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**THE UNCORRECTED SELF:  
IDENTITY NEGOTIATION IN JUVENILE DETENTION**

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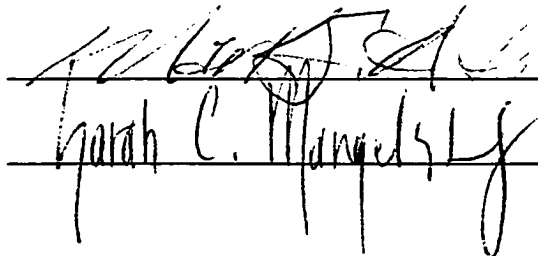
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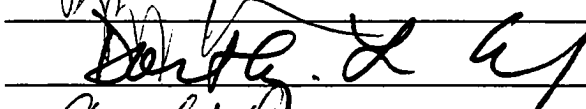
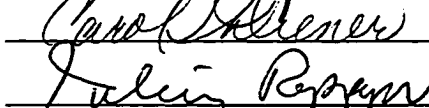

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## ABSTRACT

Using ethnographic methods, this study explored the process of identity negotiation for juvenile detainees in a county detention center in the Midwestern United States. Participants included six male, first-time detainees, ages 12 to 16, their parents, and detention center staff and administrators. Data are drawn from fourteen months of participant observation in the detention center, archival research, single interviews with several detention center officers and administrators, and repeated interviews with participating detainees during and after their time in detention. Working within a narrative framework that incorporates theories of labeling, reflected appraisals and possible selves, the research seeks to illuminate how labels or appraisals of detainees are communicated in the detention context. Particular attention was paid to how experiences in detention contribute to detainees' perceptions of themselves and their future opportunities, and how race and disproportionate minority confinement affect the identity negotiation process. Detainee interviews and field observations revealed a highly restrictive, jail-like atmosphere in which detainees' self-expression was severely curtailed. The setting appeared to be designed to "erase and replace" youth identities, shaping youth to be silent, polite, even obeisant toward adult authorities. Youth responses to this context ranged from passive acceptance through active resistance. Contextual and personal factors affecting detainees' perception of and response to the setting are explored through detailed analysis of detainees' narratives. The setting's current mix of punitive and rehabilitative approaches suggested ambivalence toward detainees, in which they were viewed as either flawed and dangerous, needy and vulnerable, or both. This negative ambivalence was clearly rooted in the setting's history in the community, and appeared to prevent the facility from successfully engaging with, understanding and helping detained youth. This was particularly true for African American detainees, who were over represented in the center, in comparison to the local population. The report concludes that the setting's extremely restrictive practices and the role it offers to detainees are ineffective at best and damaging at worst. Specific recommendations are offered for recreating the center with a strengths-based, restorative approach.

*For “my kids” –  
six in this study and many others who have motivated and inspired  
me as a clinician, researcher, advocate, and human being –  
each one is a gem.*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My heartfelt thanks go first and foremost to the young men who participated in the study, answering my questions with intelligence, humor, honesty and insight. I'm honored to have been allowed a glimpse of their lives and their thoughts. Thanks also to the staff and administrators at the juvenile detention center for letting me in and showing me honestly what their work is about. I hope I have done justice to the stories of both groups. My advisor, Mark Aber, has the gift of making my rambling thoughts seem meaningful, intelligent and sometimes even important; perhaps that's why I always have more motivation when I leave our meetings than when I enter. My committee members, Julian Rappaport, Peggy Miller, Carol Diener and Dorothy Espelage, gave me excellent feedback and support throughout. Finally, thanks and shout outs to my husband, Charley, to Darby and Liz, and to the many members of my chosen family, who have supported me through this project with judicious dispensations of advice, cajoling, moral support, and love.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is a typical Monday morning in the language and arts classroom at the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC). The detainees in the room number five in all, including three European American males, an African American male and an African American female; all appear to be in their mid-teens. They are quiet but alert as they watch a portion of the movie, "The Miracle Worker." Also in the room are four adults: myself and two other European American women (the teacher and a detention officer) and a European American man, also a detention officer. The man's name is Earl; he is a stocky, barrel-chested man of about 45, with large, muscular arms and a crewcut. He is imposing in physical presence, voice and personality. He has a reputation, among detention center staff and detainees alike, for "always messing with people" (e.g., teasing, joking, calling names) or "having a bad attitude" (e.g., "pushing" people, verbally or physically, in ways that sometimes seem designed to make them uncomfortable).

When it is time for the next class to begin, Earl stands up and moves to the back door of the classroom, which leads directly to the math and science classroom next door. At this point, the norm is for a detention officer to call the detainees as a group to line up, or to call them to join the line one at a time. On this particular occasion, Earl addresses the entire group, saying, "Come on, hoodlums." The detainees stand up slowly, walk to the side of the classroom and line up facing the door. Earl opens the door and they leave the classroom. The last young man in line is a 15-year-old African American male. As he passes Earl, he asks, "Who were you talking to when you said 'hoodlums?'" Earl responds quickly and firmly, with a hint of defiance or challenge in his voice: "You." In a slightly louder voice than he used to ask his question, the young man tells Earl, "I'm not a hoodlum," and walks to his seat.

Every year, United States juvenile courts encounter increasing numbers of delinquency cases.<sup>1</sup> Between 1987 and 1996, delinquency caseloads increased 49%, totaling over 1.5 million

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<sup>1</sup>Although the overall rate of arrest and adjudication has stayed fairly constant, the total population of adolescents (i.e. people "at risk" for adjudication as delinquents) is increasing and  
(continued...)

in 1996 (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999, p. 144). During that time, about 20% of each year's cases involved detention of the minor in a secure facility (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999, p. 146); thus the overall numbers of detention cases have increased as well. Adjudication and detention rates are especially high for African American youth, who are more likely to be referred to juvenile court than European Americans (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999, p. 150), and more likely to be detained than other court-referred minors, even when controlling for the severity of offenses (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999, p. 155).

Given the increasing number of delinquency cases and the concomitant rise in detainments, it is important to understand the effect of the juvenile detention experience on young people, particularly African Americans. In 2000, 194 young people spent a total of 6,299 nights in the Champaign County (Illinois) Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC, 2001), for an average of 33 nights per person. Similarly, a national "one day snapshot" of detention facilities in 1997 showed that nearly 50% of young people in detention had been there at least 40 days. If, instead of a detention facility, we were sending adolescents to summer camp, school, or even a relative's home for four to five weeks, we would probably want to know what would happen to them there, how they would be treated, and what they would learn from the experience. As scientists and citizens supporting the juvenile court's "in loco parentis" stance, it is essential that we seek this same understanding of young people's experiences in detention.

This study is intended to illuminate the experiences of young people in a juvenile detention center. Particular attention is paid to how experiences in detention contribute to self-image and perceptions of future opportunities, and how race<sup>2</sup> affects young people's

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<sup>1</sup>(...continued)

is expected to continue growing well into the twentieth century (US Census, 1998). However, teens may become somewhat "invisible" in years to come. The total proportion of the population represented by adolescents will be shrinking, suggesting that teenagers' interests may receive less attention in research, policy and media.

<sup>2</sup>My use of the term "race" (rather than "ethnicity") is intentional; I use it to refer explicitly to the socially constructed categorization of individuals, based in part on particular characteristics, (e.g., physical features, speech patterns), that is linked to a set of meanings and assumptions about behavior, abilities and so on.

perceptions of the detention experience. The project uses ethnographic methods to build on a theoretical and empirical foundation of contextual approaches to identity development, including labeling, possible selves, and narrative theories. Observation in a juvenile detention center and interviews with youth, parents and detention staff provide a dynamic view of processes, such as labeling, which existing research often assumes or implies through static measurements, but seldom observes directly. Interweaving direct observation with youth's interpretations of their experiences offers a foundation for explaining the apparent gap between the goals of the juvenile justice system and its actual effects. In addition to these potential contributions to juvenile delinquency research and understanding, this work seeks to listen to and make known the voices of six young men, a small subgroup of the population of detained youth. The broad category of "juvenile delinquents" denies the remarkable variability of individual characteristics and experiences within this group of young people. By listening to young people themselves, we have the opportunity to understand what is behind the label, and to remind ourselves of the impact on individuals of broadly drawn social policies. "Juvenile delinquents" receive a great deal of attention from the media, legislators and scientists alike, but have had little opportunity to contribute to the conversation about themselves and their behavior, experiences and prospects.

## BACKGROUND

### Juvenile Adjudication and Detention: Intended and Unintended Outcomes

The juvenile court was founded in 1899 in Illinois, and was originally designed to protect delinquent and dependent children from adult courtrooms, procedures and prisons (Mack, 1909). Numerous reviews have documented fluctuations in the way the original mandate has been carried out, moving from a rehabilitative to a more punitive philosophy, with recent trends toward increased transfer of juvenile cases to adult courts and mandatory minimum sentences for those youth kept in juvenile court (Feld, 1999; Hurst, 1998; Steinberg, 2000).

Research on juvenile adjudication has shown mixed positive and negative results, but juvenile detention is more dependably associated with later justice system contacts and re-offending. Community "survival" time (i.e., time between arrests or detainments) is greatly

reduced with each additional prior commitment (Tollett & Benda, 1999), but this result has had at least two competing interpretations. In one view, increased recidivism or decreased survival time after adjudication is evidence of “iatrogenesis” in the juvenile justice system (e.g., Miller & Gold, 1990). More commonly, however, these outcomes are understood to reflect something about the young people themselves. This approach, which ignores the direct impact of contact with the juvenile justice system, is typified by the identification of individually-focused “risk factors” (e.g., age at first offense, type of crime committed, prior commitments), conceptualized in a way that implies their status as a proxy for the “criminality” of the participants (e.g., Heilbrun et al., 2000). Counter to this stance, the central hypothesis of this study is that being in juvenile detention affects young people’s behavior through their self-concept, by communicating to them a story, or message, about who they are and who they can become. Furthermore, the race of detainees is assumed to influence the communication and interpretation of these messages, and the youths’ eventual responses. The theoretical and empirical bases for the study are presented below.

#### Conceptual and Empirical Underpinnings

##### *Self as Dynamic and Socially Constructed*

Several conceptual themes form the foundation of this research. The project’s focus on the self-concept of adjudicated youth is driven by the basic assumption that self-concept influences behavior; this assumption has found support in numerous studies (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Secondly, this project understands the “self” as a dynamic, socially constructed entity; who we are is influenced by and expressed in social interaction, and it can be affected by experiences and observations in the social realm. Symbolic interactionist theory represents the self as a process, constituted by our social interactions (which use shared symbols such as language and gestures), and guided in particular by “reflected appraisals”—our beliefs about others’ perceptions of us (Matsueda, 1992; Matsueda & Heimer, 1997). Thus interacting with people, and surmising what they think about who we are, guides our own beliefs about who we have been and our choices about who we will become, as expressed by our actions and interactions.

To understand the dynamics of changes in self-concept, then, we need to examine the

social context and the interactions in which a person is embedded. An alternative approach, using repeated “measures” of self-concept over time, would provide information about the occurrence of changes in self-concept but would say nothing of the circumstances under which those changes took place or the process of change itself. Even with the knowledge of a particular precipitating event or context in the individual’s experience (e.g., arrest or incarceration), we could not be sure whether or how those experiences affected self-concept. A simpler way to say this is that studying self-concept as a process, rather than an object, requires attention to that process in action.

#### *Narrative as a Link to Self-Concept*

The “special affinity between narrative and the self” (Miller, Potts, Fung, Hoogstra and Mintz, 1990), is a third lens through which we may access and understand the processes of identity negotiation in juvenile detention. This viewpoint includes several elements. Identity development can be viewed as the construction of a life-story (Howard, 1991; McAdams, 1985), incorporating meanings derived from the consensual community one inhabits as well as one’s own experiences, observations, and interpretations. Narrative is also used in social interactions as a way to express one’s own identity and to collaborate in the construction of others’ identities (Miller et al., 1990). Rappaport (1995) describes a set of classifications for narratives which may be useful in understanding and discussing the ways that communities, settings and social interactions contribute to individual’s self-concept and life-story construction. According to this view, narrative types include dominant cultural narratives, community narratives, and personal stories. Dominant cultural narratives are the stories common to a culture and conveyed both through the media and through individual communication; for instance, “juvenile delinquents” are often assumed or portrayed to be violent, amoral, urban-dwelling African Americans, involved with the use or sale of street drugs. Community narratives are stories representing shared meanings held by members of a subculture, local community, or setting; juvenile justice personnel in a particular facility may, for instance, share certain stories of perceived system successes or failures to exemplify beliefs about how the system should work. Personal stories, told by individuals about themselves and their experiences, reflect one’s interpretation of his or her own behavior and experience, or

serve as a way to present a particular view of oneself to the story's audience. Themes, beliefs and information can pass among these levels of narrative, such that meaning in personal stories may be influenced by the assumptions of dominant cultural narratives, or dominant cultural narratives may be selective presentations of community narratives.

The current study's methodology and interpretive framework focus in part on individual and community narratives as a way to understand the process of identity negotiation for youth during their time in detention. Stories told by detained youth reflect beliefs about themselves and the role of the juvenile justice system, interpretations of social interactions in detention, and meanings drawn from the detention experience. A comparison of themes and "plots" across participants reflects points of commonality and disagreement, allowing insight into how detainees' make sense of their experiences.

### *Labeling*

Labeling theory exemplifies the application of symbolic interactionist tenets to a particular subset of social interactions—specifically, those involving public or official labeling through such institutionalized practices as mental health diagnosis and treatment or legal/justice system intervention in the lives of young people. This theory is important to the current discussion not only for its theoretical and empirical contributions, but for its historical role as a source of major critiques of the juvenile justice system. According to labeling theory (e.g., Becker, 1963), juvenile justice system involvement is likely to increase criminality in part because young people who are labeled "deviant" or delinquent come to identify with this description, at the same time that detention and probation involvement disconnect them from conventional society. A delinquent identity is thus constructed for them by the very system designed to limit delinquent behavior.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Initial empirical and social support for this viewpoint, in combination with the political tenor of the times (late 1960's in the U.S.), led to the creation of "diversion programs," with the intention of shifting young people away from the juvenile justice system as much as possible, while still intervening in behaviors perceived as problematic. Unfortunately, recent data suggest that rather than reducing the overall numbers of youth in the juvenile justice system, diversion programs simply served to "widen the net" cast over young people, with the result that even more young people are caught up either in diversion or the juvenile justice system itself

(continued...)



Labeling theory parallels a narrative understanding of this process. The label of “delinquent” may be shorthand for a dominant cultural narrative about youth who behave in particular ways. Making repeated contact with the justice system and the delinquent label, the youth appropriates this cultural story, over time, into his or her own self-story. Labeling theorists make explicit the importance of power differences in the “negotiation” of meaning, such that majority groups or those with socially ascribed power (e.g., adults, authority figures in social institutions) label other, less powerful groups and individuals as “deviant” (Matsueda, 1992). Thus minority group members may be at increased risk of labeling regardless of their behavior. This view fits all too well with the disproportionate representation of African American males, across levels of crime severity, in the juvenile justice system.

Some empirical tests of labeling theory have indicated that increased delinquent behavior does follow from informal labeling, such as perceptions of teacher disapproval (Adams and Evans, 1996) and from official labeling, in the form of negative social sanctions (Kaplan and Johnson, 1991). However, overall research results regarding the validity of labeling theory have been inconsistent (for summaries, see Bynum & Thompson (1999) and Matsueda (1992)). Recent studies of labeling effects have begun to explain these inconsistencies by looking at group differences and labeling subtypes (i.e., formal/official v. informal/social). A pair of studies using data from the National Youth Survey (NYS) exemplify this approach and use a prospective, longitudinal design to support causal inferences regarding labeling effects. By fitting separate models for non-White [sic] and White [sic] samples, Adams, Johnson and Evans (1998) revealed different patterns of results for the two groups, thus moving beyond the simplistic use of “race” as a between-groups factor in a single analysis. In this study, informal labeling was more strongly associated with increased delinquency for non-White than for White participants, while the authors’ review of past research suggested that the reverse is true of formal labeling effects. Although the use of “non-White” and “White” categories is a somewhat rudimentary approach to race differences, it is consistent with the constructs and hypotheses being tested (i.e., that non-Whites will resist formal labeling by a

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<sup>3</sup>(...continued)  
(Shelden, 1999).

power structure understood to be biased against them, while informal labels will carry more weight in predicting later delinquency for this group).

Zhang (1997) used the same data set to thoroughly explore the construct of informal labeling. In this study, informal labeling was assessed via parents' agreement with four items describing their child as one who "is a bad kid," "gets into trouble," "breaks rules," and "does things against the law" (p. 138). The study also assessed children's perceptions of their parents', teachers' and peers' judgments of them using the same four negative labels. In this way, Zhang includes both actual and perceived labeling of the participant, which in combination partially mediated the relationship between prior and subsequent delinquency. Perceptions of labeling by parents, peers and teachers were also associated with increased feelings of social isolation in the domains of family, friends and school respectively. Finally, Zhang (1997) found that girls were more likely than boys to be labeled by parents following delinquent behavior, while boys' subsequent delinquency showed more effect of parental labeling than did girls'.

#### *Reflected Appraisals*

The theorized link between labeling and shifting identity is also supported by psychological and sociological research. Kaplan and Johnson (1991) found, in a prospective longitudinal study of over 2,500 young people, that official labeling for early delinquency, in the form of negative social sanctions, affects both self-concept and behavior. Sanctioned youth showed increases in perceived alienation from conventional society, contact with deviant peers, and motivation to identify with and value their deviant status. These findings, and labeling theory more generally, beg the question of how labeling results in intrapersonal and behavioral change. The symbolic interactionist construct of reflected appraisals may be of use in explaining this link. Reflected appraisals are our (selective) perceptions of other people's judgments or views of us. Although the two studies described above (Adams, Johnson & Evans, 1998; Zhang, 1997) focus on the construct of "labeling," their measures of labeling fit under the rubric of reflected appraisals. Rather than invalidating the notion of labeling effects, this overlap of constructs makes clear the link between labeling, a process external to the individual, and self-concept, an internal process affected by reflected appraisals.

Felson (1985) found that even more than actual judgments by others, beliefs about others' judgments of us (i.e. reflected appraisals) influenced self-appraisals. Matsueda (1992) goes one step further, eliminating self-appraisal from the equation entirely, and assuming the "self," and thus delinquent behavior, results from the coalescence of reflected appraisals across important others (parents, friends and teachers). This study, again using the National Youth Survey's prospective, longitudinal study (this time using data from 851 male participants), assessed reflected appraisals of the young person as someone who is sociable, successful, distressed, or a rule violator, thus expanding the range of reflected appraisals to include both positive and negative attributes. The results support the hypothesis that reflected appraisals (of self as a rule-violator) mediate the association between parental-labeling and subsequent behavior. However, the data collected provide little information about how this mediation occurs. Another problem arises in Matsueda's explanation of race differences in informal labeling. In explaining the finding that African American parents are more likely to negatively label their sons, holding delinquent behavior constant, Matsueda (1992) reduces the issue to a focus on the construct of "social disadvantage." While this is not an unreasonable place to begin, it is problematic as a total conclusion about African American families as homogeneously disadvantaged, without any clear supporting evidence. Taken together, the results of the labeling and reflected appraisals studies reviewed here suggest that labeling does have some bearing on self-concept, identity, and later delinquent behavior, in part through reflected appraisals, and that "social addresses" such as race and gender have an impact on the strength or pattern of labeling effects. What remains to be seen is how labels are communicated, perceived, and appropriated or rejected, and how social addresses are translated into differing meanings and experiences of the labeling process. The current study considers these questions within a single juvenile detention center, using the frameworks of possible selves and narrative to explore detainees' perceptions of the labels or messages of detention, as well as their responses to these messages.

#### *Possible Selves*

Although symbolic interactionism lays helpful groundwork for studying the construction of identities in social context, the processes it specifies (e.g., the internal negotiation of

behavior choices by integrating the “me” (past self) and the “I” (current self) with reflected appraisals) are not easily identified through observation or questioning. The construct of possible selves offers a way to understand the negotiation of self-concept and thus behavior motivation (Oyserman and Markus, 1990). Possible selves are defined as “individuals’ ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming” (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954); like labels, they can be seen as referencing a set of alternative narratives about the self in the future. In contrast to Matsueda’s (1992) rejection of self-appraisals as an important motivator for behavior, possible selves theorists would argue that one’s appraisal of the relationship between current selves and future desired or feared selves is central to choosing among courses of action. Markus and Nurius’ (1986) questionnaire research with college students supported the notion that individuals imagine a variety of possible future selves, including characteristics that are quite different from their current self-descriptions.

A later set of studies (Oyserman, Gant and Ager, 1995) revealed that social contexts, including race, gender and social class, constrain and shape the development and strength of possible selves. For instance, among African American middle school students, the relationship between ethnic identity and school performance was non-significant for males, but for females, “African American achievement identity” and awareness of racism were important contributors to school performance. In a study of undergraduates, a collectivist identity was associated with increased strategies for attaining possible selves among African American participants, while for European American participants, individualist identity was associated with more attainment strategies. These results suggest the importance of a relationship between personal identity, possible selves, and later behavior.

Furthermore, Oyserman and Markus (1990a) describe the importance of balance among possible selves. “Balance” indicates the availability of a positive/hoped-for self in a particular domain where the individual holds a negative/feared self; for instance, in the achievement (work and school) domain, the fear of being unemployed and poor might be balanced by the hope of becoming a successful attorney. The authors argue that possible selves are a resource used by individuals to motivate behavior; an individual might “recruit” a positive future self-

image to counter fears of failure (feared possible selves), and in so doing motivate behaviors designed to move toward that positive possible self (Oyserman and Markus, 1990b).

In a study of 238 13-16 year olds, Oyserman and Markus (1990) found no relationship between self-esteem and delinquency, thus ruling out this global measure as a useful predictor of delinquent behavior. Delinquent youths were, however, less likely than non-delinquents to have a balance between expected and feared selves. It seems plausible that delinquent youths, once adjudicated, may experience (further) constriction of the range of selves they see as possibilities in the future. In fact, Oyserman and Markus' (1990) study showed striking contrasts between participant groups in schools, community placements, group homes for delinquent youth and a state training school. The hoped-for selves of all participants were fairly similar, including "getting along well in school" and "having friends" (p. 117), but those students in more restrictive settings expressed much more fear of being involved in (further) crime and delinquency, and of not getting along well in school, than public school students. It is difficult to assess the influence of specific contexts, given the confounds with overall rates and severity of prior delinquent behavior. However, to the extent that social interaction drives the development of self-concept or of possible selves, continued contact with the juvenile justice system may simply drive home the message that "delinquency" is the most likely future self for adjudicated youth.

Oyserman and Markus (1990b) do address, in theory, the impact of important others and social environments on the development of possible selves. However, their research (Oyserman and Markus, 1990a) represents the imbalance in possible selves as pre-existing and causing delinquent behavior, rather than resulting from contact with the juvenile justice system. This perspective differs from that of the proposed study, which understands juvenile justice experiences, settings and personnel as important contributors to adolescents' possible selves, through the communication of assumptions and beliefs about the possibilities for young people in the system and their behavior.

#### *Communication of Meaning*

Having established that labeling, social interaction and reflected appraisals influence self-concept and thereby behavior, we are left with the question of how messages or

assumptions are communicated to individuals (in this case, adolescents in detention). Stories are one common means of communicating meaning, on a broad cultural level or between individuals. Dominant cultural narratives (Rappaport, 1995), by definition, suffuse a particular society and era through public media and direct conversation; they are readily available as labels, possible selves, or elements of personal narratives. In an ethnographic study with a group of public housing residents, Salzer (1998) found that residents were aware of negative stereotypes (i.e. dominant cultural narratives) about “people like them,” and that the narratives of residents served in part as active resistance to those stereotypes. This strengthens the claim that narratives are an important resource for creating meaning and identity, and exemplifies the important point that identity can be influenced by narratives through rejection, as well as incorporation.

Direct communication of narratives is another means by which social interaction can affect identity. Miller et al. (1990) found that parents tell stories about their children, in the children’s presence, thus communicating interpretations of meaning and importance to the child along with the audience. Settings can also communicate values, interpretations and meanings to setting participants, and in so doing shape participants’ self-concepts and perceived future prospects. Kloos (1999) compared two residential settings for mentally ill individuals, and found that the philosophies and practices within those settings were clearly reflected in the life stories of the facilities’ residents. Like mental illness, delinquency carries social stigma, along with the threats of institutionalization and disempowerment by systems acting “for the person’s own good.” It seems reasonable to assume that detention centers, as juvenile justice settings, communicate to their charges, through policy and practice, a set of assumptions about who they are and who they can or should be. How this occurs, and the extent to which young people accede to or resist the meanings imposed by juvenile detention, are focal questions of this study.

#### Methodological Considerations

Because this research is centered around questions of identity construction in social context, the negotiation of meaning in social settings, and the use of narratives in those processes, it employs a data gathering method that allows for rich, complex understanding, and

for multiple perspectives on the processes that occur in juvenile justice settings. Ethnographic methods include participant observation in a setting, which allows greater intimacy with the setting and its participants, and provides a view of processes occurring over time. Participating in and observing events in juvenile detention, and following the course of young people's interpretations of those interactions over time, allowed observation of the interplay between the viewpoints of young people and the practices and assumptions of the detention center itself. By combining inquiries into the perspectives of participants with the observer's own "outsider" views of daily events and interactions, this approach shows how interpretations of events and identities are negotiated by participants and influenced by the larger contexts of cultural stereotypes, judicial system requirements, and individual characteristics.

#### *Still Lives or Motion Pictures*

The use of ethnographic methods also addresses some problems in the methodology and interpretation of traditional quantitative explorations of identity development and juvenile delinquency. For example, many studies (e.g., Adams, Johnson & Evans, 1988; Miller & Gold, 1984; Zhang, 1997; Matsueda, 1992; Hayes, 1997) present data "snapshots" to describe a dynamic, emergent process. These static data arrays provide before- and after-adjudication images of a child's characteristics on myriad dimensions including demographics, delinquent behavior, peer associations, educational achievement, personality, attitudes, and self-esteem. In such models, causal inferences are based on the time sequence of measured variables; pre-adjudication characteristics are used to explain post-adjudication behavior. Although these studies can guide our attention to certain markers in a young person's path from, for instance, adjudication to recidivism, they do little to tell us what that path looks like, or why it is so well-trodden. Without this information, it is hard to know which young people do well, and why; thus it is difficult to design and implement effective interventions. What is missing is direct examination of the process by which adjudication and detention interact with youth's characteristics to affect later outcomes.

Delinquency adjudication itself is just a small part of a series of events, nominally beginning with arrest, possibly including one or more stays in a detention facility, and involving several courtroom hearings. These events are the "during," the middle of a story that is

frequently described only by reference to its beginning and end points. Young people's experiences in detention, their interactions with juvenile justice personnel, and the sense they make of these processes, are key contributors to the changes described by sociological, criminological and psychological delinquency research. Observing day-to-day life in the detention center and exploring with participants the meaning they ascribe to their own observations and experiences sheds some light on these often-obscured aspects of the changes in self-concept and behavior wrought by juvenile detention.

### *The Importance of Race*

The role of race in shaping young people's experiences of the juvenile justice system deserves thorough and critical attention. African American people experience the United States legal and judicial systems differently than European Americans from the outset, due to higher risk of being arrested, adjudicated and detained (Huizinga & Elliott, 1987; Pope & Feyerherm, 1992). Some portion of the over-representation of African Americans in the judicial system may be attributable to limited personal resources, in the sense that poverty limits the availability of private attorneys, alternative schooling or mental health treatment when behavioral problems arise. However, the power structure of the United States has historically supported institutionalized forms of racism which limit the social and political power of African Americans as a group (Bell, 1995); in this context, the juvenile justice system can be viewed as a setting created and embedded in racist practices. It is not inappropriate to consider the possibility that race itself, through its influence on judicial decisions and on juvenile justice workers' assumptions about young people in the system, has an impact on the experiences of youth in detention.

As noted earlier, quantitative predictors of recidivism differ between European Americans and African Americans (Adams, Johnson & Evans, 1998). Race may also affect outcomes through its impact on the beliefs of powerful legal system participants. In a study of 233 narrative reports by juvenile probation officers, Bridges and Steen (1998) explored the relationship between the race of adjudicated delinquents, and probation officers' descriptions of the youths, the causes of the crime, and sentencing recommendations. By coding the report content along several dimensions (attributions, threat of future crime, sentencing) with strong



reliability, the authors quantified responses and compared the means for African American and European American minors. In general, African American youth were seen as having more negative personality traits, and European American youth as having more negative environmental influences. In other words, the explanation for European American youths' misbehavior was found in their environment, while African American youths were seen as the cause of their own problems. Not surprisingly, this difference accounted for officers' portrayal of African American youths as more likely to re-offend in the future. These results held true even when variation due to prior convictions and severity of the current crime were accounted for. The authors note that in assessing the likelihood of re-offending, probation officers' reports focused on delinquent minors having "the right attitude" (i.e., remorse), supportive and controlling family environments, and positive attitudes toward school. These are not unreasonable concerns, but they are all areas in which racism and cultural misunderstanding could have dire effects. To the extent that an African American youth perceives systemic racism as one source of his or her contact with the law, a "good attitude" may not be evident, and cultural differences in communication style could confound this problem. Similarly, young people who see limited value in education due to perceptions of a limited opportunity structure (Mickelson, 1989; Ogbu, 1989) may present with a "bad attitude" about school attendance. Furthermore, African American families, and particularly single-parent families, have been negatively portrayed (e.g., "culture of poverty" and "welfare mother" stereotypes), such that probation officers may not be able to see past the stereotype.

The assumptions described in the work of Bridges and Steen (1998) may be seen as part of the socially constructed category of "African Americanness." Critical race theory holds that this racial categorization serves to justify power imbalances in the economic, social and legal systems of the United States (Bell, 1995). These imbalances can certainly be seen in the disproportionate representation of African Americans in the legal system, not as subjects (attorneys and judges) but as objects (arrestees, detainees, parolees). Given the current study's location within the juvenile justice system, the impact of race is a necessary element for understanding young people's perceptions of, and experiences in, the system.

Many studies of delinquency and sanction effects approach race (and class and gender)

as an explanatory factor, without attention to how it affect attitudes and behaviors. Rather than simply using participants' race as a category in a statistical analysis, this study looks more closely at each individual's beliefs about the effects of race on his own and others' juvenile detention experiences. These inquiries are embedded in a detailed exploration of participants' narratives about themselves, their experiences in detention, and their views of the future. Detainees' attributions about the detention experience can be better understood in light of their experience of race, along with their beliefs about racism and fairness in the world, their own lives, and the justice system. Thus the experience of race and racism is viewed as a complex process of making meaning from experience, observations, and available individual, community and cultural narratives

### *Talking About or Listening to Youth*

Perhaps most important in deepening our understanding of what happens when adolescents enter the juvenile justice system is to listen to the voices of young people themselves. Theories of causal relationships and behavior are frequently imposed by researchers on participants with whom they have little in common, preventing a true understanding of the participants' experiences. In juvenile justice research, demographic differences alone indicate that those doing the research, aside from having once been adolescents, have little in common with the young people they study. Theories developed by outsiders—not only to juvenile justice, but to today's version of childhood and delinquency—are unlikely to fully capture the experiences of delinquent youth, or the way they understand those experiences. Spending time with young people in juvenile detention, asking them to describe their experiences and understanding, provides evidence for the processes assumed but not measured by existing theory and research. Delving into the meanings young people ascribe to their experience in juvenile detention, we can better understand how, and how much, the juvenile justice system is meeting its goals of rehabilitation and deterrence.

The problems described here—the absence of information about the contexts and processes affecting young people in juvenile detention, the representation of race as a static characteristic rather than a cultural process, and the imposition of adult, outsider theory on the true “insiders” in the juvenile justice system—are well suited to ethnographic methodology. In

ethnographic work, a preferential distinction is made between “etic” and “emic” interpretation; the former imposes the observer’s criteria and categories on observed events, while the latter, preferred approach involves distinctions that have meaning and significance for the participants (Harris, 1976). An emic view of youth in juvenile detention could illuminate the interactions, events and ideas that are most relevant to young people’s self-concepts, behavior, and views of the justice system.

## SUMMARY

As the number of adolescents in the U.S. population grows, the number of children in juvenile detention will increase as well, particularly with the continuation of the current trends of net-widening and the imposition of longer or harsher sentences. Existing research tells us only that diversion from the juvenile court has no worse effect on recidivism than adjudication and that adjudication may have positive, negative, or non-existent effects on recidivism (Minor, Hartmann & Terry, 1997; Sherman, 1993). This is particularly true in the case of African American youth, whose chances of adjudication and detention are so much higher than those of European Americans that “delinquent youth” is almost synonymous with “young African American male” in the popular culture. With greater numbers of young people entering this apparently inconsistent system, it is important to explore their experiences in detention, with the goal of illuminating the processes that affect self-concept and behavior and the ways that race is woven through those experiences. By applying ethnographic methods to the question of identity negotiation in juvenile detention, this research represents a unique examination of labeling, enhanced by the incorporation of ideas from symbolic interactionism, possible selves, and narrative theory. This approach provides a complex understanding of how labels or narratives are communicated to and understood by young people. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn from direct observation of interaction processes, rather than from distal indicators (e.g., questionnaire responses) that those processes occurred. This process-oriented approach is particularly important when considering a setting such as the juvenile justice system, where the race of young people so clearly influences their experiences, because it allows identification of the ways that meaning-making is attached to race in the daily processes of African American youth’s encounters with that system.

In addition to its potential contribution to juvenile delinquency research, the information presented here may generate information to assist policy makers and practitioners in the juvenile justice system. At the most basic level, this approach can give policymakers and program developers better insight into the effects of their decisions on individual lives, providing a rich set of stories to “humanize” juvenile delinquents. For instance, the CCJDC’s current service-oriented and activity-laden plan for detainees might seem to some an extremely lenient form of punishment. At the same time, the data suggest that restrictions on normal liberties and on contact with family and friends are quite difficult and stressful experiences for detained youth, regardless of the number and nature of daily activities at the center. This research also provides information about gaps between the goals of adjudication and detention and their actual effects, by illuminating those processes which contribute to young people’s self-concept and motivations. Ideally, this information would lead to changes in decisions about detention and probation, such as diverting more first-time or non-severe offenders from the system, training personnel to seek young people’s strengths and see beyond stereotyped assumptions, or working more closely with families to provide support as young people transition out of the imposed structures of detention or probation.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do young people make meaning of their experiences in juvenile detention?
2. What relationship, if any, exists among the stated goals of the local juvenile detention facility, practices within the facility, and the perceptions of detained youth?
3. How do young people in juvenile detention understand, resist, adopt or otherwise respond to perceived assumptions about themselves and their prospects in the future?
4. What role does detainees’ race play in the experience of detention and the negotiation of meaning in juvenile detention?

#### OVERVIEW

The chapters that follow constitute an attempt to answer the research questions listed above. Chapter 2 describes the research method and summarizes information about the setting and study participants. Chapter 3 provides more details about each of the youth participants in the study and about the researcher/author as a co-participant and co-creator of study data. The

results are presented in series, starting with the foundation in Chapter 4, exploring the historical context of the setting as a first step to understanding current policy and practice, and, therefore, detainees' experiences. Chapter 5 describes the facility itself as seen through the eyes of researcher and participants, linking history to current practice. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on individual experience and observations, using interview and observational data to draw out answers to the study's research questions. Chapter 6 explores detainees' interpretations of the setting and their experiences in it, and Chapter 7 looks explicitly at identity negotiation in detention, through the eyes of detainees. Chapter 8 offers a summary of the previous chapters' observations and considers the implications for the local setting and for juvenile detention more generally.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHOD**

#### **SETTING**

##### Description

The setting of the study is the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC), a newly built, county administered, 40-bed facility in a mid-sized Midwestern city. The CCJDC admitted 194 young people in 2000, the year prior to the study. Eighty of these youth had multiple admissions, accounting for 190 of the center's 304 admissions for the year (CCJDC, 2001). The detention center can take young people from age 10 to age 17. The average age of detainees is about 15.5 years. Most detainees (65%) are African American, with European Americans (32%) a close second. Paralleling national trends, African Americans are overrepresented, and European Americans underrepresented, in comparison to those groups' total proportions in Champaign County. In contrast, most detention staff members are European American. Figure 1 presents the representation of various ethnicities in the County's population, CCJDC staff, and CCJDC detainees in the year 2000. Detainees' offenses, whether alleged or adjudicated, include misdemeanors such as retail theft, possession of alcohol or small amounts of cannabis (less than 30 grams), and felonies such as aggravated battery, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. The most common reason for being detained (13% of all 2001 detentions, compared to 8% for the next most common offense) is a contempt of court charge, often incurred by young people who fail to comply with a judge's requirements for their probation.

##### Study Initiation

I first approached the facility's director regarding the study in the summer of 2000, and worked with her over a period of several months to develop a study plan for approval by the county's head judge. The judge approved the study plan in January, 2001. In February, 2001, the facility director told shift supervisors that I would be attending shift change meetings to present the study. In each of three shift change meetings (morning, afternoon, and night), I was given time to describe the study and participation requirements, distribute and review consent forms, and collect signatures.

## PARTICIPANTS

### Staff

Of the 38 staff members working at the beginning of the informed consent process, 21 signed consents (see Appendix A) within a few weeks of my first request, with another ten signing consents when reminded over a period of several months. Some staff turnover occurred during the course of the study, and I introduced myself and the study to new officers as I encountered them in the facility. Only a few officers neglected or declined to provide their consent to be included in the study, and they were excluded from my written observations and analyses.

In addition to detention center staff, I requested and completed interviews with a detention center volunteer, three juvenile probation officers, the head of the juvenile probation division, and the juvenile court public defense attorney. I approached each of these people individually, but otherwise followed the same informed consent procedures as with CCJDC staff. Finally, I requested interviews with the county's head judge, who had initially approved the study, and the lead juvenile court judge. Despite several phone calls to each judge over a period of two or three months, I did not receive an answer to my requests.

### Youth and Parents

#### *Recruitment and Consent*

I recruited six youth participants, four African American and two European American, from among the male detainees at the facility. The balance of African Americans to European Americans was intended to approximate the racial disproportion of the juvenile justice system, giving primacy to African American voices, while still gathering sufficient information from European American youth. The sampling procedure was both purposive and convenient, selecting youth who matched the study's ethnicity requirements from the set of detainees whose first day at CCJDC coincided with one of my days at the facility. Although I had hoped to engage staff in the search for participants, such that they would call me when a potential match arrived, this did not prove feasible. Instead, each time I entered CCJDC to observe, I talked with staff and reviewed the facility's census sheets to find young men who were in detention for the first time and were African American or European American. This approach resulted in my

missing contact with at least three potential participants, because my time at CCJDC did not overlap with theirs, and in some data collection delays, because very few of the first-time detainees were African American.

For each young man who qualified, I asked staff to point him out or introduce me. I then described the study, reviewed the informed consent form (see Appendix A) in detail, and asked each youth if he was interested in participating. I obtained the youth's signature, asked him to discuss it with his parent(s), and got permission from him to call them and discuss the study. I then called the parents, explained the study, and set up a time to meet with them to review the informed consent forms. The two European American youths I approached both agreed immediately to participate, and their parents gave consent as well. One African American youth declined, and another was willing to participate, but his mother declined.

Participating youth were offered \$5.00 for each completed interview, and their parents were offered \$30.00, to be paid at the study's end, or \$8.00 per completed interview if they withdrew from the study before its completion. When I interviewed detained youth, I placed their interview payment in their "personal possessions" bag, filling out a CCJDC form to note the addition and its source. I offered to complete this transaction with the target participant present as witness, but participants declined this offer, appearing to trust me and the staff to protect their payment. I made four of the six family payments at the study's end, hand delivering payment when possible, and mailing it when I could not reach the parents by phone. The two exceptions were made at parents' requests. One parent had requested her payment in installments made when we met for interviews, to help her cover monthly expenses; another requested payment in full about six months before the study's end, so she could buy required supplies for her son's (the study participant) upcoming move to a job training program.

#### *Demographics*

The following brief summary of youth participants' demographic characteristics is expanded in Table 1, and supplemented with extensive detail about each youth in Chapter 3. The six young men who worked with me ranged in age from 12 to 16 at the time of recruitment (spring/summer 2001). Their average age was 14.5, compared to the 2001 CCJDC population average of nearly 16 years. Four of the six (three Black and one White) were parented by their



mothers alone. A fifth (Black) lived with his father but often visited with his mother in a nearby city, and the sixth (White) lived with both parents. All six families had at least one more child living in the home during the time of the study, and three also had (older) children living outside the home. All the parents but one (the single father) were regularly employed for most or all of the study period. Their jobs included: convalescent home nurse, long distance trucker, grocery store cashier, day laborer (landscaping), and part-time office clerk.

Although the need to find first-time detainees precluded a more exhaustive search for “typical” or representative participants, the six young men who participated were fairly typical of the overall population in apparent socioeconomic status, family composition, and living situation. Their alleged offenses included four felonies and two misdemeanors; of the felonies, three were among the five most common felony offenses in 2001. Further details of the events leading to the participants’ first detentions are provided in Chapter 3.

## PROCEDURES

### Participant Observation

My participation in the CCJDC setting began prior to the study’s initiation, through the collaborative development of a database for CCJDC data starting in April, 2000, and through my role as a classroom aide or tutor beginning in September of that year. These established roles became the basis of my participation in the setting. However, each of these roles was limited: database consulting happened only as needed, with a small group of staff members involved in the project, and classroom assistance was limited to school hours and classes in which students genuinely needed assistance. Outside of these roles, it was difficult to find a steady participant role, although I frequently offered help and was given tasks such as meal tray distribution or pickup, assistance with detainees’ phone calls, and the like. In addition, staff members would occasionally invite me to participate in games or activities (an invitation I accepted about ten times over the course of the study, choosing at other times to sit out and observe), to “keep an eye on” a detainee momentarily while the staff member was busy (perhaps two or three times during the study), or to help monitor a group of detainees participating in an activity (only once). My most detailed fieldnotes correspond with those times that I was not actively participating, other than by talking with staff and detainees who

were nearby.

As an observer, I tried to make myself unobtrusive, standing or sitting at the edge of target observation areas (e.g., classrooms, staff station, gym). I carried a spiral notebook and took notes openly, in part to make it clear to non-participant detainees that I was an observer, and in part because I was trying to capture minute details of verbal and non-verbal interactions. When actively participating, I would close the notebook, setting time aside afterward to jot down as much as I could recall of my observations. Perhaps because my work as a classroom aide was scheduled in two-hour blocks, most of my fieldnotes cover about two hours of time in the detention center. However, they range in length of observation from five minutes to about six hours of observation at one time. I typed up fieldnotes as soon as possible after leaving the field, further expanding the brief jottings made in the setting with as much detail as I could accurately recall, and using punctuation to distinguish between verbatim quotes (quotation marks) and paraphrases (brackets).

## Interviewing

### *Interview Design*

All interviews were semistructured, with basic questions or topic areas developed along two tracks: the study's initial research questions, and issues and questions that emerged as the study progressed. Base interview guides for all interviews are included in Appendix B. The interview process was partly dependent on the nature of my relationship with each participant, but in each interview I sought to keep a balance between a having a comfortable exchange and making sure I completely covered the questions on the interview guide. Therefore, each interview conversation was unique in the possible phrasing of questions from the guide, the nature of conversational "tangents" to discuss issues specific to that participant, and the overall "feel" of the interaction.

### *Youth Interviews*

My interviews with the six young men in the study focused on their experiences in detention, their hopes and fears for themselves in the future, their beliefs about other people's appraisals of them, and their experiences after detention in court, on probation, and in the community. Figure 2 shows the timing of youth and parent interviews over the course of the

study. The first interview with each youth took place in the detention center, and subsequent interviews in the young men's homes, the location each of them chose when I offered to meet them "anywhere that's convenient for you." Interviews took between 30 and 90 minutes, depending in large part on each youth's responsiveness and tendency to elaborate (or not) on his answers. Although I made every effort to keep regular contact and complete interviews frequently with all six young men, several difficulties arose in the process, including scheduling problems, families' frequent loss of phone service, youth participants occasionally forgetting interview appointments, and one participant (Franklin) moving several hours' drive away for a job training program, subsequently becoming unreachable by telephone.

In Jimmy's case, we completed six interviews in seven months, and then lost contact. The frequency of interviews resulted from his statement that I might be able to help him stay out of trouble by "talking to [him] more often." I took that opportunity to explore the young man's life context, using it as a background against which to view his beliefs about himself and his experiences of detention. We lost contact when his family's telephone was disconnected, after which I made several failed attempts to find him or his father at home. I did not make contact with either of them until shortly before the study's end, at which time the father told me the youth had been sent some weeks before to a "work camp" a few hours' drive away.

#### *Parent Interviews*

I completed at least two interviews with each parent, except that I interviewed only the mother of the child who lived with both parents. I interviewed parents in whatever location they chose; all the parents but one chose to meet me in their homes each time. The remaining parent set one appointment in a fast food restaurant, another in her office while she was working, and the last in her home. When interviewing parents, I focused on their observations of the detention center and their child's experience there, their hopes and fears for their child's future, and their parenting experiences. Parent interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes.

#### *CCJDC Staff Interviews*

Staff interviews began fairly late in the study process, after I had developed some hypotheses about the detention center based on my observations and the interviews with youth and parents. The CCJDC director gave me permission to complete interviews during officers'

shifts, expressing a preference for this over interviewing them on their personal time; she was concerned that they would feel as though they were being made to do unpaid work otherwise. My interview requests were made strategically, with consideration of several factors: varying levels of experience in the detention center (ranging from a few weeks to almost 20 years), varying perspectives on the role of the center and its officers (ranging from “social work”/rehab to “corrections”/punitive), and variations in sex and race. Given the relatively small number of African American officers at the study’s outset, and the importance of race to the study’s main questions, I made special efforts to interview African American officers.

I tried to approach potential staff interviewees privately, to prevent unnecessary tension among officers or between me and those staff members I did not intend to interview. Every officer I approached agreed to be interviewed, and we scheduled interviews at their convenience. Most interviews were completed in the director’s office or in the conference room; one was completed in the “master control” area while the officer was working. The officers to be interviewed would check with the shift supervisor before beginning the interview, and were sometimes interrupted by their duties during the interviews, but always returned to complete the interview. The interview guide for staff was consistent across these individual variations, and included questions about the purpose of juvenile detention, the role of detention officers, good days and bad days in detention, issues of race and fairness, and perspectives on detainees (in general) and the young men in the study (in particular). Most CCJDC staff interviews lasted about 60 to 90 minutes.

#### *Non-CCJDC Staff Interviews*

I also interviewed four individuals working in juvenile justice, but outside the detention center: the public defense attorney for juvenile offenders, the director of the juvenile probation office, and two juvenile probation officers. Questions for these interviews paralleled those in the CCJDC staff interviews, focusing on perceptions of juvenile detainees and the detention center. These interviews also lasted about 60 to 90 minutes.

#### *Interview Transcription*

All interviews were audiotaped and subsequently transcribed by me and four undergraduate research assistants. Transcripts include some description of variations in vocal

tone (e.g., surprised, sad), non-verbal content (e.g., sighs, crying, laughter), background noise (e.g., television), non-interview talk (e.g., non-participants answering interview questions or conversing with interviewees), and notation for pauses, interruptions and overlapping speech (see Appendix C). After each tape was transcribed, a second listener would review the tape and transcript for accuracy, editing as needed.

## Analyses

### *Grounding Theory in Data*

Following the principles of grounded theory, I integrated the processes of data collection and analysis as much as possible, using multiple cycles of *questioning*, through observation and interviews, *hypothesizing*, through identifying themes or concepts in the data, and *re-questioning* to confirm, qualify or refine the hypotheses (Huberman and Miles, 1994). Thus, observations and interviews in the middle and later sections of the study were influenced by ideas developed from the data collected and reviewed earlier on. I based my initial observations and interview questions on the key substantive questions of the study, and used several methods to delve into the resulting products (i.e., ideas, fieldnotes, transcripts) with the goal of honing the next round of observations and interviews. Some methods—the inclusion of observer comments, theoretical notes and methodological notes in transcribed fieldnotes, and the follow-up process for these notes and ideas (i.e., directly asking study participants about them, re-focusing observations and interviews, and incorporating the results into my notes and analyses)—were intrinsic to the study process itself. Other methods, such as open-ended discussions or formal presentation of my experiences, observations and ideas to colleagues, were external to the study itself, but equally important in developing the ideas that form the bulk of this report.

### *Text Review and Coding*

The process of transcribing fieldnotes and discussing interview transcripts with my research assistants provided an initial review of the data as they were transformed into text. The data coding process, which took place in several overlapping phases, resulted in numerous additional readings. The first layer of coding was for “objective” characteristics of the data. For fieldnotes, the location of the observation (e.g., staff station, classroom, gym), the roles of

speakers or actors (e.g., myself, staff, youth, parents), and the content of the data (e.g., descriptions of places or people, interactions between people, topics of talk). For transcripts, the first layer of coding focused on topics of talk (e.g., detention center, detainees, possible selves). As I read through the data on this first pass, additional layers of meaning and pattern emerged, and I created codes for them as well. This resulted in additional phases of coding, with the goal of elaborating and refining ideas drawn from the data: for instance, the creation of narratives about youth's detention experiences, the idea of "bad attitude" as defined by staff and detainees, and the subtle ways that detained youth may resist the power imbalances inherent in the detention experience. This manuscript will focus on those analyses directly relevant to the original research questions, as well as other dimensions of the data that emerged with strength and drew repeated attention during observation and analysis.

#### *Validity and Reliability*

The creation of grounded theory incorporates assessment of validity and reliability through several processes. Because coding, analysis and data collection occurred simultaneously in this project, concepts were validated and observations supported with multiple methods: asking participants directly (i.e., member checking), returning to the field and the notes to search for or solicit additional examples or counterexamples, and comparing patterns across cases or situations. Member checking was particularly important to the course of the study, but it did not occur as systematically as I had anticipated. Delays in transcription meant participants could not read through and respond to prior interviews' contents, and the abundance of data meant that many of my ideas were not fully developed until after the data collection process had ended. However, I did frequently incorporate past interview material, new ideas, and field observations into my conversations with participants, and I believe the transcript excerpts presented here will attest to my efforts, within each interaction, to be sure I was understanding participants' perspectives, rather than imposing my own.

Throughout the research process, in the belief that I cannot eliminate my own influence on data collection and interpretation, I have tried instead to recognize that influence and seek alternate interpretations and descriptions of experience from participants, from colleagues who had worked in CCJDC or with similar populations and settings, and from relevant literature. I

have included a self description in Chapter 3, Contributors, and address in Chapter 8, Reflections and Implications, my potential influence on data collection and analyses.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTRIBUTORS: PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCHER

This chapter provides information about the study's youth participants and me, as a context for the observations and conversations presented in later chapters. The goal is to present the participants as *people*, rather than solely as sources of information. It is through their individuality, and mine, that the reader will see the study's results. Unlike quantitative data, the information presented here is personal and individual; interpreting it requires knowledge of the various "lenses" through which the information is viewed. In order to protect participants' confidentiality, their names and some aspects of family life and history have been altered in these accounts. My description of each of the six participants and their families will include details of our meeting and first impressions, family constellation and living arrangements, and some discussion of our relationship as it developed during the study. Further details of participants' lives, experiences, and perspectives can be found in Chapters 6 and 7. Table 1 provides a summary of demographic characteristics, home environments, and parental employment.

### ALLEGED OFFENSES

My agreements with the participants prohibit me from revealing the specific charges for linking specific events and charges with specific participants. Following are descriptions of the events participants described to me when explaining how they came to be in detention. One youth had been sentenced to probation for a minor *trespassing* charge, and violated the probation by engaging in a physical fight with a sibling. Another was charged with *burglary* after he and a friend were caught breaking into the cash register of a local automotive business. The remaining four were all with groups of friends when they incurred the charges that led to their detentions: One was stopped by security guards in a local business after he and his friends, playing with plastic water pistols that were painted black, pointed them at two strangers and told them "give us all your money." The strangers told them to "get out of here" and then reported the incident to the security guards nearby. This event resulted in initial charges of *aggravated assault*. Another youth was with friends at a store and was charged with *retail theft* after store security followed them out of the store and discovered a gun hidden outside,



allegedly by one of the members of the group. Finally, one youth was with friends when they were approached by a police officer. The officer believed the youth was hiding marijuana in his mouth and took the youth's face in his hand to check. The youth pulled away and pushed the officer's hand or arm away, thus incurring charges of *resisting arrest* and *assaulting an officer*. Although I am not familiar with the details of many other detainees' alleged actions and their arrests, the charges incurred by the six study participants are not unusual for CCJDC detainees in general.

### HOME ENVIRONMENTS

The individual descriptions of youth participants, below, include some description of their homes and neighborhoods. However, I saw numerous similarities among the six residences and the contexts of home interviews, which I will describe here, rather than repeating it throughout the following text. Economically, the six families were fairly similar. All but one family was run and financed by a single parent; two of the five single parents were unemployed at least temporarily during the study, and the others had jobs with limited income, benefits and job security (two cashiers and a day laborer). Only one family lived in a public housing complex, but all lived in low-middle income neighborhoods with a mix of apartments and single-family homes. The homes I visited were often suffused with the cigarette smoke of both parents and youth participants; in many homes, the television was on every time I stopped by, and often remained on, turned up loud even when nobody was watching it, throughout the interview. Most of the homes' exteriors were at least mildly run down, needing new paint or structural repairs; the interiors varied more, with levels of clutter ranging from minimal (nothing on counters and tabletops, nothing to step over on the floor) to moderate (numerous objects on the table, requiring some effort to find space for the tape recorder or notebook; blankets or pillows on the floor near the television). All that I saw of the homes' interiors appeared clean, with the worst "messes" being occasional small spills, dustballs, or sinks of unwashed dishes. My overall impression, with all the families, was that they put effort into maintaining their homes' interiors, keeping them neat and clean regardless of limited income and possessions.

## NOAH

Noah is European American, with fair skin, blue eyes, and ash-blond hair that he wears short, cut to about 1/4" all over his head. Physically, he has an "all American boy" image, with an athletic build, relaxed movements and a ready smile. He was 16 when he was first detained at CCJDC, charged with robbery. He had also been a high school football player and was an occasional writer/performer of rap. Before I actually met Noah, I heard Mae, a (European American female) CCJDC officer, describe him as "polite" at least twice during conversations at the staff station. I overheard other staff members saying that he was "sad" after his last phone call with his mother. A CCJDC officer facilitated my initial meeting with Noah, introducing me, explaining that "she wants to talk to you about something," and allowing us to sit and talk at one of the pod tables.

As we sat down at the hexagonal table in the pod (Noah next to me, to my left), Noah asked me what I was there to talk about. He spoke softly, and looked directly at me as he spoke. I told him I wanted to tell him about a project I was doing, that I hoped he would help me with. He told me that in the book he was reading [which he later told me was a Bible], he had just read a part saying that you should help people when they need help; he said that seemed like a good coincidence, and that he'd be happy to help with it. I told him he shouldn't agree until we talked about it, which we proceeded to do.

From fieldnotes, 3/29/01

Wearing the characterless CCJDC uniform, talking about the Bible and smiling as easily as he is prone to do, Noah gave me an impression of innocence, a scrubbed-clean sweetness. My sense of Noah's innocence was tempered by our first meeting at his house, when he came to the door in jeans and no shirt, wearing a thick gold chain around his neck and smoking a cigarette. His softspoken, rambling friendliness continued, however, throughout our five interviews and numerous contacts for his juvenile court hearings. During the interviews, Noah was earnest, willing, warm, funny and open. His interest in helping me with the study was demonstrated by his flexibility in making appointments and his tendency to give lengthy, detailed answers, making sure I understood by describing things fully and carefully correcting slight errors as he told stories.

Noah lived with his mother, Deborah, and 20-year-old brother, Richard, in a rented

house which Deborah hoped to buy. They moved to this house from transitional housing which had kept them from literal homelessness. The rented house was in a neighborhood thought to be a “bad part of town,” a dead end street whose houses appeared greying and run down, some with boarded-up windows or sagging front porches. Noah’s family’s house needed some work as well, and they worked together to accomplish this, repairing the front door and adding (among other things) a new air conditioning unit, new carpeting in the living room, and a garden, all during the year I was visiting the family. Deborah had worked for a hotel, but switched to landscaping work when Noah got out of detention, because she needed more flexibility in order to supervise Noah and attend his probation meetings and court hearings. When he got out of CCJDC, Noah also got employment, working at three fast-food restaurants over the course of several months, and eventually working with his mom on landscaping jobs.

