

40 Years on the Front Lines

00:00:00 Sean Fearn: Good afternoon and welcome everyone. A special welcome both to those who are joining us here in the auditorium this afternoon, as well as those joining us via our live webcast from around the globe on the museum website.

This month of July we mark the 40th anniversary of the Drug Enforcement Administration. Today, we're going to take some time to look back at four decades of great DEA cases, great operations going after the biggest of the big and the baddest of the bad drug traffickers.

00:00:31 DEA has been on the tip of the spear, in the trenches and on the frontlines, for 40 years, now. We've assembled an amazing and perhaps even entertaining panel for us this afternoon. DEA chiefs of operations that go back through our 40-year history. We are lucky to have seven of them with us this afternoon.

Our moderator today for this esteemed group is the current chief of operations, Special Agent James Capra. Prior to his law enforcement career, Mr. Capra served in the United States Navy, the United States Navy Reserve, the Air National Guard and as a military intelligence officer with the United States Army Reserve.

00:01:12 Mr. Capra began his federal law enforcement career with DEA in the New York Field Division in 1987. As a field agent and as a group supervisor, Mr. Capra served in the Los Angeles Field Division and the DEA New Jersey Field Division. Mr. Capra was assigned here to DEA headquarters from 1999 to 2004, where he served in the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, assistant to the chief of Operations and as chief of Domestic Operations.

00:01:42 Then, in 2004, filled the position of associate special agent in charge of the Miami Field Division, followed in 2006 by advancement to special agent in charge of the Dallas Field Division. Then, in August of 2012, Mr. Capra was selected by DEA

administrator, Michele Leonhart, who joins us today -- welcome, ma'am -- to serve as DEA's chief of operations.

00:02:06 As the chief of operations, he serves as the principle advisor to the DEA administrator on all law enforcement related matters. In this role, he is responsible for leading worldwide drug enforcement operations for our agency's 227 domestic and 86 foreign offices, as well as the Special Operations Division, the Aviation Division and the Office of Diversion Control.

00:02:31 Before we bring Mr. Capra up, I'll just ask to remind you that we'll have a question and answer period at the end, so please come up with some great questions for our panel following our discussion Ladies and gentlemen, please help me in welcoming to the stage Mr. James Capra.

00:02:54 James Capra: Thank you. Well, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, what a panel we have. I worked, I think for all of you, maybe with the exception of one. And by the way, nobody but your mother likes a bio. I get the opportunity to introduce a little background on our esteemed guests that are here this morning. And we're going to start with Tom Harrigan.

00:03:21 Tommy began his career with DEA as a special agent in 1987 in New York Field Division. From there, he held positions in Bangkok County Office, the Newark Field Division, Congressional and Public Affairs, Domestic Operations at headquarters, the Washington Field Division, and in 2009 as a chief of operations, until his most recent Senate confirmation in 2012 as the current deputy administrator for DEA. Mr. Thomas Harrigan. Tommy? [Applause] Yeah, he's supposed to come up. He still doesn't follow instructions. Friggin' guy used to work for me.

00:04:02 Mike Braun. Michael started in DEA in 1987 -- I almost said '47 -- 1987, after serving in the Marines and working in local and state police agencies for 11 years. His career spanned postings in Los Angeles, Houston, Detroit and St. Louis Field

Division offices, as well as three tours at DEA headquarters, including OCIDEF, the Office of Intelligence and, finally, chief of operations, until his retirement in 2008.

00:04:34 He is currently a managing partner at Spectre Group International, a company he co-founded with Doug Wankel. Mr. Braun? [Applause]

Joseph Keefe. Joe began as a special agent in 1971 for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, BNDD, a predecessor of DEA, and held positions in Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, Florida, North Carolina and several tours at headquarters that included the Office of Public Affairs, Special Operations Division and, finally, chief of operations, until his retirement from DEA in 2003, when he went to work for ONDCP.

00:05:16 He is currently is a research staff member for the Institute for Defense Analysis. Joe? [Applause]

Richard Fiano. Richie joined DEA as a special agent in 1975. During his 35-year career, he traveled extensively in Europe, the Middle East, Southwest Asia and served in multiple positions at headquarters, including the Office of Special Operations and the Planning and Inspection Division.

00:05:45 He was the chief of operations from 1999, to 2000, and retired in 2005 after serving as the regional director for Europe and Africa. Mr. Fiano currently works as a criminal investigation division commander for the Louden County, Virginia, Sheriff's Office. Richie? [Applause]

00:06:08 Douglas Wankel. Doug joined BNDD in 1971 and served in a number of domestic and foreign assignments, including the country attaché in Afghanistan and then Pakistan. He later served at the FBI through a senior executive exchange program, before retiring in 1996 as DEA's chief of operations. In 2003, DEA asked him to return -- or we call it "recycled," Doug -- as the chief of intelligence.

00:06:38 After a second DEA stint, he became director of the Kabul Counter Narcotics Task Forces, before co-founding the Spectre Group International with Michael Braun, where he is a managing partner. Doug? Thank you. [Applause]

00:06:55 David Westrate. Dave's career began in 1964 with the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, DEA's predecessor agency, before transitioning into BNDD and then DEA. He held positions in Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, Washington DC, and headquarters, where he held positions in the Planning and Inspection Division, and as the first assistant administrator for Intelligence. He was the chief of operations from 1984 to 1990, before retiring in 1999 as the director of training at Quantico, Virginia.

00:07:31 After retirement, he worked for MVM Incorporated, and is currently involved in business development for that company. Dave? [Applause]

Mr. Frank Monastero. Frank started working in 1966 for the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control, BDAC, a predecessor agency to DEA. He had postings in Boston, New York, Kansas City and various stints in headquarters, including in Intelligence, Information Technology, and the director of training in 1980.

00:08:08 He requested and was granted a demotion to chief pilot to pursue his passion for flying. In 1981, he became chief of operations and held that position until his retirement in 1985. Frank, please join us. [Applause]

00:08:30 I have to start with -- I have to start with this. I have to. I have to apologize to Joe and Richie to start out with. Many of you know that one of the most important positions besides the chief of operations is a horse holder position. And horse holders are -- they are executive assistants is what they are. Richie hired me and - myself and another fellow, Sweetin, were his horse holders, and we were handed over to Joe, as your horse holders.

00:09:06 Now, I have a couple horse holders, and I have to apologize. I didn't do anything that these guys do. Nothing at all. So, yeah, you knew that. As a matter of fact, the thing that stands out the most, besides, Rich, I got there as a horse holder and like two months later you told me you were leaving. So, I had that going for me.

00:09:26 Richard Fiano: I couldn't stand the guilt.

James Capra: Yeah. And then Joe, I'll never forget, Joe comes in. We have it -- I have it down in my date book. You came in at 7:30 in the morning, this first morning, and you just looked at us and said, "Oh, this is going to be great." And then I think it was about a couple of months later he walks in -- this is a true story -- he walks in and says, "I got a speech. I got to do a speech. How's my speech coming?" Of which Jeff Sweetin looked at you say, "We don't do speeches."

00:09:53 I'm not kidding you. "We don't do speeches." So, I apologize to you. I actually have guys who actually really do work a lot. So, it is -- it really is a distinct honor to be up here, today, and to kind of host the panel, here. And there's a lot of questions. And I think the first thing that we want to be able to talk about is this 40 years. And we, currently, all of us, here, active, and I've always said this, we are fortunate that we stand on the shoulders of great men and women who came before us who paved the way.

00:10:26 We have better tools, today. We have better laws, today. We have better investigative capability and that's all because of what you all have done in the past. And so I want to personally thank you for that, and we can give them a round of applause for that because that's important. [Applause] And that includes all the men and women who came before us.

00:10:44 But I think I want to first start out with probably when you look back during your tenure what in your mind -- what stands out as what you thought was your most challenging -- your most challenging part of being a chief of ops, and I'll open it up.
Doug?

Doug Wankel: Avoiding Mr. Constantine when he first came in. No. [Laughter]

00:11:10 Tom Harrigan: It's funny, mine was cleaning up Braun's mess.

