

DEA MLS July 30 Vimeo

00:00:30 Male Voice: Good morning everyone, and welcome. A special welcome to those who are joining us via live webcast from around the world. This month marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Drug Enforcement Administration. Throughout this past month we have paused to look back at the accomplishments and the challenges that we have faced here as the men and women here of the DEA.

00:00:57 This morning, we reached the pinnacle of our commemorations. We have assembled an expert panel that represents four decades of DEA leadership, both past and present. Four decades of enforcing our nation's drug laws, drug laws - by the way - established as a direct result of this country's many drug epidemics over the past century and a half. Yale University drug historian Dave [Musto] wrote, "Societies tend to react against drugs slowly, and that reaction usually comes just after the popularity of drugs has peaked."

00:01:33 "Learning to hate drugs comes not so much from a government brochure as from repeated observation of the damage both to acquaintances and to society." What lessons can be learned from our struggle against drug abuse and drug trafficking? Have drug policy and drug law enforcement techniques changed and evolved over these last 40 years? We will get into all of that this morning.

00:01:57 But first, our moderator for this morning's panel, the DEA is pleased to welcome Mister Pete Williams. Pete Williams is an NBC news correspondent based on Washington DC. He has been covering the Justice Department and the United States Supreme Court since March of 1993. Mister Williams was the key reporter on the Boston bombings of this past year. To quote a recent report from a national publication, "When CNN became the butt of jokes for its erroneous reporting, NBC's Pete Williams' clear, careful, accurate reporting in a sea of media confusion has made him the most lauded television news reporter working on the Boston marathon bombings story."

00:02:42 Williams has been covering the justice department since 1993. Prior to joining NBC, Williams served as a press official on Capitol Hill for many years. In 1986, he joined the Washington D.C. staff of then Congressman Dick Cheney as press secretary and as a legislative assistant.

00:03:01 In 1989, when Cheney was named assistant secretary of defense, Williams was appointed assistant secretary of defense for public affairs. While in that position, Williams was named Government Communicator of the Year in 1991. Mister Williams is a native of Casper, Wyoming, and a 1974 graduate of Stanford University. Please welcome to the stage our moderator Pete Williams.

00:03:26 [Applause]

Moderator: Thank you reading that just as I wrote it. Well, it's an honor for me to be here, and honor for me to have covered DEA for half of its existence, for 20 of its 40 years. And you have here an enormous amount of experience, people who have shared the highs and the lows, people who have - each of them had their own crises and challenges and successes and run-ins with congress and the administration and the White House, and we're here to talk about some of those things that have built DEA into what it is today.

00:04:03 Now, many of you in this room know these people extremely well, and it's presumptuous of me to introduce them to you, but for the benefit of the few of you who may not know them all and the folks who are watching on the web, I'll briefly re-introduce them to you. Peter Bensinger, I'm starting on this side and working that way in case you can't tell that that's not Peter on the other end.

00:04:25 Peter Bensinger was DEA's second administrator nominated by President Ford, serving from 1976 -1981. He came to the position from his native Illinois where he was the director of the state's department of corrections. He's not the president and CEO of Bensinger, Dupont & Associates, which promotes employee health and safety.

Francis Mullen served as DEA administrator from 1981 - 1985. Stepping up to DEA after a career in the FBI of almost two decades.

[Laughter]

Moderator: Oh, this is a hip crowd. This is a hip crowd.

00:04:59 Where he was, as they say in the FBI, and SAC in Tampa and New Orleans and later was in charge of the criminal division and then executive assistant director of investigations. Things worked out so well with promoting an FBI man to run the DEA that President Reagan again turned to the Bureau when he nominated Jack Lawn to become DEA administrator in 1985. He served in the post until early 1990. Mister Lawn spent 15 years at the FBI in a number of leadership positions and then he left the DEA to help a much more controversial organization, the New York Yankees.

00:05:32 He's now a director of [Globe Sec9], a private equity firm dealing with international security issues and [Globe Sec9], is a company that hopes one day to overcome its addiction to abbreviations. Robert Bonner was nominated by the first President Bush and served as DEA administrator from 1990 - 1993. He served as U.S. attorney in Los Angeles and a federal judge.

00:05:58 After DEA, he was the commissioner of the U.S. Customs Service and then with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. He became the first commissioner of CBP, U.S. Customs and Border Protection. He's not a senior principal of Sentinel HS Group, and global security consulting firm. The second President Bush nominated Karen Tandy, and she served as DEA administrator from 2003 - 2007. She was well steeped in the issues of drug law enforcement from a career at the Justice Department where she was the director of the organized crime drug enforcement task forces.

00:06:32 She also served as an assistant U.S. attorney in Virginia and Washington State, and she's now senior vice president of international governmental affairs for Motorola Solutions. And that brings us to Michelle Leonhart who came to the DEA administrator's job from the DEA. Nominated by President Obama in 2010 after serving in the acting capacity since 2004.

00:06:54 No administrator has known this organization better because she was a career special agent and the first woman to be a special agent in charge running the Los Angeles and the San Francisco field offices. She began her law enforcement career on the streets of Baltimore as a police officer and she joined the DEA in 1980. So, she has lived much of the history we'll be talking about today, and she was an agent when many of these people were running the DEA, and she has a different perspective, I'm sure, on what was going on at the time.

00:07:23 Mister Bensinger, we'll start with you. You became the administrator at a time when the Ford administration recommended that DEA give its priority and de-emphasize enforcement directed at marijuana and cocaine. How much of a challenge was that? Did that hobble the DEA?

Bensinger: No, it didn't, Pete. Um, in fact it was, I think, a very good target for us because the public saw heroin as evil. This was not a debatable drug. It also was killing about 2000 Americans a year.

00:07:58 And many of our big cities were overcome with heroin addiction. We had about a million addicts, and we were able to focus on heroin, set up a special action office - in fact, Howie [Schaeffer], who is here was with [Erve Swank], the head of that - focused on Mexican brown heroin, worked in Mexico, eradicating poppy fields, worked with congress, got a select committee involved, so we got support from congress.

00:08:29 Had major, uh, investigations, such as [Nikki Bonds] and the Gold [unintelligible] conspiracy that Chuck [Lutz] and Lionel Stewart handled and a lot of

major cases that ended up in October of '76 in President Ford's last year in office having a major round up in, I think, 35 cities and 57 traffic [organizations].

00:08:56 And by the end of four years, the overdose deaths from heroin in the United States went from 2000 to 800. So, that was, I think, fortuitous for DEA to focus on heroin. It was a major problem. It was one we could do something about. We got very specific results and got good cooperation with our most important neighbor, Mexico.

00:09:23 Moderator: But there was a report that came out, I think that Vice President Rockefeller wrote, that said that marijuana and cocaine were really not that much of a problem. They weren't addictive. Did that lead to a greater use of those drugs though?

Bensinger: I don't know if Rockefeller wrote the report. Uh, when Jimmy Carter took office, uh, Peter [Born] was the advisor to the president, and he certainly, uh, and the president, didn't feel that marijuana and cocaine were priorities. I did, uh. We tripled the penalties in marijuana, believe it or not, during the Carter administration for trafficking and increased the fines.

00:10:04 We passed, with the help of Gene [Hayslip] who is not with us today but many of us remember him, a drug paraphernalia act where there were head shops all over America including not far, by the way, from our headquarters at 14th and [Iowa], which is not as glorious a facility as we are now in. I thank Jack Lawn and my successors for moving us from Lafayette Park. But um -

00:10:30 Moderator: It's like having your parents fix up the house after the kids move away.

Bensinger: That's right. Believe me. Believe me now. The other great thing that happened was that I was able to swear in Michelle Leonhart in 1980, who was the

distinguished special agent outstanding in her class in 1980. So, there were some good things that happened during those years. Cocaine started to emerge the end of my tenure.

00:10:58 Moderator: I want to ask you a little bit that because you saw the origins of the Medell'n Cartel, South Florida being the hot spot for the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S.; did it seem like a big threat at the beginning, and was it clear at the outset that it would be thriving because of rampant corruption in Columbia?

Bensinger: Yes, and yes. Uh, the northern part of Columbia, the Guajira peninsula, and also the trafficking from Peru and Bolivia up into the labs in Columbia certainly started in the late 70's and early 80's.

00:11:34 South Florida was impacted tremendously with mothership operations. We got involved with the U.S. Coast Guard. Jack Hayes was commandant. We set up a couple of special operations where DEA agents and operation group were out of Miami. Don [Maer] was then regional director. We were actually acting under cover in off loading loads of marijuana and cocaine from mother ships coming from Columbia into the United States.

00:12:05 We followed the loads and had an impact, but the money was enormous. It was so much cash, Pete, that the traffickers would bring the cash to the banks in garbage bags, and they'd weigh it, and that led to the asset forfeiture law. In 1978, congress passed 881C, which enabled the government and DEA in particular with the U.S. Attorney's offices to seize assets derived from, traceable to, or intended to be used for a violation of the controlled substances act.

00:12:41 And the successors, to me, really took that law and put teeth in it to hurt the traffickers, but we could see the problems coming from particularly Columbia in the late in the late 70's and early 80's with cocaine and major loads of marijuana.

00:13:01 Moderator: Did you want to say something about that, Jack?

Lawn: I do, Pete. As far as the heroine situation is concerned, so many people think that the heroin situation is a uniquely U.S. problem, and in the 1980's, 1987 I believe, I was at a conference in Vienna, and the then Soviet Ambassador approached me as head of DEA, and he said, "We have an overwhelming heroin problem in the Soviet Union. Could you come to the Soviet Union and sit down with our law enforcement personnel to tell them how you in the United States addressed the heroin problem?"

00:13:41 The State Department said, "Go if you want, but this is the Soviet Union, and there will be no cooperation." Quite the contrary was true. I'm a Russian speaker, I guess, so that helped. But I was a tovarish. I was a friend. I met with the KGB. I met with the GRU, who were overwhelmed with the heroin problem, and their biggest problem was not something that was difficult to deal with.

00:14:07 Their customs service wasn't working correctly with their internal security, with their internal law enforcement issues. So, as long ago as 1987, the problem began in the Soviet Union. In the past two years, I've been working on a study with an institute, the Carnegie Institute, in New York, because Russia now has the greatest heroin problem in the world.