Noah made mention of an ex-partner of Deborah’s who sometimes lived or spent time with the family, and whose own personal problems led to some relationship conflicts. Although I did meet this man once or twice, most of my contacts were with Noah, Deborah and Matthew. Deborah and her sons were very close, frequently discussing each other’s relationships and struggles, expressing affection both physically and verbally, and sometimes finishing each other’s sentences. Noah described himself as his mother’s “rock,” and she used the same phrase; he was both her son and someone she could come to for support. Richard is a few years older than Noah. The two brothers freely made comments and suggestions about each other’s life plans, strengths and shortcomings. The importance of Noah’s family to his identity and his view of the future is exemplified in this excerpt from our first interview:

- Noah: I got my hopes up that they’re gonna let me go home and I’m just gonna get off with probation . . . .
- Noah: Which I hope they do it because, you know, I’ve done, made some decisions between me, you know, and my family . . . .
- Noah: That we’re all gonna change things around and, you know, support each other on . . . .
- Noah: Just whatever we need . . .

Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01

Like Noah, Deborah was very willing to work on the study, insisting more than once that I didn’t need to pay her the small stipend for participating. Through our contacts and

interviews we developed a warm, supportive relationship, discussing her work schedule and health problems, my wedding plans, and so forth. She often called me “hon” or “dear,” and was the only parent in the study who called me to make sure I knew the status of her son’s case and the scheduling of an upcoming hearing. Noah and Deborah were also the only participants who offered goodbye hugs when the study came to a close.

### COREY

I met Corey just moments after I had met Noah. Their first CCJDC detentions coincided, and their cells were in the same pod, so I asked staff to let me meet with them together to introduce the study. Seated next to Noah, who was well into adolescence when we met, 13-year-old Corey seemed almost like a pre-teen, with pudgy body and face still showing the traces of boyhood. Corey is European American, with fair skin and light brown hair worn short, about one to two inches, with an occasional part on the side, very short bangs above his round face, and visible cowlicks in the back.

When I gave Corey and Noah the consent forms to read, he told me I could keep talking while they read because he could “keep three things in mind at once.” During that meeting and the rest of our conversations, Corey expressed pride in his own intelligence and creativity. When he found out I was a student at the local university, he told me he planned to go there himself, and later, during his telephone call from CCJDC, excitedly informed his mother of our shared goal of graduating from the university. During our initial meeting, he asked if he could draw on the back of the consent form, and drew a character he calls “Nite,” an inhabitant of an imaginary world he would refer to repeatedly during our interviews. Corey was excited to learn that the results of the study would be something “like a book,” and he told me he was writing two books, one of them the first in a series about Nite and the other characters inhabiting the imaginary world Corey had created, based in part on a collecting/competition card game called Magic.

Corey’s intelligence and creativity sometimes made our interviews interesting but difficult, as he would introduce subjects unrelated to my questions, but helpful to understanding his experiences and thoughts in general, and probably more interesting to him than my focus on CCJDC and probation. At our first meeting, he asked and received permission (from me and the

CCJDC officer) to go to his cell/room to get a folder full of drawings and stories, which he showed to me during the remainder of the conversation about the study, interrupting me and Noah to go back to talking about the worlds he had created. Similarly, our later interviews were peppered with talk about those imaginary worlds, about his learning to play the guitar, and other accomplishments. He also had a tendency to think concretely, giving lengthy lists of descriptive details, lists of activities, or names of characters. His responses to more abstract, conceptual questions were often terse, and when he could not think of a better way to answer, he would fall back on the term “stuff,” which was for Corey a much-used, catch-all noun (e.g., “they let me go to my friend’s house and stuff”). This led to some mutual teasing in the second interview, and to a negotiation about the interview process itself. For me, these interactions exemplify Corey’s quirky sense of humor and his interpersonal style. Following are three excerpts, ordered from earliest to latest, from that interview (which contained at least ten similar uses of the word “stuff” by Corey):

Kate: Uh huh. And how does that [stuff “attitude”] come out?

Corey: I don’t like it.

Kate: Yeah. Like what do they, what do they do that shows their attitude?

Corey: There’s different stuff.

Kate: Like what? I need descriptions here.

Corey: I’m trying to think.

Kate: Okay.

Kate: 

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 [after Corey said he didn’t think he could make it to college, to be a biologist, as he would like to do] What’s keeping you from doing it?

Corey: Stuff.

Kate: Well, here’s that “stuff” again. Which stuff is it this time?

Corey: Different stuff.

Kate: ((laughs))

Corey: Another kind of /stuff/, uh. I don’t really know. Just tired.

Corey: I say stuff when I can't think of an answer.

Kate: Yes. I've noticed that.

Corey: I'm trying to think. That's a weird (sound). It looks like a snake.

Kate: Uh huh. So at least today you feel like it's going to be hard or that you just won't make it to doing what you want to do?

Corey: Today it's going to be boring./I/ want to sleep.

Kate: /Uh huh/ Uh huh. So um is there a better time of day to meet with you the next time?

Corey: Yeah.

Corey: They [his parents] have different stuff they say about me.

Corey: Than I think about me. And they think differently about me. They think I can do more. And I can't. And they know I can't.

Kate: Uh huh. Like what kinds of things do they [Corey's parents] think you can do? Don't say "stuff." ((laughs))

Corey: Stuffed.

Kate: ((laughs)) 'Stuffed.' Hey, that's not fair!

Corey: No, but, uh, different things.

Kate: You can say "stuff." I just mean in what realm. Like is it school that they think you can do more of than you think?

Corey: They think I can do more school work, ah more activities stuff, and different stuff, but ah that's about it.

Corey, Interview #2, 7/5/01

CCJDC staff members also noticed Corey's quirky humor and his creativity, but most of their spontaneous comments about him concerned his mental health. They believed he needed psychological help, based on an existing prescription for antidepressants (about which he and his mother also told me), on occasional odd behavior in CCJDC, and on their knowledge of his

family, gained from numerous contacts with them when Corey's older brother was at CCJDC.

I managed to interview Corey only twice after his release from CCJDC; we scheduled at least two other interviews, but he was not home when I arrived for these appointments. On those occasions that we did complete interviews, I would meet him at his home, in which he lived with his mother and father (Mary and Parke), his 7-year-old brother, Daniel, and his older brother Luke's girlfriend, Laurie; Luke was incarcerated for much of the study period. My fieldnotes from our second interview give an idea of the physical and social context, which was fairly consistent throughout my contacts with Corey and his family:

I arrived at the house just after 11:00 a.m. The house is in a neighborhood of small but mostly well-kept homes; most have a driveway and a small yard or garden area in the front. A couple of houses down, a man was watering his yard and garden. Corey's house is a little less well-kept than its neighbors; the porch was sagging a bit and the paint appeared to be somewhat faded or chipped. The porch, with steps leading up from the driveway to the left of the house, provides access to the front door. On the porch were an exercise bike, a set of white rattan or wicker chairs with cushions, and a rocking chair; I noticed an unpleasant, slightly sharp odor, and several flies were hovering near the door. As I looked around I noticed a few spots of what looked like dog poop on the porch, along with several large tufts of dog fur on the welcome mat and the porch floor itself. The storm door was missing a pane of glass; the wooden door behind appeared to be slightly ajar; I knocked on it, and I heard a dog start barking and approach the door. About a half-minute later, I heard someone coming to the door, yelling at the dog ("Get back!"). She pulled the door open a few inches and peered through the crack; I told her I was there to interview Corey, and she opened the door wide, turning back to the house interior as she did so. As I came through the door, I saw (in what turned out to be the living room), a TV with cartoons playing, and directly in front of it, the back of a person, entirely covered by a fleecy red blanket and resting (his) head on what looked to be an arm cushion from a couch. The woman who had answered the door (who I later discovered was Laurie, Corey's brother's girlfriend) pushed hard against the person with one foot, and then rocked him with her hands, yelling several times "Get up! Corey, get UP!" He lifted his head slightly and gave a questioning "Huh?" I then said "Good morning" to him and added, "How am I going to interview you if you're asleep?" Laurie told him once again, loudly, to get up. He sat up and said "Okay, okay." Laurie left the room, passing through the dining room and kitchen to a doorway at the back of the house.

From fieldnotes, 7/5/01

At home, Corey told me he frequently slept on the floor or couch, in front of the TV (which was

on most of the day and through the night if he slept there). He slept a lot during the day if he wasn't at a friend's house, but insisted that he wasn't depressed, although his mother believed otherwise, according to his report and hers. Mary is a nurse, working days, and Parke is a long-distance trucker, so I didn't see them much when I was there on weekdays, and never had a chance to interview Parke. Corey's parents visited him in detention, and expressed a great deal of concern for his well-being there and in general; Corey did not talk much about them in our interviews except to say (as noted above) that they disagreed about his abilities in school, activities and so on. Corey's interest in relationships at home came out most in his discussion of the family pets, and in his excitement about the upcoming birth of a niece or nephew, the child of Laurie and his brother. Corey told me his older brother referred to the baby as "the turd with a heartbeat," which Corey repeated, and found funny, though he acknowledged Laurie was not pleased by it. Aside from these brief descriptions, I got very little sense of the overall family relationships that provided a context for Corey's behavior and his identity development. The family moved to another town just after the study ended, and I would not have known this had I not stopped by the house after making several unsuccessful attempts to contact them by telephone.

#### FRANKLIN

Franklin was 16 when I met him at CCJDC. He identifies as "black," and has biracial heritage, with an African American father and a European American mother. He is slender with light brown skin, brown eyes, high cheekbones, and dark brown hair braided in front-to-back rows ending at the nape of his neck (while at home). When I first described my research interests to Franklin, he immediately answered the implicit question, "What do you think of CCJDC," telling me "They expect us to change over night" but "it takes time to change." This was my first glimpse of Franklin's intelligence and his analytical bent; he had obviously been thinking about this before I asked him, and his statement suggested a systemic-level view, rather than a narrow focus on his own situation. At the same time, Franklin's statement hinted at his perception of a difference between "they/them" (the system) and "we/us" (youth in detention). This came out further in later discussions of Franklin's perceptions of the police and his concerns about his future.



In his conversations with me, Franklin spoke softly, but was very forthcoming throughout the process, taking conversational turns that were at least as long as mine, with ample detail and expansion on his beliefs and perceptions. The phrases “y’know wh’ I mean” and “y’know what I’m sayin’” came up repeatedly in Franklin’s speech, but he seemed to use them more as placeholders (the way some people use “um” or “like”) than as actual questions, using a downward, statement inflection rather than an upward, questioning tone. Following is a typical example, in Franklin’s explanation of how detainees might talk to each other while in separate cells in a pod:

I just yell down there, you know what I’m /sayin’ / “What’s up?” You know what /I’m/ sayin’, he’ll yell back, you know what I mean? I me-, a-, like we yell at other people in other pods, /you know what/ I’m sayin’, get their attention. Yeah, we could still communicate, /(?)/ like they’ll come and check, but by the time they get there, we’ll shut up, you know what I’m /sayin’, or/ we see ‘em comin’, you know what I mean?

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Franklin lived in a town near Champaign, with his mother, Donna, who worked as a grocery store cashier, and his 13-year-old sister, Jackie. He also had an older brother living in the area who, Franklin told me with pride, had received a master’s degree from the local university. I had no contact with the brother, and very little contact, except in passing, with Jackie. My contacts with Donna, aside from a single interview, were in telephone calls to her home or work (when the home phone had been disconnected), as she helped me to set up appointments with Franklin when he was not home to talk with me. Donna and Franklin’s relationship was close, based on their explicit descriptions and the implications of their statements about each other and their lives. Donna recounted stories of Franklin taking care of her emotionally even as a toddler, and told me she hardly slept for the first few nights he was in CCJDC. Franklin expressed concern about his arrest and detention, not for himself, but for his mother, who he knew was sad, worried and disappointed. However, he seemed to feel that her tears were undeserved by him, because he had made his own choices about his behavior:

Kate: Is it hard for you when she’s cryin’ like that?

Franklin: Yeah, it’s real hard, I /tell/ her to stop, you know /what I’m sayin’ / cause like, I don’-, I don’t like her cryin’ like that, you know what I’m /sayin’ /

stressin' herself out all like that, you know what I'm sayin', she ain't gotta feel sorry for me (no way), /you know/ what I'm sayin'?

Kate: [several "uh-huh" turns removed] Well, but-, I mean, she's your mom, do you really think she's gonna not feel sorry for you?

Franklin: Yeah, I mean, I mean, I know where she's comin' from, /you/ know what I'm sayin', but I wish she wouldn't do it, you know what /I'm/ sayin', because I did it by myself, you know /what/ I'm sayin', and plus, I mean, I can take care of myself, you /know/ what I mean? I mean-, and I mean like, if I get put in here, I get put in here, that's how I see it, you know what I'm sayin', it really don't matter to me, you know what I'm say-, I do my time and get it over with.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

In addition to his family, Franklin found support and camaraderie through peer connections and gang membership. He talked willingly with me about some aspects of gang life, as they related to his perspective on CCJDC, probation, and possible or likely futures for himself. He expressed a belief that his gang would support his efforts to avoid further delinquent or criminal charges if that was what he wanted; he also made it clear that the alleged burglary that led him to CCJDC was not gang-related. Again demonstrating his ability to view things from a systems perspective, he also explained to me that the "old" image of gang turf battles has been replaced, as he saw it, by increased collaboration and a focus on economic, rather than geographic, territory claims. As a result, he claimed friendship with peers who were members of various gangs in his town, neighboring towns, and a large city about 300 miles distant.

CCJDC staff members' impression of Franklin can best be described as "neutral," in that two officers told me that he was "a good kid" while he was detained, but months later, during individual interviews, nobody could remember much about him. This is consistent with my impression of Franklin as someone who "lays low," attracting as little attention as possible while he goes about his business in his own way.

In December of 2001, Franklin joined a Job Corps program across the state, a drive of several hours, from his hometown. Although he had agreed to continue our interviews by telephone, and I made numerous calls to the dorm number he had given me, I was unable to reach him again before the study period ended. We completed three interviews, one in CCJDC

and two at his home, before he moved.

## MARKUS

At 12 years of age, Markus was the youngest of the study participants. He is African American, with medium-brown skin, big brown eyes and hair kept natural but cut short, forming a layer of curls about 1/4" thick all over his head. He was placed in detention after he and some friends, while riding bicycles together, pretended to hold up two people by pointing black-painted water pistols at them and demanding money. This occurred near a local business with security guards, and the guards chased the boys, caught them, and called the police. The two other boys, aged 10 or 11, were taken home by the police, rather than to CCJDC.

When we met, he looked directly at me, even though his quiet, hesitant speech made him seem shy. According to all accounts (my observations, Markus himself, his mother, and CCJDC officers), he was much less shy with his peers, and was often silly and playful when interacting with them. His adult observers also agreed that he tended to be a follower among his peers, someone who would go along with the crowd but would be unlikely to "start trouble" on his own. In our interviews, he seemed to listen hard to what I was saying about the study, and when I explained my research interests, he thought about it and asked questions, presumably making sure he understood. He agreed to help me out with the study, but seemed uncertain, saying that his mother "doesn't like to be interviewed." I told him he could participate regardless, given her consent, and he agreed to suggest it to her and let me follow up with a phone call. Markus maintained the same soft-spoken, slightly hesitant manner throughout our three interviews, seeming very conscious of the formality and structure of the interview process. He was so polite that I found it difficult to assess how he felt about me or the interviews as they continued through the year; my guess is that he found them a little boring or uncomfortable, given the speed with which he left the table when we finished.

While Markus was willing to answer my questions, he sometimes answered in ways that made me think he hadn't understood the question, even after several rephrasings. This happened most often when my questions were lengthy or too complex (e.g., "If X were true, do you think that kids would feel Y, and if they did, might they then do Z?"), or when they addressed abstract concepts, rather than asking for Markus to describe something he had

experienced or witnessed. As a result, I found myself “leading” Markus more during our interviews, replacing open-ended questions with a question and a set of response choices, or a yes/no question. In spite of this, I believe Markus’ own ideas did come through in our interviews, because he was good at, and interested in, expressing his beliefs and experiences.

Markus lived with his mother, Joanie, and his 2-year-old sister, Jasmine; Joanie was pregnant when we first met, and gave birth to a baby boy, Tyrell, during the time I was in contact with the family. The family lived in a small, well-kept house in a lower-middle class neighborhood, which Markus described emphatically as a good neighborhood because “They ain’t no loud noises or nothin’. We probably have some music once in a while or /somethin’./ No fightin’ and stuff.” Joanie and Jasmine had moved into the house while Markus was in detention. Prior to that, the family had lived in a transitional housing facility for women and their children, because they had been temporarily homeless the year before. Joanie told me, “I was sick. So I couldn’t pay my bills at the house we were renting. So, I had, I could’ve went to my mother’s /house/. I could have, but I chose not to. . . . I’m 32 years old, and I don’t wanta go, keep goin’ home to mommy. So I went to the shelter. And, and Markus didn’t like it at all.” Joanie expressed great affection for Markus, as well as appreciation for his helpfulness and his close relationship with his younger sister, who she told me was “just *crazy* about her brother!” Joanie’s parents lived less than a block away, and were an important source of emotional and tangible support for Markus and his mother.

Although my relationship with Markus was confined to the timing and structure of the interviews, Joanie’s and my relationship was more intimate and spontaneous. Although she was a little shy at our first meeting, Joanie was always very warm toward me, and we got to know each other a little through our conversations about relationships, jobs, children, race and racism. Joanie worked full-time as a cashier at a grocery store, but during the course of the study, she became ill and eventually told me she’d been diagnosed with cancer. As she got sicker, she and Markus both told me he was spending more and more time at home to help out, especially after Tyrell’s father, who had lived briefly in the house, moved out and ended the relationship. When I was last in touch with them, Joanie was struggling to pay the bills for appliances rented by Tyrell’s father; she asked me for a loan, which I gave her, and then asked for another, which I

did not give. We lost touch at that time, and I have been unable to reach them since.

#### JORDAN

Jordan was 14 years old when we met at CCJDC. He is small for his age and slender, with small, wide-set eyes that often appear heavy-lidded and sleepy. He is African American, with dark brown skin, except for some patches of lighter pigment on his face. When I first met him, he was wearing his hair in an Afro, at least 4" in length, with a few small braids: one at his right temple, one sticking straight out above his forehead, almost unicorn-like, one over his left ear. I told him when we met that I wanted to ask his help with something I was working on, and he agreed to help me before he knew what it was. (He later told me that he had agreed so quickly because he thought I was asking for help with some small, brief project in the CCJDC, such as making posters.) I asked him, "Do you think about what it's like to be in here, or do you just go through your day and try not to think about it?" In response, he said, "I just go through the day and try not to get in trouble, but if you ask me questions, things will pop up in my mind."

It was certainly true that Jordan had a lot to say in response to my questions; he thought carefully when we talked, and used a larger vocabulary than most other detainees I had met. However, I did not get a chance to discover this when the consent process was completed, because Jordan was released and the phone number he had given me was inoperative, so I did not see him until he was detained again, three months later.

All of my interviews with Jordan took place in CCJDC; we tried twice, but failed, to meet at his home when he was not detained. During our interviews, Jordan's facial expression betrayed little emotion except for occasional flashes of humor, sadness, or indignation. In fact, he appeared and sounded slightly sullen and guarded in interviews and more generally in CCJDC. I believe this, along with a facial expression that (mis)communicated a lack of interest unless one paid close attention, contributed to his reputation with staff for having a "bad attitude" and failing to achieve his potential as an intelligent and right-acting young man. Jordan gave me a chance to see beyond his uncaring tone and appearance; the emotional exposure and insight of some of his comments were all the more surprising in that context. For example, in our first interview, Jordan talked about his hope for being released, and the reason

he was in detention:

Jordan: . . . they was gonna release me on this [charge] . . .

Jordan: but my mom asked them to keep me . . .

Jordan: so I'll learn my lesson.

Kate: What do you think /about that?/

Jordan:/Cause the people/-, cause the people that I was hangin' with when I got /arrested/, she didn't want me hangin' with.

Kate: /Mmm hmm./ Uh huh. So, what do you think about that, that she asked them to keep you?

Jordan:I think-, sometimes, I just think to myself, like-, sometimes a part of my f-, body feels like she just abandoned me.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

Jordan expressed frustration about his relationship with his mother throughout our conversations, but at the same time, he acknowledged and appreciated that she had kept him and cared for him as a single mother.

Jordan and his mother, Annette, lived in a public housing complex. Jordan's 11-year-old sister and his 6- and 4-year-old brothers lived there as well. The complex and the surrounding neighborhood were mostly African American; Annette told me "the only white people that come up in here are looking for drugs or working for DCFS.," and opined that her neighbors would undoubtedly think I was a "DCFS lady" if they saw me knocking on her door. Annette herself worked in the office of the complex, and was trying to develop a neighborhood watch program to decrease drug sales and violence on the grounds; for part of the study period, she also took evening computer classes.

My relationship with Annette was challenging for me, and I believe for Annette as well. I met her first at one of Jordan's hearings, and she was extremely angry afterward, such that she "vented" to me for about an hour in the lobby of the courtroom, continuing in the car when I gave her a ride home. During this first conversation, Annette's penchant and talent for mimicry became evident; she was more likely to act out a conversation or event than to simply describe it, and she used body language, changes of voice, and facial expressions to increase the tales'

impact. Like her son, Annette was articulate, intelligent, and well-spoken. When upset, she was prone to using well-placed epithets, as in the story she told me about walking through the housing complex with Jordan, pointing at various idle men on the street corners, and telling him “See that? That’s a nothin’ -ass nigger, is that what you want to be?”

The difficulty in our relationship arose not from Annette’s theatrical presentation or her swearing, but from our cultural experiences and the content of our conversations. Specifically, Annette mentioned something to me in our first conversation about using physical discipline on Jordan; as a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect, I was concerned, and had to consult with my supervisor. On deciding the incident itself was not reportable, we agreed that I would go back and talk with Annette about her discipline practices, remind her of my status as a mandated reporter, and suggest some ways she could find support for alternative discipline methods. Annette listened to my suggestion about “Effective Black Parenting” classes, but did not pursue it. When I followed up again during our third interview, she became visibly angry with me; not only had she been correct about her neighbors thinking I was a “DCFS lady,” but I had effectively become one, in the middle of an otherwise unremarkable conversation. Until that time, I had more contact with Annette than I did with Jordan, but afterward, I had three more interviews and several observation periods with Jordan, and no further conversations with Annette, in spite of my attempts to contact her.

My relationship with Jordan got much closer toward the end of the study, when we did two interviews and several observation periods at CCJDC in a few weeks’ time. He had been charged with a new crime, involving harm to another person, which was more serious than his previous alleged delinquent acts, such as retail theft. He was in detention for three weeks, during which he had limited contact with Annette, who was furious about the new charges; he was facing a term in the state’s youth prison, depending on the outcome of his hearing. At this point, Jordan seemed relieved to have someone to talk to, and discussed his hopes, fears and anger openly with me.

#### JIMMY

Jimmy was 16 years old when he joined the study. He is a slender, light-skinned African American boy, about 5'8" in height. When I first met him, his brown hair is in braids running

horizontally across his head, with bent ends that stick up at odd angles around the base of his skull and his neck. He is bright-eyed, he looks directly at me when we speak, and his frequent smiles show the dimples in his cheeks. He seems very engaging, charming and personable. Jimmy was almost always fun to interview and observe<sup>4</sup>. He tended to act like a “class clown,” going for laughs even if it meant getting a warning in the CCJDC classroom. He also used humor in our interviews. In the following excerpt of a conversation closely paraphrased in my fieldnotes, he refers to a series of advertisements for a law firm, aired frequently on local afternoon television. The gist of the ads is that having this firm “on your side” induces opponents to settle quickly out of fear of the law firm’s powerful attorneys:

Kate: What did the judge say to you [in court]?

Jimmy: She told me this is my last chance, and next time I mess up, it’s DOC [state Department of Corrections, juvenile prison], so I’m tryin’ to get Ron Kanoski on my side.

Kate: You’re trying to what?

Jimmy: I’m trying to get Ron Kanoski on my side. (laughs)

Kate: (laughs). (Emulating TV ad, using a deep, resonant voice) “Ronnnn . . . Kanoski!!”

Jimmy: (laughs) Yeah. But I’m not gonna mess up no more . . . these 13 days [in CCJDC] ain’t nothin’—they talkin’ ‘bout three years [in DOC]—that’s a long time!

From fieldnotes, 11/14/01

Jimmy’s use of humor distracts us both, briefly, from the gravity of his situation. He then returns to the topic, still amused but ready to talk more seriously about the possibility of going to juvenile prison. CCJDC staff members took a dim view of his “clowning;” like some schoolteachers, they seemed to believe that his humor indicated disrespect for, or disinterest in learning, what the Center had to teach him. My sense, after six interviews and several

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<sup>4</sup>The exception to the “fun to interview” rule came when I showed up at his house for an interview and he was asleep on the couch, in front of the television. I offered to come another time but he said we should go ahead with the interview, and we did, but his answers were almost monosyllabic and he seemed extremely irritable, much as I would be if I were awakened to someone asking repetitive questions about my personal life.



observations, is that Jimmy sometimes distracted himself from learning when the social value of humor (to peer relationships) was too strong to resist. However, he was quite aware of what CCJDC was about, and what he needed to learn. As in the example above, he may have used humor as a way to ease the tension of his situation even as he learned from it.

Jimmy lived in a rented house with his father, Jimmy Sr., and sometimes another friend of his father's, whom I never met. Their house was a little worn on the outside, with a broken doorbell and a severely dented, non-functional garage door. Jimmy Sr. was a gruff, somewhat guarded man; if he was home during my interviews with Jimmy, he usually stayed in his bedroom, except for one memorable occasion when he expressed concern and suspicion about the kinds of questions I was asking Jimmy Jr.:

Jimmy Sr.: Why do you ask so many personal questions about his uh private life and how he grew up and all that?

Jimmy Jr.: It's in a book. It's an autobiography book. That's why.

Kate: Cuz I'm tryin to get um a sense of how the kids see themselves and what their lives are like, and how they see their lives . . . and how they see their lives and how they see—

Jimmy Sr.: Okay, cuz I seen a lot of people come up in here workin' for DCFS or somethin'

Kate: Uh hmm. And askin' the same kinds of questions.

Jimmy Sr.: Yeah.

Kate: Oh, no. On the consent form they talk about like I would have to report it if I found out that he was being abused. That's not why I'm askin' questions and I like don't um /like/

Jimmy Jr.: /I signed/ a consent form and everything Dad.

Jimmy Sr.: Yeah but

Jimmy Jr.: Everything we say stays between us two.

Jimmy Sr.: But uh I'm uh kind of a private kind of person. I don't know.

Jimmy Jr.: I ain't.

Jimmy Sr.: I don't mind, you know, sharin' what you know about things that are goin' on.

Kate: Uh hmm.

Jimmy Jr.: But, personal things, you know, I like to keep, you know

Jimmy Jr.: What's so personal? What she ask you a question on?

Kate: So what kind of things are you talkin' about?

Jimmy Sr.: I'm talkin' about things like, uh, how'd you grow up? You know did you like this and that? You know, I don't like that.

Jimmy, Interview #4, 11/29/01

The conflict was mostly resolved by my assurance that I was not taping the conversations in order to make a DCFS report, and by Jimmy Jr.'s repeated assertion that he did not mind answering my questions; Jimmy Sr. said, in the end, "It's up to him." Taking a cue from the content of our conversation, I suggested to Jimmy Sr. that we might do another interview to talk about his issues with DCFS, his impressions of my research project, and so on; he agreed to this but I could not reach him to schedule the interview before the study's end. Jimmy's 23-year-old brother lived nearby in an apartment complex, and was sometimes at Jimmy's house when I was there for interviews. He had two older sisters, ages 27 and 28, who lived in other states. His mother lived in a large city about 300 miles distant, and Jimmy told me he visited and talked with her frequently.

My work with Jimmy distinguished itself by fitting the highest overall number of interviews (six) into the shortest overall period of acquaintance (six months). This came about partly at Jimmy's request. In our second interview, he expressed a desire to stay out of trouble and out of detention, and I asked him if there was any way I could be helpful in that effort. He was not the only youth to express such a desire, nor the only one I asked the question. He was, however, the only one who immediately took me up on the offer, telling me, "Probably come visit me and interview me more" (Jimmy, Interview #2, 10/30/01). I would not have expected this from Jimmy. With his joking around, he gave me the impression of an independent, slightly cocky young man, someone who would not likely ask for support, especially from an adult so removed from his own world and experiences. I readily agreed, and used the additional interviews to get to know Jimmy better and try to understand his life context and its relationship to his identity and CCJDC experiences. Much of what I learned from that process is beyond the scope of this report, but certain parts of it gave me ideas that shifted the path of my questions

with other detainees, their parents, and staff members. In addition to the pleasures of interviewing Jimmy, who was extremely funny, smart and perceptive, I appreciated the insights our work created. I don't know whether the increased frequency of contact was useful to Jimmy, especially because we lost contact only a few months into the process. I like to think it was at least somewhat interesting for him, and occasionally even entertaining.

### RESEARCHER AS A CONTRIBUTOR

As I have introduced the study's youth participants and their parents, I will now try to introduce myself. In addition to my demographics, I will provide information about my motivations for carrying out the study discussed here, my politics, my perceptions of myself and social systems. It is not my intention to be self-indulgent. Instead, I want to draw my attention, and the reader's, to the aspects of my history, beliefs and perceptions that have most likely influenced my seeing, recording, analyzing and reporting throughout the study process.

#### Demographics

I am a European American woman, aged 37 at this writing (35 when the study began). I grew up in a small, all-white, upper-middle class town in New England. I lived at home with my sister, four years my senior, and my mother and father. My parents' income and savings were sufficient to pay for five years of education at a private, liberal-arts college in New England. Since college, I have lived from paycheck to paycheck for short periods of time, but I could always ask my parents for money if I ran into trouble, which I did more than once. My return to graduate school and my recent marriage to an upper-middle class man, suggest that I will be solidly ensconced in economic and social privilege in a few years' time.

#### Family History

Although my background might imply a socially and politically conservative upbringing, this was not the case for me. Idealism and activism are "in my blood," and certainly in my intellectual and social upbringing. My family has a tradition, at least four generations long, of activism and social justice work, which affects my identity and my interests. My parents worked with black community leaders to support the creation of the first black-owned bank in Connecticut; my great aunt and great grandmother were social workers in the traditional sense of the term; my great grandfather defended radical activist Scott Nearing when he lost a

teaching job due to his political beliefs.

I was raised to view social systems critically, with a focus on identifying and undoing oppression and injustice. Ironically, I learned the value of that critical stance, in part, in my own family system, in a way that appears directly relevant to my academic interests and this study in particular. My sister and I had distinct roles in the family, my sister playing the “bad kid” and me the “good kid,” both behaviorally and academically. While differences in personality and ability probably contributed to the constricting of our family roles, I also believe my parents “bought into” and supported the disparity. In a sense, they relegated us to our separate and unequal worlds, and acted accordingly, expecting the worst from my sister and the best, or at least “no trouble,” from me. Thus constructed (in part) by our immediate social milieu, we encountered the broader world, where the labeling was repeated and cemented. (While I did do my share of adolescent “acting out,” some of which would have merited formal sanction had I been caught, I was strongly identified with my academic success and eventually chose that path.) Not surprisingly, the vestiges of these roles can be seen in the differences between my sister’s life and my own. My own life story is entwined with a narrative of “troubled adolescence,” and I suspect some of my interest in being an advocate and therapist for children and teenagers is an attempt to understand and make up for that early history. I know from being in our family that some part of my sister’s “self” was created by the beliefs, attitudes and actions of adults in our childhood lives. As a result, I imagine the roles could have been reversed, and I often tell myself, “there but for the grace of God go I.” In the light of this understanding, I find myself drawn to “troubled” children and adolescents, and to the idea that at least part of what is “troubled” is not inherent or even internal to them.

#### Research Agenda

In choosing this dissertation project (as well as many other activities and relationships in my life), I have narcissistic images of myself as a heroine, a voice for the silenced. I also have more realistic images of doing research in a way that allows me to develop real relationships and contribute where I can to participants’ lives. Finally, I am interested in research questions that touch on social imbalance and injustice, and in methods and projects that address these questions and issues head on. My agenda when I began this project was to identify and describe

in minute detail the ways that juvenile detention, as an arm of the juvenile justice system, was doing a disservice to detainees. I had not seen very much of this in person, but I was convinced that it must be happening; a variety of sociological and psychological theories, discussed in Chapter 1, provided a less personal foundation as a starting place.

Although it may not surprise more experienced ethnographers, I have been frustrated by the degree to which my relationships to the setting and the participants have altered, perhaps diluted, that agenda. After a year of “immersion” in the world of the detention center and its officers, I have sympathy, even empathy, for them. I *like* them. I am not (any longer) comfortable vilifying them outright. I have also heard tales of some disturbing and violent behavior from some of the young men in my study, and I cannot attribute it to the detention center alone. Although I would not place it exclusively in the realm of “individual responsibility” in a social vacuum, I cannot ignore their admissions of participation in some egregious acts. The picture is more complex than I would like it to be, and my activist/advocate/imagined-heroine self is chagrined. As I began to analyze the data, assemble the results, and imagine this report, I became aware that I would be walking a thin line, balancing my generally positive impressions of detainees and CCJDC staff with my awareness that both groups occasionally showed “bad behavior.” Furthermore, I was invested in telling a story that would be fair and accurate from the perspectives of all the participants, while placing the perspectives of detainees in the foreground. My relationships with participants and my intellectual, emotional and political investments are important considerations in understanding the project, the process, and the product.

### Implications

I am not, and cannot be, a neutral observer, nor can the influence of my particular presence on the creation of data (in the form of behavior, words and interactions) be ignored. I believe this to be true in general, but it is especially important to make the point while reporting results of a study I imagined, designed and carried out from start to finish. Fortunately, my desire to understand other people’s perspectives is strong, and I enjoy the response I get when people (e.g., study participants) feel understood by me. That interest, in combination with my belief that unbalanced subjectivity would greatly limit the meaning and utility of this report, has

helped to keep “my agenda” in check. It seems clear that my “social position,” as represented by demographics, has affected participants’ interactions with and in front of me. This was most obvious in my conversations with African American parents about my relationship (or lack thereof) with DCFS, but it also came out in my lack of understanding of youth participants’ slang (e.g., “dubs” are double-wide rims on car wheels; “fit’n’ ta” can be loosely translated as “about to”), musical interests and social lives (e.g., weekend “hotel parties” with peers). At the same time, my subjectivity must have yielded positive results as well, such as my relationship with the CCJDC setting and staff members, my connections with some of the parents, and my willingness and ability to really listen to detainees’ versions of their experiences. I have *presented the description of myself not so much as a caveat to readers, but as an aid to interpretation of the work presented here.*

## CHAPTER 4

### SETTING HISTORY

In the early development of Champaign County's Youth Detention Home (which would eventually become the Juvenile Detention Center at the heart of this study<sup>5</sup>), clear tensions emerged among potentially competing goals: saving money, doing justice, serving youth, protecting the community. Public documents such as council meeting minutes and newspaper articles convey these tensions through their descriptions of the policy, practices and target population of the detention center. This chapter summarizes the history of the CCJDC and its forebear facilities in the county, primarily as it is presented in local newspapers, focusing on those tensions and their shaping of the current facility's identity, structure and practices. The likely "slant" of information presented by CCYDC administrators to news reporters, and subsequently filtered by reporters and editors, would be problematic for an *objective* history of the facility. However, my goal here is to illuminate the center's *subjectivity* and the resulting public image: its self-presentation to the community, and the messages conveyed about the setting and the young people incarcerated there.

The events and statements recorded in local newspapers (the Urbana Courier, the Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette, and the campus Daily Illini) suggest four key phases of development for the facility: the initial conception and construction of a youth detention home in the 1950s, a 1970s period of staff turnover and policy shift from rehabilitative to punitive, accompanied by criticisms from the state Department of Corrections (IDOC), a controversy in the late 1980s over the use of isolated confinement and frequent strip searches, and a decade of re-invention, increased service focus, and discussions about overcrowding in the facility, 1990 to 2000. A youth's 1995 suicide in the facility also had a strong impact on the detention center's public image and later shifts in policy and practice.

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<sup>5</sup>Because the research presented here relies on media reports, it is impossible to disguise the location and name of the facility where the research took place. However, as agreed in the consent process, the names of all individuals currently working in the facility have been changed to pseudonyms, even where the names refer to quotes from newspaper articles. Participants were aware that their role in the facility might make them identifiable to readers, but desired as much confidentiality as was feasible.

In each of the three phases after the center's opening, system "outsiders" (i.e., research and advocacy organizations, community members) questioned the practices of the detention home, administrators responded with policy justifications or changes, and the setting adjusted accordingly. In this process, administrators often combined descriptions of detained youth with "philosophical" statements about the goals of detention and the best ways to achieve them, contributing to the community's images of detained youth and of the detention center. Over time, changes in policy, practice and rhetoric resemble the swinging of a pendulum, from punitive and blaming to rehabilitative and "explaining away" delinquent behavior. The detention center's current practices, detailed in later chapters, still reflect the tensions between the extreme ends of the pendulum's path, and a paradoxical pair of core beliefs that delinquency is caused by bad parenting, but lies within the individual youth, unrelated to social or structural contexts.

#### 1954 TO 1955: CREATION OF A YOUTH DETENTION HOME

The Champaign County Youth Detention Home was first conceived in the early 1950s. By 1954, the Welfare Committee Council of Social Agencies (WCCSA) had created a sub-committee on Protective Services for Children, which began active planning for a "detention home for juveniles" in the county (WCCSA, 1954a). Later that year, the Special Committee for the Study of a Detention Unit for Champaign County made a report to the WCCSA (1954b) regarding the yearly cost of the current practice of detaining youth in the adult jail, listing possible structures for a new detention facility, and discussing issues of location, cost, financing and staffing. The report emphasized cost savings, but also mentioned that "Judge Lierman and Probation Officer Richard Layman have stated that in many instances they would have liked to have held certain children for study before making a ruling, but have not done so for lack of a proper facility" (WCCSA, 1954b, p. 8).

The assignment of a special committee, and the committee's thorough report, suggest that the need for some kind of a facility was already clear. The need to detain allegedly delinquent youth seems to have been taken for granted, and the question at hand in 1953 was simply where this should happen. While the practice of detaining youth in an adult jail was allowed by current Illinois law, the statements from the judge and probation officer suggest that



the adult jail was not considered a “proper facility” for minors. The special committee suggested a “family type unit” as the best option for the county, being “ideal for a small intake, requiring a minimum staff, and... [being] more economical to operate.” The proposed facility would be staffed by a live-in “custodian and wife” (WCCSA, 1954b, p.3), and would have a capacity of 10 to 12 minors. These early meeting minutes refer to potential detainees as “boys and girls” (WCCSA, 1954b, p.1). The committee also suggests that the new facility include a “play area” and “rumpus room” (WCCSA, 1954b, p. 3). The original youth home, then, was developed and designed in the interest of serving individuals who were children first and “trouble” second; this perspective and the resulting “personality” of the facility will be seen to shift significantly over the years.

In May, 1954, the county announced that funds were available to build the “detention home,” but the tone of public officials regarding the facility and its charges had changed. A Champaign City Supervisor justified the proposed expense by saying, “We will have to pay for the care of delinquents whether they are in a home or in jail . . . . A detention home will pay for itself by turning out children who will be producers” (“Funds Already Available,” 1954). This statement implies that the detainees are delinquents first, children second. Without intervention, they will become “non-producers,” draining county coffers by failing to contribute their fair share. Judge Lierman also pointed out the benefits of separating youth from adult lawbreakers, stating that “In jail [young people] get an education in crime” (“Funds Already Available,” 1954). Thus a new, separate youth facility would protect vulnerable youth from the influence of adult lawbreakers and protect the community from the unproductive adults the youth might otherwise become. This ambivalent stance toward “delinquent children” apparently paid off. The family-style detention home, with space for 13 youth to be supervised by a married couple, opened to its first three inmates in late 1955 (“Youth Home Open,” 1955).

#### 1976 TO 1979: ISOLATION AND PUNISHMENT

The Champaign County Youth Detention Home operated for over 15 years with relatively little public attention. In 1971, direction of the facility was taken over by Fred Krauss, and a rehabilitation program called TARGET was created, with headquarters at the youth detention home. According to current staff who are familiar with the institution’s history,

TARGET incorporated a token economy into a program of social skills training, education, and behavior modification. In 1976, the program came under scrutiny for several reasons, including being too easy on target youth (“Critics Call,” 1976). Krauss resigned, and was later accused of mismanaging program funds.

A consulting firm was hired to evaluate the county’s youth program, and the detention home was brought more closely under the supervision of the county court services (i.e. probation) office. Krauss’ position was effectively divided in two, with the county’s Chief Probation Officer, Del Weatherford, taking the role of “administrative head of the county’s youth programs” and Mel Hess becoming the temporary director of the youth detention home (“No Changes,” 1976). While the new administrators stated at first that they would keep the TARGET program, they proposed other dramatic changes, including eliminating all the current staff and testing future employees for drug use and sexually transmitted diseases (Groninger, 1976). Public descriptions of detainees during this period used the words “juveniles” and “youth,” neither of which carries the playful, innocent connotation of the word “children.” In general, these articles focused more on the program and its staff than on the young people in the facility.

This was soon to change, with the appointment of Robert Steigmann as the new county juvenile court judge. Steigmann brought with him a strong, outspoken public presence and a punitive philosophy. By December of 1977, the rehabilitation-focused TARGET program had been closed, and Steigmann stated to a reporter that the detention center was “no longer a place for rehabilitation like it was under TARGET. It is now a jail for juveniles. We make no bones about that. It is a penal institution like Menard Penitentiary [an adult facility known for its harsh treatment of offenders], and it gives the kids a taste of what the penitentiary is like. We aim to get their attention” (“Court Options,” 1977). Whether this “attention-getting,” adult-prison-like approach had any merit was the subject of a great deal of debate over the following year.

In January of 1978, the youth home was found to be in violation of several IDOC standards, regarding the physical structure and the treatment of detainees. In the latter category, the IDOC report required providing daily recreation opportunities for youth in detention. Del Weatherford’s response was to point out that “recreation equipment had been used as weapons

in the past . . . . bars used for weightlifting and pool cues . . . had been used to attack staff members.” (Poppenhagen, 1978). By focusing on the actions of a subset of former detainees, Weatherford implies that all detainees are dangerous, creates an equivalence between providing recreation and inviting violence, and subtly implies that lack of exercise and recreation is part of a suitable punishment for young people in detention.

Local scrutiny of the youth home’s practices expanded, continuing throughout 1978. Notably, the facility’s name was changed from “Champaign County Youth Home” to “Champaign County Youth Detention Center” (CCYDC) in early 1978. In a February, 1978 article in the Morning Courier, the center’s administrators, Mel Hess and Del Weatherford, talk about detained youth as “losers,” most of whom are violent offenders. The role of the center is corrective, educational even, but not supportive per se. Keeping detainees in their rooms (i.e. cells) except for trips to the bathroom and classroom (i.e., up to 18 or 20 hours a day), denying access to radio, television or exercise, using smoking and access to books as rewards for good behavior: “It’s all geared toward helping them learn something,” according to Hess. He describes a new program designed to teach detainees about the law and social responsibility, and emphasizes the overall goal of the center as persuading young people “they don’t ever want to come back again.” A photo accompanying the story gives a glimpse of CCYDC’s unwelcoming atmosphere. It shows Hess standing at some distance from the camera in a large, stark room with fluorescent ceiling lights, exercise mats on the floor and a small table in the foreground, this distinctly drab space is identified in the caption as the center’s “recreation area” (Payne, 1978a).

In response to criticisms from the local paper and county board members that the center’s practices go far beyond what is needed for deterrence, Judge Steigmann states he wants to “scare the hell out of the kids and make them think.” Quoted in a newspaper story, he emphasizes the role of CCYDC in preventing delinquent youth from going on to adult prison. A photo of Steigmann shows just his head and shoulders; he is a white man with glasses, dark hair cut close on the sides, longer on the top, parted on the side. He is wearing his judicial robe, a white shirt, a tie. He looks directly at the camera, his lips slightly parted, his gaze suggesting a combination of surprise and defiance. Throughout Steigmann’s tenure as juvenile court judge,

this same portrait appears repeatedly in newspaper stories about the detention center, almost as often as photos of the center itself. Thus Steigmann's strong personality is given a face, which in turn becomes the face of the detention center itself.

In the same way, Steigmann's words become the voice of CCYDC. He uses colorful language to describe youths' experiences in the center: "When the doors are closed they clang shut like the gates of hell," and "[s]ome of the kids are reduced to tears in 15 seconds or less" when shut into cells temporarily on a cautionary tour (one of Steigmann's requirements for first-time probationers). Justifying the "scared straight" approach, Steigmann describes youth in the system as having received "extensive counseling" prior to their court experience, with no apparent positive effect (Groninger, 1978). This falsely suggests that only two approaches exist for dealing with problem behavior in youth: counseling on the outside, or isolation and extreme behavior restriction in detention.

A debate between Steigmann and the IDOC, over practices at the YDC, developed over the next several months. In February, 1978, the IDOC weighed in yet again on the absence of recreation and the frequency of exercise for detainees. Judge Steigmann refused outright to change the recreation policy, stating, "The center is to have the ambiance of a jail" (Payne, 1978c). In contrast to earlier community discussions of the reasons to build a detention facility, Steigmann argued that "It would be nice if the juvenile court experience helped kids find more meaning in life, become more responsible, become productive citizens or get along better in school. None of this is the goal. The primary goal is to get them to say, 'I want to stop committing crimes' . . . by putting some teeth in the detention experience of juveniles" (Payne, 1978b). Here again, Steigmann dichotomizes rehabilitation and punishment, and implies that without harsh intervention, alleged delinquents will continue to "want to" commit crimes<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>I do not mean to imply that young people don't "want to" do the things that get them detained, simply that their wanting is not about committing crimes per se. In other words, I think it unlikely that young people ever say to themselves, "I want to commit a crime now." Rather, they might say "I want this person to leave me alone" or "I want that man's money," or they might act impulsively and only think after they have acted. The construction of youth as "wanting to commit crimes" implies acts committed for the sake of their antisocial effect; this pattern of behavior is fairly rare, even among youth in juvenile detention.

In April of 1978, Toney Xidis, the president of the Illinois Juvenile Detention Association stated that Champaign County's detention practices represented a "radical . . . backward shift," and asserted the need for youths to be made aware they have broken the law, but they do still have privileges and rights. Xidis' goals for youth in detention would be to learn that "authority figures can be reasonable, understanding and tolerant and also can be firm, fair and friendly . . . [and also] a source of motivation, a source of help and a positive influence" (Payne, 1978d). While this statement of objectives suggests that juveniles have a negative view of authority figures, it is otherwise in direct conflict with Steigmann's goals for the Champaign County YDC.

In the next few months, Charles Rowe, director of the IDOC asserted that the "shock therapy" approach of Judge Steigmann was likely ineffective and possibly damaging (Payne, 1978e), the American Bar Association released standards for detention prohibiting use for punishment, treatment or rehabilitation ("Panel: Detention," 1978), and several Illinois legislators expressed concern about the "19<sup>th</sup> century approach" taken by Judge Steigmann (Payne, 1978f). In all three articles, critics of CCYDC practices focused on the vulnerability of youth, rather than their criminal behavior or its cost to the community. Rowe acknowledged that juvenile offenders are "tougher," but emphasized the need for education and counseling during detention.

Illinois legislators said CCYDC's practices are "related" to child abuse, and noted the potential for young people to be damaged by the "lack of stimulation and communication" at the center (Payne, 1978f). Finally, the American Bar Association standards assert that too much detention is dangerous to young people, and specifically encouraged detention facilities to protect the psychological and physical health of their charges ("Panel: Detention," 1978). These excerpts reveal a parallel between polarized beliefs about (alleged) delinquents and about best practices for juvenile corrections. One stance, exemplified by Judge Steigmann's statements, is that delinquents are almost as responsible for their actions as adults, and require harsh punishment to deter further crime. In the alternate view, focusing on the age and assumed vulnerability of young people, delinquent acts require a rehabilitative approach combined with milder punishment.

Judge Steigmann's hard-line stance and the resulting detention center practices continued to come under fire in 1978 and early 1979. The John Howard Association, a non-profit corrections watchdog organization, released a critical report on the facility in December, 1978 (Payne, 1978g). Appearing at a local press conference with Judge Steigmann, the Howard Association's director, Michael Mahoney, stated that "the practices of the center go far beyond what is necessary," noting in particular the limitations on interaction among detainees and the lack of mental health assessment and counseling. Steigmann responded by saying that the detention center "is several hundred percent safer than attending any local high school," and that "more than 90 percent of detainees have had 'extensive contact' with social service agencies," so they would be fine without such contact for three weeks. Steigmann further stated that he didn't expect detainees "to sit there like monks, but reading has never been the strong suit of most of our clients. I expect them to sit there bored, but safe" (Payne, 1978h). In the first comment, Steigmann shifts the focus away from the possible emotional vulnerability of adolescents to long periods of social isolation and inactivity, focusing instead on safety from physical harm; the implication is that extreme restrictions are necessary to prevent youth from fighting with each other or with staff. By asserting that "more than 90 percent" of detainees have had "extensive contact" with social service agencies, Steigmann implies that youth in the center are emotionally troubled or otherwise dysfunctional. Finally, he discredits the academic abilities of juvenile detainees and seems to suggest that detainees' difficulty with reading justifies his policy of limiting recreational activities.

The accuracy of Steigmann's generalizations about youth detained at CCYDC is questionable, though certainly the population of detained adolescents, like any other group of adolescents, probably has a subset that could be characterized by aggressive behavior, social service contacts, or difficulty reading. The issue here is the use by Steigmann and his administrative staff of a particular set of words and images—illiterate "losers" with a history of assaultive behavior—to characterize detained youth, creating an exaggerated, negative public image of them in order to justify the center's harshly restrictive policies. Steigmann's use of the word "clients" (Payne, 1978h, quoted above) is almost comical in the context of his other statements about how detainees are treated in "his" facility. The word, perhaps used

unintentionally, falsely implies that the detention center is geared toward providing a service of some kind, and that the teens' presence in the center is a request for this service.

The idea that youth in the juvenile justice system have problems that need solving is perhaps the only point of overlap between the views of Steigmann and his public detractors. Their rhetoric focuses on detained young people's psychological vulnerability and need for education and counseling (Steigmann simply refers to heavy use of social services, rather than acknowledging a "need"), in some ways echoing the initial aims of the Champaign County Youth Home. Little is said on either side of the debate about the strengths and resources of the young people and their families. The reason for this gap is unclear, though one can imagine that a focus on positive characteristics of detained youth might lead the public to question the need for juvenile detention of any kind, let alone the harsh punishment doled out by Steigmann's version of the Youth Detention Center. Instead, the debate seems to be about just how needy and bad detained youth are, and how the detention experience should be designed to protect any possible vulnerabilities and rights without losing the power of the intervention.

The debate continued through early 1979, fueled by the release of the annual IDOC inspection report on CCYDC. The report noted two major areas of ongoing noncompliance related to the treatment of detainees. The first was the lack of toilets and sinks in individual cells, which resulted in detainees having to ask for permission each time they needed to use the bathroom. The second was the practice of putting youth into their cells immediately after intake for an isolated "cooling-off" period of several hours. The report also suggested the appointment of a citizens advisory committee for the detention center. Judge Steigmann stated there had been "plenty of criticism and support" from the community in recent months, such that no further citizen input was necessary. Regarding current intake practice and cell furnishings, he said that both were in keeping with the goals of the center, and were believed to be effective by the facility's administration (Groninger, 1979). At the same time, the report noted that some changes had taken place: fire safety had improved, and range of physical exercise was increased. Detainees now had 90 minutes a day of an odd assortment of recreational activities "calisthenics, ping pong, sack races and basketball dribbling" (Selkove, 1979). These changes were apparently made with little or no public fanfare, allowing

Steigmann to adjust to the requirements of state authorities while still maintaining his image as someone tough on juvenile crime.

#### 1987 TO 1990: STRIP SEARCHES AND “QUIET CONTEMPLATION”

The 1970's standoff between Steigmann and the IDOC was eventually defused by the state officials' acknowledgment that their reports' recommendations were not mandatory, and that the IDOC had no plans to “rigidly enforce” their standards (Groninger, 1979). However, by late 1987, the IDOC had mandated the installation of individual toilets and sinks, and the center briefly regained the attention of the local press. A newspaper report showed little change in the guiding philosophy of the program, in spite of some changes in the center's practices. Youth were given weekly screenings of the film, “Scared Straight,” a movie intended to turn youth away from crime by showing them the terrors of adult prison life through contact with current prison inmates. Detainees had a full day of classes in the center's basement schoolroom, 60 minutes of exercise, and occasional visits and phone calls, leaving a mere 16 hours for isolation in individual cells (Schuster, 1987).

Steigmann's explanation for the center's practices had shifted somewhat as well. While the judge continued to focus on showing youth “no matter how bad things are for them outside, it can be a lot worse in a place where someone else sets all the rules,” he also stated that the extended time in social isolation would encourage “quiet contemplation,” forcing youth to “confront their own behavior” and “reflect about who they are or where they're going” (Schuster, 1987). Steigmann further justified his policies by pointing to the facility's safety record, with no assaults or suicides for 10 years, and to the effect on detainees: “[T]he time spent there by these youths is the most productive and useful period of their lives” (Schuster, 1987). In these statements, the judge presents a more ambivalent stance toward detained youth than in the past, emphasizing the need to punish and control, but also to provide opportunity for reflection and “productive activity.” His overall negative assessment of the youth, however, seems unchanged.

In 1989, discussion of the treatment of youth in the detention center came to a head once again, sparked this time by the revelation that since the facility's 1976 transition from youth home to detention center, detainees had been strip searched any time they left their cells, left the



facility (e.g., for medical appointments), or had a visitor. The strip searches were conducted in private by a staff member of the same sex as the detainee, and were entirely visual, requiring the detainee to “bend over, spread the legs, squat, and lift breasts or testicles” (Rooney, 1989a) to allow visual inspection by the detention officer. The center’s director at the time, Ron Sengenberger, stated that the average was about twice daily (Rooney, 1989b). However, my conversations with current staff who worked at CCYDC through this era confirm that detainees were strip searched even when returning from the bathroom, suggesting that detainees may have been subjected to strip searches much more often than twice a day.

Judge Steigmann expressed surprise regarding the frequency of strip searches, and issued a new practice guideline within a day noting the need to balance safety concerns against the dignity of detainees (Rooney, 1989b). However, he commented that he found it “very curious that in 13 years, no juvenile detainee has mentioned it to her parent or lawyer, who in turn has mentioned it to the court,” apparently giving no weight to the perceived risk of complaining for a teenager in the adult-run, punitive detention center and courtroom. The new policy mandated strip searches upon arrival at the center, after returning from an outing, after an unobserved visit with a third party, or after physical contact with a third party. While this was a mild improvement, it could still have forced detainees to choose between a private visit with their lawyer, followed by a strip search, or an officer-observed visit, with no subsequent strip search<sup>7</sup>.

In spite of Steigmann’s quick response to complaints about the strip search policy, the community’s attention was once again drawn to the detention center, leading to a year of discussion, the eventual involvement of the local ACLU chapter, and the evaluation of CCYDC by a research firm consulting with the U.S. Department of Justice. At the beginning of this phase, Steigmann again defended his position, this time presenting alternatives to current practices as being “like a Boy Scout camp . . . [with] arts and crafts rooms, color TVs, air

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<sup>7</sup>It is unclear from news documents at the time whether “professional courtesies” were extended to attorneys or other service providers such that strip searches would not be the result of their contact with detained clients. This was the case years later, when I began my study at the detention center; however, all visiting rooms had intercoms allowing staff to listen in from a remote location.

conditioning, pool tables and the kinds of fun and games many of these juveniles don't have available to them when they're law abiding juveniles on the street" (Rooney, 1989c). In other words, easing the restrictions on detained youth would make the detention center a fun place to be, like going to camp; Steigmann plays on the presumed deprivation of youth's home and family lives to make even a jail with entertainment sound appealing.

Community members entered the discussion, with some parents reporting that their children, boys and girls, were intimidated by staff members making sexualized comments (e.g., "homosexually suggestive" comments to a boy, or intimations that a girl would have to be naked in her cell for the entire weekend). One parent reported that her son "left the detention center with no respect for those adults" (Rooney, 1989d); this may have been the first time anyone publicly identified observable negative effects on youth who had been in the center. While Steigmann confirmed that he did not want detainees to be harassed by staff in any way, he also expressed hope that "the [County Board's Justice and Public Safety] committee would not take these complaints as gospel. I have heard this for the first time." Again, the implication is that if these events occurred, young people would have complained sooner or more loudly, such that the judge would have heard about it. Steigmann uses the power of his position to discredit the complaints, addressing the Justice and Public Safety Committee in way unlikely to be countered by a juvenile detainee or average community member.

Some community members responded to the complaints as well, expressing admiration for the work of the CCYDC. A school dean of students echoed Judge Steigmann by saying the center "is the last opportunity . . . to give [a delinquent] a look at the future before he gets sent to a state prison where he will be raped and brutalized." A juvenile officer with the police department stated that the center has "a wonderful effect on kids whose parents have thrown up their hands and said, 'I wish someone would help me'" (Rooney, 1989d). A probation officer reports "I've had a lot of parents call and tell me that time in detention was the best thing that ever happened to their kids. You don't know how many kids there are out there who are waiting for somebody to say 'no' to them" (Pressey, 1989d).