Doug Wankel: You know, it's interesting. Special agents, and law enforcement, in general, especially when you work drug cases and things along those lines, and at the level that DEA does, internationally, as well as domestically at the highest level of penetration and building cases and doing things, managers -- I think managers all the way up, from group supervisors, all the way up to chief of operations -- you're very concerned and very worried about the safety and security of your personnel.

00:11:46 And, so, the thing that I always focused on and tried to instill in people around me that were involved in supporting and providing for the workforce that were actually doing the cases, doing the work, was to make sure that everybody that came to work in the morning went home at night. And so you did what was necessary to make sure that was first and that was paramount. And that was the thing that I wanted to focus on throughout my career whenever I was involved in management situations.

00:12:11 James Capra: I'd like to hear from Mr. Monastero. When you look back in your time as the most senior chief of operations, here, you know, what in your mind and at the time was paramount?

Frank Monastero: Well, probably the biggest challenge I had was the scope of responsibility. As the first chief of operations I had everything except administration and inspection, which was a little overwhelming.

00:12:40 But the thing I probably was most concerned with was maintaining integrity always, high standards and probably, as important as those, effective, interpersonal communications. You know, if you don't get the proper message, nothing really gets done. So, those were the things that I felt were the challenges. Not the

operational challenges, but, you know, the things that I worried about. And, of course, like Doug, I always worried about people coming home safely.

00:13:18 James Capra: Absolutely. Dave, I'm curious. You had -- you also had training. When you look back in DEA's training, when you look back to what it was to where it is, give me some of your insight as far as where we were. And you were actively involved, we see you in a lot of events, like we see many of us, but today, and you're intimately -- have knowledge of the training environment. How do you see where we were, where we're at, and maybe where we're going?

00:13:48 David Westrate: Well, Jimmy, when I came on the job in 1964, we really didn't go to training for a year because they wanted us to finish our probationary period before they invested in the training, actually. And after that year period of time we came back to Washington -- we were in the Treasury Department, then, and we did three weeks as a basic Treasury agent, and then two weeks of Narcotics training, and that basically was it. So, your training was really up to your senior partner. And in those days the partners -- senior, junior partners -- system was very strong. So, that was really where your street training came in.

00:14:22 And over the years, of course, training has grown. I was fortunate enough to be the agent in charge of the training division for the five years during which we built the Justice Training Center at Quantico. When I was there, agent training was 16 weeks. Now I understand it's 18 weeks. And things have gotten so much more complex, today. But to see that training facility, and to see how it services the agency, and when agents go through there as basic agents and come back as -- for training as first line supervisors and so forth, I think it's really the glue that holds the troops together and gives the people something to look at and focus on that's not just headquarters..

00:14:58 It's sort of a grounding thing for I think the workforce. But the training I think is outstanding. The clan lab training, for example, when I was chief operations, one of the first things we did was authorize the first clandestine laboratory raid truck, or

van, or whatever they call them, today. Now there's several generations have gone through there. So, I tried to look at our programs.

00:15:24 The challenge of crack cocaine and the cocaine flow, itself, led to Snowcap while I was chief of operations. But as Doug and others have mentioned, getting people home safely, and how do you train our agents to do that? This is really a paramilitary type of operation. Which today you're all familiar with it as fast teams in Afghanistan and other places. And it's a combination of law enforcement, military, the intelligence community and all of that.

00:15:50 So, one of the things we did was ask the military, the training and doctrine command of the Army to come in and study what we do, study what we wanted to do in South America, and come up with a training and curriculum for us that basically was a ranger school. And we would send our guys to ranger school, which took a couple of months, as I recall, to go through before they were deployed. The only training they didn't get was desert -- the desert aspects of it. So, really, our training I think has developed very well, along with the agency, to meet our challenges.

00:16:19 James Capra: Thank you. Rich, you -- of course, I got to see you up-close in person, but you did things a little bit different when you were chief of operations - decided to go back out. Where a lot of chiefs of operations either die or, you know, or others -- or have electrical problems. Can you talk about that? Or you had bad horse holders and you had to get the hell out.

00:16:51 Richard Fiano: I wanted to leave carrying my shield, rather than be carried on it, or out of it. I always felt that the -- and if you remember when you were the executive assistant up there. I always put the rank and file first. I always -- I tried never to forget that I came from the ranks, from the field, and that every decision we made in headquarters, as a chief of operation, affected those other 4,499 agents.

00:17:24 And, although you had to -- you had to understand that there were certain things where the agency came first, you really had to put the rank and file up there. How is this going to affect the guy in the field in his day-to-day operations? And I tried never, ever to forget that. And sometimes, you know, it worked, and sometimes you get overridden on that. But I always felt that the job and what I came on this job was to do in the field.

00:17:55 So, quite honestly, I had had enough of Washington. You know, I was the SOD SAC, I was the chief of Domestic Operations, and then the chief of operations and it was -- the stars were really all aligned. The guy who was in Rome, which was a job I always wanted as an agent - I either had not enough juice to get that job, or had too much juice to get it. And the guy before me he left a year early and I said, look, you know, it's something I want to do.

00:18:27 And then the administrator, Donnie Marshall, says, you know, I don't think that can happen. And he went to the AG, and the AG says, you know what, Fiano's been a good soldier and he did his time and, you know, let him go there and finish out his career where he wants to be. And it was one of the best assignments because I'm back with the guys in the field, mentoring those guys.

00:18:54 And just as an aside, I'm sitting there with one of the new agents that was recently assigned to Rome. And he comes in there and he says to me, he says, "Boss," he says, "So, when did you come on this job?" I said, "Well, I came on the DA in '71, but I actually came on in '71." So, he starts laughing, you know. I says, "What's so funny?" He says, "I was born in '69." So, that kind of gives you an idea. But that said, that was my thoughts.

00:19:23 James Capra: That's great. Joe, real quick, is it true that you were are a counselor for juvenile delinquents.

Joseph Keefe: It was.

James Capra: It was. So, when you get on DEA, really, no difference.

Joseph Keefe: I didn't have to go to basic school.

James Capra: Fortunately, I've worked for Joe, too. Joe, talk a little bit about, you know, we joke here and kid around with our guests, but they are -- they are serious leaders. And when you have the opportunity to serve under men and women like that, it changes you and it should change you, and it changes the agency.

00:20:02 So, Joe and Rich, both, I was fortunate to call them both mentors for me. But, Joe, I'd ask you, when you think about your time, here, challenges and all, kind of put your -- if you had to tell people here was my philosophy as the chief of operations. Here's my leadership philosophy. This is what I thought about at the time. Can you share?

00:20:25 Joseph Keefe: Well, I would echo all the comments made before me, certainly, first of all. I think I was fortunate to be chief of operations. It was an honor, a privilege. When I came in, I was fortunate to have been at SOD. So, I saw a lot of the agency and what was going on. And I just saw if I'm in the opportunity, can I help move this agency? It's a great agency and they're doing great things. Is there something I can try and push to help us be better?

00:20:50 And what I wanted to do was I thought it was time that we had regional directors. Our cases were primarily overseas. We had offices reporting to headquarters, but didn't know what other countries were doing. And I thought that headquarters should be changed from drug desk, to regional desk, to local and stuff. And I struggled with that because some people didn't agree with it and, naturally, I expected that. But I just didn't - I was always struggling with: How am I not going to screw this up?

00:21:18 Because I thought it was really important and I thought it was a really important time for us to move forward because we were -- we are still very good. But we were very good, and we had so much to offer, but we needed to talk to ourselves more. We needed the SACs to be talking to regional directors. We needed more information flow. And that to me was a big challenge.

00:21:37 One of the other big challenges that happened was 9/11, as you well know. That was a tough day. And I worried about the people big time more and more after that. I was worried about our guys and girls overseas have the trade craft because I was, like everybody else: What else is going to happen next? So, that really concerned me and I tried to talk to people. Of course, we weren't spending enough money on it at the time. But those were the tremendous challenges.

00:22:01 And something you just mentioned, today, which I didn't realize, now I realize what the challenge was. That I didn't know you were a military intelligence officer.

James Capra: Funny thought. I want to get back to that in a minute. Mike, we've been a nation at war for a long time. You were here when we created FAST. And I like to ask you as the chief of Operations during the height of things, what were your challenges in getting that off the ground. Because there was big pushback in the beltway, if I remember.

