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# Death Penalty Symposium: Welcome by President Jay Lemons, Introduction by Allan Sobel, Adams Center Director, and Remarks by Bud Welch

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The Arlin M. Adams Center  
FOR LAW AND SOCIETY  
Susquehanna University

ARLIN M. ADAMS CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIETY  
SYMPOSIUM  
SHOULD THE DEATH PENALTY BE ABOLISHED?

SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY  
WEBER CHAPEL AUDITORIUM  
SELINGROVE, PENNSYLVANIA  
MARCH 27, 2008  
7:00 P.M.

Welcome by President Jay Lemons, Introduction by  
Allan Sobel, Adams Center Director, and Remarks  
By Bud Welch

PARTICIPANTS:  
Jay Lemons, President, Susquehanna University  
Allan Sobel, Director, Adams Center  
Bud Welch, Guest Speaker

Before: Sarah C. Thomas, RMR  
Reporter-Notary Public

ERVIN BLANK ASSOCIATES, INC.

PRESIDENT LEMONS: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome. It was beginning to feel a little like a Quaker meeting room for a moment, the calm and quiet that is here.

Welcome to the Susquehanna University. My name is Jay Lemons and it's my pleasure to serve Susquehanna as its president. Tonight my purpose here is to offer brief words of welcome to each and every one of you as we kick off a very dynamic two-day program presented by the Arlin M. Adams Center for Law and Society, which is based here at Susquehanna University.

The tradition of an annual spring event began seven years ago. That event was an impressive and important event, but it was a singular lecture. Today, this program has grown into a two-day symposium involving dialogue between a whole array of nationally recognized experts on an issue of current significance.

This is certainly an important and wonderful opportunity for reflection of our efforts in the academic setting to create opportunities for constructive discourse and healthy debate. I would want you to know that that has become one of the hallmarks of the Arlin M. Adams Center and a way in which this center and its efforts and our faculty and their efforts in working with our students seek to emulate the model and the example that is bound up in the person known as the Honorable Arlin Adams. The Adams Center was created in 2001 through the generosity of the Degenstein Foundation and also with the support from the Annenberg Foundation. Tonight I would like to ask all of you to join me in thanking Michael Apfelbaum, who is here on behalf of the Degenstein Foundation, for their great support and the way in which the Adams Center has become an important exemplar of Susquehanna.

Michael, out there in the middle of the house, would you stand and give a wave, Michael?

As I have already said, the Adams Center was established in 2001, to honor Judge Arlin Adams. A most distinguished jurist, respected nationally and internationally, he is an attorney, a public servant who has given his life in the service of his country in so many ways. Judge Adams served on the United States Circuit Court of the Third Circuit for a 17-year period.

He has had a long and, for us, a deeply appreciated association with Susquehanna University, where he first came to be acquainted with us in the modern sense via service as a Woodrow Wilson fellow. This is a fellowship program that brings distinguished guests to campuses like ours across the country. And it is a rare thing that those visits spawn a friendship that would last and would grow in the ways in which this one has. In some ways that visit gave its wings to this relationship, but its roots go back to the University of Pennsylvania Law School and a friendship with a young lawyer by the name of Sidney Apfelbaum, who, with the Judge, was studying at the University of Pennsylvania and who, like the Judge, in the days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor immediately left law school to serve in the military.

Judge, we are so thrilled that you and Neysa and your granddaughter Alex can all be here with us tonight. Would you give a wave, and let us acknowledge and thank you for your presence and your example and for all of your good works?

The Center's mission is to explore the rich intersection between law and the various disciplines of our society which surface in contemporary thought. I'm pleased to recognize the great work of the Center's director, Al Sobel, and the members of the Adams Center

steering committee, Michele DeMary, associate professor of political science; Tom Martin, assistant professor of philosophy; and Rick Davis, professor of accounting, who bring together the resources to make events like this happen.

Particularly faculty colleagues -- I see Tom. I'm not sure where Rick is. Michelle is over here -- would you please stand and let us acknowledge you? Thank you.

Discussions on the subject of capital punishment raise important questions about ethics, morals, trust, constitutional power, and the basic tenets of right and wrong in a free society; truly a subject that can be divisive and one in which opinions are often considered clearcut or unconditional and resounding. Over the next few days we will have an opportunity to engage with each other in thoughtful and respectful examination on an issue that certainly animates strong emotional response.

In the end, if we succeed, we will all know more, we will think more, and we will be willing to engage and discuss more. This is, after all, one of the principal aims of an educational institution.

Once again, let me welcome and thank you all for being here. At this time I would also like you to join me in welcoming Al Sobel, who will introduce our honored guest this evening.

MR. SOBEL: Good evening. Thank you, President Lemons, for those remarks.

The symposium that begins now and will continue through the day tomorrow will examine whether we should abolish the death penalty. Thirty-six states, and the federal government, have within their criminal codes provision for a death penalty in the event that certain offenses are committed, a responsible individual is held accountable, and a jury, on balance, finds that the death penalty is warranted.

The public in America is split on the question whether there should be a death penalty. Although a majority favor the death penalty in some circumstances, the percentage of those who favor the death penalty has decreased in recent years and that appears to be attributable to two changes that have come about in our society.

One is with the advent of DNA technology there have been 215 exonerations, cases in which people who had been given a trial, found guilty, and sentenced were proven innocent by science, by DNA technology. And that has caused some who previously favored the death penalty to have some concern about a sentence with such finality, a sentence that could not be taken back if it turned out at some point after an execution that the condemned person was, in fact, not guilty.

Secondly, a number of states have adopted as an alternative form of punishment a sentence of life without parole, which satisfies some people who want to see a sentence imposed when a serious crime is committed that will avoid any risk that the offender will duplicate that crime down the road against another victim.

Other countries in the world condemn the United States for having as part of its criminal justice system a death penalty. They feel that no civilized nation at this time in history should put anyone to death regardless of what offense that individual committed.

The United States Supreme Court is currently considering whether the lethal injection method of execution, which involves the administration of a three-drug cocktail, is constitutionally banned on the basis that it is, by its nature, cruel and unusual punishment. We are waiting for a decision from the Supreme Court on that question,

which is expected by the end of this current term. Now, I would suggest to you that there are many ways to consider whether America should have a death penalty or should abolish the death penalty. I would suggest to you that the most common way most people consider the question is divorced from the reality of the American criminal justice system.

What do I mean by divorced from the reality of the American criminal justice system? What I mean is most people assume that whoever has been convicted and sentenced to death was, in fact, guilty of the crime for which he or she was convicted and sentenced to death. They assume that the defendant was given competent and effective counsel, who worked zealously safeguarding the rights of the accused throughout the proceedings. They assume that every actor in the criminal justice system was mindful of and safeguarded the procedural and other rights of the accused. And the actors that I'm thinking of are police officers, prosecutors, judges, defense lawyers, members of the jury, and other witnesses besides police officers who might testify in a case.

There is also an assumption that the administration of the death penalty is administered in a way that does not involve any improper elements of racism or other improper influences having to do with bias and prejudice. In other words, the system is at all points administered by people free from any bias and prejudice who look only at the relevant facts and consider the law, apply that law to the relevant facts, and reach their decision.

Finally, there is an assumption generally that the death penalty in this country is administered evenhandedly and consistently. What do I mean by that? I mean that if an offender in county X commits a crime and a different offender in county Y commits a similar crime, the nature and circumstances of the crimes are virtually identical, and the backgrounds of the two offenders are virtually identical, the outcomes or punishments, if they were both found guilty, will be virtually identical.

If you consider whether we should have the death penalty, if you ask that question divorced from all of these assumptions that I have just outlined, your answer will turn on your own set of values and how you prioritize those values and no evidence, I would suggest, would change your opinion with regard to that question.