00:14:38 We talk about our heroin problem, Russia will admit to between eight and twelve million heroin addicts in their population. Their former president said that the heroin problem in Russia today is a national crisis, so it speaks well for DEA that when our former enemy, the Soviet Union was looking for help, who did they look to but the Drug Enforcement Administration.

00:15:08 Moderator: Well, I want to come - yes sir?

Bonner: Yeah, I wanted - before we dropped the cocaine issue, I just wanted an intervention here. Actually long before I became Administrator, I was an assistant U.S.

Attorney federal prosecutor in Los Angeles, and I can just tell you, I mean, as of the first half of the 1970's, you know, a big cocaine case into L.A. was maybe five kilos body carried from Lima, Peru.

00:15:30 And within a few years we were talking about not five kilos. We were talking about 500 kilos at a time daily being flown from Columbia from the Guajira Peninsula into South Florida. So, there was big sea change there, and part of it was - and I think Peter kind of glossed over this a bit - that you did have the drug advisor to the president, President Carter at the time, Peter [Born] who did describe, he and along with others in the administration, cocaine as benign and non-addictive.

00:16:03 And how wrong they were on both scores. But the fact is, during that period of time, we saw cocaine's use and abuse in the United States skyrocket, starting the late 1970's.

00:16:15 Moderator: Yeah, the song was "Going to Los Angeles Bringing in a Couple of Key's". That's right. Um, I want to talk about some of the changes and how DEA has been perceived by public and the administration, and I want to come back to the Columbian issue in just a moment.

00:16:33 But Mister Mullen, it seems hard to believe now, but you've faced an unusual directive from the Attorney General a few months after you came in. You were ordered to report to the director of the FBI, which was given concurrent jurisdiction for drug offenses. How much of a challenge was that, and did it, you think, in the long run did it help or not?

00:16:51 Mullen: Well, that's probably one of the more interesting questions we'll address today.

Moderator: Good.

[Laughter]

Mullen: I think most people in DEA and the FBI thought a merger was in the works, and actually it was discussed. When the attorney general, uh, sent me over to DEA, he said, "Look at the possibility of a merger," and was considering making DEA a division of the FBI, and that was discarded in short order. And we found that DEA had the talent, the capacity, to handle the drug enforcement problem. They just didn't have the resources.

00:17:38 For example, we got over - I had an aid Bob [Ricks]. I said, "Bob, take a look at the case loads. See what they're doing. Are they handling it right?" He came back to me and said, "Bud, I don't know how they count the cases, let alone get out there and work them." So, DEA had the ability but didn't have the resources.

00:17:56 So, um, my goal then was to bring FBI resources to bear along with DEA to assist DEA and we did a skill study and did other things to see which direction to take, and one of the things we looked at, radio systems. The DEA was on VHF and the FBI was on UHF. I went to the attorney general and told him that and he said, "Bud, do you mean to tell me my two principal agencies can't talk to each other?" I said, "That's right general. It's probably on purpose."

00:18:32 Moderator: With or without -

[Laughter]

Moderator: With or without radios, yeah. Well, was that one of your -

Mullen: We were reporting to the director. I reported temporarily, and then it just kind of faded away and then I went directly to the attorney general.

Moderator: So, how long that did that - how long did that situation last before you were reporting to the HE?

Mullen: I'd say a year if that long.

Moderator: But was it - when you were appointed, was it sort of with a wink and a nod that you were going to come to DEA to do the merger? Was that one of your missions?

00:19:02 Mullen: Not really. I don't think it was ever seriously considered. I know this is a problem that's come up year after year, and it's been discussed time after time. But it didn't happen, and I don't think it'll ever happen.

Moderator: Well, let's come back to the Columbian cartels because they were on the rise in your time as well. Was it the rise of the cartels that brought the development of a drug distribution system in the U.S., the same one that would later be exploited by the Mexican sources, and how did the DEA respond to that?

00:19:35 Mullen: Well, they targeted the cartel leaders. They used some very sophisticated techniques to track the precursor chemicals needed to make cocaine and identified the labs, destroyed the labs, and stressed the money laundering investigation. We went after the money and tracked that and also we set up an organization known as IDEC, International Drug Enforcement Conference, to bring the foreign police agencies into line with us to assist in those investigations. That's been very effective.

00:20:13 Moderator: Let me ask you all before we go to Jack, uh, let me ask all of you about - fast forward now to Columbia today. Are you surprised at the progress Columbia has made, and how much credit can DEA take for that? Peter?

00:20:30 Bensinger: I was fortunate enough to go to Columbia in 2010. Bill [Alden], chair of our DEA educational foundation, organized the trip for the board members, and we went back there. And Columbia today, certainly when I saw it several

years ago, was dramatically different. And I credit Carlos Uribe, the president of Columbia and General Naranjo who was the head of Columbia National Police, with a tremendous effort over a decade with some help from U.S. money and a lot of encouragement from special agents at DEA that we met down there.

00:21:11 And the cartels, the FARC, which is the major organization that was a terrorist group fighting the government, had lost from 44 percent of their geography down to less than 5 percent, and the streets in Bogota were relatively safe. The drug trafficking cartels had lost their political influence, had lost most of, a lot of, their power.

00:21:38 The Mexican cartels were really stronger than the Columbian cartels. So it says to me, and people say, "Look at the corruption and the problems of drugs in Mexico." But if you had said this 20 years about Columbia, they'd say, "It'll never happen." But it did, at least that's my perception, and DEA had a tremendously important role in implementing much of the information and training and assistance.

00:22:11 But the political leadership, without that, you can't fight corruption. They did more Title 3's in Columbia than we do.

Moderator: Explain a Title 3.

00:22:23 Bensinger: It's a method of listening to phone conversations and, uh, taking action based on that intelligence. They also polygraph their agents when they're coming in to be employed as special agents. They did a lot more work on internal security, increased their salaries, did a tremendous job of upgrading the national police force and focusing on the bad guys, and that paid off. But without a leader at the president level and a leader at the national police level, not going to happen.

00:23:01 Moderator: That agent you swore in has an answer too.

Leonhart: Well, I want to fast forward 40 years, and I think it needs to be, um, highlighted here that, you know, you asked about the capabilities in Columbia, what's been accomplished. When you look at the Columbian national police, the men and women currently of DEA know this better than anyone, um, there is probably not a police organization in the world that is closer aligned with the drug enforcement administration than the Columbian national police.

00:23:34 Mutual respect, mutual operations work on a daily basis, uh, and that partnership has paid off these many, many years. And uh, I'll end my saying that partnership helped when we lost last month and agent in Bogota, Terry Watson. Within days, within days, working 24 hours a day, the Columbian national police with our assistance were able to arrest seven people that were involved in the murder, uh, ensure that there was a strong case made against them.

00:24:13 And we look around our partnerships around the country and I'd have to put our relationship with the Columbian national police as the top relationship even against the domestic law enforcement agencies we work with on a daily basis.

00:24:31 Moderator: Mist Bonner and then Mister Lawn?

Bonner: Yeah, let me say very clearly here that, uh, the Columbian government with a great deal of assistance from the Drug Enforcement Administration dismantled and destroyed two of the most powerful cartels, drug cartels, criminal organizations the world has ever seen, and that was the Medell'n cartel made up of four organizations and the Cali cartel, which was also made up of four large drug trafficking organizations.

00:25:02 Um, that couldn't have been done, by the way, in my estimation with DEA assistance working side-by-side with the Columbian national police. By the way, I think if we're going to name names here, General Serrano of the head of the Columbian national police, General Gomez Pedilla, these were honest and honorable leaders of a great law enforcement organization, the Columbian national police.

00:25:27 Um, but I want to give just one quick vignette to illustrate how important DEA not only in Columbia but DEA's international network was in terms of bringing down these powerful cartels. One of the organizations of the Medell'n cartel - well, we all know about Escobar, but he was actually one of four organizations. One of them was led by a cartel leader, a kingpin, named Rodriguez Gacha.

00:25:55 And DEA located information about Rodriguez Gacha, uh, about where he hid his financial or bank account records basically. By the way, they were hidden. They were buried on a hacienda or ranch in Columbia.

Moderator: Literally buried in the ground?

Bonner: Literally buried in the ground ten steps from a certain oak tree. Okay? So, DEA through its, shall we say, its intelligence network developed that information and with the Colombian national police then went in and seized those records. They were buried in the ground. Seized them, put a document exploitation team on those records, and within 24 hours we'd identified every bank account worldwide that Rodriguez Gacha had.

00:26:39 Those bank accounts weren't just in Columbia. They were in Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Luxemburg, Hong Kong, and Panama. And through the DEA, and this is where I - you know, DEA is a great agency because it has this international network, law enforcement network, like no other agency in the world.

00:26:58 A few phone calls were made to DEA attachés in various countries around the world, people like Greg [Pasik] in Switzerland and so forth, and on the word of the DEA country attaché to our law enforcement counterparts in Switzerland, in Panama, and elsewhere, all of Gacha's bank accounts were frozen like that, 220 million dollars in cash. The guy then needed cash desperately. He came out of hiding. He was in

Columbia. He was located with some DEA help not far from Cartagena. The Colombian national police surrounded him, and he resisted arrest and Mister Gacha was killed.

00:27:38 Okay? So, that's the end of one kingpin. Uh, I could tell you those stories repeated themselves with respect to Escobar. They repeated themselves later with respect to the Colombian national police with DEA assistance. And other U.S. governmental agencies were helpful here in some other ways. But that repeated itself with the Cali cartel.

00:27:58 And so, by the end of the 1990's both the Medell'n - by the way, this isn't recently. This is the end of the 1990's with DEA's assistance. Both the Medell'n cartel and the Cali cartels were destroyed. They were eliminated. Now, they - Columbia still had the FARC to contend with, and president Uribe has done a good job there, but this was done before Uribe even became the president of the country. The coup de grace for the Cali cartel was ultimately not only the surrender, but also the extradition, of the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers.

00:28:30 Moderator: Mister Lawn?

Lawn: When the question was asked about the influence of DEA in Columbia, Columbia like every other place when they're facing a drug crisis, uh, have to get a first-hand feeling for how severe the crisis will be. Uh, for example, in all the work that the DEA was doing with the Colombian national police, very effective work with the, but then suddenly the Ministry of Justice is attacked by members of the cartel. Nineteen Supreme Court justices are killed in their supreme court.

