Welcome to Justice Today, the official podcast of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, where we shine a light on cutting-edge research and practices and offer an in-depth look at what we're doing to meet the biggest public safety challenges of our time. Join us as we explore how funding, science, and technology help us achieve strong communities.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Welcome to Justice Matters, the official podcast of the Bureau of Justice Assistance or BJA. I'm your host, Karen Friedman, Director of Criminal Justice Innovation, Development, and Engagement at BJA. Before joining BJA, I served for 20 years as a member of the Maryland judiciary sitting in and for the city of Baltimore.

Here on this podcast, we'll discuss critical issues facing our nation's criminal justice system, and share how BJA funding, services, and evidence-based strategies can support you and the communities in which you serve. We'll feature federal leaders, criminal justice professionals, program experts, and community-based partners who aim to address criminal justice challenges and create safer communities.

Welcome to Justice Matters. I'm your host, Karen Friedman. I'm Director of Criminal Justice Innovation, Development, and Engagement here at the Bureau of Justice Assistance otherwise known as BJA. As many of you may know, April is Second Chance Month. On an average day, almost 1,500 Americans are released from state or federal prisons and reenter their families and communities. April is a time when BJA focuses special attention on the formidable barriers these Americans must overcome to build successful, rewarding lives.

Today, we're joined by two men with a deep personal and professional commitment to breaking down these barriers. John Bae and Angel Sanchez currently serve as Second Chance fellows here at BJA. John came to BJA from Vera Institute of Justice here in Washington. Angel graduated from University of Miami law school in 2020 and most recently was with the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition.

Both Angel and John are making reentry issues a focus of their careers, but they also bring a unique personal perspective. Both were formerly incarcerated themselves, and they are already becoming forces in the field. John, Angel, welcome. I am so excited that you're here with me today.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Great to be here with you, Judge.

JOHN BAE: Thank you so much for having us on.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Thank you. No, I'm really excited to have this opportunity to talk with both of you. Now, for those of you who may not know, BJA's Visiting Fellows Program identifies accomplished professionals in the criminal justice field and offers them the experience of working on national policy issues here at BJA. So first of all, congratulations, Angel and John, for being selected. I know that this is a coveted fellowship, so I'm really happy for both of you. I'd love to kind of hear a little bit about each of your professional backgrounds, and the work that has brought you here to BJA. So John, I'm going to start with you.

JOHN BAE: Sure. And, you know, thank you again, so much. And I appreciate you having us on and really want to express my gratitude to BJA for making this fellowship opportunity available. So my entire career has focused on improving the criminal legal system and helping those who have been impacted by it. And this fellowship provides an opportunity to see the work from a different vantage point.

I started out of college at a direct service organization in New York City, supporting formerly incarcerated college students. It was, you know, really rewarding work. But you know, the challenges faced by my students, kind of, like prompted me and fueled my desire to shape policies and programming on a larger scale. So from there, I transitioned to the Vera Institute of Justice to provide technical assistance to colleges and correctional systems that were selected for the Second Chance Pell Initiative in 2016. I was also part of the team that helped launch a BJA-funded project to provide TA to public housing authorities to improve reentry outcomes.

I left Vera to go into philanthropy, most recently managed criminal justice portfolios in several states and cities, before returning to Vera last October, where I currently work on reentry housing issues. So I had the benefit of working on issues along the criminal legal system continuum, like from local work to national projects. And the path that I walked on one that often intersected with BJA brought me here.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: That's awesome. It sounds like it was really a natural trajectory to BJA. And just for those of you that don't know, "TA" means technical assistance. So, when I came to BJA, not that long ago, there were so many acronyms that, so, I know, not everyone knows all the acronyms that we use here. So I want to make sure that our listeners know what TA is, so that's technical assistance. All right, Angel, you want to share your pathways to BJA?

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Yeah, sure. And, again, like John said, thank you for having us. I think this is exciting. We're having a podcast, and this is part of our formal onboarding

thing, showing the ways that we're communicating, thankfully, informally to the community. So I'm really excited about this. Like we're in the, we're on a podcast.

JOHN BAE: Yes.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Happy hour is next, even more exciting.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Yeah, this is awesome. So, to kind of describe a little bit of my professional background, I would say, it involves the opportunity, first and foremost, to work alongside and in an organization that was fighting for justice-impacted individuals, but not just so, it was also led by-justice impacted individuals.

