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1 inmate's movements with a wrist band so that we can
2 then compare the video with the actual tracking
3 system so we would know exactly what inmate was in
4 what point at what time.

5 Again, that is not going to eliminate the
6 problem of assault and rapes in prison, but it will
7 assist us in better documentation and tracking and
8 prosecution of these.

9 And with that, I'm open to questions.

10 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much for
11 your testimony.

12 Let me just ask, have you had any reported
13 incidents of either staff-on-detainee rapes or
14 assaults of that nature, or inmate on inmate or
15 detainee on detainee, allegations of that nature?

16 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, we have.
17 At Mira Loma detention facility since we opened in
18 1997, there have been no reported rapes of
19 detainees. We have had one incidence of a detainee
20 and a staff involved in an allegation of sexual
21 activity.

22 That employee resigned from the department
23 prior to being interviewed as part of the
24 administrative investigation. So that's all we've
25 had at the detention facility.

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1 We -- yes, within our jail system, yes, we
2 have had rapes of our --

3 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Do you have a formal
4 process in place for the reporting of incidence of
5 sexual assault that will preserve the -- that the
6 inmate will or the detainee will feel confident will
7 adequately provide a means of protection for them?

8 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, we do have a
9 system in place, sir.

10 The problem we face is more of the culture
11 within the jail system in Los Angeles County. And
12 they're just reluctant to report it.

13 And, again, our -- for my jails, the issue
14 for us is we're in a dorm environment with anywhere
15 from 68 to 140 inmates in one dorm. And they are
16 generally supervised by one staff member.

17 CHAIRMAN WALTON: As far as your
18 immigration population is concerned, what's the
19 estimated or average amount of time that they would
20 be in custody at your facility?

21 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: They are generally
22 in between one and two years, from the time they go
23 through the intake process until the time their case
24 is adjudicated. The average is probably between one
25 and two years.

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1 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Do you have a
2 classification system in place that seeks to
3 identify potential predators and potential victims?

4 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. We -- as
5 well as the Federal Government's classification,
6 when they come to the Mira Loma detention facility,
7 there's a deputy and a professional staff member
8 that classify every inmate.

9 Our clientele tend to come from the five
10 counties within Southern California. They generally
11 come from another county jail and then become a
12 detainee.

13 If they are a member of a street gang, if
14 they are a member of a prison gang, we do not detain
15 them there. We refuse to accept them.

16 If they are homosexual or if they are soft,
17 we will not detain them in our system.

18 I don't know nationally what's done, but in
19 the Los Angeles County jail system, they are removed
20 from general population and kept separate from
21 general population.

22 So if we identify that or they do not meet
23 our classification criteria, they are not housed at
24 Mira Loma.

25 We only house males and we only house

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1 adults.

2 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Just one other question
3 that I have. This classification process, is it
4 ongoing or do you just do an initial classification
5 and then there's no further classification efforts
6 thereafter?

7 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. It's
8 ongoing. They're reclassified.

9 And if -- for example, if they are involved
10 in some violation of the jail rules -- which, again,
11 we meet the California Title 15 rules for jail
12 operation. So if they violate one of the rules,
13 they go through the process. They get a hearing in
14 front of a supervisor.

15 Then they could be reclassified to a level
16 that is higher than the minimum level. And they
17 will be removed from the jail.

18 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you.

19 Commissioner Aiken?

20 COMMISSIONER AIKEN: No questions,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Commissioner Fellner?

23 COMMISSIONER FELLNER: I'm curious about
24 the security camera. And I wonder, one, if you had
25 resistance from your staff since they were also

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1 going to be viewed by the camera all the time.

2 And I know in some jurisdictions there's
3 been considerable officer resistance to cameras that
4 were going to monitor them as well as detainees or
5 inmates.

6 And I wonder whether the cameras have also
7 caught any misconduct by staff or if you think that
8 the presence of -- not just dereliction of duty, but
9 actual mis- -- active misconduct by staff or if you
10 think it's had a deterrent effect.

11 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Several parts.

12 COMMISSIONER FELLNER: Several parts.

13 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: We anticipated
14 problems from not only the unions, but from our
15 employees.

16 So we began discussions and educational
17 meetings with the unions for about a year before we
18 implemented the camera system. Because, again, that
19 was our big concern, as well as if we go to inmate
20 tracking device devices for the wrist bands, we will
21 have tracking devices for our employees also.

22 So we met for a year, and every one was
23 comfortable. We put them in place. We have
24 found -- let me see if I remember all the parts of
25 the question. I'm sorry.

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1 We have used them as documentation for the
2 use of force in our force packages when we do use
3 force. And we will retain those for future
4 litigation if someone wanted to attempt to litigate
5 it.

