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man. I mean I didn't regret a thing. I've got my bags. I can't wait to get to the airport.

01:58:28:05 I'm on a mission. I get home. It's a beautiful sunny day and life is good. I am so excited to get home I can't believe it. For the first month my wife just kept leaning over touching me at night. You're really here. You're really here. I said I'm home. This is it. Best thing I did, and I highly recommend this to everyone. I took six weeks vacation. Sick leave, vacation time, whatever.

01:58:55:12 However your bosses let you do it take some vacation time. Decompress, relax. You've earned it. You've been working for twenty, twenty-five, thirty years. Take four or five weeks vacation. If you get a job tell them I'm quitting in June. I'll start in August, you know.

01:59:15:23 You're gonna get that big, fat retirement check, and you're gonna be able to walk away with fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty thousand dollars. That will get you through it. But enjoy life. Take your

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family on a vacation. Do something fun because it's your reward for what you've done.

01:59:32:10 That's the best thing that I did. I took six weeks. I went to the beach. We went on vacations. I mean I just had a great time. Went white water rafting in North Carolina. I went to Vegas, did a little gambling. I had a great time.

01:59:45:19 Because guess what? August 1<sup>st</sup> comes around and I'm getting ready to start a new job. I was so excited that first day. I've got my office. I've got my desk. I've got my new computer. I've got the phones in. I mean I am ready to go. Now it's the first day and I'm at my desk. I've had my bagel, I've had my soda.

02:00:06:09 I'm waiting for the phone to ring. (Laughter) Now what? So I'm thinking okay. I gotta make sure people know that I'm here. So I got the business cards. So I just casually run into some attorneys, and I say hey, here's my business card. Just to let you know I'm in town. You're kidding me, Mike.

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02:00:27:16 We didn't know you retired. I said well, I'm just kind of starting in business, and I was—my biggest fear is I didn't want too many people to start calling me because I didn't really know what I was gonna do and how I was gonna do it.

02:00:39:22 So I'm a little nervous. So then comes the first phone call. Two days later, Wednesday, nine o'clock attorney calls me. Mike, I need you over here right away. Okay, the alarms going off. I'm ready. Grab the notebook, out the door, over to the attorney's office, and I'm in a coat and tie. I'm all pressed down. I'm looking sharp.

02:00:59:01 The first thing the attorney says, who the hell are you trying to impress? I said well you know, maintain professional image, retired DEA guy, grade 15, you know, maintain... He says hey. Tommy Bahama golf shirts. We don't wear suits around here.

02:01:15:14 I said this is music to my ears because the idea of having to wear suits in South Florida especially in

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the summertime forget about it. So I immediately go over to Tommy Bahama and I buy \$2,000 worth of Tommy Bahama clothes. I said I'm sorry honey. It's the uniform of the day. This is the way I've got to do it. Okay?

02:01:33:19 This is the way it's gonna be. So I'm so excited I don't have to wear—I mean this is like—it's the greatest thing. I don't have to wear a suit anymore. Nobody expects me to show up in a coat and tie. So I sit down and the first case is a policeman who gets jammed up off duty. So I said this is great. I get to help a police officer.

02:01:52:21 He's out in a bar, five o'clock in the morning. Gets in a fight with a couple of guys and he's potentially gonna get arrested by the Miami PD. So he says Mike, we gotta get witness statements and we gotta stop this before they take him into custody or file for a warrant.

02:02:07:04 So I go out. I do the interviews. I find the witnesses. I take some statements, I write the

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report. Now I've invested maybe fifteen/twenty hours in the case, and you would laugh at me hysterically if you would see how I agonized over how much to charge.

02:02:23:05 My wife was laughing and she couldn't believe it. Now, I didn't want to charge seventy-five dollars an hour because I knew some of the other people—I knew that I had to be a little bit higher than that because I wanted to establish myself in credibility. I had more credentials I felt.

02:02:38:17 So I said alright. I'll charge \$85 an hour, but I won't charge them the total twenty hours. So I ended up—I mean this is silly, but I agonized and charged the guy \$785 for about two or three thousand dollars worth of work, but I wasn't sure what the market would bear, and you always want to make sure you get that repeat business.