So the organization I come from, the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, we've been fighting to undo a Jim Crow-era policy of life disenfranchisement upon the conviction of any felony in Florida. We had to learn how can we destigmatize our community. We couldn't depend on others fighting for us. And when the low-hanging fruits were no longer there, oftentimes, many of those who were doing good work found their way into other states and other areas that provided them other low-hanging fruits, and we were left, for lack of better words, holding the bag.

And so that's when we decided we needed to take agency and initiative of our own issues. And we began meeting people where they were. We began talking to people from all walks of life and realizing that many of the regular common folks on the ground really believe in second chances. They really believe in restoration. But oftentimes are discouraged or scared out of it, with these stigmatized, demonized narratives.

And so when they began meeting people like one of my mentors and friends, Desmond, and myself and others in our organization, it was, we were surprised to see how overwhelmingly supportive people were. And so my professional work, if I had to encapsulate it, I know that it's very easy to go and hit like the résumé markers. But I would rather highlight right now, and maybe later we can get to those résumé markers. But right now, I want to highlight that my professional experience is trying to meet people where they are and tap into that actual desire and belief in second chances, so that they do support it.

And it was such that after, like, almost 10 years of work, we were able to get a state to overwhelmingly, and when I say overwhelmingly, over 60 percent of the state voted "yes" to second chances, to restore voting rights to people who had completed their sentence. And so that was my, both my school and my entering into the advocacy field and into the reentry field.

But I would just like to point out that we didn't just fight to restore voting rights for the sake of voting rights, we were, we were fighting to restore voting rights, so that we could have political power and be a constituency, that then can turn to our elected officials and hold them accountable. So, that's, I think, an overarching, a good a summary of my professional experience.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: You know, we here at BJA really care about second chances. So that's, you know, a natural progression for you here to BJA. Because we, you know, we spend a lot of our time thinking about that. And I know personally, I was the expungement judge in Baltimore for a long time, and I really saw firsthand how those laws affected people in real time in the most real and personal way. And when, you know, the law didn't allow me to expunge people's prior offenses, you know, how it held them up, and even how emotional they were about it.

Like there were times when, you know, and I would, you know, always have to ask, like, "Why do you need this? Et cetera." And sometimes there was no real need for it in the sense that they were working and had a house and had a business. So it wasn't like holding them up, but emotionally, it was holding them up. Mentally, it was holding them up. And they needed it just to, you know, for themselves to really overcome that emotional and mental barrier as opposed to just in, you know, an actual housing or educational need. It was, it was really fascinating to see.

So, as I mentioned earlier, both of you have experienced firsthand the challenges that are part of reentry from incarceration. How does that experience influence your work on criminal justice issues? And Angel, I'll go to you first on this one.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Thank you. Yes. So for me, one of the things that my experience taught me is that there were way too many fault lines and insurmountable barriers along my reentry path. And it was only thanks to the individuals that I met along the way, who either bent the rules or made exceptions for me that made my story possible. And that was both a very encouraging, an experience, something to be grateful for.

But it was also a very frightening experience because it just highlighted how fragile one's reentry is. Had I not met that individual at one juncture of my journey or at another, I probably would've found myself right back into prison. And the sad story that would've been told was, "Angel didn't try hard enough." And that, to me, was very scary and disheartening to think how many individuals right now are getting out with lots of motivation, but sadly, not the structures and the support system in place, and just didn't

have that happenstance chance to run across someone who might have bent the rules, so that they could get to the next chapter in their reentry journey.

And so having seen that firsthand from my personal experience made me want to fight for one, continuing to encourage all those individuals of goodwill to continue being on the lookout for people that are trying hard and are motivated, but more importantly, fighting to change those structures so that we could have successful reintegration not by chance, but structurally in place.

And so it, to me it's a two-headed approach. And I don't dismiss that while we're trying to change the system, we have to figure out ways to be resilient to endure those fault lines, but also not think that chance is enough. We should definitely be fighting to structure the system so that people can have successful reintegration, not by chance, but by design.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Wow. That answer really blows me away. Because, you know, from my perspective, I was in a position to be that person you're talking about, and it was such an honor for me to be able to do that. And to hear the difference that it made for you is so powerful for me. I, yeah, that really blows me away. Wow. John.

