



Marc Levis

### Why I became a Court Services Officer


I am here to tell you that my path to working for Court Services has been a journey and not particularly a destination.

I grew up in a low-income portion of Metro-Detroit, where some of the effects of poverty were evident. Alcoholism, drug abuse, and property crime were a part of the neighborhood. Domestic Violence and assaultive behavior were also a part of the landscape of the community.

As a child, my first exposure to severe and persistent mental illness within my family occurred. This drove in me a deep desire to be somebody who wanted to help others. Taking community college classes at first and then receiving a BA in Psychology was my chosen path. During this time, I also had an interest in Criminal Justice and an intense love for music. I bought my first house at 22 years old, often working two or three jobs to support my family. I fathered three beautiful daughters in my twenties.

I have worked many jobs during my adulthood. Highlights during my twenties and thirties included being a recipient rights advisor for a Detroit hospital, a case manager for both the SPMI population and the substance abuse field. I also worked as a protective services officer and as a psychiatric technician in a Detroit Hospital. At some point, I followed through after years of contemplation and completed a second degree in Criminal Justice. This was indeed the best decision I have ever made from a career standpoint. I graduated at the age of 45.

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After graduating, I worked in Community Corrections for Oakland County Michigan as a Case Manager for the Wyoming Department of Corrections. I worked for both the Wyoming Honor Farm in Riverton, Wyoming, and the Women's Penitentiary in Lusk, Wyoming. After a year of working in Lusk, I decided that working in the female pen was perhaps not my wisest decision. I started looking around the Black Hills for work and decided that I would throw my hat in the ring for the Court Services Officer position in Belle Fourche, SD. This was my second-best decision in my work career. The amount of training and professional growth I have encountered since working for the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit has allowed me to feel productive and valued. I have been able to infuse the skills from all my past job experiences and have been able to help most people on some level. People with substance abuse issues, people with mental health issues, people with legal problems, and criminogenic difficulties.

I have for the past year and a half been working for the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit DUI Court as a Court Services Officer. This has afforded me such an opportunity for professional growth. I will always be thankful for my Supervisors -- Derek Nedved, Gene McNabb, and Judge Day -- for entrusting me with this position.

Things have come full circle in my life; although 1,300 miles from where my life started. I have traded concrete in the city for the Black Hills and the old neighborhood for wide-open spaces. I have traded all the instability that comes with growing up in a household with a mentally ill parent. I have traded this for professional and personal roots, and the kindness of the people of South Dakota. I'm here to tell you life is a journey, not a destination.



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