According to a detention officer, youth benefit in other ways from their stay in detention; he states that many detainees had never, before their time in detention, read an entire

book. Center director Sengenberger claimed that detainees benefit from being in the detention center classroom because “Many . . . are school discipline problems and the individual attention they get . . . helps build their confidence . . . [This is] a very positive experience especially for a kid who’s been sitting in the back of the room getting D’s and F’s.” In the same interview, the director stated that the average detention stay of 10 to 14 days offered little opportunity for staff to help youth with their “troubled pasts,” so they must instead try to focus on the future, with age 17 and the state penitentiary looming close (Pressey, 1989d). In these statements, the vulnerability of youth and families becomes an argument for, rather than against, harsh penal practices. CCYDC is framed as a protector of vulnerable youth who are inevitably on the road to prison, and as a timely source of support for helpless and frustrated families.

In March of 1989, yet another report was released, this time by the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), criticizing conditions of detention at CCYDC. Rather than addressing the nature of juvenile detainees, the report focused on the center’s violations of Illinois law and the protection of the rights of minors detained at the facility. The report recommended that the center appoint a citizens oversight committee, establish a grievance procedure, specify the center’s rules, penalties and rewards for inmates’ behavior, provide mental health assessment on intake, and increase the variety of recreational activities available to detainees (Rooney & Schenk, 1989).

In response to the ACLU’s assertions and the community’s resulting concern, Court Services Director Del Weatherford requested technical assistance from the state, in the form of an evaluation by Department of Justice consultants. Discussing the possibility of an evaluation, CCYDC Director Ron Sengenberger said he believed the center was “getting a bad rap,” because “the public doesn’t really know what kinds of kids we’re holding out here—we’re not holding curfew violators here” (Pressey, 1989a). A detention officer justifies the social isolation imposed on detainees, saying that when social interaction is allowed, “the bravado and machismo starts [sic] coming out—they start refusing to do what the staff tells them” (Pressey, 1989d). Judge Steigmann, just before his appointment to an appellate court position, demeaned the ACLU’s concerns as “touchy-feely” and “left-wing” concerns (Pressey, 1989b). In combination, these statements tell community members that youth in detention have committed

serious offenses, deserving or even requiring harsh treatment, such that any other approach would be soft or weak<sup>8</sup>, inviting trouble—regardless of risks to detainees’ due process rights, civil liberties or psychological health.

By August of 1989, Judge Steigmann had been replaced by a new judge, John Delamar, and a citizens advisory panel was once again in the works (Pressey, 1989c, 1989f). The detention center had been refurbished with new paint, brighter lights, a visiting room, and the IDOC-mandated toilets in each cell (Rooney, 1989e). However, conditions within the center were targeted for another round of criticism when the evaluation sponsored by the Department of Justice was released in November, 1990. Focusing on detainees’ boredom, isolation, and suicidal ideation, the report brought youth’s vulnerabilities back into the discussion. Lengthy isolation periods for detainees were again described as “unnecessarily punitive,” and physical and psychological conditions in the center were said to increase inmates’ risk for suicide. Recommendations included decreasing isolation of detainees, hiring an on-site social worker, providing daily programming for inmates, and correcting structural flaws that might allow a youth to commit suicide (“Report Criticizes,” 1990).

Newspaper photos of the detention center’s interior during this period of controversy evoke the public image Steigmann seems to have desired: cold, uncomfortable and lonely. Dark cells have what look to be painted, concrete-block walls. Each holds a single narrow, wood- or metal-framed bed and little else (Pressey, 1989e; Pressey, 1990; Rooney, 1989a). Solitary

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<sup>8</sup>In Judge Steigmann’s comments about the ACLU, we also see a hint of the forced polarization of masculinized (i.e., harsh, punitive, physically coercive) correctional practice and a more respectful or lenient approach, which is given a feminized (and therefore) devalued position. The officer’s remarks suggest that stereotypically masculine behaviors like “bravado” and “machismo” are unwelcome in detainees, tantamount to rebellion. Note that the earlier descriptions of staff harassment of detainees involved “homosexually suggestive remarks” made to a young man, and threats that a young woman would spend the entire weekend naked in her cell—these are gendered, shaming interactions, demeaning detainees by threatening to “undo” a young man’s masculinity (according to mainstream culture), and to expose a young woman’s body, her femininity and her vulnerability. This interplay of gender, power and control, though relatively rare in documents concerning CCJDC history, arose again in my observations of the current facility. While it is not addressed in this report, it is a subject for planned future analyses.

detention center employees are viewed from the perspective of a detainee. In one photo, a white man stands in a hallway, seen from behind horizontal bars (Rooney, 1989a). In another, a white woman stands in the doorway of a cell, her hand on the doorknob, seen from inside the cell (Pressey, 1990), a strange, stark twist on the image of a mother saying goodnight to a child. While the cells look narrow and relatively small, staff members still appear small and far away in each image. Emotional distance is increased by the bare floors and walls, and the employees' unsmiling faces. The sense of physical depth and distance is enhanced by the lines of the concrete-block walls, converging at the "back" of each photo. If Steigmann's image and voice were the public "face" of the detention center, these images might be its "body," its physical form as seen by the community at large.

Unlike Judge Steigmann, Judge Delamar kept a low profile. He refrained from discussing the report with the press, allowing a public hearing with the citizens advisory committee to be the primary platform for arguments. Some contributors continued to link judgments of the program's value to judgments of the detainees' character or "attitude." Others, however, maintained a more neutral stance, similar to that taken by the ACLU. They raised questions about the program's effectiveness, pointing out a recent increase in the number of county youth committing severe offenses and thus being transferred to state-run youth prisons (Pressey, 1990). From this perspective, the nature of the detainees and the philosophy of treatment are less important than achieving the goal of keeping young people out of prison. The timing of this shift suggests that Judge Steigmann's forceful personality and strong beliefs had been controlling the terms of the argument, returning repeatedly to incorrigible youth and the harsh punishment they deserve. With Steigmann's absence and Delamar's relative silence, outsiders had a brief chance to reframe the discussion, placing responsibility on the program's administrators rather than on the youth they sought to control or "serve." The entire debate, like the rest of CCYDC's history, takes place against the backdrop of national discussion and policy regarding juvenile delinquency. While national trends showed several cycles of alarm about youth crime and resulting demands that the courts "get tough" (Feld, 1999), Steigmann held his court and detention center on a steady, punitive course throughout. At the time that Delamar replaced Steigmann, juvenile arrests and transfers to adult courts were showing a sharp

increase; adolescents perceived as violent and dangerous were being “held responsible” for their behavior, much as Steigmann would desire (Feld, 1999). The distinction between the national and local debates is that local concerns had to do with the conditions of detention; Judge Steigmann’s philosophy about the necessity of a punitive or deterrent facility was not in question.

#### 1990 TO 2000: RENEWED PUBLIC IMAGE AND A NEW FACILITY

Overlapping with the 1990 debate about CCYDC’s practices was a discussion regarding overcrowding in the facility, an issue that eventually overshadowed the debate about how detainees should be treated. Judge Steigmann’s departure, along with a number of staff and program changes, likely contributed to that debate’s demise. The program changes, amounting to a re-invention of the facility’s identity, was well-timed for CCYDC, as the County Board might have been hesitant to support expansion of a facility whose practices had been the focus of so much debate and negative publicity. However, over ten years’ time, judges, detention administrators and court services staff justified the county’s investment in a new CCYDC by focusing on two major themes. The first, pointing to increasing rates and severity of youth crime, echoed Judge Steigmann and Del Weatherford’s earlier focus on serious offenses as a justification for punitive treatment. A second theme running through the discussion of overcrowding is finances, increasing the community’s sense of urgency by pointing out the relative costs of supporting the existing facility or building a new one. The new version of the facility’s public image seemed to take hold, with occasional articles offering a contrast to earlier, bleak images of the center and its practices. A detainee’s suicide in 1995 was a tragic stumbling block, but likely contributed to the public’s sense that a new center would be a good investment. Woven together, these threads supported the community’s 1998 decision, through the County Board, to fund and build a new, 40-bed detention facility. They also contributed to that facility’s mandate, its design, and its development of an internal culture.

Juvenile facilities across the state saw increased demand starting in late 1989, after a law was passed to prevent people under 17 from being kept in adult jails (Pressey, 1990a). Several difficulties arose in Champaign County as a result of this change. The 11-bed CCYDC, which was rarely full in the past, had been staffed only for three-quarters capacity.

Administrators reported increases in the stress levels for staff, along with potential violations of IDOC standards. The county also had contracts with other, smaller counties to take alleged juvenile offenders into detention as needed. When the facility reached capacity, youth from Champaign County had to be sent home early (Pressey, 1990b).

In August of 1990, CCYDC was forced to stop using three cells it had built the year prior, because they lacked an IDOC-mandated day room. The state also recommended hiring more staff, rebuilding and using an outdoor exercise area, and serving meals family-style rather than individually in cells. Del Weatherford expressed dismay over these unfunded mandates, giving an early hint of what would evolve into a lengthy campaign for funds to improve the current center or build a new one. The concerns he presented revolved around the financial strain of hiring new officers, combined with safety issues based on the nature of the youth in custody. Due to overcrowding, he reported, youth accused of milder offenses were likely to be released, leaving only severe offenders to be supervised by staff. Given these circumstances, he resisted complying with the “family style meals” suggestion, implying that the young people in custody were too dangerous to be allowed out of their cells. Weatherford stated, “On a given day last week, we had two murderers and one attempted murderer” (Pressey, 1990c). Weatherford’s statement does not make clear whether these were youth already adjudicated delinquent for these offenses, or simply alleged to have committed them. Furthermore, he mentions only three detainees from the prior week, out of an ostensibly full facility with ten available cells. In the years that followed, the “dangerous youth” argument was used repeatedly to justify requests for community support and funds to build a newer, “safer” detention facility.

In November of 1992, a county referendum was submitted to the voters, requesting a quarter-cent sales tax increase to cover the costs of a new detention facility. The referendum failed, but soon after, the state and federal governments awarded the county \$1.5 million to help subsidize construction of a new facility, which was anticipated to cost \$5.7 million (Block, 1992). It took several years for that project to come to fruition. In the meantime, reports continued of problems associated with overcrowding at CCYDC. Youth were boarded at a nearby county agency building or placed on home detention (spending days at CCYDC and nights at home) (Schenk, 1994), and eventually boarded in other counties (Monson, 1998b)

with the boarding and transportation expenses requiring additional Champaign County funds (Monson, 1998c).

Between 1995 and 1998, local newspapers reported judges' and administrators' claims of the need for a new detention center at least six times (March and August, 1995; February, May, and November, 1996; January, 1998). Statements in several articles imply a growing imbalance between the local justice system's ability to control youth and deter crime, on the one hand, and the allegedly increasing "toughness" of juvenile offenders on the other. A local associate judge, Donald Parkinson, wrote a letter to the County Board stating that "juvenile crime is changing and we're dealing with a lot of very violent youthful offenders that need to be detained." He cited recent cases involving "two 15-year-olds who were charged in a shooting . . . a 16-year-old who is out on bond on armed robbery charges . . . [who] was caught with a loaded .357 Magnum and .25 (caliber) automatic pistol . . . a 16-year-old who is charged with great bodily harm to a senior citizen . . . [and] minors awaiting adult hearings on murder charges." The judge continued, asserting that the necessity of detaining these young people resulted in no room for "juveniles put on probation . . . who don't behave" (who would otherwise be detained) (Monson, 1995). The judge's manifest message is that the center needs to be bigger to hold youth charged with both serious and milder offenses. The details of specific cases, however, appear calculated to alarm or disturb community members by vilifying youthful offenders. Whether local juvenile violence and criminality was indeed increasing is unclear, but the judge's statements were consistent with national media coverage of juvenile crime (Feld, 1999).

Also misleading is Parkinson's use of the term "juvenile crime," technically a misnomer, as illegal acts committed by minors are "delinquent offenses" rather than crimes (unless the youth is transferred to adult court). Were his statement changed to "Juvenile *delinquency* is changing . . .," it might carry different weight with readers of the original letter or its excerpts in the newspaper. Furthermore, the judge's case examples refer to charges brought against youth, rather than actual findings of delinquency (juvenile court) or guilt (adult court). Again, creating an alternative statement reveals the weight of his choice of words: The judge might have mentioned "youth who may have been involved in delinquent acts involving



guns and violence.” While acknowledging the severity of the alleged offenses, this statement emphasizes the true status of the cases (charged but not resolved), and omits details that serve only to encourage the reader to imagine dramatic, violent scenes involving young people. Parkinson’s use of sensational images increases readers’ sense of an urgent need for protection from dangerous youth and suggests the way to fulfill this need is to build a larger detention center (rather than investing in prevention, for example).

An August, 1995 newspaper article carries similar messages in its report of a meeting of the County Boards’ Space Needs Committee, regarding the possibility of a new detention facility. The article opens with a description of a knife “confiscated last year from a seventh grader [at school]” and presents a statement from Andrew DeBoer, deputy director of Court Services, who notes a recent increase in charges for “serious crimes” and adds, “We’re not talking about kids who didn’t do the dishes. We’re talking about kids who have to be in jail<sup>9</sup>” (Merli, 1995). Like Parkinson, DeBoer distances readers from detained youth by drawing a distinction between the (implied) behavior of detainees and the more mundane defiance of average teens.

In February of 1996, Judge Parkinson wrote a second letter, this time to the Space Needs Committee, again requesting that the county subsidize a new facility. Shifting from his earlier focus on detainees, Parkinson notes the weakness of a system with limited space: “I even had a minor tell me that he wasn’t worried about detention because he knew that the center was always full. Unfortunately, a full center results in no deterrent effect” (Monson, 1996c). A later statement by Andrew DeBoer (Court Services Deputy Director) echoes this viewpoint, giving a practical example of the system’s inability to adequately prevent youths’ misbehavior. He states that limited cell space led to four youth having to sleep on the center’s basement floor, supervised by two officers. As a result, DeBoer was concerned that “. . . anything could happen. Here we have a bunch of kids who have demonstrated a tendency to violate the laws,

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<sup>9</sup> While it is unlikely that the community would want alleged murderers released from detention, it is not technically true that youth charged with such crimes “have to” be in jail. The detention center has full control over the initial decision to hold or release youth when they are brought in by police and charged. The judge takes control of this decision starting with the detention hearing.

and now we're asking them to lay on the carpet and be good" (Monson, 1996d).

In the discussion of overcrowding at CCYDC, financial considerations are a second thread running through local papers' presentation of the issue; many articles presented the issues of community and facility safety (presented as "increased severity of youth crime") simultaneously with issues of cost. Andrew DeBoer noted that a new facility meeting IDOC standards would lead the state to pay juvenile officers' entire salary, rather than splitting the cost with the county, potentially yielding annual savings of \$160,000 (Monson, 1995). In addition, counties without detention facilities could board more of their detainees in Champaign, for another \$150,000 per year (based on prior years' boarding income) (Merli, 1995). In seeking a temporary solution to overcrowding, the possibility arose of boarding Champaign county youths elsewhere, but the cost—\$180,000 per year—was prohibitive (Monson, 1996c). In 1998, it appeared that Champaign County would lose the \$1.6 million state grant offered in 1992 to help with building a new facility, and Presiding Judge Townsend wrote a letter to the County Board urging them to move forward with the decision (Monson, 1998a).

While the practical concerns of overcrowding made the plea for a new facility fairly straightforward, CCYDC administrators still had to work to clean up the facility and its public image. Occasional articles in the mid-1990's shed light on a shift toward a more rehabilitative philosophy in the center. Two such articles appeared in the local university's student newspaper, limiting likely circulation to the community at large, but nevertheless providing a new view of CCYDC. A February, 1995 article (Degroot, 1995) profiles Carrie Majors, a longtime staff member and the center's superintendent since late 1994. A photo shows Majors seated at a woodgrain-topped desk with a few papers and a small lamp on it. She is seated at an angle to the camera, looking to her right and smiling, her face suggesting she is, perhaps, embarrassed to be having her picture taken. She has long, curly blonde hair and is wearing a loose-fitting blouse. This image contrasts with the local city paper's stock photo of Judge Steigmann, which is formal both in tone (head and shoulders, devoid of context) and content (the judge in judicial robes, shirt and tie, looking serious and ready to speak). Majors, on the other hand, is portrayed in a casual light, appearing to be someone "like the rest of us." The content of her interview, and the article's description of the facility's practices and staff,

suggest that the center has made a firm departure from the philosophy espoused by Steigmann.

Majors' description of her work is filled with words conveying warmth and concern. She talks about the center having "a lot more to offer the kids," using a term conveying innocence, and says that she likes the detainees and tries to be kind to them. Unlike previous administrators who repeatedly "named" detainees by listing charges against them, Majors says she "loses track" of the alleged offenses of the inmates. She describes her wish to treat detainees the way she would want her own child to be treated (Degroot, 1995). Like Steigmann and Weatherford occasionally did, she presents detainees as vulnerable. Majors, however, alludes to emotional difficulty leading to current behavior problems, rather than on future problems detainees might cause, or on their history of social service contacts as evidence of incorrigibility.

Notably, she lays responsibility for detainees' behavior squarely at the feet of parents: "It makes me really, really despise the parents. If they had just pulled their lives together and done things differently, the kids wouldn't be here." In the Steigmann era, quotes about parents suggested they had tried everything and even welcomed "help" from the detention center, suggesting more culpability on the part of child than parent. In Majors' view, (alleged) delinquent acts leading to a stay in detention are evidence of failure on the part of parents, with youth as the injured party. Majors' protective, parental stance is coherent with this perspective, and probably a welcome change to critics of the punitive approach of Steigmann and Weatherford.

Indeed, a second student newspaper article focuses on changes in the detention center's philosophy and practices. Andrew DeBoer states, "There was a philosophy . . . five years ago that minors were to be detained and locked up hours on end. That philosophy has long since changed" (Wasag, 1996, p. 1). The article notes that youth are in school eight hours per day, with emphasis on keeping up with work from their regular schools. A photo accompanying the piece shows five staff members gathered at a pair of paper-strewn desks in front of a sunny window. Sunlight lends warmth to the scene, and the image of a group contrasts with the bleak, solitary photos of the detention center during Judge Steigmann's era.

In the same article, DeBoer presents negative images of the detainees, echoing earlier

statements by other administrators. He tells the reporter they are often poor students, they come to the facility in “deplorable” condition, that the center has “more structure and discipline” than they have ever experienced, and that many detainees have “committed murder, attempted murder, rape, armed robbery, Class X drug offenses, home invasion, burglary—we’re talking serious felonies” (Wasag, 1996, pp. 1, 5). He distinguishes between two groups of detainees: “You know which ones are going to be back and which ones aren’t; you know which ones have listened to you while they’re here and have learned from their mistakes” (Wasag, 1996, p. 5), though he does not explain how this distinction is made. DeBoer emphasizes the strict discipline in the facility, the classroom being quiet because “the kids find out very quickly that we will give them a two- to three-hour time out where they sit in their room with nothing, no books, nothing.” Like Majors, though, DeBoer now uses an explicitly parental tone, noting that “most of us here go home at night and worry about them. People always ask me, ‘How many kids do you and your wife have?’ and I say, ‘Well, my wife doesn’t have any, but I’ve got 13” (Wasag, 1996, p. 5).

In the midst of CCYDC’s ten year period of self-reinvention, a suicide at the facility raised a new set of concerns and problems. In the university student newspaper’s profile of the center’s superintendent in February, 1995, Majors stated “My biggest fear is that someday a kid will successfully commit suicide” (Degroot, 1995). In December of that year, she was faced with this very event, and the public attention that inevitably accompanied it. The event, in which a 14-year-old hanged himself in his cell, made the facility’s administrators appear negligent, as the DOJ-sponsored evaluation of 1990 (by Community Research Associates) had advised removing protruding objects from inside cells specifically because of the possibility of suicide by hanging. The suggested renovations were not accomplished until immediately after the youth’s death (Monson, 1996a). While acknowledging and correcting several problems that contributed to the youth’s death, staff and administrators at the center continued to emphasize their philosophical and practical differences from the previous era’s atmosphere. Andrew DeBoer described a recent remodeling and facility improvement project, along with the end of lengthy isolation and frequent strip searches for detainees. Discussing the reaction of staff members to the suicide, he said, “They’re just kids. They may have done some bad things, but

they're just kids. It's what keeps you up at night" (Monson, 1996a). Stuart Laird, president of the local ACLU leader, labeled the mishap a result of negligence, but former ACLU president Tom Betz lightened the blow, acknowledging DeBoer as "the best thing to happen to the youth detention center in years" (Monson, 1996a).

Overall, the suicide was presented as resulting from known practical problems associated with a physical facility unsuited for its current use. An article discussing events leading up to and following the suicide (Monson, 1996b) addresses the staff's failure to accurately assess the youth's suicide risk. Staff members noted that the young man, like many other detainees, acted "irreverent" upon admission, and later "seemed to fall into the routine" (Monson, 1996b). While the article does identify problems with the assessment and monitoring procedures, it also implies that the youth was at high risk for suicide on entering the facility, and that the center's atmosphere and practices were unlikely to have been the sole cause of the young man's death. Because the suicide's success seemed dependent primarily on the age and unsuitability of the building, rather than the people and practices inside it, the event may have strengthened the case for a new detention center.

The decision about a new detention facility in Champaign County was made more complex by proposals from other counties and private developers to place a large detention facility elsewhere. A neighboring county proposed a center whose cost would be shared by several counties, but Champaign had opted out of this plan (Merli, 1995). Private developers also proposed a for-profit facility in Champaign (Bloomer, 1996a; Bloomer, 1996b; Pressey, 1996), and then in a neighboring county (Monson, 1996). By April of 1998, the discussion had shifted, focusing not on whether to build a facility, but when, and how to fund it. The idea of a quarter-cent sales tax was raised again (Monson, 1998), and the board began the process of requesting design/build proposals. The option of leasing was considered, but rejected when it was discovered the state's grant money could not be used for that purpose (Monson, 1998). In June, 1998, the board had come up with a backup funding plan involving a county bond fund, in case the proposed quarter-cent sales tax was rejected by voters. A site was selected in September, 1998, and work began in April of 1999.

Discussion continued over the number of beds in the facility, with some county officials

arguing that a 40-bed center would be unnecessarily large and perhaps invite “net-widening” by law enforcement and juvenile justice officials. Alderwoman Ruth Wyman stated, “With jails, especially youth detention centers, when you build them, they’ll come. The judges will send our youths to jail for petty crimes that they should not be in the youth detention center for. The criminal justice system is racist and just an excuse to board a lot of African American youth in the youth detention center” (Monson, 1999a). Surprisingly, this seems to be the first mention of racism or racial disproportion in the discussions of the youth detention center as presented by the news media. In spite of the concerns of Wyman and others, a 40-bed facility was approved (Monson, 1999b).

William Freyman, a Champaign County Board member, described the planned facility in terms that balance two desires: giving alleged offenders an unpleasant detention experience and providing services for vulnerable, needy youth. Freyman stated, “It’s not extravagant in any way. The kids will know it’s a penalty to be here. At the same time, all the resources of the community will be there, and we’ll have the space available for them” (Monson, 2000a). Administrators described the new building as a “state-of-the-art facility,” and identified several features geared toward serving, rather than punishing, detainees: “three classrooms and three full time teachers, including a special education teacher . . . [and] a computer lab and library, and indoor and outdoor recreation areas” (Monson, 2000b). In an interview about the new center, “heavy doors, automatic locks and constant monitoring [through] . . . cameras and observation windows” are described by Carrie Majors as appearing more punitive than she intends the new center to be, because “our primary focus is education” (Haag, 2000).

Statements from staff members maintain the images of vulnerable, damaged and potentially dangerous youth in a facility designed to simultaneously protect and improve them. A teacher from the center describes detainees as “good kids who have obviously made mistakes,” and Majors says, “We keep them involved in structured activity all their waking hours. We want them to get interested in something other than getting in trouble” (Haag, 2000, p. B-1). The latter statement closely parallels statements (quoted above) made by Mel Hess and Judge Steigmann in 1978 (Payne, 1978a) that presume young people “want to” commit crimes, get in trouble, and be in the detention center. At the same time, staff members discuss alleged

delinquents as products of their environment, out of control until CCYDC helps them. A teacher alleges, "Everybody needs information on how to live. Their home lives were chaotic, and the detention center provides the structure" (Haag, 2000, p. B-2). Carrie Majors says "Kids can be monsters on the outside, but once we set rules and give them structure and positive reinforcement, they do so well. They have to feel safe and that we genuinely care" (Haag, 2000, p. B-2). This last statement shows how the detention center and its staff still hold some of the same beliefs as administrators from the facility's earlier, more punitive era: a colloquial comparison to "monsters" suggests wild, dangerous, unearthly creatures. Majors' statement and the teacher's suggestion of a chaotic home life suggest a belief that these "monsters" may not have had rules, structure or positive reinforcement before they reached the detention center. At the same time, the new, more rehabilitative bent of the center is evident in the inclusion of the term "positive reinforcement," the emphasis on detainees' feelings and ideas, and the call for staff to care about and for detainees.

Just before the new building opened, newspaper articles indicated a name change, referring to the Champaign County *Juvenile* Detention Center (CCJDC). The shift from "youth" to "juvenile" makes a stronger connection to the terms "juvenile court" and "juvenile delinquent;" it seems also to focus on the *legal* status of detainees as "juveniles," rather than on their *developmental* youth and vulnerability. A photo of the CCJDC, taken before its opening, shows workers in a large, bright-looking space (the "multipurpose room" according to the caption), surrounded by glassed-in, bi-level residential "pods" of several cells each. Another photo shows the view from inside the "master control" area, with a black male detention officer, seen from the back and wearing a tee shirt, demonstrating the use of computerized video monitors, linked to 37 cameras, and intercoms in the building (Monson, 2000c).

The new building, set to open in early September, 2000, was to Carrie Majors the culmination of "lots of years of hard work and convincing people this was a worthwhile endeavor" (Monson, 2000c). Like any publicly-funded institution, CCJDC had to continually prove its reasons for existence and expansion, matching public statements about juvenile delinquency to the public's expectations, and then offering solutions accordingly. Originally developed to help "children," the facility underwent major public-image adjustments over the

years. The new building represented not only a culmination of years of work, but an attempted resolution to years of vacillating between serving vulnerable children and punishing dangerous delinquents. Settling in neither camp exclusively, the new facility's structure and intentions expressed ambivalence—neither too much rehabilitation nor too much punishment. Instead, the punitive stance was softened through staffing changes and responses to ongoing controversy, but was not replaced so much as augmented by rehabilitative practices and ideas. In fact, the new facility's design was much more jail-like than the original building, which had been designed as a family-style home. Video monitors, intercoms, electronically locking doors and a central “master control” room make clear that administrators and county officials continue to value containment and control of alleged delinquents. The strong emphasis on monitoring may be attributed partly to safety concerns, especially in light of the relatively recent suicide in CCYDC. However, the overall design of the facility does not speak of comfort, warmth and protection, but of efficiency and control. After 40 years in a building described by some staff members as a “dungeon,” the new facility and its programs seem to be fairly large steps toward a rehabilitative environment. Underneath, however, the narrative of the dangerous delinquent and the philosophy of control and punishment are maintained. It is in the new CCJDC that my research took place. As the following chapters will show, the themes that arose during the setting's development, particularly ambivalence toward detainees and a mix of desires to punish and rehabilitate, continue to affect staff and detainees alike over the 18 months of my presence.



## CHAPTER 5

### IMPOSED STRUCTURES: RULES, PHYSICAL SETTINGS AND SCHEDULE

“Nuttin’, naw, nothin’ really make it a good day. Ain’t nuttin’—as long as you’re in here, ain’t nothin’ good.”

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

The Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC) opened in September, 2000. As detailed in the previous chapter, the center’s public narrative, throughout its 30 year history, includes several thematic threads. Primary among them is the idea that delinquent youth are both vulnerable/deprived and dangerous. More fleeting and subtle motifs include: bad parenting causes delinquency; CCJDC’s role is to help (decreasing vulnerabilities) and to punish (decreasing dangerousness); and CCJDC gives youth a taste of their likely future, should they continue committing crimes. Weaving these threads together, arguments supporting the subsidizing and construction of a new facility focused on two main themes: the facility was overcrowded and it was antiquated. Overcrowding caused security and funding problems. Outdated facilities were taxed by a population increasingly involved in severe and violent “criminal” (delinquent) offenses. In addition, center administrators expressed hope that a larger facility would provide additional space and resources for education and service programs.

The physical and programmatic structures of the new facility are laid on the foundation of these arguments and the facility’s history. Overcrowding was addressed by increasing the capacity from 13 beds to 40<sup>10</sup>. The appearance of the new building matches its function; the original building was first designed as a (rehabilitative) “youth detention home,” and never met the requirements of a (punitive/deterrent) “detention center.” Key activities and structures facilitate constant observation and control of detainees’ activities, increasing the appearances of both security and discomfort (i.e. deterrent effect) for detainees. Increasing classrooms and space for outside service providers speaks to the increased focus on rehabilitation and service for detainees, perhaps attempting to counterbalance the cold, correctional ambience of the bulk

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<sup>10</sup>Total admissions increased 45% in the first year from 300 (2000, including three months in the new facility) to 440 (2001), with the average daily population in 2001 averaging 22 (Champaign County Probation and Court Services, 2002). The distribution of sexes and ethnicities was essentially the same in 2000 and 2001.

of the building.

This chapter details the physical and social structures of CCJDC: the physical setting, the interactions and activities within it, and the rules imposed on setting participants. The descriptions are drawn from my observations at the center, in combination with excerpts from interviews with study participants. The goal of this “thick description” of CCJDC’s structures is to provide background for subsequent chapters’ exploration of how detainees make meaning of their experiences in the facility. Therefore, I have attempted to privilege the perspective of detainees over that of adults in the setting in two ways. First, I have described the setting from the imagined perspective of a new detainee, starting with the CCJDC Handbook, then moving through the facility from intake area to cell to classroom, and so on, focusing on each according to the amount of time detainees generally spend there<sup>11</sup>. Second, I have included, wherever possible, participant minors’ descriptions of the structures imposed on them—physical, temporal, and procedural—during their detentions.

#### CCJDC HANDBOOK: RULES, EXPECTATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Minors entering detention receive the “Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center Handbook” (hereinafter “Handbook,” see Appendix D) during the intake process (described in greater detail below). They are required to pass a quiz (also in Appendix D), with the assistance of staff after the first try, on the Handbook’s contents before they may leave the intake area. The Handbook, then, is the basis for a detainee’s first literal lesson on the culture of CCJDC; by reading and recalling the contents, detainees begin to absorb the setting’s beliefs and assumptions. The Handbook, like the local newspaper articles about the center, reveals aspects of the center’s self-narrative, its identity. Unlike the newspaper articles’ contents, however, the Handbook’s contents are completely controlled by CCJDC’s staff. This is a self-portrait designed specifically for incoming detainees. As such, it is part of the setting’s contribution to the process of negotiating meaning with detainees.

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<sup>11</sup> I have allotted less text to descriptions of those areas experienced briefly or not at all by minors, with the exception of the staff station, the key area for detention officers’ interaction, information-sharing and decision-making regarding detainees. The staff station is in full view of the minors during much of their time in the facility, but the conversations I observed there generally took place when minors were not present.

It is possible that the critical, analytic perspective I present here is unrelated to the concerns and viewpoints of detainees. Youth participants in the study did not discuss the details or overall tone of the Handbook with me, nor did I see young people reading the manual with particular attention, or objecting to its contents or tone, during my time at CCJDC. However, my goal in this chapter is to describe the messages in the Handbook and other aspects of the setting, to look at meanings subtly offered or imposed by the facility. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8 I will explore the extent to which these messages are recognized by, acceded to, or resisted by detainees.

The Handbook's surface content deals with procedures, rules and expectations, but its language and tone convey another level of meaning. It places procedural and regulatory details against a complex conceptual backdrop with several thematic threads. Repeated themes include: carefully neutral descriptions of detention conditions, references to the benefits of detention for inmates (detainees are vulnerable/deprived; CCJDC is here to help), reminders of detainees' personal responsibility for behavior, and warnings about the effects of rule violations on one's time in detention (CCJDC is here to punish) and, ominously, one's court case. This private, intention-driven face of CCJDC mirrors the public face presented to the local media, expressing concern for vulnerable youth while attempting to justify the extremes of behavioral control exercised in the center. The following detailed discussion of the Handbook's contents is intended to contribute to our outsider's understanding of what detainees are told about themselves and the purposes of their detention.<sup>12</sup>

The Handbook begins with a statement of purpose, telling detainees that the handbook is intended "to help you during your stay" at CCJDC, to "make your stay . . . beneficial" (CCJDC, 2000 (Handbook), p. 1). The phrase "your *stay at the Detention Center*" is

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<sup>12</sup> Like many official memos and documents, the CCJDC Handbook is written in somewhat stiff, formal language; it is quite possible that the meanings I am drawing from the text were not intended by the author(s). However, it is the goal of this study to address the meanings that are made available, intentionally or unintentionally, to detainees. Language is a powerful tool, and one assumes that this document was put together with some concern about the implications to be drawn. I have tried to stay close to the text, not reading "too much" into what has been written.

reminiscent of hotel brochures, but given the apparent emphasis on benign intentions, it could not easily be replaced with something less euphemistic, such as “your *incarceration in* CCJDC.” The opening sentences tell detainees that the handbook is meant to be helpful, and that they may even benefit from time in detention. The Handbook fails to specify the alleged benefits, but many officers believe in them, and detainees do learn about them, as evidenced by interactions and interview texts presented in later chapters. At intake, however, the potential benefits of detention are left to the Handbook reader’s imagination. On the other hand, the means by which one gains the benefits is made specific: detainees are encouraged to “properly” use the information provided, and to stay within the bounds of “expected” or “acceptable” behavior as defined in the Handbook.

The “Why you are at the Center” section of the Handbook focuses on practical and legal matters: the two possible reasons for detention (court sentence or alleged delinquent act), notification of parents, and the decision process for as-yet unsentenced detainees. “[Y]ou will be detained until your next Court hearing” at which “the Judge will decide if you should remain in the Detention Center until your next court date” (CCJDC, 2000, p. 1). The initial hearing referenced here is the detention hearing, and the Handbook’s description is notable for its omission of a key due process right for juvenile detainees. The detention hearing must take place within 40 (business/working) hours of intake, or the youth must be released from detention (Illinois Juvenile Court Act, 1987). This omission in the Handbook may have been unintentional, but given the nature of the document—presenting rules, regulations and expectations—the lapse is surprising to an outsider.

A possible reason for this omission arose in my early work with the detention center. During development of the database project, Carrie expressed interest in using the database to see how well (i.e., in what proportion of cases) the local system met the timing requirement for detention hearings. She implied a concern that detainees were being (unintentionally) denied this legal right. My past experience with adjudicated delinquents led me to suggest that many detainees were unaware of juvenile court procedures and associated rights, and Carrie agreed. Looking for ways to provide assistance and advocacy, I suggested that I could work with other graduate students to put together a “guide to juvenile court” booklet for detainees and their

families, to be provided at the time of intake. Carrie agreed with the principle of informing detainees about their rights, but she gently rejected my proposal, saying that it would be a “conflict of interest” for the detention center to educate detainees in this way.

I did not pursue the idea with her, given my goal of creating a positive, ongoing collaboration with the center. However, my sense then, as now, is that the problem would be less a “conflict of interest” in the legal sense, and more a “source of conflict” in a social setting already rife with opportunity for dissent between the powerful (officers) and the disempowered (detainees). In addition, the timing of detention hearings is controlled by the local juvenile court, not by detention center staff; problems in meeting the 40-hour requirement would not, technically, reflect poorly on CCJDC. However, the center is an arm, and therefore a representative, of the local juvenile courts. Omitting mention of the “40-hour rule” in the Handbook effectively protects the juvenile court from accusations like those leveled at CCJDC in prior decades.

The next Handbook section, “Intake Process,” provides basic information about what happens at intake, but incorporates an implicit warning as well. Alleging first that detainees should be truthful to facilitate their “proper care” in the center, the Handbook then continues with the vague and unsettling rationale that “false information can hurt your case.” Like the benefits mentioned earlier, the way that false information would hurt one’s case is left to the imagination. Following details of intake procedures, uniform issue and storage of possessions, the document addresses the more abstract issue of detainees’ rights.

The opening sentence of the passage tells detainees that “many of your freedoms have been taken away.” This phrase is vague in two ways. First, it does not tell detainees which freedoms are (temporarily) unavailable to them, and second, the passive voice evades the responsibility for removing those freedoms. A more specific phrasing might be: “The police and the detention center staff have decided to prevent you from going home, talking to friends or family, or making decisions about your meals, clothes, sleep, behavior and speech for an as-yet unspecified period of time.” The chosen phrasing makes administrative sense, as it focuses the detainee’s attention on what rights remain, and again avoids confrontational or upsetting language. Similarly, the Handbook refers, as do officers and detainees, to individual residential

quarters as “rooms,” rather than “cells,” thus causing detainees to be “sent to their rooms on restriction” rather than “placed in lockdown in their cells” when their behavior is problematic to officers. From my (outsider’s) perspective, this minimizing language seems disingenuous and almost glib, a shorthand reference to conditions that represent a drastic and abiding departure from detainees’ everyday lives. The tactic seems part of an overall strategy to deflect attention from the problems with juvenile detention while creating a facade of neutrality and even beneficence. This is in marked contrast to the punitive public stance of earlier CCYDC administrators, and as such, it demonstrates the goal-oriented nature of the institution’s self-presentation in various contexts.

Detainees’ rights are listed in boldface after the disclaimer discussed above. The reason for omitting the “40-hours until hearing” law from this list is unclear, unless this is considered a legal right, not a humanitarian right, and therefore not necessary to include here. Although the text mentions that detainees are searched, it does not give any details or mention that the search is a *strip* search. Here again, the apparent intention is to keep new detainees calm, presenting the nature of the search in the context of direct conversation and the associated physical presence of an officer.

The “Medical Care” section of the Handbook maintains the theme of combining a caretaking tone with statements detailing guidelines for “acceptable behavior,” in this case the correct method of asking for medical care. Detainees are also invited to seek emotional support from staff, but the fundamental tension between caring and control remains. Staff members are said to be available because they are “here [both] to maintain your safety and security during your stay [and] . . . to help you.”

The “Daily Schedule” section simply lists the order of detainees’ activities throughout the day, with one oblique reference to expected behavior in the statement, “bedtimes will vary depending on your level in the behavior level system.” Similarly, the sections on “Education,” “Recreation and Physical Education,” and “Telephone Calls, Visits and Mail” consist mostly of procedural details. Each section identifies behavioral expectations for detainees: “complete cooperation” in the classroom, “participate fully” during physical education, “proper manners and a respectful tone of voice . . . [and no] profanity or hostility” during phone calls. Detainees

are informed that their “behavior, attitude, and progress while in school” will form the basis for a report for a schoolteacher’s report which “will be given to the Judge.” The latter phrase, in boldface type, ends the “Education” section on an ominous note. The section’s opening statement, “Attending school at the Detention Center is extremely important!” is amplified here, pointing out the importance not only of attending but of following rules, and the link between good behavior and a positive outcome in court.

Linking rules for behavior with descriptions of positive or negative consequences is a principle tenet of behavior modification programs; as such, it is not surprising to find this link in a detention center handbook. In the case of the CCJDC handbook, targets include specific behaviors like profanity or lying, and abstract principles like full participation and positive attitude. Similarly, the text identifies concrete consequences, such as restriction to one’s room (cell) or using a “walkman” to listen to music, and abstract outcomes, such as harm to one’s court case or time in detention “going by faster.” On a global level, the Handbook refers vaguely to the overall benefits of detention. In the “Detention Center Programs” section, the text states that

“individuals from . . . agencies may wish to meet with you individually in order to assess your needs. This is not to be considered as an attempt to pry into your personal life. The information gathered could be used to find a constructive way for you to deal with issues that may concern you. It is our hope that you will participate completely in any and all programs, so that we can find a suitable way to aid you in your goal to stay on the right track” (CCJDC, 2000, p. 4)

This section reveals several assumptions about detainees and the role of CCJDC. Making services available through agencies has become a part of the setting’s self-imposed mandate, a change from prior eras’ approach of having youth go “cold turkey” from social services. Detainees are now assumed to have “needs,” “issues,” “concerns,” and a “goal to stay on the right track,” which implies that they are on the wrong track, or heading towards it. This, in turn, assumes that staff and detainees agree on the definitions of those “tracks,” the necessity of intervention in detainees’ lives, and the qualifications of the staff members doing the intervening.

Finally, the text directs the *thinking* of detainees, in addition to their behavior, giving instructions on how to think about the questions and actions of volunteers and service

providers. The command's presence in the text is an explicit example of the setting's negotiation of meaning with detainees. Here, the facility acknowledges the possibility of a particular interpretation, "prohibits" investment in that narrative viewpoint, and presents its own self-narrative (i.e., CCJDC is here to help) as a substitute. This parallels the facility's larger goal of prohibiting youths' investment in a "wrong track" self-narrative, while substituting a new set of behaviors, values, thoughts and identity narratives—the "right track" perspective—in its place. These assumptions are re-emphasized in the Handbook section on "Behavior and Attitude," which asserts that CCJDC detainees will be "challenged daily to *grow* and *improve* physically, intellectually, and emotionally," through a combination of "good behavior . . . positive attitude . . . [and] follow[ing] all the rules of the facility" (CCJDC, 2000, p. 5, emphasis added). Youth are to accept the challenge of growth and improvement, but only within the limits provided by CCJDC, and without losing a "positive attitude" in the process. As I will emphasize throughout this report, the problem lies not (necessarily) in the belief that some detainees may benefit from services and support, but from basic differences in beliefs about who detainees are and who they can or should be. Notions of right and wrong become conflated with ideas about culture and identity, such that youth are asked to give up essential self-narratives in order to replace them with an unfamiliar and potentially self-denying substitute.

Twenty-eight "Rules and Regulations" outline CCJDC's standards for "acceptable behavior." Half of these rules address self-expression and communication. Speech and communication are restricted along several dimensions. Several communication *methods* are forbidden: passing **notes**, certain types of **drawings** (including the use of color combinations associated with particular gangs, a rule later changed to state that drawings had to include at least four colors), **physical contact** between minors (which could, for example, be a handshake, a pat on the shoulder, or the like); **obscene gestures**; "**throwing gang signs**" (using hand gestures to make reference to, or claim membership in, a gang) is also forbidden and frequently noted by staff members, though it is not specifically listed in the Handbook). The *manner* of communication is also restricted: speech must be **courteous** and **respectful**; forbidden are **argument** and **complaint** in response to staff instructions. The *content* of speech must be



**truthful**, with no **swearing** or references to “**gangs, drugs, sex, escape, violence or crime**” (CCJDC, 2000, p. 5, emphasis added), and without **threats**. Certain *contingencies* must be considered: when **with other minors**, communication between minors must be **with permission and loud enough to be heard by a staff member**; during **population moves**, **no talking** is allowed; **in minors’ cells**, no **unnecessary noise** including “**talking, whistling, tapping, banging, singing, rapping, etc.**;” if (and only if) minors are **hurt or sick**, they may **call staff** to their rooms; when **using the intercom**, minors must “**state [their] name and . . . need**” (CCJDC, 2000, p. 6, emphasis added).

While the restrictions noted above fit into a broadly defined category of “communication,” many contribute to self-expression, along with other aspects of behavior identified in the “Rules and Regulations” list. The volume, tone, content and language of speech acts are aspects of “self-performance,” ways we show ourselves to others. By limiting these aspects of communication, along with behaviors like physical contact (which could include a friendly hand on the shoulder, or a handshake, or a punch in the nose), mode of dress (both providing uniforms and controlling how they are worn), singing, and nonverbal communication (tapping, rapping, ways of sitting in a chair), the CCJDC is effectively narrowing the range of self-expressions available to detainees.

Some of the behavior limitations, such as the restriction on threats and violence, mirror typical expectations for social interaction. Others, such as the prohibition on escape attempts and leaving assigned areas without staff permission, and the logistical details about dirty laundry and hygiene items, are unsurprising given that the setting is a residential, correctional facility. Directives that mirror typical school rules are a third category; this includes the rules about swearing or passing notes. We could set aside the rules that sit clearly within the bounds of these three “expected” categories, on the (perhaps questionable) basis that their predictability gives us little motive for critical examination. If we do set them aside, we are left (see Figure 3) with a set of regulations that *seem* familiar or expected; for instance, the requirement that minors speak to each other loud enough for a staff member to hear, or that they limit the content of speech by excluding a variety of topics. However, in combination with mandates to avoid making any “unnecessary” noise in one’s “room,” sit on chairs “properly,” and give “full

participation during group activities,” the remaining rules (labeled as “CCJDC Values” in Figure 3) shed light on the dominant belief system of the setting’s staff and administration.

This narrowed set of “CCJDC Values” rules shows variation in apparent motivating beliefs. Some beliefs seem to revolve around controlling social interactions between minors, perhaps for the sake of safety and overall staff control of the setting. For example, limiting threats may help to limit physical fights between minors. Controlling the timing and volume of minors’ speech allows staff to control the milieu more tightly, preventing a variety of undesirable or inconvenient social behaviors (e.g., threats, escape or assault plans, “escalation” of conflict, complaints or group-level defiance, etc.). Several staff members also referred to problems arising from gang-related talk and artwork, and at least one youth participant confirmed, in an interview, that stated or implied criticism of a particular gang would “force” members of that gang to retaliate with violence. One might disagree with the motive or the logic of these “social control” rules, but they do seem to have some relation to the mandate of the CCJDC to provide a “safe and secure holding facility” for minors.

The rules regarding how minors speak in detention (only with permission, loud enough for officers to hear, not during population moves) may seem better suited to the “Corrections” category. However, my conversations with numerous staff members, and with corrections professionals from other jurisdictions, suggest that most facilities allow detainees to talk. Carrie Majors and others mentioned to me that officers from other facilities, when in CCJDC to pick up or drop off a minor, often express surprise at this rule and the resulting near-silence of the CCJDC building. Carrie’s response is to remark that “We’ve never had a fight here, in all the years I’ve been here. Most places have two or three fights a (week)” Here, the link between safety and silence is made explicit; youth who can speak are youth who will fight. This rule, then, responds to the “dangerous” pole of the ambivalent view of youngsters in detention.

That the extreme limitation on detainees’ speech can be explained by referring to CCJDC’s mandates and values does not reduce the harshness of the speech restrictions or their effect on the facility’s atmosphere. Unlike other settings where one might find 15-30 adolescents gathered (e.g., shopping malls, a public school, even a church youth group), CCJDC is seldom filled with young people’s voices and energy. Limiting speech reduces peer

social interaction almost completely, leaving detainees awash in a solution of adult-driven, adult-controlled interaction. The eerie silence of CCJDC's settings will be described and explored later in this chapter, but it flows directly from the center's rules and policies.

In the following interview excerpt, Jimmy gives his perspective of the limitations placed on detainees' speech. In explaining a room restriction he received, Jimmy minimizes both his own behavior ("that's about it") and the consequences ("they just...").

Kate: Have you been restricted for you own behavior?

Jimmy: Yeah once.

Kate: Yeah. What'd you do?

Jimmy: Talked to someone. . .

Jimmy: That's about it.

Kate: So how long did they- What did they say?

Jimmy: Uh they just put me up for the rest of the morning.

Jimmy: Til 1:30.

Kate: What were you talkin' about?

Jimmy: We was talkin' about a uh role play. But we not supposed to talk unless we have permission.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

In this last contribution, Jimmy makes it clear that my question (and his answer) about the topic of conversation are irrelevant according to the rules. Having seen some detainees communicating in non-verbal ways, getting around the prohibition on speech, I ask Jimmy about his experience of that. His answer takes the conversation in an unexpected and revealing direction:

Kate: Mm hmm. Do you ever- Are there ever ways that um that you guys sorta manage to talk to each other anyways even though even though it's against the rules?

Jimmy: [shakes head "no"]

Kate: No. So you get caught no matter what?

Jimmy: Mm hmm.

Kate: Yeah.

Jimmy: So I don't even talk.  
Kate: So you just don't talk at all?  
Jimmy: Just sit there. I just sit here like this all the time [demonstrates, leaning forward in his seat, his forehead almost resting on the desk, effectively blocking his own view of the surroundings]. They're always sayin' I'm sittin' like an attitude, but I'm not tryin' to sit like it's attitude but when I sit like this it's just helpin' me not talk to nobody.  
Kate: Mm hmm.  
Jimmy: Stuff like that  
Kate: So you're just tryin' to stay outta trouble.  
Jimmy: Yeah.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

Jimmy has responded to the problem of behavior restrictions for talking in two ways—by not talking at all, and by limiting his inclination to talk by limiting his own awareness of possible “targets” for a conversation. Unfortunately, one of his solutions breaks two CCJDC rules, one explicit (“sitting properly”) and one implicit but equally pervasive (“having a good attitude”). The issue of “attitude” arose repeatedly throughout my observations, and merits its own discussion later in this manuscript. In this example, it emerges as a barrier to Jimmy’s attempt to stay out of trouble. As we continue discussing the rules, Jimmy seems to know them fairly well, and is amenable to the logic of “following them in order to stay out of trouble,” but becomes irritable and frustrated in describing the extent of the restrictions on detainees’ behavior:

Jimmy: You can't talk to nobody. You can't touch no (minor).  
Jimmy: You can't do nuttin' ( ).  
Kate: Right.  
[ . . . ]  
Kate: So does that not talkin' thing, does that like, does that bug you a lot that you can't talk?  
Jimmy: Hmm yeah but I gotta abide by the rules while I'm here in detention.  
Kate: Yeah. So do you know why you can't talk?

Jimmy: Hmm?

Kate: Do you know why it is that they have that rule that you can't talk?

Jimmy: Mmm-mm [no]. They don't want you to talk about what, what you're here for.

Kate: Uh hmm.

Jimmy: They don't want you to talk about when your next court date. They don't want you talkin' about nothin'. You can't even- [beginning to sound frustrated] maaan, you can't talk about *nothin'*. You can talk to the minors if you in the classroom and /stuff/ and they let you. That's about it.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

The rules on how to speak are augmented by one rule addressing a combination of interactional process and speech content, stating that detainees should “obey . . . without argument or complaint.” Like the speech rules noted above, this may seem an obvious demand, given the setting. On the other hand, youth could be told simply to “obey all (staff) instructions;” in the final analysis, detainees’ complaints or arguments should be irrelevant, because officers have nearly absolute power to gain compliance. What, then, does this rule accomplish? Along with the requirement that detainees speak “in a respectful and courteous manner,” it requires youth to help create an image of a setting with limited conflict and maximum “social propriety” as defined in a hierarchy-based culture: respect, courtesy, “niceness” and uncomplaining acceptance. This cultural standard overlaps with the attribution of “attitude” to Jimmy when he sits the wrong way in his chair, probably appearing uninterested or uninvolved in the activities around him.

The requirement for uncomplaining obeisance also plays into the Victorian-era notion that children should be “seen and not heard,” and the culturally common notion that children should automatically respect adults. That is, they should automatically think of adults as deserving respect, and they should behave accordingly. Complaints and arguing are seen as disrespectful. At the same time, they are forms of resistance and self-expression, statements that imply an “I,” as in “*I* have a problem with this.” Just as behaviors identified as “respectful” and “courteous” require some degree of self-effacement, so obedience without complaint requires a complete abandonment of one’s own wishes and beliefs about a situation. This flies in the face

of the cherished American value placed on “free speech,” and in particular the right to complain and argue about laws and government. It also contradicts popular notions of adolescent development in the United States, where questioning authority and defining one’s own values are thought to be inherent to the age group.

The loss of the right to protest policies or rules while in detention may be one of the intended punishments for misbehavior, falling in line with a perspective where rights are earned, rather than assumed. For instance, a detainee (European American female) complained about getting no physical education time one day, saying that this violated state Department of Corrections standards. An officer (European American male) responded by saying, “You gave up the right to complain when you came in here.” Another officer (European American female) intervened and said, “Well, you have a right to *complain*,” and went on to explain that this particular complaint would not change the outcome. The second officer’s correction may have mitigated the effect on the detainees present for this interaction, but the message conveyed by the first officer was clear: a youth in detention has given up any claim to rights that he or she could automatically assume “on the outside.” Furthermore, his statement contradicted the policy set forth in the Handbook, which allows detainees to fill out a grievance form if they have any complaint about their treatment in the facility. In this instance, the officer’s personal beliefs took momentary precedence over the facility’s policy.

Like enforcing silence, limiting “resistant” behaviors may also ease detention officers’ stress levels, as much of their job involves telling detainees what to do. Finally, it probably contributes to a “peaceful” environment by giving detainees limited footing for group alliance and rebellion. If nobody is complaining out loud, there is little perceived support for individual resistances. However, in the service of limiting conflict and easing workers’ stress, restrictions on speech form and content tell detainees that their selves, their voices, are unwelcome and perhaps even flawed. The rules of the setting dictate limitations on detainees’ speech, but provide little in the way of a rationale. Especially for younger detainees, who may struggle with broad, abstract analyses of a situation, the simplest implication of punishing speech is that speaking is wrong. CCJDC is a “correctional” setting, this much is clear to detainees. The nature and extent of the target of the correction is less apparent. Without guidance in this

regard, it is easy to imagine that all the center's rules are part of the correction process.

"Silencing" is practiced in more than the literal sense—attitude, behavior, dress, opinions, social identities—all are muted or silenced by CCJDC policies.

Similarly, the rule against "unnecessary noise" in detainees' cells prevents even private self-expression. This rule is especially perplexing in the breadth of its restrictions and its lack of clear motivational logic from the perspectives of corrections or social convention and "morals." Youth are not permitted to make "unnecessary noise," and a long list of examples is provided. Granted, if every youth in every cell was banging on the door, the resulting noise would be loud and extremely unpleasant. But in my experience, it was hard to hear a young person speaking at normal levels if a cell door was closed between us. From the likely location of any observer (detainee or officer, whether on the pod or in another area of the facility), it would be nearly impossible to hear talking, whistling, singing or rapping done in a normal tone of voice. This rule may have been written in response to conditions in the old building, but the Handbook was identical throughout the study period, so the message to youth was the same. This rule is unclearly motivated at best, leaving open the possibility that it is, at best, self-serving for the staff, or at worst, entirely capricious. Regardless, the effect is to further silence detainees.

The prohibition on talking about sex (if we assume a variety of possible tones or levels of content, from abstract or scientific reproductive information to "dirty jokes" and tales of sexual exploits) does not easily fit under the rubrics of correctional logic, social mores, or even "self-denial." Admittedly, open discussions of sexual acts and practices are considered impolite and immodest in U.S. culture, but it remains in the realm of free speech, a personal choice about self-presentation. Schools may be likely to attempt control of this type of talk, but they do not (and cannot) forbid or prevent it altogether. During my observations, staff members did appear uncomfortable and "on the alert" (looking directly at detainees, actively following the conversation) when classroom or cafeteria conversations turned toward sexual content. At these times, minors would show their own heightened response, smiling, giggling, speaking more loudly than usual, or talking over each other. It may be that staff members saw the potential for "disorder" in minors' behavior at these times, and usually an officer would cut the conversation short with a sing-song, calm-voiced, "Okaaaay, thaaat's enooooough." Minors would continue to

giggle briefly, and then the topic would be changed by a staff member or teacher to something “more appropriate.” For example, the following took place in the CCJDC cafeteria:

. . . three young men take the lids off of their food trays, one of them comments that the food smells – and I start to notice a slightly unpleasant smell, not quite food-like. Dorothy jokes that “it smells like feet!” A detainee responds that it smells like Dorothy’s feet, but she retorts that her feet smell good, “like roses!” The banter and joking goes back and forth, moving into a conversation about kissing feet, who has kissed women’s feet, who hasn’t but has massaged them... at some point, the boys are beginning to smirk and giggle as the conversation verges on talk about sex instead of jokes about feet. Dorothy removes herself from the conversation and speaks loudly to be heard over it, using a sing-song tone: “More appropriate, please” but then continues, saying “So, kissing feet is not your thing?” (to one of the detainees, who said he hadn’t done that). Soon after, though, she says, “Less personal talk – let’s talk about US history.” She begins quizzing the kids from the history quiz another staff member has brought.