00:29:09 Then their general public said, "Gee, maybe we do have a problem and maybe the cartel is getting too powerful." And I think while we were very supportive, it took that immediate concern that the cartel could be strong enough to attack their supreme court. And similarly, when I was preparing my position papers on why DEA should be a single mission agency, uh, to Attorney General Ed Meese, one of my major

issues was that were we to be a part of another organization, uh, whose responsibility also included terrorism, if there were a major terrorist attack in the United States, all resources would be turned into doing work in terrorism.

00:29:58 How prescient when 9/11 happened and the Federal Bureau of Investigation than put all of its resources into terrorism? That would have boded very, very poorly for drug law enforcement in the United States and drug law enforcement and cooperation worldwide.

00:30:15 Moderator: Well, Mister Lawn, let me ask you about a galvanizing moment in the history of DEA. February 7th, 1985, a date that will be remembered forever in DEA history, the day that Special Agent Kiki Camarena was kidnapped in Mexico and later found tortured and murdered.

00:30:30 Tell us about the effect that had both inside DEA, and then secondly was it a turning point for the nation in confronting the problem of drugs?

Lawn: Number one, it was a turning point internally, uh, and a turning point externally. Externally, uh, there was a quotation I heard just this morning that the darkest places in hell are saved for those senior officials who at a time of crisis declare their neutrality.

00:31:02 So many agencies within the United States declared their neutrality when DEA went to war with the government of Mexico about the kidnapping of Kiki Camarena. We didn't have many persons behind us. I could recall vividly a call I had from the president of a major, uh, international bank who advised me that if we were to persist in angering Mexico, his bank was liable to lose 25 million dollars in loans. And I said, "That really doesn't concern me. We're talking about people, not money."

00:31:42 But that was the kind of issue we were facing. There was not national approval for what we were doing in Mexico, but DEA decided, uh, with the great support of Attorney General Ed Meese and the President of the United States, that we

would take on Mexico because they were not doing what they should be doing because of the abject corruption among their police.

00:32:08 DEA overseas depends upon the integrity of the police with whom they work. That, uh, trust, that honor failed completely in Mexico with the loss of Kiki Camarena. The general public didn't react when three couples, three Jehovah's Witnesses couples who were giving out bibles suddenly disappeared from the streets of Guadalajara.

00:32:35 Uh, the embassy, our embassy, knew about it but they said, "Well, we don't want to create a big issue now with the Mexican government." Uh, thereafter, two young men from Dallas, Texas, were down. One was researching a book and disappeared in Guadalajara. Disappeared because Caro Quintero, a major trafficker, uh, thought that they were DEA agents.

00:32:58 These two young men were tortured for two days in the basement of a cantina and murdered. Again, no reaction. It took the loss of Camarena for the nation to realize that we had to get serious about corruption in Mexico. And so, it was a telling moment for the Drug Enforcement Administration, but a more telling moment for the people of the United States who saw how we were getting an absolute lack of coordination and cooperation from the government of Mexico. It was a telling moment.

00:33:36 Moderator: And in fact, complicity.

Lawn: And complicity indeed.

Moderator: Were you surprised by the extent of it?

Lawn: No, we were not surprised. Uh, one of the things that DEA does so well internationally is gathering intelligence, and all of the efforts in 1982 - 1983, uh, in 1982

there was information received which we brought to the attorney general's office in Mexico that there was a major marijuana field just north of Guadalajara.

00:34:06 The attorney general's office said, "No. That's not possible." Indeed, when we finally got the Mexican federal judicial police to arrive, it was a 200-acre plot owned by or funded by Felix Gallardo. A year later, in 1980, early 1984, uh a DEA agent's car was machine gunned just as a message from Felix Gallardo.

00:34:35 "Leave our operation alone," and that's when we began an operation against Felix Gallardo, Operation Patrino. Thereafter, when Chihuahua - the big operation in Chihuahua began, Chihuahua was of such major significance between, uh, 500, uh, between 500 and 10,000 tons, tons, of marijuana was seized in this field.

00:35:05 There were 7700 campesinos working this field, and when DEA arrived there with the Mexican federal judicial police, the campesinos were there but the Mexican officials who had to go because they had the information, there were very few other officials. So, corruption was so endemic that this field was allowed to operate and would have continued to operate without the magnificent work of Kiki Camarena and those other agents working in Guadalajara and in Mexico City.

00:35:39 Moderator: Mister Bonner?

Bonner: I just wanted to add to that.

Moderator: Yeah.

Bonner: That Jack Lawn was a - did incredible things here, but one of the things he did was to set up operationally, which was a DEA led, was DEA agents investigating the kidnapping and murder of Kiki Camarena.

00:35:58 And when you think about it, this is one of - for any agency - is one of the most complex murder cases that was ever investigated by the U.S. government, and it involved - part of the reason being that we were investigating a crime that took place in a foreign country whose government was not cooperating with us and had no desire to cooperate with us. And I managed to intersect or inject myself into the equation because I was a U.S. attorney in Los Angeles at this point in time, and the most important prosecution that I and my office brought when I was U.S. Attorney was indictments against those responsible and those who had conspired to kidnap and murder agent Camarena.

00:36:43 We indicted 22, including some very high level Mexican officials who were, uh, not just corrupt but actually were part of the planning of the kidnapping of Camarena, and some actually participated in the interrogation, while Kiki Camarena was tortured over a period of about three days at 881 Lope de Vega in Guadalajara, a house, by the way, that was owned by a drug kingpin named Rafael Caro Quintero.

00:37:13 So, the importance, though of what Jack did cannot be underestimated. That is, he got the Department of Justice to - not only was there a vigorous investigation here, but the Justice Department to follow up with a prosecution that not only did some justice for Kiki Camarena, but more importantly, I think, established that a murder or kidnapping of a DEA agent or any federal official overseas is a crime against the laws of the United States no matter where in the world it takes place.

00:37:51 And I believe that by virtue of the fact that Jack set up this vigorous investigation with the very difficult circumstances that we were confronting with trying to get evidence from Mexico, and that we were able to actually get our hands one way or another - that's another story which I will not go into right now - but, uh, we were able to one way or another get our hands on and to take custody of 14 of which 13 were convicted. One was not. I was a miscarriage of justice, but uh, Doctor Alvarez Machain was actually given a judgment of acquittal by a federal judge, one of my colleagues in L.A.

00:38:33 But the point is, this was so important not just to DEA, but to all federal agents that serve overseas, that the U.S. just does not sit back and say, "We're doing nothing." We did something, and we did something because of this man to my right.

Moderator: Mister Mullen and then Mister Lawn.

Mullen: Yeah. I just wanted to say, I had submitted my retirement and was leaving DEA and was in the process of transitioning over to Jack, uh, when Kiki was missing, and I flew to Mexico.

00:39:06 I was met at the airport by a high level official in their law enforcement community and I said, "We want our agent back." And he, "S', s', s' se -- or. S'." It turned out later he was involved in the kidnapping. That's how bad it was. Another incident I'd like to mention, I was never happy with the Mexicans.

00:39:27 Uh, flew down there with the attorney general and we were touring around the country, and they were going to put on a demonstration of spraying paraquat on a marijuana field. We were out there applauding what a great job they were doing. After I got back to the United States, I learned they were spraying water. They were watering their crop right in front of the attorney general of the United States.

[Laughter]

00:39:47 Again, I was never pleased with their effort.

[Laughter]

Moderator: Jack?

Lawn: Yeah, just a quick anecdote. Rob truly did a great job in the prosecution. These were very difficult cases to prosecute. The evidence that should have been collected in Mexico was all destroyed and we were told when we sought out the shroud and some of the other evidence that it was putrefied and we just couldn't give it to you, evidence of a crime that they just destroyed.

00:40:19 But years later, whenever we'd talk to our counterparts, talked about a potential problem about a growth of marijuana, uh, seemingly by the time action was taken, the bad guys, uh, would have left.

00:40:35 And uh, when Rafael Caro Quintero was in prison in El Norte Prison, uh, there was information that he had that would have been of infinite value to, certainly to DEA, but to the entire law enforcement community about corruption, and uh, a number of times we said, "We have heard that Caro Quintero is going to be allowed to escape and then in the escape process would be shot so that he wouldn't ever decide he wanted to talk about the people who were part of his corruption plan."

00:41:15 Uh, the agents of DEA found the tunnel, an 800-foot tunnel was dug from a house under El Norte Prison to rescue Caro Quintero. The agents called and said, "Well, we found a tunnel." I said, "Well, that's great news. Can you go down and actually Xerox, actually take pictures of the tunnel? Otherwise, when I go to the Mexican ambassador he's going to say, "Oh, Se -- or, that's just bad information."

00:41:45 We do have a copy of the tape made of that tunnel. It's now in the DEA museum. Sometime if you have some free time, if you want to visit the museum, I'm sure Sean would be happy to show you the tape of the tunnel that was dug in order for Caro Quintero to be rescued.

00:42:04 Moderator: Miss Tandy?

TANDY: I have to just add a few things, Jack. Um, uh, being in Guadalajara is really stunning. When you think about the capture and what happened to Kiki Camarena, the consulate is on a sidewalk. It is just a few feet from the street, and Kiki Camarena was right in front of the consulate on that sidewalk. He literally could have put his arm behind him and touched the consulate.

00:42:38 I think, for me, that was the most stunning real-life view of just how insidious the cartel people were in Mexico that they would steal him from the street so close to government owned and - government space. Um, but for this agency, for the 40 years of the agency, I don't think that there was another seminal moment like what Jack did in responding to those incredible days that followed.

00:43:19 And I have to just say for you, Jack, um, uh, you may have come into DEA as an FBI agent, but you retired from DEA. Uh, and you changed the map in this agency forever more the way you stood up to what happened down there.

00:43:38 Closing the border, closing the border over the objections of some of the U.S. government officials was done by Mister Lawn and our ability to bring justice, as Rob Bonner was describing, to the people who perpetrated that kidnapping, torture, and assassination of Kiki, our ability to do that at all was because of Jack Lawn.

00:44:08 So, uh, he is, um, uh, just a phenomenal forever leader in this agency, and Kiki Camarena will forever be the heart and soul of everything in this agency. So, Jack, Thank you.

Bonner: I just have to add a footnote.

Moderator: Yeah, please.

Bonner: After Jack gets the accolades - it rolls off his head, but no. Those are well-spoken words.

