

***The customer is NOT always right!***

**A common sense approach to Safety  
and Security in the Courthouse**

***Marshal Rob DeGroot***

***Rowlett City Marshal's Office***

# The Customer is **NOT** Always Right





# *Common Sense Court Security*

*What I'm **NOT** here to do today;*

- To try to impress you with my resume.
- Bolster my fragile male ego by trying to convince you I'm some kind of expert.
- Tell you how to do your job or live your professional life.
- To sell you anything...so **RELAX!**



# *Common Sense Court Security*

## DISCLAIMER

The instructor is not an attorney, and does not offer or provide legal advice. Legal advice, when necessary, should be sought from a competent and licensed Attorney at Law. This instruction is meant to provide background and guidelines as a training aid. Personnel in attendance should be familiar with their agency policy and procedures, laws pertaining to their jurisdiction, and applicable Local, State, and Federal / Appeals Court rulings.



# *Common Sense Court Security*

## *COURSE OBJECTIVES*

- Identify and define what Court Security is.
- Define the nexus between the role of the Clerk and that of Court Security.
- Identify what influences Clerks can and do have on Court Security Programs.
- Illustrate common Court Security practices for general application.
- Illustrate potential solutions for Court Security Issues that impact Court Clerks.



# Who comes to Court?

- Upset
  - Had to take time off from work (without pay)
  - May have to pay a fine (they cannot afford)
- Confused
  - First time Offender
  - Slow moving lines
  - Fail to understand – new instructions
- Concerned
  - Fine amount
  - Insurance cost
  - Jail time



# Who comes to court?

- Fed up
  - No one cares, no one will listen to their side
  - Being picked on
- Looking for and expecting justice
  - The system is against them
- Unresolved issues
  - Health and safety issues
  - Municipal ordinances
- Gang members
  - All kinds of issues
- Convicted Felons



# Who comes to court?

- If you are ever going to find people stressed-out and tense, this is the place.
- How do we as security personnel identify the normal from the abnormal, the misfit, or the maladjusted?
- There is no proven formula to achieve this identification.
- Courts must move from the traditional reactive security mode to the proactive mode.





## *Common Sense Court Security*

*The very nature of our profession requires that we address often difficult persons in what are frequently complex situations, who have an already elevated stress / anxiety level, which can lead to anger or even violent outbursts or episodes.*



# What is Security?

- 1: the quality or state of being secure: as  
a: freedom from danger : safety b: freedom from fear or anxiety
- ***What is the value of a secure work environment?***
  - Employees have a reasonable expectation of safety in the workplace.
  - The mitigation of risk lessens Employer liability.
  - People work more accurately and efficiently with an absence of anxiety and stress.
  - Citizens expect a secure place to do business



# *Common Sense Court Security*

## **VIOLENCE DEFINED;**

- any act of aggression (as one against a person who resists); and/or abuse that causes or intends to cause injury to any person(s)
- ferocity: the property of being wild or turbulent; "the storm's violence" a turbulent state resulting in injuries and destruction



# *Common Sense Court Security*

## **EMERGENCY - DEFINED**

- A serious situation or occurrence that happens unexpectedly and demands immediate action.
- A condition of urgent need for action or assistance: *a state of emergency.*



# Common Sense Court Security

## **RISK - DEFINED**

- The possibility of suffering harm or loss; actual or perceived danger.
- A factor, thing, element, or course involving uncertain danger; a hazard: *“the usual risks of the desert: rattlesnakes, the heat, and lack of water”*

**BAYTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**CP 2006-41413**

**Reported: Sep-06-2006 17:43:47**

**Incident Location**

**Address : 701 W BAKER RD  
Place Name : HARRIS COUNTY COURT ANNEX  
District : 1 Beat : 3 Grid : 892**

**General Information**

**Report number: 2006-41413  
Case type : UNKNOWN PROBLEM Priority : 3  
TIME - Disp : 17:44:34 Enroute : 17:48:42 At Scene : 17:48:42 Cleared : 18:42:21  
How call received : TELEPHONE  
Unit ids : #1 - 72 #2 - 136 #3 - 88  
Call taker ID : 7634 LUCAS, D JEAN**