We are here today and tomorrow to give you reason to whether there are factors that should influence your decision in light of the way that the criminal justice system in America is actually administered. We are going to look at questions like is the death penalty administered fairly and nonarbitrarily. We are going to look at questions like is our American criminal justice system infallible or does it, in fact, produce results that are unreliable and inaccurate.

We are going to look at a variety of questions and try to fill you with knowledge that will allow you to think about whether in light of the state of the American criminal justice system, we should have the death penalty.

Our kick-off speaker tonight was to be Sister Helen Prejean. Many of you know of her, certainly know of the fact that she authored *Dead Man Walking* and was portrayed in that wonderful film by Susan Sarandon, who won an academy award.

I received a call yesterday morning late in the morning, answered my phone, and it was Sister Helen at the other end in a voice that was barely audible. And I have hearing problems to begin with. It was all I could do just to make out what she was saying. But what

she was saying was that she had a horrible respiratory infection and there was no way she could travel.

So I thought quickly. First I wished her well and hoped that she had a speedy recovery and that I certainly understood why she couldn't be with us. Then I thought, well, gee, what are we going to do? So I called Jim Acker. Jim is here. Jim is a professor at the State University of New York at Albany. He is recognized as one of the true experts in criminal justice in America and he knows just about everybody.

And I called up Jim and we had a conversation. In the conversation Jim and I initially agreed that it would be great to have somebody here who could speak from personal experience about the death penalty. Somebody, like Sister Helen, who had been in the trenches in some way or another.

Jim suggested that I call David Kaczynski. Some of you may be familiar with the name Kaczynski. David's brother is known as the Unibomber, the person who sent bombs to people and caused their death and injury. And David turned his brother in and David, after he turned his brother in, worked in ways to try to help his brother get the kind of treatment that he needed.

I called David Kaczynski and I finally reached him on his cell phone in west Texas. He was on a family vacation there with his wife and a foreign exchange student. And we talked a little bit and he said, "You know, the person you really have to try to get is Bud Welch." He said, "If you get Bud Welch, you'll get somebody who is really going to be able to tell a story to your audience that will have them riveted and that will make them think about the death penalty in new and different ways."

He gave me Bud's telephone number and I got ahold of Bud. And Bud was very understanding and was able to work things out and be with us tonight.

Before I call upon Bud to come up and speak to you, I want to tell you a little bit of background that will help you understand the significance of what Bud has to say. I want to tell you that this ain't Broadway and Bud ain't no understudy. Bud is as qualified in every respect as Sister Helen Prejean to address you about the issues that he will talk about and you are not going to be losing out in any way, shape or form.

But now to the history, some of the background. Some of you may remember -- and some of you who are attending Susquehanna University are probably too young to remember -- that in 1993, there was a standoff in Waco, Texas between the FBI and the Branch Davidian cult led by a cult person whose name was David Koresh. That standoff, which occurred on April 19, 1993 -- a very significant date, April 19, 1993 -- that standoff ended in a fiery tragedy. The FBI gassed the complex and the entire compound went up in fire, claiming the lives of 75 Branch Davidian followers.

People who sympathized with the Branch Davidians developed a great amount of hatred toward our government as a result of how that Branch Davidian encounter ended and one of the people who developed that sort of enormous hatred was a person by the name of Timothy McVeigh. McVeigh and others planned a revenge against the government and the revenge was carried out precisely two years after the encounter at Waco that killed 75 Branch Davidian cult members.

On April 17th, 1995, two days short of the anniversary, McVeigh rented a Ryder truck and, along with a colleague by the name of Nichols, loaded the truck with approximately 5,000 pounds of ammonium

nitrate fertilizer. On the 19th, on the two-year anniversary, McVeigh drove the Ryder truck to the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, lit the bomb fuse, parked the truck in front of the building, left the keys inside the truck, locked the door, walked across the parking lot to an alley and then ran away.

This is all happening as the employees working in the Murrah Federal Building were arriving at work or settling into their places at work. Many of them had brought children to work with them, because there was a day care center in the Murrah Federal Building.

In a short time an explosion occurred. One hundred sixty-eight people were killed in that explosion, including 19 children who were brought to the building for day care, and 500 other people were injured, so there were almost 700 victims as a result of this explosion.

Ninety minutes after the explosion McVeigh was pulled over by a highway patrol officer for driving without a license. The officer discovered that McVeigh had an unregistered gun. He was arrested on the firearms charge.

Before he was released his ties to the explosion were discovered. He was charged with the responsibility of having caused that explosion. He was convicted. He was sentenced to death by lethal injection and on June 11th, 2001, McVeigh was executed.

Now, what's all this got to do with Bud Welch? Bud Welch's 23-year-old daughter, Julie Welch, was killed in that bomb blast. Bud and Julie had always opposed the death penalty, but when Bud learned of his daughter's death, he quickly came to the conclusion that McVeigh needed to be executed. However, as time passed, that view also changed.

And Bud is going to talk with you tonight about the transformation that took place in his life, first as a result of learning about his daughter's death, and then as he thought about the death penalty and what it would mean for him if Timothy McVeigh was executed.

Bud has testified in front of 22 state legislative bodies regarding the death penalty. He's testified internationally in Britain and in Russia about the death penalty. He has been on a whole host of major television shows, including Larry King, 60 Minutes, all the morning news shows. He's written articles that appeared in Time and Newsweek. He is truly one of the people in this country that can speak from personal experience about what the death penalty means to a family member who has lost somebody as a result of a horrendous criminal act.

Please help me welcome Bud Welch.

MR. WELCH: Thanks for having me tonight. I think it's 32 hours ago I didn't know I would be here and I spent quite a bit of time on the computer yesterday trying to figure out how I might get here. And from central Oklahoma to a small, small town in Pennsylvania can be difficult. I ended up flying into Baltimore, got here this afternoon. I think I arrived here at about a quarter of 5:00. I rented a car and drove here.

What I want to try to do tonight is place a face on one of the 168 that was killed in the Oklahoma City bombing. Of course, that was my only daughter, Julie. I want to tell you some stories about Julie, some things that she did, some things that we did together. Before I do that, I want to briefly tell you who I am.

I am the third oldest of eight children and I was raised on a dairy farm in central Oklahoma, and I spent 38 years running Texaco service stations in Oklahoma City. I retired from that six years ago.

Julie was born in 1971. She attended the public school system in Oklahoma City K through eight. At the beginning of Julie's eighth grade year she met a little Mexican girl that had come as a foreign exchange student and Julie became probably her closest friend.

After going to school with the little girl for a short period, probably no more than about five months, I think, in all, one day it just dawned on Julie this little girl was speaking English as well as she was. And she called me at my Texaco station that evening with excitement in her voice and telling me about how she noticed the little girl's English was so good.

Her question to me was -- of course, she was 13 at this time. Her question to me was, "Dad, do you think that I could learn Spanish as quickly as she learned English?" And I said, "Well Julie, if you were put in the same situation as her, you probably could."

And I reminded her that she was going to Bishop McGuinness High School the following year. We are Catholic and I had always told her she was going to have a Catholic high school education. And I said, "Bishop McGuinness offers quite a lot of foreign language courses and you will have your chance."

When August rolled along, I took Julie down to get her enrolled in school. She signed up for her classes. We had to return the next morning to pay the fees and buy the books. We were in the used book line and all of you know in a private school the used book line is pretty important.

As we are standing in the book line, one of the teachers is coming through the line obviously looking for someone. And as she got close enough, she was looking for Julie Welch. Julie raised her hand and said, "That's me." The teacher said, "I need to speak with you for a moment."

She took her off to the side. She had a clipboard in her hand with some sheets of paper on it. They were talking probably three or four minutes.