JOHN BAE: Yeah, I mean, so I had a very different reentry experience from the ones that we often hear about, where people are, they're faced with barriers and challenges upon barriers. And, you know, I think that really influenced how I, my work, and how I navigate in the field.

You know, so for one, I returned to New York City, and I think the city itself can be very conducive to supporting successful reentry. Just one example is, like, it has a sprawling subway system. Right? And, like, one thing that I do not have to worry about was transportation, but for others across the country and for those who need cars to get around, but have limitations because of licensing restrictions, it poses a challenge for them. For me, I had family support and a house to live in. And within 60 days of my release, I was re-enrolled in school at a, at a job at a law office. I was working full-time and going to class in the evenings and the weekends, so. And even the school itself that I was attending, so they were focused on the issues that we're talking about, and it provided an environment for me to explore different opportunities and build a network.

So, you know, to sum it all up, like, I walked out those gates and never looked back. But that's not to say that I didn't have challenges, right? And I remember the first house that I applied to on my own, my conviction history was flagged and I had to provide like 60 pages of supporting documentation, right, to demonstrate my rehabilitation. And was denied a part-time job mentoring justice-involved young people. Even when the senior director, like, offered me a position, but the organization that I was applying to, they just didn't understand that this was what the job called for.

So it's like, it's like things like that that I had to overcome, but I recognize how privileged I was. And it's that privilege that influences my work, you know. We just, I, we all just want to live free from the extended chains of our system involvement. But that spills over to every facet of our society once we reenter. And I recognized that I've been more fortunate than most, and I want to make use of the privilege that I've been afforded to help others, so they can have the same opportunities like I did and more.

And I think at the end of the day, I want to create a world where everyone is treated fairly. And one where a person's past does not determine something about their future. I think we've made headway in a lot of areas, but there's still a lot of work to do.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: I want to live in that world with you, John.

JOHN BAE: I'll take you all along.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Awesome, so eloquently said. Thank you. All right. So let's talk about the complex process of reentry. You know, people come out, and they need to get an education, either an education, like you gentlemen did, college and graduate school, or just an education, vocational training to get a job. Then they need to get a job. They need to find a place to live. They need to get health care. And all these hurdles are hard. All these things are, these steps are hard.

But both of you really have successful careers and advanced degrees. And Angel, it's my understanding that while you were in law school, you published an article in the *Harvard Law Review*. And so my question to you is based on your professional and personal experience, how can we make education more accessible for people who are reentering society?

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Oh, that's a great question, Judge. I would first point out what isn't the obvious and sadly oftentimes is ignored, which is having access to education for people who are "not getting out." Oftentimes we, to, we focus our resources on so-called "the ones that are getting out" to make the most of those resources. But in doing that, what happens is that we deny the individuals who create the culture inside the correctional facilities the opportunity and the advantages of experiencing and understanding the value of education.

And so to have successful reentry and successful access to higher education, I think, first and foremost, it needs to start inside the correctional facilities. In other words, reentry starts the moment you enter a facility, not when you're about to be released from it. I often like to say that I've made the mistake way too many summers, for way too many summers, of trying to get a six-pack right before summer. It never works out. And I think and I believe that if I just do a couple of fast, I don't know…

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Sit ups.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: …hacks and sit ups that, and get a couple of supplements that will create the magic and the genie in the bottle give me that six-pack. And the reality is that for me to have, to be fit, this has to be more than just a momentary thing before a certain event. It has to be a culture that is created, developed, and accessible.

So first and foremost, I believe is access to higher ed for individuals who are not getting out. And an education that goes beyond just trade opportunities, which those are also important, but too often the incentives in facilities is to, is to equip individuals with trades that allow them to be, to work in the facility and to manage and maintain the facility, right? So it's a very utilitarian type of approach. And so to me, I think that's the first part of it. And I say this from personal experience.

I went to prison as a teenager with a 30-year sentence. I will later get my convictions vacated and resentenced to 15 years and served 12 years. That just happened to happen by chance. But based on my 30-year sentence, and even on a 12-year sentence that I ultimately ended up serving, I was not eligible for many programs. I went to prison computer illiterate. I went to prison in '99 before the internet and was getting out in 2011 because my sentences got changed. And I essentially, based on the opportunities provided to me, was getting out of prison no different than when I went in.