**Complainant Information**

**Name : JENNIE  
Address : 701 W BAKER  
Business Telephone : 281 427-4791**

**Remarks :**

**JUDGE POLUMBO'S OFFICE**

**B/M ASSAULTED BALIFF - IN HALLWAY PLAID SHIRT AND JEANS IN OFFICE AREA BY JUDGE-**

**IN JUDGE HALLWAY - SUPOSED TO BE WITH JUDGE - UNK IF HE IS THREATENING JUDGE - SEND EMS TO STAGE FOR FEMALE BALIFF - PER MARISELL**

**(M) 6322:HAVE UNIT TO STAGE TILL FIND OUT SCENE IS SECURE**

## **Security**

On September 6, 2006, at approximately 5:43 p.m. Baytown Communications received a telephone call from Jennie from Judge Polumbo's Court. The initial complaint was inputted as an unknown problem. Units were dispatched as a priority 3 (low priority), at 5:44 p.m and arrived on scene at 5:48 pm.

**Incident** – A 16 year old juvenile was removed from the court after he was in a verbal altercation with Judge Polumbo. The Bailiff was escorting the 16 year old juvenile outside of the courtroom through the side hallway. The hallway is located on the eastside of the courtroom; it accesses the detention room and all of the court offices. As she attempted to handcuff the 16 year old juvenile, he ***PUNCHED*** the Deputy. **The Deputy was knocked to the ground and the 16 year old juvenile climbed on top of her and proceeded to beat the Deputy continually in front of the court staff members.** A court staff member yelled for help as one staff member called Baytown Communications. Judge Polumbo heard the outcry. Judge Polumbo stepped off the bench to investigate the commotion in the hallway just inside the court offices. As Judge Polumbo opened the door and entered the hallway he witnessed the 16 year old juvenile on top of the Deputy beating her, he made an outcry to the 16 year old juvenile. **The 16 year old juvenile climbed off of the Deputy and turned towards the Judge and started to approach Judge Polumbo in a threatening manner.** Judge Polumbo reached down and pulled out his weapon and aimed the weapon at the 16 year old juvenile. The juvenile then turned around and walked out

**BAYTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**GO 2006-41413 (\* CLEARED/CL)**

**2203 - 0 ASSAULT-DEADLY ON P.O.COURT**

**General Offense Information**

**Operational status : \* CLEARED/CLOSED**

**Reported on Sep-06-2006 (Wed.) 1743**

**Occurred on Sep-06-2006 (Wed.) 1740**

**Approved on Sep-07-2006 (Thu.) by 300 - SHAW J 025 OPRV PATROL SERGEANT**

**Report submitted by 1747 - REYES J 072 OPEVE PATROL**

**Org unit : PATROL - EVENING**

**Down time : 156**

**Located at 701 W BAKER RD**

**Place name HARRIS COUNTY COURT ANNEX**

**Municipality : BAYTOWN**

**District : 1 Beat : 3 Grid : 892**

**Offenses (Completed/Attempted)**

**Offense : #1 2203 - 0 ASSAULT-DEADLY ON P.O.COURT - COMPLETED**

**Location : GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC BUILDING**

**Suspect used : N/A OR UNKNOWN**

**Weapon type : PERSONAL WEAPONS (HANDS, FEET, TEETH, ETC)**

**Offense : #2 2207 - 0 TERRORISTIC THREAT - COMPLETED**

**Location : GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC BUILDING**

**Suspect used : N/A OR UNKNOWN**





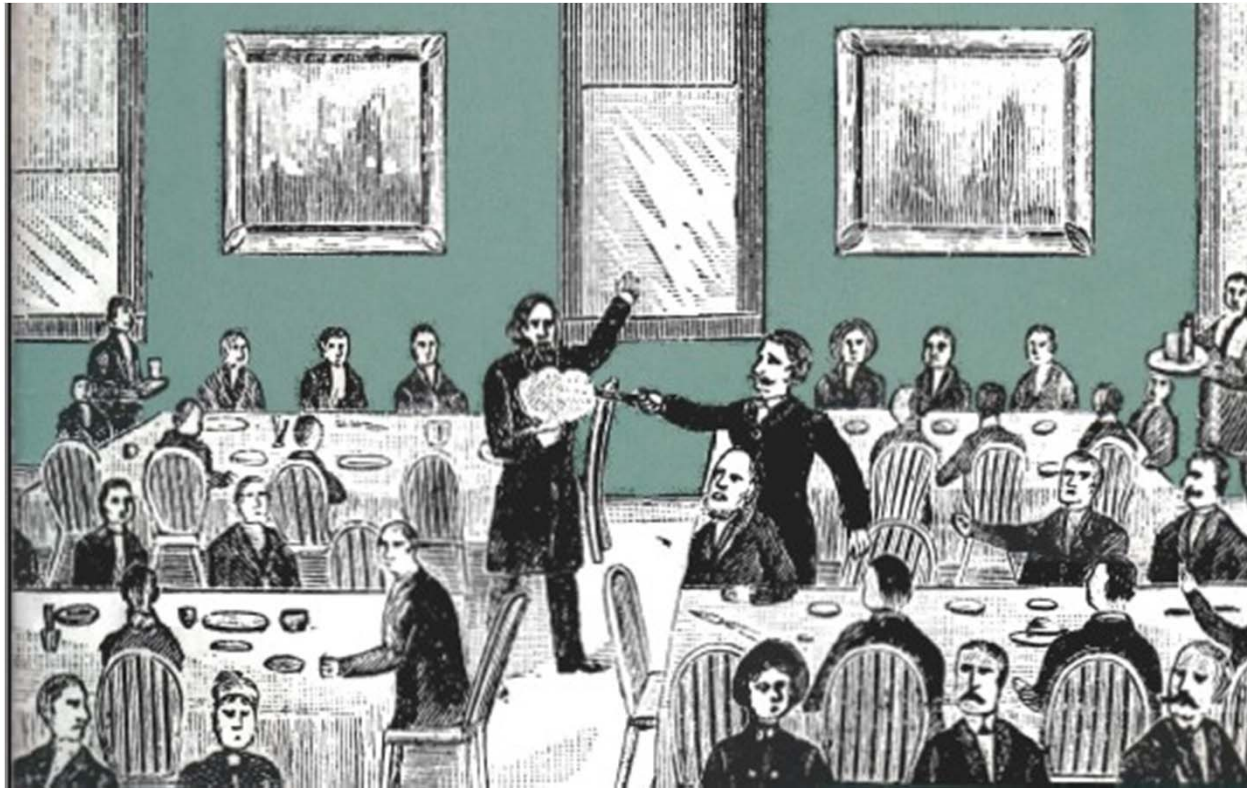
## *Common Sense Court Security*

When evaluating the need for a Security Program, consider...

If its ***PREDICTABLE***

It's ***PREVENTABLE***

# *Common Sense Court Security*



On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1889, Deputy U.S. Marshal David Neagle shot and killed David Terry after he refused to stop an assault against Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field.

Terry was also a local Court Judge

# *Common Sense Court Security*





# *Common Sense Court Security*

## ***HISTORY***

- May 29, 1979-The shot heard round the United States for Court Security. Federal Judge John Wood was assassinated by Charles Harrelson in a Murder for hire plot financed by a drug lord, Jamiel Chagra.
- This incident struck fear in the Federal Judiciary for their safety. Never before in the twentieth century had a Federal Judge been assassinated.



# *Common Sense Court Security*

- 1983-U.S. Marshal's Service contracts for court security personnel utilizing former law enforcement officers
- Security plans are implemented and screening begins in most Federal Court Facilities, others are added as the program expands
- Now, more than 4500 Court Security Officers are employed in 400 courts nationwide
- More than 600 threats/improper communications received annually

# *Common Sense Court Security*



July 1, 1992 - Shot heard around Texas  
that changed the way many looked at  
court security in this State



# *Common Sense Court Security*

- Attorney George Lott opens fire in a Tarrant county courtroom in Fort Worth.
- Killed are Assistant DA Chris Marshall and Attorney John Edwards. Appellate Judges Clyde Ashworth and John Hill along with Assistant DA Steve Conner are wounded by Lott.

