

Jen McClendon

I want to thank this panel for hearing me today.

I am coming before this panel to introduce myself as the founding mother of a collaborative think tank that wishes to address finite questions that this panel and other panels might have that relate to rape, sexual harassment, and other violent crimes in the military.

This think tank is over a year old. My co-director is Diana Danis of the National Women Veteran's Conference and the University of Colorado Denver. Together we have hand-selected people from a number of age groups and occupations. Today we are the interdisciplinary Service Think Tank for Social Justice.

Out think tank includes:

- Jen McClendon: Philosophy, ethics, logic, humanities, and history professor, public educator, mother, parent, protector, and provider for four young children.
- Diana Danis: National Women Veteran's Conference, former faculty University Colorado Denver, sociologist, speaker, cultural diversity instructor, and social activist.
- Amber Mathwig: Graduate Student in Gender Studies, Veteran Master At Arms, and social activist,
- Monisha Rios: License Eligible Clinical and Macro Social Worker, human rights activist, speaker and post graduate student in Humanist Psychology, specializing in trauma, transformative social change, and creativity.
- Geri Lynn Weinstein Mathews Licensed Clinical Social Worker and co-producer of the film Justice Denied.
- Ginny Branam Lee, Nurse, educator, social activist, and graduate student in Forensic Psychology.
- Rosie Palfy, Rosie Palfy served as a combat correspondent in the Marine Corps. She is currently a homeless advocate in Cleveland, Ohio.

We collaborate with each other, we research together, we brain storm and challenge ourselves. We debate and deliberate and we help each other through the rough points of research and reporting. By the time that your committee convenes on May 29th, we will have a white paper for you that address some highlights of this committee's deliberation hitherto. We will make conclusive and helpful but not yet exhaustive points to this panel.

At this time I am reporting that your legal deliberations have been specific and on point. You have a remarkable lawyer –who is also the dean of a law school- so we will only offer opinions and testimony on the legal experience of victims and witnesses.

There has been significant advocacy on the issue of violent crime in the military. We applaud that. There have been remarkable legal conversations and we support that. Awareness raising through films such as the Emmy award winning film Service: When women come marching home, the award winning film Justice Denied, and Academy Award nominated film the Invisible War have been helpful and we applaud

the scope of people that those films continue to reach. We applaud advocacy groups and we applaud the STOP act and the Military Justice Improvement Act. While we think that some good will come from taking reporting out of the chain of command we also believe that culture change is the most necessary goal if we are to generate a lasting change.

The primary goal of this think tank is to insert interdisciplinary insight to panels like this, Congress, the Department of Defense, and the American University system create and maintain culture change. The white papers that we have to offer are only part of our mission.

We are developing a set of courses for presentation at war colleges, senior enlisted academies, the Pentagon, and a few universities. The goals of these courses are to help facilitate culture change through transformative competency based instruction that will be offered to senior leadership in both enlisted and officer ranks. These six courses will cross several academic disciplines from business to psychology and they will be useful to both the Department of Defense and the service member's resume. We are drawing on our interdisciplinary resumes and over 100 combined years of advocacy on behalf of the abused.

I have been an advocate on the issue of planned, family, gang, community, and military violence since 1988. Given my personal strength, my education, my intelligence, being a self-defense coach, having been a command competitive swimmer as well as the swimming coach for two commands, I never thought that I would see the blatant and unrepentant violence that I witnessed. I could not imagine some of the blatant excuses for violence that I witnessed.

When I challenged some service members on their violent behavior they told me that they have to abuse other service members and claim that they are practicing for prisoner of war status. Having interviewed several prisoners of war and Holocaust survivors, I noticed from actual prisoners of war that it was the enemy that capture and abuse prisoners and not fellow troops. I have never heard a valid excuse for troop on troop violence.

I share this challenge to the excuse drive paradigm because representatives from the Department of Defense are here to tell us that they are going to train their way out of this problem. I am here to contend that the Department of Defense has been training for a long time. I have two concepts to introduce here. The first concept is anti training. Anti training is a term that I developed to describe the conversation that happens after training.

After a training episode a senior enlisted leader will take their divisions and subdivisions aside and say something like, "OK that's all well and good but here in the real world..." And that is where they reintroduce rape mythology terms such as "Most of them were asking for it or buyers remorse." Those two rape myths almost guarantee limited reporting.

I will share another example. After a Navy Rights and Responsibilities training when I was on active duty, the first class work center supervisor that I was working for on the USS Donald Cook in 1999 told his

portion of the subdivision that before women and overeducated feminists like Petty Officer X came aboard ships the Navy was a great career. You are hearing from Petty Officer X. That sentiment is as good as saying, "If you rape or harass petty officer X...we're cool with that."

The other concept that I am sharing is a subset of training fatigue. If I keep telling you that the Pythagorean theorem is $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ and then I ask you to put this into practice you will have a hard time. I have only given you surface knowledge. Transformative knowledge is critical for success. I have been studying how people transform for a number of years.

I suspect that training has been well intended but it has also amounted to several different ways of saying the following:

1. Treat each other with respect
2. Real soldiers and Sailors do not rape.
3. Not in my service.
4. Don't talk to women.
5. We do not retaliate.
6. We take all allegations seriously.

Ad infinitum

All of this has some merit except the "Don't talk to women." I put that there for a reason. That was the training that was given with women in the room when I was in basic military training continuum at Fleet ASW Training Center in 1997. Don't talk to women was the solution back then. I meet veterans today that basically still feel the same way. Some male veterans have a hard time staying employed because they cannot work for women after that type of training so when I say that sexism hurts everybody, sexism also hurts the sexist.

The problem with the "Don't talk to women" solution is that it is predicated on rape being the fault of women. Too many people still feel that rape is the problem of women. As important as rape not being the fault of all women we need to be clear that not all men rape. In fact most men would not consider raping anyone ever. Nothing says that rape is not the fault of women more clearly than the fact that rape also happens to men. This think tank will not ignore the importance of men in this conversation.

I am interested in continuing this conversation. Although the lifespan of this panel is limited, the conversation needs to continue. I am asking this panel to hear my colleague at the end of the month and I am asking the Department of Defense to continue to hear from me.

Thank you for hearing from me and I want to give special thanks for everyone that is on the right side of this matter. Hopefully my four children will come of age in a safer and more considerate world.