When Julie came back to get in line I asked her, I said, "What was that all about?" She said, "She was concerned about the classes I signed up for yesterday." I didn't know what Julie had signed up for. I asked her, "Well, what's the problem?" Of course, Julie, being Julie, said, "There isn't one."

But I rephrased the question. I said, "Julie, what does the teacher think the problem is?" She said, "Dad, I signed up for Latin, German, and Spanish." I said, "Honey, I don't think" -- Julie is still 13 at this point -- "Julie, I don't think that's going to happen. I don't think they are going to let you do that."

She knew she wanted to take Spanish. She had been told during her eighth grade year that if she took Latin also that would help her to more easily learn Spanish. Why she wanted to take German, I don't have a clue.

But three days later Julie's mom took her to school and Julie spent the first hour with the freshman advisor, and she convinced the freshman advisor that she could handle the class load. Julie had two free study periods on the regular schedule. This German and Latin would fit in those two periods and she knew she could do it. So she took all three courses and her sophomore year she repeated about the same thing.

I think it was the second day of school her sophomore year she met a young man from France who was a foreign exchange student. I think she followed him most of the first week of school, bending his ear, trying to learn how this exchange system works.

I would pick up Julie each afternoon from school and I would take her home. Then I would go back to my Texaco station.

Well, I picked her up this Friday afternoon and dropped her off at the house and went back to work. She called me later that evening.

And Julie had learned as a very small little girl if she had something she really wanted badly she would call dad at the Texaco station, but she would wait till rush period to do it. She had learned that I was very agreeable when I was busy, because my only motive was to get her off the telephone so I could take care of my customers. So Julie calls me this Friday evening. I remember it very well. I was back in the service bay. One of the employees answered the phone out front. I was changing the oil in the car, probably wiping off grease with my right hand and talking on the phone with my left.

She said, "Dad, I want to go foreign exchange with Youth for Understanding. I want to go to a Spanish-speaking country." Of course, my comment to her was, "Julie, that could be very expensive." She learned from the Frenchman they had a scholarship program.

There wasn't really any discussion about that for probably the next four months. Shortly after school - after she returned to school after the Christmas break she called me one evening and she said, "Dad, I have to go next week to take exams with Youth for Understanding."

It really caught me by surprise. I just probably started, I just said, "When was this all set up? What does your mom think about it?" She said, "I haven't told mom yet. I'll tell her when she gets home from work."

So the next week Julie went and took the exams and won a scholarship to go foreign exchange. So after her sophomore year in July she left to live with a family in Pontevedra, Spain for 11 and a half months.

Pontevedra is a city about 20 miles north of the Portugal border. The family she was living with had a lot of relatives and friends that lived in Portugal, so they would visit Portugal on weekends and holidays.

Of course, when Julie arrived in Spain she couldn't speak the language even though she had studied it two years in high school. She got pretty much a crash course. Her host mom couldn't speak any English. So the year that Julie lived in Spain she not only learned to speak Spanish, but learned to speak Portuguese, as well.

She returned back to Oklahoma City to complete her high school and in her senior year she applied at several colleges and universities. Marquette University in Milwaukee was one of them. She got a letter from Marquette in January of 1990, that being her senior year, informing her that they had an annual foreign language competition for a scholarship and, if she cared to compete, she, of course, would have to go to Milwaukee to do it. She called me after I had dropped her off at the house and opened the mail to let me know the contents of this letter.

I said to her, I said, "Julie, I don't think that you should -- I don't think you should go to Milwaukee now. We will be there in about six weeks," because I had promised her all during her senior year come spring break in March we would go on a college tour, and we were going to stop off in St. Louis and South Bend and Chicago and Milwaukee.

And about three nights later Julie called me back. And she said, "You know, Dad, if I went to Milwaukee now, that would be one town that we wouldn't have to go to on spring break."

Well, I had anticipated that she would do the follow-up calls and I had already called the airlines to find out it would cost about \$260 to send her to Milwaukee to compete. So I bought her the ticket, she went and competed about with about 90 other kids, and she won. However, about ten days after she returned home we learned that the score that she made when -- she actually made a perfect 800 on it -- qualified her for two additional no-pay-back grants that brought the total to about \$6,000 a year.

At that time \$6,000 was half the room, board, and tuition of Marquette. And I think I had about, oh, probably four weeks after I heard of that, between that time and spring break, and I spent about every free moment that I had trying to convince Julie that Marquette was the finest university in America. She could forget about these other places that she applied. And Julie did end up going to school at Marquette.

She came by my Texaco station one afternoon in August and the car she was driving was her mom's old Oldsmobile Cutlass. She didn't really particularly keep it very clean, old cups and straws and stuff on the floorboard. Most teenagers understand what that's all like. I noticed when she pulled in the station drive her car looked cleaner and, after she parked it, water was still dripping from the fenders.

So she comes in. She is dangling her keys in front of her. She said, "Dad, I have to leave my car here for you to drive. I have to take your truck." I have a little Blazer truck and I occasionally would let Julie and her friends borrow it to go to a park or wherever she might be going. Of course, typically it would have five or six times as many miles on it as they said they were going.

I said, "Julie, what do you need to use my truck for?" She said, "Dad, I want to start packing." I said, "Honey, we are not leaving for another week." "Well, I want to be sure that I don't forget anything."

I never attended college and I didn't realize freshman take everything that they own when they go away to college. When they graduate four years later you can put it in the trunk of a Pontiac Grand Am.

So she goes and packs the truck. The next week we up the road to Milwaukee. The bicycle is tied up on top. The inside rearview mirror is worthless because she has the thing completely full.

When we arrive in Milwaukee and start unloading things there is over 2,000 incoming freshman that Monday morning and there wasn't enough carts to unload the vehicles to take the things into the dorm, so they had us unload things onto the grass so we could move our vehicles and the next families could repeat the same process.

So we are pulling things out of the -- I was pulling things out the truck and handing them to her, and she was piling them out on the ground. We are about finished. I reached in and got her little Teddy bear that was about yeah big. It looked a little junky. I said -- when I handed it to her she snatched it out of my hand and she slammed it back in the truck, and she said to me in a low voice, "Don't put that damn bear out here."

Well, I couldn't imagine what was going on. I hadn't packed the bear. She had.

So when we finished unloading the truck and I get ready to close the tailgate, she takes her left hand and kind of slams it back down.

Bear in mind we are not speaking at this point, anyway. And she dug a bath towel out of the things she had on the ground, she crawls in the truck, retrieves the Teddy bear from the passenger side floor where it landed after it bounced off of the inside of the windshield, and she takes the Teddy bear and rolls it up in the bath towel, and then she places it down on the ground. The problem was this grown freshman going away to school, she didn't want all the other grown freshman to see.

She was staying in McCormick dormitory, 12 stories tall. The top six floors were young men and the bottom six were young women. All these young guys were around there, as well. And Julie learned by sunset of that first day of orientation that 97 percent of the young women had their stuffed animals with them and about half the young man had the same thing.

And the young men are always in denial about that when I speak at colleges or high schools. I was in and out of that dorm for a week during orientation and I saw young men with their stuffed animals.

Another note about McCormick dormitory on campus. It's commonly referred to as the beer can because anything that contains 12 and is round in Milwaukee is a beer can and the building was round.

Julie returned back to Spain for her sophomore year. Marquette has a program in Madrid. She came back to Milwaukee and graduated in 1994, with a degree in Spanish and a minor in French and Italian.

I took Julie home after graduation. Shortly after returning home she got a job as a Spanish translator for the Social Security Administration.

And a few days after Julie was working there she learned of a prayer group that met each Friday night at Tinker Air Force Base at the Catholic chapel and learned that most everyone that attended were in their twenties and single, and certainly more young males than women, being on an Air Force base. So she started attending. And the second Friday night she attended she met a young lieutenant that had graduated from the University of Arizona, Tucson, a year ahead of her. Julie and Eric started dating and they dated the last seven months of her life.

