

OSJCL Symposium 2022: Transcript of Keynote Speech

Shon Hopwood*

Thank you for having me, and thanks to everybody who participated.

I'm going to start by telling a story, and then at the end of the story I'm going to talk about its policy implications, and then I'm going to finish by telling you where I currently am and what I'm going to be doing this weekend, because it ties in neatly with the story I'm about to tell you.

The story I'm about to tell you is about a man named Adam Clausen, who, at the age of 23, committed nine robberies of massage parlors in and around Philadelphia. He did so with guns, and, while no one was physically hurt, these were violent crimes and serious offenses. Adam turned down a plea agreement with the government for ten years and decided to exercise his right to a jury trial. He then went to trial, and lost on all counts. Because of the harshness of our federal sentencing practices, Adam faced a steep mandatory minimum sentence. In fact, his mandatory minimum was 205 years in prison, and the judge ultimately sentenced him to 213 years. To put this in perspective, generally people in federal prison must serve 85% of their sentence. And so, at one point, Adam's release date was December 1, 2185.

I think most people in Adam's situation—24 years old, facing life in prison without parole, no chance of release—would have very little hope and would give up. And yet that's not what Adam did. He went on to compile one of the most remarkable records of rehabilitation I have ever witnessed.

But he had some help, in the form of several small miracles that happened to him.

The first was that he had a warden who was actually dedicated to rehabilitating people in the prison he worked at, rather than just punishing them. She set up a bunch of re-entry programs that Adam got training for, and eventually Adam *led* those programs. They were partially led by Adam, and also partially led by two people who worked for the Department of Justice, as well as some of the staff at the prison. This re-entry program was incredibly successful, in part because Adam was leading it and was a living example everyday of what rehabilitation should look like, and how people should prepare for release. Adam trained hundreds of people in prison, who were later released and had success with re-entry. This was a small miracle for

* Professor Shon Hopwood is an associate professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center. Shon's unusual story began in prison, writing briefs for other prisoners, including two petitions for certiorari that were later granted review by the United States Supreme Court. Then receiving his JD from University of Washington School of Law, Shon clerked for Judge Janice Rogers Brown at the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. He has worked on criminal justice reforms across the country, and is a published scholar and author.

Adam because, unlike most federal prisons, that warden and the people from the Department of Justice wrote glowing letters of recommendation for Adam, saying that he was worthy of release.

But no matter what Adam did, the system could not recognize how he had changed. All it saw was the man, the 24-year-old, who'd committed all these robberies and deserved to be in prison for the rest of his life.

Adam tried a whole host of ways to get out of his prison. He filed appeal, which was denied. He filed an appeal to the Supreme Court. That too was denied. He filed a habeas petition. *That* was denied. And finally, he sought clemency. At one point, he thought that maybe President Obama, during his last year as president and during the Clemency Initiative, would see to his release. Unfortunately, he did not.

Another miracle did happen, though, during Adam's petition for clemency. An Assistant US Attorney named Bob Zauzmer was the pardon attorney at that time. When he reviewed Adam's application, he thought, "Wow, this is a really remarkable person, with a really robust record of rehabilitation." Bob Zauzmer, after the Obama Administration, later went back to his office in Philadelphia, where he is the #2 US assistant attorney in that office.

In 2018 Adam caught another big break, another miracle. Congress, despite not usually acting in a bipartisan manner, passed the First-Step Act. One of the changes to the First-Step Act was a change to compassionate release. This allowed people in federal prison to petition their judge for compassionate release on a whole host of grounds, including that a change in law, or a long sentence combined with a robust record of rehabilitation, could warrant a reduction in sentence, or even, potentially, time served and a release from prison.

I was fortunate enough to represent Adam in court, and we argued the case before a federal district court judge. The judge specifically noted those letters of recommendation, and Adam's work on re-entry, and the hundreds of men that he helped lead a law-abiding and successful life after prison. He granted Adam's motion. One of the interesting things about it was that other miracle in the form of Bob Zauzmer reviewing his clemency petition, which had a large impact. Bob Zauzmer represented the government in court, and told the judge, "We agree with the defense, that Mr. Clausen should be sentenced to time served." And he said, "Judge, whatever you decide today will be a final decision, because the government is not going forward with an appeal."

Couple weeks later, Adam Clausen is released from federal prison. He meets up with his girlfriend, Ro, and they take-off to start a new life. He eventually moves to Las Vegas, Nevada, where he is doing wonderfully. I'm going to talk about what he's doing now, because it's very relevant to the topic of re-entry.