02:03:00:08 So then, and this is the stupid part, and this is how naïve I am. So then I begin to get the second client. Hey Mike, I've heard you're a retired federal agent. I've got a problem. I've fallen in love with a girl

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in Cuba, and I need to get her a visa. I said well oh gee, that should be no problem. I mean we give visas out for Cubans all the time, right?

02:03:23:18 I mean this is like once in a lifetime. What are the chances of you getting a visa for your girlfriend out of Cuba who has no job? So I says listen. Let me make a couple of phone calls. So sure enough, I call the State Department. I talk to the State Department. They put me in touch with the U.S. inter section, and they said Mike, yeah, she's in a stack of about three hundred people.

02:03:43:22 I said listen. I'm a retired federal agent, DEA, on the job. Boom, boom, boom. Knew a couple people together. Any chance you could slide her from the bottom of the pile to the top? Engh, what the hell, (swishing sound). Move it up top. Well, guess what. The woman got her visa in two weeks.

02:04:00:06 I mean she was gonna get it anyway, but you—I nudged it along. Well, what is that worth to a guy who is getting ready—who wants to get married? Well, I was

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foolish enough to say it was \$500. Now, \$500. You say well you only made a few phone calls to Cuba and to Washington and you just—somebody did you a favor and now you owe them a steak and lobster dinner.

02:04:20:03      What we have to understand, and as I begin to discuss some of this is it's not just your hourly rate. It's the doors that you had the ability to open. How do you put a price tag on that? Third case. Client walks in and says Mike, my plane was seized in Haiti, okay.

02:04:41:18      And Aristide (ph.) has been flying around in it for the last two years. Honest to God truth. He subcontracted—he bought the plane. Turned it over to Bahamian Corporation. They leased it out to another guy who showed up on—to pick up a passenger.

02:04:57:19      The passenger had marijuana strapped to his legs. The police stopped him before he got on the plane. They arrested everybody and seized the plane. These guys had to bribe their way out of jail, but the plane

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stayed. So the client could not get anybody to listen to what he had to say.

02:05:14:08 So I said well let me make a few phone calls and look into it. Sounds like they've illegally seized your plane. So I talked to Al Rowans. Al says hey Mike, I'll be happy to introduce you to somebody at the Justice Office over here. So I take the client down.

02:05:27:25 Now mind you before we even get on the plane I'm now thinking okay, the client wants me to do this for him. I may have to take one trip down there, make a few phone calls. I'm thinking \$2,500. Okay, that's a reasonable fee. Before I open my mouth the client said to me Mike, if you get my plane back I'll give you ten thousand dollars plus expenses.

02:05:49:08 I said what. He says ten thousand dollars if you get my plane back I'll cover all your expenses and ten thousand dollars. So let's go, come on. So we get on a plane. We go to Haiti. Mr. Minister, nice to meet you sir. Mike McManus, retired DEA on the job. Here's the story.

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02:06:07:08 Al Rawlins introduces me. Sir, I believe there's been a mistake. Client's plane was seized. He's the legal owner. There was never drugs onboard. Defendants have already—this—cases were dismissed because of the bribes. He says Mike, you're right. Go to the airport, take care of this, boom. Have them give the keys. Here's a note. Client gets the plane back.

02:06:30:15 He's been trying for two years. I did it in two weeks. But the question becomes what other investigators, what other people with our abilities to open these doors and how do you put a price on that? As I begin to have this unfold I still think okay, well I'm beginning to learn.

02:06:49:27 Every day in the last seven/eight months that I've gone into my office I have learned something new about the private sector, and it is absolutely amazing. Fourth client comes in. Mike, I'm getting ready to do a business deal with a Bahamian. I believe he's a fugitive. He says I need to know whether I should engage in this business deal.

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02:07:13:17 I said well considering he's a fugitive I'm not so sure that's the right move you want to make. He says I need you to investigate what his criminal liabilities are here in the United States. So he gives me the name. I run the name. He's already been convicted, and he's a fugitive on a Palm Beach case.