On the morning of April the 19th, Julie got up and it actually had become a daily ritual the last two and a half years of her life. She went to 7:00 a.m. mass. She went to work at 8:00 o'clock, had an appointment with a Mexican man that could not speak English at 9:00. Left the Murrah building on the first floor, where her office was, to walk to the front of her building to get a client. Her client had been brought by a friend of his who is bilingual.

Julie and the two men are returning to her office and got about halfway through the building when the bomb went off at 9:02. That was on a Wednesday morning and all three bodies were found together on Saturday.

All my life I had always opposed the death penalty. I just thought it was something we shouldn't be doing. It was not a big issue for me, because I had never been caught on either side of that issue.

Julie had always opposed the death penalty. In fact, she was an activist against the death penalty. I never had been until after her death. After Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols were arrested and charged by about the same time Julie's body was found, I was so full of revenge and hate that I didn't want even a trial for the two of them for probably a month. I simply wanted the bastards fried. That was my vote.

I finally accepted the fact after about a month we had to have the trials to hopefully learn the truth, but I still struggled with the death penalty issue for probably another eight or nine months beyond

that. I would close my Texaco station at night and the first thing that I would do when I would arrive at home is make a drink. If I drank enough, when I went to bed I could go to sleep or pass out, whatever you want to call it. It was the next day I was paying for. This kept escalating over this nine-month period of time.

And I went to the bomb site each day after Julie's death. I felt a special closeness by going there because, of course, that was the last place that she was alive.

And I was standing across the street from the Murrah building, where it had once stood. All the rubble had been cleaned up. And it was about the last day of January of '96, almost ten months after the bombing, 3:00 in the afternoon, a cold afternoon. My head was splitting from abusing alcohol the night before. I went to asking myself a whole series of questions: What did I need to do to move forward? Because the self-abuse that I was doing was not working.

So I went to asking myself a bunch of questions and there's three questions that stuck in my mind that afternoon for probably three weeks or so. That is, should the trials begin now, because the first trial did not start for 25 months, do you need convictions, and do you need executions?

Struggling with those questions for about three weeks, I finally came to the conclusion that the day we might take Tim McVeigh or Terry Nichols from their cage to kill them would be an act of revenge and hate, and revenge and hate is the very reason that Julie and 167 others are dead in that great city today. The other reason, it was revenge they had against the United States for what Al told you a few moments ago that happened at Waco, Texas on April 19th, 1993.

I was starting to clearly understand what they had done with their revenge, how it pushed them off the table, so to speak. I knew at that moment that I had to start redirecting my revenge to something else. I started -- and I started remembering things that I had forgotten, that I had suppressed that happened shortly after the bombing. I think probably that's God's way of not putting too much on your plate at one time.

One incident that I remembered was seeing Bill McVeigh, Tim McVeigh's father, on television. It was probably two, maybe three weeks after the bombing during the period of time that I didn't even want a trial for his son. And I remembered there was a sound bite that came on the news that he was going to be on after this series of commercials.

My thought at that time was very clearly that I did not want to see this. However, I didn't change the channel or I didn't leave the room, and I sat and I watched him being interviewed.

He was standing in front of his house. He lives in a rural area near Buffalo, New York, not actually all that far from here. And Bill was stooped over a flower bed like he was maybe pulling weeds from it or something. There was a camera -- television camera to his right shoulder. Bill kept his face and shoulder turned away from the camera. The reporter would ask him questions and hold the microphone down for Bill to answer.

I don't recall any of the questions that reporter asked that day or any answers that Bill gave, but I remember very clearly on his final answer he stood almost straight up and looked directly into the lens of the television camera for just a couple seconds. When he did that, I could see a deep pain in that father's eye. I recognized that pain immediately, because I was living that same pain at that moment. Well, I knew at that moment that some day I really needed to go tell that man

that I truly cared how he felt and did not blame him or his family for what his son had done.

More than three years passed and I received a telephone call in June of 1998, from a nun from Attica Prison who does ministry work there. In fact, she still works there. The purpose of her call was to ask me to come to Niagara Falls, Buffalo -- Niagara Falls of western New York to speak against the death penalty.

And I had been in Syracuse two months earlier and with a man that's here present tonight, Reverend Walt Everett, and we traveled through the Syracuse, New York area for about a week speaking against the death penalty, so that's how this nun at the prison got my name and telephone number.

When she asked me about that, I went to telling her during that long conversation about seeing Bill McVeigh on television more than three years earlier and how I often thought of his well-being. Well, she convinced me if I was able to come to western New York that a meeting should be arranged, or at least attempt to arrange a meeting, between the two of us. This was in early June.

Sister Roselyn called me in August to let me know -- I committed to going the first week of September -- to let me know the meeting had been arranged. She said, "Bud, you will meet with Bill the sixth day in the Buffalo area. That will be a Saturday morning, September the 5th, 10:00 a.m. at Bill's house." She said, "I will take you there."

Everything about this meeting sounded fine except meeting at the house. Certainly at that point we all had learned that Tim had lived there with his father while he was going through high school and after he came back from Desert Storm, because Tim and Terry Nichols served together in Desert Storm in 1991. I somehow just didn't think that I wanted to meet his father where Tim had once lived.

Nevertheless, I went and spoke in the Buffalo area. My speech was on Friday night in Canisius College, a Jesuit school near downtown Buffalo. After I spoke there were two men that came forward and introduced myself. They said they knew Bill McVeigh. They didn't have a clue I was going the next morning to meet with him.

And I went to -- I went to ask them questions about his personality, because I was apprehensive about this meeting coming up the next morning. I learned from the two of them Bill was quite shy, that he didn't talk much, but his hobby each year was growing -- in the summer growing a very large garden in his back yard. He lived on about two acres of land.

So that next morning Sister Roselyn comes by the hotel to take me, being 18 or 20 miles into the country, to Bill's house. Until I went to get in Sister Roselyn's car, I never realized someone had built cars as small as the one she had, but obviously they had.

We were on the expressway going about five miles. It seemed like we were going awfully fast. I thought, well, it was the size of the car. We clearly already passed at least two speed signs that said 45. I tried to peek at the speedometer to see how fast we were. I couldn't see. So finally I spotted a barn or something off in the distance. I said, "Roselyn, what is that?" When she looked, I looked at the speedometer. We were going 75 miles an hour. And I was pretty shaky at this point.

Shortly after that, within a minute, she said, "Oh, I think we just missed his house," because she didn't know where he was living. We were given a description. She hit her brakes like she is about to run over someone and pulled off this dirt shoulder going much too fast. This little car is bouncing up and down, swerving back and forth. The

dust and dirt is flying. Then it started sliding sideways. The nun never got that car under control until she made a U-turn out of it.

I had never been in a vehicle that performed like that before. I had seen it in a race track. We went back down the road, probably two or 300 yards down the Bill's driveway. Again, she was driving too fast. Bill's driveway is gravel. It's the first week in September. You know how the lawns in this country look the first week of September. She throws rocks up on this grass. I'm thinking that this is not a very good start. I've been nervous about this, anyway. I get out of the car and I go up to his door. He had a doorbell. I remember very clearly not ringing the doorbell. I kind of knocked, knocked kind of softly. Bill came to the door and after he did, I introduced myself. I said, "Bill, I understand you have a nice garden in your back yard."

This big guy is about six-three, six-four. This big guy got a big smile on his face, didn't seem the least bit shy. He said, "Would you like to see it?" I said, "I would love to see it." I knew when I saw him through his garage that in his back yard we would find common ground. We spent about 30 minutes in his back yard getting to know one another. Then he invited me into his house.