00:22:38 We had a lot of pushback. Were we going to be able to do these things. Joe, 9/11, three days later people were asking us for access to our informants everywhere. So, people knew the value of DEA, the value of what we had. But, Mike, you saw things a little bit differently as we moved ahead.

00:22:57 Mike Braun: Yeah. Joe was there, you know, very near post-9/11, but we were, when I came on in 2005, it was still a different mood than it is today in our country. Still, very much near post-9/11. And I think one of the things that I struggled with, and I

know that Michele was struggling with as the deputy, and Karen as the administrator, was we knew the power and certainly recognized and appreciated -- had a deep respect and appreciation for the power of DEA.

00:23:32 And let me just say this right now, and I've said it many times, you know, pound for pound, dollar for dollar, there's not another three-letter agency in our nation's security apparatus that contributes more in keeping our citizens alive and safe each day than the organization that you all work for, and that those who are watching this live work for. You have a great deal to be proud of.

00:23:54 But with that said, what I was struggling with is, okay, how do we keep the agency relevant? Because in a large part -- and I know Joe felt this pain. In a large part, the nation had forgotten about drugs. That as we -- and, fortunately, I was very fortunate in that as the acting assistant administrator I was able to lead intel for almost a year before I moved down the hallway to ops.

00:24:24 But what we realized and saw emerging was, you know, this continued kind of growing confluence between drugs and terror more and more designated terrorist organizations were getting involved in the global drug trade. And when you start, you know, when we started weighing that, you know, I felt that if the agency was going to get additional funding, which we desperately needed because our budget for all intents and purposes flatlined, at best and, quite frankly, dipped with inflation and those kinds of things.

00:25:04 If we were going to continue to survive and continue to grow as an organizations, I felt very strongly that we needed to align ourselves a bit more closely with the two departments in this town. The only two at the time that had any money whatsoever. And really then it was only one, and that was the Department of Defense. Even State was struggling in a big way; didn't have the monies they needed to do what they needed to do, what they had been used to doing, Jimmy, globally.

00:25:34 They were very much focused in Iraq, very much focused on Afghanistan. And, you know, no fault to them, but they had turned away from many, many other parts of the world that we were involved in. So, if we could dip into their war chest more deeply, then, you know, the way I looked at it, for every dime we could get out of them we could probably free up at least a few cents to grow our domestic and to support even more strongly our domestic operations. So, those are the kinds of things that I worked very hard on.

00:26:09 FAST was very much an important part of that. The personnel recovery capacity, you know, I'm very proud of the fact that the DEA was the first civilian agency to sign the MOU with DOD, and to initiate a formalized personnel recovery program that's alive and thrives today. And you would probably agree with me it's probably saved a few lives and some other things along the way, as well.

00:26:36 James Capra: Absolutely, absolutely. Thanks, Mike. Tom Harrigan and I have had sort of a parallel career. He's not only the deputy, but a close friend of mine. Tom and I came on the same time. He worked in New York, I went to LA. We went to Newark as supervisors together. Got lateralled to headquarters in Congressional Affairs on the same cable. Got promoted to fifteens on the same cable.

00:27:01 When I got promoted to domestic ops, Tom was the deputy, went out as an ASAC. Came back and took my job, and has continued. I used to tell him, "Keep going, Tom. You're doing good, if I can follow you." But he now serves certainly as the deputy and we're fortunate and blessed for that. Tom, I'll just- because I think you're -- when you think about where we're at right now, and you're looking downrange, tell me what worries -- I know what it is -- but tell me what worries you, or what you think is going to be challenges for our country as we move ahead in ten years.

00:27:40 I mean, our careers have overlapped with many of these professionals, here. When you look downrange, what are going to be the challenges?

Tom Harrigan: Well, I think, you know, without question, Jimmy, as we've discussed in several forums, whether it's internal or external DEA, certainly technology, without question. These cartels have become much more sophisticated. Their infrastructures mirror Fortune 500 companies.

00:28:14 As I said numerous times, drug trackers aren't necessarily in the business to traffic drugs. They're in the business to make money. So, anyway they're going to do that, any way they can accomplish that to make that extra buck they're going to take advantage of it. So, working very closely, obviously, with ST, with SOD, we try to stay one step ahead of the cartels. But it's extraordinarily difficult, especially in today's environment.

00:28:44 People see what's in the news, nowadays. So, it's certainly a challenge. Another thing that quite honestly worries me is the whole legalization movement. We've seen it not only in our country, but in countries in South America. People are wondering why in Mexico they've lost thousands of their soldiers and police. In Colombia, our very close partners - our closest partners - in South America, they've lost literally thousands of their soldiers and police officers fighting the battle, the scourge of drug trafficking.

00:29:18 And that greatly concerns me because I think as a nation we may have taken the eye off the ball I think as Mike alluded to earlier, with Joe, where, you know, people lost sight of drugs and the danger and the damage that they cause to communities and families. It is something that worries me each and every day. Because, again, I think if we -- and I know we as an agency continue to try to pull and focus America's attention on this issue.

00:29:50 We must continue that battle and make sure that the American public and our government and our partners all around the world -- because, again, we, and principally DEA, is looked at by other countries. Right now we're in 86 countries -- actually, 86 offices in 67 countries around the globe. We have the largest law enforcement presence around the globe. Our counterparts look up to us and we need to

continue to lead the charge, to lead the fight. And without question that's something that is a significant challenge, I believe.

00:30:26 James Capra: Thanks, Tom. In the last -- in the last three or four days, we've arrested significant traffickers in Mexico: Miguel Trevino Morales. Funny, the administrator and I were just there for the weekend and they got him. So, coincidence? I think not. But we're really doing significantly powerful things with our counterparts.

00:30:52 Let me pose this and open it up. When you look at 30 years ago, to where we are today, what's the biggest surprise that you have regarding the trafficking organizations? What is it when you look at from where you stood to where we are today to say either I saw that coming or didn't see that coming? Or, I was surprised that this was going on? What do you -- for any of you. Open it up, anybody.

00:31:24 Joseph Keefe: I think 30 years ago we were by bust. We were into statistics. We were into arrests. Your supervisor wanted to know how many cases you had, how many informants, how many -- I mean, you had to do your statistical report. So, it was about you and the cases you were doing. And you had partners, you needed people for surveillance. Wire taps people didn't want to do because they were too much work. Even if you could get a prosecutor to do one, that was another issue.

00:31:47 And it's lucky over time we've had really bright people, a few, come along, and I mean that sincerely. And I could name them, but I'd miss some. If you listen to them, and I was fortunate enough to be around some of them, and you say, wow, this is the way we got to go. We got to go after organizations. We got to improve ourselves. We got to work together, we've got to share information. That was unheard of. A guy from Boston calling New York asking for something? Yeah, nice talking to you. It was ridiculous.

00:32:13 So, when you look at things, now, those were big, big movements. And then, of course, technology and the changes with technology, as Tommy has mentioned, this is an important battle. I think when you look at 30 years and look at what guys and girls are doing today, it's tremendous.

James Capra: I think you're exactly right. Anybody else? Tommy.

Tom Harrigan: I think, Jimmy, when you look at it, it's almost like we take a snapshot of a moving train, if you will, where we've seen the evolution of these cartels, whether it was in the '80s in southeast Asia, the Golden Triangle. You know, at the time, 90-plus percent of the heroin that was seized here in the United States came from southeast Asia.

00:32:50 Then you saw these vertically integrated Colombian cartels, the Medellin and the Cali cartel, in the '90s. We've seen what's happened in Mexico. And I think part of it -- the success that we've had going after the cartels in southeast Asia, where we see virtually no heroin from southeast Asia here in the United States. Where we've seen -- as Colombian President Santos mentioned last week with the extradition of El Loco, Barrera Barrera, he's the last of the great kingpins.

00:33:26 And that goes, you know, to great I think selling point for Plan Colombia, the success that we've had. And then what we're seeing in Mexico, now. We're seeing, because of what the previous administration, the Calderon, what the Peña Nieto administration is now obviously doing with the great success that you just mentioned. That is a trafficker he has been on the lam for several years. He is not only a drug trafficker, but he is violent scum.