02:07:28:27 He's be re-indicted on a Miami case. I says this guy's got a lot of baggage. He's looking at ten years to life on four different counts. Okay. Thank you very much. Pays me for my work. I said—he says I would like you to interview—he wants to surrender now and turn himself in and cooperate with the United States government.

02:07:49:29 So I said okay. I says I don't do drug cases. Mike—and that's the rule of thumb. DEA guys, none of us—you're not going into court and testifying against the government. If the government witness, the defendant, wants to cooperate and they ask you to liaison between DEA or the FBI, whatever, that's fine.

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- 02:08:13:08      You're acting as a consultant because it's going to benefit the government. That's the rule of thumb in the private sector. So I sit down. Well listen, if he wants to surrender and he wants to cooperate with DEA I will go and begin to interview some criminal defense attorneys. I will provide him with five different names and five different proposals.
- 02:08:32:20      So I walk into five different attorney's offices. This is just boggles me to no end. The cheapest guy was a hundred thousand dollars. I said but the client wants to surrender, plead guilty and cooperate with the government. How could you charge him a hundred thousand dollars?
- 02:08:55:01      They said Mike, number one, we have to take the case assuming we're gonna go to trial. And number two, that's the going rate. So—and I said—and then they said something to me which was another learning experience to me. Mike, your fees alone will be twenty-five to thirty-five thousand dollars. I said my fees? Where did I even come into this?

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02:09:22:11      And I said what are you talking about? They said before we negotiate a deal with the government based on his cooperation that you'll have to liaison with and sit in the debriefings and basically mentor him through the process we want to know the strength of the government's case, that's all.

02:09:41:24      All we want you to do is review the tapes, review the evidence, mentor the client, and report back to me. I said this is unbelievable. But they said you have to understand you're on the other—not so much on the other side of the fence. This is the other side of the coin. Understand that when we go in like this we have to understand both sides of the case.

02:10:03:14      What the client is telling us but what also the government is saying. We're just asking you to understand both sides of it and report to us as the attorney as to what that is. So then you see the private side and you begin to understand a little bit about what is taking place and the financial side of what people are willing to do.

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02:10:26:14 But what's interesting about the private sector is there is such a variety of things out there for so many different skills, and it's your personal decisions that you have to sit down and evaluate. Now don't get me wrong. If DEA would have transferred me back to south Florida I would not be retired today.

02:10:47:11 But I thank the career board every morning when I get up because it's the best thing that could have ever happened to me. If I retired at fifty-five and started having this much fun I would have been upset that I didn't do this five years earlier.

02:11:03:03 So I'm not encouraging anybody to leave DEA. I'm telling you we've got the best agency out there. This is a wonderful career. It's something that we all believe—this is not about what we do. This is about who we are. Most of us are here not just to collect a paycheck. We believe in the cause. We believe in what's going on.

02:11:24:05 But it even gets more ridiculous because then they want to hire me to go out and give speeches. Now,

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I've been talking to groups since '96 and they've sent me all around the world giving these drug talks. This is nothing more than agents would do at a Rotary Club. The drug smuggling highlights, the video, the dog and pony show, and 78% of the cocaine goes through the Mexico/Central America corridor, and there's a 110 airstrips in the Bahamas, and it's a smuggler's paradise.

02:11:55:12 The typical stuff that agents would do at Rotary Clubs. Now they want to pay me to do this. So the group calls me up and they said Mike, we'd like to put you and book you for five speeches. So I said okay, five speeches. Where do you want me to go? Colorado, Texas, Arkansas, five different locations.

02:12:16:13 They said we'll pay airfare, hotel and food, and we'll give you seventy-five hundred dollars. So I said okay. Seventy-five hundred dollars. That's \$1,500 a speech, five different speeches, and I get to market my new business. I said this is pretty good. So I said okay, that'll be fine. I'll be happy to do it.

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02:12:39:03      They said Mike, and at the end send us the bill and we'll send you the check for the thirty-seven thousand. (Laughter) And I said oh, seventy-five hundred per speech. I was getting ready to do it for seventy-five hundred for all five of them. Then it really—I mean I go home and tell my wife this and they said I've heard your speech. It's not that good. Okay.