First, I wanna explain the science of change. Our criminal justice system and our re-entry policies don't line up with a burgeoning body of neuroscience, which says that people change, that people have the capacity to change, even adults, that our brains are quite elastic, and that even through adulthood our brains can be rewired in response to external stimuli. That's the opposite of how the criminal justice system was based. We have this folk-belief that people can't change, that

“once a criminal always a criminal,” and that criminality and character traits are inextricably linked, when they are *not*. If you want to look into this neuroscience, Professor Eve Hanan from the University of Nevada Las Vegas has a really fascinating paper called “Incapacitation Errors: Sentencing and the Science of Change,” where she cites all this neuroscience that shows how even adults in their 40s and 50s can undergo quite significant brain changes in response to external stimuli.

Well, so, if we’re not too good at predicting who has the power to turn around and who doesn’t, that says something about our current criminal justice practices. Many of our practices assume that someone cannot change, and thus we often sentence people to long terms of imprisonment, thinking that we need to incapacitate them to protect society, that we need long stretches of incapacitation to maintain public safety. Well, if we know that people can change, and we know that people change pretty profoundly from their 20s to their 40s, then maybe we should re-evaluate whether the people in prison could change. If we think they can’t, well, maybe that says something more about the prison system, instead of them as individuals.

This new body of neuroscience and the science of change should re-orient many of our policies within the criminal justice system. Obviously, the first one you would think about is sentencing. It’s quite possible—and I would argue this is certainly happening—that we are imposing sentences far greater than necessary to protect the public, because we tend to err on the side of over-incapacitation and over-incarceration. It’s one of the reasons why the United States has a system of mass incarceration—where the United States represents 5% of the world’s population, but 25% of the world’s prisoners. Our incarceration and prison system is so large that over 100 million Americans have had someone in their close to immediate family who has gone to jail or prison in their lifetime. I tell you that the social implications of locking up that many Americans and that many people is profound, especially in communities where there is poverty. Some of those communities have been decimated by our mass incarceration system.

But it’s not just sentencing. Even if we do impose a sentence, and feel the need to protect the public by, say, long sentences, a sentence of ten years doesn’t take into consideration that sometimes people go to prison and pretty quickly turn things around, rehabilitated. In my case, when I was sentenced, my judge said that he believed I could never change, and that I would never make a law-abiding, productive citizen. What he later said—and these are his words, not mine—was “My sentencing instincts suck.” What I told the judge was, “It’s not that. It’s that we are not very good at predicting who has the power to change, and who does not.” That would counsel in favor of shorter sentences.

Even when we impose longer sentences, we would want to have early-release mechanisms that incentivize people to prepare for re-entry in prison and to become rehabilitated while in prison. Very few successful re-entries start when someone’s released. The best re-entry programs begin on the day someone begins their sentence.

Not only should the criminal justice system be impacted by this change of views on what I call *the science of change*, but we should also certainly reconsider the hundreds of thousands of collateral consequences that we impose on those with felony and misdemeanor convictions. People can be discriminated—legally discriminated—against in housing, employment, public benefits, voting rights... It impacts peoples' lives in all sorts of different ways, and those collateral consequences, for re-entry purposes, make it very difficult for people who are formerly incarcerated to obtain stable housing and stable employment, which are the key markers for recidivism reduction. We know that when someone gets out of prison, and has stable housing and stable employment, their risk of recidivism goes way down.

Finally, with this view of neuroscience we are now better at knowing how human beings behave, how systems can work to get behavioral change, and how brains can be rewired based on external stimuli, even when people are in their 40s, 50s, and 60s. That should obviously inform our re-entry practices.

If their brains can be rewired based on the external stimuli they encounter, then the first thing you would want to do is place someone who has been in prison into a welcoming environment. This is especially true for people coming out of prison who have served long terms, because the message every day in prison—either implicitly or explicitly—is “You are worthless, you are a piece of garbage, and it’s only a matter of time before you get out, commit a new offense, and return.” Those external stimuli have a profound impact on people. People start to believe that all they can ever be is a criminal, and all they can ever do is commit crimes, going back and forth in the criminal system. One of the saddest things I saw in the criminal system were the certain communities and groups of people that just expected to do and serve a prison term, in the same way that in other communities they expect that when kids reach 18 they’ll go off to college.