00:33:57 There is no other way to describe Trevino and all of the Zeta's, for that matter. So, that is a very positive movement. So, again, I think it's just a snapshot over the years. As the train moves along you see these cartels the way they're moving to Africa. We've seen in Europe. We've seen -- you just, you and the administrator, just

participated in [Idek] in Russia. The concern that they have in Russia with the heroin issue and the cocaine from South America.

00:34:28 So, again, I think starting with Mr. Monastero, up to you, now, you just see as it moves along just the proliferation of these different cartels and our programs and our policies and how we combat them, and how successful we've been.

James Capra: Mike.

Mike Braun: First of all, I would agree with everything that everyone has said. The sophistication, organizationally and operationally of the cartels in Mexico or Colombia, no matter where they're at, is unprecedented.

00:34:59 But with that said, you can go all the way back to Frank's time, or you can leap forward I think 30 years from now, and you're going to have some underlying commonality. You're going to have corruption, which is really -- it is what generates most all of this activity. And I don't think it's being addressed as aggressively by our country or any other country around the world as it should be right now.

00:35:27 You know, the Mexican cartels are dumping millions, tens of millions of dollars into their efforts to -- into corrupt our side of the border. They've very successfully done their side of the border, but now our side of the border. I mean, recent reporting that as many as it was 300 or 500 CVP officers have been arrested over the last five years for corruption. I mean, that's -- you know, and we've all been in this business a long time. That's the tip of the iceberg and we know that it's not just CVP.

00:36:00 It's, you know, we have had our problems in DEA. The FBI has had their share, ICE, and others. But I, you know, what you can't forget about is oftentimes I think you're overwhelmed with, you know, the complexity and the sophistication of these groups, let's never forget about what drives them and, again, what was driving them 30 years ago, and what's going to be driving them thirty years from now: corruption,

intimidation, violence, the hallmarks of organized crime. And if you attack that, I think you can be successful.

00:36:32 James Capra: Thanks, Mike. Richie.

Richard Fiano: I don't think I could have envisioned the rise in synthetic drugs. And I look at this more from a local perspective, now. What we see now is, between synthetic drugs and prescription drugs, we're our own source country. The overdose deaths in the county, or the overdose hospital rooms admissions are all from prescription drugs and bath salts.

00:37:04 So, you know, when we came on it was heroin, coke, marijuana, you get a little bit of acid here and there. But now you've got all the analogs and prescription drugs. I have a newfound appreciation for some of the things the Administrator Constantine did with state and locals because -- sorry, Doug. [Laughter]

00:37:26 Because I'll tell you, it's -- state and locals in most of the cities of this country do not have the capabilities to address those issues. So, fortunately, you know, both the sheriff, myself, a former DEA guy, [Phil Ranazizi], and his group are helping us a lot with prescription and the synthetic drugs.

00:37:52 But that's -- I don't think I could have envisioned that 30 years ago; the problems that we're having with the analogs, bath salts, ketamines and that kind of stuff.

James Capra: Mr. Monastero, you had something?

Tom Harrigan: Jimmy, if I could, before, sir, let me -- if I could tell a quick story about Richie. I remember years ago with -- principally with the ecstasy, with Richie and Joe, it was certainly on their plate almost on a daily basis. And Richie was testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, and at the time the chairman was Vice President Biden.

00:38:22 And Richie was very passionate the way he would tell a story. And you could see that the vice president just loved Richie. And after there was some give and take with other members of the panel, I'll never forget, you know, Vice President Biden looking -- and as opposed to referring to him as Chief of Operations, or Mr. Fiano, he goes, "Richie, what do you think?" And it was like one of his buddies back in The Bronx, you know. But it was very endearing to see the vice president -- well, obviously, the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee -- looked at Richie, just sort of sidestepped everybody else on the panel and looked exactly at Richie and said, "Richie, what do you think?" Because, again, even then, the vice president realized who he was talking to on the panel. I'm sorry, Mr. Monastero.

00:39:05 Frank Monastero: I just wanted to go back to something Joe obliquely mentioned. Most people are not aware of this, but during the Nixon Administration, which was in the early '70s, he, personally, realized the significance of drugs and the detriment to the country. And so he focused on it and he made his administration focus on it.

00:39:31 And it was a different time. I happened to be the chief of Enforcement Policy at the time. And I would spend -- I would go to the White House once or twice a month to talk to people about our drug situation and so forth. I met with the Science Advisory Panel to explain to them what we did, what the priorities were and so forth. Even had Henry Kissinger involved.

00:40:00 It made a big difference that the administration and the president had a focus on drugs. And, of course, eventually, as everybody remembers, one of the things he was aware of was the perception on the street. And so he created the ODALE Operation, if you remember, which was to make people on the street, the local people, aware of the fact that the administration was doing something about drugs. It was a different time, then, than it is now, I believe, and has been for some time. It made a big difference.

00:40:42 James Capra: Thank you. Let me talk really quickly. When we talk about our people as a whole, we talk about the culture that we're in. I think - I grew up in a cop's home. My father had a 10th grade education, but loved being a cop. When he talked about the job, he didn't talk about arrests, or gunfights. He talked about men and women eking out an existence. But when he talked about it, his eyes lit up and he was proud of it.

00:41:08 And then I come into this culture and we meet the same types of men and women on a daily basis who, if you sat there, they would say I'm called - this is my calling in life to do this. And there's a level of humility; there's a few egos, you know, here and there. But what I'm leading into is a lot of, um, a lot of people in different agencies I don't think really fully grasp our men and women because we're a single agency with a single mission of how our men and women -- what kind of experts they are, what kind of professionals they are.

00:41:45 And I'm going to bother you, Joe, because I want you to, if you would, tell the story after 9/11, we have to get volunteers, agent volunteers from the field to put them on planes. The attorney general, if I'm right, says I need you to volunteer. Half of our workforce, I believe, volunteer -- half of our workforce -- while others were trying to get MOUs signed. Joe, you got to tell the story, please, about the FAM -- the guy who said about his -- you just got to share it.

00:42:17 Joseph Keefe: It was a Friday right after 9/11 and Administrator Hutchinson came to us and said that we had been asked if we would have agents volunteer to become FAMs, because nobody else wanted to join. But Administrator Hutchinson said, hey, I've agreed to do it and the attorney general is going to give us the authority to do it. So, we went out in cables to the field that afternoon, Jimmy, as you remember, and we had 1,000 people put in.

00:42:44 Needless to say, because nobody was flying, we could only take agents from the East Coast. So, I'm on the phone with this poor guy at the FAA who had a staff of maybe two, the way it sounded. So, he's going through these things with me. He said, okay, we're going to need trainings. They're going to be at least two weeks. I said, okay, we'll train them for two weeks. We have to have people come to Atlantic City because that's where our training center is, have them bring a small bag -- just one small bag. And then they'll go off from there on their assignments.

00:43:12 So, I said, well, if they're going to bring a small bag and be gone for that long period of time, they'll look like the Middle Easterners that we're trying to find. And this conversation went on for some time. So, then he told me, he said, well, we need 50, but please send us 100 because I know your guys won't pass the firearms test. So, I said, with all due respect to you, I said, are the planes they're going to be on bigger than the planes they were on before 9/11? Because if our guys and girls fail that test then they shouldn't be here, either.

00:43:41 So, I said, I'm pretty sure we'll be fine with that. So, then we go on how long we're going to do it and we agreed. I said, hey, 30 days. Because I sat there -- and as Richie said before about yourself, I'm saying, okay, I'm going to ask people to volunteer to go on these flights for this 30 days. Because I said I would go nuts if I had to do this for any longer period of time, so I'm not going to ask people to do it themselves. So, we agreed to 30 days. We got the people. All the divisions on the East Coast agreed and we sent them.

00:44:09 But, by the time we finished the conversation that night we went from two weeks training to two days of training. This was their request, not mine.

James Capra: And this is after our guys were going -- because I remember the phone call. Because you'd sit there and go like this in front of me. And they did. The guy said, oh, my god, these guys are great.

Joseph Keefe: Yeah, they were good. So, they kept coming and asking us.

James Capra: Yeah, and then didn't he ask us, hey how can you train our guys?
How can you train our guys?

00:44:36 Joseph Keefe: It was a tribute to our people that did it. We were the first ones in. We did about six months.

James Capra: Yes, sir.