As we were walking toward the house, he told me his younger daughter Jennifer was there. She had learned I was coming and she wanted to meet me.

We walked in the back door up into the kitchen. Bill introduced me to Jennifer and we probably stood there nervous for about five minutes. Then we all three set at the kitchen table and Jennifer set on this side and Bill set to my left.

And, well, the table next on the right was pushed up against the wall and there's some family snapshots up on the wall of various family members. After setting there for probably three or four minutes, I noticed the largest photo was right above my right shoulder and it was an eight-by-ten of Tim.

Well, during this hour-and-a-half-long conversation quite frequently I'm glancing at that picture of Tim on the wall. When I am looking at it I'm not looking at it with any particular anger or anything like that, no revenge. I was just looking.

Then I started feeling self-conscious, because I know I've looked at that photo many times and, of course, they have seen each time I looked. And I caught myself looking another time and felt the need to say something. I just said, "God, what a good-looking kid."

There was utter silence in that kitchen after that. I looked across the table at Jennifer, and she dropped her eyes on the table and didn't say a word. Bill had done the same thing. Jennifer was two years younger than Julie at the time of the bombing. Jennifer was 21.

And earlier when we were in Bill's garden he asked me, he said, "Bud, can you cry?" I thought, why is he asking this question? I said, "Well, yeah, Bill, I can. I usually don't have much trouble doing so." And he said, "All of my adult life I've been unable to cry." He said, "My father was much the same way and." He said, "I've had so much to cry about over the last three, three and a half years and I just can't do it."

After this long silence ended at the kitchen table Bill looked up at the wall and very simply said, "That's Tim's high school graduation picture." But when he said it there was a great big tear flowed out of his right eye onto his cheek. I could see that a father could cry for his son.

And I think what was going on in Bill's mind at that moment was this. When you have children you are going to love them more the more they need you. That's just kind of the way God made moms and dads. At that moment Tim was in prison in Florence, Colorado, had been sentenced to death, and Bill knew he needed him desperately but there wasn't a thing he could do for him.

We finished talking after a bit. Jennifer had told me about she had just completed her first week of teaching school and she was teaching not far away and the grief that she had gone through that first week because her last name was McVeigh. And she said one family removed their two children from her class because her last name was McVeigh. Jennifer finished that fall semester of 1998, in New York teaching and moved to North Carolina in January of 1999, and is still teaching school in North Carolina.

When I got up from the table to leave I shook Bill's hand. Jennifer walked around the table and I extended my hand to her as I had when we had met a couple hours earlier. And she didn't take my hand. She grabbed me around the neck and she started hugging me. When she did, we both started crying and that escalated to sobbing. I hadn't really experienced that as an adult. It seemed like it was going on much too long. I felt trapped and didn't know quite what to do to get out of it. Finally I just took her shoulders -- her face off my shoulders and just held her face in my hands and said, "Look, honey. The three of us are in this for the rest of our lives. We can make the most of this if we choose. I don't want your brother to die and I'll do everything that I can to prevent it." She hugged me again.

And I turned to walk through the living room to the front door and when I got to the front door I had the feeling that I had walked alone. I stopped and turned and looked through the living room into the kitchen. Sure enough, Bill and Jennifer were still standing in the kitchen. Jennifer is still crying and Bill has this utterly stunned look to his face like he doesn't know what to say to me next. I waived good-bye to both of them and I went out of the front door.

I knew they were going to leave a rental car for me to drive the 20 miles back into Buffalo. When I spotted that rental car I had a split second of joy, because I recognized I wasn't going to have to ride back to town with that nun. And I drove the 20 miles back into Buffalo and I was still crying the whole time.

I was to meet Sister Roselyn at the Hope House, a halfway house for released prisoner. When I arrived there I said in the living room to Sister Karen, who had been running Hope House, and Sister Roselyn, "I finally went through that process of crying and sobbing. When I finally got through that, all of a sudden it's like this tremendous weight had been removed from my shoulders. I've never felt closer to God than I did at that moment."

I think what I found that Saturday morning in western New York is a bigger victim of the Oklahoma City bombing than myself. I say that in spite of the fact I no longer have Julie. I traveled all over the world speaking, telling Julie's -- stories about Julie -- and I have a lot more I could tell you tonight, but I won't. I'll spare you. I don't have to tell you the ugly things she did. She certainly did her share of those, as well.

But Bill McVeigh every morning awakens with that noose, if you will, around his neck that his son was convicted of killing Julie Welch and 167 others.

We had a horrible day in his life and my life on June the 11th, 2001. It was a Monday morning at 7:00 a.m. in Terre Haute, Indiana.

We took Tim McVeigh from his cage and we killed him. There was nothing about that process that brought me any peace or made me feel good.

Bill McVeigh from that morning, we both have two things in common. We have both buried our children. They died in very different ways, but we both buried children.

And I would hope that someday that we will be able to stop telling victims' family members, other relatives that taking someone from a cage to kill them is part of the human process. It's not. It's absolutely the opposite.

Thank you so much for letting me tell you my story and I think we have some time for questions and answers. Thanks for letting me brag on my kid.

MR. SOBEL: Please feel free to use the aisle mic if you have any questions for Mr. Welch.

MR. WELCH: While someone is thinking about a question, I'll tell them a little bit about how Julie was physically. She was five feet one-half inch tall and she weighed about 103 pounds when she was killed. And she was -- I think you could best describe her personality as she had the constitution of a government mule. Younger people might not know what that means. But she was a determined young lady and I spoiled her to death, and I would probably be still doing that if she were alive.

Some points I would like to bring out while someone is thinking about a question is the death penalty and how we apply it. Probably some of that is going to be covered tomorrow. We certainly have some experts here that know the facts and figures better than I do.

But by and large in the United States the qualifier for someone to get the death penalty is to be poor. Probably the number two thing is to be poor and an ethnic minority. Also very important is who is murdered, whether it's a white person or a person of color.

If it's a person of color that murders a white person, there are several times -- I don't know what the figures are -- several times more of those are sentenced to death than a white person killing a person of color, but the number one qualifier is they be poor. And we don't -- we simply don't put wealthy people on death row in this country.

We had a horrible case in central Oklahoma, in Oklahoma City, five years ago. A multimillionaire doctor bludgeoned his wife to death. He was -- actually, under Oklahoma State law he qualified for the death penalty. And the prosecution didn't even seek the death penalty because it's very much like the other case a number of years before, the O.J. Simpson case, where there was millions of dollars to hire the best lawyers in America, the so-called dream team. And that's why I say if they are poor, those are the easy ones that the prosecution will put on death row.

Anyone have a question?

QUESTION: You have spoken in a very moving personal manner about this tragedy, but I want to ask you from a broader perspective. I mean, it is the United States of America versus Timothy McVeigh. There is a public aspect to a criminal prosecution that's broader than the private aspect you told us about.

I wonder what your thoughts are about whether the United States -- citizens of the United States of America have some interest in

seeing Timothy McVeigh executed or whether the citizens of the State of Oklahoma have some interest in -- at the state level in having people executed that perhaps transcends your personal perspective.

MR. WELCH: Yes. I attended several meetings that the U.S. Attorney's office held for victims' family members and in those meetings -- of course, they were conducted by prosecutors -- we were told repeatedly what was needed for the people of Oklahoma City, the family members is to be able to -- the word they always used is get closure. Closure really is a media word.

That's the thing that I mentioned earlier, about prosecution teams need to stop lying to people that that's somehow going to help them do the healing process. Because what I have found from a number of people that I know -- I'm on the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation. I know a lot of the family members. I know any number of family members who supported McVeigh's execution at the time have since made the comments that, "I wish he were alive today because I never had the opportunity to confront him."

Terry Nichols is still alive today. He is in prison in Florence, Colorado. And there is at least a dozen victims' family members in Oklahoma City that correspond with him on a regular basis. They are going through their healing process in that manner.