From fieldnotes, 3/22/02

In another example, detainees are writing answers to a list of personal-exploration type questions (e.g., “three qualities about yourself that you are most proud of,” “how do you show your emotions,” “what type of man or woman do you want to be?”). They are being led in the exercise by a teacher and a detention officer (both white females). They tell the group that they can share their answers with the class if they want to, when the exercise is done. One of the questions is “What has been the craziest thing you’ve ever done?”, a question that elicits laughter from the group. A (white female) detainee says, “I don’t know if I can say this.” The officer responds, “We may not have you guys share this one.” When, in the sharing of answers, the group gets to this item, another detention officer (also white female) says “We’re gonna skip this one -- you guys will get way out of hand.” Based on the vocal inflections in use, it appears that the question has moved the entire group, including the staff, to an awareness of the potential for sexual innuendo and “impropriety.” One youth says “Mine [answer] is appropriate! Mine won’t get me in trouble,” but the officer ignores her and moves on to the next question. After the rest of the questions have been answered, two detainees ask if they can share their “craziest things,” and show their written answers to the officers to get approval.

It is the propriety issue that places the “talking about sex” rule in the “CCJDC Values”



category. Detainees in CCJDC appeared energized by any group discussion, regardless of the topic. This is not surprising given the rarity of these events and the resulting sense of social isolation and boredom. In fact, I witnessed one lengthy, lively conversation in which detainees made a variety of vehemently homophobic remarks, focused largely on sexual practices of gay/lesbian people, with much giggling and shouting throughout the group of 10 or 12 youths. The three or four officers present for the talk (being facilitated by a counselor from a local drug and alcohol treatment agency) made little or no effort to prevent this “escalation.” It seems, then, that it is not merely “loss of control” that guides decisions about permissible speech content. In addition, the CCJDC is expressing an opinion, through its rules and actions, about how young people should be (i.e., naive, or at least silent, regarding sexual matters) and how they should express themselves (i.e., homophobia may be acceptable but interest in sex is not).

Like the speech restrictions noted above, two rules address behavior issues that seem unrelated to the needs of a detention facility: specifically, detainees must give “full participation” in group activities, and they must “sit on the chairs properly.” Two issues come to mind immediately: the reasoning behind imposing the rules, and their actual wording. It is unclear why detainees must sit in a particular way, or why they must participate “fully” in activities. If the detention center is a neutral holding facility (its technical/legal definition), it is not clear how sitting in a particular way or completing a certain number of sit-ups affects that function. Neither activity contributes in an obvious way to the facility’s safety or security, nor are they necessary to detainees’ health. As for the wording, both instructions are quite vague, allowing for broad interpretation by detainees and officers. This vagueness, in combination with the obvious power differential between officers and detainees, could allow capricious enforcement based on shifting interpretation of the rules, but I didn’t see this during my observations. In enforcing the “sitting properly” rule, officers or teachers would tell detainees, “Please sit all the way back in your chair,” or “(Brian), please take your head off the desk and sit up straight.” When detainees participated “less than fully” in activities, they would be told how to improve their participation (“you have to sing,” “really stretch!”, etc.), and what the consequences would be if they did not do so.)

Regardless of the staff’s consistency in describing and enforcing behavior expectations,

the lack of correctional logic behind these rules implies the existence of another impetus on the part of the facility. Both rules focus on bodily behavior, rather than speech; they are remotely related in that “sitting properly” in one’s chair is often interpreted as a sign of interest or participation (e.g., in a classroom), as is “full participation” in an activity. The desired behaviors, then, are performances of investment in CCJDC’s programs; evidence not necessarily of actual interest, but of willingness to appear interested. They are the bodily expressions of “complying . . . without argument or complaint.”

Based on this analysis of the Handbook text, in isolation from other data, it seems that one of CCJDC’s goals is to limit the appearance of young people’s defiance and resistance, at least while in detention, and most likely in the larger world. Observations and interviews presented later in this manuscript support and expand upon the notion that neutral, even *positive*, reactions to behavior restrictions, is the idealized detainee response in the eyes of detention officers. All told, the combined limitations on detainees’ speech and behavior—that they be seen and not heard, wear certain clothing and move only in certain prescribed manners, ask permission for most actions, comply unquestioningly with all staff instructions—make the CCJDC’s form of “help” for detainees clearer. In addition to providing a venue for education and social service contacts, CCJDC is giving minors a new framework for interacting in the world, one that emphasizes denial of the (inappropriate, delinquent, resistant, questioning, angry, or noisy) self. The Handbook presents detainees with guidelines, a script of sorts, for becoming a new, “appropriate” self, simultaneously making it more desirable by imposing sanctions for failure to comply.

#### DAILY SCHEDULE: TEMPORAL STRUCTURE

The Handbook (Appendix D) contains a sample of detainees’ weekly schedule. However, the following excerpt from an interview with Corey (12 year old, European American male) provides the same information in the useful context of Corey’s own responses to scheduled events and procedures.

Kate: Oh ok right. Yeah, alright um so what’s a good day like in this place? Like for you, when you have a good day what’s what makes it good?

Corey: Getting up at 6 some- like 25, the last one for shower.

Corey: And having hot water.

Corey: And when I come out of the place like dressed and stuff, getting the- here comes Kevin [European American male officer] but uh- -get some food and medication when I get my tray.

Corey: Go an' finish it, dude's still sittin' out there. Come to the door and like tell 'em I'm done.

Corey: Put the tray up. Go back to sleep. And uh wake back up at around 8.

Corey: And uh, I get dressed, have the right size clothes.

Corey: Um, like go to school.

Corey: Have a good day there.

Kate: What's a good day in school?

Corey: In science, like a movie.

Kate: Uh huh.((laugh))

Corey: In the next class, literature, /I/ think that's it. Um, Birdie Song<sup>13</sup>. Cuz we have to sing tha-

Kate: /Uh huh/ Right right.

Corey: But Birdie song an' then some questions and then a quiz.

Corey: And back to math and not having to work on PLATO [a computer program specifically designed for the classroom]. /Cuz/ I get aggravated by that.

Kate: /Uh huh/ Mm hm, what aggravates you about it?

Corey: I type in the right answer and then they'll say it's wrong

Corey: And I'll type in a different answer and, they'll say it's the first answer.

Kate: Oh!

Corey: So,

Kate: That sounds bad.

Corey: Happened to me about 400 times. I'm not sure, but, uh (pauses)

Kate: A lot.

Corey: And then we go, we go to lunch.

Corey: And I get to sit way in back, facing this way.

Kate: Uh hm, so that you can see the door.

Corey: Yeah.

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<sup>13</sup>The "Birdie Song" is discussed in more detail in the section on the CCJDC classroom.

Corey: And /the food would be/good.

Kate: /Why's that?/ Okay, so what, what is it about sitting that way that's good?

Corey: No one can see me.

Kate: Oh /you don't like that?/

Corey: /I don't like people/ staring at me.

Kate: Oh, okay.

Corey: But uh, then we go outside and play basketball for a while.

Corey: Or go in the gym or whatever instead of going in our rooms for a little bit before the teachers get back. And then coming back and going into there [the classroom] for um reading.

Corey: And during reading we're supposed to read silently. And come back in here for P.E. And we play volleyball. Then--

Kate: Not Knockout<sup>14</sup>?

Corey: Not Knockout! No!

Kate: Not Knockout, right ((laugh)).

Corey: Then uh going back in to (Norma's) room.

Corey: To do art, and being able to cut, after doing journals in

Corey: literature or something. But being able to ah draw /and/ color and all that stuff. Do ah those things ah I forget what they're called.

Kate: /Uh huh/ Oh, oh, those things where you like take the squares and(?)

Corey: Yeah.

Kate: Yeah I don't know what they're called either, but I know what you mean.

Corey: And uh, then go back outside for, for the what time we have left. Play basketball, and I don't care if it's Knockout or anything /by/ this time,

Kate: /Uh huh/((laughs))

Corey: Then going in to our rooms an- for shift change. Then after shift change, coming back out. Getting a phone call.

Kate: Uh huh.

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<sup>14</sup>“Knockout” is a basket-shooting competition game, the rules and play of which are presented in the discussion of the CCJDC Gym.

Corey: Cuz I normally don't get 'em and uh . . .

Kate: Who are your phone calls from when you get 'em?

Corey: Huh? Nah I they ask me if I /want to make a phone call/

Kate: /Oh oh I see/ So why don't you normally get one?

Corey: I don't know. I, they are supposed to be after 5:30pm.

Corey: And normally they forget or something.

Kate: Oh okay. Is that every night or is it like a couple times a week that people get phone calls?

Corey: I can have four.

Kate: Oh okay.

Corey: People on three and lower get like three phone calls.

Corey: So

Kate: So who do you call when you get a call?

Corey: My Mom.

Corey: Cuz she's home no matter what, but sometimes my Dad works late.

Corey: Or he's truckin' or some/thing/so and then after the phone call having like a group or some-not a group, but being able to go the gym or /have/ quiet time. Which is where we sit in the pod and write, /read,/ or draw. And then uh . . .

Kate: /Uh huh/ /Uh huh/ /Uh huh/ Is that like all together or are you in your separate rooms when you're doing that?

Corey: We sit in the /pod/ like the /pod people/. We call 'em the pod people. This, the... other kids in the /pod/ but uh . . . Then um, /dinner/ and then back to the gym or back to quiet time. Then not dinner but cuz I'm used to having a group during /dinner./ A group involves something fun.

Kate: /Oh okay/ / Oh got it. Pod people/ /Right, right/ /Uh huh//Uh huh/ Like what?

Corey: Uh, ( ) with Matt and Ned. I think his name is Matt. But uh those two people cuz Matt's funny and Ned's in a band. An' he brought in some music /yesterday/.

Kate: /Uh uh/ Oh cool.

Corey: I like those people. And uh then, back to the gym. Then let, wait until everybody goes to sleep. And do like chores and then whatever time I have left to spend in the gym or doing something else. So and then

go to sleep.

Kate: Okay, so what are the things that make that a good day? Like I mean like you sorta told me the schedule but like

Corey: That's the stuff that makes it a good day.

Kate: Ok, so all of it so like the activities themselves are the things that make it a good /day./

Corey: /Uh huh./

Corey, Interview #1, 4/5/01

In fact, Corey had told me much more than the schedule, and explained exactly what, for him, would be a good day in CCJDC. It wasn't until I looked back at this transcript, some months into my own observations of the setting, that I recognized the numerous details Corey provided that distinguish "good day" events from the neutral or negative alternatives. In an environment where one's preferences are moot and options are few, it is, perhaps, the small details that make a difference, appearing luxurious in contrast to less preferred alternatives. The timing of a shower, the size of one's clothes—normally things we have a say about—these become more important when our "say," our voice, is eliminated from the equation. Corey mentions getting up at 6:25 and being the last one to take a shower, meaning that he has been allowed to sleep the longest of any detainee on his pod, while still having sufficient hot water for his shower. Corey's specifying "the right-sized clothes" implies that even the baggy CCJDC uniform can be ill-fitting, due either to officers' errors in distributing clean clothes, or to a detainees' unique shape or size. [Although I did not directly witness any interactions about clothing size, I would surmise, based on my observations, that a detainee who was given the wrong size could get the error corrected at some point before the morning was out.]

Corey goes on to describe preferred classroom activities: movies in science class (the alternative is often worksheets or science magazines designed for classroom use), and not using the "aggravating" computer program, with its perceived mixed messages, in math. At lunchtime, detainees are told where to sit by officers, so Corey's odds of getting the seating position he wants are dependent on the number of students and his placement in the line on the way to the cafeteria; instead of being in the back where nobody can see him, he may end up in the very front, with everyone facing toward him, rather than away. In the break between lunch

and the return to classrooms for the afternoon, Corey points out the choices: playing a game outside or in the gym, or being in the pods or cell/rooms for “a little bit.” The opinion that almost anything is better than being in the cells was common among detainees I spoke to or interviewed. For the actual gym class, Corey would choose volleyball over the ubiquitous Knockout game, but by the end of the school day, he reports that he no longer cares what they play, as long as they get to be outside or in the gym (places where voice, movement and self-expression are maximized). After the staff’s shift change, he hopes to be able to call his family, but says he doesn’t always get the chance, in spite of having earned the privilege of an extra phone call per week. This was confirmed in my own observation during his stay at CCJDC; phone call periods were ill timed in relation to his parents’ work schedules, and he had permission from staff to call later, but it didn’t always fit into the rest of the planned activities, or they would make the call and get no answer.

Corey’s report of the evening hours in CCJDC suggests, fairly accurately, that much of the time is spent in the gym or in group activities; if the Center’s population is greater than about 12, detainees will be organized into groups, with the groups moving in shifts between the gym, quiet time” on the pods, and group activities. Corey’s only specified preference comes in the “group activity” category, and it is marked by his attempt to remember the names of the group leader, his descriptions of their personalities and activities, and his own positive feelings toward them. This is the only point in Corey’s description of the day where he mentions *individuals* who have an effect on his perception of the activities. In the cafeteria, he doesn’t want “people” staring at him, and he mentions the name of one of his teachers but without any indication of his feeling toward her or her class in comparison to others. Corey’s very description suggests that in the details—the activities and personalities—lies the pleasure of attending Matt and Ned’s group. In a free-will context outside CCJDC, this would probably be self-evident. Within CCJDC, it needs only be stated to address the contrast between the Center’s generic, restricted schedule and interactions on the one hand, and the relatively colorful, active and flexible involvement of volunteers and outsiders, on the other. Throughout my observations and interviews, detainees showed a marked preference for those CCJDC settings in which there was room and permission for them to express themselves. The structure,

rules and activities of the Center, however, were designed in a way that results, whether intentionally or not, in limitation or prevention of detainees' self-expressions.

### PHYSICAL AND PROCEDURAL STRUCTURES

The physical structure of the CCJDC, like Handbook, was created to serve a set purposes. It must simultaneously provide a "safe and secure holding facility" for juveniles, create a sufficiently restrictive atmosphere to punish or deter further misbehavior, and provide space, services and support to address the "needs" of detainees. In addition, the design of the CCJDC building communicates a particular image to the community, to officers, and to detained youth. These groups are subject to different rules and experiences in the building. For example, visitors do not always get to see the entire detention area; detained youth seldom, if ever, see the administrative area in the front of the building; dress, movement and behavior requirements differ for members of the three groups. As a result, different messages are communicated to each group about the institution and its "behavior." As noted previously, I will focus here on the experiences of youth in the setting: what they are likely to see and experience in the various physical/social settings of the building as they are brought into and move through the detention experience.

#### Exterior

The Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center is an imposing, heavysset, building. Its tan, concrete exterior and almost monolithic appearance imply function-over-form design, a no-nonsense practicality. The building seems to sit atop its allotted patch of land, unattached and cumbersome, as though it were dropped there, rather than constructed from the ground up. One can imagine the dull thud, the vibrations it would have made when it landed. Its front wall, just over two stories high, is punctuated at regular intervals by glass—the double front doors and narrow, tinted windows of the administrative offices. On either side of the building, the windows are even narrower and farther apart—one per cell, so each child inside can get a slim glimpse of the flat, Midwestern terrain and perhaps the buildings nearby—county offices, a nursing home, the adult jail. Behind the detention center is an area enclosed in razorwire-topped chain-link fencing, with a door and steps leading down to it from the back of the building. Inside the fence are several long tables with attached benches, a grassy area and a paved area



with basketball backboards at either end. The outside of the building appears heavy and impenetrable, and gives the viewer no sense of how many people are inside, let alone where they are or what they are doing.

## Interior

### *Garage and Sally Port*

A young person coming into the detention center will most likely be ride in behind the metal mesh divider of a police car (directly from arrest) or the CCJDC van (from court, after a hearing). In either case, the official vehicle will drive around the north side of the building to the *garage*<sup>15</sup> and *sally port*, a hallway, electronically locked at either end, that links the garage and the *intake* area (see Figure 4a for an approximate floor plan of the detention center). Both the garage and the sally port are unfurnished except for fluorescent lights, with cinder block type walls and concrete flooring. Intercom units and cameras allow communication with officers inside the facility in the *master control* room; a button on the intercom unit would allow an officer to announce his or her presence, after which the sally port door would be buzzed open. Once the officer and detainee pass through the first sally port door, it will slam heavily behind them, with a loud clicking noise as the metal lock re-engages. The security system prevents two doors in an area being open at one time, so the door from sally port to intake would not click open until the garage door had closed completely.

The sally port is the transitional space between the familiar culture and liberty of a young person's daily life and the restricting, foreign culture of the detention center. This first, narrow hallway offers a glimpse of experiences that will become familiar during a stay in detention: being herded through spaces by officers, seeing and hearing officers ask, via radio or intercom, for each of many doors to be opened, hearing the buzz of electronic locks and the heavy metallic clunk of doors slamming, having one's movement and speech limited by the physical structure and the adult(s) who serve as guides and guards.

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<sup>15</sup>Terms in *italics* are setting "jargon," referring to a thing or concept in a way unique to this setting.

## *Intake Area*

### *Physical Description*

The intake area is notable in its lack of resemblance to “typical” interior spaces like offices, living areas or storage spaces; its design is obviously specific to its unique, corrections-related purposes. Entering from the sally port, a youth would see a long hallway leading off to the right of the sally port door, several doors on the opposite and right-hand walls of the square room, and a single door leading off from the left-hand wall. Also along the left-hand wall are file cabinets, and against the right-hand wall are a wooden bench, a fingerprinting machine that resembles a photocopy machine without a cover, and a digital camera much like those used in vehicle licensing offices. Occupying the left-center of the room is a V-shaped, chest-high counter with a long desk on the inside of its bend and several metal stools bolted to the floor on the outside. From the stools, one can see the desk’s contents: desktop computer, notepads and pencils, a variety of labeled binders and books, and a telephone. The floor of the intake area, like that of the entire detention section, is polished grey-brown concrete. The walls are white, punctuated by blue or grey doors.

Two of the doors opposite the sally port door open onto “constant observation” rooms. These are small cells, furnished only with a vinyl-covered mat on the floor. They are used when a child’s behavior is “out of control” (e.g., s/he has been in a physical struggle with staff or is assessed to be at risk of self-harm). The observation rooms may also be used if several children are brought in for intake simultaneously, so that the intake officer can maintain control and surveillance over the youth without calling on additional officers. During the 18 months of my observations, staff mentioned using the constant observation cells a few times for youth whose extreme behavior caused concern of harm to self or others. I only saw one youngster detained temporarily in this way; staff reported she was crying uncontrollably, screaming at staff and repeatedly asking for her mother. I refrained from looking into the cell myself, as it seemed intrusive and unnecessary to do so, but as I passed by I saw the young woman lying on the cell’s mat, on the floor, curled up on her side. Later on, Carrie (the superintendent) came back to see how the young woman was doing, asked staff to let her into the cell, and talked to the youth with the door ajar for a few minutes. I never saw staff use the “restraint chair,” which resembles

a mobile dental examination chair, with the addition of restraint straps for torso, arms and legs. The chair is kept in storage near the intake area, but is seldom used.

### *Intake Procedures*

Kate: Alright, alright. And so-, alright, so then you're here, and what was it like-, like what was the intake like? You know, like the first part where you're over there [gesturing toward Intake Area] and the-, you know, and they're like takin' your picture and stuff. Did the-, did they, people who worked here-, how did they talk to you and-

Franklin: -Oh, they were respectful, you /know what I'm sayin',/ they were respectful, like-, like um, like when I got here, I really didn't have any problems with 'em, you know what I'm sayin', I just cooperated, did what they told me to /do./ (Do it,) and that was it, you know what I mean?

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

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Kate: Do you remember what it was like when you got in here? Like how they, what the people talked to you about er what they said or how they treated you? How you felt? Any of that.

Corey: They treated me normal.

Corey: Not like I was uh uh, my Mom calls 'em heathens./But/ I, I forget the real word. But uh they treated me normal. Like teachers will treat kids.

Corey: They, they were nice. Everything, they were normal.

Corey, Interview #1, 4/5/01

Franklin and Corey's quotes reveal, in what is denied, similar beliefs about what intake might have been like, or at least an understanding that this was the true focus of my question. Franklin starts by using the word "respectful," implying a contrast with his reports to me of police officers' disrespect on the same occasion. He then says he didn't have any problems with the CCJDC officers, explaining further by saying he didn't *give* them any problems, and (as a result) did not "have" (i.e. receive) any. Corey, too, says officers treated him "normal," and not like a (bad kid, presumably -- possibly "hoodlum" or "hooligan"). He repeats the word "normal," perhaps thinking that I was expecting him to describe unusual or abnormal treatment. He then describes the officers as treating him "like teachers will treat kids." The implication is

that the officers took a sanctioned, formalized, adult authority role, familiar as such even to a first-time detainee. One might ask, “How else would they act?” because this is, after all, a detention facility. In theory, however, they could have acted like police officers, casual friends, or parents, even like kids if they chose to. Each role would carry a different set of expectations and meanings. That Corey thought of teachers was consistent with the combined image of caring and control that CCJDC seems to be striving toward.

When a youth comes in with a police officer directly from arrest, he is usually still wearing handcuffs. When youth and officer enter the intake area, the detention officer on duty there will tell or ask the youth to sit down on the wooden bench facing the intake desk, usually adding something like “I’ll talk to you in a couple of minutes.” The detention officer may remove the handcuffs at that time, or leave them on until the police officer departs and takes the handcuffs with him or her. The detention officer will then have the transporting officer fill out a report form regarding the youth’s alleged delinquent act and his<sup>16</sup> behavior during and after the arrest. Police and detention officers are often familiar with each other from previous interactions, and will likely have a friendly, casual exchange in addition to the formal requirements of the transaction. During this time, the youth is expected to sit quietly on the bench; the young people I saw during intake usually had frowns or tightly neutral facial expressions and appeared uncomfortable, agitatedly bouncing a leg up and down, shifting in their seat, sometimes crying; some were also disheveled, dirty or rain-soaked.

The officers may ask the young person for clarification of facts, or engage him in a discussion of the alleged misbehavior (“So, what have you learned from this?” “Don’t lie?” “Yeah, don’t lie to cops, that’s a good one, too. What else?” [the youth shrugs, and the officer continues] “Don’t [commit crimes!]” The detention officer will complete a screening form which gives numerical scores for various factors including severity of offense, use of a weapon, prior offenses, prior episodes of detention, and so on. If the youth surpasses a set cutoff score, he will be detained; otherwise, his parents will be contacted to come get him at the detention

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<sup>16</sup>For brevity’s sake, I will use a single gender to refer to “generic” detainees, alternating between male and female.

center<sup>17</sup>.

*Manifest meanings of intake procedures.* Young people who are screened into detention go through several procedures for intake, not always in the order presented here: a strip search; trading in clothes and possessions for a CCJDC detainee uniform; having photographs and fingerprints taken for the file and for transmission to the state DOC database; completing an intake form and health screening questionnaire; reading the CCJDC Handbook (discussed above; see Appendix D) and taking a short quiz on its contents. These activities, like acts of speech or behavior, have both manifest and latent content. Their manifest purpose is practical. Strip searches are intended to check for contraband material (e.g., weapons or sharp objects, drugs) that may be hidden on or in the youth's body; taking clothes and possessions serves this purpose as well. Uniforms make it easy to distinguish between detainees and others (service providers, volunteers, officer) at a distance, convenient in the facility for observing activities at a distance and outside the facility for preventing or limiting escapes. The CCJDC also uses uniform colors to signify detainees' status in the behavioral level system; blue uniforms are standard, and brown uniforms are for those detainees who reach the highest (fifth) level, thus earning extra privileges (the level system is discussed below). Fingerprinting and photos allow for identification of young people in the system, tracking their progress within the justice system, checking for outstanding warrants, and so forth. The intake form ensures that demographic and family contact information are gathered for each youth, and the health screening questionnaire increases the likelihood of youth getting adequate care, simultaneously limiting the likelihood of negligence regarding medical or psychological problems. The Handbook introduces detainees to basic CCJDC policy, rules and procedures, giving them a sense of what to expect and what is expected of them.

*Latent meanings of intake procedures.* Symbolically, the intake routine initiates processes of labeling and socialization into the setting. Strip searches are undoubtedly the most difficult, unpleasant and notorious part of the intake routine, for detainees and staff alike. My

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<sup>17</sup>The screening form's "decision" can be overridden in either direction by the officer in charge, in which case he or she is required to provide a written explanation for the override on the screening form.

conversations with officers about strip searches suggested that they do their best to be matter-of-fact and quick about it, explaining the physical movements required before the youth removes his or her clothes, and emphasizing that there is no physical contact involved. It is a visual search only, done in a small, closed room by a single staff member, of the same sex as the detainee. The officer stands two or three feet away while the detainee strips, squats, and lifts testicles or breasts.

The procedure's special status among CCJDC employees is indicated by the superintendent's early comment to me that I was welcome to observe "everything except strip searches," and by officers' spontaneous references to it in conversation, usually as one of their least favorite parts of the job. For example, AnnMarie, a European American female detention officer with over ten years' experience, told me:

AnnMarie: /Oh, I can tell ya,/ my least favorite task is a strip search . . . number one, least favorite thing to do. Would not work here if we didn't do them, /but/ I certainly would love for someone else to do /it/ every time.

AnnMarie, interviewed 8/23/01

I assumed I knew why this was so, but her first reason was a surprise to me, and her explanatory logic revealed part of how she thinks about detainees and their lives:

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ /Right./ Okay, and even though it's probably obvious, I'm just gonna say, why is that? What is it about doing a strip search that you hate?

AnnMarie: I-, okay, number one's the smell.

Kate: Mmm Hmm.

AnnMarie: Why can't I strip search kids that smell good?

Kate: ((laughs))

AnnMarie: Oh, wait a minute, kids that are more likely to have good hygiene and /clean/ clothes, are less likely to be in trouble.

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ Mmm Hmm.

AnnMarie: I mean, sure, there are exceptions to the /rule/, um, but we deal a lot with kids who've been on the run and, /therefore/, have not have access to a shower, /or a/ toothbrush. What is it about getting locked up that makes a girl start her period? Why is it that they never have a

tampon? You know?

AnnMarie, interviewed 8/23/01

She continues her wryly funny commentary on detainees' menstrual cycles for a short while, and then continues:

AnnMarie: /Yeah./ Yeah. Um, so that's a large part of it right there. It's not comfortable for the kid.

Kate: Mmm hmm.

AnnMarie: I-, other than the fact that it is necessary to keep the building /safe/, I can't think of anything positive to say about a strip /search./

AnnMarie, interviewed 8/23/01

This final excerpt shows AnnMarie's ambivalence about the strip searches, because of her ambivalence about the detainees: she feels the building would be unsafe without the searches, but clearly recognizes the vulnerability (presented here as discomfort) of young people who must submit to the search.

Longtime employees and administrators also recalled to me, with evident distaste or disapproval, the earlier, controversial practice of strip searching detainees any time they left their rooms. The current practice is to perform strip searches upon intake, after (rare) contact visits with non-professionals, and after time spent outside the facility (e.g., at medical appointments). As an outsider, this seemed to me to be "more than enough" strip searches, and I was openly skeptical about the likelihood that a youth would be carrying contraband material in a way that a strip search would reveal. However, given that the current rules could allow a youth to experience only one strip search during his or her entire stay in detention, as opposed to two or more per day by the old rules, the policy may seem quite reasonable to correctional officers.

Youth participants did not mention the strip search when discussing their intake experiences, maybe because it would be embarrassing to do so. In fact, the only mention made was of a youth *not* being strip searched: "we were all talkin' today about the strip searches . . . and how they have to bend over and cough . . . He didn't do that with me, /so/, I think, that was, that was kinda cool." (Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01). He mentioned in the next interview that the strip searches were a key point of interest for his peers who knew he had been in

CCJDC. The attention given to strip searches supports the notion that they are uniquely evocative for people who perform them, are subjected to them, or are aware of their occurrence in CCJDC. The extreme vulnerability imposed on detainees, the sudden and complete denial of privacy for one's "private parts," and the impossibility of refusal all send a message to detainees that their wishes and concerns, their individuality and rights, are meaningless in the detention center context.

After the strip search, detainees are given a clean, dark blue uniform—a tunic and drawstring pants similar to surgical scrubs, and a pair of rubber-soled slip-on shoes—to replace the clothes they were wearing when they came in. The officer who performed the strip search leaves the room, instructing the detainee to put on the uniform and come out, clothing and possessions in hand, when he is finished changing. When the detainee comes out, the officer makes an inventory of all his possessions, with a brief physical and numerical description (e.g., 1 pair blue denim pants, 1 gold chain with "J" pendant, \$4.71, etc.).

As noted earlier, these procedures have a manifest practical purpose, but they carry symbolic meaning as well. A young woman enters the strip search room wearing clothes, jewelry and a demeanor she has chosen as a way to represent herself. She is then required to disrobe and expose her genitals and breasts in front of an unfamiliar adult woman, after which she dons clothing which is decidedly neutral in terms of color, shape and style. When she emerges, she looks just like the other detainees, and very little like "herself." Her own clothes, the outer trappings of "who she is," are taken away, put in storage until she will be allowed to reclaim that identity. Like some of the center's value-driven restrictions on behavior, and the implicit messages of the CCJDC handbook, the trading of personal possessions for a drab uniform is part of a process I glimpsed repeatedly during my observations, whereby CCJDC strips away pieces of young people's identities, apparently trying to create a *tabula rasa* onto which a new identity may be imposed.

Fingerprinting and "mugshots" likely contribute to this re-identification process as well. Both are iconic American cultural representations of criminal life and entry into correctional settings. The fact that the resulting, real-life "artifacts" are relayed to a statewide database makes it clear that from this point, there is no going back: you are now an official member of



the category “juvenile delinquents” and perhaps also “repeat offenders.” The intake and health screening forms focus on information the youth has likely provided in other, non-correctional settings, so they may contribute little to the detainees’ sense of relationship to this particular setting. However, the forms guide the screening officer’s behavior in asking the questions, and guide his or her attention in terms of what is important to know about this young person. The forms don’t ask, for instance, “what is your favorite subject in school,” or “who do you look up to as a role model?” Rather, the intake form identifies a limited set of adults (parent/guardian, probation officer, arresting officer) in the youth’s life, locates her in the community (town, neighborhood, school), and gives basic information about current and past interactions with the police and the detention center (number of prior detentions, current charges, time and date of current arrest). The health screening form presents a series of yes/no questions, often asked in a rapid, monotonous sequence by an intake officer who appears to know them by heart. Any “yes” answers elicit further questioning for details of the identified condition or problem (e.g., If asthma, do they have an inhaler with them? If allergies, to what?). Some officers incorporate “regular conversation” and humor into the intake process, but even so, the process seems boring, perhaps even irritating, to detainee and officer alike. Officers sometimes initiate the process by making some sort of disclaimer like, “Okay, I’ve got to ask you a bunch of questions now, it won’t take long.”

While the information gathered is essential to CCJDC’s ability to keep detainees safe and healthy, the process of gathering it sets a tone for interaction between officers and youth. Officers determine the content and sequence of the conversation, youth speak when spoken to. Young people at this point in the intake/detention process are often unhappy, and this sometimes shows in their demeanor or vocal tone -- slouching, avoiding eye contact, mumbling or sounding irritated by every question. This predictable discomfort may be part of the reasoning behind officers’ relatively monotonous presentation of questions, whether to avoid escalating conflict or to get through the process as quickly as possible. In any case, officers are unlikely to respond to the emotional tone or content of a youth’s presentation at this point, unless it escalates to tears or yelling (I saw only the former in my observations). Even when responding to overt vulnerability, officers tend to focus on the task at hand (e.g., “You’ll be

okay, let's just get through this", and not so much on the youth's unhappiness.

One notable exception to the sense of emotional neutrality at intake is that new detainees are frequently offered a meal or snack to eat while they answer officers' questions. Several times I saw young people refuse the offer in sad or irritated tones, to which some officers responded with parent-like urging, along the lines of "You sure? You won't get another chance to eat 'til tomorrow morning -- you might get pretty hungry!" While the offer of food in these circumstances may be a matter of convenience for officers who don't want to be bothered later on by untimely requests for food, the tone they adopt and the extent to which they encourage detainees to eat implies some level of personal concern as well. CCJDC's structure and rules limit officers' opportunities to actively nurture detainees, but providing food (however unpleasant the food may be) is a required, and therefore socially acceptable, way for officers to care for detained youngsters.

The intake process might be seen as an overt, physical acting-out of the latent intentions of CCJDC: the trappings of the detainee's presumed "delinquent identity" are removed and replaced temporarily with symbols of CCJDC "membership." At the same time, the social interactions between staff and detainees exemplify general expectations in the facility. Officers exert control with occasional forays into warmth and support. They are powerful and guide all interactions, while detainees are expected to submit because the rules demand it, even to the point of potential humiliation during the strip search. The strip search itself is part of protocol, not overtly intended (currently) to embarrass, but its capacity to do so is enormous. With this controlled and powerless role, detainees are brought into the main detention area, which will be their entire external world for the length of their stay.

### *Detention Area*

#### *Sensory Impressions*

Although each "microsetting" within the detention center has unique physical and social characteristics, some aspects of the center's physical environment are common to most or all spaces detainees encounter during their incarceration. For instance, the grey, polished concrete flooring, first seen in the sally port and intake area, continues throughout the majority of the detention area, except in the classrooms, which have carpeting. Any interior wall that can be

seen from inside the detention area (i.e., all interior pod walls, one side of the gym, the resource area and two of the three classrooms, and one end of the cafeteria's interior wall) is constructed partly (mid-wall to ceiling) or completely (floor to ceiling) of reinforced glass, supported by metal frames painted black. The glass, along with the high ceiling and skylights, gives the space a surprisingly open, airy feeling. It also lets occupants see the blue doors and yellow stairs and railings in each pod; the colors are bright and cheerful, an obvious attempt to make the space more pleasant and less "correctional" in its look. More practically for the detention officers, the glass walls allow easy, direct viewing of activities almost anywhere that detainees might be. The door of each cell also has a glass panel running most of its length, wide enough that staff can see into the room without going to the door. The ease of viewing throughout the facility is, of course, not limited to staff members. Detainees use the glass in making social contact—making eye contact, lifting their chin in silent acknowledgment of recognition, lifting a hand slightly in a subtle "wave," or "throwing gang signs." While in their cells, detainees often stand at the door, pressed up against the glass panel, looking out into the rest of the facility or watching staff at the Staff Station. They look glum, almost pathetic, to me; when I mentioned this impression to Burke, he remarked nonchalantly, "Oh yeah, they always do that."

The one exception to the "clear glass wall" pattern is *Master Control*, an area whose name gives an accurate sense of its function in the facility. Activities in Master Control will be discussed below. In terms of the physical structure, viewed from a detainee's perspective, Master Control is the area next to the staff station with glass walls, tinted black, through which one cannot see. It is actually possible to see through the glass if one is literally pressed up against it, but detainees are never allowed to get close enough to do this. One officer pointed out an unintended result of tinting the glass of Master Control's walls: The glass provides a reflective surface, allowing detainees in their cells to see activities in areas that would otherwise be invisible, or to signal to each other, using the glass as a mirror.

The "light and airy" visual sense of the space is contradicted by the jarring, sporadically active auditory experience. Unlike a school or mall, where there is constant, mid-level noise created by social interaction, CCJDC is characterized largely by mechanical noises that occur intermittently throughout the day and evening. Except for the individual classroom doors, every

door in the detention area is electronically controlled from within the Master Control area, and each door-opening is accompanied by several sounds. First, officers moving detainees from one area to another must radio the Master Control area to ask for each door to be opened, in sequence (e.g., “Master Control, can I have [pod] A-5, please?”). The officer in Master Control responds by unlocking the door (see Figure 4d for the layout of Master Control); the electronic lock buzzes for three or four seconds as it opens. Having brought detainees through the door, the officer will move on to the destination; if Master Control (the person, the task and the physical space are combined in this single term) is busy or has not anticipated the direction of the move, the officer must radio again to get through the next doorway. In the meantime, the door through which detainees have just passed is allowed to close; the doors are made of metal and swing shut with some force, perhaps to counter the physical resistance of the electronic locking mechanism. As a result, the doors slam closed with a heavy, clunking thud. I worked in the CCJDC for 18 months or more, and in spite of my ability to predict the slamming of doors as I moved through the facility, I never failed to be startled by the noise. Officers and detainees in the building seemed much less sensitive to it than I, but my experience suggests to me that first-time detainees may take some time to get used to the repeated, but only partially predictable (i.e., only when one sees a door being opened) stimulus.

Because detainees are forbidden to talk without permission, the facility is exceptionally quiet; the most common social sounds of CCJDC are the communications of officers throughout the facility. Officers are issued radios at the start of each shift, and the radios remain on throughout the shift, regardless of the officer’s assigned task or location. Any officer using the radio will be heard by all the other officers, and possibly by detainees as well, depending on the context and the radios’ settings. Some officers use an earpiece to listen to the radio, thus preventing “broadcast” of transmissions, but most do not. Officers who had just begun a classroom security shift often had their radios turned up to normal or high volume, remembering to turn it down after the first interruption of the relative silence of the classroom. Although I found it difficult to understand radio transmissions unless I was directly next to the radio, detainees often appeared to be trying to listen to officers’ radios, suggesting that they were able to pick up more of the content than I could.

In addition to the visual and auditory sensations of CCJDC's Detention Area, an overview of the center's control over detainees' movements is important to understanding their experiences in the setting. Master Control and the officers in the Detention Area coordinate efforts to guide detainees' movements through the center. If detainees are being brought out of their rooms singly or as a group, an officer simply asks Master Control to "pop the door(s)" of the target cell or pod. The release of the doors signals detainees to come out of their rooms, at which point they will receive instructions from the officer in charge.

Detainees moving as a group will be told to line up by the doorway of the area they are leaving, to await the opening of the next door and the officer's permission to go ahead. In moving from place to place within the Detention Area, detainees are to walk single file, looking straight ahead, with their hands by their sides or behind their backs, and without talking. In addition, they must walk only along the perimeter of the Multipurpose Area (briefly, the "space between places" in the Detention Area; see Figure 4a for a map, and see below for further details) to get to their destinations, with one or more officers monitoring them by walking slightly behind and to the inside of the group. Youngsters in these lines tend to shuffle their feet as they move slowly along, in spite of officers' occasional urging to pick up the pace. At times when the entire CCJDC population is being moved (e.g., in the morning to go to school, at mid-day for lunch, and in the afternoon to return to the pods from school), there may be four or five lines of youth in matching blue uniforms waiting in lines or walking slowly along the wall of the Multipurpose Area. Because they are required to look straight ahead and remain silent, the shuffling lines of youth can appear almost zombie-like. This impression is in clear contrast to teenagers' typically active and energetic movement and chatter in less restrictive contexts. Notably, detainees readily emerge from the numb, shuffling state of population moves when given any opportunity to speak or move freely, as in the gym or the cafeteria (these bouts of self-expression will be discussed in detail below). By limiting the range of appearance and behavior to a rigid, narrow set of expectations, CCJDC rules imply that detainees' "real selves" are unacceptable or unwelcome in some way. While the rules' overt intentions may have more to do with safety, security, and ease of operations, the effect fits well with CCJDC's apparent interest in adjusting the self-image of detainees in order to help them and to protect the

community from their potentially dangerous behavior.

The Detention Area is comprised of several smaller “microsettings,” each with its own patterns of behavior and interaction. The schematic in Figure 4a is an approximate depiction of the center’s layout, to give the reader an idea of the relative locations of settings described here. The Detention Area is rectangular in shape. The west side of the rectangle is adjacent to the Administrative Area at the front of the building. Moving clockwise from the northwest corner of the Detention Area, one encounters three residential pods along the north wall, the gym and educational area along the east wall, three more residential pods along the south wall, and the cafeteria in the southwest corner. A smaller rectangle containing detainee visiting areas, a training room for staff, and the Master Control room, juts out from the west end into the middle of the Detention Area rectangle. This places Master Control in an optimal position for viewing the rest of the Detention Area, through its tinted glass windows on the north, east and south sides. Against the south side of the Master Control area is the Staff Station, an area with a desk and office equipment where staff gather at shift change and to complete various administrative tasks (behavior logs, report writing, etc.). The Staff Station has a chest-high counter but no walls, leaving Master Control’s view of the south pods unobstructed. Similarly, the north wall of Master Control abuts the “Fishbowl,” a glass-walled office for assistant superintendents, one of whom oversees each shift of officers. The U-shaped open space between the detainee-occupied perimeter and staff-occupied areas centered around Master Control is the Multipurpose Area. Following is a description of each of these microsettings, focusing on basic physical characteristics, behavior expectations for detainees in the setting, and examples from fieldnotes or interviews to bring out detainees’ own experiences in the Center.

### *Pods and Cells*

CCJDC has six “pods,” four with six individual cells, and two with eight individual cells, for a total of 40 cells<sup>18</sup>. The six pods are nearly identical in terms of general layout and

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<sup>18</sup>While the officers and detainees refer to the individual sleeping areas as “rooms,” I will refer to them from this point on as cells/rooms. I believe this term, in its awkwardness and ambiguity, reflects the ambivalence of CCJDC toward its function and its charges, and highlights the resulting identity strain of the setting, the officers and the detainees.

contents (see Figure 4b for a schematic):

The pod itself is shaped like a right triangle with two corners cut off. One leg of the right angle faces the Multipurpose Area, and is made of floor-to-ceiling, steel mesh-reinforced windows, trimmed in red to match the main exit door. The other leg of the right angle is made of concrete blocks painted white; this is the wall adjoining the next pod. Along this shared wall are the stairs to the mezzanine level. The hypotenuse of the triangle, on the first and mezzanine levels, is where the cells (four per level) and closets (two per level) are located, along with a bathroom on the first floor. Also on the first floor are two octagonal metal tables, each with four attached round stools. The entire table/stool assembly is bolted to the floor. The room and closet doors are blue with black frames. At one tip of the triangle is a closet, and at the other (adjoining the second neighboring pod) is the TV, mounted on the wall above a wheeled cabinet and bookshelf unit. Among the books and magazines on the shelves are *Ranger Rick* and *Nickelodeon* magazines, *Free on the Inside* (a Christian Bible/book for prisoners), *Prisoner Released* (a non-fiction book), some puzzles, and some mystery books. From the inside of the pod, I can see the very front part and the stairs of the next pod over, as well as the Fishbowl, the windows of Master Control, and the pods across the Multipurpose Area from this one.

From fieldnotes, 3/12/01

Markus, a 12-year-old African American boy, focused on the cells themselves when giving his generally negative impression of CCJDC:

Kate: So if you were gonna tell another kid about this place, who hadn't been here, what would you tell 'em about it?

Markus: I'd say it ain't fun, most of the time you are in your room. You get three books and that's all, a toilet, a sink, an' a desk, a chair, an' a bed. Not fun.

For Markus, the cells were the first thing to come to mind in describing the setting, the main evidence for his assertion that the facility is "not fun." He describes the deprivation of the cells, implying a negative comparison to other parts of CCJDC, and to the outside world.

While detainees are no longer left in their cells 23 hours a day, they do spend at least a third of each day in their cells: sleeping, bathing, eating (for detainees on behavior levels one through three, the great majority of the population), waiting for shift change to be completed (twice during waking hours), or being restricted for misbehavior (from one to 24 hours, depending on the infraction). Like Markus, Franklin identifies extended periods of time in the

cell as one of the worst parts of being at CCJDC. He mentions not only the length of time in the cells, but the sometimes limited opportunities for “good . . . time . . . to get out and talk,” to have social contact and express himself:

Kate: . . . Um, what about a bad day, like, what-, what makes a day bad or what are the bad parts of the day? /Or just-/

Franklin: /Saturday/ and Sunday when we locked up in the room /almost the/ whole day. This [i.e., the interview with me (KH)] is the only time-, not the only time I been out, /but/ like-, but the only good, like really time I get to get out and talk, you know what I’m /sayin’./ Because, mostly we’re locked up in our rooms all /day./

Franklin: /We come out/ for breakfast. But no-, we actually don’t even come out for breakfast, we gotta eat in our room for breakfast, then we /come/ out for lunch and dinner. . . .

Franklin: And then we go straight back into our rooms after that.

Kate: Aww, man.

Franklin: So- ((laughs)).

Kate: Right, so unless you have a visitor-

Franklin: So unless you have a visitor, (you’re) shit out of luck. ((laughs))

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Jimmy is acutely conscious of how much time he is spending in his cell in the absolute sense, but he also compares his lockup time to that of other detainees. During one of my observations at the detention center, he told me, “They did us bogus today,” explaining that the staff “let out Group 1 [from their cells]... from 12:15 to 3:30,” but kept Group 2 in until 2:30 [so they only had an hour out of their cells] (from fieldnotes, 8/6/01)<sup>19</sup>.

Detainees also spend “quiet time” on the pods (i.e., in the common area), writing letters

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<sup>19</sup>Jimmy is referring to group numbers used by staff to plan the activities and movements of detainees in the center. Detainees are categorized in groups based on age, size, and academic ability (so an older (16 or 17 years old) or physically large detainee with exceptionally low academic functioning might be placed in a group with younger, smaller detainees). These groups then stay together for classes and PE during the school day, and often for activities at night.



and doing homework in the afternoon, or being allowed to choose among a variety of entertainments. Some officers, when supervising quiet time, will initiate quiet, casual conversation (e.g., about sports, food, holidays) or a more education-focused discussion (e.g., about current events, history, laws about driving) with the detainees. From Franklin's perspective, these gatherings were a highlight of an otherwise unpleasant stay<sup>20</sup>:

Kate: Are there-, are there things like besides, you know, not gettin' in trouble, are there parts of the day that are better parts of the day?

Franklin: Uh, yeah, I probably be ( ) when they sit us out in our pods.

Franklin: Like they'll bring other-, like they'll bring all the boys from one pod, /like/ they'll bring like, like, in my pod they've only got like four seats in there, so, /if/ I'm sittin' in there, they'll bring about, um, three more kids in there to /sit/ with me, you know what I'm sayin', we'll sit in there, talk for a little bit, you know what I'm sayin'. But like, I don't know, like towards the night, like, um, sometimes we'll watch movies out there, you know what I'm /sayin, set/ out chairs and we'll watch movies out there, we'll sit there and talk for a little bit, you know what I mean? And laugh, you know. . . .

Franklin: /But./ yeah, that's kinda the best times, you know what /I'm/ sayin'.

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ So-, yeah, so, partly it's like the times that you get to like actually talk to other people.

Franklin: Yeah.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Other officers maintain and require more social distance, making "quiet" time into "silent" time for the detainees. For instance, I once observed six male detainees and a European American male officer on C-Pod for about 30 minutes, during which time I noted the detainees' activities: "One watches Cartoon Network on the big TV mounted on the wall. Two play chess but are not

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<sup>20</sup>For the sake of brevity and clarity, I have removed from the transcript texts the "support work" parts of my contribution to the conversation, such as "mm-hmm," "uh-huh," and "okay." I have indicated the locations of these conversational turns by presenting the participant's speech as two turns in a row, each beginning with the participant's initials and a colon.

allowed to talk during the game, just move pieces. Two do puzzles (separately). One writes a letter” (fieldnotes, 3/12/01). Detainees on restriction may be assigned to sit alone on a pod writing a letter of apology.

Pods and cells could also become sites of intervention for problem behavior or emotional distress. When detainees misbehaved repeatedly in the classroom, they would be taken to their pod by the observing officer, and the officer would attempt, through conversation, to prevent additional problems<sup>21</sup>. Officers sometimes talk with detainees in the pod, rather than in public in the classroom, about behavior problems. If the conversation becomes heated or the detainee becomes agitated, the officer will call on the radio for backup. I witnessed this only once.

Diane (European American, female officer) was talking with a youth in A-Pod, and radioed for assistance. Four officers walked quickly or jogged to A-Pod, with one, Amber (European American female officer) following more slowly behind. I asked Amber what was going on with the call, and she told me, “You never know until you get there.” She then added that the youth with whom Diane was talking was “an asshole.” I ask what she means, and she says he has “serious emotional problems,” that he does “suicidal crap,” that he has been in a local mental health inpatient/day school for kids, but that he “manipulated a little” (i.e., faked more severe problems to get attention). I ask if she believes he’d hurt himself, and she says “Not lethally.” We observe the interaction of staff members and detainee briefly from outside. A European American young man is seated at one of the pod tables, hanging his head. One officer (a European American male) is talking to him, and approaches the table slowly, eventually sitting down with the youth. The other four officers, including Diane, stand close to the table, moving closer until they encircled the seated pair. Amber returns to the staff station, and I follow her.

From fieldnotes, 5/30/01

In the moment, I was torn between understanding for Amber’s frustration with a youth she perceives as manipulative, and concern about her lack of sympathy and concern. It did appear to me that she would have overcome her irritation enough to assist Diane and the youth if other officers had not been available.

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<sup>21</sup> Although I could probably have observed these disciplinary/supportive chats, I chose not to because they seldom happened with youth who had consented to participate in the study, and I also felt uncomfortable interfering with the interaction between officer and detainee.

If staff encounter a particularly difficult problem (e.g., a detainee whose behavior is violent, or a group of detainees who become extremely defiant and challenging to staff authority), all detainees will be sent to their cells (“locked down” or “on lockdown”) until the problem is settled, sometimes a matter of several hours. For Jimmy, this is the key characteristic of a bad day:

Kate: Like, what’s a bad day like here? Or what would happen that could make it a bad day?

Jimmy: Somebody get- actin’ crazy in here.

Jimmy: Beatin’ on the doors, cussing out staff, keep on pressin’ the button on the thing [intercom] and then they come in and they lock down everybody cuz everybody gotta come and do, deal with him.

Jimmy: And everybody be on lock down all day. Like the second day I was here.

Kate: Oh really, that happened?

Jimmy: Yeah. This guy was clownin’. ( ) Called the staff b’s [bitches] and everything.

Jimmy: He told ‘em that they had ten ((laughs)) seconds to get away from /(him)/ or he gonna hit ‘em . . . .

Jimmy: And then they- so we uh we had to go back in our group. I had to go to a whole different pod.

Jimmy: And then we stayed in our room all night and then went to bed. We came out of our room for like thirty minutes /that/ night. ( ) We was locked down for a about four and a half hours.

Kate: /Uh huh/. Wow. So like gettin’ restricted for someone else’s behavior is a bad day.

Jimmy: Yeah.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

Again, Jimmy agrees with Franklin’s statement that a bad day in detention comes from too much time in the cells, but he attends as well to the fairness of the restriction. In both of his comments about detention cells, Jimmy notes exact amounts of time spent in and outside of the cell. In my other conversations with him, he seemed much less conscious of times, dates, appointments and so on; his attention to exact durations appears specific to the circumstances

he is describing. He uses his observations not only to describe his own experience, but to support the implication of unfair treatment (being “done bogus”) by staff members.

Detainees spend the bulk of their time in CCJDC’s pods and cells. In the cells, detainees are deprived of social contact and of the usual comforts of a bedroom, except for two or three books and “a religious material.” The jail-like ambience of the cells is clearly intentional, and is used not only as part of the CCJDC’s global deterrence/punishment program, but as one part of the punishment for misbehaviors within the setting. The cells are characterized by limited space, social isolation, rules against “unnecessary noise,” and a punishment function. As such, they are the CCJDC microsetting where detainees’ self-expression is most severely limited. Whether intended or not, the result is that CCJDC detainees spend most of their time in a space where typical forms of self-expression are prohibited, leaving available only solitary, internal dialogue.

### *Classrooms*

Although detainees spend most of their time in their cells and pods, their interactions with staff members happen primarily in other CCJDC locations, particularly the classrooms. During the local school year, detainees spend six hours in the classrooms every weekday. The Center employed one part-time and two full-time teachers during the period of this study; the part-time teacher was brought in when the number of detainees warranted using three, rather than two, classrooms. The two full-time teachers were both European American, one male (Patrick), the other female (Norma). Norma started working for CCYDC 10 years earlier, in its former building, and moved with it to the new building. Although their teaching styles were distinct, Patrick and Norma’s classrooms shared numerous characteristics that distinguished them from the rest of CCJDC. Some of these characteristics were physical and structural, others social or procedural.

Perhaps the most notable characteristic of the classrooms, aside from the remarkable silence, is that unlike other parts of the CCJDC, they feel familiar because they are similar to (but smaller, and better appointed than) classrooms in “regular” schools (see Figure 4c for a diagram to accompany the following description).

Norma's classroom: The main entrance to Norma's classroom is in the back of the room; the door is at an angle to the right side and back walls of the room. The right hand wall has a whiteboard along its length, with students' artwork on the wall above it and to its left; at the front end of that wall is a door into the adjacent (usually unused) classroom. By the front wall, toward the right-hand corner, is a TV and VCR on a large stand; the remainder of the front-wall space contains Norma's desk (just to the left of center, seen from the doorway), a lectern (just to the right of the desk), and a chair for one of the officers (in the front right corner, near the door to the next classroom). Norma has students stand at the lectern when reading from their own stories and poems, or when they lead a class game. The left wall has two sets of bookshelves, each about four feet high and three feet wide; books on the shelves include novels (classics and "teen literature"), encyclopedias, dictionaries and atlases, a few books of poetry, and some how-to kinds of books. Above the bookshelves are posters depicting famous African Americans: Martin Luther King, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and various male and female athletes.

From fieldnotes, 3/26/01

The decorations on the walls, including youths' high-scoring quizzes and their drawings, poems and stories, along with the wall-to-wall carpeting, give the rooms a sense of warmth, energy and personality that is lacking in the rest of the Center. The absence of observation cameras, intercoms and electronic door locks increases the sense of conceptual or thematic distance from the jail-like atmosphere of the Detention Area. In other ways, though, the CCJDC classrooms are clearly part of a correctional institution: one or two detention officers are stationed in each classroom at all times, and the rules of the detention center apply in the classrooms as well, so students are physically and verbally subdued most of the time. They may look around briefly when someone enters or leaves, but they turn quickly back to their work or risk a warning from the classroom's detention officer. Like the facility's communication with local media throughout its history, the CCJDC classrooms send a mixed message to observers, claiming both a warm, active educational identity and a more austere, restrictive correctional face. For detainees, the ambiguity of the Center's intentions for them may become more obvious in the classroom, where the service/education/rehabilitation push is at its strongest. As they enter the classrooms, the identity they are allowed or encouraged to adopt shifts; they go from the role of detainee, primarily an object of rules and instructions, to a tenuous balance between subject (student, learner, contributor) and object (follower of rules,

recipient of discipline). Certainly, students in classrooms are subject to rules created by adults, but I will attempt to show here that the classrooms in CCJDC are inherently more restrictive, thus enhancing the “object” aspect of the student role.

The academically-oriented materials on the classroom walls seem typical for grade school classrooms. In Patrick’s classroom, educational materials focus on science, and in Norma’s they focus on writing and language. Over the months of my observations, the walls’ contents changed frequently, but they always included several items dedicated to personal growth, inspiration, and suggestions or rules for behavior. As a result, the classroom walls conveyed at least as many value-laden statements as the CCJDC Handbook (CCJDC, 2000). However, the messages’ contexts and tones differ, such that different meanings or interpretations are emphasized.

In Norma’s classroom, I notice a wall poster behind Norma’s desk that I haven’t seen before. It is written in magic marker, with thick, multicolored letters. The uneven handwriting and irregularities in spelling and capitalization make me think it was written by a student, not by a teacher, though almost certainly based on a list provided by a staff member.

**“CCJDC Classroom Rules**

Raise your hand and wait to be called before you speak.

When your work is finished, raise your hand.

Don’t look around, focus on your work.

If you need something, raise your hand and wait to be called.

Sit up in your desk.

Work quietly [sic] and no sleeping.

Keep your feet off your desk.

No doodling or drawing.

Remember, All [sic] rules of the Center apply in the classroom also.

Remember that you are getting credit for all work you do while you are here

So TRY HARD AND DO YOUR BEST!”

From fieldnotes, 11/27/01

The classroom’s list of rules (above) expands on some CCJDC Handbook rules (e.g., “Raise your hand . . .,” “Sit up in your desk,” “Keep your feet off your desk”), providing a definition for getting permission to speak and for sitting “properly” on chairs. The classroom list also reminds detainees to follow the other CCJDC rules, but does not re-list them. Rather, it

mentions “your work” in four out of eleven suggestions and rules, and closes by providing a specific, measurable benefit as a reason for detainees to “try hard and do [their] best.” This presentation suggests an acknowledgment that “because I said so” may not be reason enough for detainees to follow a rule or suggestion, and appeals to detainees’ rationality and their ownership of the work they create. CCJDC’s rules, and thus the reality of the correctional setting, are acknowledged, but they are minimized, giving more weight to the educational and inspirational goals of the classroom.

“Inspirational” poster themes are similar across the two rooms.

Patrick’s classroom: On the left-hand classroom wall are posters of “black innovators,” most of them appear (because of clothing styles in the drawings) to have lived in the 19th or early 20th centuries. There is a poster over the closet door on that same wall, which shows a six-columned building facade. In the peak of the roof above the columns is the 4-H Club’s cloverleaf symbol. Above the columns, the words “focus on” begin a directive that is completed below the columns with “character.” Each of the six columns is a different color and has a word on it. The words are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. They were the focus of a presentation given to the detainees by a volunteer earlier this school year. A banner on the wall behind Patrick, made up of several smaller pieces of paper, once said “Positive thinking,” but the “P” has fallen down.

Fieldnotes, 2/15/02

Patrick’s class room [had] numerous “inspirational” or guiding messages posted on the walls. Behind Patrick’s desk were 13 sheets of colored paper arranged in three rainbow-shaped tiers; each piece had the name of a personal quality on it: self-esteem, goal-setting, caring, patience, service, perseverance, humanity, responsibility, respect, self-control, honesty, courage, cooperation.