Assuming that individuals are not learning, and I like to say that everybody is learning something. What they're learning is the difference. And so having access to education for people who are not getting out, like, those that were my mentors and older than me, some of them even associated with gangs or whatnot. They happen to have been imprisoned during a time when Pell Grant was still available for the incarcerated. And so they had a certain value of education and had been exposed to it.

So they gave me, they imparted upon me that same value, shared with me textbooks to be reading, ways to look at the world, different ways to, that at some point when I started realizing it dignified me. It made me feel valuable, and it made me feel more than what this, the legal system had labeled me, which was an irredeemable super predator teenager. And I began seeing myself as a college student, as a 19-year-old sitting in a prison compound.

And so I'll start with what isn't the obvious, which is access to education for the ones that are not getting out, because they are the culture carriers that influence what those who are getting out ultimately value while they're incarcerated.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Wow. That is so interesting. That is really interesting. I never, I never really thought of it like that. Thank you for sharing that. John, you earned your master's degree from John Jay School of Criminal Justice. And you're also working on housing and education issues. What are the issues related to housing or education that concern you the most?

JOHN BAE: Wow, I mean, I can go so many different ways with this. But I think I want to touch on a point that Angel made earlier, and it's around the stigma and the narrative.

So, you know, what's most concerning to me, it's like, it's a narrative around people who have been involved with the criminal legal system, as that narrative underpins many of the policies that pose barriers to housing, education, employment, and other needs.

So there's this notion that once someone engages in criminal behavior, they will always continue to, continue to do so, and that people with system involvement are more dangerous and scarier than people who may not have any contact. So this narrative and the debate about people being less deserving of needs and supports because of their conviction history fuels and have fueled policies, blanket policies that limits access to housing, employment, education.

I mean, the list goes on and on, and we can dissect the tens of thousands of collateral consequences of conviction histories. But studies have shown repeatedly, and I'll pull one from 2014 that examined the Bureau of Justice Statistics' data, that following incarceration most people never return back to prison. Even recent studies have shown that success in the community after incarceration is a more likely outcome. But still, we create these self-fulfilling prophecies by promoting these narratives and building policies around it.

I'll give you an example, the "not in my backyard" attitude and restrictive housing policies cause housing insecurity for some and may push others to live on the street. Formerly incarcerated people are 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public. And homeless people are 11 times more likely to have contact with the criminal legal system than people who are housed. I mean, these data points point to the cyclical relationship between housing insecurity and criminal legal system involvement.

But I don't want to dismiss people's concerns. And I recognize that individuals have worries that can be shaped often by their own experiences. But the point here is this: People with system involvement, we're not a monolith, and we need to have nuanced conversations when thinking about policy and practice. And not one, and I don't want this to be taken the wrong way, not one about who is more or less scary, but thinking about who may need more support and interventions to thrive in the community and how we, as a society, can embrace and help these folks, not just shun them out.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Love that. I love that. Thank you, John. Angel I know that even though you're a lawyer now and have this, you know, great career going, I know that you still have contact personally with the criminal justice system. And I want to know if you'd be willing to share with our audience, your personal situation that's occurring in your family as we speak.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Yeah. You know what, thank you for that question, Judge. And before I even answer it because here's a real-time example of the kind of insecurities of returning individuals live with. I just graduated from law school in 2020, passed the D.C. Bar, graduated in the top 10 percent of my class. And I'm still right now crazy insecure because you just said I'm a lawyer, and I need to overcorrect and make sure that I'd be

twice as good. I haven't gone through character and fitness yet, so I'm not an attorney yet.

And the last thing I wanted for someone to say, "You see, you can't be trusted. You put yourself out as to be a lawyer because someone said you were a lawyer and you didn't correct them." And I'm afraid that that would later come to haunt me when in all, for all intents and purposes, I think I'm doing everything the right way. So. anyways, I, that was a long way of saying, "Let me correct. I am not a practicing attorney yet."

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Okay. My apologies.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: I'm still waiting.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: My apologies.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: No worries, but it's the insecurities I live with. I have to be twice as good. And so to talk…

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Well, welcome to the, at least welcome to the Order of the Coif club.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Yes, I did…

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Right?