# *Common Sense Court Security*





# *Common Sense Court Security*

- Texas implements the Court Security Fund to allow various Courts to collect a Security Fee.
- This fee is for the various Courts identified to staff, train, improve and support Court Security related programs and functions.





# *Common Sense Court Security*

- The city must adopt a city ordinance that allows the municipal court to collect the \$3.00 security fee.
- The ordinance simply must state that it authorizes the municipal court to collect the fee and provide for expenditure of the fee under regulation of state law.



# *Common Sense Court Security*

- Art. 102.017. COURT COSTS; COURTHOUSE SECURITY FUND; MUNICIPAL COURT BUILDING SECURITY FUND; JUSTICE COURT BUILDING SECURITY FUND. (a) A defendant convicted of a felony offense in a district court shall pay a \$5 security fee as a cost of court.
  
- (b) A defendant convicted of a misdemeanor offense in a county court, county court at law, or district court shall pay a \$3 security fee as a cost of court. A defendant convicted of a misdemeanor offense in a justice court shall pay a \$4 security fee as a cost of court. The governing body of a municipality by ordinance may create a municipal court building security fund and may require a defendant convicted of a misdemeanor offense in a municipal court to pay a \$3 security fee as a cost of court.



# *Common Sense Court Security*

## COURT SECURITY FUND

- (c) In this article, a person is considered convicted if:
  - (1) a sentence is imposed on the person;
    - (2) the person receives community supervision, including deferred adjudication;
  - or-
  - (3) the court defers final disposition of the person's case.



# *Common Sense Court Security*

*Court Security Funds may finance;*

- (1) the purchase or repair of X-ray machines and conveying systems;
- (2) handheld metal detectors;
- (3) walkthrough metal detectors;
- (4) identification cards and systems;
- (5) electronic locking and surveillance equipment;
- (6) bailiffs, deputy sheriffs, deputy constables, or contract security personnel during times when they are providing appropriate security services;



# *Common Sense Court Security*

- (7) signage;
- (8) confiscated weapon inventory and tracking systems;
- (9) locks, chains, alarms, or similar security devices;
- (10) the purchase or repair of bullet-proof glass; and
- (11) continuing education on security issues for court personnel and security personnel.



# Physical Security

## ■ What is Physical Security?

- Doors
- Locks
- Alarms
- Lighting
- Glass
- Landscaping
- Sidewalks
- Vehicle Barriers



# Personnel Security

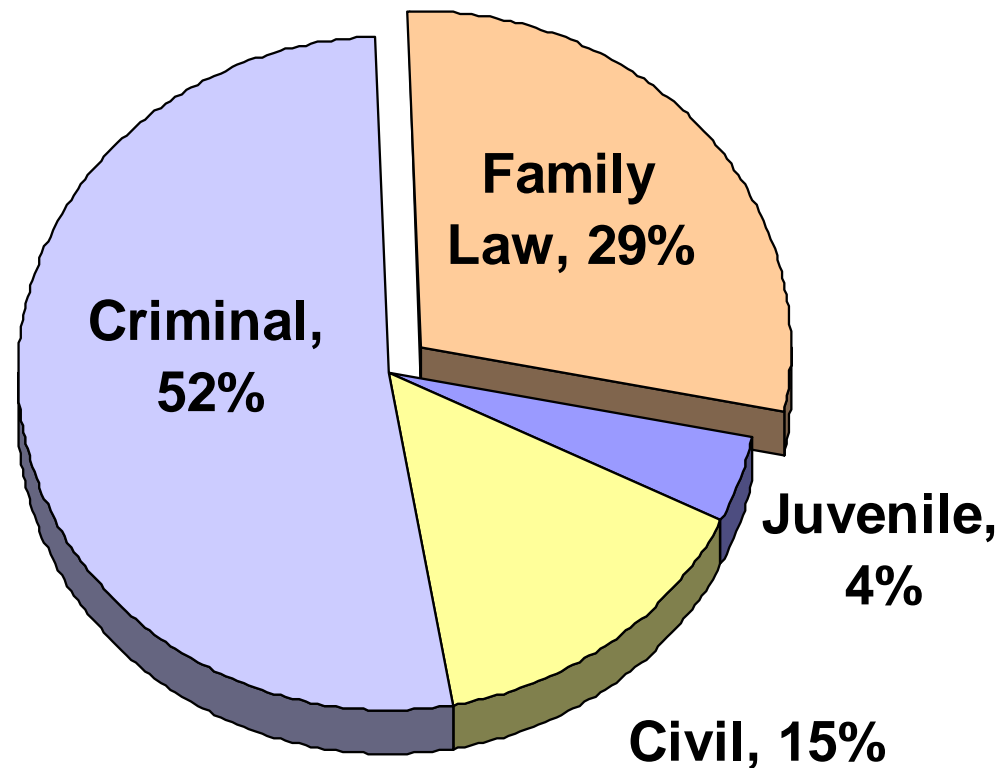
## ■ What is Personnel Security?