Fieldnotes, 4/2/01

Norma’s classroom: On the back wall today is a large poster with the words “SUCCEEDING IN 2001” written across it. Scattered around these words are smaller rectangles of paper, each containing one of strategies for success listed below. When I asked Norma about the poster, she said the statements were drawn from a conversation about New Year’s resolutions and ideas of how to succeed -- the class brain stormed to come up with this list:

Stay in school  
Pay [Carrie] big \$\$  
Be respectful

Focus on whatever task you have  
Have integrity  
Get a job and do it well

Believe in yourself  
Listen carefully  
Seek a God of your own choosing  
Think before you act  
Surround yourself with good people  
Look for the good  
Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil

Follow through  
Work hard to accomplish your goals  
Set your mind on the right thing  
Forgive yourself  
Avoid violence  
Communicate well

Fieldnotes, 3/26/01

Unlike the CCJDC Handbook's setting-specific focus, the classroom's "inspirational guidance" posters are more generalized, addressing strategies for success and aspects of personal character, rather than specific behaviors and potential consequences. In addition, the "Success in 2001" list was generated by detainees, encouraging self-expression and the exploration of personal values, rather than imposing particular values in the guise of facility rules. The inclusion of the joking suggestion, "Pay [Carrie] big \$\$" is evidence of the extent to which detainees created and controlled the content of the list, and their trust in Carrie (the superintendent) and the classroom to buffer them from accusations of "inappropriate" behavior (e.g., not taking the exercise seriously).

The numerous images of well-known, successful and/or famous African Americans also sets the classrooms apart from other parts of the detention center. In Patrick's classroom, the posters depict "black innovators," most of whom lived and died before the detainees were born: Madame C.J. Walker, Mary McLeod Bethune and George Washington Carver. In Norma's classroom, the individuals depicted are athletes, social activists and political figures whose names may be more familiar to students and staff alike (e.g., Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr.). The exclusive focus on African Americans reflects the teachers' awareness of racial disproportion in juvenile detention, implying some special effort on their part to provide race-matched role models for the majority of their students. Given that I saw no equivalent posters of European Americans, or of people of any other ethnicity, the practice may also reflect a belief that African American detainees need this type of "support" or education more than their peers of other ethnicities.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The marketing of educational posters specifying "African Americans" is an interesting (continued...)



In general, the emphasis of classroom wall content on inspiration and guidance seems heavier than in a regular junior high or high school classroom. My impression, supported by an informal survey of several colleagues who work in schools, is that the walls of classrooms for adolescents are usually used to display information (e.g., articles, photos, graphs) related to educational material being taught in class. While the CCJDC classrooms do have standard educational materials (e.g., punctuation rules, multiplication tables) on the walls, many of the posters focus on value-driven training in how to be a particular kind of person, how to have “character” and “integrity.” While the personal style being advocated is one I have come to appreciate, I am more interested here in the messages conveyed by this emphasis in CCJDC classrooms. Specifically, the visual/educational weight on guiding students’ “character” suggests a belief that this group of youths needs this sort of guidance—either they have not had it before, or they have not learned it adequately—and that it is the role of CCJDC, even in the educational classrooms, to provide it.

Unlike the materials on the walls, the educational methods of CCJDC classrooms appear fairly typical for junior high and high school, in terms of content areas and teaching techniques (i.e., combining short lessons, reading, worksheets and paper handouts, individual and group activities, discussions, quizzes and tests). However, CCJDC teachers work within a context that differs in several ways from standard public school classrooms. The student body at CCJDC classroom varies from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour as students arrive from and leave for court hearings. The classrooms (two full-time, with one additional classroom when the Center’s population demands it) serve students aged 10 to 17 years, and within any one grade-level, students may have abilities ranging from far below average to far above. In my role as a classroom aide, I worked with one ninth grader (approximately 14 years old) who had not learned to read and was doing the “Hooked on Phonics” program in the Resource Area. At the other end of the spectrum, some students sped through reading assignments or math worksheets with little or no assistance, finishing early and asking the teacher if they could read

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<sup>22</sup>(...continued)

phenomenon in itself; it leads me to wonder whether the formerly “generic” role-model posters are now labeled “European Americans in History” or “European American Athletes.”

a book while waiting for the class to end. In addition to the widely varied and ever-changing population of students, CCJDC teachers must adapt to the presence and contribution of other adults in the classroom, whose work in controlling the behavior of students is a semi-constant layer of background noise for the usually-foregrounded classroom work and conversation. The following excerpts offer examples of the interplay of disciplinary and educational interactions, couched in the context of typical classroom activities, to give a sense of the classrooms' social context:

The version of 20 Questions they are playing involves a set of cards, each of which has an answer and a set of 20 clue-questions on it. The kids take turns picking numbers, and the clue with that number is read to them from the card. JH (European American male), the first kid, picks number 1. Norma, standing at the podium, reads, "No state is larger than me." When JH gets the answer right (Alaska), he goes to the podium to do the next card. The kid (European American male) who is to guess next, in response to the clue, asks, "It's a state, right?" Travis (European American officer) laughs at this, and then JH laughs. JH gives another clue, "Kentucky borders me on the south" and then adds, "Oh my god, it's so easy!" Travis says sternly, "You didn't need to say that!" Norma nods, agreeing. Travis says, "You're only supposed to say what's on there, and if you do that again, you can sit back down."

From fieldnotes, 3/5/01

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MD (African American male) has the arms of his sweatshirt on his arms, but the body of it is bunched up in front of him (i.e. not on his body). Robin (European American female officer) tells him, "M, if you're going to wear your sweatshirt, you have to put it all the way on."

From fieldnotes, 7/27/01

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EK (an African American male), in the front right corner of the room, is doing something (with his pencil?), not writing or looking at his worksheet. Jeff (European American male officer) says "Get to work, pleeeeeeease." The kid looks up at him, smiling, and says (I think), "I hadda fix it!" (Referring to whatever he was doing.)

From fieldnotes, 2/15/02

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The African American male detainee next to me, who is sitting two seats behind EK (African American male detainee), says in a low voice, leaning forward toward EK, “35 into 280?” Jeff (European American male officer) and Patrick (the teacher) both look up, toward the young man next to me, and Patrick says, “He can figure it out.” The kid next to me says, “I was just” – he pauses and spreads his hands in a gesture of (innocence?). Jeff shakes his head, his mouth in a straight line, his lips pursed. The kid next to me says quietly, “You’re just so uptight, Jeff.”

From fieldnotes, 2/15/02

Just as the classroom is structurally and contextually distinct from the rest of the Detention Area, detainees’ behavior in the classroom differs from their behavior elsewhere in CCJDC. As noted previously, the overall feel of the classrooms is much more subdued than a typical junior high or high school classroom, with students sitting fairly still, working silently at their desks. This detention-like atmosphere does occasionally give way to more typical interactions, when a teacher starts a game or activity with the class. At these times, the classroom is transformed. Detainees seem more like students than prisoners, moving toward the “subject” end of the classrooms’ range of available identities. They lean forward in their seats, looking around the room instead of down at their desks, laughing and sometimes shouting out answers. During the group activities, officers may be more lenient about the “no talking without permission” rule. They remind detainees to raise their hands first, but will usually go longer between reminders, and will tolerate more interaction between detainees before telling people to “settle down.”

In Norma’s classroom, detainees start each day with a song; it is always the same song, and Norma has sung it daily with detainees for years, starting during her time in the old CCYDC facility. Detention “repeaters” often know the song by heart from their last time(s) around, and first-time detainees learn it in within a couple of days of admission. Some youngsters in public schools start the day with “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” but the song Norma has selected is quite different. It’s called “The Birdie Song,” and it is a children’s song accompanied by arm and hand motions:

"The Birdie Song"	
<p><u>Lyrics</u>  Way up in the sky,  the little birds fly  While down in the nest,  the little birds rest</p> <p>With a wing on the left,  and a wing on the right  The little birds sleep,  all through the night</p> <p>Sssshhhhh,  (SHOUTED)  THEY'RE SLEEPING!!!!!!</p> <p>Up comes the sun  The new day's begun  The world comes awake  With a shiver and shake!  The birds flap their wings  The dew melts away  "Good morning! Good  morning!" the little birds say.</p>	<p><u>Movements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- point up in the air with a sweeping motion</li> <li>- fold your arms like wings and flap them</li> <li>- hold your arms in front of you like a nest or cradle</li> <li>- close your eyes and rest your head on your hands like you are sleeping</li> <li>- flap your left wing</li> <li>- flap your right wing</li> <li>- close your eyes and rest your head on your hands like you are sleeping</li> <li>- hold that pose</li>   <li>- hold your finger to your lips</li>   <li>- make the sun rise with both your arms</li> <li>- flounce with your arms up in time to the music</li> <li>- "wake up" from your previous "sleeping" pose</li> <li>- shiver and shake</li> <li>- flap your wings</li> <li>- shake the dew off your fingers</li> </ul>

Although Norma performs the song every day with her detainee/students, I never saw an officer sing or act out the Birdie Song; rather, they would stand with the group of detainee/students, sometimes walking between the aisles of seats to encourage full participation. If several students do not sing or do the arm/hand motions, Norma will stop the song, note that people aren't singing, and start again. If individual detainee/students refuse or passively resist more than once or twice, they will be taken back to their cells/rooms for a restriction "until [they] are ready to participate." I was invited several times to do the Birdie Song with Norma's morning classes, but I could not bring myself to do so; given my usual willingness to engage in silly or child-like activities, I took my own resistance as evidence of the strain the Birdie Song might place on a person's self-perception and self-presentation. It is difficult to know whether detainee/students "willingly" did the Birdie Song, because of the

obvious consequences of refusal. However, very few detainee/students refused strongly or long enough to be sent to their cell/rooms<sup>23</sup>.

By the time I first witnessed the Birdie Song at CCJDC, I was used to thinking of the detainee/students as “normal teenagers,” rather than as (tough or scary) “juvenile delinquents,” but the Birdie Song seemed incongruous even from that normalizing perspective. One African American male detainee, around age 16, told me he liked the Birdie Song because it put everyone on the same level; nobody can maintain a tough “attitude” or act better than anyone else when they have all sung this song and flapped their arms together. Norma sometimes presented the song to new detainees as (paraphrased) an activity to make sure everyone is awake and ready to participate; when I told her the young man’s interpretation of the activity, she said with a smile, “Exactly!” Like the intake procedures, then, the Birdie Song had a manifest purpose, getting everyone awake and participating, and a latent purpose, marking youth participants as equal members of a humble, childlike group of detainee/students.

The message of the Birdie Song and the CCJDC classrooms is, in part, “this is a safe(r) place to be yourself.” However, detainees moving from the Detention Area to the Education Area are asked to add the role of “student” to their temporary (CCJDC-specific) behavioral repertoire. They must shift from largely passive objects of rules and instructions to more active participants in social interactions; in fact, CCJDC teachers invite them to express themselves through stories (fictional and biographical), poems and displays of knowledge. At the same time, they must “Remember [that] All [sic] rules of the Center apply in the classroom also.” As Jimmy discovered, attempting to meet the requirements of one role (i.e., being silent as an obedient detainee) may lead to problems fulfilling the other role (i.e., being viewed as participating “with a good attitude”). Amid the push and pull of self-restraint and self-expression, detainee/students are surrounded by myriad suggestions and directives, covering the classroom walls, regarding character, integrity, faith and hope, education, goal setting and so

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<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, when I accompanied an officer as he picked up one day’s lunch trays from cell/rooms, we heard one of the detainees singing, standing by his door. Eventually it became clear that he was singing “The Birdie Song,” and when the officer asked him, “Who you singing the Birdie Song to?” the young man answered, smiling, “Myself.”(from fieldnotes, 7/13/01)

on. The resulting CCJDC classroom message, then, is mixed: self-expression is welcome here, but only within strict and sometimes shifting limits, and preferably guided by the values espoused by the setting and its staff members.

### *Gym*

The cells/rooms are at one end of a continuum of behavior restriction in CCJDC, and their position on that continuum is matched by their ranking, among the young people I interviewed, as the least pleasant place to be. At the other end of these continua, allowing the most self-expression for detainees and, (not surprisingly, therefore) enjoying the most popularity with them, is the gym. In spite of my own extremely limited interest in competitive sports and typical gym class activities, the descriptive and energetic flow of my fieldnotes reflects the enjoyment I gained from observing detainee/players<sup>24</sup> playing sports<sup>25</sup> in the gym:

AnnMarie (European American female officer) and I sit with our backs against the wall of the gym closest to the multipurpose area [see Figure 4a for CCJDC diagram]. Many of the kids are energetic and graceful as they play; they add

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<sup>24</sup>This term is intended to parallel the “detainee/student” construction from the “Classroom” section, as the role duality and tensions are similar in the gym.

<sup>25</sup>The only regular team sport I saw played at CCJDC was volleyball. Basketball was not played by the usual rules, with two teams of players running simultaneously on the court. In fact, the gym had only a single basketball backboard, and the games involving basketball skills were primarily basket-shooting competitions, with detainees taking turns to make their shots. Two of the most commonly played were “Knockout” and “Around the World:”

The kids are playing Knockout and Around the World in the Gym. In Knockout, the kids are in a single line; the first two kids in line have basketballs. They shoot at the basket; the object is for person #2 in line to get a basket before #1, thus “knocking out” person #1 from the game. Then person #1 has to go stand by the sidelines until the game’s end, which happens when there are only two people left and one of them makes a shot. In Around the World, the entire group starts out lined up to the right of the backboard, near the base of the freethrow lane. Shooting points are marked along each side of the free throw lane, and from several 3-point spots further away. Each player starts at the right base corner of the free throw lane, and takes a shot; if s/he makes the shot, s/he moves to the next spot. The s/he can shoot again or stay; if s/he shoots again and misses, s/he goes to the end of the line and starts over. If s/he makes the shot, s/he can move forward again.

From  
fieldnotes, 2/5/02

“extra” movements as they go to make their [basketball] shots, dribbling the ball between their legs, spinning around, feinting back and forth as though facing an opponent. One kid in particular looks like a dancer, his movements are so flexible. As kids make or miss shots, they and others comment on what is happening— “Awww!” “Dang!”—or simply groaning, laughing, or sighing—or making faces and using their bodies, spinning away from the basket in frustration, jumping to catch the rebound of a made shot—to express pleasure or displeasure.

I feel myself actively enjoying watching this game, although the game itself is not all that interesting. It’s a big change from other places in the center, because here kids have the freedom to move around a bit, and they are also allowed to talk and laugh together a bit more than the rest of the time. They are still not supposed to talk to each other, but commenting on their own and each other’s shots, either verbally or physically, seems to be an accepted part of the activity.

From fieldnotes, 2/5/02

Not only is talking aloud allowed, but “sitting properly” is no longer a requirement; in the context of the gym, posture while seated appears to contribute little to detainees’ engagement, and gets no attention from the officers:

While not playing, the young men slouch so low that some of them have only their shoulder blades in contact with the wall. They appear very relaxed and interested in the game, but mostly not particularly excited. Their gazes follow the ball and the game, and they comment occasionally to clarify team scores. Patrick (European American male teacher) makes many high-scoring shots, and they exclaim at this as well: “Dang!” I think I hear one of them saying something about “We’ll have to give him [Patrick] a new name.” They seem somewhat different when they are actually playing – suddenly they are full of energy, adding in moves (spins, jumps) that appear to be just for style; they do it not only when shooting, but when they are running to their shooting-point, or just after making a shot, or when passing the ball to a teammate. Because the game is timed, they also move quickly and are cooperative in making sure the ball is passed quickly between teammates. One young African American man always comments either verbally or physically on his missed shots; slapping his hands against the wall, or shaking his head and saying in a disappointed or irritated tone, “Airball.”

From fieldnotes, 2/19/01

As these excerpts suggest, the usual CCJDC limitations (self- or rule-imposed) on movement, gesture and speech are greatly eased. Some officers and teachers participate in the games and contests. They, too, are freed from some of the constraints of the classroom, where interactions

have a particular structure and pattern, and officers' interaction with detainees must be quiet and brief enough to minimize disturbance to the class as a whole. The increased freedom for both detainees and officers, along with officers' full participation in activities, create an environment in which detainees are both observed and observers, both judges and objects of judgment.

From my conversations with detainees, and my observations in CCJDC, it was clear that sports, basketball in particular, provided an outlet not only for physical energy but for creativity and style. Although writing stories and poems can be a creative outlet, I never heard detainees clamor for more time to write or share stories. Nor did I witness the spontaneous expressions of pride in writing abilities that I heard in the gym about sports:

Some of the kids are playing a team basket-shooting game (two lines of kids shooting baskets, score kept for each team), supervised by staff. Jordan (study participant, African American male) is eager to join the basketball game. While he waits, he palms the basketball, turns it downward, and fully extends his arm. He asks me, "Can you do dis?" I say "No, I don't think so."

[Later] Jordan makes a shot and prances back to the end of the line. When he makes another one, I smile at him, he smiles back. He gestures the wrist-flick of an easy layup, as if to say "That went in easy! Did you see that?" Later, they switch to playing Knockout [a different basket-shooting competition] and when he makes another shot, he says proudly to me as he trots back to the end of the line, "Skills!" Other kids sometimes also prance or dance when they make their shots.

From fieldnotes, 4/23/02

The officers organize a volleyball game in the gym. The play is peppered with positive comments from staff and between kids. Serena (African American female officer) is playful with the kids, joking around and making faces with them; at one point she runs at one of the kids saying "Don't come over here again" (meaning out of their place in the game). MD (African American male detainee) gets pulled out [of the game, for a violation of a CCJDC rule] and sulks, sticking his lower lip way out and scowling.

From fieldnotes, 8/1/01

As in the classroom, rules in the gym are more flexible and open to interpretation by staff than they appear to be in the cells and pods.

A couple of the kids in line are dribbling the extra basketballs as they wait. AnnMarie (European American female officer) says to me, "I don't know if I



should call 'em on that—playing with those balls—it's probably good to get rid of some physical energy."

From fieldnotes, 2/5/02

Reggie (African American male officer) has Jordan replace him in the game. To the people playing, Reggie says, "I didn't say 'talk'! I didn't hear myself give permission to talk!" Jeremias (Latino male officer) says "If you guys talk, I'll just line you up against the wall" [i.e. stop the game].

The kids are keeping score as they play, currently it's 6-6. As shots are made or missed, people moan, groan, shout, or leap triumphantly in response. Jeremias tells them, "Quiet down!" They quiet down a little, and then a little more.

From fieldnotes, 4/23/02

However, the expectations for interactions with staff and "full participation" in activities can still motivate officers to impose punishment:

Jordan: [part of a multi-turn response to a question about the staff, in which he explains his categorization of the officers] . . . /Like/ her-, sittin' over there, /I don't like/ her.

Kate: /Uh huh./ Why is that?

Jordan: Cause-. She restricted me because we was up in the gym and she like to do stretches. . . .

Jordan: She wearin' the same clothes over [i.e., "over and over"]. . . .

Jordan: Then, she was like-, "did you say 'yes' that you wanted to do a harder stretch?" I was like, "No." And I didn't answer-, I didn't (even) answer her, I was just-. Cause she was like, "Keep your feet movin'." . . .

Jordan: So we-, so everybody was keepin' they feet movin'. Then, she's like, "Jordan, do you wanna do a harder stretch?" I didn't even answer. . . .

Jordan: I just kept doin' this [demonstrating a toned-down version of the exercise in his seat]. And then she's like, "Is that a 'yes?'" Then, everybody was like, ((slightly louder)) "damn!" And I was like-, I said "n- I ain't even say nothin'. I said 'naw.'" She's like, "But you nodded your headed 'yes.'" I was like, "No, I didn't." Then she sent me to my room, then when she came and talked to me, she went and changed the story.

Kate: So what did-, what was her story?

Jordan: Then she said, "I was just jokin' with you." And-, "Yes, you did nod your head 'yes.'" I said, "No, I didn't." "Yes you did." Then she changed her story again. I can't remember what the last story

was, but-  
Jordan: -But she changed it again somehow.  
Jordan: Right. Then I was like, “(skip it),” then-, I just came out-, and the next group came out their rooms.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

[During group calisthenics] AnnMarie (European American female officer) moves on to the next exercise, which is a variation on toe touches. She demonstrates the sequence (“1” is [fingertips touching the floor] in front of your feet, “2” is [fingertips touching the floor] between your feet, “3” is [fingertips pointing between the legs] out behind you, and “4” is all the way up [standing upright and clapping hands] and various “wrong” 4th positions – a little way up, halfway up, etc.). She then says to me and an undergraduate volunteer “Okay, and you guys are gonna be watching, right, to make sure everybody does it right?” We agree, and she goes on, “Cuz if anyone is doing it wrong, we start all over again!” [I am uncomfortable being put in this position, but having come in as “participant observer” rather than strictly observing tonight, I also see no way to disagree; instead I choose to resist the role silently.]

The class starts doing the toetouches, with AnnMarie counting. Detainee BR (male, ethnicity not recorded) falls quickly out of sync (after about six reps) with the rest of the kids; the volunteer calls out to him and the kids groan. AnnMarie starts the count again. I notice a couple of girls (both AfAm) in the back who are not doing the exercise as AnnMarie demonstrated. I try to make eye contact with them to encourage them to do it better, before they get caught, and before I get caught “not doing my job.” At some point I say “Hup!” (i.e. the rising-intonation, catching a near mistake noise) fairly loudly, but nobody hears me. I continue to make eye contact with the girls, smiling and encouraging them. [I was relieved that nobody heard me correcting the kids, as I didn’t want to be implicated in the group’s “punishment.”]

From fieldnotes, 10/9/01

In spite of the potential inconsistencies in rule-enforcement, detainees want to be in the gym whenever possible. Being in the gym is generally good, so being kept out of the gym is bad:

Kate: . . . like, of the stuff that you do in here besides goin’ to school-, is there any stuff-, like you talked about like the movies, and being outside as things that you really like. Are there any other activities that you particularly like or that you particularly dislike of the stuff that they have you do?

Franklin: . . . There’s one thing I dislike, /like/ they’ve had us-, like um, well, supposedly three times, they’ve had us come in here and learn about nutrition and /all that,/ for what, I don’t know. I don’t know

what the reason's for it, you know what I'm /sayin'./ We'll come in here, we'll have to sit here and l-, learn about nutrition and all that, you know what I'm /sayin'/, for our free time, then we gotta go straight back up to our room when we could have been in the gym-

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

The staff are aware of the rewarding nature of the gym for many detainees, and use time in the gym as a "carrot" to encourage good behavior.

DJ [European American male detainee] asks "Are we going to have PE today?" Norma says "If you are good and make it through the day, you will have... a wonderful afternoon." DJ asks "When will we have PE?" Norma tells him (and his classmates, all of whom are looking up and listening), "At 1:30, if you keep it together, you'll have PE."

From fieldnotes, 3/26/01

[part of a confrontation between an officer and a detainee in the cafeteria] The detainee (European American male) says something about "I just don't like to be touched." Earl (European American officer) responds in a slightly teasing, sarcastic tone, the sort that makes it unclear whether the content is a joke or not, "Then I guess you can't play Knockout anymore." The kid protests and Earl says in the same half-joking tone, but still with a straight face, "Well, you said you don't like to be touched, and in Knockout you get touched. I'm just trying to take care of you." The kid protests further, saying in an almost-pleading tone, "Noooo, not like *thaaaat!*"

From fieldnotes, 2/26/01

In the first excerpt, the entire group's PE time is contingent on "being good," "making it through the day," and "keeping it together." In the second excerpt, a detainee explains to Earl (an officer described by both officers and detainees as being likely to tease and "mess with" people) why he reacted strongly to Earl's looming over and leaning against him, which began, apparently, as an attempt to control and calm the youth's agitated and irritated behavior: The detainee does not like to be touched. Earl teases the youth, threatening to keep him out of one of the most common PE activities in CCJDC. Earl's comment diverts the youth's attention from the original argument, but leaves him unsure about the seriousness of the threat. The youth's response has an almost desperate quality to it, indicating his frustration and his concern about losing part of his PE privileges.

Like the CCJDC classrooms, the Gym has looser behavioral expectations, an increased range of interactional patterns, in comparison to other parts of the facility. Specifically, Detainees have increased freedom of movement and self-expression in the Gym, albeit still within some of the main CCJDC rules for behavior (full participation, no talking directly to other minors outside of the hearing range of an officer) and typical game rules (taking turns, keeping score). The range of detainees' activities in the Gym includes team games, individual competition games, and non-competitive activities like calisthenics. The rules of these activities, for the most part, do not constrain self-expression of detainees beyond what CCJDC rules already require, and CCJDC rules themselves are relaxed somewhat in the Gym. For example, there is no prescribed way to express pride in making a three-point basket on the first try, and detainees are not penalized for their dancing, shouting, groaning or making faces, even when they make eye contact with or talk to each other in the process. The dimension of self-expressive range is a key distinction between the Gym and the Classrooms. In the Classrooms, there is a prescribed way to tell a story one has written, a prescribed way to talk to the teacher, walk to the pencil sharpener, and so on. Sports and physical exercise constrain behavior in ways that directly support the success and enjoyment of the activity. In the CCJDC Gym, the ratio of seemingly arbitrary (i.e., corrections-focused and value-laden) to relatively understandable (i.e., inherent to a game or activity) constraints is much lower than in the classroom. The rules that remain allow detainees to stretch and energize stiff, unused physical muscles and to exercise the performance of "self," to show their personalities in movement and voice, to interact with other detainees doing the same. It is no surprise that detainees are eager, almost desperate, to get their time in the Gym.

#### *Food and Cafeteria*

Detainees eat lunch and sometimes dinner in the cafeteria; they eat breakfasts in their cell/rooms. For each meal, an officer is dispatched, with a van, to the county jail down the street; the kitchen in the jail makes meals for CCJDC as well. The food arrives in single-meal-sized plastic trays. Officers bring it in through the back door of the kitchen and distribute it to detainees; a cart with meal trays is rolled out into the Detention Area to serve detainees on Behavior Levels One and Two.

The lunch trays are beige/taupe colored, about 2-3" in height with an equally thick lid. The trays have four rectangular compartments of varying sizes. The "main course" for lunch today (identified by its size and its placement in the largest of the compartments) is circular slices of processed meat, apparently turkey; each 1/4" thick circle, about 5" in diameter, is comprised of two semicircles of color, one dark brown and one light brown (like dark meat and white meat). Another compartment on each tray holds coleslaw, which Chandra (African American female detainee) tells me I can have because "it's got like 50 million onions." The rest of the meal is roasted potatoes, shiny with oil, accompanied by a small puddle of ketchup and a little paper salt shaker (like at McDonald's), squares of spice cake with powdered sugar on top, and a carton of milk.

From fieldnotes, 2/26/01

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The contents of the lunch trays (being collected from detainees after they have finished eating): the main compartment of each tray has in it a pinkish-brown, thick substance, possibly refried beans. Embedded in the beans are large chunks of yellow potato, and smaller pieces of carrot and green beans. On most of the trays, this appears to be untouched; one has a spoonful or two missing, another is completely empty. Another compartment holds an irregular sphere of what looks like cornbread. This, too, is mostly untouched on the trays we collect. I comment on the food to Frank (African American male officer), saying that it looks nasty. He says it is "shit I wouldn't feed my dog."

From fieldnotes, 7/13/01

In spite of my own observation that CCJDC food usually looked and smelled extremely unappetizing, I seldom heard spontaneous complaints about the food from detainees in everyday CCJDC settings. However, cued by my attention and questions, detainees seldom failed to mention food in talking about "what it's like in here" or what they would do when they got out.

- Jimmy: I don't wanna go come back in here. Never ever again.
- Kate: And what is it about here that, that makes it so you don't wanna come back?
- Jimmy: Freedom.
- Kate: Yeah.
- Jimmy: Food. I miss my Dad, my Mom.
- Kate: Uh huh.

Jimmy: My brother and sisters.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

In this excerpt, Jimmy's list of reasons to avoid CCJDC starts with "freedom" and ends with "family," and "food" is squarely between the two. Other interview excerpts suggest that this juxtaposition of food with both freedom and family is not coincidental. Rather, the lack of appetizing food seems to be a daily, physical reminder of detainees' isolation and restriction. Even in our first meeting, before our interviews had begun, Jimmy established a link between being released and being free to eat as one chooses:

I talked to Jimmy there in the yard [fenced outdoor area behind JDC], to ask if he'd be in the study. He readily agreed, saying with evident surprise and enthusiasm, "You'll give me five dollars? Come *on!*" (i.e. "bring it on, I'll do whatever you want for \$5."). He tells me "I'll get out Friday" [and (paraphrased) go straight to McDonald's with the money.]

From fieldnotes, 8/23/01

Noah mentioned CCJDC food as one thing that was worse than he had expected, but minimized its overall importance to his experience of the facility:

Kate: [summarizing Noah's descriptive statements] And it sounds, you know, it sounds like what you're sayin' is, there are a lot of things about it that are easier than you expected, except for the food which is, (pause) not so good.

Noah: [minimizing the importance of the food aspect] It's, but that's not, you know, that's-

Kate: Right, that's not that big a deal, right-

Noah: Right, you know, that's /food./

Interview #1, Noah, 4/5/01

Like Noah, Franklin talks about the food being bad, going into some detail (below). Given a choice between the food "mattering" or "not mattering," he says it doesn't matter. He explains the food's limited negative effect on him by talking about imagining what he'll eat when he is released. While he starts by naming a single barbecue restaurant, he rapidly gains momentum, considering a "lot of place[s]" and then "a rampage" of eating.

Kate: Alright. Um, what about the food? What do you think about the

food?

Franklin: Ugh. Terrible.

Kate: ((laughs))

Franklin: ((laughs)) Terrible. I mean, I eat in anyway cause /I'm/ hungry, you know what I'm sayin', but it's terrible. /Ain't/ sanitary.  
((laughs))

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ /Yeah./ What do you mean?

Franklin: I mean it is [sanitary], you know what I'm sayin', but that's just another way of sayin' /it./

Kate: /Right./ it's just /stinky./

Franklin: /(??.)/ I mean-. Like powdered eggs, I /mean/, come on now, man.

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ ((laughs))

Franklin: And powdered potatoes and /stuff/ like that, I mean, that's disgusting.

Kate: /Uh huh./ Yeah. ((laughs)) It is pretty disgusting, I've sat in on a couple meals, but-

Franklin: -Man, they gave us-, they gave us like some bologna with barbecue sauce on it, I don't know if it was a joke or not, but they gave /us some/ bologna with barbecue sauce on it, I sit there and look, just laugh about /it, you/ know what I'm sayin', like-

Kate: /((groans))/ /((laughs))/ -Yeah.

Franklin: What kind of stuff is that, you know what I mean?

Kate: Yeah, th-, so, how does the food-, does it-, does having like nasty food like that affect the rest of your time here or does it not matter really?

Franklin: No, it really doesn't matter. Cause I-, I just think, like, if I get out, I'm goin' to these /restaurants, I'm goin' here./

Kate: /Right, what are you/ gonna eat, when you /get out/?

Franklin: /Man, I'm/ goin' to Sweet Willie's [a local barbecue restaurant],  
((laughs)).

Kate: ((laughs)) Uh huh.

Franklin: I'm goin'-, man, I can name-, I can name a lot of place I'm gonna go. Yeah, I'm gonna go to-

Kate: -Yeah. ((laughs)) /Gonna go and chow down./  
Franklin: /I'm goin' on a/ rampage.  
Kate: Uh huh. ((laughs))  
Franklin: ((laughs))

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Based on my observations and detainees' reports, the "rampage" Franklin describes is probably not a result of hunger alone; the food at CCJDC is unpleasant, but not completely inedible for most people (especially those accustomed to public school cafeteria food). As he describes it, imagining this eating rampage is a way to ward off the messages carried on every CCJDC tray: you have no control, your family is not here, we will provide nourishment in as unappetizing a form as possible. Eating a good meal when released becomes part of a celebration reclaiming what CCJDC took away temporarily: freedom and social connections, especially connections to family.

Kate: Um, and how was it coming home?  
Franklin: It was great.  
Kate: Yeah. Yeah, and it was your birthday, right, /so/, yeah, your mom said like, you had people over or somethin' and-, and I know that you were like-, you guys were talkin' about steak and what you were gonna eat.  
Franklin: /Yeah./ Oh, yeah, we ate a whole bunch of /stuff/. ((laughs)) A whole bunch of stuff. Some real food.  
Kate: /Oh ((laughs))./ Uh huh.  
Franklin: Or better food than they had in there.

Franklin, Interview #2, 6/18/01

Franklin contrasts CCJDC food, in its unpleasantness, to "real food" enjoyed with family members. While the institution's food must be physically nourishing to comply with state standards, its poor quality is a reminder of the limits of CCJDC's caretaking stance. In addition, if the food can be assumed to be unappealing at best, then eating the food requires, at its root, a denial of one's "self" (i.e., one's preferences or desires) for the sake of survival or staying out of trouble.



While all detainees eat CCJDC's food, only those at or above Behavior Level Three eat in the cafeteria (otherwise, detainees eat in their rooms or, rarely, in supervised groups on their pods), encountering another physical space with its own set of behavioral norms. The cafeteria is adjacent to the Detention Area, near the staff station. The room itself is an oblong polygon, close to rectangular. The entrance from the Detention Area is on the north side of the room, and a door in the opposite (south) wall leads to the kitchen. The cafeteria holds eight tables—rectangular metal tables with benches attached. The benches, if they were full, would seat three people comfortably on a side, four with physical contact (which would not be allowed at CCJDC). The seating arrangement for each meal is controlled by staff.

When we go into the cafeteria, Roy (European American officer) tells the (three) boys “Okay, you can sit down, one to a table, facing this way please” (indicating that they should face away from the door and windows of the cafeteria, toward the west wall). The boys do as he says; Roy sits facing north at a fourth table, which is perpendicular to the ones where the boys sit, and I sit at a fifth, next to and in the same orientation as Roy's.

From fieldnotes, 3/22/01

Eating is, of course, the primary activity carried out in the cafeteria. As in other CCJDC settings, detainees' communication is limited by rules and officers' control. Detainees are seated at the tables in formations designed to prevent covert communication (e.g., eye contact, whispering, hand signals). In the example above, Roy has all detainees face one direction, so they would have to turn around to look at each other; a larger group would be seated in a staggered formation on the benches, such as that used to prevent cheating on school tests. Detainees can speak if they are spoken to by an officer, but otherwise must raise their hands to get permission to talk; if they want to address another minor, they must ask explicitly for permission to do so.

As they do in the gym, officers in the cafeteria have complete control, within the limits of facility rules, over the amount, content and freedom of conversation and activities. Additionally, they are free to direct the detainees' conversation without contributing, to contribute to a shared conversation among officer(s) and detainees, or to lecture or instruct without allowing detainees to contribute. In this context, the officers' personalities and interactional styles come to the forefront more than they do in the structured environment of the

classroom; this broadens the range of behavioral expectations a detainee might encounter, though usually within the confines of the basic CCJDC ground rules.

While officers' freedom in the cafeteria is similar to what they might experience in the gym, detainees' freedoms are more limited in the cafeteria. As a result, spending time in the cafeteria is probably less rewarding to detainees than being in the gym. Because only levels three and up eat in the cafeteria, it is not an option for newcomers to detention, nor is it an activity that detainees can request for the whole group (as they might ask about Knockout in the gym or a game in the classroom). The increase in officers' level of control is not balanced by the protections of game rules and behavioral expectations, which in the gym seem to provide additional freedom of movement and expression. Similarly, officers' idiosyncrasies, such as bad moods, expectations for detainee behavior, and interactional styles, loom larger in the imposed structure of cafeteria activity. Therefore, detainees cannot predict before arriving in the cafeteria what kind of time they are likely to have there: Will they be allowed to converse with each other with limited staff intervention? Will they be able to create some kind of competition or game? Will they have a history lesson instead of a talk about motorcycles, or family, or school? The cafeteria experience seems, like the food, to convey a message about detainees' lack of control over their treatment and surroundings: "This is what you get, this is all you get, you won't know from day to day what it will look like, but it probably won't be as good as what you'd get on the outside."

My discussion of the cafeteria and its "messages," more than those of other CCJDC "microsettings," is based on my perspective as an observer, but an outsider to the experience of being either an officer or a detainee. Except for frequent remarks about the food, detainees made little mention of the cafeteria. In fact, some study participants never made it to level three (either because they were released too soon, or because their behavior did not meet criteria), and were therefore never in the cafeteria for a meal. As a result, my interpretation of the cafeteria and its role for detainees is more tentative than my interpretations of other settings more common, and apparently more crucial, to the experience of all the young men I interviewed. However, a discussion of CCJDC structures, settings and interactions would have been incomplete without mention of the cafeteria, and so it remains in the manuscript with this

cautionary note to the reader about the validity of my conclusions.

### *Multipurpose Area*

The Multipurpose Area (MPA (my abbreviation, rather than a CCJDC term)) is significant to detainees' CCJDC experience mostly in its function as a transitional space. Physically, it is most easily defined as the space within the Detention Area which is not the pods, cells, gym, classrooms, cafeteria, staff station, or master control area, but across which one can see or move to these other spaces. It is colorful only to the extent that other spaces are colorful; when a Christmas tree is erected and decorated in one of the pods, or when something is posted on the staff station wall, it can be seen from the MPA. The one exception I noticed was the lining up of six or seven small pumpkins, painted by detainees for Halloween, on the floor next to the outer (east) wall of the Master Control Room. The brightening effect of the pumpkins was drastically minimized by their placement on the floor of the high-ceilinged, wide-open space (because there are no tables, shelves or other furniture in the space), and by the vast area of gray concrete floor and white walls surrounding them. Occasionally, the MPA is used for showing movies on videotape to the entire group of detainees, for group meetings (e.g., a young men's group run by a local black fraternity), or for volleyball games. However, the detainees' most common experience of the space is walking through it in slowly shuffling, perimeter-hugging lines, as described earlier in the section on sensory impressions of the Detention Area. The large space's possibilities for free movement and the realities of detainees' slow steps and restricted path contrast distinctly with each other, making more obvious the controlling, jail-like function of the larger setting.

### *Officer's Spaces*

Three key "officer's spaces" (my term) reside within the confines of the Detention Area; they are the Staff Station, the Master Control Room, and the "Fishbowl" or Assistant Superintendents' Office. Detainees are never taken into the Master Control Room, and have little contact with either the Staff Station or the Fishbowl. They are sometimes invited/brought, with an officer, into the Fishbowl when there is a disciplinary issue and an assistant superintendent chooses to intervene. However, the Fishbowl is frequently empty, as the assistant superintendents may be in the administrative area or working with officers in other

parts of the Center. Detainees are sometimes brought to the Staff Station for their evening phone calls, or for a haircut (for court) by an outside provider, or to talk with staff about a disciplinary issue. Their exposure to the space is brief, and officers make only cryptic remarks about detainees in the presence of other detainees (e.g., [paraphrased example] “That situation we were talking about, I figured it out, I’ll tell you later.”). In general, when detainees’ observations included mention of these areas, their statements had more to do with interpreting staff behavior than interpreting the message of that particular space; in other words, these “officer’s spaces” were just that, evoking little specific meaning for detainees. Therefore, I have included detainees’ understanding of staff behavior in these locations in the next chapter, which presents detainees’ perceptions of CCJDC and their interactions with staff.

#### SUMMARY

CCJDC, like any setting, conveys messages to its participants about its purposes and its “beliefs” about the participants, through its physical structures, its schedule and events, and its social interactions within spaces. Detainees in CCJDC come in through the Intake area, where they encounter formal labeling procedures of fingerprinting and “mugshots,” along with informal labeling and CCJDC socialization in the form of the Handbook and initial interactions with officers. From Intake, they move to the Detention Area, which is composed of several unique “microsettings” or subspaces, each with its own norms for behavior, and, therefore, its own messages to detainees. The microsettings can be described by their placement on several continua, including: isolation/social contact; structure/flexibility of routine; freedom/restriction of detainees’ behavior; freedom/restriction of officers’ behavior. Variations in freedom of self-expression appear related to detainees’ general preference for the gym or cafeteria over the classroom or cells. CCJDC staff use these spaces accordingly: gym time can be lost through bad behavior, and time on the pods or in the cells is a typical punishment for detainees.

Detainees are, from the moment of entry into CCJDC, in unfamiliar territory—they are on someone else’s turf. They must draw their cues for “appropriate behavior” not just from past experiences, but from the messages and pressures surrounding them in a variety of forms. These might include teachers’ and officers’ behavior toward them, the rules presented on paper and the ones learned only in social interaction, and behavior modeled by other detainees. These

messages carry subtexts as well. Classroom posters convey an intent to change behavior not just now, but in the future. Detention food reminds detainees they're not at home, they're not free, and they will be given nutrition, but not much beyond what is absolutely required in terms of form and taste.

The physical and interactional settings of CCJDC, as described from the (attempted) viewpoint of detainees, provides a context for exploring detainees' statements about their experiences in the setting. The following chapter continues the detainee's-eye view tour of CCJDC, exploring detainees' perceptions of CCJDC as a whole. Chapter 6 also considers detainees' beliefs about themselves before, during and after detention, in an attempt to understand what meaning they make of their observations and experiences.

## CHAPTER 6

### DETAINEES' INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DETENTION EXPERIENCE

#### PURPOSES OF CCJDC

- Kate: So, why do you think they put kids in detention– what do you think they're trying to do by putting kids in here?
- Jimmy: They didn't used to do this, did they?
- Kate: Actually, they've been doing this for a long time–the juvenile court started in 1899–before that they put kids in jail with the adults. So yeah, they've been doing this for a long time. But what do you think the reason is?
- Jimmy: They detain you to make you think about what you did, to make you wanna not do it again. They tell you, “you better than that.”

From fieldnotes, 11/14/01

The young men participating in the study talked about CCJDC in a variety of ways, but their references to the facility's purpose, whether explicit or implicit, made it clear that they understand CCJDC as a place that is trying to change detainees. This revelation, in isolation, would be unremarkable; the role of correctional facilities is, of course, to “correct” something. However, the detainees' statements go beyond the obvious, revealing a variety of methods and targets for transformation, as well as some hints of barriers to the facility's success. Several detainees used the language of education–teaching, lessons, and learning–in a sense combining method and purpose into one idea. This is probably related in part to the idiom “learning one's lesson,” referring to a lesson gained through negative experience, as in the following examples from an interview with Jordan:

- Kate: “Nothin’.” [repeating his last response] So there's nothin' good about this place? Alright.  
[responding to Jordan's shaking his head “no”]
- Jordan: (?) you-, but you learn your lesson.
- Kate: Mmm hmm. So-, is this teaching you any kinda lesson, I mean-, yeah? [responding to Jordan's nodding] What's it teachin' you?

Jordan: I don't know. I can't explain it.

[later in same interview]

Jordan: But I think the judge-, she gonna let me go, or he gonna let me go because they was gonna release me on this-

Jordan: -but my mom asked them to keep me

Jordan: so I'll learn my lesson.

[later in same interview]

Kate: What did [your mom] say when you first got in here, like, the last time, when you were here for a week? Do you remember what she said to you?

Jordan: When I first got out?

Kate: No, when you first actually came in. Like-, like the first time you got arrested and ended up in detention, the last time around.

Jordan: ((pause)) She ain't say nothin'.

Kate: No?

Jordan: She /just/ said, did I learn my lesson?

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

The concepts of teaching and lessons are interwoven with detainees' ideas about CCJDC's purposes and methods, combining commentary on the targets of change with themes of punishment, deterrence and rehabilitation. The paraphrase of Jimmy's explanation, above, reveals a common framework for CCJDC's lessons, echoed in other detainees' statements. CCJDC is seen as affecting three interrelated domains: how youth think ("make you think about what you did," "make you wanna not do it again"), how they behave (assuming that not wanting to do something reduces the likelihood of doing it), and who they are or how they see themselves ("you better than that"). The discussion below uses excerpts from interviews with all six participants—Noah, Corey, Franklin, Markus, Jordan and Jimmy—to explore their ideas about how and what CCJDC is trying to teach detainees.

#### Deterrence as a Lesson

Noah: /- There's/ some kids who should-, who-, who need a lesson in life and-

Noah: An-, and other kids who, you know, they-, they've-,

they've had theirs, they just, you know, they ain't takin' a grip on it /and,/ and, you know, takin' a hold of it and /doin'/ what they're supposed to so, they're gonna end up in here again.

Noah: Most of the people in here have been in here more than once.

Noah: And, you know, I'm not-, I'm not gonna end up in /here/ again. Again- I've only been in here once.

Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01

For Noah, CCJDC is part of a necessary "lesson in life," and being a one-time detainee is the evidence that the lesson has been learned; the lesson is a path to deterrence, but not a deterrent in itself. Markus, in the excerpts below, sees a less abstract lesson being taught, and believes that only time in detention will do the trick:

Kate: So, one of the questions is . . . what do you think, um, detention is supposed to do for kids. Like, what is, what's the point of it?

Markus: Try to teach you to stay out of there, like, if you keep doin' bad stuff, you, this is where, the place you'll end up at.

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

From this point, I followed up with questions about rehabilitation and punishment, concepts which Markus accepted with apparent ease (however, his youth and the power difference between us make it possible that he was acquiescing for reasons other than full conceptual agreement):

Kate: . . . Some places are sorta, like, about helping you think differently, and other places are just to kind of scare you, to not do it. Do you think it has either or both of those things goin' on?

Markus: Both.

Kate: Yeah? So what /things about/

Markus: /It could/ teach you and then it could scare you.

Kate: Uh-huh. So what parts about it teach you stuff?

Markus: Like, they'll talk to you about stuff, that you go to classes and stuff.

Kate: Uh-huh. And what about the scary part?

Markus: Um, being locked down.



Kate: Uh-huh. So just like, not having your /freedom (?)/

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

Markus substituted “teaching” for the notion of “helping you think differently” that I had presented, and focused on the restriction of CCJDC as the “deterrent” (scaring) aspect. The next part of the conversation, presented in the two excerpts below, suggests that for Markus, the lesson to be learned is directly linked to the inevitability and the harshness of punishment:

Kate: Okay. Um, so why do you think... that they would detain kids to teach them things instead of doing things some other way? Like, why would they put ‘em in the detention center?

Markus: Cuz they did something bad /and they/ wanna teach them.

Kate: /Uh-huh/ And they can’t /teach ‘em/

Markus: /Not to do/ anything, and this is the place where you end up at.

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

At first, Markus’ reasoning seems to be that CCJDC is, by definition, the place kids go when they do “something bad,” and this inevitability is part of “the lesson.” When I asked him about alternative consequences, it became clear that CCJDC’s jail-like aspect is another essential ingredient:

Kate: Oh, okay. So, /it’s kinda/ like, so it’s like, you’re going to get punished, /if you/ do this again, so you can’t teach ‘em in school, because... because it– that isn’t enough of a threat? Is that(?) (questioning intonation) . . . I mean, like, why couldn’t they just say, “Well, you did something bad, now you have an extra class in school?”

Markus: /Yeah./ /Yeah./ Um, that’s probably di– that’s different.

Kate: Yeah? How’s it diff’rent?

Markus: Cuz you don’t be locked up, you just have a extra class, /in the/ the detention center, you be locked up, you be in your room.

Kate: /Uh-huh/ So it’s harder.

Markus: Yeah.

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

Jordan (below) spoke more generally about the unpleasantness of CCJDC and

identifying it as "jail." He expressed a willingness to accept some restrictions, but implied that CCJDC went too far. As a result, his desire to stay out, and to tell other kids to do the same, was strong.

Kate: [responding to Jordan's statement that he'd been in his room most of the afternoon] -But one way or another, you end up stayin' in your room, /most of the time./

Jordan:/Right/. ((strongly)) It's *jail*. You can't /get all/ the freedom in the world, but-.

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ -Right, so it's like jail. It is jail, just a kid jail.

Jordan:Right.

Kate: Yeah. Um-, if you were gonna tell another kid about this place, what would you tell them?

Jordan:That it's not fun up in here.

Kate: Mmm Hmm.

Jordan:And-, it ain't no place to be.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01  
[emphasis in original text]

In an excerpt cited earlier, Jordan reported that his mother asked him if he had learned his lesson, a lesson he could not easily articulate. Jimmy's father, on the other hand, uses the example of Jimmy's time in CCJDC to teach him, directly and explicitly, the lesson of deterrence.

Jimmy:[My dad] tell me that, uh-, don't go back there. You need to straighten up-, cause they ain't playin' wick you, and stuff like that.

Kate: Mmm hmm. What do you think he means-, they ain't playin' with you?

Jimmy:That they goin' take-, put me in jail if I keep on messin' up.

Kate: So-, that they'll put you in D.O.C. instead of just here. Yeah.

Jimmy:If I catch another case.

Kate: Mmm hmm.

Jimmy: Then they'll probably put me in D.O.C.

Jimmy, Interview #2, 10/30/01

The detainees' statements about CCJDC's lesson focus largely on the behavioral aspect of deterrence. The main lesson, as they see it, is "don't do 'bad things' or you will end up in detention." When detainees strayed from this behavioral focus, they usually strayed as well from the idea of punishment, acknowledging a rehabilitative purpose as well. Noah's notion of a "lesson in life" seems broader than the simple concept of inevitable punishment. Jimmy used idioms of morality—"think about what you did," wanting not to do it again, being a "better person"—that go beyond his statements about the threat of a DOC term. Markus, too, made mention of staff "talking to" detainees and teaching classes; his description of CCJDC classes, detailed in a later section, will confirm the intuitive sense that they would not be simply about the link between delinquent acts and time in CCJDC. The theme of changing not only detainees' behavior, but their thinking and selves, arose repeatedly and spontaneously in my interviews with Noah and Markus, to the extent that it merits attention here.

#### Passive Rehabilitation: A Chance to Change

Kate: How do you feel bein' in here?

Markus: I don't know. Boring, tiring

Kate: Yeah. Yeah, so you're just bored. So [responding to an earlier comment by Markus that some kids think going to CCJDC makes them "cool"], but it doesn't seem like, for you it's not anything about, like, your ego. Like feeling like better about yourself cuz you're in here?

Markus: Right.

Markus: Just give me a chance to change.

Kate: Uh huh. Do you think that's what happening? Are you getting a chance to change?

Markus: Yeah.

Kate: Do you think you needed that?

Markus: Yeah.

Markus, Interview #1, 7/29/01

This passage, in comparison to earlier-cited excerpts from Markus' interviews, posits a

different dynamic between CCJDC and detainees. Here, CCJDC is relatively passive and benign, a place that *provides an opportunity*. The implication is that detainees can choose whether or not to take this chance. In the excerpts cited earlier, Markus saw CCJDC as more active and punitive, teaching kids in part by locking them up and punishing them. It should be noted that the current, “benign CCJDC” excerpt is from our first interview, while Markus was still in CCJDC, and the others were from our last interview, nearly ten months later. Several interpretations are possible here, with little or no information to guide our choice of the most likely one. Markus may have held both sets of beliefs throughout, and their emergence in different interviews was coincidental; the “benign” interpretation may have been a way of coping while in CCJDC, or a result of discomfort criticizing the setting while he was still subject to its restrictions; or Markus’ perspective may have changed over time, from an initial belief in an abstract notion of “choosing to change” to a later, more concrete understanding of CCJDC as a place that merely punishes bad behavior. Another possibility, not to be ignored, is that the difference in content was driven by the difference between a response to a direct question and a spontaneously emerging thought.

Like Markus, Noah and Jimmy referred occasionally to CCJDC as a passive provider of opportunity. They talked much less about its punishing qualities, so their contributions cannot help us to explain the noted duality in Markus’ interpretation. However, the details of their “benign CCJDC” constructions may illuminate the means by which detainees see the setting trying to change them. Their explanations of this process focus on how and what detainees think about their identities, their past behavior, and how they will make choices in the future; an implicit assumption is that changing how and what they *think* will somehow change what they *do*, through their motivations and desires. These themes are evident in the excerpt that opened this chapter, with detainees being made to think “about what [they] did” (content/past), to “wanna not do it again” (process/future), and finally to claim a “better” self (identity):

Jimmy: They detain you to make you think about what you did, to make you wanna not do it again. They tell you, “you better than that.”

From fieldnotes, 11/14/01

Noah, too, believed CCJDC could help detainees improve themselves by changing their

thinking, and returned repeatedly to this theme in our first interview. In many of these passages, Noah talks about open-mindedness or thoughtfulness as a quality that helps CCJDC benefit him and other detainees. The following excerpts from our first interview are presented in chronological order, with emphasis added:

Kate: Yeah, yeah, /do you think you deserve to be in here?/

Noah: /I think it's uh,/ for what I did, uh, yeah, I think, I think deserve to come here and I'm glad I did.

Kate: Mmm hmm.

Noah: Cause you know, it, it *changed the way of my, my thought*, you know *the way /I/ look at certain things*.

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Noah: [about other people who might deserve and benefit from detention] Somebody who's maybe, uh, involved with gangs /or/ something cause, you know, it helped them get away from those things and, you /know,/ have them *live a different life* for awhile and maybe they'd start /to/ *understand what life's about* and, um, just things along that line.

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Noah: [observations about detainees' responses to CCJDC] And uh, you know, there's other people, you know, like myself, /like,/ that are uh, laid back, you know, kinda got their own thoughts /about/ things and, and, you know, ready to get outta here. And I'm not sure if, you know, they're thinkin' what I'm *thinkin' about*, /you/ know, *changin'*. But uh, and um, I don't know ((laughs)).

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Noah: [predicting which detainees will probably return to CCJDC] That type of a person, /who/, they just, you know, basically, they ain't got no kind of respect and, /you/ know, they just-, they don't *open their ears and listen* to what other people got to say, /they/ wanna hear what-, what they know and what /they/ got to say and what other people are sayin', you know, it's not right and /uh,/ you know, basically along that line, they're not *open-minded* people.

Noah: And that's what *they need to be*, is *more open-minded* about things.

Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01

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While Noah's sense of changing detainees' thinking was fairly abstract, Jimmy talked about it more concretely:

Jimmy: Help 'em to realize and stuff like that.

Jimmy: Cuz some kids in here don't even realize they did anything wrong.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

This statement implies a specific lesson, rather than a generalized change in thinking; in fact, Jimmy presented it in the context of a discussion about services in CCJDC, which brings us to the "active rehabilitation" concept, along with specific "lesson" content, discussed by several detainees.

#### Active Rehabilitation: Classes and Concrete Lessons

What follows is the preface to Jimmy's comment that CCJDC can, or should, correct detainees' thinking by helping them realize that they did something wrong. He starts out with a critique of the punitive, jail-like atmosphere, and then suggests what he believes would be a better approach.

Jimmy: Cuz the way they, uh, the way they act. They don't- What I feel is ((sigh)) they, they ain't, they ain't, the ki- We all kids, you know what I'm sayin'. It's not like it's a-- they tryin' to treat us like it, like jail, like a county jail.

Jimmy: Kids, when they, when kids commit crime at a young age, don't you put, they're, receive help for 'em and stuff?

Kate: You'd think.

Jimmy: Right.

Jimmy: Help 'em. Anger management classes.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

Jimmy's first stay in detention, when this interview took place, may have coincided with a period when few or no "rehabilitative" classes were offered. However, other detainees mentioned classes such as Jimmy suggests, targeting detainees' behavior and thinking.

Kate: I don't know if you were there when they had like either anger management or, did they do any like life skills...

Markus: Yeah.

Kate: ...stuff? Do you think that stuff works?

Markus: Um--yeah, it worked on me.  
[ . . . . ]  
Kate: Right. So what were the things that they did that did work for you?  
Markus: Prob'ly how to stay outta there (laughs).  
Kate: Mm-hmm? So how did /they/  
Markus: /Don't/ hang out with the wrong people.  
Kate: Uh-huh. So /what/  
Markus: /The wrong/ crowd.  
Kate: And did you learn that from, like, being in a class, or from like sorta individual conversations with people, or...  
Markus: From a class.

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

The classes Markus attended, according to this excerpt, addressed anger management, substance use and abuse, and peer relationships or social choices. (His comment that the classes “weren’t for him” indicate a possible problem with the rehabilitative work of CCJDC, which will be addressed more fully in the following section.) He had to attend all the classes, but found the most utility in lessons having to do with how to stay out of the detention center by avoiding the “wrong crowd.” This concept of the “wrong crowd lesson” arose in Jordan and Noah’s interviews, as well. For Noah, this was an implicit part of the passive learning to be done at CCJDC, by removing (some) detainees from a negative peer group:

Noah: Somebody who’s maybe, uh, involved with *gangs* /or/ something cause, you know, it *helped them get away* from those things and, you /know,/ have them live a different life for awhile.

Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01

For Jordan, the “wrong crowd lesson” was one he believed his mother wanted him to learn during his stay at detention; he seems to imply that the punitive aspect of CCJDC would change his ideas about who he spends time with, or at least deter his continued association with them.

Jordan: -but my mom asked them to keep me.  
Jordan: So I’ll learn my lesson.