And that's not uncommon. That happens all over the United States. I've run into case after case after case.

I understand what you are saying, it's the government versus the criminal, and that's -- that's the way it should be. But let's remove the family members from the equation of trying to convince them that what they are doing is actually helpful to them. That's a big problem I have.

Of course, I think the death penalty is wrong, anyway. I don't think any government has a right to kill its citizens. I just simply don't believe that.

QUESTION: One would assume that the government invested an enormous amount of resources in the prosecution of Timothy McVeigh. Could you describe a little bit about what resources were invested in responding to the victims' needs and what you might do with resources at your disposal to help victims at a time like you have experienced?

MR. WELCH: Well, as far as the federal government spending money to help the victims, the victims' families members didn't receive any money. The reason they didn't receive any money is because there was no one to sue.

The reason that the people of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon received, I think, at least 800,000, up to five or six million, whatever it was -- and I don't begrudge them at all. Some of the Oklahoma City family members do begrudge that, but I don't. The reason they received that is because the federal government recognized if people were allowed to go forward and sue the airlines for what happened, it was a lot easier to go to Congress to get three or four billion dollars or two billion to give to the people than to go to Congress and get three or four billion dollars to give to the airlines.

That's what that was all about. That's why the people in New York had to agree to accept the money at the same time and not sue. We didn't have that same equation in the Oklahoma City bombings. We didn't have anyone to sue, so we couldn't -- we couldn't be bought off, so to speak.

The figure that was spent on Tim McVeigh, the low figure is 48 million. The high figure is 91 million. It's someplace in between, I think. That's a tremendous amount of money.

We brought Terry Nichols to Oklahoma to try him on the state charges because both men were convicted of killing only eight people. They were convicted of killing eight federal law enforcement officers. That's why it was a federal crime. And they were never convicted of killing the other 160 people.

So the District Attorney in Oklahoma County had made the statement right after the bombing if they didn't get the death penalty in the federal case that he would bring them back in Oklahoma and try to get the death penalty on the state trial.

They brought Nichols back, tried him in McAlester. McAlester happens to be where -- the town happens to be also the home of our killing house. And we spent between 12 and 19 million dollars trying Nichols on the state charges. He stayed in the Oklahoma jail for three years before the trial could go forward because the District Attorney's office didn't have the money to prosecute him until finally the legislature funded it.

After they tried him the jury came back eight to four for the death penalty. In Oklahoma it takes 12 to zero to get the death penalty. So we squandered between 12 and 19 million dollars in Oklahoma just to try to get the death penalty for him.

So you can see what the death penalty -- we would have never spent the money if Oklahoma didn't have the death penalty. He would be back where he is right now, in Colorado doing his federal life sentence.

And the death penalty -- and there's several people here that know the figures a lot better than I know -- but it's about three or four times more expensive to get the death penalty, incarcerate them until they are executed, than to give them life in prison. It's about three times more expensive. A lot of people don't believe that.

A lot of places I speak sometimes some people will say, "I don't want my tax dollars feeding into that." Well, that's the guy I need to talk to. If taxes is his concern, then we certainly want to abolish the death penalty.

I hope I answered your question.

QUESTION: You were talking about qualifiers and how the poor and the ethnic minorities are big with the death penalty. I was wondering, what is one way that you are working to change the public system to make it more fair toward the minorities and the poor?

MR. WELCH: Well, I personally am not working any way to that, because I simply think that's not going to happen. I don't think we are ever going to have a system in this country where the poor get the same treatment as the rich get. That's just not in the cards.

And, of course, another problem I have with the death penalty is all the wrongful convictions that we've had. I don't know if there's wrongful convicted in here tonight, but I know that one is going to be here tomorrow for sure.

And these people being wrongly convicted -- one man, I think, is maybe here tonight from Maryland, Kirk Bloodsworth, was the first exonerated from death row with DNA. And here he spent several years on death row as an innocent man.

And you are not going to institute the perfect system perfect. As long as it's not perfect, I don't think we can be killing people.

If we wrongfully convict someone of kicking the door in and stealing a television set and they do 14 months in prison, and we learn later they are innocent, we can correct that. But if we kill them, there is nothing we can do about it.

I think for every eight that we are executing, we are releasing one off death row. The State of Illinois reduced their death row by 25. They killed 12. They had 13 there were wrongly convicted. They even found more wrongful convictions since that time.

Now, if you have a chance -- going up in an airplane you only had a 50 percent chance of getting there, I don't think you are going to fly. Illinois was having more wrongful convictions than they were executions.

Anyone else have a question?

QUESTION: Going back to when people - the system telling what people need as opposed to what they think they need, I remember at the time of the Oklahoma bombing there was a big thing about trying to make it possible for the victims' families to attend the execution and setting up a satellite room, and all that sort of thing.

And so I wondered if you could just talk about - I don't remember how many people actually attended -- what their short- and long-term reactions to that experience was.

MR. WELCH: Yes. There were about 20 -- I think it was about 2400 family members. This is brothers and sisters and moms and dads and grandparents, and what have you. Out of the 168 dead, there were about 2400 family members that received letters from the federal prosecutors. And the question was, would you want to witness the execution?

Well, ten people did witness the execution in person because there was ten chairs in Terre Haute, but the rest of them, it was a lottery. It was a draw. And if your name got drawn, you were one of the ten that got to go to Terre Haute. If not, you could watch it on closed circuit television in the Federal Aviation Administration building in the auditorium. There were only about 280 family members even responded and I think it ended up being about 145 or 150 that watched it on closed circuit television at the FAA. Of course, ten people went to Terre Haute to witness it in person. So the overwhelming -- 90 percent or 93 percent of the family members had no -- had no desire to watch the execution.

That's typically what we find with most executions, that most family members don't want any part of it. There are many, many family members by the time the execution takes place are opposed to it and even try to stop it.

You have to remember one time I was certainly supporting the death penalty. It's the anger that you have. It's the vengeance that you have. It's normal. I look back on that period of time now and I say to myself, That was pretty awful. It's also pretty normal for you to naturally have that kind of revenge.

But that kind of -- hate and revenge won't heal you. The two don't mix. You simply can't go through the process of healing until you've been able to -- I'm not saying you have to forgive, but you have to get rid of the retaliation in your mind.

QUESTION: First I would like to thank you for coming and sharing with us. I can relate somewhat to what you are going through. My only son was with a man who committed a crime that killed his son. In this

state if you are along for the ride, whether you did it or not, you get the same sentence. He was charged with second degree murder and held for trial for capital punishment. And if he wouldn't have chosen to go non-jury, he would probably be on death row even though he was not the so-called trigger person.

In my opinion his guilt is he didn't stop it and he didn't turn him in, probably because he was intoxicated and not able to think clearly.

My question to you is, if the death penalty should be abolished, do you see states such as Pennsylvania adding a sentence of life with the possibility of parole for such cases?

MR. WELCH: Yes. I think Pennsylvania doesn't have a death penalty? No?

QUESTION: Life without parole, period. First or second degree carries either life without parole or death. There is no possibility for parole with a life sentence.

MR. WELCH: Most of the jurisdictions, they have the death penalty and they have life without parole or life with parole or even some lesser sentences. The question is if they abolish the death penalty --

QUESTION: Do you believe that they would then add life with the possibility of parole to the sentencing phase?

MR. WELCH: I don't think that would have any bearing on it, to be honest with you. I think if it's a state that does not have life without parole and they abolish the death penalty, they will have life without parole. It will escalate to that.

A good example is several years back --

QUESTION: You don't think if the only thing they have is without, that they will not add the possibility of with?