- Efforts that address the risk of harm to other persons, from other persons.
- Bailiff's or similar Peace Officers.
- The 'Human Factor'.



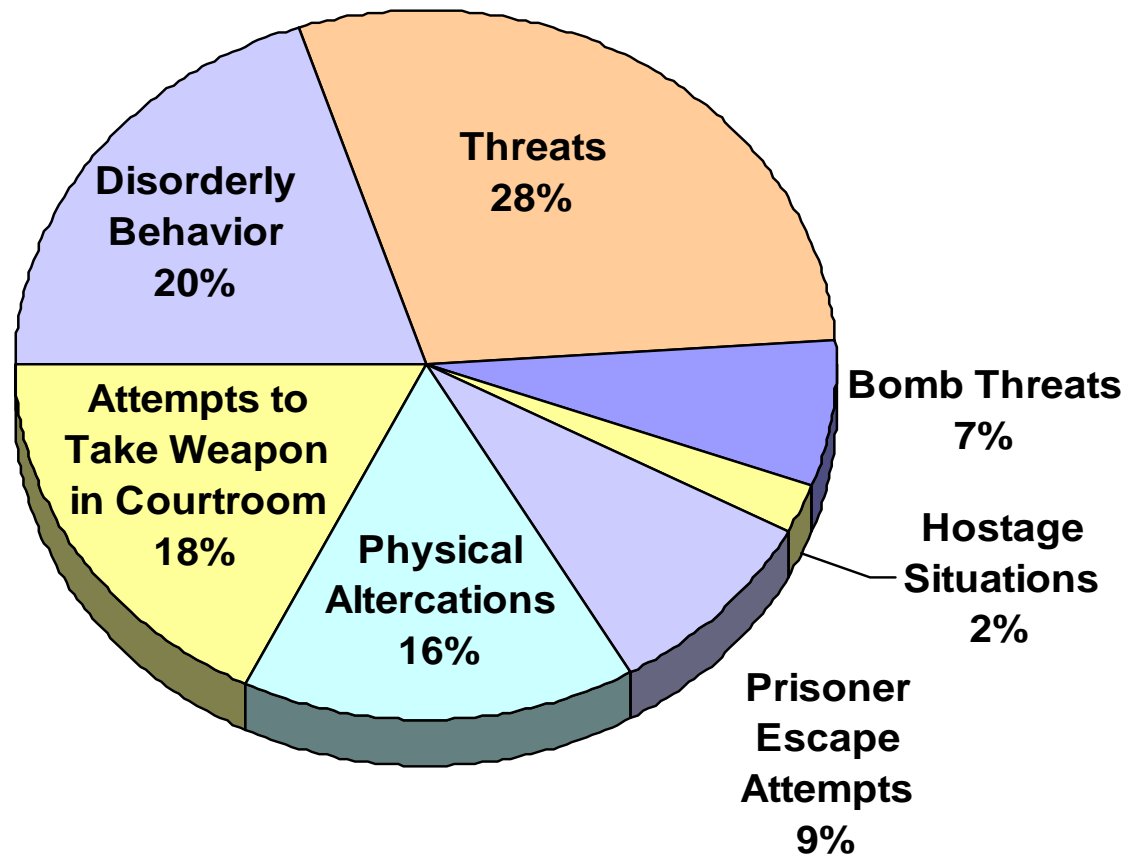
# Court Security Survey, Fiscal Year 2005