02:13:05:21      So—but I said this is what they're paying. Of course the first thing out of her mind can I quit my job now? She wants to quit, and I says no. Let's just learn to ride this wave a little bit and begin to see. I tell this story. It is funny, and it shows you how naïve and stupid I was. But I learn every day like I said because you've got to not underestimate what you have to say.

02:13:30:06      So how do you prepare for that? Well, if you're interested in public speaking, if you are interested in telling your message, if you're interested in pushing the cause out there start doing it now to the

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Rotary Clubs because guess what? They're not paying you but it's a great practice ground.

02:13:48:25 You get out there and you have the opportunity. Go to your kid's schools. Do the dog and pony shows. Teach them about drug education. Go to the museum and pick up the literature. Go to demand reduction and meet with these people and read the information because that's the message that they're looking for.

02:14:07:08 We have got great stories to tell. Whenever you can tell the war story but yet educate the people at the same time and it's the simple things. When I talk about drug education, and these are all something that we can all talk around at our dining room table. But think about the message you can carry by going to your children's school whether you're a support staff person, an intelligence analyst or a criminal investigator.

02:14:32:18 Fifty thousand kids, four hundred high schools. They ask them the top three reasons kids are using drugs today. You say well number one, peer pressure.

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That's obvious. Number two, family troubles at home. Number three, is rebellion. Well, everybody understands a lot of that and that makes sense. But what about the top three reasons kids aren't getting involved in drugs today.

02:14:58:09 They say well nobody ever told us that. Well, the number one reason that kids are not getting involved in drugs today based on 400 schools, fifty thousand kids, family. It starts at home. Number two, religion or God in my life. And number three was education.

02:15:19:28 Somebody took the time to educate me. But when you begin to stand up in front of an audience and you have a message to give and you begin to education them on these things—that there are 461 chemicals in marijuana and sixty-one are toxic to the human body, what is Ecstasy. What does it affect on your body? What is cocaine? This is the type of things that companies, business world, want to know.

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02:15:46:15      You have the best resource in the world right here because today the business world is changing. There was a study done the top five reasons, the top five elements that corporations are looking for in a college graduate coming into their company. The number one thing all five of them are looking for is no drug or alcohol abuse.

02:16:12:00      But think about the education factor that you can provide. I'm just getting ready to start on a tour where I'm gonna go to college/universities and educate college kids. They could have paid me nothing for that. But to be able to stand up and help educate society and if they want to pay me for it that's great.

02:16:30:25      But we have a great message to give out there. So getting back to preparing yourself. We talked about the resume. You talk about sitting down and going for that job interview. Now, I haven't had to do the job interview because it all fell into place for me. But as you talk about the fact that you are capable of establishing and doing brief..

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- 02:16:56:07 I mean I can remember when I got—the second day as a chief—section chief, Joe Keefe called me up and said the administrator—excuse me. President Bush is going to Mexico. He wants a briefing book. I said what is this a joke. I don't do briefing books for the President of the United States.
- 02:17:13:04 They said Mike prepare a briefing book on Mexico. We're gonna send it to the White House. I walked down to my program analyst, and by the way are there any program analysts in here? Raise your hand. God love you. You are the best people in the world. You are the backbone of this agency because let me tell you something.
- 02:17:29:06 The program analyst and the institutional knowledge that they have in putting these type of briefing books together and cutting and pasting and making it all happen they're the ones that really make the staff coordinators and the agents working in coordination with the intelligence division to make us look good.

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02:17:47:06 My staff put together a briefing book for the President of the United States in a week, and it was impeccable. I-it just impre-I didn't have anything to do with it other than read it and add a coma or a semi-colon some place. That was it. So when you take-when you think about you're doing briefing books for the highest levels of government and you're putting working papers together and you're putting talking points together for the highest levels of government that are dealing with foreign policy and deciding how they're gonna spend billions of dollars trust me. You've got a job opportunity out there because there is a need for your resources.