Kate: What do you think /about that?/

Jordan:/Cause the people/-, cause the people that I was hangin' with when I got /arrested/, she didn't want me hangin' with.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

Study participants understood CCJDC's rehabilitative efforts as lessons about "how to think," "how to behave," and "how to choose one's friends and activities." The idea that an institution exists solely to teach these lessons, and that part of the lesson is actually a threat ("if you don't shape up, you'll end up in a place like this"), says a great deal about the culture of the juvenile justice system in general. The original goal of the juvenile court was to protect youth from adult jails; much of the court's development had to do with providing services to youth perceived as needy or neglected. This theme has been transmuted, in the culture of CCJDC, where neglectful parenting is "proven" by delinquent behavior. In this worldview, it makes sense to remove young people from their homes and take over the task of teaching them morals, values and identity. While the juvenile justice system may technically be addressing juvenile delinquent behavior, the lessons learned in CCJDC (and probably in other detention facilities) are much broader than that: they are about values. Indeed, one of the values espoused in the system is that adolescents should put others' values ahead of their own—not just in the sense of obeying the law, but in social interactions and in their response to CCJDC itself. Furthermore, the "lesson" of CCJDC is about who detainees should be or become, about identity. In a context of limited self-expression and even identity erasure, the goal is to replace "bad" thoughts and behaviors with "appropriate" ones, as defined by adult authorities, making reference to extremely limited information about who young people are when they come in, and what their strengths might be.

The teaching methods and goals of juvenile detention have an imperious quality to them. Students' retention and adoption of the material is measured by their behavior, and more specifically through their absence from the detention center in the future. This approach seemed more welcome to Markus and Noah than to the other participants, but even Markus expressed some difficulties with it. Markus' critique, along with the responses of Franklin and Jordan, provide some clues about barriers to detainees' learning the perceived lessons of CCJDC.



## BARRIERS TO LEARNING

### Unclear Goals

Franklin, when invited to talk about problems with being in CCJDC, brings up the non-academic classes, held during time that would otherwise be spent playing sports in the gym or having “free time” on the pods.

Franklin: There’s one thing I dislike, /like/ they’ve had us-, like um, well, supposedly three times, they’ve had us come in here and learn about nutrition and /all that,/ for what, I don’t know. I don’t know what the reason’s for it, you know what I’m /sayin’./ We’ll come in here, we’ll have to sit here and l-, learn about nutrition and all that, you know what I’m /sayin’/, for our free time, then we gotta go straight back up to our room when we could have been in the gym-

Kate: /Yeah, what’s that?/ /Uh huh./ /Mmm Hmm./ /Uh huh./ -Oh.

Franklin: -playin’ ball or something, you know what I’m /sayin’/?

Kate: /Right,/ so having actual free /time,/ or like doin’ something fun.

Franklin: /Yeah./ Yeah.

Kate: Is that part of the thing where they’re having you like do the-, cause I know they’re having people cook and they’re doin’ like, resumes and work stuff, is that separate from that? Cause th-, they’re tryin’ to like do this life skills thing, is /that part of that, or is it-, oh/

Franklin: /Yeah, I don’t know what-, I don’t know/ what it is.

Kate: ((laughs)) Alright, it’s just somethin’.

Franklin: I mean, to be honest, I don’t know what /it is,/ they just do it.  
((laughs))

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

In addition to his complaint about having limited time in the most enjoyable activities available at CCJDC, Franklin expresses a lack of clarity about the purpose of the classes, ending his statement with the opinion that “they just do it.” His description emphasizes the polarity between staff and detainees: the activity is something that detainees “have to” do (which is actually true of all detainee activities in CCJDC), for no reason apparent to Franklin other than the staff’s whim. Here, the barriers to learning may be the perceived irrelevance of the topic for

Franklin himself or the instructors' inability to convey the lesson clearly<sup>26</sup>; in addition, the strategy of replacing "free time" and time in the gym with classroom time, beyond that of the school day, did not facilitate Franklin's interest in learning.

#### Irrelevant Topics

Markus, too, reported some problems with the non-academic lessons taught at CCJDC, in spite of his expressed interest in "a chance to change." In an excerpt above, Markus noted that the anger management and life skills classes "worked on [him]," but then went on to say

Markus: But, like, anger management, I don't really have any anger problems.

Kate: Right.

Markus: And, I don't drink or smoke or /nothin'/ so, some of the classes really weren't... for me.

Markus: But you had to go to 'em anyway.'

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

The classes' goals were clear to Markus, but he did not see them as helping him to learn *his* lessons. As an observer, I would agree with Markus' assessment that he did not have anger or substance use problems as they are generally defined in correctional or clinical practice. However, even youth who would be judged by adults to have those problems might not see themselves that way. Given that Markus also seemed to be on the "acquiescent" end of a continuum of responses to CCJDC's lessons, it is possible that more than a few detainees would combine the responses of Franklin and Markus, finding the facility's "concrete" lessons and teaching strategies irrelevant, unclear and irritating.

#### Conscious Avoidance

The reader may recall Jordan's statement, quoted near the beginning of this chapter, that

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<sup>26</sup>During my observations at CCJDC, a program was implemented whereby detention officers would teach detainees "life skills," including such things as cooking or applying and interviewing for jobs. Officers were assigned to the topics, but some felt they could do better and enjoy the process more if they were allowed to choose an area in which they had strong skills and knowledge. Over a period of two or three weeks, I heard frequent staff comments about officers' questions about how to teach the classes, combined with frustration at being asked to add "educator" to their job descriptions. Therefore, Franklin may have been unclear about "what they were doing" because the staff members themselves had not achieved clarity.

he felt he was learning a lesson but was unable to explain what it was. My later contacts with Jordan showed that his difficulty giving an answer was unusual for him; as I noted in my description of Jordan, he was generally articulate and capable of expressing deep, even poignant, insights. He explained this anomalous difficulty in that first interview as follows:

Kate: So-, are there, um-, when you think about that, is there a particular way that you feel when you're thinkin' about it? I mean, do you feel sad or mad or happy or-, about the lesson. ((pause)) No. [responding to Jordan's shaking his head "no"] Okay, /so it's just somethin'/-

Jordan: /I don't even/ think about it. I don't think about this place.

Kate: Oh. Alright, so what do you think about while you're in here, instead of thinkin' about this place?

Jordan: I jus-, well, I think about, like, doin' good up in this place so I can get out, /but-/, I don't think about like, how-, what-, what-, how fast my days go by /or whatever./ I don't think about that cause the more you think about it, they more they gonna go slow.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

Not-thinking about CCJDC appears to be a coping strategy for Jordan; he returns to it later in the same interview, as we talk about his conversations with his mother while in detention.

Kate: Oh, okay, you guys haven't talked on the phone or /nothin'/?

Jordan:/Oh yeah/, we be /talkin'/ on the phone.

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ Uh huh.

Jordan:But-, ((pause)), (we don't talk about ( ) stuff).

Kate: Oh, okay, so-, does she talk about how she-, what she's thinkin' about-, about-, or th-, feeling about you bein' in here?

Jordan:I don't like talkin' about, like, in here.

Kate: Oh, okay. So when you talk to /her you talk about/-

Jordan:/Like-, like-/, she tells me like-, she tells me like, she got my school stuff.

Kate: Mmm hmm.

Jordan:And she registered me for school.

Kate: So you talk about what's goin' on out there.

Jordan:Yeah.

Kate: Rather than what's in here.

In the first excerpt, Jordan gives his reason for avoiding thoughts about CCJDC: it makes his time go by slower. He focuses on the immediate need to “do good” in the setting, so he can get out faster,<sup>27</sup> but thinking about the experience itself, and by implication the “lessons” of the experience, is unpleasant. Although he does not state here that it is the harsh or punitive nature of the environment that leads him to the strategy of avoidance, his initial description of CCJDC (cited earlier in this chapter) defined it as a “jail,” a place that “ain’t no place to be.” Linking these statements, we can tentatively conclude that the punitive nature of the facility is at least one of the barriers to Jordan’s “learning his lesson” at CCJDC.

Based on their implicit and explicit explanations of the rationale for CCJDC’s existence, it appears that detainees’ view of the facility mirrors some aspects of the setting’s self-presentation. Specifically, CCJDC portrays itself as serving the two main functions also identified by detainees: supporting or rehabilitating vulnerable youth, and punishing the misdeeds of dangerous youth, with some detainees fitting both descriptions. The punitive aspect of the setting was clearly defined and understood by study participants, and was linked to the lesson of deterrence—in Markus’ words, “if you keep doin’ bad stuff, you, this is where, the place you’ll end up at.” Detainees’ perspectives were less unified regarding the rehabilitative efforts of CCJDC, its abstract and concrete lessons about thinking, behavior, social relationships and self. While detainees made some references to the “learning opportunity” created by incarceration at CCJDC, they also identified some barriers to taking that opportunity, including the perceived irrelevance of the lessons, the punitive context in which they were taught, and the choice to replace detainees’ already-limited “free” time with structured classroom time. For Franklin, the short-term result of his time in CCJDC was a focus on staying out of detention, without a change in his beliefs about himself or the alleged illegal behavior the resulted in his detention:

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<sup>27</sup>At each hearing, the judge is given a report from CCJDC summarizing the youth’s behavior and “progress” during their incarceration; detainees are told about the use of reports, and their impact on judges’ release decisions, by detention officers, probation officers and defense attorneys.

Kate: So, before you got detained, you think you would've been more like, oh, well, whatever. I mean like, if you were doin' somethin' that you-, that you knew could get you in trouble. Did like-, it seems like you must've done a couple things along the way-

Franklin: -Yeah.

Kate: -That you knew, like, well, if I get caught doin' this, I'm gettin' detained, or whatever. But now I g-, is it that the consequences are bigger now [i.e., with the threat of a longer term in JDC for contempt, or a term in DOC] or that your attitude toward the whole thing has changed?

Franklin: It's cuz the consequences are bigger /now./

Franklin, Interview #2, 6/15/01

### BELIEFS ABOUT CCJDC OFFICERS

Understanding study participants' generalized beliefs about CCJDC's purpose, lessons, and teaching methods exposes one facet of the meaning detainees make of their experiences in the setting. Another view of detainees' meaning-making process can be drawn from their stories and memories about being in detention, particularly their interactions with staff members, through which the messages and meanings of CCJDC are transmitted and negotiated. When I began this project, I expected to find that relationships between CCJDC staff and detainees were essentially negative, with low expectations at best, and animosity at worst, expressed by youth and adults alike. This overly simplistic view is not borne out, but in aggregate, the youth participants' statements about their experiences with CCJDC officers can be mapped fairly well in two dimensions (see Figure 5); one dimension is valence, from negative to positive, and the other is content, from relationships to rules. Detainees' narratives of CCJDC staff fit into four basic categories: respect (positively perceived, focused on relationships), permissiveness (positively perceived, focused on rules), injustice (negatively perceived, rule-focused), and abuse of power (negatively perceived, relationship-focused narratives).

#### Respect: Relationship-Focused, Positive Narratives

Youth participants made numerous positive comments about CCJDC officers, expressing general approval in many cases, and spontaneously offering examples of the behaviors and interactions they most appreciated during their incarceration. Respect, support,

and informal personal interactions (as opposed to communications about rules and discipline) were common threads across these statements.

Kate: Alright, um, alright what about the staff? What are they like?

Jimmy: They cool.

Kate: Yeah?

Jimmy: Yeah.

Kate: What, are there, um, are there ways that they, like, get to know you? I mean, do you feel like any of them know you well?

Jimmy: Mmmm, no.

Kate: No. Is there anybody who's tried?

Jimmy: Nope.

Kate: Is there any, are there any of the staff people that you like particularly well?

Jimmy: Hmm?

Kate: Or that you don't like?

Jimmy: I like 'em all. They cool.

Jimmy: They, they pretty understanding.

Jimmy: They just tell me to just be good /until/ my next court date. And they said more than likely they'll release me.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

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Kate: Okay, um, how do they, people who work here act toward the people who are-, like, to the-, to the kids who are in here, in general?

Franklin: Like, in general, they act pretty nice, you know what I'm /sayin' / They're-, they're okay, you know what I'm sayin'. Like um, li-, I wish they'd give us a little bit more slack, you know what /I'm sayin' / but, you know what I'm sayin', I see where they're comin' from, you know what I'm sayin'. But-, like, more than anything, they're okay, you know what I'm sayin', they don't come off

everyday with a /attitude./ They don't come at us, like, you know what I'm sayin', tellin' us what to do everyday, you know what I'm sayin', gettin' smart, you know what I'm sayin', and all that, they're pretty nice, more than (?).

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Franklin's statement implies a negative -- that the staff could be "coming at" detainees in a pushy, "smart" way--but they don't, and overall they are "pretty nice." He is ambivalent, though, because he wishes they would "give [detainees] . . . more slack."

Jimmy is confident that officers view detainees as essentially good people who have made bad choices; for evidence, he calls on the authority of an assistant superintendent, whose job it is to supervise the detention officers:

Kate: /Uh hmm/. Um, do you have any sense of what the staff think about you or the kids who are in here in general?

Jimmy:Hmm?

Kate: Do you have any idea what the staff here think about the kids who are in here or about you? Like what do they think about you, like what kind of person do you think they would say that you are?

Jimmy:Oh they, they know the kids here ain't- they know the kids here ain't, ain't bad, but they choose the wrong things. Cuz I had talked to uh the assistant superintendents uh

Jimmy:I think his name's Sam.

Jimmy:He said "Man, I don't want none you all to be here. I want to see you all at WalMart or somewhere or somethin'." ((voice in background unclear)) He said if I don't know if (inaudible) really said that they don't want to see us here.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

In preparation for asking staff members about their appraisals of the young men in the study, I asked each youth participant about officers who they felt knew them well. The resulting conversations, in addition to providing targets for my later interviews with staff, yielded some specific statements from detainees about the way they wanted to be treated by staff members. The key, based on these responses, appears to be simple: being respectful and yielding some

personal power to detainees by talking with them about everyday things.

Kate: Uh huh. So how do you, how do they go about like learning about you, finding out what you're like?

Corey: They just talk.

Kate: Uh huh. So what do they talk to you about?

Corey: Whenever we're playing chess they'll /talk/ and I'll talk. Normally it's different things like basketball games. /Who/ do you want to win? And I'll ask who's playin'/and/ they'll go so and (so). And I'll choose one. And they're like sometimes it will be the /same/ people.

Corey, Interview #1, 4/5/01

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Kate: Um, how do the staff here- Do you think that that the people who work here kinda get to know you while you're here?

Markus: Yeah.

Kate: Yeah. And /and how-/

Markus: /Get/ to know how you act and stuff.

Kate: Uh huh. So they know how you act. Do they know like what kind of person or what you're interested in? Do they find out any of that kind of stuff?

Markus: Yeah. They ask us.

Kate: Uh huh.

Markus: In the classroom.

Markus, Interview #1, 7/29/01

Even Franklin, whose ambivalence toward CCJDC's aims and staff was clear in many of our exchanges, appreciated daily, mundane interactions with an officer. Notably, he knew (see below) when the officer would be working, and where he would be for a particular day off, which tells us that the officer shared some details of his own life with Franklin. Thus the interaction is not only a dependable daily event, but more power-balanced than most interactions between adults and youth in the facility. In spite of Franklin's appreciation of this basic human contact, he implies that even this officer, who he "really like[s]," doesn't know him very well.



Kate: What do you think-, like, are there staff people here who you think kinda know you?

Franklin: /Mm mm./ no.

Kate: /No./ Alright, um, is that-, have they-, have they made an effort, do you think, to get to know you at all?

Franklin: Um, there's been one that came in the mornin', like, he's not gonna be here now, cause he went to Springfield for like, trainin'.

Franklin: Or someth-, but there's one-, like, there's one in the morning, you know what I'm sayin', he talked to us like every morning, /you know/ what I'm sayin', yeah, ().

Franklin: He sit outside, (let us) watch tv and talk to us every mornin'. And that's the only one I really like, you know /what I'm/ sayin', like, really, /really,/ like.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Jordan, like Franklin, wants staff to treat him with respect. He raises the standard quite a bit, however, looking for respect not only in personal conversations, but in rule- and protocol-focused exchanges with officers. Although his overall satisfaction seems to be lower than Franklin's, he does report feeling that some officers have gotten to know him, something Franklin denied<sup>28</sup>.

Kate: Do you feel like any of them, um-, get to know-, have gotten to know you or get to know other kids that are in here at all?

Jordan: Yeah.

Kate: Mmm hmm. And-, how do they do that? Like, what do they do that's different, that lets 'em get to know you a little bit?

Jordan: Talk to you at your door.

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<sup>28</sup>Without further data, the interpretation of this disparity remains unclear. One possibility is that feeling respected to the degree one expects it is the *sine qua non* of detainees' positive regard for staff. In this case, Franklin would be satisfied because he has lower expectations for the level of respect he receives from officers, wanting simply to have occasional "equal-like" interactions with officers, even in the context of mundane chat. Jordan's dissatisfaction would be a result of the inadequate respect he perceives, regardless of his feeling that some officers have made efforts to get acquainted with him. Another possibility, of course, is that each individual has different "set points" for both "feeling known" and "feeling respected," such that any two detainees would require distinct patterns of interaction to feel good about officers in CCJDC.

Jordan: Answer your question with-, with like-, like they're really listenin', /like/-, they'll answer your question instead of [saying] what everybody else says, "I don't know."

Jordan: "I don't know." They'll tell you "Maybe in about-", the people (will) know i- if you comin' out because-, they got the little slip of paper.

Jordan: And they'll tell you when you comin' out and stuff. And-, some people'll tell you w-, like, "Five or ten minutes."

Jordan: Some people'll tell you, "I don't know, I don't know." And know na-, and they know dang well, /it's about in/ five or ten minutes.

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ So, it sounds like the ones that you like better are the ones who actually listen to you and who actually talk to you-, like-, respect you enough to answer your questions.

Jordan: Right.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

Jordan's stories about memorable events in CCJDC, to be presented below, carry similar messages about his wish for officers to be not only respectful, but responsive to him.

#### Permissiveness: Rule-Focused, Positive Narratives

A few detainees provided examples of staff being lenient or permissive with regard to the rules and protocols of CCJDC. These stories were told with a note of surprise in the narrators' voices. Given their overall experience of the setting and the officers working there, the smallest relaxation of rules by a staff member, even "permission" to mop or sweep, begins to look like a gift.

Kate: . . . what about saying good things about kids? Were there people who kinda went outta their way to-

Markus: Yup.

Kate: Okay. And what kinds of things did they say or do?

Markus: Like, they uh, like, one of the supervisors, Seamus (European American male) . . .

Kate: Uh-huh?

Markus: He was nice! He um, gave us an extra snack and stuff. /And/ so, he had let us help with the snack, but other people wouldn't help, let us help.

Kate: /Uh-huh/ Hmm.

Markus: But they...

Kate: So, it sounds like he was a little more...

Markus: Yeah.

Kate: A little more lenient and a little nicer.

Markus: Uh-huh. Y-- plus, everybody would want him to come to they pod so they could get out the room /and/... cuz he would let 'em do stuff, /like/ mop or stuff, like /sweep./

Markus, Interview #2, 11/11/01

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Jordan's interest in being listened and responded to is echoed in the story he tells of one administrator's (and occasional detention officer) "permissiveness."

Jordan: An-, Paul (African American male administrator), I like him because he'll do stuff for you. He'll do you favors, like, when I was up in [cell number] D8, I couldn't see the TV [in the pod common area].

Jordan: But everybody else could, so, I was like, Paul-, and there was nobody in D7, but /in D7/ you could see the TV. I was like, "Paul, could I be moved to a cell-." I asked everybody else-

Jordan: "-No, no, no, no, no." Then I asked Paul, "Paul, could I be moved to a cell so I could see the TV like everybody else?"

Jordan: He was like-, "Let me think-," he was like, "Lemme think about it." An-, but-, he said he would, but he /was/ thinkin' about what cell to move me in, /cause it/ was a couple that was open. Then-, he moved me to the next one over, D7. Then-, that was cool.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

In this story, Jordan emphasizes the perseverance required to accomplish his goal: "I asked *everybody else*," [and they said] "*No, no, no, no, no.*" He seems to recognize, but not to understand, a difference between his view of the request and the staff's perspective. For Jordan, moving between cells seems fairly simple and reasonable, but the effort it takes to accomplish the move suggests that many staff members view the request as unusual and probably unacceptable. Paul's agreement implies acceptance of Jordan's perspective and respect for

Jordan as someone who has the right to make such a request. As a result, Jordan likes Paul more than other staff members.

Unlike Jordan, who attributes his success to a *staff member's* "likeability" and willingness to do favors, Noah sees *his own* character and honesty as the key factors in earning him leniency for a rule violation:

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ So, um, and you haven't been on restriction at all? Wow. /Have you/ ever-, have you ever like come close or have you broken rules and they just didn't catch you or-

Noah: /No./ Uh-, um, well, like, in the-, in my room, /in the/ corner of my room-

Noah: - I was pickin' at it and-, I picked off about an inch high and /about/ a centimeter width /of paint off./

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ /Of, what-, like paint,/ uh huh.

Noah: And I pa-, I picked it off. And when they do room searches, it took 'em 'bout a week and a ha-, a week and a half to /notice./ So, when they took me-, he was like, come here, /he was/ like-

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ /Who's "he?"/

Noah: Huh?

Kate: /Who-/

Noah: /Michael [European American male CCJDC officer]/

Kate: Oh, okay.

Noah: He was like, come 'ere, so I went in there and he pointed at it and he's like-, he was like, was that there already er-, er-, you know, what? And I'm like, no, I n-, I did it. You know, I'm-, /you know,/ I'm pretty honest /most/ of the time.

Noah: And um-, you know, cause I wasn't-, you know, I coulda easily been like, yeah, it was there, you know /and he'd of/ been, oh, okay. But, you know, I told 'im, I /was like/, yeah, I did it, and he was like, what was it just bubbled up and I'm like, you know, part of it was, I mean, I did the rest of it too. I did, you know, what was there.

Noah: So um-, and again, the question? ((laughs))

Kate: ((laughs)) Oh, well, did-, basically, it was like-, have you done anything wrong /and/, you know, what /happened/ and-, like have you gotten away with stuff, that kind of thing/ so-

Noah: /Okay./ /Oh yeah, um./ Except for-, like um-

Kate: So wai-, whoa, what happened with that paint thing?

Noah: Oh, nothin'.

Kate: So, /so you-, so you just/ told him and then-

Noah: /Cause, I mean, I was honest with him./ -Yeah.

Kate: /So then, what did he say?/

Noah: /I was honest with him/ and, he-, he told me-, he was like, you know, that type of thing, you can get criminal damage for, and I'm like, you know, I'm sorry, you got some paint? I'll fix it, you know.

Noah: And then, you know, basically, we joked about it.

Noah: So-

Kate: Alright.

Noah: I think, I think the, pretty much the majority of the staff like me because I'm, you know, I don't give them problems.

Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01

Noah's closing statement refers back to his belief that he has control over his "fate" in CCJDC as a result of his character and his behavior. This construction reverses the power dynamic of Jordan's story about changing rooms, in which success is dependent not on Jordan's personal qualities, but on the whim, or the character, of the staff member he asks.

#### Misuse of Power and Privilege: Relationship Focused, Negative Narratives

The narratives in this category fall into several subgroups. Within the "misuse of power" quadrant are judgements of staff "laziness" and lack of responsibility, and "bad attitude" or "abuse of power" on the part of staff.

#### *Work Ethic Critiques*

Franklin and Jordan both complained about being kept in their rooms too much, attributing the situation to staff members' personal qualities or desires, rather than to some function of the setting and officers' jobs.

Kate: And what about when [the staff] aren't- [being nice to detainees], what do they-, like, what do they do that-

Franklin: Aw, they just get rid of us as fast as they can, just send us to our room, /you know, so/ they ain't gotta deal with us.

Kate: /Uh huh./ Mmm Hmhm. /Do you-/

Franklin: /Cause/ they don't wanna take the responsibility, they just-, they just send us up to our room, you know, /so./

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

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Jordan: But yesterday, we didn't-, we went in there at 3:30 and didn't come-, and we didn't ever come out for the rest of the night.

Kate: Wow. Why was that, do you know? They don't tell ya, they just leave you /in there/?

Jordan: /They/-, they just said that they were busy. But, if you come out here, all you ever see 'em doin' is just sittin' at that desk.

Jordan: Or they're um-, or they're just walkin' around doin' the little "beep beep" thing [i.e., the electronic "Watchman" checks] on /the door./ That's all you ever see 'em do. And they talk about they're busy at intake, /don't/ nobody be at intake, you don't gotta do nothin' til somebody comes in.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

### *Bad Attitude*

Descriptions of staff members' "bad attitudes" were of particular interest to me, because they turned the tables on staff members' frequent complaints about the "bad attitudes" of the detainees, singly and as a group. Although Franklin and Jordan suggest that a number of officers qualify as having a bad attitude, one officer in particular was the subject of the majority of "bad attitude" incidents described to me by detainees. Regardless of the identity of the officers, detainees' narratives suggested an inability to explain the problematic behavior of officers. This inexplicability may be a link between a detainees' observation of behavior and their judgment about attitude: no other reason makes itself clear. One exception to this pattern was Franklin's categorization of officers' motivations for working at CCJDC:

Kate: And then-, so you said most of them wanna help you, what about the ones who don't? Like, what do you think they're thinking or doing here? Like-

Franklin: -Oh, they're just here to get paid. ((laughs))

Kate: ((laughs)) Oh, alright. Alright. And do you think the people who don't wanna help are more likely to have an attitude?

Franklin: Yeah.

Kate: Yeah. So, when they have an /attitude/-

Franklin: /Yeah, they won't/-, like the people that are here not (to) help, you know what I'm sayin', they're more prone to have an /attitude./

Kate: /Mmm hmm./ So what does that-

Franklin: -I believe.

Kate: Yeah, so what does that look like, when they get an attitude?

Franklin: It's nasty.

Kate: What do they do?

Franklin: It makes me mad, you /know what I'm sayin'./ Like, they get a-

[end of side 1 of tape; brief break in recording]

Franklin: You know what I'm sayin', but you can't say anything /bad./ you gotta sit there and take it, and that's really hard, you /know what/ I'm sayin'? That's really hard, when you-, um, especially when you got somebody yellin' at you, you know what I'm sayin'.

Franklin: Th-, that's the only thing I don't like, you know what I'm sayin'. You can't say nothin' bad, you /know/ what I'm sayin', cause if you do, do it, you're the one that are gonna be, um, the consequences, you know what I'm sayin', they ain't gonna get /nothin'/ for it.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Jordan generalizes the "bad attitude" judgment to the majority of staff members, developing his own set of subcategories for the officers whose attitude he dislikes. He is able, however, to name three officers he likes and trusts.

Kate: What can you tell me about the-, the people who work here. What are they like?

Jordan: Smart-alecks.

Kate: Yeah, smart-alecks, what do you mean?

Jordan: Like-, you'll ask 'em, what time do we come out? ((In a condescending, sarcastic tone)) "When the doors open."

Kate: Oh.

Jordan: Stuff /like that./

Kate: /Mmm hmm./ Is that all of 'em? Are /they all like that/? Yeah?

Jordan: /Most of 'em./ Then-, most of 'em say, "I don't know."

Jordan:(in a mocking tone) "I don't know, I don't know." Most of 'em, they just put you on restriction for stupid stuff. (First, like-), if I ever caught one of these people outside, and they wasn't a detention /officer/, I'd probably cuss 'em out or somethin'.

Kate: /Mmm hmm./ So they make you mad.

[a little later]

Kate: So, if I were gonna ask any of them, who would be a good bet, someone who knows you kinda well, or-, you know, at least has-, at least has your trust or respect.

Jordan:None of them.

Kate: None of 'em. Okay.

Jordan:Like-, like-, like, I got this thing to myself, like-, when I first came in here, everybody was nice.

Jordan:But then-, I made a list of everybody who was in here in my head-

Jordan:/Like-/ I say, everybody's (bitches).

Jordan:Then, like-, as-, as my time goes on, I eliminate people.

Jordan:They go from bitches, then-, then they, um, start goin' to hoes, /that's/-, that's where they're nice to me.

Kate: /Mmm hmm./ Okay, /((laughs))/.

Jordan:/When they be/ a hoe.

Kate: ((laughs))

Jordan:Then-

Kate: -((laughs)) Alright.

Jordan:Then they're nothin'. They're just-, they're normal /people./

Kate: /Just a/ normal person. So that's-, /that's not a hoe./

Jordan:/(inaudible)/ Yeah, /that is/-, that isn't a hoe. Bitches is the worst, /hoes/ is the second, and-, pe-, just their plain name.

Jordan:Like-, Paul, easy. /That-/ that's what I called him. Paul [the African American male administrator who let Jordan move to a new cell], Serena (a African American female detention officer), Rosie (LF detention officer), /I don't call them/ b's or-

Jordan: -hoes or, whatever.

Jordan:/I don't/ call them that.

Kate: Right, /and I/-

Jordan:/Like/ her-, AnnMarie sittin' over there, /I don't like/ her. [goes on to tell



stretching story, detailed in setting description]

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

Jordan's story of his encounter with AnnMarie, in which she restricts Jordan after a perceived miscommunication about an activity in the gym, is more focused on rules and fairness than on relationships. Franklin, however, provides specific examples of "bad attitude" as a relationship-based issue.

Franklin: But-, li-, I had a problem with, like, a couple of-, there was one man that I ain't really like that much, you know I'm /sayin/. /Cause he was/-

[some time/conversation spent identifying the person to whom he is referring]

Kate: Okay, and so what was-, okay, that's-, that's Earl.

Franklin: I mean he had-, I mean, he had a attitude all the time, /you/ know what I mean, like, like he tell us, line up, you know what I'm sayin', and we'd be gettin' up, you know what I'm sayin', he'd be like, hurry up! Hurry up! You know what I'm sayin'?

Franklin: And he'd just get a attitude with us, you know what I'm sayin', he'd try to rush us, you know what I /mean/? And like, I ain't like that, you know what I'm sayin', he-, and he act different, you know what I'm sayin', just because he was-, or he had the authority, he'd /act/ different, you know what I'm sayin'.

Franklin: But when he wasn't, you know what I'm /sayin', then/-, then his attitude changed, you know what I'm sayin', he'd be /nice/, you know what I'm sayin'.

Franklin, Interview #2, 6/15/01

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Noah, too, perceived Earl as occasionally overextending his use of authority. The following excerpt is adapted from an addendum I taped immediately after our second interview, based on a conversation with Noah that occurred after I had put the tape recorder away.

[Noah] described a situation in which Earl was with a kid and they were carrying some bananas or something, but when they put the bananas down, some water spilled. Near where the water spilled there was a rag and there was also a roll of paper towels. The kid started to take paper towels in order to clean up the water and, Earl asked, "What are you doin'?" The kid said, "I'm cleanin' it up" and Earl said, "Don't clean it up with the paper towels, use the rag, and you soak it up and then you wring it out, and you soak it up and you wring it out, 'cause if

you're using paper towels you're just wasting money." And the kid says, "Okay," and so he does all that, he cleans up the water. The paper towels that he had started to use, which were kind of damp, were sitting there on the table, and Earl asked the kid to go throw them away. The kid was on his way to the bathroom to throw them away and, Earl said, "While you're in there, shut the door," and the kid said, "Why?" Earl said, "Just do it." And Noah made a point of telling me that Earl didn't say it like a command, like, "Just do it!" He just said, "Just do it," um, in a lighter tone of voice. So the kid gets in there and shuts the door, and then a couple of minutes go by, and the kid knocks on the door [which apparently had to be unlocked by staff] and says, "Can I come out now?" And Earl says, "No." And the kid says, "What did I do?" You know, "Why do I have to be in here?" And Earl says, "You can't come out." And the kid says "Well, at least if you're gonna lock me up, you know, put me in my room, not in the bathroom." And Earl says something about how the kid should be glad that at least where he is, he has control over the, the lights being on or off as opposed to in his room, where he wouldn't. And Noah told me that he was watching this going on, and he was thinking, as he put it, "I was thinkin' in my mind, wha-, what's the point of this?" Noah told me, "I don't know what Earl was tryin' to do, or what the point was that he was making, it didn't really make sense to me what he was doing, but maybe-, you know, maybe there was a reason for it." But he couldn't figure out what it was. And, as he was telling me the story, I couldn't figure it out either.

Noah, Addendum to Interview #2, 6/13/01

My observations corroborate Franklin and Noah's impression of Earl as someone who pushed the boundaries of officer-detainee interaction. Early in my observations, a detainee saw him come into the cafeteria and said "Here comes Earl -- he's always messin'!" That is, indeed, his reputation among both staff and detainees. The following episode, referenced briefly in Chapter 5, is recorded in my fieldnotes. I have included the comments I made at the time about the incident, which are strikingly similar to Franklin and Noah's independent beliefs that Earl sometimes uses his power simply because he can.

Later, Samantha is looking in the direction of another detainee, who tells her not to look at him; he has done this with other staff members at lunchtime, on other occasions. Earl goes and stands behind this young man (as he had done earlier this lunch period with another detainee who was engaged in a verbal disagreement with an officer), standing so close that the front of Earl's stocky frame is touching the young man's back. The young man tells [or, more likely, asks] Earl not to touch him, and Earl does not stop. He puts his hands on the young man's shoulders. At this point the detainee starts squirming and wriggling, trying to shake off Earl's hands or get his shoulders out from under

them. He also continues to protest verbally. Eventually Earl moves away. The detainee says something about “I just don’t like to be touched.” Earl’s response is “Then I guess you can’t play Knockout anymore.”

The kid protests and Earl says, “Well, you said you don’t like to be touched, and in Knockout you get touched. I’m just trying to take care of you.” The kid protests further, saying in an almost-pleading tone, “Noooo, not like *thaaaat!*”

I am uncomfortable with Earl’s tactics in this second interaction – he seems to use the “standing behind and talking” thing to calm kids down at the same time that he reminds them “who’s boss.” However, when a kid is protesting that he doesn’t want to be touched, it seems abusive to me to continue doing so – a boundary violation done solely for its own sake, to express the privilege of doing so. The conversation that follows is humorous to Earl, but does not seem to be so for the young man. It may be that more experienced detainees are used to Earl’s humor (as when Chandra says to me, “Earl is always messing.”), and that first-time detainees have to learn to deal with it. In the meantime, it just seems like Earl is toying with the kids.

From fieldnotes, 2/26/01

Franklin, Noah, Jordan and I all described incidents in which officers seemed to use power “because they can.” Jimmy, in a particularly vehement moment, suggested that using power “because they can” is common to detention officers more generally, and a symptom of power imbalance. Specifically, he implies that limitations on detainees’ speech encourage officers’ abuses of power, and that those abuses, in turn, provoke detainees’ resentment and resistance. He closes with his own statement of resistance, voiced as a denial of officers’ respectability and (masculine) power.

Kate: Do you think it’s working, to make you not wanna do whatever you did to get in here?

Jimmy: A little bit.

Kate: Do you think other kids are more or less likely to end up back in here?

Jimmy: Some kids don’t even care... they don’t want to be in here, but they ain’t gonna let these (inaudible) push ‘em like they always do. They act like they your daddy -- the only reason [I let ‘em] is because I want to be out of my room. If this were County [jail], it wouldn’t be this way.

Kate: What do you mean?

Jimmy: They can't restrict adults...: they can't say "go to your room." Some adults don't even care -- they going to the joint anyway -- they just split they wig right there.

Kate: Do you think the staff understand that acting like they're your daddy upsets people, pisses them off?

Jimmy: Yeah, they understand it.

Kate: So why do they do it?

Jimmy: (increasingly emphatic) They do it cuz they know they can, you can't say *nothin'* to 'em. Your freedom practically taken away, right? Why can't you talk to nobody? I feel the [cell and/or pod] doors should be open from about... about 8 to about 9:30, 'til bedtime...

Kate: Do they tell you why you can't talk? Do they give you a reason?

Jimmy: No. (contemptuously:) "You can't play 21 cuz it might start a fight..." What they got correctional officers here for then? They ain't *nothin'*. They a bunch of *pansies*.

From fieldnotes, 11/14/01

In this passage, Jimmy expresses frustration not only with officers' interpersonal behavior, but with rules that he perceives as irrational and a system that limits detainees' responses to problems. In so doing, he addresses the fourth major category of study participants' narratives about detention officers: negative narratives focused on the content and impact of detention rules.

#### Irrationality and Injustice: Rule Focused, Negative Narratives

Kate: . . . Alright, so-, sounds like things are not so great in here for you. I mean-, it sounds like you're w-, you're makin' it work, I mean, when was the last time you had a restriction?

Jordan: Today.

Kate: Today. And what was that for?

Jordan: Um-, she said I wasn't doin' my work.

Kate: Mmm hmm. Who did?

Jordan: Lynn.

Jordan: Metal mouth.

Kate: ((slightly laughing)) Metal mouth.

Jordan: She met-, she-

Kate: -Yeah, she has braces: /Yeah./ So-, wait, she said you weren't doin' your work, what work was it?

Jordan:/Yeah./ It was this little thing, like, with a map or whatever. Like, you put stuff in alphabetical /order/.

Kate: /Mmm hmm./ Were you doin' it?

Jordan:Not at that-, not-, cause the teacher just handed it out.

Jordan:And I was pickin' -, and I was rubbin' this [points to a blemish on his chin] with some /tissue/. ((hand hits table)) This one right here [continues pointing].

Jordan:No, this one [points to a different place on his face]. Cause it was bleedin'.

Jordan:And then she just said, "Jordan, come with me," and she took me to my room.

Kate: And so you didn't-, she didn't tell you first that you should do it or-, you know, tell you to get back to work or anything like that? ((pause)) Alright.

Jordan:((softly)) Yeah. I was just snappin', though.

Kate: Mmm hmm. Oh-, so you went-, you kinda went off when she took you out. What'd you say?

Jordan:That I hated her.

Jordan:And I hate everybody up in here, 'cept for the people that I named.

Jordan:And I was snappin' on 'em.

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

In Jordan's initial presentation of the scene, he has just received a worksheet but is momentarily distracted from it as he picks at a sore spot on his face; the officer's intrusion comes as a surprise. He acknowledges, once I ask, that she warned him first, but implies that he was (already) "snappin'" by then, perhaps resentful of the limited time he had been given to start working. He does not seem resentful of the rule itself, that detainees are expected to do the work provided to them, but of the manner in which Lynn enforced it. As a result, he expresses his anger personally, implicating first Lynn, and then, by extension, the rest of the staff, aside from those officers he had identified earlier as being "just people." His belief, expressed in a passage cited earlier, is that "Most of 'em, they just put you on restriction for *stupid stuff*" (emphasis added); again, it is the officers' use of the rules that is problematic, rather than the

rules themselves.

In the same vein, Markus raises the issue of misplaced punishments (in what seems to be a mistaken interpretation of my question about staff treatment of detainees).

Kate: Did you ever see, um, staff people kinda putting kids down?

Markus: Yeah.

Kate: Yeah? Like what kinds of things happened, at least from... or at least some of it was, necessarily, but.

Markus: Like, uh, sometimes some people won't do nothin'(?)

Kate: Uh-huh.

Markus: Like, they [officers] said they [a detainee] were talkin', and they wasn't talkin', it was somebody else, and they'll send 'em to their room, /or/ a 24-hour restriction or some'n.

Markus: Like sometimes they don't know who did it, but everybody get punished for /it./

Markus, Interview #2, 11/11/01

While Markus is answering a different question than the one I asked, he clearly understood that I was asking about things that staff do to detainees, and most likely understood the negative implication of my phrasing, as well. His response focuses on practices he seems to perceive as unfair: punishing everyone for one person's mistake, or punishing the wrong person altogether. Like Jordan, Markus seems to accept the rules themselves—for example, the prohibition on talking—but dislikes the way officers enforce the rule in ambiguous circumstances.

Jordan also has complaints about officers' imposition of implicit rules on detainees' behavior, rules that appear to him to have no rational basis:

Jordan: You can't like-, if you ask one person for a book-

Jordan: -They'll say, they don't got time.

Jordan: Right at that very moment. But when you ask another person, and they standin' right there-

Jordan: -like the person who you just /asked/ is standin' right there. They'll be like, "Do you want a restriction? Cause I just told you, I didn't have time." ((Quoting his own, internal response)) "Right, you just told me *you* didn't have time."

Jordan: “. . . but does *he* have time, or *she* have /time./”

Jordan, Interview #1, 9/5/01

Jordan takes the initial refusal and explanation at face value, assuming, logically enough that if the first officer’s issue is a lack of time, another officer might have enough time to help Jordan out. He also assumes, mistakenly as it turns out, that the first officer’s refusal effectively closes the interaction between them. When Jordan makes the request to another officer, the first officer re-asserts control, stepping in and threatening him with a room restriction for this breach of implicit protocol.

Jordan related to me another story of an officer enforcing a “rule” that is not only implicit but (probably) idiosyncratic. This tale seems to lie in the gray area between rule-focused and relationship-focused negative narratives. In fact, it elucidates the limitations of the rules/relationships mapping: It is a convenient organizational strategy, but one that fails to capture the interweaving of CCJDC rules, setting power dynamics, and the parameters of officer-detainee relationships.

Jordan: Cuz now, just like today I got put in my room, because you know Bo-um, Burt?

[Jordan describes the officer physically to be sure I know who he’s talking about.]

Kate: Yeah.

Jordan: Today he saluted me.

Jordan: But, den he was mad because I s—, he says, he, he came in and said “Good morning,” and I said “Good morning,” and he saluted me.

Jordan: Den I just sat dere. He was like, “Stand up, stand up!” Den I stood up, den I sat back down. I, um, he was like, “Do you know what this is called” and he was standin’ there in a /salute./ Burt like, “Dis is called a ‘salute.’ It shows respect to people... it shows respect to people.” But... to me, he said, “Dis shows a great deal of respect to people.”

Jordan: I show great deals of respect to people, but that’s like, one of the top things you could do to respect a man, without savin’ his life or /nothin’/ like that. To salute a man, is, just showin’ him . . . (emphatic) *man!*

Kate: /Uh-huh./ Just the utmost, like the /ultimate./

Jordan: /U—/ yes, the ultimate, the HIGHEST...

Jordan: The highest level of respect... there is for me. And I can show a lot of

respect.

Jordan: That's just utmost, utmost, utmost respect. But I 'on't, I, I'll salute a... woman, before I would a man.

Kate: Hmm. Why's that?

Jordan: What have I been livin' with all my life?

Kate: Wo/men./

Jordan: /Wo/men.

Jordan: Who left, who left me when I was a baby?

Jordan: A man. That's why I 'on't ha-, that's why I don't, that's why I don't get along with very many men. I hang around a lot of girls.

[conversation continues for several turns, about Jordan's relationships with girls and boys]

Kate: But one way or another, you, you didn't wanna salute ol' Burt.

Jordan: Right, because, I show respect to him, I woulda shook his hand if he put it out. But, I 'on't salute no man.

Kate: Uh-huh. So did you get in trouble, is that why you- /you (?)/

Jordan: /Yeah./ Cuz I didn't salute him.

Kate: Okay, so . . . okay, so you stood up, and then you sat down again.

Jordan: Yeah.

Kate: And then, what happened?

Jordan: Then he was like, he asked another staff, "What-- What room is he in?" They was like, "B1." He was like, "Can I have B1 please?" [on radio, asking to have the door opened.]. Then he walked over to my door and opened it. I was like, "You sendin' me in my room?" He 'as like, "Yeah." Den, I just didn't question him no more af/ter that./ But I wasn't worried about it, cuz I'm leavin' [CCJDC] tomorrow, so I won't have to put up with this no more.

Kate: /Uh-huh./ Right.

Jordan: From these people anyways.

Jordan, Interview #4, 4/25/02  
Emphasis in original

In both of these stories, Jordan interacts with officers in a way that implies an assumption of personal power; it is this assumption, more than Jordan's actual behaviors, that officers respond to with threatened or actual punishment. In the first story, he asks repeatedly for something he



wants, rather than accepting the first refusal. In the second, he accepts, but does not return, a “sign of respect” from an officer, honestly expressing his limited respect for the officer. The officer then uses his authority to punish Jordan’s “insubordination,” which is not, in fact, a violation of any CCJDC rule. The officer’s behavior implies that he respects Jordan only to the extent that Jordan pretends respect for him; when Jordan steps outside this boundary, maintaining his honesty at the cost of obedience, he is punished. Jordan’s stories, in particular, show how the rules enforced at CCJDC go beyond those printed in the handbook. The rules he inadvertently stumbles on are in the realm where “rules” and “officer personalities and expectations” overlap.

Detainees’ stories of CCJDC officers and rules are suffused with power dynamics: how staff occupy their powerful role as officers, how they interpret and use or misuse the detainees’ lack of power, and the specifics of rules, codified expressions of power. Detainees described positive responses to being treated with respect and fairness. They accepted the reality of some of the rules, but wanted to feel valued and acknowledged as people. CCJDC’s history—devaluing detainees, viewing and treating them as either dangerous or needy and untrained, the non-neutral goal of teaching youth how and who to be—set the stage for disrespect and invalidation. Detainees are not necessarily seen as having something to offer; rather, staff members have the power of offering or withholding information and privileges, ignoring or attending to detainees. The punitive approach has a longer history in CCJDC than rehabilitative thinking. In spite of the importance to detainees of feeling respected and valued, this experience is unlikely to surface dependably during their time at CCJDC.

#### SOURCES OF VARIATION IN DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

The detainees’ focus on staff members as individuals and as agents implementing system rules mirrored my own observation that neither staff nor rules could be observed in isolation. In fact, differences in rule-implementation across individuals, shifts, and backgrounds was brought up numerous times by officers discussing their jobs with me. These variations seemed fairly stable: personalities were dependably linked with discipline styles, and shift contingencies (e.g., having to get detainees to and from court and classrooms, or having to lead activities for them) led to predictable “discipline cultures.” In fact, Jimmy told me he adjusted

his behavior according to what shift was on at the time:

Kate: They treating you alright?

Jimmy:Somewhat.

Kate: What do you mean?

Jimmy:This shift [evening] is real cool. The first shift, some you can like, some you cannot like.

Kate: Why is that?

Jimmy:They so serious with they jobs, they crazy.

Kate: So, what does that look like -- how do you know they're serious with their jobs?

Jimmy:They don't play around. Anything you do, they wanna warn you or restrict you--so I just stay to myself.

Kate: So, what do you mean you stay to yourself?

Jimmy:I just sit there.

Kate: So it sounds like you aren't really being your "real self" while you're in here, because you don't want to get restricted.

Jimmy:Right.

From fieldnotes, 11/14/01

Jimmy identifies some day shift officers' seriousness about their work with "not playing around," which he defines as having high sensitivity and immediate disciplinary response to detainees' behavior. He implies that the evening shift officers' "coolness" is defined by more flexible responses to detainees.

Officers themselves identified differences across shifts and individuals, occasionally joking with each other about their disciplinary styles.

I talk to Samantha (European American female officer) briefly about having changed shifts from day to evenings. She says the first (day) shift was more organized, and that one staff person on evenings, in particular, acts like the JDC is "day camp." She does not name this person, though I am fairly sure I know who she's talking about. She mentions people having less experience than she and some other staff members do, and talks about how letting one kid start fighting will lead to all the detainees being out of control. She says "Jeremías [Latino male officer, who also works evenings] thinks like I do," and implies that she will work to add structure and discipline to the evening shift.

From fieldnotes, 8/1/01

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I ask Jeremías (Latino male officer) about the length of restrictions, whether that's up to each individual officer or what. He says that he thinks "it should depend on the time of day," as well as the offense: if it's early in the evening shift, restrict them for the rest of the night, and if it's later in the evening, restrict them that night and all the next day. He mentions a kid who was "disrespectful" to an officer, Cindy, who was giving out meds; the kid said something like "You gonna make me?" to her, and added the epithet "Blondie." Jeremías, in an incredulous voice, tells me they restricted the kid for two hours, and says that "It's his last day—give him two hours and no fun activity." Ron (European American male officer) says to him, smiling, "You're a hardass."

From fieldnotes, 12/13/01

In spite of this individual and temporal stability, relationships between officers and detainees shifted rapidly from positive to negative and relationship-focused to rule-focused, depending on a variety of factors including power dynamics, personalities, moods, and immediate contingencies (classroom versus free time versus gym, disciplinary versus casual versus directive interaction). The fluidity of interpersonal relationships between detainees and staff allowed for the development of supportive personal interactions, such as those identified by Corey and Jordan. At the same time, it led to occasional conflicts, all of which, in my observation, left detainees in a "one-down" position. Two examples from my fieldnotes follow.

[In the gym, during a volleyball game,] Darnell (African American male detainee) is talking with Samantha (European American female officer). They are smiling and laughing; he playfully pushes at her shoulder with his open hand. I am sitting on the sidelines with AnnMarie (European American female officer). She calls Darnell over, pulling him out of the game briefly. She observes aloud that he touched Samantha and tells him he shouldn't do that. He says emphatically, "But she was touching me!" AnnMarie says "She works here, she gets paid to touch people." Darnell appears frustrated, shaking his head; he goes back into the game and on the way in, he brushes against another detainee. Jeremías (Latino male officer) immediately calls Darnell out of the game for touching someone. Darnell tells him it was an accident, and Jeremías says that doesn't matter. Now Darnell appears not just annoyed but angry, he is glaring and almost stomping his feet as he walks over to where Jeremías stands. Darnell sits down on the floor and scowls.

From fieldnotes, 8/1/01

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Erik and Bernard (both European American male officers) stand in the back left corner of the classroom, just behind the desk of Lavon (African American male detainee). Erik asks Bernard, "How'd they do in Knockout?" Bernard responds, "Okay – Lavon got seven or eight?" (He ends on an upward intonation, indicating that he is unsure of the exact number, and is perhaps looking to Lavon to answer). Erik looks toward Lavon, saying in a teasing voice, "That's okay, everybody gets lucky sometimes." Lavon sits up, pulls his shoulders and head back as he responds, looking "puffed up." I cannot hear his words, but his tone is one of bantering, humorous defiance (as in (imagined statement/implication): "That wasn't luck! You come play me and I'll show you!"). The officers and Lavon have one or two exchanges like this, with all three smiling and laughing, and then Erik, his face serious, says to Lavon, "Don't say anything, just turn around... or just sit there silently." Lavon looks as though he is about to speak again, and he scowls, looking frustrated. Then he slaps his book down on the desk, apparently angry. Erik says emphatically, "*Silently*." Jarrod (African American male detainee), who is seated next to Lavon, glances sideways and says something under his breath, apparently responding to this interaction.

The end of this exchange surprised me (and apparently Lavon as well) with its abruptness. I think the officers may have tried to end the bantering after the first exchange, but if they did so by saying something like "Okay, Lavon," it may have sounded like more banter to him. In any case, it seemed unfair to me, though perhaps not intentionally so. Seems like a problem with shifting the boundaries between "friends" and "officers." Unclear what provoked the change at that particular point.

From fieldnotes, 3/5/01

This last story shows especially well the moment when an interaction between adults and youth in the setting shifts from officer-detainee/hierarchical to friendly/casual and back again. The shift from high to low structure is relatively smooth, but the shift back again is abrupt, surprising, and evidently frustrating to the detainee; one of the officers reclaims his authority suddenly, without any apparent warning, changing his entire demeanor in the process. He expects immediate compliance from Lavon, and uses a typical "officer-warning" tone when the youth does not respond as quickly as the officer would like.

#### BELIEFS ABOUT RACE AND RACISM

##### Perceived Absence of Racism in CCJDC

The framing of the study's race-related research questions reflects my expectation that issues of race and racism would suffuse detainees' interactions in, and perceptions of, CCJDC. My observations and interviews, however, led to a different hypothesis, in which detainees view racism as something external to CCJDC and mostly irrelevant to their interactions within the facility. Youth study participants mentioned race or racism spontaneously only a few times. Franklin made a comment about police officers' treating him more harshly than they would if he were not black, and Jordan implied, but did not state explicitly, a preference for black and Latino officers over white officers (this excerpt can be found in the section on staff "bad attitude," above). A story told by Jimmy was the only narrative in which a detainee implied unfair treatment by CCJDC officers based on race, but even here, the implication is veiled. Jimmy mentions the race of the other detainee who is punished, and compares the harshness of punishment on that basis:

Kate: What happened?

Jimmy: Uhh, (CCJDC officer, name inaudible) restricted me.

Kate: Today?

Jimmy: Yesterday. F-- for four hours.

Kate: For what? Or what'd she say /happened/?

Jimmy: /She said I wa-/ She said I was talkin'. But this one, this one white boy was talkin' too, and he got restricted for two hours, I got restricted for fo'.

Kate: So why is that?

Jimmy: I 'on't know! I asked her, I said, "Why I get fo' hours?" Cuz, she said I lied to her.

Kate: What did you say?

Jimmy: I said I wa'n't talking!

Kate: Were you talkin'?

Jimmy: No, I wasn't talkin'! This one girl said something to me, and I smiled at her, and then she said, "Jimmy, you talkin'," she said, "When you move your mouf, then you talkin'." I said, "Nawww, you can move your mouth in a lot of ways and you not talkin'." She said, "Welllll, Lynn, can-- can we ha-- can we have you come back to the... Classroom 2?" They es-- escorted me out.

Jimmy, Interview #3, 11/20/01

My attempts to explore the issue of race and racism, as perceived by detainees, began with broad, vague questions about “fairness.” When asked in this manner, Jimmy’s unequivocal response, below, is typical of the outcome of these forays.

Kate: Alright, um, do you think they treat everybody pretty much the same here? Like they’re pretty fair about stuff?

Jimmy: Uh yeah they’re pretty fair about everything.

Kate: Have you ever seen anything that makes you think that they’re like being unfair or that they’re kind of abusing their power.

Jimmy: Na uh.

Kate: No, /that’s good/.

Jimmy: /They treat/ everybody pretty fair.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

As described above in the discussion of detainees’ perceptions of staff, some youth participants told stories of events in CCJDC that they perceived as unfair. Apparently these events were insignificant or infrequent enough that they did not color the young men’s overall view of the fairness of staff or the center as a whole.

Believing it possible that detainees might feel uncomfortable discussing race and racism with me, without explicit “permission” on my part, I began asking them more directly about these issues. My own observations at CCJDC suggested that staff members treated detainees similarly, regardless of race<sup>29</sup>, and I wanted to be sure to balance this with detainees’ own statements. My questions addressed fairness and race not only within CCJDC, but in detainees’ experiences with police and the juvenile court as well. Youth participants were confident in the fairness of CCJDC staff, but were less sure, within and across interviews, about police officers and the juvenile court:

Kate: . . . do you think that it makes a difference, like, do you think people

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<sup>29</sup> Even if I had observed an imbalance in treatment of Black and White detainees, I would have had difficulty proving this was not simply a result of the racial disproportion among detainees: when 75-80% of detainees are Black, it stands to reason that 75-80% of disciplinary actions (for instance) would be directed at Black detainees.

are treating you differently in the, like probation office, or the detention center, or any of that, because you're a black kid?

Markus: No, they all treat everybody the same.

Markus, Interview #2, 11/11/01

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Like Markus, Jordan believes CCJDC staff members are fair. He adds that in spite of this, he dislikes some staff members, making it clear that he can distinguish between his personal feelings and his perceptions of justice.

Kate: Okay. Um, do you think it's different in here for you than it is for a white kid? I mean, cuz like most of the staff are white, right?

Jordan: Yeah, na-- yeah.

Kate: So does that /(inaudible)/

Jordan:/But/ I 'on't think it's different.

Kate: Okay.

Jordan:I think all the staff fair, though. That's for real.

Kate: You think they're all fair? Mm-hmm? That's good (laughs). Because I think there are some places where people don't feel that. I-- but mostly I think, you know, from what I've talked to -- the kids I've talked to, I think they mostly agree with you. Um,

Jordan:But there's some that I don't like, like Frank [African American male detention officer].

Jordan, Interview #3, 4/1/02

When I asked Franklin about the possibility of racism in his experience with the system, he said nothing about the detention center, focusing instead on the judge.

Kate: So do you think in, in general, that um, the things that have happened for you with, with the police and detention and probation, do you think it woulda gone differently for you if you were white?

Franklin: Yeah.

Kate: Like how?

Franklin: I would prob'ly have got -- at least a lesser sentence.

Franklin: Um, I mean honestly I never heard of anyone gettin' five years [of probation].

Franklin: Especially off their first offense, you know?

Franklin: I mean that's kind of outrageous. I mean, there's nuttin' I can do about it.

Franklin, Interview #3, 12/1/01

In Franklin's view, racism explains the inexplicable, a sentence that he considers "outrageous" because it is more extreme than anything he had known about previously. Jimmy implies distinctions among CCJDC staff (fair, not racist), police officers (some act racist), and the judge (not racist). Where Franklin believed his own sentence was extreme, Jimmy feels his thirteen-day CCJDC sentence is deserved, and believes his judge is not racist:

Kate: Do you think it makes a difference that you're black, to like, how things go for you, with the police or in here, or any of that, with the judge?

Jimmy:Mm-mm [no].