## Distribution of Incidents by Case Type

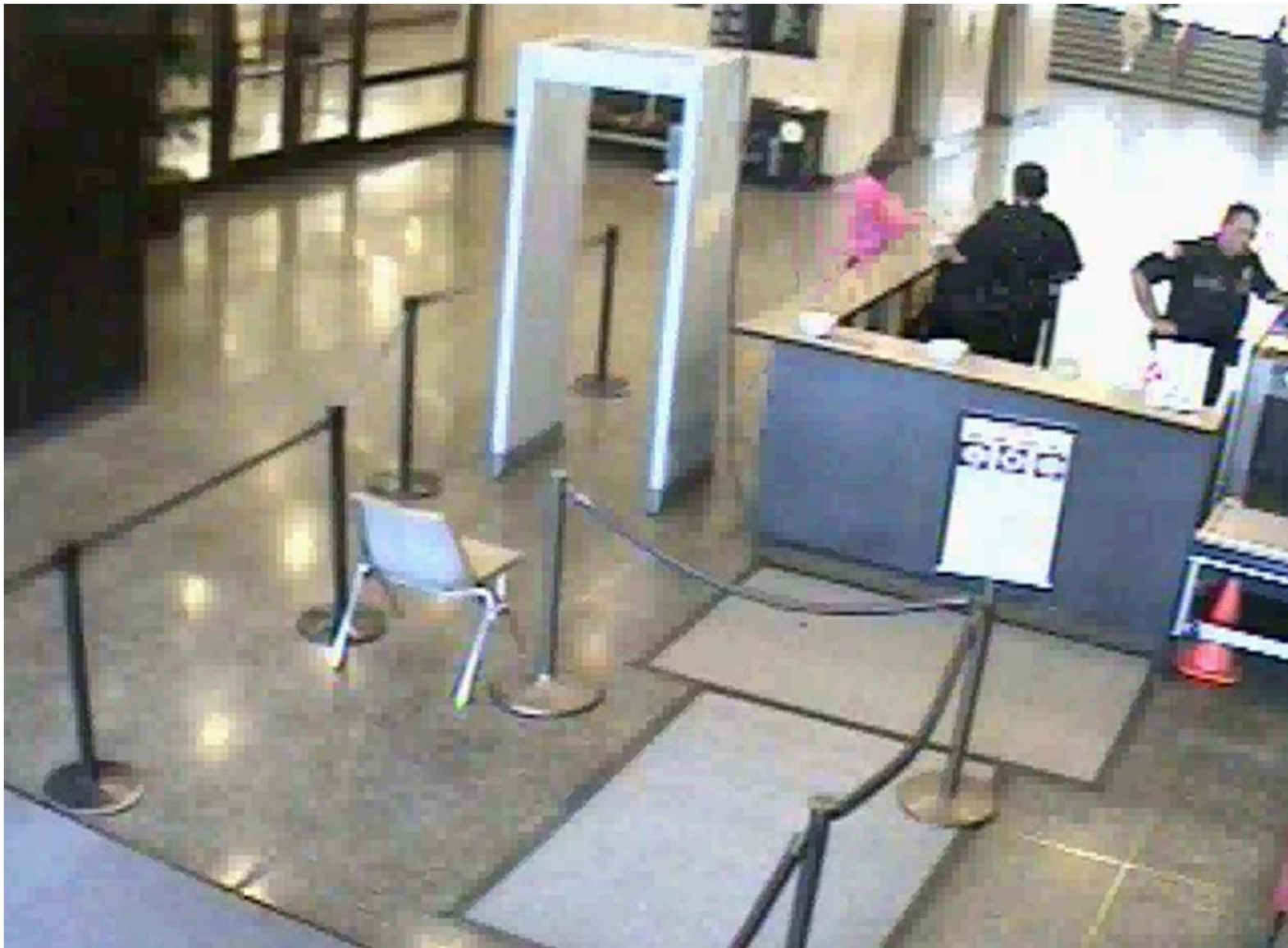


# Court Security Survey, Fiscal Year 2005

## Types of Incidents in Family Law Cases



# *Common Sense Court Security*





# Common Sense Court Security

## ***Risk Management – DEFINED***

***Accurately assessing and responsibly managing predictable risk in the provision of Court Security Services. Analyzing how to control these risks, and where feasible providing a method of ‘risk transfer’.***

***Providing competent supervisory practices and/or policies to reduce the exposure from identified risks. Providing realistic and appropriate levels of training at all levels to further mitigate risk.***



# *Common Sense Court Security*

*There are Four Concepts that are key to Emergency Management, and can assist in our building a competent Court Security Program.*

- *Mitigation*
- *Preparedness*
- *Response*
- *Recovery*



# *Common Sense Court Security*

- Why do things go **WRONG?**

In addressing Security issues, things generally go wrong because well meaning managers are involved in very complex and/or dynamic situations that can develop and change rapidly and they have failed to plan for foreseeable circumstances, resulting in damages. They encounter situations for which they did not plan or prepare for, and have had little - or no - training for, and have not developed experiential learning to assist them in responding and coping to critical concepts and themes.



# *Common Sense Court Security*

## ■ Why do things go RIGHT?

Competent Managers have learned how to address Security situations through their training or from past experiences - through an expression of experiential learning. In addressing security issues, the Manager has dealt with a similar situation previously or received training to provide information and preparation. In any stressful situation, a solid, well trained employee who is experienced in handling a given incident is an outstanding combination for a successful outcome.