02:18:31:10 I don't want to-I know I want to leave time for questions, so please, I don't want to cut it off too soon, but I can go on for hours. Based on what we're doing how about some questions? Yes sir. E-mail. It's M as in Mike, P as in Paul, M as in Mike, DEA at aol.com. I'll even give you a business card. Next question. Yes sir.

02:19:06:10 MS: (Inaud.)

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02:19:10:20 MS: Ten thousand dollars. No, I'm only kidding. I am not getting paid anything. So this—they asked me if I would come up, and I said I'd be more than happy to. The Museum is paying for my airfare up here and they're paying for one night at the Ritz Carlton. So there's—government rate. At the government rate.

02:19:29:09 So I...yes, Susie. Oh, very good point. Susie asked about contacts. Ladies and gentlemen, take your business cards with you. Every business card that you collect, keep it. You'll be surprised how often you'll go back and you'll begin to hey, what about that guy at the Pentagon? What about that guy over at State Department? What about the guy at ONDCP?

02:19:54:21 True story. I hate to talk about too many cases. Attorney calls me and he says hey Mike, I'm in a jam. I need information in seventy-two hours. Client's getting ready to invest two million dollars in a casino in Macao. I said I gotta go look up on a map where Macao is, over off of China.

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02:20:13:04 I later find—I called DEA and I says listen, is Macao famous for anything? Yeah, it's the biggest money laundering place in the world, and everybody's laundering their money. The client needs to know—he's going in with Caesar's Palace to invest twenty million, and he's got two of his million dollars in it, in an investment.

02:20:28:21 So I said seventy-two hours. I said this is a it tough. So I said let me see what I can do. I pick up the phone. I call Tommy Maw (ph.) in Hong Kong. Country attaché. I says Tommy, any chance you have a hook in Macao? He says Mike, I'm in Macao right now. I'm sitting across from the Judicial Police. I said on my God.

02:20:46:19 I says take out a pen. Tommy, I need to know do the police have anything on this guy and this corporation? Is it legit? Is it organized crime? Is it whatever, whatever? He says no problem. I'll call you back in twenty minutes.

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02:20:57:29      Calls me back a couple hours later. He says hey, these guys are legitimate businessmen. There's no crime. There's no—these guys are legit. So now I go to the State Department, I go to DEA, I go to the website. I do some research. I prepare an eight-page report on casinos in Macao and money laundering and organized crime and the possible threats and concerns.

02:21:19:07      Again, a big mistake. I never discuss with the client how much his budget was. So now I'm very proud of myself. Not only did I get the information in less than seventy-two hours. I got an eight-page report which outlines everything you need to know bout Macao.

02:21:35:21      What do you charge the client? So I call a couple of other DEA guys who are investigators, and I said what should I charge? They said Mike, ten thousand dollars. I says ten thousand dollars. I've only gotten maybe fifteen hours invested in this thing. Mike, it's not your time, it's your ability to open doors. It's your ability to have contacts.

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02:21:57:09 I couldn't do it. I was too afraid. I was afraid to charge. I charged the client \$2,500. Okay, and he paid it and didn't bark—didn't bat an eye. But it taught me a lesson. Number one, talk to them about the budget before you step into something like that, and number two you have to mentally still prepare yourself if you have the ability to open doors that other people can't.

02:22:21:04 You have the ability to have access to knowledge. I'm talking about public knowledge. You just happen to know where to go to get this information. I never asked DEA guys don't—run NATUS for me, do this. You don't do that. You don't put your fellow agents or intel analysts or anybody else in a difficult position.

02:22:37:26 But if they happen to have public publications that are public, use it, cut it, paste it, bastardize it, plagiarize it. Take it and use it to your advantage in the private sector. That's really what you need to think about. So take those contacts with you. Stay

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friends. Save e-mail addresses because believe me, it all comes back and you end up interfacing.

02:23:01:24 Some of these other people will leave government as well, and before you know it they're in the private sector. I'd get guys who have now left the State Department and the FBI, and they call me and we work as a coordinated effort. There's the Will Garrett's, the Burt Lund's, the George Offlix, Mike Cane, Billie Sylvestrie, Billy Mitchell, Vinnie Mozelli. We're all in south Florida.