MR. WELCH: I don't know. I mean, I simply think it should be that way, but, unfortunately, most state laws are not that way, that you can be the driver in the car and be sentenced to the same thing as the person that actually did the shooting in most jurisdictions.

QUESTION: It's my guess that you know a lot of the people who had -- who did take the chance to witness the execution of Tim McVeigh either in person or on closed circuit television. I remember the newspaper the next day reporting on that and there were quotes all over the front page in which people said, "Why don't I feel better?" Would you care to comment on that from the people you know?

MR. WELCH: Yes, Walt, I will. This is Reverend Walt Everett, by the way. He is on our board with the Murder Victims Families for Human Rights. He and I both serve on the Board of Directors.

There were people, surprisingly, the very next day after McVeigh's execution said, "I don't feel better." As time passed there were more and more people that felt that way.

I know of three people -- three people in Oklahoma City right today that I know one that still is going to therapy. They are going to therapy directly because after about a year after McVeigh's death

they had -- after the story kind of got out about Bill McVeigh and the rest of the family, they started having some kind of guilt -- I don't understand that, but I didn't have the problem with that -- some kind of guilt because McVeigh had been killed.

I run into other people just in single cases where an execution is taking place and had to go to therapy, also, for six months or a year because they had this sense of guilt.

No. There is a lot of people, Walt, in Oklahoma City are now saying it served no purpose, especially those who are corresponding with Terry Nichols.

QUESTION: In your opinion if they would abolish the death penalty, what do you think would happen to like murder rates in like cities and stuff, not having the option of going to death row for committing a crime?

MR. WELCH: Well, it might very well do like it is now. The states that don't have the death penalty have a much lower murder rate than those that do. Texas kills more than anybody and they have one of the highest murder rates in the United States.

North Dakota doesn't have the death penalty and I don't know if -- I don't know how many years it's been out of North Dakota -- I think 65 or 70 years -- and I think North Dakota like has like one murder per 100,000 population. I think the State of Texas is like seven or eight people per 100,000 population. And that's similar figures for Massachusetts.

Boston versus Oklahoma City is a good example. I know five years ago we had 69 murders in Oklahoma City. We have a population of about 550,000. I am talking about the corporate limits, because that's where the crime figures come from. The City of Boston is about 590,000 people in their city limits. At the same time we had 69 murders, the City of Boston had 31. Massachusetts does not have the death penalty. Oklahoma has it and we use it.

Yet people say, Well, that's the makeup of the population of Oklahoma City. We don't have nearly the minority population, for example, the City of Boston has. We don't have a big inner city area like Boston has. We are a spread-out, modern day city with really no slums. So it's not that, either. It's the mind set.

QUESTION: Do you think the death penalty will ever totally be abolished in the United States?

MR. WELCH: Yes. The death penalty will totally be abolished. I'm 68 years old. I'm 69 in June. I think I am going to see it in my lifetime. I hope. And you know, we've had -- the death penalty bird's eye view, it is just a big social ill.

We have people today that will use scripture to tell you the death penalty -- we should have the death penalty. Well, 150 years ago we had people use the scripture to show you slavery was good. Ninety years ago they were using the scripture against keeping over half of this room from having the right to vote.

I remember something in my life time and that's desegregation. That started in the '50s and '60s. God only knows, we are still struggling with that. They were using scripture for why the races should be segregated. There again, you can use scripture for anything.

Yes, I think the death penalty will be abolished. It's been abolished in all the European countries. You can't even be a member

state in the European Union if your country has the death penalty. Russia abolished the death penalty, I think it's ten years ago, 11 years ago.

I went to Russia and testified in December of 2002, at the Duma, which is the equivalent of our Congress, because there was two party members rattling their cage about reinstating the death penalty. The high court in Russia had thrown out the death penalty four years prior to that.

We did have 12 states that didn't have the death penalty. We actually have 14 now. New York State effectively doesn't have the death penalty. New Jersey just abolished theirs. I think the states will start falling like dominos. I hope it's not wishful thinking.

QUESTION: If Timothy McVeigh were alive today, would you be able to see in him potential for rehabilitation or rehabilitation for any criminal?

MR. WELCH: I don't know about Tim McVeigh, about rehabilitation for him or not. Certainly, as long as he is a living human being, anything is possible.

I think rehabilitation for Terry Nichols definitely can. I think Terry Nichols has been remorseful several years now, ever since the state trial was over. He couldn't be remorseful prior to that. Legally he couldn't. I think Terry Nichols got trapped up in some revenge they carried out.

They served in the Gulf War together. They came back two angry young men. They were telling neighbors things that they had seen in the war. Unfortunately, there's awful things that happen in war. And McVeigh came back to western New York telling friends of his about him seeing Iraqi soldiers being shot in the back when they were trying to surrender. This is the 1991 war I'm talking about.

There was others who said that, as well. They said that some Iraqis had been buried alive as mine sweepers.

Well, McVeigh wasn't the only one that said that. Those things shouldn't happen in war, but they do.

They came back very angry at the U.S. government when they got out of the service. When the thing happened at Ruby Ridge, Idaho in 1992, with the Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms killing a woman and her son - - a lot of you are too young to remember that -- that made them angry. When Waco, Texas happened -- they planned this bombing for two years. Then they had moved to Arizona and got militia groups out there. That's all they talked, is antigovernment.

QUESTION: You mentioned earlier that it was the prosecutors that fueled the idea that with execution comes closure. What is the drive for prosecutors to want the death penalty?

MR. WELCH: In the past it's always been reelection. You have that with prosecutors and you have that with governors. When they are out running for reelection, they pound on the podium and the thing that a prosecutor feels like he has to do -- and many governors feel the same way - they have to prove to us they are the strongest governor. If we believe they truly are, we will reelect them.

That's beginning to not work as well now. A few years ago we had an anti-death penalty governor elected in the State of Iowa, defeated a pro death penalty. We had an anti-death penalty -- he can't

really say it -- elected a District Attorney in Oklahoma County in '06, and he defeated a very, very pro death penalty prosecutor.

And I have a niece that's a lawyer in Oklahoma City and she did criminal defense work until David Prater was elected district attorney. She is now assistant district attorney for David Prater. We have not had any death penalty cases in Oklahoma County since David has been elected.

I'm glad I'm this far away from Oklahoma so maybe none of the people in Oklahoma will hear me say that. I don't think they will have another death penalty case in Oklahoma County.

Prior to his election we had three times as many death penalty cases as Tulsa County. Tulsa County is not much smaller than Oklahoma County. We have had eight wrongful convictions in Oklahoma and four of them belong to Oklahoma County.

So that's the main reason, is politics. They have used it for political reasons.

QUESTION: If the death penalty does become totally demolished, do you think it will come without controversy?

MR. WELCH: No. I don't think the death penalty will cause a lot of controversy. I think you can go back to the 1964 civil rights legislation. What happened in 1964, was if we had a Congress willing to do the right thing. They weren't doing the popular thing, because had that been given to a vote of the American people in 1964, it would have never passed. I don't even know if it would today. It probably would today.

But what it's going to take is lawmakers to finally do the right thing and then the people will accept that.

QUESTION: Thank you very much for sharing. I was looking through our program and I saw that there was a Dr. Zehr that was appointed by the Judge, I guess, during the trial, it says here to assist the defense in working with the victims in relationship to restorative justice.

Could you tell us a little bit about what the concept of restorative justice is and what they were trying to do?

MR. WELCH: Well, Dr. Zehr is here tonight. He is a professor at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. And restorative justice, my understanding of it is, is restorative justice really got started with people with crimes of property, whereby they could -- somebody could pay for what they had done. And restorative justice then got started being worked on -- and I wish Dr. Zehr was -- restorative justice -- restorative justice, we want to do that instead of the retributive justice.

QUESTION: How would that apply in a case like this?