Joseph Keefe: A lot of people went through. We allowed people to go another 30 days if they wanted, and then after that I said to the SACs, if you have anybody that wants to stay after the first 60 days, then I don't want them on a plane because they got to be going nutty. Or, you don't want them in your division. So, we ended nobody could do more than 60 days. But it was a tremendous, tremendous turnout. All our folks did a great job and we had no problems.

James Capra: It was great.

Joseph Keefe: It was a great tribute.

00:45:05 James Capra: That was great. Yes, sir, Dave.

David Westrate: I'd like to make one comment. I've always said that I wouldn't want to have DEA after me. And I say that because of the innovation and the aggressiveness and the ability of people never to quit on the job and all that. But I think as importantly, the agency always has allowed and encouraged innovation, and you can see that in all the programs that have developed over the years, like SOD and Asset Forfeiture and the intelligence program.

00:45:36 We always seem to be working ahead of the curve. Somebody has always got a new idea and the agency always seems to allow that and encourage that. And I've always been very proud of that and I think it really adds to the strength of the organization, and to the attitude that people have about working here.

James Capra: That's exactly right. Thanks. You know, it's easy to talk about challenges, you know, so many. It's easy if I was to say, hey, what was one of your worst times? We know that's going.

00:46:02 But individually I'd be interested, when you look at your career, if you could say this was one of the highlights of my career. I mean, this moment, you know, what it was. Because it'd be easy to say what was the worst. I can imagine what the worst time can be. But what's, when you look back in a career that has gone by for me in a blink, and I'm sure for others. Dave we talk about this from time to time. It's just going by.

00:46:30 What's the -- what's your highlight? What's your highlight, Doug, when you look about it?

Doug Wankel: [Unintelligible] ask me. As being one of the guys in the senior citizen row, here, I think that I would like to take the liberty of doing something else, first. May I?

James Capra: Yes, sir.

Doug Wankel: Okay. It's only going to take about three or four minutes. We're sort of talking like here like we're in the 40-year phase and this has always been what DEA is and what DEA has done. I was around before DEA came in and then I started with DEA. So, I was just thinking yesterday and today about what exists today that didn't exist 40 years ago.

00:47:11 James Capra: Very good.

Doug Wankel: So, let me talk about a couple of things here that might surprise you. Forty-one, forty-one-and-a-half years ago, there were no female agents in DEA. There were no female agents in law enforcement until I think '72 when the FBI hired two, and then later DEA came in. So, that's been a remarkable change since then. I mean, there's women getting hired, women coming on. Some of them have done okay. You probably see a few people around that have been able to get promoted and, oh, there's Michele.

00:47:42 So, that's a remarkable change when you look at society today to think that back 41 years ago women weren't allowed in federal law enforcement. So, that's a big deal. Some other significant happenings that come on -- people have alluded to or talked to, here, DEA is a domestic agency in the Department of Justice in the United States, we all know that. But DEA functions and works like an international agency, all right.

00:48:06 When you look at what's gone on from the time of Jack Cusack, back in Mr. Monastero, or before Monastero's era, things that were developed back then. We were in foreign 60 or 70 years ago doing stuff, and now we've grown exponentially in the last 40 years, and it's so important and so critical, and has led to a lot of the major investigations and cases the DEA does on a daily basis. State and local, as Richie was talking about, state and local are key and critical, our bread and butter, and we think like state and locals, and we're not a federal agency that's too good for state and locals. We're very much brethren with them and do things with them.

00:48:42 When I went to Detroit - it was 1970, not '71, by the way. When I went to Detroit, we were using index cards to file and do things. You didn't have [Matus] come on in the past 40 years, and that's been a big deal. Diversion has become a huge,

important key component of the drug enforcement administration, given responsibilities that came into DEA as it was created.

00:49:07 Intel Division. Intel Division didn't exist. Wasn't around. And the guy sitting on my left was a key person for that. By the way, he said he'd hate to have DEA after him. There was a time in his career the DEA was after him, seriously.

Dick Westrate: That's why I say it.

Doug Wankel: Seriously. Yeah, I know, because you saw, right?

The tech division. I mean, there were things being done, created, hidden and put together for tracking and doing stuff that people couldn't have imagined around the world.

00:49:36 We've done stuff that is beyond what any other law enforcement agency, be it the FBI, or anybody else has been able to conceive and do. And we've had - somebody referred to, I guess, Joe Keefe, to some of the brainiacs we've had here. A guy named Mockler, all right. Unbelievable guy as far as what that could think of, what he created. We've had the fifth floor come on. I can't talk a whole lot about that. I could get arrested, I guess.

00:50:02 But, anyway, the fifth floor is a huge deal. The stuff that goes on there. SOD -- there's no operation in the universe that I'm aware of that can really do what the Special Operations Division has done. That's all new in the last 40 years ago. The DEA Academy. Again, Mr. Westrate gets a lot of credit for that. That came onto being. You had Syntax and a major conspiracies. That wasn't going on 40 years ago. That's been a big deal that's done things.

00:50:29 Snowcap and FAST were key and critical to what goes on to support the ability to dismantle major organizations. Let me tell you about one, though, that people

have -- most people in here -- have forgotten about if they ever knew about. DEA was doomed and destined to go away as an agency at about its 10th anniversary, about 1983.

00:50:56 1981, the FBI, through the Department of Justice, sent a gentleman here to take control of us or to be the administrator, Francis "Bud" Mullen. Right, you remember? He came in to be -- and Jack Lawn was his deputy. Mullen's job was to get DEA ready to be brought into the FBI. And that was going and that was working. DEA was probably thought by most people in this town to be out of business by 1983 and would have gone to the FBI.

00:51:31 So, there was a lot of work that went on to do that. There are two people that were key and critical to making sure that didn't happen. One of them was an FBI turncoat, Jack Lawn, okay? Lawn became a DEA guy. He saw the error in their thinking stuff, and he became a real champion, a real warrior. The other guy that supported and did stuff -- and I don't know if he's ever gotten a lot of credit for it -- but was a key and critical to DEA surviving and becoming the entity that it is today and continuing to grow, is sitting on my left, Dave Westrate.

00:52:04 I was around here. I was a guy working staff doing stuff. I saw a lot of things. So, Westrate and Lawn are responsible in large part as the individuals that led the effort that prevailed that kept DEA as a single standalone drug agency. So, I think that as we look at what's been accomplished and where we're going, we need to kind of understand that some of those things go on.

00:52:27 Later, he's going to speak me probably what was the strangest thing that came across my desk and happen. And I'm not going to tell it because it will probably reflect poorly on me. What I'm going to leave you with, though, is one other vignette. You guys heard earlier, in 1992, or whenever it was, I was asked to go to the FBI by an administrator. And FBI accepted me, I went over there and I worked there for about a year and a half. Came back to DEA, later, all that kind of stuff.

00:52:57 One day after I came back, myself and Greg Passic, and I don't remember who else, three or four guys from DEA, were over at a meeting at the FBI doing some joint thing with the FBI. And there was a senior executive service guy there. A guy named Merril Parks. The only guy I ever met named Merrill. But, anyway, we're there having this meeting and when the meeting was over with there was about half FBI, half DEA. Parks says, "Well, Wankel, you know, you've been around both. You've been at the FBI and see how we work and what we can do and stuff. And you've been at DEA a long time; you're back at DEA. But let's just talk about drugs for now. Who are the best -- who's the best drug agency? How would you rank the agencies in Washington DC as far as drug law enforcement?"

00:53:38 I says, well, I mean, I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, but without a doubt DEA is #1. I says -- I'm kind of being pensive and thinking. I says, probably I'd put FBI #3, Customs No #4. After that I'm not sure it really matters. And he's like, he scratches his head and says, "Well, wait a minute. Who's #2?" I says there's nobody close enough to DEA to be #2. That was my best line ever.

00:54:05 James Capra: [Laughing] That's excellent.

Frank Monastero: I have to correct Doug.

James Capra: Go ahead. Go ahead.

Frank Monastero: Bud Mullen came over in July of '81, and he was immediately impressed by the agency. And there was a time when we were going to be merged with the FBI. And I was the co-chair, with Lee Caldwell, who was the second in the FBI. And we went over to -- the meeting happened to be at the FBI and we went over. Were you with me? I think you were.