Kate: No?

Jimmy:I think it's all the same, except for when you out with the police, though. It's different with some police.

Kate: Mm-hmm. Why is that? Or how is that?

Jimmy:Mm-mm-mm (I don't know). Some of 'em's just prejudiced.

Kate: Uh-huh?

Jimmy:Some of 'em ain't. But I know some that is.

Kate: So do you think they're, if they're prejudiced, does that mean they treat you worse, or they're more likely to arrest you, or....

Jimmy:They more likely to . . . find some reason to talk to you.

Kate: Got it.

Jimmy:Find some reason they wanna harass you.

Kate: Uh-huh.

Jimmy:Or usually -- the judge, my judge(?), I /got/ . . . I know she ain't, ain't be co--, my color. She-- she don't care who you is, if you do bad, you get what you deserve, whatever you deserve, you think she [sic, probably "she think you"] deserve. Cuz she pretty cool.

Kate: /Yeah./ Uh-huh?



Jimmy: I deserved these thirteen days (I'm sentenced (?))

Kate: You think so?

Jimmy: Oh yeah, yeah.

Jimmy, Interview #3, 11/20/01

### Racial Disproportion and Perceived Police Racism

Jimmy's comments provide a helpful introduction to the issue of racial disproportion, seen through the eyes of detainees. All of the African American study participants told stories of frequent police contacts, although the degree to which they attributed the problem specifically to racism differed across participants. Franklin, for example, felt he could not get away from the police in his hometown.

Franklin: And, and it's like you're being suffocated. There's so many police. I mean, I mean they do they job, but they're everywhere.

Franklin: And you don't find time, y'know wh' I'm sayin', to um, ever get away from 'em.

Kate: Right, so they don't, they don't necessarily make up stuff, y'know, they don't, they don't falsely accuse you, necessarily.

Franklin: No, not now-- I mean, they never used to, like really falsely accuse me...

Franklin: Y'know wh' I'm sayin'. But they put stuff in your head, y'know wh' I'm sayin', they, they be like, (?) y'know wh' I'm sayin', you need to quit doin' this and doin' that, y'know wh' /I'm sayin'/, not even knowin' if you're doin' it or /not!/ But... they um, like in other words, they try to get stuff up outta you. /Y'know/ wh' I'm sayin'. But I didn't think that was really right, y'know wh' I'm sayin'? Like, just to come up outta the blue and just /ask/ me any kind of question that you want, y'know wh' I'm /sayin'/, knowin' that I'm not doin' anything.

[a little later in same interview]

Franklin: And, they [the police] know you had no part of it.

Franklin: But they think that you may know the person /who/... but still, I mean, that gives 'em no right to come up to me askin' about it.

Franklin: You know?

Franklin, Interview #3, 12/1/01

Franklin told me he was 13 or 14 when he had his first police contact, and that he came into

contact with police “often” after that time, as often as twice a week over three or four years’ time. In response, I asked him more directly about the possibility of racist police practices:

Kate: Uh-huh (laughs). Right. And do you think it makes a difference that you’re not white?

Franklin: In a way.

Kate: Okay, can you...

Franklin: Um... well, for instance, I know, um, this kid that goes to my school, his, um, dad is a police officer.

Franklin, Interview #3, 12/1/01

The story Franklin told me involved the white son of an officer getting away with something in plain view of Franklin, his friends, and a police officer who has pulled them over for no apparent reason. Franklin’s use of “for instance” implies that he has other tales of possible police racism; however, he did not mention racism as an explanation for his problems with police until I brought it up specifically.

Jimmy, too, told me he had very frequent contacts with police officers (initiated by the officers); in spite of the belief he stated in a later interview that police “harass” black youth, in telling his own story, he attributes the attention he gets from police to the nature of the first delinquent act for which he was placed on probation:

Kate: When was your first police contact?

Jimmy:(thinks for quite some time). I was probably about 13 or 14.

Kate: Do you remember what you were doing, or what they said you were doing?

Jimmy:Me and my friends were running through a store, opening stuff. They thought we were stealing.

Kate: How many times have the police stopped your, or talked to you?

Jimmy:Arrested me?

Kate: No, just interrupted what you were doing and talked to you... is it like five, or fifty, or a hundred?

Jimmy:Man, like a hundred. I get stopped every week, pretty much, since March 2001.

Kate: Why?

Jimmy:I don't know... that's when I started probation.

Kate: (clarifying) But you didn't go to court until July...

Jimmy:First they put me on supervision so I didn't have to go to court, and then in July I had to go to court.

Kate: Got it. So, you have no idea why the police stop you all the time?

Jimmy:Because I prob'ly pushed a police officer [that time in March] -- I've been stopped consistently since then.

Kate: So you think it's the kind of thing you did that makes them stop you, not who you are or what you're doing now -- if you'd done something different, they wouldn't be stopping you as much.

Jimmy:Right.

From fieldnotes, 11/14/01

Both Franklin and Jimmy are subject to frequent police-initiated encounters, which they believe to occur regardless of their behavior at the time. Their initial explanations for this circumstance revolve around their own past behavior and history with the police. However, when my specific questions about police racism elicited quick affirmative responses, suggesting that for them, the idea of police racism is familiar, though not, perhaps, one they apply immediately to their own situations.

When I first pointed out the predominance of black youth in CCJDC, Jimmy seemed surprised, but he readily returned to police harassment as an explanation, expanding his observation to an analysis of racial variations in the types of crime committed:

Kate: Yeah. So, why do you think, then, that... at the detention center, like, do you think it's about even, like black kids and white kids?

Jimmy:Yeah, it's even. /So/

Kate: But do you think in this community it's about even?

Jimmy:Aww, black kids and white kids in /here/?

Kate: /Like/ how many there are, yeah. Like how many there are.

Jimmy:Well, lemme see. There's me (lists nine names in quick succession) . . . there's a lot of black kids here. There *is* way more black kids /here/ than white kids.

Kate: /Uh-huh./ Yeah. And actually that's usually true, like statistical/ly/, that's also true? So here's my question.

Jimmy:/Mm-hmm/ But there's way more white girls than...

Kate: Than black girls?

Jimmy: Yeah.

Kate: Yeah. But, like, overall, like 80, like 75% of the population in this place is almost always, y'know, like three quarters of this place, is usually black males. But out in Champaign-Urbana, there's only a 15, like one tenth of the people in the community are black.

Jimmy: Mm-hmm.

Kate: So why do you think all these black males, like you, end up in here, so much?

Jimmy: Cuz, we get harassed! We already gettin' . . .

Kate: So why do you get harassed? I mean, cuz, some of the officers you think are racist. But some you think aren't. So how does it en-- I guess, I mean, like I'm just trying to figure out, /what/ what people, like what people think about that, in the community. And do people think about that, like do people you talk to know that it's mostly black males in here, or do they care? Or in, in prison, y'know, cuz it's also true for adults, right?

Jimmy:/Why/ I 'on't think they really care. But ummm, my um, I think because, some black folks be try'na, black folks is, is the main people, black folks ain't the ones that be doin' the, the um, be doin' the um, what d'you call it? Uh, black folks is the ones who's sellin' drugs, and,

Kate: They are or they aren't? [clarifying]

Jimmy: They *are* the ones who /be/ sellin' drugs, and... stuff like that. But white folks is the ones that seem to be killin' folks /(laughs)/, stabbin', doin' the craz--, doin' the off the (?), off the wall type /stuff. / And they-- they're usually, they always on the-- they're always on drug busts. // I think black, cuz black folks, they just got--, they make the money the best way they know how, y'know wh' /I'm sayin'/? / Cuz that's the-- some black folks ain't got a education

Jimmy: And those, they, um, only th-- only thing they know is the street.

Jimmy, Interview #3, 11/20/01

Jordan seemed already to have noticed the disproportionate number of black detainees at CCJDC, and he was clear, at first, in his explanation: the police are "harsher on black folks." However, his reasoning became less clear to me as the conversation continued, weaving together images of justice and injustice, system-level racism and individual-level balance.

Kate: (pause) Alright. Um, so do you think . . . okay, well, maybe you've noticed, and maybe I've talked to you about this, that, that most of the kids that end up in here are black? And I-- presumably you noticed that anyway, right? So, does that make a difference to what it's like for you, in here?

Jordan:It's only like, two white people up in here.

Kate: Mm-hmm. So why do you think that is?

Jordan:(emphatic, louder) Because, they're harsher on the black folks!

Kate: Who, "they?" The police, or the /det/ention center?

Jordan:/Yeah./ Police.

Kate: Uh-huh? So, does that make it harder to feel like it's fair that you're in here?

Jordan:Mm-mm (no).

Kate: No. So . . .

Jordan:I think it's the same, cuz if they do a crime, it's not, they don't, they don't have ta um, they have to do a bigger crime

Jordan: . . . to come here, I think

Kate: Okay.

Jordan:Den we would, if we, the smallest little crime we do, we come here. They have to do, either a lot of little crimes, to equal a big crime, /or/ a big crime.

Kate: /Mm-hmm/ Okay, so then does it feel like it's unfair?

Jordan:No, because we both did a crime!

Kate: Oh, I see. So

Jordan:If I do a crime, den, if I do a crime, I'm not gon' say, "Oh, it's unfair because . . . "

Kate: Because they have to do more different crimes

Jordan:Right.

Kate: Okay, I /see/

Jordan:/If/ I did a crime, I did it. If they did it, and they don't get locked up, that's dem.

Jordan, Interview #3, 4/1/02

Jordan was intent on communicating to me his belief that it was fair for him to be detained for having committed a crime, regardless of his observation that black people are arrested for fewer or smaller crimes than white people are. In Jordan, Jimmy and Franklin's responses, a theme arises of distinguishing their own experiences with the police and justice systems with the larger problems of systemic racism: for them, the personal is, explicitly, *not* political.

Franklin and Jimmy also explained their own experiences of frequent police contact differently than they explained police behavior toward black youth in general. This disparity between personal and political beliefs may be linked to a distinction between personal and community narratives about relationships to the justice system. Franklin identified the media, not his own or his peers' experiences, as the main source of the message that the police and courts are racist.

Kate: Right, right. Um, and—had you ever heard from anyone that it was sorta like that, that the system was racist?

Franklin: Well, I hear it on TV a lot -- /not/ Not from like the government /and/ you know this, like, rap artists on TV, and then you hear it from, what's his name that went to Illinois? Um, over that incident that happened at the school.

Kate: /Uh-huh/ /Oh,/ Jesse Jackson?

Franklin: Yeah, you hear it from him sometimes. Yeah, that's basically where I hear it.

Kate: But you haven't heard about it, like, locally. Y'know, I mean, nobody said, like, about [your hometown] or Corbel, like, "Oh yeah, Corbel County Juvenile, watch out."

Franklin: Oh, no, not really.

Franklin, Interview #3, 12/1/01

Markus' responses showed the same distinction between community observations and personal narrative. Markus reported (in the first excerpt, below) that his peers talked about the unfairness of police practices, and he himself had an example of an event in which police seemed racist to him. In spite of his peers' statements and his own observation of racist police behavior, he unequivocally asserted (in the second excerpt, below) that racial disproportion in the detention center was a result of individuals misbehaving.

Kate: Yeah? Do kids talk about the detention center or the police being unfair? Like, out, y'know, like when they're /out/

Markus: /Yeah/ on the streets? /Yeah./ They talk about the police and stuff.

Kate: /Uh-huh?/ Uh-huh, and what do they /say?/

Markus: /How/ they'll stop you for n-, sometimes, no reason.

Markus: They just assume that you're doing somethin'.

Kate: Uh-huh. Has that ever happened to you?

Markus: (pauses) Yeah. /It's/

Kate: /Yeah?/ Yeah. And so like, they just stopped you, because... they felt like it or some'n?

Markus: Yeah. Cuz I wasn't doin' nothin'!

Kate: Mm-hmm? Were you mad?

Markus: Um, yeah! I was /real mad/

Kate: /(laughs)/ yeah.

Markus: I didn't feel like talkin' to 'em, but I just... "might as well just get it overwith."

Kate: Uh-huh? So, hmm. That would be hard, I mean, to be like, not trusting the police. And do- do people talk, I mean like, I know that... where I'm in school, at the university, y'know, that, and the people that I go to school with, we sorta figure that the police are unfair in a particular way that has to do with... black kids. Is that what your- like, what your friends would think? Or do they think it's just /anybody?/

Markus: /Yeah/ that's what some of my friends /think./

Kate: /Uh-huh./ What do you think?

Markus: Like, this one time, when I was, we used to live on Broad Street. We, we had some, a couple white friends, like two boys with us, and four of us black /kids/. And we was walking to [the public] pool, and the police stopped us for some . . . cuz one of the white kids threw a rock at a car.

Markus: And the car stopped and they called the police. And they stopped us. And the police assumed that the, one of us, the /black/ kids did it. And I didn't think that was fair.

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

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Kate: Do you think kids who are... black, or from neighborhoods that are mostly black are more likely to end up in the detention center?

Markus: Yeah.

Kate: Uh-huh? So... but that isn't, that isn't, because people are racist?

Markus: Naw, they do wrong things.

Markus, Interview #2, 11/11/01

These examples, taken from interviews with all four African American participants, suggest that for these young men, racism is seen as something separate from the personal experiences that led them to CCJDC. They are familiar with, and frequently exposed to, the community narrative of racist police practices, but they do not claim it as part of their CCJDC narrative. This may result simply from a perceived distinction between “what the world is like” and “what happens to me.” It may also be a method of coping, a way that Jordan, Jimmy, Franklin and Markus maintain a sense of control over their circumstances and, thereby, of hope for staying out of CCJDC and jail in the future. A third possibility is that the CCJDC’s narrative that “delinquency is a result of individual choice” is taking hold. However, given that all the African American participants could point to incidents where they believed police did approach them because of racism, they were not entirely invested in that point of view.

Noah and Corey’s responses differed from each other, but were similar in the lack of importance, or even consideration, they gave to race in thinking about CCJDC and the detainees. As noted previously, Corey said simply that he “never thought about” why so many detainees were black. Noah and his brother, Richard, talked with me about the issue of police racism and racial disproportion. Like the African American respondents, Noah agreed that some police might be racist, leading to the possibility of disproportionate arrests and detentions. Unlike his African American counterparts, though, Noah denied not only personal experience or observations of racist discipline, but the legitimacy of claims that cultural and historical racism contribute to the African American experience today.

Kate: I’m asking, like, people about race just sort of in general, and, like, how race affects /the way people experience detention and stuff./

Noah: /I think it’s ridiculous how-/ how so called minority people, you



know, ((Richard coughs)) they preach on, you know, their past and, you know, their-, their-, uh, their relatives' past /and whatever/ and the whole slavery thing. You know, that's got nothin' to do with you.

Kate: /Uh huh. (Like history)/

Richard: They feel like they're-, they're still being /repressed./ Do-, do you still-, do you get that, that like w-, with a lot of like-, like black people's answers they feel they're still oppressed and-?

Noah: /You know?/

Kate: -Actually, no. I a-, I'm surprised at how little I hear that, although, /um./ you know, I think-, I mean, personally, my-, my opinion is that there are ways that-, that slavery contributed to a lot of things that are still lasting today in terms of economic conditions and employment and blah blah blah. But I am not hearing that from black people at all. Um, most people say that they think some police are probably racist, and so that some black kids might be more likely to get arrested. /But other than that-/

Noah: /They're-/ /Yeah, I-/ I-, I kind of agree with that-

Noah: -but if you look at stipulations in like the number of percentage most black kids, er most, um, you know, there's a lot more like black kids in school-

Noah: -I mean, just th-, you know, that's the closest thing I can relate to because, you know, I go to school. They get in trouble. And, /you know./ I mean, my dean (\*Mrs. Smith\*), she'll pacific-, she's black, she'll pacifically point out to-, to-, to black kids, 'I'm tired of y'all actin' like niggers /and-/ and not bein' respectful of the teachers and doin' all this stupid shit.' /Just-/ that's the word /she uses./ She uses curse words to get through-, /I mean/, you know, I don't think there's a racial problem. But, ah, ( ). ((slight laugh))

Kate: [multiple supporting "mm-hmms"] At-, at all?

Noah: No.

Kate: Okay.

Noah: I don't have a racial problem /anyway./

Noah, Interview #4, 3/12/02

The best interpretation of these last statements is unclear: Noah may close with a statement about himself as a way to qualify and back off from a fairly vehement stance against claims of racism, or he may be directly linking his personal beliefs to a judgment about how the larger

system works. In either case, he has no personal observations of racism in the system, and has the privilege of being unconcerned with the issue. The disparity between the responses of African American and European American respondents regarding racism and racial disproportion suggest, not surprisingly, that racial disproportion itself has a disproportionate effect on African American detainees' beliefs about police, the justice system, and their own experiences in CCJDC.

### SUMMARY

Detainees' understanding of the purposes of CCJDC, their experiences with officers, and their interpretation of the evident racial disproportion among detainees all contribute to the meaning they take from the detention experience. Detainees themselves identify the manifest purpose of CCJDC as changing youth in particular ways: bringing out their "better selves," punishing bad behavior, deterring crime by demonstrating its potential consequences, and training them to deal differently with anger, alcohol and drugs, or peers. Interactions with officers enhanced or detracted from detainees' relationship with CCJDC, and by extension, their learning process. This would be true of teachers and students in a school setting as well. However, the context, intended lessons, methods and personnel of CCJDC, outside of its classrooms, are quite different from those of a school. Young people's power in CCJDC is even more limited than in a school, with detainees' forbidden to speak freely, officers controlling every movement and activity, and behavior reports influencing detainees' legal cases. Detainees reside at CCJDC for periods of days or weeks, with no chance for a break from the social context, the behavioral pressures, and the setting's messages to detainees.

In spite of their overall judgments that CCJDC "ain't fun" or "ain't no place to be," each of the study's youth participants could identify at least one or two officers who they liked, describing them as understanding, respectful, supportive, and occasionally even permissive. However, the structure, rules and activities of CCJDC limit the proportion of officer-detainee interactions that might evoke these descriptions. CCJDC has 30 staff members whose approaches to detainees (by the reports of both officers and detainees) range from strict to permissive, a structure that requires close observation and control of detainees' behavior, and a high number of detainee activities throughout the day and evening. As a result, detainees are

relatively unlikely, at any given moment, to encounter a staff member whose overall approach, current mood and work contingencies would create the kind of interactions detainees appreciate the most: conversation with displays of mutual respect, sharing of personal information, and occasional provision of information, favors or privileges.

Variations across staff members and across shifts may increase detainees' experience of officer behavior and discipline practices as uneven, capricious or unfair. Some staff members allow talking during chess games, others don't; some staff members won't joke around with detainees at all, while others will do so up to a point—the endpoints also vary depending on the staff member and the context. Study participants seemed frustrated and irritated by the inconsistencies they observed, in spite of fairly clear acceptance of the role of detention officers. Similarly, detainees in the study seemed to accept the existence of certain rules and limitations on their behavior, because of their understanding of CCJDC's function. However, variations in enforcement of those rules, and rules deemed pointless or overly prohibitive (e.g., Jimmy's assessment of the no-talking rule and Franklin's discussion of the grievance procedure) were likely to gain detainees' attention and negative assessment. Study participants seldom mentioned CCJDC rules without talking about how officers enforce those rules. In a sense, the officers are an incarnation of CCJDC's structure and function. More than the rules alone, the officers are the medium that carries the lessons of CCJDC. Their effectiveness in this role is constrained by the structure and requirements of the setting, but also by their personal connections with detainees. To the extent that detainees feel that officers (and rules) are disrespectful, unpredictable, or unfair, they may be less likely to accept CCJDC's message about who detainees are and who they can, or should, become. The current study's data are consistent with this interpretation, in that the two detainees (Noah and Markus) who were most accepting of their time in detention and the fairness of their sentences were also the two who were most invested in CCJDC as a "lesson" or an "opportunity," and the two who were most vocal about feeling disrespected and treated unfairly were more likely to resist the rules and roles of the facility. It is quite possible that personality and cognitive factors play into this pattern as well; we are left with a description of events and no clearly superior single interpretation.

Racial disproportion plays a complex role in detainees' understanding of their own path to and through CCJDC and their beliefs about the larger community and social setting. African American youths seemed more ready than their European American counterparts to acknowledge police racism as an observable phenomenon, but seldom if ever identified it as a cause of their own detention in CCJDC. Whether the cognitive distinction between personal and political is a way for detainees to cope with the relative powerlessness of the juvenile justice experience, or simply evidence of detainees' adherence to the individualistic, "taking responsibility" model, remains unclear. Chapter 7 may shed some light on this issue, and more generally on the link between detainees' thoughts about and responses to CCJDC. It examines detainees' responses to CCJDC by comparing their self-appraisals with the appraisals they believe officers have made of them, and by exploring how detainees accede to or resist the pressures and messages of CCJDC.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE UNCORRECTED SELF: NEGOTIATING IDENTITY IN CCJDC

Previous chapters described CCJDC as it sees and presents itself, and as participating detainees experience and understand it. This description is the background against which we can explore the more central questions of this study: How do detainees' detention experiences contribute, if at all, to their identity development and their sense of possibility for the future? CCJDC is a setting that tries to change young people's thinking, behavior and identity. The setting's most obvious characteristics—its procedures, rules and physical structures—make this intention clear. New inmates are stripped of the freedoms and the identities they enjoy on the outside, and given a restricted range of possibilities for self-expression in CCJDC. The classroom walls are filled with materials intended to inspire “character improvement,” and courses in anger management and “life skills” offer a set of tools to supplement or replace detainees' own behavioral repertoire. Detainees understand that CCJDC is trying to change them, or to help them change themselves. Some respondents seemed to accept this without question, and to value time in CCJDC as a “chance to change” or a wake-up call, in spite of the overall unpleasantness of being detained. It remains to be seen whether detainees' experiences and interpretations of CCJDC affect how they see themselves and how they cope with interactions in the setting. This chapter will describe three aspects of detainees' self-perception: self-description, possible (future) selves, and reflected appraisals—how they believe others, particularly those in CCJDC, view them. CCJDC's contributions to detainees' identity development will be viewed through detainees' and my observations of the setting. Finally, detainees' strategies for coping with the CCJDC experience, particularly as it relates to identity development, will be explored.

#### WHO AM I: SELF-APPRAISALS

Describing oneself on cue is a difficult task, probably even moreso during adolescence, a time, in our culture, of self-discovery and development. The young men in the study were hard-pressed to respond to direct inquiries such as “How would you describe yourself?” or “What kind of person are you?” For this reason, my inquiries about self-perception took a variety of forms. I asked, “How would your friends describe you,” or “If you were introducing

yourself to a pen-pal, what would you say about yourself?” and I listened for spontaneous self-descriptions or self-narratives that seemed to make a statement of “who I am.” Of course, self-appraising statements were also woven through detainees’ descriptions of their possible selves; I have separated them only for the sake of clarity.

Overall, the young men who talked with me had positive self-appraisals, with some qualifiers about their behavior (as opposed to their character). Some seemed most comfortable using their relationships with others to describe themselves. For instance, Noah said “[my mom] knows I got a big heart and I’m real caring,” and Franklin told me that his mom “knows I’m stubborn.” These statements may be considered different from reflected appraisals because they address not what the other person *thinks* about the subject, but what she *knows* about him; Noah and Franklin see these qualities as things they possess, and that their mothers recognize. Markus and Jimmy talked about peer relationships, rather than family. Markus described himself as “a good friend,” while Jimmy saw himself as “a fun person to be with,” based on the amount of time his friends spend with him. Jordan and Corey focused on internal qualities, particularly intelligence. However, Jordan supported this by referring to his relationships with friends, who “get somethin’ wrong and I explain it to ‘em,” and who ask him “‘Why you always gotta use them big words?’” Corey, on the other hand, listed a number of attributes that he said his parents and he would agree on: intelligent, creative, organized and “kind of athletic.”

Some participants also referred to less positive current or past qualities. Franklin described himself as “stubborn” and rebellious, in the sense that “followin’ the rules . . . really gets on [his] nerves.” Markus felt his role as a “problem solver” was something that developed during and after his time in detention; before this time, he told me, he was “disrespectful,” “goofy” and prone to starting fights. Noah was more vague, stating that “everybody’s got their down sides and I just happened to show mine [in the event leading to his detention].” Although several detainees described themselves as developing “an attitude” (i.e., a *bad* attitude) in specific interactions, none of them used this as a generic self-description. [This will become relevant in the discussion, below, of detainees’ responses to the setting.]

Detainees had mixed responses to the fact of being in CCJDC. Neither Franklin nor Corey was surprised to end up in detention. Both mentioned having siblings or close friends

with juvenile justice histories. When I asked Corey, “Before you had ever been here, would you have ever thought you were gonna end up stayin’ in here for any length of time?” he told me that he expected to go to CCJDC eventually “Cuz I was takin’ the wrong road” (Corey, Interview #1, 4/5/01). Franklin told me, “[It’s] sad to say, but I wasn’t surprised, you know what I’m sayin’ . . . it was just like, I [might] as well just get it over with” (Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01). Jimmy had not anticipated being detained but did not see it as relevant to his identity, stating that “I didn’t think I was a different person. I thought I was the same person I am. . . Just choose, choose to do some different things” (Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01). In spite of his fairly calm comment about “showing his down side,” Noah seemed to be taken aback by his detention episode, talking at length about how he planned to change and improve himself, starting in detention and continuing upon his release.

## WHO MIGHT I BECOME: POSSIBLE SELVES

### Hoped-For Selves

The interview questions about possible selves were adapted from Markus and Nurius’ (1986) paradigm of *hoped-for*, *feared*, and *expected* selves (see Appendix B for full interview protocols). Hoped-for selves identified by detainees incorporated jobs and careers, earning capacity, family circumstances, and personal characteristics. Markus, Corey and Jimmy all hoped to go to college, though all worried about how they could afford it. Jimmy hoped to become a detention officer or a lawyer, and Markus an architect. Corey identified several possible jobs including biologist, owner/creator of an “All For Kids” store, or author of a series of science fiction/fantasy novels. Jordan wanted, in the short term, a job at a local bicycle shop and, in the long term, to play professional basketball. Noah hoped to have “a set career . . . [a] house on the corner . . . a family.” Even when talking about what they hoped for, detainees showed an awareness of potential barriers to success, describing active avoidance of negative outcomes. For example, Markus mentioned that he wanted to “stay out of trouble.” Jordan identified the short-term hopes of “getting out of CCJDC” and the long-term desire to “do somethin’ productive, somethin’ I like, *instead of out there slingin’ drugs and stuff*” (emphasis added). Franklin, who initially said that he wanted to be rich and didn’t care whether he achieved this legally or illegally, did say that he wanted to “stay out of jail,” and later expressed

an interest in learning a trade or going to college; like his peers, he worried about finding the money to do so.

These young men's hopes appear well within the normal range for American adolescents. Their "negative definitions" of hoped-for selves (e.g., being someone who stays out of jail) are probably less typical of the average teenager, suggesting the intrusion of "feared selves," directly related to their juvenile justice involvement, on their hopes. The question of hoped-for selves has fairly high social demand characteristics, especially when asked by a highly educated interviewer from a university, in a study about how detention affects young people's self-perceptions. However, I am confident that these answers are reasonably close to a "truth," based on my strong relationships with the participants, the variety across and consistency within participants, and Franklin's openness about a possible interest in illicit sources of income.

#### Feared Selves

With participants mentioning their desire to stay out of trouble or jail when I asked about what they hoped for, it is no surprise that staying out of jail was the unifying theme when I asked what they feared for themselves in the future. Jordan and Noah referred specifically to the DOC time that was a potential outcome of their alleged delinquent acts, but the other four participants also mentioned "being in" or "going to" jail as a central fear. This fits with Oyserman and Markus' (1990a) finding that youth in secure facilities are much more likely than their peers in regular schools to mention being incarcerated as a fear for the future.

Study participants mentioned other feared selves as well. Corey said that a negative future would be one that didn't involve succeeding with at least one of his many ambitions. Markus said he didn't want to "make wrong decisions," implying in context that the wrong decisions would be specifically about choices leading to potential jail time. As noted earlier, Jordan expressed a specific wish to avoid "slingin' drugs" or doing work that he didn't enjoy. Noah was the only participant to express fears about people other than himself. His first response to the question was "I don't know, one of my big fears is I, I don't wanna lose my family" due to an accident or violent crime; he also described a feared possible self that he said was "one of [his mother's] deep fears," that he might become "that lazy person who's gotta



struggle to pay the bills or, you know, bein' someone's roommate who's just spendin' all that excess money on booze and drugs or whatever."

### Expected Selves

For the most part, detainees' expected selves matched their hopes, although several participants were careful to qualify their assertions that they would succeed. Jimmy told me, "I'll make it. I can make it if I want to. But sometimes, sometimes I might change my mind." He then identified another hoped-for possible self, a world traveler: "I might want to go just like I wanna- when I get old enough I wanna go all over the world. I want to go to every state to see what every state like. Live in every state in the world, but I know I can't do that but I wanna try it." Jordan, too, felt confident that he could reach his goals if "I stay up outta here [CCJDC] and do my schoolwork. And try hard." Here again, the spectre of a feared self prevents Jordan from expressing full confidence in his chances for success. Markus, too, qualified his confident response, telling me he could make it through college and become an architect, "If I stay on the right track," which he thought would be "Kinda [hard], but I can do it." Corey's confidence in his abilities seemed to fluctuate, depending in part on his mood and energy level; at times he told me he would be a published author and was, in fact, already writing three books. Another time he said he expected to work at McDonald's when he was 30, but couldn't explain the prediction. Noah was vaguely fatalistic, and Franklin more explicitly so, in predicting their futures. Regarding his hope of having a house, a family and a "set career," Noah told me "I don't know if that's gonna be where I'm at. Cause you know, *you never know*" (emphasis added). Franklin said he "might get myself into trouble, cause I seem to run into trouble a lot . . . (laughs) unexpectedly . . . Like sometimes I'll be around-, like I'll be at parties or somethin', they get busted. You know, stuff like that . . . I'm there at the wrong time. Wrong place, you know /what I'm sayin'." In the end, Franklin joined a Job Corps program several hours from his home, in an effort to get away from his hometown police, whom he had described as "suffocating" him. For Franklin, police and the justice system represented major barriers to achieving the life he wanted, and he saw leaving home for the structure of Job Corps as the best solution.

## HOW DO OTHERS SEE ME: REFLECTED APPRAISALS

Along with and contributing to detainees' ideas about themselves are their ideas about how other people view them—reflected appraisals. For the purposes of this study, reflected appraisals are seen as a likely component of detainees' constructed or negotiated self-image. I asked study participants about how they thought specific people—parents, friends, juvenile justice personnel—would describe them and their likely futures. In a sense, I was hoping to evoke images of the youth's "reflected possible selves," and to see whether or how the detention experience affected detainees' responses to these reflections.

Over the course of my conversations with detainees, I discovered that it is sometimes difficult to identify the boundaries among young people's "neutral" self-perceptions (i.e., how they think they really are), their idealized images of themselves (i.e., how they would like to be), and their descriptions of reflected appraisals from important others (i.e., how they think others see them). Youth participants' developmental stages and cognitive/personality styles (e.g., abstract v. concrete thinking, etc.) also influenced their way of answering these (and other) questions. In spite of these limitations, the young men in the study had ready responses for my questions, suggesting that taking another's perspective on themselves was not an unfamiliar exercise. Furthermore, understanding the relationships among identity, possible selves and reflected appraisals requires acknowledgment of these developmental and individual factors, regardless of their tendency to muddy the conceptual waters.

Youths' assessments of reflected appraisals also occur in the context of a relationship. This is both a statement of the obvious and glimpse of the potential for complex and nuanced interpretations, beyond the content of the reflected appraisal statement itself. The relationship context may be an abiding one between parent and child, a brief series of contacts with detention officers at CCJDC, or anything between. The strength and importance of the relationship appears to affect youths' emotional and behavioral responses to the reflected appraisals stemming from that relationship. For instance, Franklin is close to his mother and expressed concern about her disappointment and hurt feelings when he was arrested and detained. He told me,

[my mother] expects me to take the wrong path . . . Cause she knows how I am.

A-, and she doesn't want that for me . . . but she expects it . . . cause I'm stubborn . . . She wants me to take a better road. And . . . I try to do that . . . but what I'm used to isn't-, isn't really up to her standards of what she wants me to do, [and] . . . tha:'s somethin' I really can't change overnight.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

His concern for his mother and his interest in the relationship evoke an effort on his part to live up to what she hopes for, and to do better than what she expects. On the other hand, Franklin had only limited relationships with officers in the detention center. He describes them (the officers as a group, aside from the one he mentioned liking) as thinking about him,

'I think he'll be back here' and all that . . . Not [because of something] about me specifically, just, like-, them knowin' about li-, how many people's been in here . . . they've seen a lot of people come in and outta here, . . . knowin' what goes on, like, they probably think I'll be back up in here.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

I asked Franklin specifically about the officer with whom he said he had developed a slightly closer relationship. Franklin told me that Peter would:

Franklin: . . . probably say that I have, uh, the ability to get-, to do better.

Franklin: Better, and get-, to, you know what I'm sayin', go to college and be able to do all that, /you know what/ I'm sayin'? And he'd probably say that I'm a good person, you know what I'm sayin', when I wanna be, you know what I /mean/? Not really knowin', like, all about me, you know what I'm sayin', /but knowin'/ what we talked about, you know what /I'm/ sayin'. A-, and what kind of attitude I showed towards him since he was bein', you know what I'm sayin', respectful to me, /you/ know what I'm sayin', when I first met 'im.

Kate: [multiple conversational support turns removed] Alright, so-, um, so you think-, do you think he expects that you would get to those places? Like, that you'd use the abilities you have and-

Franklin: -Yeah, he probably would.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Franklin's own prediction, during this first interview, suggests only limited concern about the officers' opinions of him, and no apparent intention to adjust his behavior in response to them: "I don't wanna be [back in CCJDC], but, it's a possibility I might get myself into trouble, cause I seem to run into trouble a lot" (Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01).

In our next interview, Franklin said his probation officers' would expect him not to succeed, and linked his assumption to the charges against him, rather than to his qualities as an individual. Here, however, he adds a statement about his own response to the officers' pessimistic viewpoint:

Like, I don't think they think I'm gonna make it through [probation], you know what I'm sayin', because of the charge they gave me, you know what I'm sayin'. But I'm gonna try to prove 'em wrong, you know what I mean? But I don't think-, think they're thinkin' I'm gonna make it through.

Franklin, Interview #2, 6/15/01

Franklin's assessments of reflected appraisals are embedded in relationship contexts: he anticipates negative assessment from his mother, who knows he is "stubborn" and may take a while to change. The same is true for detention and probation officers whose judgments, he believes, would be based on "technical information" such as recidivism rates for detainees in general, or for probationers with various criminal histories. Franklin did believe that his respectful behavior toward Peter would lead to a more positive expectation. The relationships and judgment sources Franklin describes fall on a continuum from impersonal and disconnected (most detention officers and the probation officers) to somewhat connected (Peter) to very strong connection (Franklin's mother). Of these potential judges, he believes those who don't know him and the one who knows him very well expect him to have trouble staying out of detention. He believes Peter would think he could do well, perhaps because he showed Peter the qualities that would help him to succeed, but not those (like stubbornness) that might predict future difficulty.

Franklin's self-appraisal and his response to reflected appraisals seem to shift according to the relationship context as well. He is interested in trying to change for his mother's sake—not because of a change in his own values, but because she wants it—but he is unsure whether he will succeed. He says, too, that he will "try" to disprove his probation officers' negative predictions, though this seems more a matter of protecting his own interests than making the officers feel better about him or his future. Franklin makes no clear prediction for himself—he thinks he might be able to stay out of detention and succeed in probation, and he will try. This is consistent with his attribution (previously noted) of some aspects of his future to

circumstances beyond his control. It may also explain his apparent lack of concern for the negative appraisals he attributes to “generic” detention officers. Unlike his mother or his probation officers, with whom he has ongoing and potentially powerful relationships, these are people whose influence on him is momentary, and whose judgments he feels are unrelated to anything about him specifically. If Franklin feels he must put effort into doing well, and those efforts may be thwarted by external circumstances, it seems reasonable to direct them toward changing the beliefs of people who will matter in the long run.

Along with the strength of the relationship, the tone of the relationship—warm or cold, positive or negative—may affect the content or direction of detainees’ reflected appraisals. In other words, a detainee who has frequent conflict with a probation officer may be hard pressed to believe the probation officer has faith in the detainee’s ability to succeed. If the detainee “writes off” the relationship, he may also “write off” this particular reflected appraisal, giving it less weight as he imagines his own possible selves. Corey, for example, had identified Nick (AM detention officer) as someone he liked and who liked him. In Corey’s typically concrete way, he said Nick would say about him, “that I played the guitar before an’ I’m telling him different . . .

But I’ve never played the guitar before” (Corey, Interview #1, 4/5/01). Corey believes that Nick sees him as a talented guitar player. Later, when Corey predicted he would be working at McDonald’s at age 30, I asked him about Nick’s likely response:

Kate: What do you think Nick would say if you said you thought you were going to end up working at McDonald’s?

Corey: I don’t know.

Kate: You don’t know? You can’t even guess?

Corey: Uh-uh.

Kate: Like, what do you think he would want you to be doin’?

Corey: Playing guitar.

Corey, Interview #1, 4/5/01

This excerpt shows not only the potential link between the valences of relationships and reflected appraisals, but the occasional difficulties of interpreting reflected appraisals as an

indicator or component of identity. Corey cannot or will not guess at Nick's beliefs about him, and when pressed, he falls back on an *ability* rather than a *personal quality*, leaving it up to the audience to understand the link between "learning guitar quickly" and "how Corey sees himself."

More than self-appraisals and possible selves, reflected appraisals seem to evoke an emotional response, perhaps because, by definition, they have to do with being observed and judged by others. This appears to be true even (perhaps especially) for teens who might be labeled by teachers or detention officers as rebellious or independent; the strength of the emotional response may also depend on the degree and type of power the appraiser holds in the youth's life. For instance, Jimmy commented on his way out of court one day that "Man, I was scared! [The judge] made me feel *little*. Every time I come out of there, man, I feel *small*." I asked him about this in a later interview:

Kate: And you said, every time you come outta there, outta the courtroom, you feel small. Do you remember saying that?

Jimmy:Mm hmm.

Kate: So what's that about?

Jimmy Uh, cuz anytime I (inaudible), I don't know. I'm nervous.

Jimmy:And, and I just feel real little. Like I'm a nobody.

[later in same interview]

Kate: Yeah. Do you remember what she said to you that last time? Like what's- what what do you remember about all that?

Jimmy:She want- she wanted me to have perfect report.

Jimmy:I think so. I think I do [remember]. She didn't want me to get suspended from scho- One thing she didn't want-want me to do is get suspended from school no more\*.

\*This interview took place while Jimmy was suspended from school, which may explain his emphasis on that point.

Jimmy, Interview #5, 12/19/01

While being made to feel little may not qualify as a reflected appraisal in the narrowest definition, this excerpt captures the potential emotional weight and cognitive impact of

“implied” appraisals. Jimmy’s spontaneous post-court comment about “feeling little” was unusual for him in its open acknowledgment of emotional vulnerability. His clear recollection of the judge’s instructions also stands out, especially because Jimmy had a reputation in CCJDC, and at home, as someone who clowned around and was unlikely to listen to officers or learn from the setting. Jimmy Senior, who was present for parts of the above-excerpted interview, expressed his pessimistic beliefs about his son and other teenagers in the justice system as follows:

Jimmy Sr.: She [the judge] probably be um she- why she made him feel little is cuz he um- she tellin’ him, believe what you do and a lot of times kids you know, you know they get to the point where they just don’t wanna be- they don’t wanna hear the truth.

Kate: Uh hmm. So you feel like that’s what, that’s what happened?

Jimmy Sr.: Yeah, yeah, they don’t wanna hear the truth. They wanna be you know- they don’t wanna be- they they got this fantasy about “Oh, I ain’t done nothin’ wrong. I, you know, really, I didn’t-it wasn’t that much” ((portraying a teenager)). But it is a lot.

Jimmy Sr.: To the court system.

Jimmy Sr.: They gotta understand that this is really serious. They understand then that it’s serious. They think, aw I’m gonna get one more chance. Maybe I’ll get one more chance.

Jimmy Sr.: But it ain’t always still gonna be there. You can’t keep on backin’ on one more chance. You need to do what you need to do. You know, to straighten your life out. They listen to other peers.

From Jimmy, Interview #5, 12/19/01

Participants seldom made their emotional responses explicit as Jimmy did in the conversation above. Rather, emotional content is implicit in detainees’ explanations of reflected appraisals and descriptions of actual or planned behavioral responses. In combination, these feelings, thoughts and behaviors are the means by which reflected appraisals are appropriated or rejected as part of the individual’s identity. The relationship context clearly comes into play here. Noah seems especially invested in being seen as an honest person, not just by his mother, but by judges, teachers and other authority figures. He told me the following story about himself, his behavior, and his efforts to adjust the images of him held by people involved with his juvenile court case:

- Noah: Um-, I was goin' to school, probably about three weeks ago or somethin' and two blocks down here, down the road, um, ((clears throat)) that's where the kids wait to get on the bus and-, uh-, a friend of mine's grandmother stays on that corner.
- Noah: And she has a fenced in yard and uh, we c-, went out to get in their van to go to school and there was a purse hangin' on the, uh, corner of the fence and I seen it and I grabbed it and that's-, [my school is] like, halfway across /town./
- Noah: So um, I-, I didn't even look in it, I didn't really wanna know what was in it, I /just/ was gonna go turn in, and I went and turned it in to the school and then, I was thinkin' about it, and I was thinkin', well, you know, that's somethin' I'd like to have my probation officers know /and/ the judge to know for when I go to court, so I went and-, uh, after school I got a letter from the assistant principal, and she actually wrote it up over the weekend for me, you know, on her /own time/ which was pretty cool. Um-, but she let me know actually what was in the purse, it was a-, a-, a cell phone, a digital camera /and/ over two-hundred dollars in cash, /keys to her home and her mother's h-, keys to her home and-, and her mother's/ car and-, and an uncashed paycheck.

[later in same interview]

- Noah: But um, I gave the letter, um, that my assistant principal wrote, um, to my probation officer, he took a copy of it said "This will be in your report /for/ when you go to court," and I was like "Okay, that-, which means the judge sees it," /and/-, and then, yeah, like I told you, um, when you were at court with /me/, the-, my attorney didn't present it and, you know, I asked her why, she said she was too busy. That kinda disappointed me, but-, it's-, it's-, I mean, *it's not really like I wanted to use that as a-, as ammunition, you know, to get out of the position /that I'm/ in.* No matter what, I'm in this position and I just gotta, you know, go with the flow kinda /thing/. Um-, (pause) it's more like ammunition for myself, (pause), you know, like-, it's a-, it's a steppin' stone for myself an-, I mean, it just shows to me that I've improved a lot.
- Kate: [numerous "uh-huh" and "right" turns omitted] Uh huh, and you want people to see that.
- Noah: Yeah. /I mean/, *I don't wanna be a-, thought of-, thought of as, you know, the-, the bad kid* that'll run up on you and steal your purse and-
- Kate: /I mean-/ -Uh huh.



Noah: -in the dark. No, /((laughs))/ I wan-, you know, I wanna be-, I wanna play football next year, I /wanna/ be a part of somethin', you know. (pause) *Have people have /good feelings/ about me*, so.

Kate: /((laughing)) Right, right./ /Uh huh./ /Uh huh./ And you wanted the judge to know that.

Noah: I wanted the judge to know that, but-, I don't know if he read it on the, um, my-, uh, report, my intensive [probation] report /thing/, but um-, if he knows that or not, I know it.

Noah, Interview #3, 10/8/01  
(Emphasis added)

Noah's story shows evidence of his own self-appraisal as an honest person. Even in describing his attempts to convey the tale to his judge, he emphasizes the point that his intention was not to affect the outcome of his case. Rather, he wanted the judge to *know* something about him—that he has improved and he isn't "the bad kid" committing crimes—and to *feel good* about him as well. The hearing where he wants the letter presented is not his first with this judge. Noah is not creating a *new* appraisal, rather he is making adjustments to one he believes exists already, perhaps the negative one he is trying to avoid or replace ("a bad kid that'll . . . steal your purse"). Like Noah, other study participants identified, implicitly or explicitly, thoughts and motivations developed in response to reflected appraisals. Therefore, the following discussion of detainees' reflected appraisals will address content and responses together.

The reflected appraisals detainees identified in response to direct inquiry included both positive and negative descriptions, thus eliminating the possible confound between reflected appraisals and desired reputation or efforts at impression management. Franklin (as quoted above) believed that CCJDC officers who didn't know him very well would assume they would see him again, based simply on their experience with other detainees; he seemed to accept this negative prediction as a result of the officers' work experiences. However, Franklin imagined that Peter, the European American male officer whom he liked, would expect him to succeed in staying out of detention. Franklin explicitly links his beliefs about Peter's appraisal to the mutually respectful interactions between them: Franklin says Peter would think he can do better, "knowin' . . . what kind of attitude I showed towards him." He says his mother expects him to "take the wrong path" because "she knows . . . I'm stubborn." In both cases, he assesses

the depth and accuracy of reflected appraisals based on how well the person knows him. Peter may not have known “all about” Franklin, but Franklin felt their interactions had conveyed something essential and positive about who he was, or who he could be. Furthermore, he implies that an officer whom he perceived as disrespectful would not have had the same opportunity to witness Franklin’s potential, because Franklin would not have been open or respectful in response.

Jordan also felt that his repeated detentions would lead officers to expect him to return again.

Kate: Like, do you think they watch you an’ say, “Yeah he’ll be back” or “No, he won’t”?

Jordan: No, I only worry, the only reason I say I’ll be back, because I been here so many times.

Jordan: And th-- and it’s like, they think I cain’t stop comin’.

Jordan: But if it’s my first time, they’ll prob’ly think, “Oh, he prob’ly won’t be back.”

Jordan, Interview #3, 4/1/02

Jordan had told me in the same interview about some major changes he was making to his “attitude” and behavior, so I asked him whether he might respond to an officer’s assumption by describing this transformation:

Kate: Do you think you’d, like, be able to tell them about this attitude change you been talkin’ about? Do you think it’d be worth it?

Jordan: (shakes head)

[later in same interview]

Kate: If I asked your probation officer or a detention officer about you, what d’you think they’d say about what kind of kid you are, an’ about, like, what kind of future you have?

Jordan: They’d prob’ly say . . . I ‘on’t even know\*.

Kate: You don’ know. Alright. Um,

Jordan: But if you asked me, I would say, I’m smart, well-educated, future is gonna be, I think that if I stop coming up in here, an’ this attitude thing is for real that I’m talking about, //I think I should have a good future.

\*Jordan’s inflection and the ensuing conversation make it unclear whether he means that the officers would say “I don’t know,” or whether he means he does not know what

they would say. However, he does not correct my assumption of the latter version.

Jordan, Interview #3, 4/1/02

Jordan recognized the likely logic of officers' thinking—that a youth who has been in CCJDC repeatedly will show up yet again—but rejects it as not applicable in his case, because he sees himself as having made major personal changes. At that time, he did not acknowledge any motivation to correct the perceived inaccuracy of officers' judgments. He did, however, directly and publicly reject some negative appraisals, showing the relevance of relationship and situational contexts to (his) response motivation. The following fieldnote excerpts are from an afternoon at the local courthouse, where Jordan was to have a hearing after being charged, along with another youth, with an assault. Prior to the hearing, I waited with Jordan and Bernard (European American male detention officer) in the small courthouse waiting room.

Bernard, in the context of Jordan's talk about how he wants to get out of CCJDC, and how he is doing better with his behavior and attitude, asks "What's gonna make you change?" Jordan tells him, "I am changin'." Bernard says, "You've had six chances—this is your sixth detention." They disagree about the number of detentions, and then go back to the main point of the conversation. Jordan says, "You don't get it, Bernard, I *am* changing . . . I swear I wouldn't be up in here if that girl hadn't said what she did. I would bet you money on that." He tells us how he was "doin' good" in school and at home, and again repeats his oath and the statement that you could bet money on its truth.

From fieldnotes, 4/23/02

In this first excerpt, Jordan responds to Bernard's dual implication that he is not changing and that he is guilty of the alleged assault. He shows how important it is to him to change Bernard's mind, bringing in "evidence" (his school and home behavior), "swearing" twice to the truth of his claims, and backing up the claim with a monetary bet. Jordan did not mention Bernard (in earlier interviews) as someone he felt especially connected to at CCJDC, so his efforts are probably not geared toward maintaining a close personal relationship. However, the charge against Jordan represents an increase in severity over past charges, as it involves an individual victim and no apparent provocation (i.e., the alleged assault was not in the context of an argument). As such, it says something "worse" about what kind of person Jordan might be than past charges do, and carries with it a significant possibility of DOC sentencing. Furthermore, the charge was made at a time when Jordan saw himself as improving and trying to stay out of

detention. Unlike the more general reflected appraisal that Jordan “will probably be back” in CCJDC, Bernard’s appraisal is specific, it is drastically different from how Jordan is trying to see himself, and it is a reminder of the dire straits in which Jordan now finds himself.

This scenario repeats itself in the courtroom, with the state’s attorney (prosecutor) presenting Jordan in a harsh, negative light, and Jordan responding with a vehement rejection of the judgment:

State’s attorney: “The defendant doesn’t respect people” (at all), and “needs a secure setting. One need only look at his probation adjustment and remission . . . “ to see this. He “continues to be a discipline problem” in school. (This) “young man” is . . . “unruly, noncompliant, and combative, even in the most secure setting.”

The judge then asks if Jordan wants to speak, and his attorney encourages him to do so. Jordan says to the judge, “Ma’am, as you can see, whenever I’ve come in here and done something wrong,” (I’ve admitted it). . . . Anybody who talks to me will tell you I’m very truthful . . . If you look over these files, I’ve been truthful with you, and with everyone in here. If I done something wrong, I plead guilty cuz I know I done wrong. I’ve been going to the [Boys’ and Girls’] club . . . doing better at school . . . “ Gesturing with his chin toward the state’s attorney, Jordan says, “He doesn’t think I respect people, but if I didn’t, I wouldn’t have as many people behind [supporting] me as I do right now” (referring to me, his school principal and counselor, and his mom, all of whom are present at the hearing, and presumably also his mentor from the Boys’ and Girls’ Club).

From fieldnotes, 4/23/02

This was the only instance, in a year of observing Jordan and other detainees’ hearings, that I saw a youth take the opportunity to speak at length in response to the charges being made. Given the obvious power imbalance between the judge and the defendant, and this particular judge’s ability to make at least one detainee “feel little,” Jordan’s firm stance is particularly significant. In an interview two days later, he repeated to me his assertion that the state’s attorney had misjudged him, which tells us he was still thinking about the incident and felt the need to make the correction once again:

Jordan: Like I always do the stuff, and I can recognize when I do wrong. So I’m feel . . . like that dude he said I don’t respect people, I ain’t like that. I don’t (pause)

Kate: Yeah, that made you pretty mad, didn't it?

Jordan: Yeah.

Jordan, Interview #4, 4/25/02

Jimmy, too, responded with anger to an authority figure's negative appraisal that he found inaccurate and insulting. The event happened at Jimmy's school, so it could be considered irrelevant to the meaning Jimmy might draw from his detention experience. However, it occurred after Jimmy's first detention, while he was on probation, and resulted in another period of incarceration for him; as such, the incident may contribute directly to Jimmy's thinking about the meaning and purpose of his detention experience.

Kate: So, how'd you get suspended from school?

Jimmy: Teacher tried to (treat) me! /This/ teacher was talkin' crazy to me, so I talked crazy back to him.

Kate: /How?!/ So what did the teacher say to you?

Jimmy: He said uh, I was gonna be a bum for the rest of my-, uh, he said-, cause I didn't wanna take Driver's Ed., he said I was gonna be a bum and-, gonna be ridin' a bike at 33 years old. I said, "You must be a motha-fucker if you think I'm gonna ride a bike and be a bum until I'm twenty-, til I'm th-, if I'm thir-, when I'm thirty-three years old." He's-, and he-, and they, uh, they suspended me for that.

Kate: Got it. So it sounds like he was really kinda ridin' you, I mean-

Jimmy: -Yeah.

Kate: Givin' you a hard time.

Jimmy: Yeah. He always be ridin' me, talkin' 'bout how I'm gonna be in jail and stuff. So I told-, so I got-, I got sick and tired of him talkin'.

Kate: Mmm hmm.

Jimmy: And he ain't even a real teacher, he just like a person to follow you around and stuff.

Kate: ((laughs)) What do you mean, he's like a teacher's aide or somethin'?

Jimmy: Yeah.

Jimmy, Interview #2, 10/30/01

In this story, Jimmy is righteously indignant, so much so that he breaks school rules to

respond to the “reflected possible self” presented by the teacher’s aide. He points out that this was not a one-time event, but an ongoing set of interactions that finally made Jimmy “sick and tired of [the aide] talkin’.” He closes the narrative by discounting the adult’s power, expertise, and, by extension his accuracy of judgment, telling me “he ain’t even a real teacher.” Jimmy responded with similar irritation when his father joined one of our interviews (excerpted in part earlier in this chapter) to give his assessment of the reason Jimmy felt “small” after going to court. As quoted above, Jimmy Senior said Jimmy Junior didn’t understand the seriousness of his behavior, or the likelihood that he would eventually run out of chances. After the contributions quoted earlier, he continued, telling me:

Jimmy Sr.: Cuz you know- he know. That why he feel little because he know what he doin’ is really- is stupid. And he like, you know, “I should know better than this.”

From Jimmy, Interview #5, 12/19/01

Jimmy Junior also told me that during his first detention, one of the first things his father said to him was, “I told you this was the way you were goin’” (Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01). In the December interview, once Jimmy Senior had left the room, I asked Jimmy Junior about his father’s assessment of him and his behavior. While he resented the frequency of his father’s admonitions, he seemed to understand the reasoning behind them. In the end, Jimmy accepted his father as someone with legitimate authority in his life.

Jimmy:I just wanna uh scream for him not to say it no more. Cuz he (inaudible) just keep on sayin it. Same thing over and over a hundred times.

Kate: Why do you think he does that?

Jimmy:Hmuhmm [I don’t know].

Kate: Why does he say he does it?

Jimmy:Tryin’ to get it in my head. I guess.

[later in same interview]

Jimmy:What ever the parents say, say, go.

Kate: Yup.

Jimmy, Interview #5, 12/19/01

Jimmy Senior’s frustrated, negative appraisal of his son’s behavior may also have been

tolerable to Jimmy Junior because of another, more positive reflected appraisal. Jimmy told me, “My Dad told me I could do what I want to do as long as I put my mind to it” (Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01). This positive, supportive statement is in direct disagreement with the statement made by the teacher’s aide, and may also mitigate the negative impact of Jimmy Senior’s lectures on Jimmy Junior’s beliefs about himself.

Detainees also sometimes accepted negative and rejected positive reflected appraisals. Noah, who was so concerned with being seen as a good and honest person, anticipated a negative response from acquaintances learning of his sentence of five years’ intensive probation, based in part on his own response:

Noah: I don’t know, it [the sentence] come to a shock at first but, I mean, I’m gettin’ used to it now, /though,/ so.

Kate: /Mmm Hmm./ So what is it that it took getting used to? Like-

Noah: -Just the, the-, you know, the label, I mean, five years intensive /probation,/ it’s like, wow. I mean, but it-, I mean it’s not really puttin’ a burden on me.

Kate: /Uh huh./ Right, but it-, so it’s more like knowing that you’re a guy who has five years of intensive-, like, /you know,/ (), so somebody would hear that about you-

Noah: /Right./ - And that’s what sucks cause, /people-/ , you know, people who I know and then, you know, “Did you know I was in trouble?” “No.” “For what?” “Oh, uh, robbery,” /uh./ So their-, I’ve le-, seen the look on their faces like, man, it’s really disappointing /cause/ I don’t want them thinkin’ of me in a totally different way but, /you/ know it’s somethin’-

Kate: /Uh huh./ /Mmm Hmm./ /Right./ So what is the-, what is the look on their face, I mean what do they look like?

Noah: I mean, it’s different for everybody but-

Noah: Like just a-, a shocking /look/ like-, like, “You’re jokin’ right?”

Noah: And then you know, I gotta, “No, I’m not jokin’.”

Noah, Interview #2, 6/13/01

Noah uses emotion-laden words such as “sucks,” “disappointing,” and “shocking” to convey the intense negativity of his responses to his story. He connects his own reaction to that of his

imagined audience, telling me that his sentence was “a shock” to him and that he’d seen “shocking” (i.e., shocked) looks on others’ faces as well. Noah sees himself differently as a result of his behavior and its consequences, and accepts, with disappointment, that others will also think of him differently, more negatively.

Lending further complexity to the picture of detainees’ responses to reflected appraisals, Corey was selective in his agreement with, or denial, of his parents’ reflected appraisals. He initially told me that he and his parents would describe him in exactly the same terms, and that his parents’ view of him was accurate and complete.