MR. WELCH: I don't think he wants to be referred to tonight. Yeah. Come on, Howard. Thanks. He is the expert and I'm going to say something that's going to sound foolish.

DR. ZEHR: You flushed me out here. Restorative justice is trying to reframe -- when a crime happens we tend to be pre-occupied by, I always say, three questions: What laws are broken, who did it, and what do they deserve? So the whole focus of justice is around making sure offenders get what they deserve.

What we are trying to say, there is really three other questions that are equally or maybe more important. That is: Who has been hurt in the situation, what are their needs, and whose obligation is it?

So the way it played in this case, I was asked in by the defense team, who realized that there were 2,000 some victims and that they were highly alienated from the community. And they knew what they were doing was going to make it worse, that the wounds in the community would not be healed, but rather make it worse.

And so at that point we did not know how to apply restorative justice, but we did know justice ought to be victim centered and offenders need to take responsibility for it.

What we did in that case is fairly limited. I and Tammy Krause, who became a pioneer of this work -- she was then my student -- we went and worked with the defense team, sentencing team, to help them understand what the victims went through, what their testimony might do, might retraumatize victims, and so fourth.

Then we tended to reach out to some victims. We set up a hot line for survivors who might be called to testify, who would be anxious about how they were going to be treated, might have questions, they could call and talk to a third party, Tammy, rather than have to call the attorney and so forth. We didn't do a lot in that case.

That's how we met Bud. Tammy worked with Bud during that time. But since that time the defense attorneys kept saying, "There's something in what you've done here that's going to change the way we do and think about capital offense."

So that there's something, a new kind of work called defense-initiated victim outreach, where we train specialists to work with survivors, to help them identify what they need, because, after all, justice ought to be needs driven. At the same time we state to the capital defendants, You better start getting ready to take the responsibility, because the victims' survivors are going to want that.

Of course, both these things are a whole new agenda for our defense attorneys, so part of what we do is try to get defense attorneys to rethink their job, to realize they have a responsibility beyond their client, the victim's survivors, to the community, to the whole.

That's a short version of it. So what we did in that case was not very much, because we came in late. We didn't know what we were doing. But it's very interesting work that has come out of that since that time.

I don't know if that answers your question.

MR. WELCH: Thanks. I can tell you one thing. When I met with Dr. Zehr and Tammy Krause in Oklahoma City there were some survivors, people that were injured in the bombing, and myself, and the defense attorneys, McVeigh's defense attorneys, we met in a circle in a church of about 14 or 15 chairs. We spent about two and a half hours together. That was probably the number one most helpful thing for me, when I met with Dr. Zehr and Tammy Krause and the defense attorneys.

I sat next to one of the defense attorneys. She went to explaining what she had gone through during the course of the trial and I saw this woman absolutely come to tears. I looked across at this, opposite of me, very well-known defense attorney, a person by the name of Richard Burr. And while she is telling her story, I see the tears rolling down Richard Burr's face.

That's how those defense attorneys -- how they felt about the victims' family members in Oklahoma City and how they so desperately wanted to help. They couldn't do anything until the trial was over.

When we got together after the trial was over, it was really a tremendous help for me. I'll never forget it.

QUESTION: May I say something just personal about restorative justice? A lot of people have trouble with the term restorative justice because you can restore some things. There are other things you can't restore. If somebody takes my television set, they can be required by the law to restore that to me, to buy another one, whatever. A crime of property, people can understand that, but they don't understand what restorative justice can do for a person who has experienced a murder.

And my son was murdered. You can't restore him back to me, but you can restore me to health, to wholeness, to a healing that would prevent me from having to live the rest of my life consumed by anger.

And what happened to you, Bud, was clearly an example of restorative justice, because your whole concept of the procedures, your whole way of looking at what happened changed, and you came back to health from somebody who was on his way to destruction.

I know Bud personally and I know what was happening. And I know that you are a healthy individual now. And that, I think, is a big part of restorative justice.

MR. WELCH: You are absolutely right. It's as correct as I can think of it.

QUESTION: Good evening. Sort of following on the statement of restorative justice, I was wondering if you could talk about your healing process. I am guessing that it will -- that you were involved in the healing process and probably continuing. My guess it's a lifelong process and I can't even fathom where you are, where you've been.

I'm very riveted by your story. Thank you so much for coming. I was wondering if you could talk about your healing process and where you could see yourself going and how you are getting there.

MR. WELCH: The healing process -- you are absolutely right -- that's the rest of my life. I will be speaking someplace. I remember going to -- I remember going to Notre Dame last fall and speaking there. And I have spoken there several times before. And I was speaking at the law school and there was a young law student. She was a second year student. I swear she had hair just exactly like Julie's and she was about the same size as Julie; a little, short thing. She was sitting in the front row. I almost couldn't even speak to that group because it reached the point where I couldn't look at her anymore.

During the time I was talking I had several occasions in my thoughts, in my mind was anger, absolute anger that -- you know, my thought was that bastard didn't deserve to live. And I still occasionally have that happen. It happens a lot less frequent and it usually only lasts for half a minute, but you never -- you never know what's going to tip it.

Since I speak at a lot of colleges and universities, unfortunately, I speak a lot of times before young women that are about Julie's age and so I'm subjected to it quite often. But it happens a lot less frequent. It's the rest of your life.

And I know one thing. I don't want to live through that one year that I lived through after Julie's death. That's awful. That's the most terrible year anyone could ever think about living through, because the mental anguish of that, the anger, there's not enough adjectives to describe it. Frankly, I cannot describe it.

QUESTION: You made two important points to me that I recognize. One important point that I think is when you looked in Bill McVeigh's eyes and recognized the pain in his eyes that you connected with him. Also, you say it was important for you to see defense attorneys experiencing the pain.

So my question is, how does -- what is the aspect of experiencing and sharing pain in finding healing or working towards abolishing the death penalty?

MR. WELCH: I wish -- I know there's some good minds in this room, because there was a young lady at dinner tonight. I am not going to flush her out. I think she can explain that probably a lot better than I could.

I think just simply understanding, seeing other people's pain and letting you know that probably the pain you had -- I think what you are doing is recognizing the pain you were having, it's okay. It's normal, whatever normal means.

I think that's what I really recognized that time in 1998, when the group of us met at the church in Oklahoma City with the restorative justice people. And I think that's clearly what came out of that for me.

Of course, seeing the pain in Bill McVeigh's eyes when I saw him in television, it's like he hasn't lost his son now, but he knows he's going to lose him. I think that's what I saw when I saw Bill McVeigh.

I know I probably didn't do a very good job of explaining that tonight.

QUESTION: You are talking --

MR. WELCH: There is no point in belaboring it.

QUESTION: You are talking about personal experience again. This has been on my mind. If you care to, can you a little bit about the other people around Julie's life; her mother, her friends, extended family?

MR. WELCH: Julie's mother has had a tough time. Julie's mom and I divorced when Julie was six and we never had visitation rights. We both saw Julie every day. Lena took Julie to school and I picked her up every afternoon until she was about 16 years old and got her driver's license. And I remarried a little over a year after Lena and I divorced. I will be married 30 years in June. Lena never remarried and I think that's made it tougher for her.

And when Julie graduated from college I took her to Lena's house, took her home. And when Julie was killed, Lena not only lost a daughter, she lost her roommate, as well. And she has been alone ever since. She's gone through a lot.

I have talked to her probably once a week, at least. Shortly after Julie's death we talked probably two or three times a day. But she is doing better now. She's had to go through a lot.

She just retired. She was a state employee. She just retired last year and seems to be doing a little bit better after retirement.

I was afraid she would be doing worse, but she is apparently doing better.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. SOBEL: Please let's thank Mr. Welch for coming tonight.

(Whereupon, the remarks concluded at 8:50 p.m.)