6 And we have, yes, used those to review.
7 And if misconduct is found, we take appropriate
8 disciplinary action. And we have actually
9 terminated one employee so far based on the actions
10 recorded in the camera.

11 So, yes, and everyone knows that.

12 One of the interesting things, though, for
13 us is that the staff at that jail is very new.
14 We're in a hiring process with the sheriff's
15 department. We're hiring a thousand deputies this
16 year.

17 So when you leave the academy, you come to
18 the jail system, and generally you come to one of my
19 four jails up north.

20 So I think I have -- about 60 percent of
21 the deputy sheriffs assigned to this jail have less
22 than one year's experience.

23 So we're bringing them into a culture that
24 has the cameras already in place. And they're very
25 comfortable with it. That's the way it is the day

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1 they walk in the door, and that's the way it will be
2 until they transfer to patrol.

3 So we've had no negative comments from the
4 staff on it. And, yes, we've used it both to our
5 benefit, and we've used it to correct performance
6 and misconduct on the part of our staff.

7 COMMISSIONER FELLNER: So overall you think
8 it was a good investment in terms of maintaining
9 safe and secure facilities?

10 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Oh, absolutely. I
11 think it's worth every dollar. And it was about
12 \$1.2 million. And this is a very small 1800-person
13 facility.

14 Yes. I think it is -- it should be in
15 every jail. In fact, I have to thank the Board of
16 Supervisors of Los Angeles County, but -- they're
17 funding the program so that we'll be putting the
18 closed-circuit cameras in the jails in Los Angeles
19 County.

20 COMMISSIONER FELLNER: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Do you have anything,
22 Commissioner Struckman-Johnson?

23 COMMISSIONER STRUCKMAN-JOHNSON: Can you
24 tell us any more about the rapes that were -- the
25 inmate-inmate rapes, rape cases or -- that you spoke

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1 of earlier?

2 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: I have to apologize.
3 I have only been in the custody division for a year
4 and a half, and I only know of two. And I believe
5 Mr. Gennaco testified to those at an earlier hearing
6 in San Francisco.

7 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Right.

8 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: I have -- none have
9 come to my attention in my four jails in a year and
10 a half. Again, that's not to say that it has not
11 occurred. It's just that they're not reported.

12 And, again, part of that is the culture
13 within the Los Angeles County jail system, and part
14 of it is probably the fact that we don't have the
15 ability to document what goes on in the dormitories.
16 But those are the only two cases that I'm aware of.

17 And so I -- I mean, I don't have all of the
18 information and as concise as Mr. Gennaco.

19 Were you there for his testimony?

20 COMMISSIONER STRUCKMAN-JOHNSON: Right.

21 Yeah.

22 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER STRUCKMAN-JOHNSON: Okay.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Do you have any ideas of

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1 what could be done to change that culture in order
2 to have individuals more willing to come forward and
3 provide information?

4 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Mr. Chairman, I'm
5 not sure how to change the culture of the jail
6 system in Los Angeles County. Our jail system is
7 similar to the California state prison system
8 because we are not really a county jail in the --
9 what you would normally think of.

10 Over 90 percent of my inmates are
11 presentenced. They have not been to court. They
12 have not been convicted. They're awaiting trial or
13 they're state prisoners awaiting to go back to state
14 prison or they're parole violators. About 8 percent
15 of my 19,000 inmates are probably actually county
16 jail inmates who are sentenced and serving time in
17 county jail.

18 The other 92 percent, again, are awaiting
19 trial or in trial predominantly for felonies.

20 And upon conviction, the majority of them
21 will probably end up in state prison.

22 I send about 24,000 inmates a year to state
23 prison from the L.A. County jail system.

24 So it's more of a -- it's not your
25 traditional county jail system anymore. It's --

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1 we're just holding presentenced prisoners that are
2 in jail for serious felonies and awaiting trial.

3 And a large portion of those are gang
4 members within Los Angeles County.

5 So, no, I'm not sure how we could change
6 the culture. I think the cameras, I think the
7 tracking devices, and I think making it easier for
8 them to report it and systems for us to understand
9 the culture within the dorm environment or within
10 the jail settings so that we could understand
11 exactly what -- much better what goes on inside
12 there. And somehow we can then impact it.

13 But I don't have a solution to change the
14 culture for L.A. County, no, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you.

16 Commissioner Kaneb?

17 COMMISSIONER KANEb: First of all,
18 Mr. Rodriguez, congratulations on Mira Loma. It
19 sounds to be a very successful operation and happy
20 to read about it, happy to hear about it.

21 The jails are obviously really a different
22 world. Would you -- or am I overstating that
23 difference?

24 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: I would say our jail
25 system in Los Angeles County is quite similar to the

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1 State of California prison system.