00:44:34 But I just have to, and I'm sorry, point out that when Kiki was kidnapped in Guadalajara in February of 1985, just to illustrate the corruption in Mexico, he was kidnapped by active duty Jalisco State Police who were acting on behalf of the Guadalajara Cartel. Okay? That's how bad things were in those days.

00:44:59 By the way, I would like to make a point. Michelle might appreciate this. That I think I sensed that there is a much stronger political will in Mexico now starting with the Calderon administration 6 - 7 years ago. Uh, far beyond what we were seeing back then. I actually, I think there are some signs of hope that Mexico, like Columbia before it, has now seen how powerful and how corruptive and intimidating these drug cartels are, these major criminal organizations based in Mexico.

00:45:30 And that they need to, as the Columbians did, to dismantle and destroy them with DEA's help.

Moderator: I want to come back to that, but something tells me that the people in this audience want to thank you all for the work you did on the Camarena case.

[Applause]

Mullen: One more issue. Karen mentioned closing the border, and I think -

Moderator: Yeah. I want to hear more about that, uh, about closing the border.

00:45:59 Mullen: It was interesting. Willy Von Raab, who was a unique individual, was the customs director at the time.

Bonner: That's an understatement.

Mullen: he called and said, "But how is it going?" I said, "Not too good, Willy."

Moderator: Now, tell us where he was at the time.

Mullen: He was customs commissioner.

Moderator: Right.

Mullen: And uh, "It's not too good, Willy. The Mexicans aren't helping at all." He said, "I'll see what I can do." He told his inspectors to check every car going into Mexico. The backup was 12 miles.

00:46:26 And you've all heard the story about the man who ran up to the gate and said, "For God's sake, my wife is going to have a baby," and he said, "Well, why did you get in the line?" He said, "She wasn't pregnant when we got in the line."

[Laughter]

But Willy was chastised by then Secretary Baker. He said, "Willy, the next time you declare war or launch an invasion, check with me first."

[Laughter]

00:46:55 Moderator: Mister Bonner, listen very carefully. I have a question for you. Who is Chris Stanley, also known as Nick Biaggi?

Bonner: I didn't know I was going to be stumped on the panel today.

Moderator: Well, that's the whole idea.

Bonner: All right. I haven't the slightest clue.

Moderator: Well, neither did most of America. He was one of the characters on a television program called DEA, a TV miniseries during your time. Very few people saw it because it was on the Fox Network.

[Laughter]

00:47:27 Moderator: But the, uh, Ford Administration, the Ford Administration downplayed the dangers of cocaine. Then president George HW Bush dramatized the threat in that television address from the oval office where he held up a bag of crack cocaine that he said DEA agents brought from a dealer in Lafayette Park. Now, never mind that the agents had to bring the dealer to Lafayette Park first to do the deal but in any event, what difference did that level of administration support make?

00:47:54 Bonner: Well, first of all, let me say that as we discussed earlier, I truly think - and again, I don't want to make this partisan at all, but I think that the - it was the Carter Administration or during the period of the Carter Administration that the pernicious and addictive effects of cocaine were downplayed. I mean, we've talked about Peter [Born] and all of that, who made a terrible mistake in terms of his assessment and judgment at the time. But notwithstanding that, President Bush, Bush one, first of all, was a very strong supporter of law enforcement and the DEA.

00:48:31 I was surprised to hear just the other day that Bush one, number 41, was the only president that's ever visited DEA, and he - when I was administrator, he visited DEA three times. He was two times and headquarters on this very stage. And he also -

Moderator: What was he so worried about?

00:48:52 [Laughter]

Bonner: Well, he probably was trying to keep close tabs on me. I don't know. But, we - he also went up to New York and dedicated the New York field office with me. I

asked him to do it, and he did it. I don't know. Maybe that's the way all presidents were. I mean, they understood there's a very big drug issue and problem, and DEA serving on the enforcement side, plays a very big role in it. But he actually had - he had knowledge of the issue. He went to Columbia, notwithstanding the fact that there were security risks associated with going to Columbia in 1989, as Jack just alluded to.

00:49:31 Uh, so this is a president who understood the issue and thought it was important. And let me tell you, you know, in the final analysis, presidential leadership is important to, uh, how the United States, how our country, responds to our tortured and troubled history with illegal drugs.

00:49:55 By the way, not only was 41 an example of presidential leadership, but you know, a lot of people like to beat up on Richard Nixon. But Richard Nixon is the President of the United States who told the French that it is un - this is by the way like 40 years ago, right? Just our anniversary. Just over 40 years ago he told the president of France at the time, Georges Pompidou, that it's unacceptable that there are heroin laboratories in and around Marseille that are getting opium from Turkey.

00:50:30 And they were the major source and supply of heroin into the United States in the early 1970's. This was the French Connection.

Moderator: Right.

Bonner: And Nixon ended the French Connection because within in a year - by the way with DEA intelligence. I know John Coleman was in Paris at the time. With DEA intelligence, the French judicial police, police judiciaire, went into Marseille and they rounded up every major heroin figure, trafficker, in Marseille.

00:50:59 Then they did one step further. They went to Turkey, which was the major source of opium at the time, and convinced the Turks that the right thing to do was if you're processing opium, not allow it to get into the illegal trade. And Turkey took some

steps in terms of how it processed opium that eliminated Turkey as a source of supply for the opium that was being converted into heroin. And it had a dramatic effect in reducing heroin, the volume of heroin, into the United States for - by the way - five, maybe ten years, but at least five years or so.

00:51:34 Which was also important in terms of addressing the heroin problem. So, we don't always have it, and part of the time is how high up is the drug issue and the drug problem on the radar screen. It's got to be pretty high up before the White House actually gets interested in this. But we have had some presidents who have exercised extraordinary leadership, and that has been very, very important to DEA and to the national effort to contain, control, and reduce the level of illegal drug use and abuse and addiction in our country.

00:52:08 Moderator: Peter and then Jack.

Bensinger: I would echo what Rob said, and I'm also very appreciative of Rob's perspective generally throughout the discussion this morning, particularly on his comments about Jack's role and also about Turkey.

00:52:27 I was administrator at the end of the French Connection, and we had Franco/Canadian/American conference that Dan Casey, who was head of enforcement, told me about. We continued that, but what happened in Turkey was that the U.S. government gave the Turkish government 35 million dollars, President Nixon was involved, and limited the actual growing of opium to seven provinces.

00:52:58 In addition, provided money, part of that money, to set up a plant in Bolvadin, in the Anatolian plateau in Turkey to process this Turkey opium poppy straw into legal morphine base that could be manufactured by pharmaceutical companies. And what happened in Turkey was that instead of the poppies being grown all over the country, they were grown only in seven provinces.

00:53:30 And [John Darma], and the head of - General [Jesulautsen] came to the states. He was a good friend. Played ping-pong in our basement. Was treated to the U.S. by the U.S. Defense Department, but insisted on going to DEA headquarters. And this was the leader of the Turkish government, and the relationships between DEA and Turkey were close, friendly.

00:53:57 The ambassador liked to play tennis and one of our special agents was an outstanding tennis player. So, we used different methods to achieve our diplomatic goals. But Pete, what happened here, I don't know if it's possible in Afghanistan to grow - have a poppy plant, but they took a country that was widespread growing poppies and they had the resources.

00:54:30 I don't think Afghanistan does, to patrol what goes on in the territory, and eliminated the growth except in seven areas and then converted it to the legal manufacture. At the same time, shutting down labs. Finally on the Kiki Camarena issue. One of the very positive results of a tragedy is the Red-Letter Day that is held every October commemorating Kiki Camarena and inspiring, I hope, Americans, parents, and schoolchildren, to remember the dangers of drugs and the sacrifices that drug warriors have made.

00:55:14 Moderator: Jack?

Lawn: Just briefly to supplement what Rob had said about the support from the administration. Uh, when, uh, IDEC was formed, and it was formed, uh, when it was authorized by Bud Mullen, John Warner, and one of the old timers in DEA came to Bud and said, "I'm thinking about forming an organization in Latin America to bring the components together with whom we work on a daily basis."

00:55:46 Uh, we - Bud approved the forming of IDEC. Uh, after several years, we hosted IDEC in Miami and I then asked if George HW Bush would come down to Miami to address the personnel that would come to the IDEC meeting. He did, gave a

presentation about what the administration thought about the international drug issue and what they thought about DEA, and then said, "Jack, may I go down into the audience to shake hands with all of the representatives from Latin America?"

00:56:23 Secret service was apoplectic as President Bush went down and shook the hand of not only our country attaché, but also the representative from each of those Latin American countries, and this was IDEC. The most recent IDEC was three months ago, and hopefully Michelle can say something about it. Where was it held? It was held in Moscow, which says so much about the importance of IDEC and Bud's idea about forming IDEC.

00:56:54 Moderator: Yes, Michelle?

Leonhart: Just to make sure we correct the record, um, that uh, George W Bush actually visited Quantico and met with DEA and FBI agents during his tenure and did thank the DEA at that time for the work that DEA was doing to show that connection between drug trafficking and terrorism and following the money. And I think it's fair to say, um, many of us will never forget, uh, a night in October 2009 when President Obama - we didn't know about it. It was the night that our, the bodies of our three lost heroes out of Afghanistan, Chad Michael and [Forest Lehman] and Mike Westin, were on the plane and came back.

00:57:46 The remains came back to Dover, Delaware. We got up there with the families and were told that the president was visiting. Of all the nights that they have the remains of soldiers coming through Dover, Delaware. I think there's something to be said for the night the president chose to go to Dover and to meet with our families and be there when the remains came. That is, I understand his first and I believe only trip up to Dover.

00:58:18 Moderator: Karen, your time at DEA saw a concentration of the rise of the meth epidemic. It seemed like all the factors aligned here. There was public

concern; there was support from congress, and support in the states in limiting access to the precursor chemicals. Did it seem like that at the time? How did that work?

00:58:37 TANDY: Well, you know, the meth epidemic was literally like a tsunami. Uh, it, uh - you remember when it was mom and pop labs and then there were some super labs and, uh, and it all was a West Coast thing? And you could see that, uh, sweeping across this country. And I think the reason, in part, that there was such a ground swell across the board is because our pharmacies became a battle zone with armed robberies and even shooting of pharmacists.

00:59:11 Uh, our, um, uh - for some of the first time home owners, uh, for home buyers, were moving into toxic waste dumps that they didn't even know about, uh, because the home had been used as a meth lab. Um, uh, law enforcement on the West Coast started drug endangered children as a, um, a whole separate group and force, uh, to in part give protocols to hospitals, uh, about how to deal with incoming, um, meth addicts and overdoses.