This would also signal that maybe we should start changing how we handle re-entry in the prison system. We should be spending money on educational programs, and Congress recently ended the ban on Pell-grants for people in prison in large part because of studies showing that when we provide education in the prison, for every \$1 we spend, we save \$5 on the back-end when someone does not re-commit new offenses upon release.

We should also provide robust re-entry programs in prison for years *before* somebody’s release date. Too often prisons don’t start re-entry programs until 6 months before release, but most of the data out there says that this is an inadequate and not-long-enough time period to properly prepare people for re-entry.

Community. Again: Community. Almost every positive re-entry story I have ever seen involved community. Someone got out of prison and was surrounded by a community of people who supported that person, made them feel welcome, and made them feel like they were getting a true second chance. Having community also acts as a natural deterrent, because if people are helping you when you come out of prison, the last thing you wanna do is go break the law and let those people down. We need to surround formerly incarcerated folks with community.

There's a whole bunch of ways you can do that. I've seen people who've found community in a church or a synagogue. I've seen some public defenders' offices who've employed someone as a jailhouse lawyer, and they've got community through their work and employment. I've seen people get community through school—that was certainly the case for me, when I went to law school and felt I was around a supportive community that had my best interests at heart. We need to surround people with community, and we also need to not give up on people, even people who have struggled with behavioral change and especially people who've struggled with substance abuse. It's not often that people just quit using substances when they're addicted to them the first time. Most people relapse. We need to understand that just because this happens does not mean that the person can't turn it around.

We need to create robust re-entry programs that help provide people with stable housing and stable employment, and that additionally provides them with a sense of community, people who can support them, and whatever they need in the way of mental health treatment.

Some places have gone to this model already. I would tell you that one of the law enforcement agencies that's made a tremendous amount of change in the last ten years is the US Probation Office. Prior to the last decade, US Probation largely employed former law enforcement officers—sheriffs, deputies, police officers, military police, former US marshals. That model basically set out a bunch of rules, and tried to impose rules and punishment on people if they made mistakes. The US Probation Office has largely moved away from that model because it wasn't very successful; they had very high recidivism rates when their entire goal was to create rules and send people back to prison when they break them. The new model of the US Probation Office is more of a social worker model. Now people get out, they meet with their probation officer, and that probation officer explains to them how they are there to support them, provide them with services, tell them where wrap-around services are available, where they can find housing, where employers are willing to hire formerly incarcerated people, where they can meet for an AA class or an NA class, or where they can get treatment for mental health issues. Because of that change in strategy, because of that change to “we're here to help you, and not just to catch you when you make a mistake,” the US Probation Office has been far more successful in the last ten years than it was in the previous decades combined.

Back to Adam Clausen, and why I'm sitting where I am today. When Adam was released, I kinda knew he was gonna be successful. He had been preparing for his re-entry even though he'd been serving a life sentence for over two decades. For one, he had support. He had his girlfriend, Ro, who not only supports him but has been on this journey with him the entire time. Ro has a website called Strong Prison Wives, where she's in contact with 40,000 people who have loved ones, spouses, and significant others in prison. It's a support and community group to help people cope with missing their loved ones. Ro has been with Adam for the last 12 years; she's been with him even though there was never much hope that he'd ever be free.

When he was released, he and Ro had to quarantine for fourteen days because of COVID. Remember I said that Adam committed robberies in Philadelphia. Well, the judge would not allow Adam to quarantine just anywhere. He had to quarantine somewhere in Pennsylvania. This caused a huge problem for us because, by the time Adam had served over twenty years in prison, he no longer had family or friends in Pennsylvania. We had a serious problem trying to find someone that Adam and Ro could quarantine with. Fortunately, one of those Department of Justice officials Adam worked with at his prison is now a state court judge, and that judge called me and said, "Shon, can you please tell the federal judge that Adam and Ro can quarantine at my house for 14 days? All I ask is that you not tell the media, but I would love for them to come and spend 14 days with me."

And they did. Adam spent his first 14 days of freedom at the house of a state court judge and former Department of Justice official.