02:23:20:08 And we feed off each other. Hey, Mike, I'm too busy. Can you take this case for me? Interview's in Miami. Hey, can you do this. Vinnie, can you take care of that? Hey Burt, can you do this for me? We just work with each other because we take care of each other. If they're too busy I give it—I'll take it for them.

02:23:36:24 If I'm too busy, hey, I'm going to Haiti. Does anybody need anything? Hey, bingo. I need you to go. Can you pick up this address. Take a picture of this place. Get a business card from this guy. Introduce

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yourself to that guy. Stop by the hotel and pick up a receipt. I'm gonna be down there. I'll be happy to do it for you and help out.

02:23:53:18 So it's important as a fraternity that we take care of each other. Question.

02:23:58:28 MS: (Inaud.)

02:24:05:03 MS: Life after retirement reference materials. Um, I'm gonna—I'd probably defer to personnel on that. I mean my personal experiences were really sitting down with my financial consultant. I mean I can't stress—it doesn't have to be the guy that I'm with, but it's you need to sit down with a professional, and I suggest you sit down with somebody who understands what TSP means.

02:24:27:20 Understands what AUO is. Okay, because that makes a difference. You go to Merrell Lynch or Prudential or somebody and say what is AUO? What is TSP? What is this rollover thing? Go to somebody who specializes

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in federal retirements, that understands it because it makes a difference in my mind.

02:24:46:25 Any other questions? I know we're getting down to lunch time here. In closing, it's been a wonderful experience, and as I mentioned I would not have left DEA if it wasn't for the career board keeping me here. So I'm not encouraging anybody to walk out the door. But I am telling you that when it is time, and you'll know emotionally when it's time, be prepared for the emotions that you're going to experience.

02:25:15:07 Prepare yourself mentally for that experience, do the resume, and don't accept the first job offer like I did, okay. I mean literally interview and get different offers. Find out where—because all of a sudden it's like oh, I can retire. I got a job offer. That's great. Guess what? Take the time to interview with a couple other jobs, and more importantly don't leave—I would recommend don't leave DEA until you have the job.

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02:25:43:15      It's much more difficult to get a job if you retire and the employer says well what have you been doing for the last three months? Well, I'm just retired. That's putting yourself at a disadvantage. Oh, so you really need this job. You really need a job. If they oh, I'm with DEA and I'm considering moving on and retiring then you're in a bargaining position.

02:26:07:12      You don't have to leave DEA. You've got a good job. But if you're willing to pay me good money and encourage me enough to leave DEA I will consider retiring and moving on to your corporation. So have that job lined up before you walk out this door. Don't walk out the door and say well, I'll get a job in another year or so.

02:26:24:29      You can always negotiate when you're gonna start the new job, and if you want to six months off and go to Alaska, if you want to take that road trip with your family, that's up to you. But I always—I would recommend you have the job lined up before you go.

02:26:41:14      Questions. For those of us...yes, sir.

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02:26:48:23 MS: (Inaud.).

02:26:51:07 MS: I did. I had just shy of twenty-one years with DEA, and I had seven years I was a sergeant in charge of vice and narcotics for a local PD in south Florida. For those of us who fight this war life has a flavor the protected will never know. I honestly believe that.

02:27:12:15 We have fought this war for the American public for years and years, and the biggest question I get asked are we winning the war? My answer is we are winning the war. We're losing some very important battles. 1979 there was more illegal drug use in the United States than any other time in 1979.

02:27:34:23 Since that date it's gone down dramatically. In the early 90's we actually cut it in half to thirteen million. Since then it's begun to go up again, but our population has gone up. We're losing the battle with the younger kids. Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders, our 9<sup>th</sup> graders, experimenting drugs at a younger age.

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02:27:53:28 We are winning the war. We are losing some important battles, but it's because of the people in this building and in the field that we support that we can stand tall and be proud of the work that we do. Thank you very much. (Applause)

02:28:14:14 MS: Thanks. Sure appreciate it. Great job.

**(END OF TAPE)**