00:54:42 Dave Westrate: I'm not sure.

Frank Monastero: Anyway, we went over to the FBI, and Lee Caldwell opened the meeting by saying that we were going to start to integrate the two agencies. We would purchase cars together and do the radio system together and so forth, and eventually the FBI would absorb DEA. And I looked at Lee Caldwell, and I said, gee, that's amazing, you know. Lee could you just excuse me for a minute?

00:55:13 And I went to the phone, and I called Bud Mullen and I said Lee Caldwell just said we're going to be absorbed by the FBI. He said, "Absolutely not." Come right back here. That was the end of the meeting and that was the end of absorption with the FBI.

Doug Wankel: That was a good story, but I'm not buying it.

Frank Monastero: Well, you may not, but it's true. It's true. Mullen was immediately taken with DEA and he never turned back.

00:55:40 James Capra: I had the opportunity to sit with him at an event last year. Real quick, we're fast moving with time. I'm going to switch it up a little bit. Rich, your first undercover deal, what was it?

Richard Fiano: Working some Greeks - heroin in Brooklyn.

James Capra: Joe?

Joseph Keefe: Heroin in Connecticut -- in the Puerto Rican section of Hartford, Connecticut.

00:56:08 James Capra: Mike?

Mike Braun: South Side of Chicago, but I was with the Illinois State Police at the time, or the old IBI, later the state police.

James Capra: Tommy?

Tom Harrigan: Dominican organizations up in Washington Heights in New York.

James Capra: Frank?

Frank Monastero: I never worked an undercover case with DEA. But I was doing tech work and sneaking into buildings doing wire taps. And, unfortunately, 105-year-old night watchman almost caught us, and I was scared to death I was going to give him a heart attack. [Laughter]

00:56:42 James Capra: Dave?

David Westrate: Heroin in Detroit.

James Capra: Doug? Don't answer. [Capra wheels out a dais that has a pair of 1970's emerald green men's platform shoes on it]

Doug Wankel: Oh, Jeez. [Laughter]

James Capra: Do they still fit?

00:57:02 Doug Wankel: Bring them over here.

James Capra: I had a black pair of these when I was a sophomore in high school.

Doug Wankel: So, you were average height back then.

James Capra: I do know if you're covered if you break your ankle.

Mike Braun: Well, this is a Cinderella moment if I ever saw one.

00:57:29 Doug Wankel: Is this drugs or what? [Wankel dons shoes and does a little dance] I'd wear them to court, even.

James Capra: Click your heels together, Dorothy.

Doug Wankel: Hey, I think these are back in, aren't they?

00:58:00 James Capra: How are we doing on time? We doing okay? Here, let me get these for you, sir.

Doug Wankel: You're going to touch those, Jimmy?

James Capra: Somebody got some Purell? Well, let's -- we're good? We're still okay? We're good? Let me go back to the original question. Well, let me go up one. If you can think of it, and Doug, you said you want to skip on it. If you can think about it, what was the weirdest or oddest request that came across your desk as the chief of Ops? If you can think of it.

Doug Wankel: Yeah, maybe after some of these other guys go through, but I just don't have one right now.

00:58:41 James Capra: Dave, anything come to mind?

David Westrate: Yeah, I actually have two. One was we were looking for tunnels under the Mexican border. A pretty significant case at the time. And we actually imported technology from Korea that the US government was using to locate tunnels between the

demilitarized zone in Korea, and used that on the Mexican border. But we also had -- and here I come back to my point about innovation.

00:59:06 I was asked to support bringing a fellow there who had divining rods. He had two sticks that that could—

James Capra: Figure it out?

David Westrate: -figure out where the tunnels were. I don't honestly remember how well he did, but I did pay him. The second one was during a Vietnam war protest in Washington DC, they -- we brought in a bunch of agents at the instructions of the White House. And the concept was for the agents to infiltrate the protestors and to identify who was taking drugs because the theory was there'd be a lot of drug-taking and there's be arrests made and so on.

00:59:41 And the theory was that the undercover agents would accompany the person they wanted arrested and when they were herding people into the stadium -- the Redskins' stadium in Washington DC -- the agents would have a penny which would identify them as law enforcement. Because we took away their weapons and the identification.

01:00:01 And so I couldn't believe this story. But I literally was in my garage at 3:00 in the morning with a ball peen hammer and my vice bending over pennies. And I bent hundreds of them. And I sort of had this story and not too many people knew about it. And then a few months ago Chuck Lutz called me up. And he was writing an article for a Vietnam vet magazine and he was one of the people who got one of the bent pennies who was supposed to go out undercover and all that.

01:00:27 It turned out that -- and hats off to Diversion. The people that did the most good out there and accomplished the most were the Diversion investigators and the

people who were working the user end and the overdose end of things out there in the street. But the bent penny caper has been documented by Chuck Lutz.

James Capra: That's excellent. Frank, most usual? Unusual, rather?

Frank Monastero: Well, it wasn't funny, but it was the most unusual, of course, was a request we got from the White House to recover the hostages in Lebanon. And it turned out to be a terrible fiasco, I recall. But it was certainly the most unusual and outside the agency's scope of operations.

01:01:11 James Capra: Thank you. Richie.

Rich Fiano: I actually had to go back and ask Sweetin and Farrell what that was. And they said, well, do you remember on Friday, the ONDCP called and asked how much cocaine are you guys not seizing? And Sweeten goes, W.T.F., what's that? And I says, well, how do we figure that. So, Louie is sitting down there trying to figure out, well, how much do we wind up getting, how much is the estimate. We'll get the agency to see how much estimate for crops and what have you. But that was probably the oddest one. I don't know if we ever -- if we even ever answered it.

01:02:01 James Capra: Came up with it? Joe?

Joseph Keefe: Jimmy, I don't have to defer to you because you probably put it in my desk. There were so many of them, so I don't have to defer to you.

James Capra: There was, that's true.

Joseph Keefe: I think one that was kind of sad because I got a request -- there was an agent, and I forget what country in Central America. He had only been down there a short time, going through language school. I didn't put him down there. I think Richie must have.

01:02:25 His wife had no idea where she was going. She can't take it down there. She's seeing a doctor for depression. He's now seeing a doctor for depression. And what am I going to do?

Doug Wankel: See a doctor for depression.

Joseph Keefe: Exactly. So, that's what I did. No, so, I just remember saying, wow, how did we ever get into this mess and please don't ever let us do it again. So, needless to say, he came home. So, I don't know how his life turned out, but at least he didn't kill anybody down there.

01:02:49 James Capra: He's the deputy.

Joseph Keefe: That's why the name sounded familiar.

James Capra: Mike?

Mike Braun: Well, I'll tell you what, between Tommy, and Joe, and Jay and Jimmy and Steve, I mean, there were crazy requests that came in every day. But, I mean, to tie what I said earlier in to the power of the organization. So, let me try to put it in that perspective. Yet, very strange.

01:03:22 When you've got senior national security advisors that are coming to this small agency and asking if we can bring the likes of Monzer al-Kassar, and Viktor Bout, and Haji Bashir Noorzai, and Haji Juma Khan and others to justice, and with virtually every one of these things, you know, we're looking at each other in those days saying is there some kind of a drug connection, here, a nexus? And not surprisingly, actually, to no one, there always was.

01:04:03 But you ask about the people in the organizations earlier, one of the folks. It was, you know, the Tommy's and the Joe's, and the Jim's and the Jay's and the Steve's, okay, that actually, you know, propped me up and helped me make the decisions that I need to make and made me so very, very proud to be this organization.

01:04:27 And when you follow that out, you know, to the Derek's out at SOD, and the extraterritorial teams, and the FAST guys and the SACs, I mean, it just goes out. And everybody rolls up their sleeves and gets the jobs done. But some of the names of the bad guys that I mentioned earlier, for god's sakes, I mean, if you really stop and think about it, every three letter agency in this town had made runs on these people and they failed.

01:04:57 And we've failed a lot, also, but they failed. But I think the one thing that separates this agency from all the others are our relentless, persistent pursuit of the world's most notorious thugs, and the decades - represented here -- the decades of capacity that have been built to do all this. And as Doug so eloquently said, or to kind of round that out, when you consider that we had all of this built, honestly, before 9/11 ever happened.