They then moved to Las Vegas, where Adam began work at a place called Hope for Prisoners. Hope for Prisoners has been a very successful re-entry organization. They start by training people in Nevada prisons about what successful re-entry looks like. And then, when those people are released, they help provide them with resources in the community, including mentorship from Las Vegas police officers. This does two things. One, for the police officers, they begin to see that some of the people they arrested are not much different from them; it humanizes people that have criminal justice involvement for police officers. It's also beneficial for the people in prison, who largely have had nothing but negative experiences with law enforcement. They begin to see police not as an impediment, or as a threat or danger, but as a group of people who are trying to keep people safe, to help people. This program's been incredibly successful.

But eventually Adam grew restless with that because he saw that one of the things he could not provide was stable housing and employment. He's now moved on to a new opportunity. He's now a fund manager for what is going to be a huge opportunity zone in Las Vegas. That opportunity zone is given tax breaks under federal law, and they are looking to buy a piece of property to provide wrap-around services to formerly incarcerated people, as well as a mixed-use building that will have housing for people coming out of prison and commercial real-estate all in one place. This will be one big community where people are trying to help each other and support each other through re-entry.

Adam is creating this and fundraising at an incredible rate, and if he is successful in this endeavor, he will be able to scale this in cities across the country. This is a for-profit fund, I should add. The non-profit model has not worked very well in terms of providing stable housing and employment for people, so this is a fund where people with a lot of money can donate a significant amount for the tax breaks the federal government provides under these opportunity zones.

And so that is what Adam's doing today.

Where am I at, and what am I doing here, and why am I telling you all of this? I am currently sitting in a hotel room in Las Vegas, Nevada. Remember when I said that community is important for people to have a successful re-entry? I am a part of

Adam's community, and being part of that community means watching the big events in life. On Sunday, Adam Clausen is getting married to Ro. On February 13th—2/13. That's the date they picked because of Adam's 213-year sentence. I am looking forward to seeing them married and moving on with the next phase in their lives.

We're also representing Adam and trying to seek his early termination of supervised release, so that he no longer has to deal with the probation office, and it's been quite remarkable to see the number of people—influential people here in Las Vegas—who are supporting him, including a former federal prosecutor who's now a state court judge, a former sheriff, a person who is vice president of one of the largest casinos here in town... really just a who's who of Las Vegas leaders supporting Adam. Again, when people feel like they're given a second chance, and that they can make a difference and contribute to the world, it's amazing what people can accomplish, even if they've served a long term of imprisonment.

So, with that I'll quit talking and take some questions. If you have questions about re-entry, or the characteristics I have seen in people who've had successful re-entry, or the policies that've led to that success, please ask me.

Q1. Speaking about how hard prison-time is, and what judges and others do not fully comprehend when they sentence, would you be open to expanding on those sentiments? Ten years, fifteen years, twenty years—people on the outside have this inclination to say, "Yeah, that's all just time." But what's the real meaning of those differences, not only to experience but also on the backend with re-entry?

Yeah, I don't think that most policy-makers understand the level of punishment for one year in prison, let alone ten or fifteen. And that level of punishment has really been exacerbated during the pandemic, where a lot of prisons are on constant lockdown. Entire prisons are basically in solitary confinement. People do not have access to email and phone calls with loved ones. That negatively impacts re-entry and recidivism. We know that when people have consistent communication with loved ones, it tethers them to the outside world and has them focus on their release, rather than the day-to-day life in prison.

But it's also important for re-entry. Again, community: almost every single successful re-entry story I've seen involved community. But if somebody is serving a ten, fifteen, twenty-year sentence, and they're not allowed consistent contact with the outside world, well, they just don't have many friends and family left. That's not a good thing when somebody re-enters, because there are all sorts of things that could happen in the first two years when someone's released, when they're generally working at jobs that are on the lower socioeconomic end of the ladder, and anything can happen, including them losing that job. If somebody's living on the knife's edge, paycheck to paycheck, and they lose their job and have no community to fall back on, then they don't have a friend or family to go stay with, they lose their apartment... often times they're then put to the choice of homelessness or crime,

and that's often times when people reoffend. We need intervention so that people don't get to that point.

We're imposing way too much punishment on people, and it's *so* counterproductive. If the neuroscience says that our brains continue to change with external stimuli, and we know that the prison environment is incredibly dangerous, violent, with little hope, that there aren't many robust rehabilitation programs (although that's changing a little bit)... It's quite possible—and I would argue this is true—that the longer somebody spends in prison, the less likely they are to come out and be a successful, law-abiding citizen, because that external stimuli is giving their brains the wrong signals. All of the wrong signals.