00:59:46 They were giving training to, um, our law enforcement partners at the local level, um, as to how to go through these meth labs and look at it for the vantage point of a small child because we were losing yet another generation of these children who were neglected and endangered by those incredible toxic chemicals.

01:00:09 So, um, it brought the medical community, it brought, um uh, treatment specialists, it brought, uh, incredible enforcement and an intelligence and, um uh, coordinated investigations that, uh, SOD was deeply entrenched in with the division offices. Uh, and even with all of that, Pete, um uh, such a cross section of specialists and experts, um, just couldn't stop it.

01:00:45 Uh, I remember with Joe Rannazzisi, tracking the meth seizures, and you could just see it moving across the country, uh, and you knew it was pseudo ephedrine, uh, but as collective an effort as it was, um uh, it was very tough inside the

beltway to get pseudo ephedrine controlled, uh and uh, to limit the access, uh, to that essential precursor. Uh so, it ultimately happened, uh but um uh, you could see as it did happen on a state level, uh, that um, that lab seizures went down. So, it was so obvious what needed to be done, uh, but still it was a huge push.

01:01:30 Uh, and uh uh uh and then of course we saw in Mexico, uh, mega labs. Not even super labs, mega labs. And I still remember sitting down, uh, with the then defense secretary, uh, in Columbia who is not the president, President Santos. I remember sitting down with him and telling him, "Are you aware that there are meth labs here in Columbia?" Which he was not.

01:02:00 And uh, it was, uh, it was just extraordinary what a battle ground, uh, the whole hemisphere became and then China and a few others got in the act to help out when pseudo ephedrine was controlled.

Moderator: You mentioned Mexico, and we had been talking about it earlier, but let me ask you. You saw pledges of new cooperation with Mexico and the determination by President Calderon to crack down. How much of a change in your time did that turn out to be?

01:02:27 TANDY: I think it was at the beginning a very big change. Uh, with - when I became the administrator, Vicente Fox was the president of Mexico, and he really started, uh, extraditions at a modest level, and uh, with Calderon I think we were all holding our breath as to what he was going to do because even with the extraditions before that, there were no major kingpins that were being extradited from Mexico.

01:03:00 And within pretty quick order, uh, President Calderon in the dead of night, uh, along with some cabinet level support, uh, for - from within his own cabinet, they pulled real traffickers out of prison and in the dead of night, um, put them on a couple of planes, uh, uh, destined for, ultimately, for Houston. And so, I would say that was, um, that was a moment when we all stood up and we took notice. Um, it's a different day.

01:03:34 Um uh, there were many extraditions that followed, um, but I would say that early wave of extraditions, uh, really demonstrated something to us and, you know, it wasn't - it wasn't easily accomplished. Uh, they um uh, they had the - first of all, um, they had to take steps in the prisons, uh, in the middle of the night just to get them out of the prison because of all the corruption that would have protected these prisoners.

01:04:05 They put them on planes and when they got to Houston, um, I remember Jimmy Craig was the, uh, the SAC, and they um, had almost an incident, uh, trying to land in Houston because they hadn't gotten any clearances. Uh, and so, these two Mexican planes are coming in. Thank God they weren't shot down. The Mexicans on the plane, um were um uh, actually kind of terrifying looking.

01:04:34 They were completely disguised, uh, and covered up as though they were going in on a commando raid, uh and, that was just because they were doing something so extraordinary. They didn't want these extradites to know who they were because of repercussions they feared back at home.

01:04:56 So, it was, um uh, it was a great move for the Calderon administration. Many more extraditions, as I said, but that was the stellar moment.

Moderator: Yeah, please.

Bonner: I would say, if I could, that extradition is one of the important litmus tests for security cooperation, and uh, the fact is that if you went back before Fox, Calderon, Fox, but before that, the extradition treaty between the U.S. and Mexico went into effect in 1907. Al right? Over one hundred years ago.

01:05:28 Up until Fox, there had been a total of seven extradition of seven Mexican citizens to the U.S. at our request, seven, and those seven were under Zedillio, I think, the president before. So, there had been none for almost, you know, over 80 years.

Moderator: It's not for lack of asking?

Bonner: Yeah. But the other, the inoperative - by the way, not for lack of asking, and the Department of Justice seeking extraditions. But the other point I would make in terms of litmus test is the ability of the Mexican government to act upon intelligence in a way that's successful.

01:06:05 That is to say, they get intelligence and they have the capability of then acting on that intelligence in a way where they're actually able to go and capture a drug kingpin or a high level or key player in the Mexican cartels. And I would say, you know, the most robust I've ever seen the Mexican government in this respect is under Calderon and hopefully this will continue under the new President Pe -- a Nieto.

01:06:32 Because when I was administrator, let me put it this way, we and [unintelligible] would provide intelligence to the Mexican federal judicial police, part of PGR, and before they left Mexico Coty, the major drug trafficker in Chihuahua or wherever he was, I mean, he was long gone before they'd actually gotten on an airplane to go up and apprehend them. So, there was almost always compromise there and we're starting to see some signs of real progress, where, uh, units of the Mexican government are capable of responding to actionable operational intelligence and make apprehensions of big time kingpins.

01:07:07 And until - then one other point. Until the get, uh, the reform of their judicial system in place, uh, you know, which is going to take time and probably a relatively long period of time, they need to use extradition to the U.S. of major traffickers, kingpins, and key players in these cartels because the system right now is not capable of even holding or convicting major traffickers in Mexico.

01:07:36 Hopefully that'll change. But until it does it's really important that extradition of particularly key players and kingpins to the United States continue.

Bensinger: One of the things, Rob, you mentioned on extradition brings me back to Columbia, and I know we had in - Virgilio Barco was ambassador to the U.S. from Columbia in the late 70's when I was administrator and became president of Columbia.

01:08:05 Signed an extradition treaty in '79, and in the last decade - Michelle, you correct me - but there is an extradition of cartel leaders and traffickers from Columbia to the United States if not every week, a dozen or so every month. And that system of justice where the U.S. prisons are the ultimate repositories of these bad guys has had a deterrent effect in Columbia.

01:08:37 We saw that when we visited, and I think, Karen, that was going on when you were administrator. I know it was with Michelle, but Rob, if that could happen in Mexico it would solve their judicial and the corruption and a variety of other problems.

01:08:55 Bonner: Well, it's an interim solution. Mexico ought to reform its - both professionalize its federal and state police, and it's starting to make some progress on the federal police level. It also needs to reform its judicial system. So, this is, this is probably a long stop-gap measure, but you know, if they hopefully at some point in the - in its probably distant future, they would be capable of not only apprehending, capturing, incarcerating, but also convicting and sentencing a major cartel player and keep him in custody in a way that he cannot operate his criminal enterprise.

01:09:30 But they're a long way from that, and you do need extradition until you're there.

Moderator: Well, that brings us to the present day. Administrator Leonhart, we haven't talked about the rise in the abuse of prescription drugs. So, tell us a little bit about that and how much is illicit trafficking in that a concern? If I could ask you to sort of aim the microphone right directly at you. There you go. Thank you.

01:09:54 Leonhart: Well, thanks for asking the question because it really is the very alarming drug epidemic, uh, of our time. Uh, presently prescription drugs, uh - we always had our eye on it, but uh, it took us by surprise how quickly, uh, it spread. DEA's response, um, we're proud of that response early on back when Karen was the administrator.

01:10:23 We saw that, uh, people were getting prescription drugs off the internet and that that problem was exploding. We focused on it. We had a strategy. We, um, went after the internet problem, but uh, along with that came this explosion, uh, of, um, you know, this supposed need, uh, by people for these painkillers, uh, and they would do anything to get those pain killers and what was really happening is it wasn't just that the people that needed it were getting it.

01:11:00 Uh, people that saw how lucrative the market could be in selling pills on the street, um, started to play a role. So, as we did great damage to those that were trafficking with the internet, all of a sudden we saw the rise of pill mills, especially in Florida. And so, um, DEA, we quickly - we had to have a response, um and uh, the way, uh - while we were working, uh, with congress on legislation to help with the issue, what we were able to do was make a cultural change within DEA.

01:11:39 And I am very proud today to say that you walk into any one of our 21 field divisions, um, and you get briefed on the best cases going on in those field divisions, a good half of those you're going to be briefed on prescription drug cases that are ongoing targeting not only, uh, unscrupulous doctors who are involved in the trafficking but also, uh, their involvement with street gangs, their involvement with Mexican cartels, their involvement with every kind of trafficking problem we have in the country.

01:12:13 We're concerned because there's about, you know, 38,000 deaths, overdose deaths, in our country each year and a good majority in each year goes higher and higher. A good majority of those are from painkillers and prescription drugs, and

especially there was a recent report put out by the Centers for Disease Control on the issues now with women.

01:12:38 And if you remember back in the 80's when we saw the crack problem, we were very concerned about the women being involved, uh, in crack use, becoming crack addicts, and then what that did with the, you know, children. We had crack babies. The same is happening, uh, with prescription drugs, and um, about a 400 percent increase in the use of prescription drugs now, um, by women since 1999.

01:13:09 Eighteen women die every day from prescription drug overdoses. So, our agency is concentrating that as one of the major priorities, and what we did to combat it was we put together all across the country, especially in the pockets, that we're having these pill, um, these prescription drug problems.

01:13:32 We put together, um, tactical diversion squads. We've got 51 with another 7 that are in stages of, uh, being initiated. And we really learned from the former administrators and the men and women who have served in DEA these 40 years that the best way to attack a domestic drug problem is to do it in a task force setting. So, we now have task force officers from around the country, DEA agents, DEA diversion investigators, and intelligence analysts all sitting under one roof in cities all across the country.

01:14:08 Um, and they - using the same tools that we have used for 40 years to tag drug organizations, plus the expertise of our diversion personnel on the regulatory side, have found a way to go after and attack the biggest and the baddest that are creating the drug diversion problem and fuelling addiction in this country.

01:14:32 And it's been a great success especially on the Florida situation with, um, with pill mills, but just as with methamphetamine and other drugs, uh, now we see those pill mills go to places where there is to as much enforcement, where there are not as

many rules and laws, um, like Georgia, Ohio, uh. We're very concerned about the move of those pill mills to those locations.