01:05:36 And for five years thereafter, I mean, Tommy and I, and Michele and others, saw every three-letter agency in this town struggling with, well, how do you bring state and locals in? How do you bring foreign counterparts in? How do you trust them. How do you coordinate and deconflict? How in god's name do you ever get a SAC in New York to agree to let \$2 million in cash go out to El Paso to be seized by the El Paso field division, knowing that they're going to get the scratch?

01:06:08 And in reverse, how do you ever get, you know, the SAC of Houston to allow, you know, a ton of cocaine to go to Chicago to be seized, you know, in that division? I mean, it's testament to everything that all of you continue to do, today, testament to everything that's been done in the past, and hopefully will be done for many, many years in the future.

01:06:08 Thanks, Mike. That was good. Tom, anything to add?

Tom Harrigan: No. You know, Jimmy, I think what many, many folks may not realize is chief of operations, you know, the way it is now -- maybe not in the '20s, when Doug was chief of operations. But, you know, there's a -- I'm not going to say the vast majority, but it might be 50/50, you're dealing with personnel issues. So, since this is a G-rated program I'm not going to go into some of the details, but some of the requests that had floated across my desk as chief of operations.

01:07:08 But one in particular sort of linking on what Mike just said. There was a very sophisticated law operation that we were doing in one country. And we needed to get our folks there quickly and get this defendant out of the country as quickly as we got there. So, we needed to lease a G5. And when it came across my desk I started counting the number of zeros as far as what the cost would be and my question was can we do this?

01:07:38 And they said, "You're the chief of operations. You could do it." So, we did it and we got the bad guy, and he was prosecuted in the 7th District in New York without going into too many details. But, you know, this is very disturbing looking at Doug's shoes while I'm talking to you.

James Capra: I'm sorry.

Tom Harrigan: Yeah, could you hide those? Yeah, there you go.

James Capra: Is that better? Well, thank you. I think we're going to open it up for questions.

01:08:07 Host: Just a quick reminder to folks to wait for the microphone to come to you so we can get your question listened to not only by the folks here in the auditorium,

but also those listening around the world on our web cast. And for those that are on the web cast, if you'd like to pose a question, down in the bottom left-hand corner of your window is a little icon you can click on that and you send us the questions and they pop up right here.

01:08:38 Audience Member: Sir, Tommy, you addressed the issue of legalization very briefly. I wanted to ask you if you thought the genie had come out of the bottle as far as legalization. Because with the States acting somewhat unilaterally in difference to the federal policy. Where do you think we're going with that?

Tom Harrigan: Well, that's a great question. I mean, obviously, we're still waiting on a decision by the White House as far as how we're going to proceed in the states of Washington and Colorado. But, again, as we say, we're changed with enforcing the federal law. Last time I checked, marijuana was a Schedule I drug and anyone in violation of it -- in possession of it, is in violation of federal law. So, we will continue doing that. But, again, we are awaiting guidance from the White House as far as next steps in Colorado and Washington.

01:09:39 James Capra: That's it? Forty years?

Monastero: Is this going out to the public, or just—

James Capra: No. It's internal, DEA, at least I hope it is. It's open? Oh, it is open.

Monastero: It is open to the public? Well, then, I won't tell my story.

01:10:06 Audience Member: Quick question for anyone in the panel.

James Capra: Sir, what's your name?

[Terry Perem]: [Terry Parham], ex-DEA, retired DEA. Always DEA. Given -- something that Mr. Monastero mentioned about how different times were back when the agency was formed in 1973. It seems -- and this is looking at it from the outside, now, many of you do the same thing.

01:10:35 It seems like we're waiting -- or, as a society, we're waiting for an event to happen to refocus on this thing called drugs and the drug issue. If you think back, at least from my perspective, things that hit the nation attention-wise, you had the Camarena murder, you had the Len Bias killing that just brought tremendous publicity and media attention and refocused the politics of what we do and what this agency will continue doing.

01:11:11 Do you foresee something needed at that level to kind of give the country a jolt to refocus, again? Because society -- and I hear it from my neighbors and people wondering about legalization, as was just asked. Wondering will this issue become relevant, again? I'm curious in what you might say about that.

01:11:36 Joseph Keefe: I would just jump on what Richie said: prescription drug abuse and the synthetic drugs. How many kids are going to have to die before people start paying attention to that? And they're getting it, like Richie said, it's American products. That much more jolting do we need to make it? Yes, do we need to go out and tell the message more? We can always do that. But you folks have a lot to do every day. But I definitely agree. You don't want to see any more people die, but that's what's going to happen.

01:12:02 Mike Braun: Joe brings out a good point. When you consider the prescription drugs are for the most part they are legal. Now, if they're abused then it becomes illicit. But if anybody thinks for a minute that legalization is going to solve the problem, look at the problem we've got with legal prescription drugs, already. So, I think if America would take the time to educate themselves, or if somehow you could help them get there, I think this thing could be turned around.

01:12:33 Sadly, and, you know, Frank kind of touched on this earlier, but we haven't had an administration since Ronald Reagan - and let's not give any credit to him. It was his wife who basically came up with the "Just Say No" kind of mantra and pushed him into doing it. But whether Democrat or Republican, we haven't had an administration since Ronald Reagan that spoke out forcefully against drug abuse in our country. And until that happens, and until we begin to I think more effectively educate the public, I think we're just going to continue to go down a slippery slope.

01:13:11 Frank Monastero: If the public understood, and if politicians wanted to talk about what the impact on the economy is with respect to illicit drugs and legal drugs, I mean, you talk about health insurance costs, imprisonment. There are so many aspects of the drug problem that impact on the economy. I mean, it's just amazing as to that much money is spent, which, needlessly, is going to be spent in the future.

01:13:48 Just automobile accidents. If marijuana becomes legalized, the number of automobile accidents and people going to emergency rooms and so forth is going to increase, not to mention, you know, regular hospitalizations, drug overdoses, the illegal trade, illegal currency trade which is related to the drug problem. I mean, it's just an amazing amount of money that could be saved if we dealt with the drug problem effectively.

01:14:23 Catie Drew: We have several questions from the web, but the first one is, and this is a general question: Given the movement trend of drug cartels organizations, Caribbean to South America to Mexico, where do you think the next geographic hotspot will be? Africa, or perhaps will the geographic focus be here in the US with the increasing abuse of prescription drugs?

01:14:50 Mike Braun: It's already playing out in Europe. If I'm not mistaken, unless it's changed, probably within the next two to three years there will be more cocaine leaving the Andean region destined for Europe than there is for the United States.

Europe is where our country was at back in the mid-1970s to early 1980s, where things were absolutely out of hand.

01:15:14 And they don't have, they have not been blessed with their Parliaments and Congress bestowing the kinds of extraterritorial jurisdictions, the complex conspiracy legislation that we've got. They don't have any of the tools right now to fight what is already upon them and on their backs. They don't have the things that we've been fortunate enough to have.

01:15:40 And I, you know, again, if you study the case, if you look at the statistics, you know, we are, you know, the media would have you believe that we've lost the war on drugs. Well, it's never been a war to begin with in this country. But quite frankly we're doing an enormously good job. There are something like I think, you know, Michele you were always on top of this. But somewhere between 40 to 50 percent fewer people abusing drugs in our country today than there were in 1979 at the height of the problem in the most recent era.

01:16:16 And, you know, I've always said that, you know, if someone was -- if someone in the medical community had reduced the incidence of diabetes, or AIDS, or some other malady or affliction by 40 percent over the last 30 years, or 35 years, somebody would be getting a Nobel Prize. It's not all at the hands of law enforcement, but education and treatment as well have done a phenomenal job -- the professionals that work in that area. We're winning; we're doing a good job.

01:16:50 Tom Harrigan: You know, just as a follow-up to that, as well, you could -- the way I look at it, at times, is, you know, Africa is to Europe what Mexico is to the United States. For years all the drugs, all the cocaine movement from the Andean region up to Mexico, coming across the 2,200 mile long border. We've seen that change in dynamics over the last several years. Where they're using the Caribbean, they're using countries in South America, Venezuela, Brazil traffic drugs into Africa.