Q2. Follow-up question to that: You talked about how few of these rehabilitative programs there are in the prison system. Can you talk a little more about what programs there are that do help with the re-entry process? Earlier you said that the re-entry process starts on day 1 of entering the prison. What do you think is being done well, and what could be improved or what other programs could be implemented to aid in that process?

Well, I think we're in a much better position now than we were ten years ago. Ten years ago, it was all about warehousing and punishment, and retribution. Ya know, in my ten and a half years in federal prison, I never heard a single staff member say the word "rehabilitation." Nobody even pretended like that was possible.

We are now putting more robust programs in place, and we're doing something that's a lot smarter than what we did in the past. We are providing robust rehabilitation and behavioral-change programs, and tying those to the incentive of early release. Many of the people in our prisons need incentives. They need to be nudged, in one direction or the other. And if they're not nudged in a positive direction, the prison system generally pulls them, nudges them, in the opposite direction. We need the incentive of early release—there's no better incentive for people in prison than the thought of getting out early.

We need more educational programs and more job-training programs, but we need the right programs. In the prison I was at—this is an indication of sometimes why our policies are bad—we had a very successful welding program. People were learning how to weld in the prison system and were getting out, and this is the type of blue-collar job where having a felony conviction is not necessarily a deal-breaker for employers. People were getting out and earning \$25 an hour for welding, and \$25 an hour for someone who was formerly incarcerated is like the gold standard. This program was working very well.

And then we got a new warden in. And the warden realized that if he changed the programs, the prison could get more money. And so he extinguished the welding program, and changed it for an associate's degree program in business management. Now you might be thinking, *Well why would you do that?!* Because there aren't many employers who are gonna hand the reins of their company over and let

someone manage their business who was just released from prison. That was an example of a policy change that was a bad move, because the people that were being helped through the welding program were moved into a program that was less likely to lead to stable employment.

We need more robust programs, we need educational programs, and again, Congress has made a very good move in the last two years by ending the ban on Pell-grants. We know that when people take educational programs in prison, it reduces their recidivism rate considerably.

Q3. In your opinion, are certain rehabilitative activities better than others? For instance, access to education versus access to trade-training?

Well, I think trade-training is incredibly important for male people in prison. Just because, again, it's easier to get hired. I had a lot of other friends who took machinist programs, and many of them are out and still doing machinist work today. That's because it's easier to get access to stable employment in some of the trades than it is through certain degree programs. But ideally, we would want both.

We would also want behavioral-change programs, ya know. I think one of the things we focus on with rehabilitation and re-entry is just trying to reduce recidivism and get people in a place where they can have a job and stable housing. But man, we're missing the boat on that, because, in my view, I would have loved to have programs that taught me to be a better husband, a better father, a better citizen serving the community. I feel like we could have programs like that.

We also just need programs on doing the basics of life. I was shocked at how many people in the prison I was at had never had a bank account, had never had a checking account that they had to balance. Some of those things were just little small life skills that we could be training people on the inside, prior to their release from custody.

Q4. Connected to your example of the welding program, have you seen advocates for those sorts of changes and programs get buy-in from those in the employment sector? For example, some states offer vocational jobs and skills-training in areas like HVAC and plumbing services, however in those same states the formerly incarcerated are not allowed to be licensed for those jobs, so that training is essentially useless.

Yes, this goes back to if we know that people can change, and we know that we can train people to be rehabilitated, and then give them job training, and then they go out and become successful, then that really means we need to reconsider so many of these collateral consequences.

There are so many states that have occupational licensing laws that freeze formerly incarcerated people out of huge swaths of professions. This includes—*notwithstanding yours truly*—the legal profession. In many states, if you have a felony conviction, you cannot go to law school. And you cannot become a licensed

lawyer because that bar association will say you don't have the character and fitness necessary to practice law. There are also a bunch of states that freeze people out of even trade services, and, again, that is really counterproductive. If people are learning those skills in prison, that's all they have when they are released, and they could be quite successful in those jobs.

Q5. We've talked about helping individuals with rehabilitation while they're incarcerated, but you've also talked about how important community is, and how some people have a community while others don't. Do you have any thoughts on the different re-entry court programs that are starting, such as the one starting up in Dayton at the federal courthouse? Any thoughts on the success of those programs, or what might help or won't help?

That's a great question, and one that I don't have a lot of answers to right now.