## *Common Sense Court Security*

When things go **WRONG** in a Court Security situation, you can generally look to the Pre-Incident preparation of the organization and the employee's responsible.

The same can be said when things go **RIGHT**, but who notices?





# *Common Sense Court Security*

Four Cornerstones of Risk Management in  
High Risk Operations.

- **TRAINING**
- **SUPERVISION**
- **POLICY**
- **PERSONNEL**

# Common Sense Court Security





## ***Common Sense Court Security***

***I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use.***

***--Galileo***



# *Handling Difficult People*

- There are a multitude of types of difficult people.
- Six principles for effective communications
  - Remain Calm
  - Remove the Audience
  - Keep it simple
  - Watch your body language
  - Use Silence
  - Use effective questioning



- Skillful communications

- Knowing **when** to communicate.

- Knowing **what** to communicate.

- Knowing **how** to communicate.

- Respond to people, never react

- The word “respond” comes from the Latin word *respondere*.

- The word “react” suggest that you are being controlled from the outside.

- When you are “responding”, **you are in control**



## ***Most Vital Part of Communication***

- Appearance - Non-Verbal signals from face to face communications account for:
  - 60-80% of the impacted message
  - Vocal tones make up 20-30%
  - The word amount makes up about 7-10%



## *First Responders*

- Who are the “TRUE” First Responders.
- The first 15-45 minutes is the most critical period.
- The average SWAT response is 45-60 minutes.
- What do we need to do?



- Commencement

- Confusion and Chaos

- Anxiety and fear

- Expect extreme responses from the Subject

- Assessment (SBA)

- Situational – **What** is happening?

- Behavioral – **Why** is it happening?