01:15:01 But it is a number one. We've got many priorities, but it is in the top, uh, three or four priorities for the DEA at the moment, and this country, I think, is really coming around and seeing that it's all about educating the parents, educating the kids, educating young people and adults on how quickly, uh, they can become addicted to these painkillers, and it's also driving and fuelling, uh, the current surge in heroin addiction in this country.

01:15:37 So, we're going to go back to 40 years ago, and we're going to be talking about the problems with heroin addiction in this country and our focus is starting to change to figure out what to do about especially the young people that have become addicted to pills and now are full-fledged heroin addicts.

01:15:57 Moderator: Let me ask you about one other thing that's perhaps different from the origins of DEA problems that Mister Bensinger and his colleagues had to worry about, and that's the rise of what has come to be known as narco terrorism. There has long been a connection between, for example, Hezbollah raising money by selling illegal drugs, but is it much broader than that now? Is it a huge challenge for DEA?

01:16:20 Leonhart: It is a huge challenge. It's a challenge for the world, and you know, after September 11th and with all DEA did to plus-up our activities to help out the situation in Afghanistan, we did a lot of educating. You know, it started, you know, [Asa] did it, Karen did it, I've done it. A lot of educating, uh, not only to the law enforcement community and the intel community here in our country, but other countries, about that danger. That - we call it the marriage of convenience between drug trafficking organizations and terrorist organizations.

01:16:59 We had so much pushback. We still have a bit of pushback, but what we're able to do is put in front of people who are, you know, still questioning the

connection - we are putting cases right in front of them. We're saying, "What do you mean there's no connection between drug trafficking and, say, the AQIM?" Well, through SOD and through our great country offices in many countries, we put together cases.

01:17:29 We put together a great case that showed this connection between drug trafficking and the AQIM. There were a number of people that still didn't believe this connection between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and uh, we shot that down completely. We have done investigations, and we've had successful prosecutions of a number of Afghan drug lords and their story will show that connection between them and the Taliban.

01:17:58 One of the most recent, our [Haji Bodgco] case, here's an Afghan drug lord with complete ties to the Taliban, helping finance the Taliban. Uh, trafficked heroin to over 20 countries and was responsible for about 24 - 25 percent of the heroin produced in Afghanistan. So, we have these cases, these investigations, these stories that we can tell to show the danger.

01:18:32 And you know, a focus for DEA is what is happening in Africa with the convergence of drug trafficking organizations, some from South America, uh, some from other places in the world that are using Africa as a trans-shipment point for cocaine and other drugs now going to Europe. Uh, we're very concerned and, um, it is one of the our - just as prescription drug abuse is - is definitely one of the things that DEA spends a lot of time on, a lot of focus on, um, and uh, as we do that we see more and more people become aware of the danger of the two.

01:19:13 Moderator: All right, Rob?

Bonner: I think we're seeing an increasing link between international terrorist organizations and crime, organized crime, and particularly drug trafficking. There are two incredible DEA cases that illustrate the point. One - I'll be very brief - but one

essentially exposed the fact that Hezbollah was laundering multi tens of millions of dollars, laundering drug money, on behalf of the Mexican drug cartels. All right?

01:19:46 That's an indictment. It's on the record. It happened as a result of a DEA investigation. It was exposed. Hezbollah, of course, is a designated terrorist organization by the U.S. government and my Europe now, by the way, more recently.

01:19:59 Secondly, um, there is the absolutely extraordinary, uh, DEA, uh, intelligence that led to the fact that the Quds Force in Iran, uh, was plotting to murder, by bomb in a restaurant in the Washington D.C., the Saudi ambassador to the United States. Uh, that was exposed because DEA, as part of its intelligence network, does have confidential informants in various places in the world, and the representative or the, uh, the connection with the Quds Force contacted what he thought was a member of Los Zetas, you know, this very violent drug cartel in Mexico.

01:20:45 And of course, it turned out he was dealing with a DEA undercover informant, and that exposed really, you know, an extraordinary plot to carry out essentially an assassination and terrorist attack not just to kill the Saudi ambassador, but by a bomb in a restaurant that would have ended up killing a lot of other innocent people.

01:21:04 And it was disrupted, by the way, because of this incredible, uh, intelligence apparatus and international network that DEA has. It's a real national treasure.

TANDY: Yeah, I would just say to both Rob and Michelle's point, the, uh, nexus between drugs and terrorism, you know, really dates back a long ways, and you know, into Columbia and before.

01:21:30 Uh, but I really think it was that that restored DEA to the intelligence community, uh, as a member of the intelligence community because we were out of the

intelligence community from the end of the Carter administration beginning of Reagan. Uh, and uh, and, and it was really spearheaded by, uh, what we were doing, uh, just in our ordinary course of fighting drugs around the world, uh, that brought us back.

01:22:01 And I still remember between Jack and Peter, um, that was - there were two things that they impressed upon me when I came in. Um, and it was about getting back in the intelligence community, uh, and getting back to the White House, uh, in the National Security Council, uh, briefing rooms, which we did. Uh, and um, and I, and I just, I just want to say, um, DEA, uh, is the proudest part of our life on this stage.

01:22:35 I think I can speak for all of us, uh, and it's about what this agency does, um, so magnificently every day of 40 years. Uh, and from - it goes from the phenomenal intelligence that people have talked about, um. Nobody works an investigation like DEA does. Um, nobody collects and acts on intelligence like DEA does.

01:23:03 Nobody brings to bear the kind of pressure, uh, on the pocketbook and going after the finances of what really drives this trade to begin with than DEA. Um, that was central to our history, every one of these administrators, uh and it was the, um uh, the real expertise around the world of this agency that brought us back into the intelligence community.

01:23:32 I was convinced we were going to find Osama Bin Laden because you are that good. Um, I'm sure, I just don't know about, the intelligence that led to his capture. Not to take away from the SEALS, but I'm sure DEA had a hand in it. And um uh, and it was, uh, it is that kind of incredible history and expertise, um uh, of this agency that made training around the world, um, the number one demand when I met with leaders around the world.

01:24:03 They all wanted DEA's training, uh, for their people. So, uh, I uh, I applaud Peter and Jack in particular, uh, for uh, helping me stay focused on the real important things, um, especially getting back into the Intel community.

Moderator: We want to take some questions from our audience here in just a moment, and also those of you who are watching on the web, there is a way for you to, uh, ask questions as well that will be relayed to us. So, while you think of your questions here in the audience, let me ask you one for all of you.

01:24:34 I watched the video of the, uh, the last time, uh, former administrators were together for the 25th anniversary, and all of them were saying that legalization would be a disaster. Well, guess what? Uh, a Pew survey in April showed that for the first time since the DEA was created, that is for the first time in its four decades of polling on this issue, a majority of Americans now favor legalizing marijuana, 52 to 45. Forty years ago only 12 percent of Americans were in favor.

01:25:05 We have two states that have essentially decriminalized possession. We have a growing number of states permitting what they call medical marijuana. So, I would ask any of you - and Peter, I'll start with you because I know you've been very outspoken on this and are extremely shy, but um, uh, should you now accept that legalization is going to happen, that it is inevitable, or should the federal government be doing more to push back?

01:25:31 Bensinger: They should be doing a great deal more, starting with the President of the United States. There has been no -

[Applause]

Legalization of marijuana would be a disaster. It's in two states, and it shouldn't be allowed to happen. It's against federal law, against international treaties, justice department. The day after this ballot initiative passed should have moved in a filed suit to stop it from happening.

01:26:02 The international narcotic control board and all of the administrators here and those that aren't here have appealed for the department to take action. There is, there is - I think, Pete, if the U.S. government doesn't speak about the hazards of drugs, then why should the public think it's a problem? The politicians are afraid to follow science and the law.

01:26:32 The science on marijuana, the health hazards of marijuana, the documentation of physical disasters that come from people using it, not just addiction, are very clear. And I think it's not inevitable that the country is going to go all-green. But for that trend to be reversed, several things have to happen.

01:27:01 I was fortunate to speak to Nancy Reagan during President Reagan's administration. She took a tremendous stand on Just Say No. Parent groups got mobilized. The public got more aware. This president and this administration has not had a single speech on drug abuse, and I know Gil Kerlikowske would like to speak out. But that's where it has to start and the Department of Justice has to do its job.

01:27:33 Now, I'm a five year and plus member of the department, and I just - I have trouble recognizing it, uh, how it's silent. And the public is getting fooled. It's getting fooled because a couple of billionaires are helping fund the pot lobby so that a state like Washington and Colorado puts a ballot initiative and nine million dollars go to promote those initiatives.

01:28:11 More than is spent on the race for governor in that state. So, we've got forces to content with, and we've got to mobilize the silent community of parents and business owners and students and government officials that are going to see their towns and their families destroyed if action isn't taken.

01:28:36 And I'd like a round of applause please.

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Bensinger: You've got - you're part of this. I mean, we - we up here are working for you when we had those jobs, I felt.

01:28:56 And, and somehow more pressure has got to be born and more science has got to be presented to the political, uh, leaders at the state and federal level so that this momentum, which is clearly moving, can get stopped and reversed.

Moderator: So, you mentioned two things, uh, that I want to ask the rest of you about and then we'll invite questions from those people here. One is you mentioned the drug czar. I think several of you have mentioned the drug czar. So, you know, there's not an agriculture czar in addition to the agriculture secretary, and there's not a federal law enforcement czar in addition to the director of the FBI and so on.

01:29:39 Is that - has - over the history of the DEA, has having that position been an asset to DEA, or shall we say, something different?

Mullen: I personally didn't think it was necessary. I thought I was the drug czar.

[Laughter]

[Applause]

01:30:00 It was more of a political consideration than actually assisting drug enforcement.

Bensinger: Yeah. I think, too, but I felt the same way, but we had at those times meetings between the FDA commissioner, NIDA's director happened to be Bob DuPont,

and myself as head of DEA, and we would meet every six months with regulated agendas and tried to bring prevention, treatment, and enforcement together.

01:30:29 And I don't know if that is still happening even with the drug czar. I doubt it because I see the FDA doing some things that maybe DEA wouldn't want them to do. But Pete, it depends on whether the drug czar has a voice. If drug czar said, "let's stop this legalization stuff," and I think Gil would like to say it, but I think he's been, he's been quiet.

Moderator: Yeah, there have been different models. The Barry McCaffrey model is very different than some others.