ANGEL SANCHEZ: …get accepted.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Graduate in it's…

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Did get that distinction.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: I am proud to say I'm in that club, as well. It's a very exclusive club, so welcome.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: That's so cool. Well, I'm in this club representing all prison GED students and community college students.

So, but to answer the question that you posed, which I think it's a good opportunity to share it because oftentimes I would forget to even share it myself. It's me right now helping and being right now on the sidelines of my own sister's reentry. And my sister is a single mother of three children. Like myself, she was in and out of jail from a young age. And like me, her last, during her last arrest and incarceration, she said, "Brother, I'm going to do what you did. I'm going to just go into a homeless shelter, and I'm going to try to figure it out from there."

And I just happened to be fortunate enough that I was in the same city she was being released to. So I was able to help her in her reentry. And then witnessed all the barriers she's encountering as a single mother. I hate to, I will share it because it needs to be shared. I think that's more of her story to share, but I would just say that she was on the threads of being evicted just a month ago with three kids. And the sad reality is that I happen to have enough privilege right now to fill that gap. And I honestly don't believe that I'm among the social class that has more to give, but nonetheless, this is someone close to me.

So I was helping my sister, my family, to ensure that my local community has a better outcome with a mother who's not back into a homeless status or in any precarious status. And I think that's important to highlight because while I was incarcerated, it dawned on me, like my last years of incarceration since we're talking about reentry. Reentry, like I mentioned, started many years for me before I got out, and it was self-educating in prison, trying to figure out a way that if I ever got out how could I be successful upon release and go to college and pursue this prison-to-law-school journey that I had in mind.

And what I quickly found was, not only was the carceral system, the facilities, the probation I would have afterwards, not in place to support this journey and this dream, but in many respects was antagonistic to it, was a barrier to it.

And I'll just give you a simple example. About four years before getting out of prison for my release date, I'm shipped away 10 hours away from my family. Naturally, ties are going to be severed. Maintaining familial relations are going to be harder. And so I was shipped away. Meanwhile, I had an undocumented mother who has been battling drug addictions, scraping up whatever money she had and before she would go and get herself a fix with her drug addiction, she would first purchase a book that I had asked her to order for me, and put enough money so that I could have one phone call a week for me to be able to call.

And what's the irony in this is that the Department of Corrections is getting hundreds of millions of dollars in budget to ensure that I am released better than when I went in, that I have, hopefully, a successful reentry. And yet, I was being torn from my family through the Department of Corrections. And yet the person who has no means to support my reentry was the one that was doing it, a below-poverty-line mother on her own, battling her own demons and her own struggles. And she was purchasing the books and paying for the phone calls that helped me continue in my reentry aspirations, and in my dreams, and in my preparation for the day that I did get out.

So that's an example where sadly, too often, there is a social tax that's put upon the community that ultimately experiences the impacts of the legal system. So thank you for giving me an opportunity to share that. And witnessing that also reminds me of how good I had it. John talks about how privileged he was getting out, and maybe I have more struggles than him. But the reality is I feel so much more privileged getting out of prison than my sister. I could not imagine having been this successful being a single parent with three kids.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: And there's no resources oftentimes in place to help returning mothers.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Yeah, no, I agree. I saw that first-hand as well, that it was always more of a struggle to find community resources for women with children. And that's a huge gap in service that I think that we do need to address and that the BJA is very aware of and wants to do something about. So, and thank you for highlighting that and thank you for sharing your personal story. It's really, really powerful, and what a mom. Okay, you know, that's the power of a mom. You know, even a struggling mom, the power of a mom is always a tremendous, tremendous thing.

You know, part of the reason that BJA sponsors the Second Chance Fellows Program is so we really can learn from you. And this may be a tough question, but based on your personal and professional experience, if you could eliminate one barrier if I gave you a magic wand and you can eliminate one barrier that impedes reentry for people leaving prison or jail, what would that be and why? And I will throw that to John first.

JOHN BAE: I hope that's a really big wand. You know, I touched on this a little before, but I'll start with housing barriers. Housing is a foundation for other supports. Supports and needs such as employment, education, reconnecting with family, improving physical and mental health. And if people do not have to worry about where they will rest their head at night, then they can focus on other needs. And these improved outcomes both for the individual, right, and living conditions matter to, not just that person and their family, but the entire community. And when people who are in reentry return to their communities, when they have homes, the individual success, it helps the community strengthen and public safety is improved.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: A hundred percent. Yeah, I mean, it's interesting that you picked housing. You know, what I would see first-hand as a judge is that need for the mailing address became so critical. So, you know, if someone applies for a state ID card, right?