- Approach – **Stop** and ensure your own safety

- Initial Actions

- Attempt to contain the situation

- Evacuate all personnel to a safe locations





# Current Issues

- How fast can something go wrong?
  - [Video](#)
- Weapons
  - In today's Fashion, How easy is it to conceal weapons?
  - [Video](#)
  - Types of weapons



# Inside Security

- Alarm systems
- Fire protection
- Signs
- Emergency lighting
- Areas to handle money
- Public areas
- Personal Safety



Clearly Mark all areas



# Weapons Screening

- One of the hardest tasks in security.
- Three goals of weapon screening
  - Protect – Citizens and court employees
  - Prohibit – Potential weapons from entering
  - Control – Activity within the building
- Time
- The effectiveness of the system will determine the integrity of the process.



Control Security

State what is happening



# Duress Alarms

- Duress alarms installed strategically throughout the building enables staff to summon help at times of emergency.
- Two types of duress alarms
  - Audible alarm
  - Silent alarm
- Testing





# *Common Sense Court Security*

Any Court can potentially see an act of violence and aggression. Equally true, any Court, due to the presence of an 'audience' and the perception of authority, can become the point of gravity for persons who, for varying reasons, want to make a point...politically, culturally, or for other reasons.



# Common Sense Court Security



more colors



**Don't  
Tase Me,  
Bro!**



# *Common Sense Court Security*





## *Common Sense Court Security*

- And often our decisions, our acts of omission or commission, carry a burden, sometimes significant, of both **RISK** and **LIABILITY...**



# *Common Sense Court Security*

SO....what can we do to **MITIGATE**  
our **EXPOSURE** to risk and  
undue **LIABILITY?**

The good news, is there are  
several relatively easy steps you  
can take **NOW**.



# *Common Sense Court Security*

## *POSITIVE STEPS TO TAKE NOW*

- Review / Audit your **RISK** exposure honestly and thoroughly, particularly your Highest Risk actions. Develop an action plan to initiate necessary changes.
- Have in place a Policy/ Procedure manual and/or a Court Security Manual. Review and Update it frequently.



# *What should go into the Court Security Manual?*

- Job description and position responsibilities
- Physical Security
- Facility Evacuation Plan
- Bomb Threats
- Hostage Plan
- Emergency Medical Plan
- Incident Reports
- Courtroom searches
- Prisoner control



## *Who should Help Create the Manual?*

- Law Enforcement
- Court Administrators (Senior Clerks)
- Judges
- Clerks



## *Common Sense Court Security*

- If you need help, ***ASK FOR IT!***

- TMCEC

- TX Marshal Association





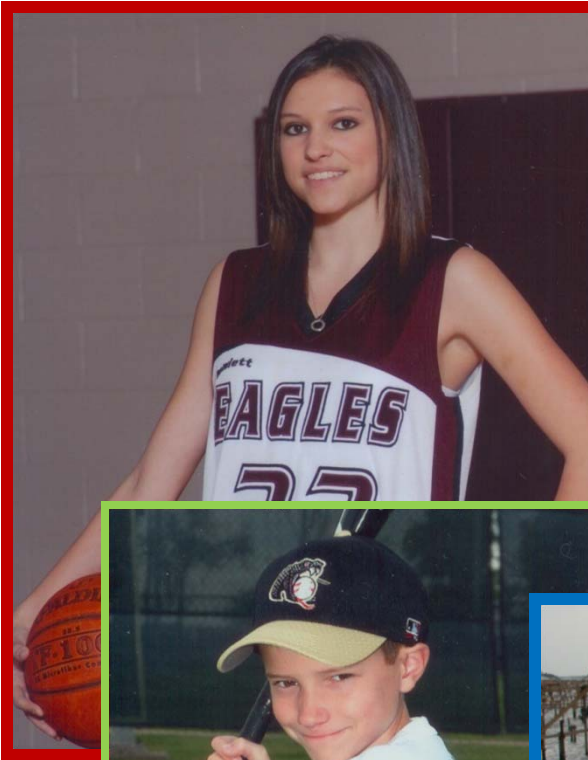
# *Common Sense Court Security*

## ■ Remember.....

If its ***PREDICTABLE***

It's ***PREVENTABLE***

Totally gratuitous & unnecessary Kid pictures.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
TIME, ATTENTION AND  
CONSIDERATION.

***Marshal Rob DeGroot***  
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