01:30:59 Bensinger: Yeah. Bill Bennett was the first drug Czar when my successors were in office, but the president ought to be the drug - he should speak on the drug issue.

Moderator: My other question, and then the last one I have, and then I'll invite questions from you all, is you mentioned the Just Say No campaign, and you know, whenever we talk about the problem of drugs there's always people who say, "Well, it's the demand problem. People bring drugs into the U.S. only because people will buy them, and we're not doing enough to work on the demand side of it." Um.

01:31:34 Bensinger: I'm shy not very rarely, but does the public know that there are fewer people using illegal drugs today than in 1978? There were 25 million people, according to household survey, using drugs when we had a population of 220 million. I know I was administrator at the height of that drug use and it started to go down in '79, '80, '81.

01:31:59 I had the trend in the right direction, guys. But now there are about 23 million using illegal drugs once a month, Pete, with a population of 300 million.

Leonhart: Peter, it's at 30 percent decrease in three decades. If anything, if we reduced cancer by that rate, someone would be getting an award, right?

Bensinger: Yeah.

Bonner: Here are the data points, and believe me, almost everybody I talk to doesn't understand or can't believe it because the media, Pete, just never covers this.

01:32:30 But here's the data point for you. Since - let's just take 2006 to the current data. Cocaine has been - cocaine use in America has been reduced by 44 percent just since 2006. Methamphetamine use, and Karen dealt with that issue, but methamphetamine use has been reduced by 50 percent since 2006.

01:32:55 Now, I'm going back to Peter's point. Use of all illegal drugs, by the way, including marijuana, and we're seeing that go back up, but all illegal drugs has declined over the last 25 or 30 years. Okay? So, now, could we be doing more on the demand side? Absolutely, but to say that we, as a country, we've done nothing is wrong. We've actually - we're moving in the right direction in terms of reducing the volume of people in our country that are using, addicted to, and abusing illegal drugs.

01:33:28 By the way, the one exception now, the trend line we're seeing go back up unfortunately in the wrong direction, is marijuana and that's a result, I think, of the fact that so many - there's so much propaganda that marijuana is harmless, which is just not true. And you had, now, 18 or 19 states, uh, including the State of California that have adopted medical marijuana laws, which tends to signal not just people that might think they need it to - for some ailment. Uh, and it hasn't been proven scientifically effective for anything, by the way.

01:34:02 That's another myth, but nonetheless, you've got that. And then you have two states. They haven't just decriminalized, Pete, the possession of marijuana. They have legalized the commercial cultivation and the wholesale and retail distribution and

sale of marijuana in the State of Colorado and Washington. No other - there's no other place in the world that's done that, but we've done it. So, we're definitely moving, I think, in the wrong direction on marijuana.

01:34:28 But we have actually done pretty well. We need to do better in terms of reducing demand. But it's two things, by the way. You can't separate demand from the supply side. You need to continue a strong enforcement effort to make drugs, illegal drugs, that are harmful less available to our population because the more available they are the more use will go up. DEA has also been a very big part of the enforcement effort in terms of keeping the level and volume of illegal drugs from getting out of hand in our country.

01:35:01 Moderator: All right. Uh, let's hear from you now. There are a couple of people in here with microphones. If you would raise your hand and wait until they get to you, there's a question right there. Just so the folks that are, um, on the web can hear you. Right there.

Male Voice: And Pete, if I may, for those watching live on the web, in the bottom left corner of your screen is a button you can click on to send us an email question. And on the bottom right is a button to elect Peter to congress.

[Laughter]

01:35:26 Male Voice: Uh, I would definitely vote for that.

Moderator: Yes, sir?

Male Voice: I think one of the biggest issues facing this country is the marijuana legalization issue. Yet, when I see debates and I hear the people who are pro-legalization speak, uh, they're very emotional, and they come up with a lot of emotionally charged arguments, which are very popular. I've not heard a real succinct

defense of anti-legalization. Maybe someone up there, uh, could give us really something that would resonate with the public?

01:35:59 Moderator: Thank you, Howard. Any of you?

Bensinger: Yeah. Well.

Bonner: I think Peter did a pretty good job of that actually, Howard, but none the less why don't you elaborate, Peter?

Bensinger: Well, first of all, Howard, I think the science on the drug itself. The public doesn't know that it contains 400 chemicals. It has an impact on the immune system. It has an impact, particularly for young people, on their brain development. That it can cause lethargy. That it can cause problems with depth perception.

01:36:30 I think the people debating on marijuana have to think back to the day in January 1987 when a Metro liner crashed into a Conrail locomotive in Chase, Maryland, and over, I think, 280 people were injured, 17 deaths because Ricky Gates the engineer had smoked pot that morning. If you look at Colorado's highway fatalities, they've tripled from drivers who have caused a fatality and have tested positive for marijuana.

01:37:07 Why would we legalize something that has not an ability to pass FDA's approval when each of us and all of these administrators got petitions, I'm sure, like I did, to move marijuana from a different schedule? And you look to the FDA and see is it safe or effective medicine?

01:37:30 And it is neither. To be on schedule one, it has to be highly subject to abuse, number one. Two, not acceptable for medical treatment in the United States, and three, unsafe even under medical supervision. Marijuana fits all those categories. The debaters on legalization of marijuana don't speak to the science or the facts or the law.

01:38:01 They talk about - the proponents will bring people in wheelchairs and people will say, "This works for me." But anecdotal case histories are no way for a country or a state to decide what drugs should be available. And people that get drugs, prescription drugs, which can be a big problem as Michelle has indicated, have a dosage, have a manufacturer, have a date code, have the ingredients, have the side effects.

01:38:34 None of that is available in these medical marijuana dispensaries. I think we need a better opportunity to debate because many of the networks don't take the scientific information or the people that would argue against the legalization. I know I've been invited to go on Piers Morgan three times, and two times while I was driving to the studio, they said, "You're not on."

01:39:09 Uh, I feel passionate about this. I feel that we're heading in the wrong direction, and I feel frustrated because there are steps that our own government could take to stem this tide, but I'm glad you asked the question. I'm sure each of the administrators has their own perspective on this issue. I just feel very passionately that because I think it is the gateway drug and it's a movement that could affect all the other drugs as well.

01:39:46 Moderator: Jack and then Karen.

Lawn: Uh, just briefly, uh, Howard [Schaeffer] had asked a very powerful question and with his distinguished law enforcement career, uh, it gives a good example of what we're doing wrong. And what we're doing wrong is not educating the public about the dangers of marijuana.

01:40:09 People talk about medical marijuana. There is no such thing as medical marijuana. Marijuana has no medical purposes at all and year ago when I had dark hair a coach, a high school coach, uh, came to DEA and said, "The kids under my charge,"

he was a father figure, "Kids under my charge are saying, 'Hey coach, why not marijuana? Why not this drug? Why not that drug?'"

01:40:42 He said, "I don't have a clue. I don't know what to ask them." We, because no one else was doing it, began a program with the high school coaches of America, teaching or high school coaches what to tell young people, and that was so important because a coach has such a major influence in one-parent families, for example.

01:41:03 And yet, in their infinite wisdom, whatever money we had put aside for that program, our congress said we were using money that should have been used for enforcement, and perhaps that was the case. But I had told one of the chairs of our committees years ago, our now vice president when he was a senator, he asked about whether we had enough resources after I testified about the budget.

01:41:30 And I said, "Yes, Mister Chairman, I do have enough resources. We'll make more arrests. We'll get more convictions. We'll seize more drugs. But if you're asking us if we're going to turn this whole situation around, law enforcement alone is the last line of resistance, not the first. Without education, without prevention, without treatment, without international cooperation, law enforcement alone cannot address this issue."

01:41:58 And I certainly agree with Howard that we're not doing a good job in getting the message out about the dangers of marijuana, and that is the reason neighbors of mine have said they have chastised their young people for drinking, and they said, "If you want to have a good time, why don't you smoke marijuana?" And I had a recent conversation with a neighbor who again said that. He wanted to take his daughter on a family trip, so they went to Amsterdam to test various types of marijuana.

01:42:32 Fortunately, I'm not a belligerent person, but uh, that really raised my Irish ire that an educated man would be telling his young people that marijuana is okay to use.

Bensing: Well, Jack, I hope you alerted Customs and Immigration.

[Laughter]

Mullen: I'm not moving to your neighborhood.

[Laughter]

01:42:59 TANDY: I would just add to that. I really think we've lost the public debate on this. The tipping point, uh, has gone against us. I'm mystified by it, and Peter couldn't be a better spokesperson or cheerleader, uh, putting all of these administrators together in one powerful statement time and time again. It is, um, I think I'm probably most mystified by - and I'm sure you've seen this yourself.

1:43:219.7

You talk to really educated people, uh, the kind of people you're talking about, Jack, and they almost see it as deficit reduction now. That everybody is using marijuana, so why don't we just tax it and make money off of it and that will eliminate that piece of illegal drug trade? Uh, and I, uh, I would love to see some economic modeling, uh, to counter that.

01:43:56 Because if people who are educated really think it's about economics and they can't see what this is going to do to the healthcare system, um, beyond other things that are going on with the healthcare system, if they can't see how much this is going to impact our costs as a country, uh, then uh uh, we're missing a prime opportunity to educate [educatable] - I don't think that's a word - to educated people who can be educated if they just had the evidence on the economics.

01:44:30 So, maybe that's a point for us in the future?

Bensing: Well, economically, Karen, alcohol and tobacco are good examples.

TANDY: Exactly.

Bensing: The social costs of alcohol and the social costs of tobacco are seven to eight times the taxes collected. We collect about \$1.20 on a pack of cigarettes and it costs about \$7 of social costs to repair for the damage of lungs, the health hazards, and the other associated medical costs with alcohol and with tobacco.

01:45:07 And somehow that - Bud and I were just listening to what you just said, and the public today, the Pew survey shows a kind of acceptance of marijuana which is incredible in view of the science, the health, and even the economic modeling.

01:45:29 But somehow that message, the message hasn't gotten across either from the parents or the grandparents to the kids. Jack, from your coaches. Rob, you're about to say a word of wisdom?

Bonner: Oh, I don't know how wise it is, and you won't be happy with it because when we go back, let's say at DEA's 50th anniversary, and there will be one, and we look at this, and I don't mean to sound pessimistic, but I'm going to go back to the very good quote from Professor [Musto] that we started this program off with, and he's absolutely right.