01:17:22 As a result, the DEA has begun to expand our presence in Africa. We just recently opened an office in Dakar, Senegal. We're in several other countries in Africa, as well. And, again, it's to take the model that we've used in Columbia and Mexico and hopefully translate, transmit that over to Africa to assist them, as well. Because, again, the last place these cartels -- these cartel leaders -- want to be, obviously, is in a jail in the United States.

01:17:55 So, cocaine is much more expensive in Europe. They use that, as I said before, these traffickers aren't in it necessarily to traffic drugs, they're in it to make money. So, again, they're going to exploit that. They're going to exploit Africa. And obviously the high cost of cocaine in Europe. And to be quite honest with you because, as Mike said, there's no DEA in Europe.

01:18:18 Catie Drew: We have another question from the web for the panel in general. Is there someone you look up to who is not on stage and why did you look up to them?

Frank Monastero: I think we all had a mentor. Mine was a former deputy director of BNDD, [Andy Tartalino], and I certainly looked up to him. He was a -- even though he was a senior person, he always kept his hand in investigations. He loves to be doing investigations, but yet he had a second in command of the agency. He was my mentor and I always looked up to him.

01:19:13 Doug Wankel: There's a number of people that are chiefs of operation that aren't here today. Marion Hambrick was a really good guy early on. Steve Green. Steve Green was a very strong assistant administrator for operations - became deputy administrator. Many people owe a lot to Steve. So, there's lots of people within DEA to be looked up to, but they're not that work in headquarters. They're out in various parts of this country, parts of the world, doing whatever they're doing.

01:19:43 I look up to people -- one thing the DEA has, as well, that I didn't mention earlier, DEA Survivor Benefit Fund. I don't know of any other agency that's taking care of its own through hard times, through bad times, through loss, like DEA has through the creation of this mostly after the Enrique Camarena situation and how that's matured and grown on. That's huge. And we owe a lot to people like Dick Crock, and others, that have been engaged about that. So, there's people across DEA that you look up to and they're not necessarily in headquarters.

01:20:20 Catie Drew: All right, if there are no more answers to that one I have one more web question. It's actually two different questions and this is for Doug Wankel.

Doug Wankel: Uh-oh.

Michele Leonhart: Doug, where is your Super Fly hat, at that time, and what operation were the platform shoes from?

01:20:38 Doug Wankel: You know, it's interesting, I was in Detroit in '71, '72, '73, '74, '75, '76, '77 and I decided I wanted to be kind of a Super Fly type guy, I guess, back in those days. I was 6'1", weighed 147 pounds, just a real strapping he-man. I grew long and I decided I wanted to do stuff. I used those shoes mostly I was doing PCP buys to start with and then I got involved in a Syntax and went to California and worked on some stuff after that.

01:21:10 And then later on some cocaine and some heroin, things like that. But, yeah, I'd like to know who asked that question.

James Capra: Any more? And Sean, we'll hand it back over to you.

Sean Fearn: Folks, before we conclude this afternoon, it's my pleasure to welcome to the stage the administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Michele N. Leonhart, nominated by the president of the United States and confirmed by the

United States Senate, our 10th administrator. She has served in this capacity since December of 2010. Ms. Leonhart. [Applause]

01:21:58 Michele Leonhart: Thanks, Sean. I want to thank all our panelists. You know, the question was asked: Is there anybody not on the stage that you looked up to, but I can say from an agent who now has 32 years on the job that each and every one of you I looked up to Mr. Monastero was the chief of operations when I walked the stage and got my badge and creds. And each one of you has really played such a key role, not only in my own career, but in molding this very great agency.

01:22:33 So, we want to thank all of you for being here today. And, really, I came up to do -- I had the honor of deciding whether or not Jim Capra was going to be able to stay on as chief of operations because this is really a little test for him. This is like his probationary period.

01:22:58 So, this week -- so this week the leader of the Zetas gets arrested. That's big. And then you were able to hold up on your own against all of these chiefs - former chiefs of operation. So, I think you're very deserving of something that I brought with me, today. Jimmy has been in the building since January doing the job and doing a great job.

01:23:26 And he is not -- we were waiting for the perfect moment to present him with his badge and creds. Carrying the chief of operations badge I know was the height of your careers, so, with that. [Applause]

Male Voice: Now you have to pass firearms, again, though.

James Capra: Obviously not the PT.

01:24:08 Michele Leonhart: One of the other questions was asked, you know, what was the strangest thing that came across your desk and I was sitting down here

betting that I knew what Mike Braun would answer. And that was a request to figure out what the seatbelt configuration was for the MI17. Inside joke.

01:24:33 I do have something --

Mike Braun: A moment I still dream about, have nightmares about. Thank you.

Michele Leonhart: Took us a few days. I do have another special presentation. He doesn't know it's coming. Tom Harrigan, our deputy administrator, you know, when you think about it I think our first deputy administrator who had also served as chief of operations. And what a difference that makes for our agency. And when he was confirmed by the Senate, we never got advance notice that day.

01:25:07 We had been waiting and waiting and waiting and then, boom, it just happened. So, that night, a couple of us decided that we wanted to find a way to memorialize that for him. And we've had it a while and we've been waiting for the perfect opportunity. So, Tom, I have something for you.

01:25:35 For your office we have a framed Congressional Record from March 29th, 2012, that confirmed you as the deputy administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration. [Applause]

Tom Harrigan: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. You got one of these, Mike?

Mike Braun: I don't have one. [Laughter] Let me see it. Did they spell your name right?

01:26:10 Michele Leonhart: Before I turn it back over to Sean, how about a round of applause for Jim Capra. He did a great job, today. [Applause] We were looking for ways that we could celebrate our 40th anniversary and one of the things we want to do it recognize the men and women who are still on the job, that were on the job July 1,

1973, and we identified -- we thought we had 22, and we found out one retired in June. But we actually identified the 21 individuals that are still on the job, today.

01:26:48 So, we kicked off our celebration July 1st, recognizing each and every one of them. And we knew we wanted to end with bringing in former administrators to talk about the challenges through the years. But what we really wanted to do was find a way that we could highlight what is our bread and butter. And that's the enforcement cases, the enforcement operations, all the disruption and the dismantlement of the organizations that this agency has been responsible for.

01:27:19 And by putting this panel together, with former chief of operations, I think everybody can see why we have so much to be proud of as an agency. But for 40 years we have had the succession of leadership always making sure that enforcement was our #1 priority, along with our workforce. So, thank you for joining us today and you did a great job and you mean a lot to each and every one of us. Thank you. Frank, you had something?

01:27:49 Frank Monastero: You know, I was listening as everybody resume was written was read and it was Detroit, San Francisco, Kabul, Rome. You know, the people that we didn't mention, today, are the families that we all had, and the sacrifice that they made. Am I going too long? I'll tell you a short story.

01:28:15 One of the perks -- you don't get many perks in the government, you know. You can't take jet flights because your cousin owns a big firm or something. One of the perks you get is you testify before Congress, and the committee chairman asks you about the fact that your daughter had a baby the night before, and it all gets in the Congressional Record. That's one of the perks you have. That's the young lady whose daughter had a baby. [Applause]

01:28:55 Michele Leonhart: Frank.

Frank Monastero: The thing I really want to mention is about families -- she was going into her senior year in high school when I got transferred to headquarters. That's hard on a family. And they've all had it. All the people that work here, their families have sacrificed.

Michele Leonhart: Definitely a sacrifice and we're very lucky, today, to have Frank's wife and daughter here with us. Thanks. Thanks for joining us, here, today. So, I'm going to turn it over now to Sean.

01:29:31 Sean Fearn: Thank you, ma'am. Just a couple of quick program notes before we conclude. Mr. Wankel referenced diversity during his remarks, earlier. We have two weeks left in July, two more programs for the 40th anniversary. Next Wednesday back here at the DEA auditorium and on live web cast at 10:00 a.m., we're going to be bringing together a group of trailblazers from DEA's history as we talk about diversity through DEA's 40 years.

01:29:58 And then on the final day of July, July 31st, back here at 10:00 a.m., again, here in the auditorium, with a web cast, NBC News justice correspondent, Pete Williams will be moderating a panel of our administrators, including Ms. Leonhart, and six of our former previous administrators, as we conclude our 40th anniversary month. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us, and gentlemen, thank you for being here, today.

End of recording.