I have been fortunate enough to participate in a lot of re-entry courts in the federal court system, especially in federal district courts. However, I have not studied the success of that yet, other than the anecdotes I hear from the judges and the people that have gone through it. Even the prosecutors have told me that they think it's incredibly helpful.

I am getting ready to learn about that, though, because in one of my next pieces of scholarship I'm going to work with the Federal Judicial Center on studying the effectiveness of re-entry courts, veterans' courts, drug courts, and all of these other courts that try and push people out of incarceration and into different models of accountability in the federal system, rather than just perpetuating our huge reliance on incarceration and supervised release. What I do know, and, again, what I've seen and heard from the people that are involved is that these are incredibly important and very successful programs.

Also, I try to remind judges that a few positive comments at sentencing, or positive reinforcement in re-entry courts, goes a long way with people who are caught up in the system. They may not appreciate the judge's comments about what they are capable of doing as the judge is sentencing them to ten years of imprisonment. They may be angry and upset. But oftentimes they will come back to that throughout their time in prison and remember what the judge said. It may not be immediately, but it almost always has an impact. I think that the move towards these courts, especially re-entry courts, where the judge is working with them hand-in-hand and trying to help them, I think that's the model that's most successful. A model composed solely of rules and negative punishment on the back-end when you break those rules is not one that's going to be successful. If it were successful, people coming out of our prison system would not have such high recidivism rates.

Q6. What do you find are the major challenges of implementing more widespread programs? Is it funding, or is there pushback from wardens?

Well, I think funding in the prison system is always difficult. State legislatures generally don't want to allocate resources towards our prisons. We love to lock up tons of people, but we don't like to pay for it. And that is a problem in every state.

There are huge funding problems, both with creating robust rehabilitation programs in prison, but also creating re-entry services once someone's released. And again, you can do everything right at re-entry, but if you're not working on people while they're in the prison system then you're just not gonna have as great a success. The best re-entries were people that were thinking about the day they were released early on in their prison sentence.

That was certainly the case for me, that what I saw in the prison system was a series of people that would come in and out, in and out, and we had a funny but sad name for that. It was called "doin' life on the installment plan." The thing I remember thinking in my cell one night was, *I gotta figure out something to do with my life for the future, because I don't want to do that. I do not want to return to prison.* I think that if we provided some of these things, we would see a much more reduced recidivism rate, and less crime, and less re-victimization of people who are the victims of crime. I think we would all be better off.

Q7. Given the recent success in bipartisan criminal justice reform, do you think advocates should focus more on lessening collateral consequences, rather than other reforms that are more controversial now?

Yes, I think we need to push in every direction. It seems to me that in the current moment, with the increase in violent crimes and homicides, and the increasing crime rate, the political climate for sentencing reform is not very great. And so, I think that, until the crime rate goes down and the political climate becomes a little more hospitable to sentencing and prison reform, one of the things that we could push for is more policy change with collateral consequences and re-entry. 95% of the people that we send to American prison are gonna be released someday. It's therefore incumbent upon all jurisdictions to set-up re-entry programs, and sometimes the best re-entry programs are government run.

Though I have to say, I'm curious to see how Adam Clausen's fund, and this complex that he is trying to create, how that will work out. Because if that works, that could be a model for many other places. It's very difficult to get state governments to provide funding for people coming out of prison. American citizens will say, ya know, "I followed all the rules, *I'm* not getting free educational training in prison, *I'm* not getting free housing when I'm first released... Why should *they* get that?" Because of that mindset, it's very hard for state legislatures to allocate sufficient resources to re-entry. Maybe the answer is to use tax breaks for these federal opportunity zones to attract private funders who have a social-justice bent, and who want to create systems that both create profit for them while also helping people.

I will be curious to see if Adam is successful in this endeavor, because, if he is, what he's doing could be scalable to jurisdictions all over the country. Which just

reminds me again why Adam's case is such an illustration of the problems with our criminal justice system. Everyone knew from the day his sentence was imposed that it was unjust, and it took so many miracles for Adam to get out... The thought that he would serve the rest of his life in prison when he's now out in this community in Las Vegas, helping the community and welcomed by everyone, including some of the best and brightest of Las Vegas... It would have been a sad day had Adam never been released from prison. We as a society would have missed out on him.

Thank you for having me, thank you for creating this important symposium on such an important issue. I can't tell you how excited I am to watch Adam and Ro get married. They had their first son in July, and it's just so cool to see the work they're doing, and seeing Adam get the second chance that he rightly deserved.