01:46:04 And I'll say to Howard, this trend will continue for a while because this is the way we do it in America. Until enough children of people start using and become addicted to high potency marijuana, have to be admitted to be - to get off weed, uh, as they dumb down, uh, and as we see that, and as employers start seeing now, uh, potheads get into the workforce and increase industrial accidents and other kinds of accidents, over time - but this may take, I hate to say it, five years or ten years before -

01:46:47 Again, there is a crystallization and a realization that, yeah, marijuana is not harmless. It is harmful. It's harmful to the people that use it. It's also ultimately harmful to the productivity of our country in the global competitive marketplace. It's harmful to our workforce.

01:47:07 It is going to increase healthcare costs and accidents and the like and kill people. And when enough of that happens, that's what it's going to take. I'm sorry to say it. When enough of that happens, then there will be a movement to say, "Let's get rid of these marijuana legalization laws and frankly let's get rid of the ultimate hoax, which is medical marijuana."

01:47:32 In which at least, according to the estimates of the DA in L.A. County, at least 96 percent of the people that get medical marijuana in California don't have any ailment whatsoever that could possibly justify it. Most of them, by the way, are 25-years-old and in perfect health.

Bensinger: Mostly males.

Bonner: So, okay, so it's a hoax. It's a fraud. It's a backdoor to legalizations and frankly the proponents of marijuana legalization understood that when they started their campaign.

01:48:00 Because what they didn't do was to invest serious money into medical research and do some actual honest to goodness scientific experiments that would prove if in fact it's the case that marijuana actually is an effective medicine for some purpose. They've never done that. What they've done, [Soros] and others, have poured tens of millions of dollars into campaigns to get initiatives enacted in states for medical marijuana.

01:48:29 Where it still isn't scientifically proven it has medical effect for anybody, but it's being - you know, I mean, the system is - certainly in California and most states that

have medical marijuana, is a joke. So, it's going to take time, but eventually the pendulum will swing back because I submit to you the science does show that marijuana actually is a - you know, may not be as harmful as cocaine and meth or as addictive as heroin, but it's still a pretty dangerous and harmful drug, and we will turn back.

01:49:00 But it's going to take some time before the momentum moves back.

Moderator: Other questions? Yes?

Female Voice: We have a question from a web viewer. How has sequestration affected DEA operations worldwide, or did DEA get an exemption?

Moderator: Ha. If only, right?

[Laughter]

Leonhart: I'll take that one. There's no such thing as an exemption, uh, from sequestration when you're, um, when you're a law enforcement agency. Um, because we've learned from our prior administrators, we've learned from our prior deputy administrators, um uh, to look forward.

01:49:39 Uh, when you see that train coming, uh, you have to make decisions quickly on how you will move the agency, and we've been able to navigate. Uh, we've been able to identify what our primary focus is, and that's enforcement. That's doing our investigations, making sure that our agents and our analysts and our diversion investigators have the tools to do their job.

01:50:03 We have scaled back where we can. We have done things. We have figured out ways, uh, to do more with less, uh, like we've never done before, and we've been able to navigate sequestration, 2014. We've done so much scaling back, however,

that 2014 is going to be rough and we're ready for that. But as a workforce, ten thousand men and women around the world in DEA, knowing that we've got that one priority, we are doing everything we can to make sure that nothing affects that priority.

01:50:40 Uh, this year we did not have to move forward with any furloughs. We don't know what 2014 brings. Um, but uh, it's the dedication of the men and the women working currently in this workforce, um, that will not take their eye off of what our mission is and will find a way to get by.

01:51:01 But um, I'm not going to lie to anybody. I'm not going to mislead anybody and say this has been easy. It hasn't been and it will not be in the future.

Moderator: Time for just a couple of other questions from folks here. Yes?

Female Voice: Fast forward to this moment, apparently for our own section, our scientists have been [unintelligible] by the most recent situation and the phenomena of abuse of a so called legal high, that including the spice, [K-2], bath salt, and an alphabetical soup of a JWH compound and 2-C compound.

01:51:41 And in the last year, Administrator Leonhart and the host of [unintelligible] news briefing on the Operation Log Jam. I just - my question to you is in your experience in the past 40 years is that a moment like that you see some maybe obscure drug in there that how DEA is handle those situation? Is that a victory inside?

01:52:09 Moderator: Michelle?

Leonhart: I believe, uh, what we're talking about are the synthetic drugs, and um, just go home and talk to your kids and ask them if they know what K2 and spice are. These are the drugs that are starting to be sold and have been a problem for the last couple of years. Um, and you know what? You know who is using them? Um, the kids that rejected, uh, illegal drugs because they were illegal.

01:52:38 And the kids are led to believe because these are not illegal and they're sold in their neighborhood store, they've started to believe that there was no problem with them, and they're very, very dangerous. It's a huge problem for us, but I look back to, um, about ten or twelve years ago when all of a sudden MDMA, Ecstasy, was a problem. DEA jumped on that.

01:53:04 A lot of it had to do with educating the public about it. And so that's what we've been doing with synthetic drugs and thanks to, um, officer diversion control and, uh, our field divisions around the country, you know. Two major operations, uh, the first of its kind last year, Operation Log Jam, and then followed up this year by, um, uh, Project Synergy, uh, really identified at all levels the people that are responsible for not only, uh, importing and bringing in these chemicals but also distributing these, uh, these synthetic drugs.

01:53:43 It's a problem that we're going to continue with until we do something about why kids will take substances that they learn are dangerous. It's just like farming and the, um, pharmaceutical, uh, problem, the pills that they're starting to take. We've got to look at the reason that people are turning to drugs.

01:54:06 People are trying to tune out and, you know, deal with their stresses by taking a pill. Um, we have a lot of work to do in that area, but the DEA are responsible. Our responsibility is the enforcement of these laws and scheduling these substances and making them illegal, and we will move forward on that front and educate, educate as we can go along about the dangers, um, of these substances.

01:54:38 Moderator: Let's see. I think we have time for one more question here from folks here. Yes?

Female Voice: Good afternoon.

Moderator: Not quite yet. Your watch is fast.

[Laughter]

01:54:56 Female Voice: Good morning. My question is to the panel. Understanding that the past influences our future and knowing what you know now, because now technology has changed the way people, you know, consume, and also distribute drugs. We understand, I think, Miss Leonhart alluded to that women now use a lot of prescription drugs. So, a lot of drugs are legally attained and people are abusing those. And pharmacist and chemists know that the composition is changing. Knowing what you know from the past and knowing what you know now, what would you change differently and what would you, uh, add as a safe - for you to know now. What would you say that you would do different today than what you did before?

01:55:39 Moderator: Peter?

Bensinger: I would, uh, encourage pharmaceutical companies to develop abuse resistant formulations, formulations for medicines, for pills, where you can't crush them, can't inject them, which is harder to abuse.

01:56:04 And there hasn't been an effective method for the FDA, to a much lesser extent DEA, because I think DEA would recognize that, to encourage that type of investment. So that companies make pills that can be abused, that are subject to abuse, subject to addiction, but which people who may not be the patients can also abuse very easily.

01:56:35 So, would say one thing we should try to do in our, uh, control of pharmaceutical products would be to give some incentive to abuse resistant formulations. Oxycontin was a good example of a product that caused a lot of overdose deaths, widely abused. Maybe you could coat it with a different kind of material, make it less easy to crush and formulate.

01:57:04 So, that would be one suggestion that I would make, and you could do this through the process by which FDA approves or schedules drugs, and DEA could have their own opinion on that. I have to admit or make comment on my own personal experience with one product that was abuse resistant and which I was engaged by a pharmaceutical company to take a look at and to try to get it rescheduled.

01:57:37 And as yet, it hasn't been rescheduled, not through the fault of DEA. But that just doesn't seem to appeal to the process. But there are perhaps avenues by which some of these pills can be made which are less subject to abuse.

01:57:58 Moderator: You know, I can't think of another example like this. I hope you all realize how extraordinary this is. I can't think of another government agency that has assembled a group like this that has all of this experience, uh, and can tell you basically the breadth of the entire history of the agency. It is really an extraordinary gathering. Thank you all for your questions. Thank you all as well.

[Applause]

01:58:30 Male Voice: Thank you, Pete, for your skilled management of the panel this morning. Ladies and gentlemen, one more thing for us this morning. We have a special tribute to our DEA administrators from the DEA Black and Gold Pipes and Drums. Ladies and gentlemen, their Pipe Sergeant Special Agent Kevin Donnelly.

01:59:00 [Pause]

Male Voice: I see his hat back in the back. Would somebody tap him on the shoulder and ask him to get started? Come on Kevin.

[Laughter]

[Music playing 01:59:20 - 02:00:38]

[Applause]

Male Voice: The administrator has asked me to address the stage. It makes it kind of difficult because I have to turn my back to you and I'd be exposing some parts that I wish you wouldn't be focusing on.

02:01:01 [Laughter]

So, I'd be humbly obliged and honored when I about face and address the stage if you would all stand with me so that I may present to the former administrators something I haven't done in the past, the ceremony called The Last Salute.

02:01:30 In 40 years, much has changed. But as you all know, what's important remains the same. When an employee of the DEA retires from the service today, the piper pipes them from the room and presents what we now call in right and tradition The Last Salute.

02:02:02 I'm honored that the Attorney General of the United States Eric Holder and his predecessors and the Administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement today Michelle Leonhart has requested that a piper present all of you today on our 40th anniversary The Last Salute, that quite frankly we wish we had done when you were still here.

02:02:30 [Unintelligible] by name. Administrator Peter Bensinger, Administrator Francis - and if I could, sir - Bud Mullen, Administrator John Jack Lawn, Administrator Robert Bonner, and Administrator Karen Tandy. By the way boss, you've got to wait before we do yours.

02:02:57 [Laughter]

Sirs, Madam, you have stood the line and you have done so with honor, duty, and integrity. We ask no more from any man or any woman, and I know that years ago you laid down your sword to return to those who love you most. But today, what you have shown us is that the flame that forged and cast that sword remains bright and warm in your hearts.

02:03:34 And we who remain and carry them will be forever grateful. May God bless you on the rest of your journey. Now, this is our tradition. I'll try and play the Marine Hymn out of here.

[Music playing 02:03:57 - 02:04:23]

[Applause]

Male Voice: Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes our program. Thank you for being with us this morning.

End of recording.