And they need a state ID card to get any job. Or you have the issue that, you know, parole and probation requires you to have an address. And if you don't, you know, if you're constantly bouncing around to new addresses, and you don't have an address to give them, that becomes a technical violation. And you could be thrown back in jail because you don't have an address to give them. So I totally, I totally hear what you're saying, John.

JOHN BAE: Yeah, I mean, all those scenarios…

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Go, sorry. Go ahead, John.

JOHN BAE: No, I was just going to say like all those scenarios that you provided, I mean, it just points to why housing is such an important need and kind of built a foundation for all those other things.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Yeah, yeah. Angel, where's your wand taking us?

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Yeah, I, and I understand the sentiment of the question. It's such an American question, though. It's, like, what is the app that will fix this problem? And can I just put it in the microwave for 90 seconds? I can't wait that much longer for it to roast. And…

JOHN BAE: So right.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: But I get it. I'm going to try to give it a shot. So, I will first say that whatever I do point out, I, for those who are listening, I want to make sure that it doesn't imply that every other barrier is that much more less significant in addressing. And so sometimes, you know, I don't want that implication to come out. And I'm probably going to get a little meta with it. I'm going to say that the most important barrier if I had to pick one is to remove the stigma that the justice-impacted individual lives with.

Because, let's be clear, the reason that housing is hard is because of the stigmas in place that have turned into policies that legitimize the exclusion of those individuals. The reason that employment is hard is because of the stigmas in place that have legitimized the exclusion of individuals. The reason many things are hard is because there are sometimes, and most of them are myths, sadly. And so we talked about how successful John and I are, but if I'm being candid with you, I fell in love with learning the law and pursuing the legal education when I was a teenager in prison trying to learn how to fight my own case. But the truth is that for most of us, what we're pursuing is just things that offset the stigma.

So whenever someone, I have had close friends of mine introduce me to someone and when they, when the conversation turns into and I share out, “Yeah, unfortunately, I was born in Miami but I grew up in prison. I turned 18, 21, 24, a lot of formative years happened in prison.” Immediately my friends turn around and say, “And he just graduated from law school.” Right? They want to highlight the offsetting, destigmatizer, if you will. And so most of the work we’re doing is to offset the stigma, to remove the stigma.

And today, we have one of the remaining remnants of things that for any other population it would be considered unconstitutional treatment. It’s legalized and permitted for those who are branded with the scarlet letter of, not only a conviction, a mere arrest is enough, right? And then it creates this false myth that those who have criminally been convicted are the evildoers, and those who are not criminally convicted are the good people. And we know that humans are more complex than that. Those who have never been convicted, oftentimes guards, proudly say, “It’s only because I didn’t get caught.” Right?

And many times, individuals who have been convicted are oftentimes individuals who have restored harm they’ve done and are some of the greatest leading individuals in their families, in their jobs, and maybe in their communities, but very rarely are they either highlighted or given an opportunity to do so. So removing the stigma that, in part, we’re all, including myself, guilty for perpetuating including media narratives, romanticizing certain things. So I will say that. I hope I didn’t dodge the question too much, but that’s my American answer…

KAREN FRIEDMAN: No.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: …for an American question.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Yeah. I was, I was about to say, well, this American thinks that’s a great use of the wand. So thank you for that. Anyway, gentlemen, I have thoroughly, yeah, I was, I was just doing it.

Okay, well, John, Angel, I thoroughly, thoroughly enjoyed this conversation. I learned so much from both of you. I so appreciate your time. I appreciate your candor. I appreciate all the work that you are doing. And I’m so thrilled that you are in the BJA family because now I’m related to you and I love that.

So thank you for being with us, keep doing what you're doing. And, again, to all our listeners, I hope you enjoyed, I hope you learned, and I'll talk again another time.

JOHN BAE: Thank you so much.

ANGEL SANCHEZ: Thank you for having us, Judge.

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Justice Matters is the official podcast of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a component of the United States Department of Justice. To learn more about today's topic or about BJA, please visit the links in the episode description. Join us for new episodes every month.