2 COMMISSIONER KANEB: No. But I meant the
3 jails are a different world from Mira Loma.

4 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Oh, definitely, sir.
5 Completely.

6 COMMISSIONER KANEB: Yeah. And the fact is
7 that you are apparently, I'm pleased to hear it,
8 quite impressed with the capabilities of technology
9 and if not enforcing proper behavior, in this case
10 in regard to sexual activity, but also deterring it.

11 So how many cameras would you typically
12 have -- and I realize the building is probably
13 different sizes -- and where are they without giving
14 me too much detail?

15 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: The cameras are
16 actually inside the dormitories -- all but one.
17 There's one camera that's outside the dormitory.

18 And in this environment, the first
19 building, it's built in 1950. It is a cement
20 structure with no windows. And the front of it is a
21 screen. That's where the staff station is. And at
22 the front of the building to the right-hand side are
23 the bathrooms. And then the rest of it is just a
24 large room with bunks in it.

25 So inside the dorm itself, there are two

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1 sets of cameras that are moveable. And I have to
2 tell you, it's amazing to watch our young personnel
3 to deal with the technology because it has a
4 joystick that you can move the camera around and
5 zoom in and out. And, unlike me, they are very good
6 at that, probably because they were raised with this
7 type.

8 So you can read an inmate's wrist band.
9 You can see what an inmate is reading on his bunk.
10 And we currently have it at about 60 percent of its
11 quality.

12 Then we also have one on the outside that
13 you can see the staff station and the deputies. So
14 you can watch the entire dorm.

15 It's split screen. And on the monitor, it
16 monitors a number of dorms at once. And all you
17 have to do is click on the dorm, and it expands to
18 that one dorm.

19 COMMISSIONER KANEB: And is the system
20 operating 24/7?

21 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, it is
22 operating and it -- the only time it doesn't record,
23 if there's absolutely no movement inside the dorm.
24 Electronically it won't record. But it's 24/7.

25 COMMISSIONER KANEB: And the wrist bands

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1 are an RFID type technology?

2 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yes. Very old, very
3 simple technology, but, yes, that's what we're
4 looking at for the wrist bands.

5 COMMISSIONER KANEB: Meaning the wrist
6 bands are relatively new in your --

7 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: We have not done
8 that yet, sir. That's a second step for us. We
9 have -- the cameras were placed last year. The next
10 step that we'd like to see is the RFID technology
11 for the wrist bands, which they're working on.

12 And in the meantime we're moving to Central
13 Jail where we're putting in about \$20 million' worth
14 of these cameras.

15 What we found very interesting, though, is
16 the inmates have never attempted to defeat the
17 camera. They understand they're in there, but
18 they've never attempted to defeat it.

19 COMMISSIONER KANEB: Now, there are four
20 facilities that you administer; is that correct?

21 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

22 COMMISSIONER KANEB: Four jails.

23 Are they all barracks style, or do some
24 have individual-type cells?

25 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: They're

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1 predominantly dorm settings, sir. I do have
2 hard-lock cells for discipline and admin seg.
3 Except for my largest jail up there, which is called
4 North County Correctional Facility, which can house
5 4,000 inmates.

6 It has a separate wing of two-man cells in
7 pod configuration.

8 COMMISSIONER KANEB: Are you using cameras
9 in the two-man cells, or do you intend to?

10 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: We intend to, yes,
11 sir.

12 COMMISSIONER KANEB: And you're getting --
13 obviously you're getting funded for all of this?

14 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

15 COMMISSIONER KANEB: Well, I must say I'm
16 very pleased with everything I'm hearing. The
17 Commission is very, very much interested in
18 technology as a means of principally deterring
19 sexual aggression but also helping it -- its
20 prohibition being enforced.

21 And I would hope you would be willing to
22 talk with our staff and consultants we might be
23 retaining on the usefulness of this system, of both
24 systems.

25 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: I would be happy to,

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1 sir.

2 And I extend, again, an invitation to
3 anyone on the Commission or any staff member who
4 would like to come up. We'll show you the system.
5 We'll have staff explain it to you. And we can even
6 show you some of the actions that we've recorded.

7 And really, again, it's encrypted. It can
8 be used for best evidence in court.

9 So it's -- I think it's state of the art,
10 and I think it's the future of jail management in --
11 not eliminating the inmate-on-inmate assaults, but
12 at least on reducing and in prosecution.

13 COMMISSIONER KANEB: Music to my ears.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much for
16 your appearance. We appreciate your testimony. And
17 I'm sure it will be very helpful in our
18 deliberations.

19 Sometimes after the fact commissioners
20 think of questions they would have liked to have
21 asked, and they may want to submit written questions
22 to you. If they do that, we'd hope you would
23 respond.

24 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: I will, sir. Thank
25 you.