Kate: How do you think your parents would describe you? Like if they were just talking about “this is the kind of kid that he is,” what do you think they would say?

Corey: Intelligent, creative, kind of athletic cuz I mean I don’t do much things and they know that.

Corey: And organized. And that’s about it.

Kate: What would you, like, how would you describe yourself?

Corey: Same way.

Kate: Same way. Do you think there’s anything that- that they miss in what how they think about you? Are there things that they don’t know about, about you? About how you are?

Corey: Nope.

Kate: No. Do you think they were surprised when you got detained here?

Corey: Not really.

Corey, Interview #1, 4/5/01

However, in our second interview, a few months after the first, we talked in more depth about his parents’ perception of him, and Corey suggested there were some major areas of disagreement, about both positive and negative appraisals.

Kate: Um, do you think they’ll have pretty much the same idea about what’s going on with you? And

Corey: I don’t know, they see different than me.

[ . . . ]



Kate: Do you think they see you a lot differently than you see yourself?

Corey: Yes.

Kate: Yeah. How do you think they see you?

Corey: I don't know.

Kate: Well, how do you know it's really different then?

Corey: Cuz it's just different. They have different stuff they say about me.

Corey: Than I think about me. And they think differently about me. They think I can do more. And I can't. And they know I can't.

Kate: Uh huh. Like what kinds of things do they think you can do?

[ . . . . ]

Kate: Like, is it school that they think you can do more of than you think?

Corey: They think I can do more school work, ah, more activities stuff, and different stuff, but ah, that's about it.

Kate: And why, how do they get this idea that's so different from yours?

Corey: I used to be a perfect all A student.

Kate: Uh huh. What happened?

Corey: Uh, I stopped doing my stuff and my grades went down.

Kate: Why'd you stop? Do you know?

Corey: No.

Kate: Are you depressed?

Corey: No.

Kate: No? Have you been depressed before?

Corey: They think that, but I haven't been depressed.

Kate: So they think you're depressed?

Corey: Huh? /They thought/ that I was.

Kate: /Do they still think that?/ Oh they thought you were. Uh huh. Do you know why they thought that?

Corey: Cuz I started to go down on my grades and /everything/, but that's it.

Corey, Interview #2, 7/5/01

This conversation shows Corey explaining himself and his abilities in very different terms from

those he believes his parents would use, but the difference is not simply one of positive versus negative. Corey feels his parents' view of him is, in some ways, too positive—they believe he can do more than he does, or than he believes he is able. There is a sense of frustration when he says “They think I can do more . . . and they know I can't,” as though he sees his parents denying an obvious truth, something literally “self-evident.” He also rejects the notion that he is depressed. It is unclear whether he sees “depression” as negative, because of its potentially stigmatizing quality, or as an indirect positive judgment—that he would be able to do “more stuff” if it weren't for the supposed depression. By rejecting depression, he rejects the idea that his abilities could be “improved” with treatment. He acknowledges a change in his school performance, though he does not say whether this is a problem for him, or only for his parents. However, given his attachment to the self-image of an intelligent, creative person headed for a university education, it seems likely that he would see lowered grades as negative.

Kate: Do you think that [your probation officers] think you'll succeed in getting through probation?

Corey: No.

Kate: No. Why wouldn't they think that?

Corey: Cuz I haven't been going for the /last/ three weeks. Cuz I've been forgetting./ (They)/ don't really care that I've been forgetting. I have trouble remembering, I have trouble remembering things that I haven't been doing for a /while./

Kate: /Uh huh/ /Uh huh/ /Right/. So, what, *you* don't care that you've been forgetting or *they* don't care?

Corey: *They* don't care /that/ I've been forgetting. They think I'm just staying here [at home] cuz I don't want /to go./

Kate: /Oh/. /Oh I see/. Have they ever, um, offered to help you get to your things [meetings] like?

Corey: Na uh.

Kate: No. So it's totally up to you.

Corey: Yeah.

Kate: And, and they just assume that you're not going because . . .

Corey: I don't want to.

Kate: Cuz you don't want to go. Do you think that's partly true?

Corey: No.

Corey, Interview #2, 7/5/01

In a sense, Corey's disagreement with some of the reflected appraisals of his parents, and with the probation officers' reflected appraisal as well, suggests that Corey feels these adults do not "see him" clearly—they may agree with him about some of his overall positive qualities (e.g., intelligent, creative, organized), but not as much about specific abilities, or explanations for his behavior. As noted earlier, Corey identified Nick (Asian American male detention officer) as an officer who had gotten to know him well in CCJDC, and agreed with the positive appraisal he believed Nick would make about him as a fast learner and talented guitarist. In general, Corey was much more positive and enthusiastic when talking about Nick and Mike (the detention officers who talked to him about, and taught, guitar) than when discussing his parents or his probation officers. The relative neutrality of Corey's relationship to his parents, and the limitations in his relationship with the probation officers, may have limited the perceived legitimacy of their claims about him. On the other hand, his new, narrowly defined, and strongly positive relationship with Nick let Corey feel known and seen, such that Nick's appraisals (limited as they were) had more authority with him. The link between strength of relationship and agreement about, or legitimacy of, self-appraisals must be bi-directional: our sense of being understood affects our perception of the relationship, and a stronger relationship affects the degree to which we imagine appraisals that match our views of ourselves. Feeling misjudged and misunderstood will likely limit the strength of a relationship (for instance, we might imagine Jordan's response if the state's attorney offered him mentoring or friendship).

My interviews with Corey also suggest that the strength of his relationship with a single officer, combined with his specific experiences in detention, may have resulted in a strong, positive relationship to the setting as a whole. Learning and playing guitar was one of the things Corey told me he remembered the most about his time in detention (the other was learning and playing volleyball, which he had never enjoyed before); in general, his appraisal of the detention experience was much milder than those of the other study participants'. He described

it as “not all that bad” (Interview #1, 4/5/01). For Corey, being in detention provided an opportunity to develop new abilities in the context of a relationship (with Nick) that validated his self-appraisal even as it was changing.

Data from other detainees’ interviews provide some support for the hypothesis that detainees’ attachments to CCJDC or to individuals influence, and are influenced by, the perceived legitimacy of reflected appraisals. The positive or negative quality of appraisals was generally less important than the detainee’s perception of the source’s authority as a judge of his character. In general, detainees seemed more likely to accept reflected appraisals from people they felt had gotten to know them—for Noah and Franklin, this included their mothers, while Corey’s parents were a less certain source of understanding. Franklin also identified a single officer to whom he had revealed more of himself, and it was this officer whose judgment he felt was based on something legitimate. Jimmy and Jordan clearly rejected the judgments of individuals who they felt had no knowledge of them—a teacher’s aide, detention officers, and a prosecuting attorney. Detainees’ motivation to make corrections in others’ appraisals of them seemed linked to the strength of the relationship, the likely outcome of the correction, and the significance of the person’s judgment to the detainee’s future. Jordan told me he saw no reason to deny officers’ perception that he would return to detention, but later, while awaiting a hearing with potentially severe consequences, he made significant efforts to correct both Bernard’s and the State’s Attorney’s negative appraisals.

#### DETAINEE RESPONSES TO APPRAISALS WITHIN CCJDC

So far, this chapter has presented participating detainees’ words about self-appraisals, possible selves, reflected appraisals, and responses to perceived misunderstanding or incorrect judgments about who they are. The young men in the study quickly took to the notion of reflected appraisals, readily acknowledging the likelihood that people around them might be judging them. Furthermore, they were able to explain or demonstrate the reasoning behind their beliefs about what people might think of them. Detainees had a variety of responses to reflected appraisals, especially to those which differed from their self-images. These responses combine emotion, thinking and behavior; they are both explicit, such as direct disagreement, and implicit, such as proving someone wrong or “explaining away” a perceived negative judgment.

The relationship and situational contexts of reflected appraisals affected both interpretations and responses on the part of detainees.

Having established that detainees are conscious of being judged by CCJDC staff, and that they have a variety of thoughts, feelings and behavior in response to reflected appraisals, the next step is to apply this framework more generally to CCJDC as a social setting. CCJDC's very purpose implies an appraisal of the youth incarcerated there, and a clear intention to change the detainees. Given detainees' awareness of officers' (and others') appraisals of them, and the continuum of available responses, are there times when their behavior in the setting is a response to perceived labels or appraisals? Perhaps more accurately, are there any times in the setting that youth behavior is *not*, to some degree, a response to reflected appraisals or a sense of being judged? How do detainees cope with a setting that is geared toward changing them? What are their strategies for survival, for maintaining a positive sense of self in an environment whose message is, at least in part, that they are lacking? Detainees' behavior in CCJDC, particularly during moments of implied judgments or labeling, is their direct contribution to the process of identity negotiation. Incorporating data from fieldnotes and interviews, the following discussion addresses detainee behavior in response to direct appraisals by staff, and behavior that appears to be a more general response, whether positive or negative, to the messages or intentions of CCJDC.

#### Responses to Direct Appraisals of Behavior: Ability, Behavior and Character

During my observations at CCJDC, staff members sometimes made explicit statements of "appraisal" or judgment of detainees, individually or in groups. These statements usually assessed detainees three overlapping areas: ability, behavior and character. Within these areas fell both positive and negative judgments. Examples in and across categories are offered here to provide a sense of the environment of CCJDC, in which detainees may be subject to public judgments by staff at any given time, about any number of possible topics.

##### *Appraisals of Ability*

Among the three basic appraisal categories, those addressing ability were the least common during my observations. This seems in part to be a result of CCJDC structure and protocol: officers are wary of giving the impression of favoritism, and in any case are given

limited opportunities (except in the gym<sup>30</sup>) for comment on detainees' abilities, because the detainees have limited opportunities to demonstrate them. The classrooms are one place where detainees can shine, but most of the classroom praise comes from the teachers<sup>31</sup>, whose actions are less affected than officers' by the need to maintain an image of neutral authority. Only a few examples of officers judging detainees' abilities emerged from my observations. Two came from a single period in the classroom (fieldnotes, 7/30/01) when the officers were overseeing an art activity. On that day, one youth asked, "How am I supposed to do this?" An officer tells him to use his artistic skills and draw, eliciting a dubious look on the part of the detainee. The officer then told him, "You have the skills." The detainee responded that he didn't "feel like drawing," and the interaction shifted quickly from appraisal of ability to disciplinary warning. The officer told the youth in an ominous tone, "Well, there's alternatives . . ." At this point, the youth began drawing again. Shortly thereafter, the same officer, on his way out of the room, commented on a drawing Markus was working on, saying "That's good!" He then walked away, but returned to look a second time and repeat his judgment, "It's good." This evoked a broad smile and seemingly embarrassed giggling from Markus. In the first interaction, the officer uses a statement about the youth's supposed skills to encourage him to do what is expected of him, switching into a warning mode when the youth's concern about skills is

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<sup>30</sup>E.g., in volleyball, a young man (European American male detainee) serves overhand and has trouble, hitting the net on more than one occasion. Mae (European American female officer) says to him: "Every try serving underhand?" He says he hasn't. She tells him, "Whenever I serve the way you were, I can't get it over, but if you serve underhand..." [it might work better.] He does try serving this way the next time; the ball gets over the net but goes out. Liz encourages him, telling him that now he just has to work on controlling it (From fieldnotes, 4/1/01).

<sup>31</sup>E.g., in the classroom, a young man (European American male detainee) is filling out a worksheet. He asks what a word ("recently") is, and Norma (European American female teacher) tells him. Then, thinking about the question, which asks him to write down something he did recently, in school, that he was proud of, he says "I've only been in school two weeks – how am I supposed to answer this?" Norma says "Well, you probably did something you were proud of in those two weeks." Detainee: "Oh yeah!... But I've only been here 3 days." A European American male officer tells him, "Like that drawing you just did." DA: "Oh yeah!" – and he continues to write (From fieldnotes, 3/26/01).

replaced by his lack of interest in the project. In the second interaction, the officer's comment is spontaneous and apparently unmotivated by anything other than honesty and friendliness.

### *Appraisals of Behavior*

Enforcing rules is one of CCJDC officers' primary duties, so many of their interactions with detainees involve statements or directions about behavior, and of those, most are negative appraisals: statements that a detainee is breaking a rule or acting outside the bounds of appropriate behavior, and warnings about what will happen if he or she continues. My fieldnotes contain numerous examples of these standard disciplinary interactions. In some instances, detainees would respond to a staff directive with an explanation of their behavior or some other brief remark about the staff member, but still comply with the officer's directions.

Jeff (European American male officer) and Patrick (European American male teacher) both look up, toward the African American male detainee next to me, and Patrick says, "He can figure it out." The kid next to me says, "I was just" – he pauses and spreads his hands in a gesture of (innocence?). Jeff shakes his head, his mouth in a straight line, his lips pursed. The kid next to me says quietly, "You're just so uptight, Jeff."

From fieldnotes, 2/15/02

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Greg (African American male detainee), in the front right corner of the room, is doing something (with his pencil?), not writing or looking at his worksheet. Jeff (European American male officer) says "Get to work, pleeeeeeease." Greg looks up at him, smiling, and says (I hadda fix it!) (Referring to whatever he was doing with his pencil)

From fieldnotes, 2/15/02

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Tim (European American male detainee) says aloud, to nobody in particular but loud enough that most of the room can hear him, "I'm done." He begins making a squeaky whistling noise (with his mouth), and taps his pencil on the desk. Diane (European American female officer) says to him, "Tim, can't you raise your hand and wait quietly?" Tim replies, "Yeah, but he's busy" (referring to the teacher). Diane says "That's all the more reason to wait quietly."

From fieldnotes, 4/1/01

At other times, detainees simply changed their behavior, making no voluntary verbal response:

An African American female gets up from her desk, moves back a step or two to

the next desk back, and peers, squinting, at the book on the desk. Frank (African American male officer) asks her, in a somewhat angry-sounding/stern tone, "What are you doing?" She goes back to her chair and says something that sounds like "nothing" but I'm not sure -- she is mumbling a bit. Frank asks her, "Checking out that book? Does that mean you can get out of your seat without permission?" The girl says "No." Frank says "Okay," and continues, after a lengthy pause (5-10 seconds), "That's one of the rules. You can't do things without permission."

From fieldnotes, 7/27/01

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The kids who are out of the Knockout game are lined up near the side wall, with Burke (European American male officer) standing nearby. AnnMarie calls out to them, but her somewhat thin voice is not heard at first over the din of the game; she calls out again, "Hey guys?" -- and the person last in line hears her. She says "You wanna spread out a little bit?" The person looks uncomprehending, and she repeats herself, adding a large gesture of beckoning with her right arm. The person moves back and tries to get the attention of the other kids as well, but is not allowed to touch them. Eventually the other kids pay attention, and they spread out. Over the next few minutes, they bunch up again, standing again in a somewhat loosely arranged line. AnnMarie comments to me with a slight sarcastic tone, "That lasted about a minute."

From fieldnotes, 2/5/02

Staff members do occasionally make positive statements about detainees' behavior. Although I chose not to observe most one-on-one conversations between staff and detainees, members of both groups told me that these interactions often involved staff supporting and encouraging behavior they interpreted as positive (e.g., trying hard, staying out of trouble, etc.), or reminding detainees of their ability to follow the rules and act "appropriately." Sports activities were a source of mixed feedback, with officers' comments ranging from "I like all the encouragement I'm hearing out there" to "You guys are getting out of hand." More interesting, because of their spontaneity and implications, are those interactions that were not focused on rule violations or negative behavioral assessments. The following three examples all involve positive appraisals of detainees' behavior, including a general positive response and an explanation of what about the behavior is good.

[At the end of a calisthenics period in the gym,] AnnMarie (European American female officer) weaves her way among the exercise mats on the floor, spraying



each with a disinfectant spray and handing out paper towels as she goes. She tells detainees to wipe down their mats. Some of them do a quick back and forth swipe, while others spend over a minute cleaning the entire mat. After cleaning his own mat, an African American male detainee offers to clean AnnMarie's exercise mat; she smiles and says enthusiastically, "Thank you! That would be very helpful." He cleans the mat as offered.

From fieldnotes, 10/9/01

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While waiting at the courthouse for his hearing to begin, a detainee asks Roy what his detention report (a report written for the judge about the youth's behavior in detention) says. Roy summarizes some parts of it, and points at the paper saying "You were well-behaved on this day... [you did] excellent, particularly in JumpStart -- one time you got a little agitated because no one was getting out [something the detainee wanted]. The detainee seemed interested and curious about the report and John's explanation.

From fieldnotes, 8/25/01

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In the gym, AnnMarie has the kids play a game, sitting in a circle, in which "the point of the game is to figure out the rules of the game." Each person in turn starts a sentence with the phrase, "I'm going on a picnic and I'm going to take," and then says the name of something they'll take; AnnMarie tells them whether or not the thing they've named fits the rules of the game. Some kids get it quickly; I and several detainees are still puzzling over it after several turns around the circle. John, an African American male detainee, is getting frustrated and angry because he can't get the rule. At one point he backs up from his spot in the circle and says he wants to sit out of the game, and Jeremías (LM officer) says "You wanna be in your room?" John's eyes narrow and he scrunches up his mouth, looking even angrier. He moves back in to the circle. AnnMarie says she's *glad he wants to play*. John responds that he is just trying not to get into trouble before his court date. Jeremías and AnnMarie both say "*Good choice!*" It is his turn, so John guesses something but uses his tone of voice to make it clear that he is not trying – speaking in a dull monotone, "I'm going to a picnic and I'm going to take... air." AnnMarie says in a cheerful tone, "Nope, but thanks for playing!" John says "Thanks" in a bitter monotone.

From fieldnotes, 10/9/01

In the first two examples, the appraised detainees had a neutral or positive response to the officer's appraisal. In the third example, however, the detainee, who was unhappy to begin with, actually resists and replaces the officers' positive framing of his behavior. AnnMarie

implies that he has changed his mind and actually wants to play the game, but he tells her he just wants to stay out of trouble. AnnMarie and Jeremías both respond positively to this, and focus on the detainee's having made a *choice* to do better—this is one of the facility's most common themes in talking to or about detainees, that they have power over their behavior and are constantly making choices between one path and another. While the detainee seems to accept this interpretation, he maintains his stance of non-participation by making it obvious that he is not going to try, and that he is irritated at the necessity of being present.

Staff and other adults in the setting also make comments, addressing single detainees or the entire group, that add interpretation of motives to a description of behavior. At times this “interpretation” is just another way of saying “you’re breaking the rules,” as when Roy observed to one of the detainees, “*You like to talk without permission*”(from fieldnotes, 8/25/01, emphasis added). Staff may also use an intervention as an opportunity to reframe a youth's behavior, as when a detainee, after a period of doing calisthenics, asked “Now can we play basketball?” In response, AnnMarie said “You had to ruin it, didn't you? We'd been doing so well! A whole [hour] without whining.” She continues for a while on the theme of detainees whining or complaining (from fieldnotes, 10/9/01). It's possible that this occurred in the context of AnnMarie having warned detainees earlier not to “whine” about playing basketball, but it's equally possible that no such warning occurred. In either case, AnnMarie successfully redefined “asking for permission” as “whining,” and in so doing, she reminded detainees of her power to define their actions or words in ways that put them at risk of punishment. She did not punish anyone for the “whining,” but she did not need to, as her intervention was successful. She was not subjected to further questions or comments about her choice of activities. Notably, the “going to a picnic game” described above happened immediately after this interaction, and was the source of several instances of detainee “resistance” to the authority of CCJDC and AnnMarie in particular. This may be because the “picnic game” was the second activity in a row that was chosen by staff without detainee input, with AnnMarie's restrictions on dissent simply increasing detainees' sense of “unfairness.”

#### *Appraisals of Character*

At other times, staff give vague descriptions of detainees' problem behaviors, focusing

more on motivation or assessment of “character.”

Two staff members stopped a volleyball game, much to my surprise and that of the detainees, saying “People are getting a attitude,” and “getting out of hand.” Some detainees started to protest with “But—“ and “Ohhhh” in slightly pleading voices, but they stopped quickly, apparently responding to the staff’s stern facial expressions. All of the detainees were taken back to their cell/rooms, and some slammed their doors shut on the way into the cells. This prompted a discussion at the staff station about what consequences to impose for the door-slamming, which they interpreted as a display of more “attitude.” They decided the detainees, regardless of their behavior level, would stay in their rooms for the rest of the night. It was about 8:45 or 9:00 p.m., and curfews normally range from 9:30 to 11:00 p.m.

From fieldnotes, 8/1/01

“Getting a(n) attitude” or acting “out of hand” are vague descriptions for behaviors that staff see as potentially leading to problems; attitude, in particular, comes up repeatedly in behavior descriptions by both detainees and staff. However, neither of these things, by itself, constitutes a violation of the rules, nor did I observe any warnings to the group about their behavior prior to the game being stopped. This may account for the detainees’ “resistant” responses, which included protest and implied requests for leniency immediately after the game was stopped and impotent expressions of anger or frustration when the protests were not honored.

Staff members occasionally make appraising statements about a specific detainee’s personality, as it relates to something they have said or done. For instance:

While working on an art project called “Under the Sea,” a couple of officers and several detainees talk about what constitutes appropriate humor, and what to do if someone is offended by an intended joke. Elizabeth, a European American female detainee, says she no longer says “I’m sorry,” because “I’m not a ‘sorry’ person.” This leads to a sequence of miscommunications, several turns long, between Elizabeth and Mae, a European American female officer. Mae understands Elizabeth to be saying that she doesn’t feel bad when she hurts someone’s feelings. I believe Elizabeth was actually using the word “sorry” to mean “undesirable,” as in “a sorry state of affairs.” Mae, caught up in an effort to evoke empathy and teach about the need to apologize, asks Elizabeth how she feels when someone makes a joke at her expense.

Elizabeth: It doesn’t bother me.

Mae: I know you, and you’re more sensitive than you let on.

Elizabeth: How do you know?

Mae: Because I know you – from when we’ve talked [on the pod, at night.]

Elizabeth: No, it really doesn’t bother me.

From fieldnotes, 7/30/01

This sequence is interesting in the conversational latitude given to Elizabeth. Elizabeth and Mae were talking publicly, with Mae at a teacher’s desk and Elizabeth at one of the student desks, in the approximate center of the classroom. Until the miscommunication began, the classroom conversation had involved the usual protocol of detainees raising their hands for permission to speak. At the point where Mae misunderstood Elizabeth’s statement, Mae and Elizabeth began taking their conversational turns spontaneously, and Elizabeth was not required to raise her hand each time she spoke. In addition, Elizabeth was given a great deal of time and conversational “space” in which to correct two perceived misappraisals: the first about her statement that “I’m not a sorry person,” and the second about her degree of sensitivity to teasing. The disagreements were not so much resolved as set aside out of mutual frustration; in the end, both Elizabeth and Mae appeared to hold onto their initial beliefs about Elizabeth.

In the following example of an officer appraising a detainee’s character as part of a disciplinary interaction, the character appraisal itself is generally positive, and the detainee’s resistance is limited to explaining the reasoning behind her problematic behavior.

An African American girl named Yvonne is headed for her pod, escorted by one of the female staff, when Burt (European American male detention officer) tells the woman officer that he wants to talk to Yvonne. Yvonne comes over to the staff station, where Burt and I are both standing, and asks him “What’d I do?” Burt starts walking quickly away and says, “Kate, keep an eye on her for a second, okay?” I agree, although I am uncomfortable being given that degree of authority and responsibility.

Yvonne: (looking at me) What’d I do?

Kate: I dunno, maybe nothing . . . maybe he just wants to talk to you.

Yvonne: No, knowing him, it’s something I did.

Kate: Is that how he is? If he wants to talk to you, it’s cuz you’re in trouble?

Yvonne: (Nods slowly, lips pursed in dismay) Yeah.

Burt returns with a piece of lined notebook paper in his hand. Yvonne looks at the paper, which has handwritten paragraphs on both sides,

Yvonne: (apparently to me, though she is still looking at Burt) Yup, I did something.

Burt: (holds up the paper and shows it to her) This paper says, ‘Yvonne’ to me -- you know why?”

Yvonne: (looks perplexed, looks at me and back at Bill) Nope.

Burt: (points to the text at the top of the front side of the paper) This part is really creative -- great! (Pointing to the next paragraph) This part shows you have social consciousness -- great!

Yvonne alternates between looking at the paper and looking up at me, while Burt continues to look at the paper -- Yvonne appears frustrated and bored when she looks at me, rolling her eyes a little bit and sneering slightly.

Burt: (turns the paper over and points to the bottom section of text) This is totally inappropriate. (Reading loudly and slowly from the paper) “The dumb pimp...” (pauses) You can’t write stuff like that in here!

Yvonne: I was working out my anger -- like he said! [Yvonne is referring to Scott, the leader of a substance use/abuse awareness group that meets at CCJDC twice a week.]

Burt: But not like this! (Reading aloud again, he repeats the phrase “the dumb pimp and continues to a part about “bitches” and “hoes.”)

Yvonne: (sounding slightly annoyed) You don’t have to read it, I know what it says.

Burt You can’t do this!

Yvonne: I was doing what Scott said, getting my feelings out.

Burt: You can’t do it this way, not in here. (Puts the paper down) Come on. (Leads Yvonne back toward the lunchroom)

Yvonne: So, am I in trouble or not?

Burt: I don’t think it makes sense to restrict you.

Yvonne: (looks back at me with a huge, triumphant grin)

From fieldnotes, 10/5/01

This interaction reveals several potential issues for communication between CCJDC staff and detainees. First, Yvonne is prepared for a disciplinary interaction, apparently based on previous experience with Burt. She is, therefore, probably steeling herself for a talking-to or a restriction while Burt goes to get the writing sample. Given the high ratio of disciplinary to

non-disciplinary interactions between staff and detainees, detainees are probably conditioned to expect discipline when a staff member initiates a conversation with them. This may be part of the second issue, which is that Burt's positive feedback seems to be lost on Yvonne, who is looking at me and appearing frustrated or bored. Simply put, she is waiting for the upshot and it takes a long time to arrive. While staff and detainees' communication styles may vary extensively within the two groups, I suspect the differences between groups are greater. I found in my interviews with detainees that communication styles and vocabulary differences sometimes obstructed both emotional connection and cognitive understanding.<sup>32</sup> This seems to be the case between Burt and Yvonne as well. At the beginning of their interaction, Yvonne has already expressed concern about whether she is in trouble; she surmises that she is, but Burt does not give her the details right away. Rather, he begins with an analysis of the match between her writing and her character, assessing her as being creative and socially conscious. Yvonne's reaction—frustration and boredom—suggests she is just waiting for the punchline; Burt is talking his way to the point, in complete control of the interaction and the information. The cultural gap between the two is confirmed when Burt addresses the real problem, Yvonne's use of the words "pimp," "bitches" and "hoes." Yvonne seems to acknowledge that the language is not typical of her, but was used to express anger. However, the terms are commonly used in hip-hop music and street culture. Burt is almost certainly aware of this, and in his choice to impose the standards and culture of CCJDC, he reduces the chance that Yvonne will feel respected or understood in the interaction.

Related to this point is the third issue, that Burt's attempt to emphasize the impropriety of Yvonne's words backfires; from my perspective, it seems patronizing, and as Yvonne herself

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<sup>32</sup>I found that my tendency to say a lot of words to get to a single point would lose the interest or attention of interviewees. Youth participants also used slang or shorthand terms that I could not follow if I did not ask for an explanation; more confusing was the use of "everyday" words that carried specific, culturally laden meanings different from my own. For instance, I knew that "calling someone a 'B'" means calling them a "bitch," but the word "bitch" is used for both sexes and has specific connotations that go beyond its admittedly negative "adult culture" interpretation. To me, calling someone a "bitch" is just a socially unacceptable way of referring to an unpleasant temperament. To the young men in the study, "bitch" is an extreme insult, one that implies a lack of manhood, weakness, unworthiness and "disrespectability."

points out, she already knows what she has written and does not need it repeated. To the extent that detainees perceive staff members as disrespectful in the way they exercise their authority, they are likely to resist the staff members—if not their authority, then the messages they use it to convey. Fourth, Yvonne makes two apparently futile attempts to replace Burt’s narrative about “inappropriate language” with one about sanctioned, cathartic writing. She calls on the authority of Scott, who is an outsider to the setting, and the requirements of the drug/alcohol abuse group, but Burt ignores this in favor of his original interpretation. This is probably a typical outcome, given the power imbalance between staff and detainees, and the associated, extreme limitations on detainees’ speech and behavior.

Fifth, Burt is ready to end the interaction without having given Yvonne the information she considers most important: whether there will be consequences. For Burt, the conversation alone should be enough, but in detainees’ experience of CCJDC, what really matters may not be “what you did wrong,” but “how much time you have to be in your cell/room as a result.” Sixth and last, Burt’s words communicate to Yvonne some degree of interest in her as an individual with positive qualities: he sees her as creative, “socially conscious,” and sometimes inappropriate in her language or behavior. His actions, however—looking more at the piece of paper than at Yvonne, reading aloud to her from her own writing, leaving out the crucial matter of consequences until she reminds him—imply a lack of awareness of Yvonne’s social needs in the moment, including an assumption that she will listen to and absorb his intended lesson, regardless of how he behaves. While detainees are required to listen and convey respect in order to avoid punishment, this alone is no guarantee that the messages of individual officers, or CCJDC as a whole, will get through. While the interaction between Burt and Yvonne is a single sample of possible detainee-staff interactions, it has several characteristics identified by detainees and in my observations as typical or notable.

The excerpt from fieldnotes that served as the introduction to Chapter One is another example of a staff member voicing an appraisal of detainees’ character. The excerpt is repeated below.

When it is time for the next class to begin, Earl stands up and moves to the back door of the classroom, which leads directly to the math and science classroom next door. At this point, the norm is for a detention officer to call the detainees

as a group to line up, or to call them to join the line one at a time. On this particular occasion, Earl addresses the entire group, saying, "Come on, hoodlums." The detainees stand up slowly, walk to the side of the classroom and line up facing the door. Earl opens the door and they leave the classroom. The last young man in line is a 15-year-old Black male. As he passes Earl, he asks, "Who were you talking to when you said 'hoodlums?'" Earl responds quickly and firmly, with a hint of defiance or challenge in his voice: "You." In a slightly louder voice than he used to ask his question, the young man tells Earl, "I'm not a hoodlum," and walks to his seat.

From fieldnotes, 4/16/01

As noted previously, Earl is an officer known for his brand of humor, which pervades his normal interactions with staff and detainees and relies heavily on teasing and sarcasm. In the interaction described above, he uses the term "hoodlums" to describe an entire group of detainees. In my recollection of the event, Earl did not smile or laugh when addressing the detainees in this way, but he did smile when a detainee responded. As in the interaction described earlier between Elizabeth and Mae, this detainee directly resists Earl's negative appraisal, and Earl allows him to do so without requiring the usual conversational protocol of hand-raising and permission. However, Earl does not apologize or take back his statement. The effect on the detainees (probably six or seven in all), is unclear, but it is quite possible that none of them would have resisted explicitly, leaving the statement standing as an "accurate" judgment or an "appropriate" joke.

Interacting with another detainee, Earl judges the detainee's character and his abilities. In the first excerpt (below), the detainee resists Earl's offer of assistance, apparently seeing it as an implication that he doesn't know the school material. Earl meets the detainee's resistance with his typical brand of teasing humor, making it difficult to know how seriously Earl himself takes the appraisal.

Ronald (European American male detainee) is working on his fractions [worksheet]. He asks a question of me and Earl, and Earl gets him a multiplication table sheet (to use for lowest common denominator in reducing fractions).

Ronald: I don't need a multiplication table

Earl: I beg to differ.

Ronald: I bet I know every answer on there.



Earl: Then you should've gotten that [the last problem] right quick, Einstein.

From fieldnotes, 4/1/01

In the next excerpt, Earl uses an interaction with me to express a judgment about Ronald.

A little later, I continue to work with Ronald, showing him the steps to doing the fractions, walking him through several problems in a row.

Earl: [What are you doing?]

Kate: I'm helping him [Ronald] with the worksheet.

Earl: That's not your job.

Kate: My job is to show him how to do it.

Earl: *He knows how to do it. He's just lazy.* [emphasis added]

Kate: Then I get him to go through the steps.

Earl: You can't *make* him do it. I can't *make* him do anything, but (directed at Ronald, in a slightly warning tone) I *can* offer him consequences for not doing it. [emphasis in original]

From fieldnotes, 4/1/01

This interaction becomes a power struggle, not between Earl and Ronald, but between Earl and me. Earl attempts to impose his definitions of my role with detainee/students in the CCJDC classroom (I was there in my capacity as a tutor/aide), the requisite response to Ronald's repeated requests for assistance with his math worksheet, and the interpretation of Ronald's behavior. Earl closes the interaction by reminding Ronald and me of his superior authority in the situation, and implies the threat (disingenuously called an "offer") of consequences for Ronald, should he refuse to do what is expected.

In another example of explicit character appraisal, Roy (European American male detention officer) seems to interrogate a detainee about his home circumstances, refusing to believe the detainee's report, and eventually stating outright that he believes the detainee is lying.

While waiting in the courthouse's small waiting room for his hearing to begin, Rakim (African American male detainee) is talking to Roy (European American male officer).

Rakim: [talking about the alleged difference between being at home and being in CCJDC] I don't know why they call it two different worlds.

Roy: [building a case for the difference] Do you get up at the same time every day?

Rakim: Yes.

Roy: (Dubious) Monday through Sunday?

Rakim: Yup.

Roy: (Still skeptical) Who gets you up? Your mom? Every day?

Rakim: Yup.

Roy: *I think you're not being truthful...* She never lets you sleep in?

Rakim: I gotta take care of my three year old sister—my mom works.

Roy: That's harder than most of us work . . . Does she work every day?

Rakim: Yes.

Roy: Even on weekends?

Rakim: Yeah.

Throughout this conversation, Rakim is leaning forward, his head down, making no eye contact with Roy. They continue talking, and Rakim eventually sits up a bit. Roy has talked some about having freedom in the “outside world” but not in CCJDC.

Rakim: No matter where you go, you're free.

Kate: You have choices, you just have to deal with the consequences.

Rakim: Right.

From fieldnotes, 7/30/01  
Emphasis added

Rakim's resistance to Roy's assumptions is calm but dogged; he does not raise his voice or even his eyes, but insists on the accuracy of his statements by repeating them in the face of Roy's ongoing skepticism. It is not until they leave the disagreement behind for more neutral topics that Rakim begins to show, through his body language, that he is engaged in the conversation. Roy continues to impose his perspective that CCJDC is much worse, in its restrictiveness, than any young person's home life. Rakim disagrees again, indirectly, and I finally intervene, believing that his point will be lost on Roy if I do not translate and support it.

Like Burt talking to Yvonne, and Mae talking to Elizabeth, Roy is caught up in the lesson he is trying to teach. In all three cases, staff members are imparting their own

assumptions about the detainees as part of a lesson to the detainees, who become “objects” to be instructed, rather than “subjects” with whom to converse. The detainees resist both the lesson and the object role, attempting with some frustration to articulate their viewpoints. My outsider’s understanding of detainees’ speech content may be inaccurate, but the disparities between the officers’ views and mine suggest that alternate interpretations do exist, in spite of the officers’ apparent certainty during the interactions.

On one level, the observation that officers publicly evaluate detainees is unremarkable—their job is to control behavior, so at the very least, they are likely to point out unacceptable actions. More interesting here is the extent to which officers’ appraisals go beyond mere behavior correction, moving into interpretation of detainees’ personality and capabilities. Perhaps this is a natural outgrowth of an adult authority role in a facility geared toward changing young people. It certainly fits with CCJDC’s longstanding ambivalence toward both detainees and correctional methods. Detainees may be inherently flawed (hence negative character appraisals), or perhaps they simply need instruction (negative behavior appraisals) and encouragement (positive appraisals of any kind). The relative scarcity of positive appraisals is symptomatic of the Center’s historic emphasis on punishment—being “too nice” would be believed to go against the grain of deterrence.

I do not mean to imply that individual officers mete out positive and negative appraisals according to set guidelines, or that they give themselves explicit permission to assess publicly detainees’ character and abilities. Rather, these are customs of CCJDC as a community, developed over time and maintained by habit and social modeling. If detainees need to learn the lessons of ‘character,’ and CCJDC is the school, then officers are the teachers, and every social interaction can become a lesson. Unfortunately, detainees do not necessarily agree with the need for this particular education, or with the lesson plan; in fact, they are careful to assess the appraiser/teacher’s knowledge of them as they evaluate the validity of reflected appraisals. Because CCJDC’s structure and protocols limit detainees’ self-expression, as well as constraining social interaction between officers and detainees, officers effectively appraise youth in an informational vacuum. Their appraisals must be based on fleeting impressions, work experience, and the narratives communicated by the setting and its adult culture. At the

same time, detainees may limit their acceptance of appraisals because they know the officers have not seen them “as they really are.” Indeed, how could they in this setting? Thus the structure and history of CCJDC may limit its effectiveness in achieving its goals of communicating with and affecting detainees.

Like Markus, Franklin, Corey, Noah, Jordan and Jimmy, other CCJDC detainees showed a variety of responses to the appraisals made by detention officers, ranging from silent acquiescence to behavioral directives, through nonverbal or brief “symbolic” verbal protests, to longer verbal disagreements with staff about the interpretation or punishability of behavior<sup>33</sup>. Similarly, the six participating youth revealed a continuum of “survival strategies” and ways of thinking about their CCJDC experience, with acceptance or acquiescence at one end and active resistance at the other. The next section of the report offers descriptions and examples of detainees’ CCJDC survival strategies, followed by an in-depth exploration of resistance in the CCJDC context.

#### RESPONSES TO CCJDC: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

The young men participating in the study made reference to what could be termed “CCJDC survival strategies” throughout the interview process, particularly in their first interviews, which took place in the detention center. They responded to direct inquiries about coping strategies and also described “ways to get through” in response to questions about what constitutes good and bad days in CCJDC, what they would tell another youth about the center, or how they perceived other detainees’ behavior and chances of being detained again. When I asked them directly, the detainees all described what I came to call “acquiescent” survival strategies. However, when I observed them and other detainees in the center, and when they told me about their interactions with CCJDC officers, I noticed other approaches to thinking

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<sup>33</sup>Although I was told it happened occasionally, I never saw a staff-detainee disagreement escalate to shouting or physical conflict. In over a year of observations at CCJDC and conversations with officers about daily events, I heard of detainees being physically restrained, as a result of attempted violence or threats to staff, only once or twice. Because shouting and physical resistance seem to be such a small part of the detainees’ repertoire of responses, and I have no direct observations to rely on, this discussion will not address those behaviors further.

about and getting through incarceration in this facility. Among the detainees I knew, the survival strategy practiced seemed related to a variety of individual factors, including identity development stage, perceptions of the justice system and its fairness or lack thereof, personal experiences with labeling and negative appraisals, and interpersonal style or “personality.” Because detainees’ survival strategies are a part of self-expression in CCJDC and a response to CCJDC’s messages about detainee identity, they are fundamental to the “identity negotiation” process in the setting.

#### Corey: Passive Acceptance

Of all the young men in the study, Corey expressed the most positive sentiments about CCJDC. Several detainees told me “it’s not so bad” in the detention center, as long as one follows the rules, and some could name a few detention officers with whom they felt connected. Corey, however, found several aspects of CCJDC enjoyable, including groups, sports, music lessons, free time, and some classroom activities. He quickly named nine officers when I asked if he had developed relationships with the staff. Overall, Corey had very few negative comments about his time in the center. In fact, when I asked him what he remembered most about the detention center, he talked about learning to enjoy volleyball and to play guitar; he was the only detainee who said anything positive in response to that question. Corey’s description of his day-to-day life outside of detention suggested a great deal of boredom and some frustration: he felt misunderstood or misinterpreted by his parents, he didn’t enjoy school, and he spent many afternoons sleeping in front of the television or in his room. Based on these observations, it is reasonable to imagine that CCJDC was in many ways a welcome change from a solitary, low-energy, unstructured daily life. For Corey, the structure of CCJDC provided a framework in which to experiment with social roles—finding out, for instance, that people thought he was funny—and with new activities, like volleyball.

The sole narrative of resistance Corey told me had to do with scratching his own hand, after being reprimanded by an officer, to avoid arguing with the officer. Even in this story, Corey avoids open disagreement with the responsible officer, choosing private physical pain and damage over active, public resistance. Along with his apparently high motivation to avoid confrontation, Corey’s youth (he was 13 when the study began) and his relatively concrete way

of thinking may have facilitated his easy acceptance of the CCJDC experience. His narratives about the facility focused on details of “what happened when,” rather than “why it happened.” It is unclear, though, whether his acceptance of the *experience* resulted in an acceptance of the intended *lesson* of CCJDC. Although he was not surprised to have ended up in detention and talked about “takin’ the wrong road,” he did not see the behavior that earned him a CCJDC sentence as particularly serious, and thus did not talk about it as something he needed to change.

#### Noah and Markus: Active Acceptance

Nearly all of the detainees I interviewed referred, during their first interviews in particular, to acquiescent survival strategies for making it through a period of incarceration at CCJDC. The extent to which they succeeded in “giving in” to CCJDC varied markedly across participants, although I believe each of them would have told me he was doing his best and was not purposely resisting CCJDC staff or rules. Only Noah and Markus, however, seemed truly invested in the long-term change that was part of CCJDC’s intended effect on detainees. Unlike the other detainees, they used, very early and then throughout the interview process, the language of “taking the right road,” avoiding “the wrong friends,” and “learning one’s lesson.” Whether this was their own conceptualization that coincidentally matched that of CCJDC, or something that developed during their time in the facility, it seemed to enhance their attachment to the facility, its staff, and its messages. In turn, their investment in CCJDC probably contributed to Markus’ and Noah’s limited disciplinary problems during their incarcerations, and to their reputations with staff as “good kids” with relatively minor problems and good futures.

Noah told me he was “breaking out in tears” during his first few days in detention, but began to feel better “

after I got to talk to my mom and I started reading my Bible . . . and, you know, just, just thinkin’ about what, you know, worse positions other people are in or that I could be in, you know, *this isn’t so bad*. So you know, I just started *suckin’ it up*. . . .(laughs) you know *just*, you know, *live it out and take it as it goes*.

Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01  
Emphasis added

He compares himself to other detainees who

just-, there's some that they've just got an attitude, you know, that doesn't stop. And there's other people who just, you know, they don't seem to care why they're in here and they just goof off. . . . And you know, fart to make people laugh. . . . Cause, I mean, re-, s-, literally. And uh, you know, there's other people, you know, like myself, like, that are uh, laid back, you know, kinda got their own thoughts about things and, and, you know, ready to get outta here. And I'm not sure if, you know, they're thinkin' what I'm thinkin' about, you know, changin'. But uh, and um, I don't know ((laughs)). . . . There's some kids who should-, who-, who need a lesson in life and- an-, and other kids who, you know, they-, they've-, they've had theirs, they just, you know, they ain't takin' a grip on it and, and, you know, takin' a hold of it and doin' what they're supposed to so, they're gonna end up in here again.

Noah, Interview #1, 4/5/01

Readers may recall that Noah saw his time in CCJDC as an opportunity to change his life. Here he voices a belief that the way to change one's life in CCJDC is to accept its lesson about "doing what [you're] supposed to do," and taking detention time seriously. If he has an impulse to resist or rebel in CCJDC, he controls it, perhaps in the service of maintaining his self-image as a "good kid," someone his mother can depend on.

Like Noah, Markus thought he deserved his detention sentence, and felt it was giving him a chance to change. He, too, talked about an accepting or acquiescent strategy for getting through time in CCJDC.

Kate: Right. So what about the times um like what about the rules? Are the rules hard to hard to follow?

Markus: Well no. Not really. But if you just listen . . . They'll do crazy stuff. Try to get in fights here. Uh, try to sneak stuff in your room.

Markus: Like that. Just listen when they op- open your door, tell you do something, do it. Don't get an attitude if they tell you to come out the room, the classroom. Stuff like that.

Kate: Okay. And what makes the good days "good days?" Like . . .

Markus: Like doin' what you supposed to, if they tell you something don't get a attitude.

Markus, Interview #1, 7/29/01

Markus, like Noah, wants to be a good kid. He is very close to his family and invested in their

good opinions of him. Maintaining this social role is likely part of the motivation for “just listening” and following orders at CCJDC.

By the time of my third interview with Markus, I had heard countless references to detainees’ “attitudes,” and began seeking definitions and explanations of the term. Like Noah, above, Markus defines “attitude,” in part, as the absence of acquiescence.

Kate: Oh, okay. So, so what do you think about good and bad attitude?  
Like, how do you know when somebody has a good or a bad attitude  
in detention?

Markus: Probably cuz they’re smiling, /happy./  
Markus: With joyful /faces./

[. . .]

Kate: But if you’re gonna learn something from that place, and get  
something out of it, how, what kind of attitude do you have to have,  
and how do you have to think about it while you’re in there?

Markus: ( ) good and bad attitude... good attitude you listen to ‘em /actually/,  
and try to learn somethin’. Bad attitude, you don’t really wanna listen  
to ‘em, and, y’know, you think, you don’t need this stuff.

Markus: You just wanna go on about your life or /somethin’./

Kate: /Mmhmm?/ And, did you have both those feelings, or . . .

Markus: No, I had a good feeling.

Kate: Uh-huh(?), so /you felt/

Markus: /Listen to people/ so you can get outta here.

Markus, Interview #3, 5/4/02

Markus identifies emotional, motivational/cognitive and behavioral components of “attitude.” A good attitude is shown by a smiling face, along with desire and effort to learn the lesson of CCJDC. Bad attitude replaces desire and effort to learn with actively thinking you don’t need the lesson of CCJDC, and wanting to “go on about your life”—in other words, just getting through the time and not accepting the changes CCJDC is trying to impose. Based on his definition, Markus might see some of the other study participants as having a bad attitude, in spite of their statements, echoing Markus’ and Noah’s, that getting through CCJDC requires



detainees to “pay attention,” “do what [staff] say,” (Jordan, Corey), “be patient” (Jordan), don’t argue (Corey), be/do good (Corey, Jordan, Jimmy), and stay calm (Franklin, Jimmy). Notably, these strategies focus less than do Markus and Noah’s on listening to staff or learning the lesson of CCJDC. Rather, the focus is on getting through, laying low until your time is done.

#### Franklin: Laying Low

Franklin’s descriptions of his CCJDC experience exemplify a “laying low” approach to surviving detention, in which one shows outward tolerance of staff control and authority, but internally questions the fairness and the legitimacy of the setting and its intentions to change detainees. Franklin, like the other detainees, disliked being in CCJDC; he also had several specific criticisms of the rules and the setting as a whole.

Uh, it’s not been all that bad, but-, but I hate it. Cause-, I mean, I like my freedom, you know what I mean? And uh, n-, I can-, I can’t stand someone standin’ over my shoulder tellin’ me what to do every minute. You know what I’m sayin’, tellin’ me to do this, tell me to do that, when I gotta get up, when I gotta go to sleep, you know what I’m sayin’, all that. I can’t stand that. I don’t know how (I) lasted this long, you know what I’m sayin’. But, you know what I’m sayin’, I have, you know what I’m sayin’, I think it’s cause I wanna get up outta here, you know what I’m sayin’, so I’m keepin’ my mouth shut, doin’ the smart thing.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Here Franklin expresses his basic frustration with the detention experience, and describes the key to his survival strategy: “keeping his mouth shut” in spite of his resentment. On the outside, this resembles an “active acceptance” strategy—a set of behaviors rewarded by staff through decreased negative attention and, probably, increased gestures of respect. In fact, this is the key to laying low: simply by keeping quiet, Franklin appears to buy into the lesson of CCJDC, which includes, of course, the practical reality that detainees are to be seen and not heard. However, he describes one incident in which he chose not to stay silent, in spite of the general prohibition on detainees talking to each other and a specific prohibition against conversation between co-defendants.

I had one restriction, you know what I’m sayin’, but it was my fault and I already knew it, Cause I was talkin’, like, outta place, you know what I’m sayin’, she said, “you’re on restriction,” so I ain’t argue, you know what I’m sayin’. I started laughing cause I already knew what it was about, you know what I mean,

so I just went to my room. Yeah, I was talkin' to Gordon [his friend and co-defendant]. And uh, she sent me to my room, she came up there and asked me if I knew why I got sent to my room, I was like, "Yeah, I already know, you ain't gotta explain."

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Franklin describes his interest in having a brief, general conversation with his friend, and his inability to do so while in detention, because of the rules. The way Franklin talks about being prevented from having this conversation suggests that he does not understand or agree with the policy being implemented, and that he sees the conversation itself as something minor, such that staff could easily make a concession if they chose to. Because he sees the rule as unreasonable (irrational) and unfair, and it was preventing something he actively desired, it is less surprising that this is the rule he violated:

[I wanted to] . . . talk [to the friend] in general, you /know what/ I'm sayin', just like have a /conversation,/ at least for a little bit, you know what I'm sayin'. But they won't even let us do that, /you know/ what I mean. I mean I don't even get to, like-, 'bout the whole time I been here I ain't been able to sit in the pod with 'im, you know what I'm sayin', and /talk./ Like this other kid I've been able to talk to, you know what I'm sayin', I got other friends in here,/but, you/ know what I'm sayin'. But I ain't been able to talk to him the whole time I been here, you know what /I'm sayin'/?/ Not one time.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Franklin describes some of the ways in which he and other detainees break the no-talking and no-communication rules:

Mmm hmm, I do it /sometimes, you know, just like-/ I'll slide it by, you know what I'm sayin', when they're not lookin', /I'll-/ like, (lifts his chin slightly, mimicking the clandestine greeting) "What's up," you /know./ ((laughs))

[Or] you know, hand signals or somethin' like /that,/ you know what I mean? But yeah, I slide it /sometimes, you know what I'm sayin',/ when they're not lookin', you know what I'm sayin', I'll slide somebody, you know what I'm sayin', like, "What's up, how you /doin',/" so. But like, like I got another friend, you know what I'm sayin', he was actin' up, you know what I'm sayin', and like, I had to slide somethin' to 'im, like, I wanted to help him out, you /know what/ I'm sayin', I was like, "Man, you gotta calm down," you know what I'm sayin', tryin' to tell 'im, you know what I'm sayin', to calm down so he could get up outta here.

[And] like when we're sittin' in our pods, like-, like when they lock us up in our

room, we can communicate, you know what I'm sayin', cause I got a friend that stays below me. He stays like downstairs- I just yell down there, you know what I'm sayin', what's up? You know what I'm sayin', he'll yell back, you know what I mean? I me-, a-, like we yell at other people in other pods, you know what I'm sayin', get their attention. Yeah, we could still communicate, (), like they'll come and check, but by the time they get there, we'll shut up, you know what I'm sayin', or we see 'em comin', you know what I mean? [. . . ] -Yeah, we find open spaces, you know what I'm sayin, where we can- We can slide a little bit, have some fun. ((laughs))

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Franklin describes keeping his mouth shut and staying out of trouble, and he does report receiving only one restriction for talking to another detainee. However, he hasn't stayed out of trouble by not committing infractions, but by "sliding" within "open spaces" in the disciplinary structure. By keeping to himself, talking at length with only one detention officer, breaking rules selectively and secretly, and not *openly* resisting the authority or the lessons of CCJDC, Franklin maintains a low profile with staff members. In our conversations, however, it is clear that his beliefs are in conflict with those the CCJDC tries to convey to detainees:

Like I won't cho-, I won't choose to just go out there and be a menace to society, you know what I mean, but, like there are certain times when I wanna go do things, you know what I'm sayin', that aren't right. But, you know what I'm sayin', [those things] may help me out, you know wh'I'm sayin', in the long run, you know what I'm sayin'. But other people don't seem to understand that, you know what I'm sayin', because they're not in my place, it's like-, just like police officers, like, you tell 'em somethin', you know what I'm sayin', they look at you like you're stupid, you know what I'm sayin', they don't see where I'm comin' from, you know what I'm sayin.

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

As Franklin sees it, some criminal behavior and gang involvement is a legitimate response to limited resources and economic necessity. He thinks the police see him as "stupid" because they assume he has not thought through the relative risks and rewards of committing a crime. However, he keeps his opinions to himself while he is in the detention center, passively resisting the messages of CCJDC by avoiding direct confrontation with them or the staff who convey them. His beliefs about the futility of the accepted method of protest, filing a formal grievance, may also contribute to his decision to keep a low profile.

Yeah, they won't-, like the people [officers] that are here not help, you know what I'm sayin', they're more prone to have an attitude. . . . It's nasty. . . . It makes me mad, you know what I'm sayin'. . . . You know what I'm sayin', but you can't say anything bad, you gotta sit there and take it, and that's really hard, you know what I'm sayin'? That's really hard, when you-, um, especially when you got somebody yellin' at you, you know what I'm sayin'. Th-, that's the only thing I don't like, you know what I'm sayin'. You can't say nothin' bad, you know what I'm sayin', cause if you do, do it, you're the one that are gonna get the, um, the consequences, you know what I'm sayin', they ain't gonna get nothin' for it. And they say, you know what I'm s-, they say in the rules, like, if you have any problem with any staff members, you can write a letter, you know what I'm sayin', whatever, whatever. But that really don't help either, cause they really don't get nothin' out of it, you know what I'm sayin'. They might talk to 'em. But they really ain't gonna do nothin', you know what I'm sayin'. I ain't stupid, you know? I ain't that stupid, you know what I mean?

Franklin, Interview #1, 5/6/01

Franklin's approach to CCJDC matches his early self-description, in which he said he is "stubborn" and does what he wants. In general, he accomplished this without his mother's knowledge. Thus he kept a positive relationship with his mother, avoided scrutiny at home, and maintained his own behavior and values.

#### Jimmy: Resisting the Rules

Like Franklin, Jimmy believes the system is unfair or irrational at times, but presents himself, especially during his first detention, as trying to stay out of trouble in CCJDC. Jimmy saw himself as being frequently harassed by the police and felt he had been falsely accused of the charge that brought him to the detention center, both of which generated some anger and resentment on his part. When I asked him about his current perspective, he relied on his view of himself and his behavior, rather than the police and justice system's appraisal, as a source of "truth." Like Franklin, he sees argument with authorities (in this case, the police) as futile, because of his extremely limited power and credibility in the situation.

Kate: So are you still mad about that?

Jimmy: Na uh.

Kate: No?

Jimmy: I'm over it.

Kate: How'd that- how'd you get over it?

Jimmy:Just, I know what I did and didn't do.

Kate: But it doesn't bother you that you're being charged with something you feel like you didn't do?

Jimmy:Mm-mm.

Jimmy:It's just- ((sigh with lip noises)) Wha- what can I do? It's me and the police officer.

Kate: Right. So you don't think anybody will believe you?

Jimmy:Mmmuhmm. Nah, I don't think so. /It doesn't matter./

Kate: /Why won't they believe you?/ Ok so it doesn't matter, but if it did matter why wouldn't they believe you? I mean what makes you think they wouldn't? Just I mean is it something about you?

Jimmy:Na uh.

Jimmy:Mmm this is - this will be my first time bein' in here. First time in trouble. . . . They told me if um if they you-your first time in here just be good the first time your in here and then they probably release you on your next court date.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

Unlike Franklin, Jimmy believes there's no way to sneak around the rules, and even when he tries to follow them, he feels falsely accused of "having an attitude."

Kate: Uh hmm. Do you ever- Are there ever ways that um, that you guys sorta manage to talk to each other anyway, even though, even though it's against the rules?

Jimmy:(shakes head)

Kate: No. So you get caught no matter what?

Jimmy:Uh huh . . . So I don't even talk . . . Just sit there. I just sit here like this (demonstrates, leaning forward, holding his head in his hands, looking down at the desk) all the time. They're always sayin' I'm sittin' like an attitude, but I'm not tryin' to sit like it's attitude but when I sit like this it's just helpin' me not talk to nobody.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

In spite of his interest in "being good," and his apparent belief that there is no way to get around the rules and no point in arguing with the police, Jimmy experienced several disciplinary restrictions during his stays in CCJDC. During his first detention, he was restricted because he

was “talkin’ to someone . . . about a role play . . . But we not supposed to talk unless we have permission” (Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01). Another discipline event, initially presented in Chapter 6, is repeated below. In this interaction, Jimmy is told by an officer to stop talking, and when he denies having talked, lying is added to the “charges,” and his restriction time is doubled.

Kate: What happened?

Jimmy:Uhh, (CCJDC officer, name inaudible) restricted me.

Kate: Today?

Jimmy:Yesterday. F-- for four hours.

Kate: For what? Or what’d she say /happened/?

Jimmy:/She said I wa-/ She said I was talkin’. But this one, this one white boy was talkin’ too, and he got restricted for two hours, I got restricted for fo’.

Kate: So why is that?

Jimmy:I ‘on’t know! I asked her, I said, “Why I get fo’ hours?” Cuz, she said I lied to her.

Kate: What did you say?

Jimmy:I said I wa’n’t talking!

Kate: Were you talkin’?

Jimmy:No, I wasn’t talkin’! This one girl said something to me, and I smiled at her, and then she said, “Jimmy, you talkin’,” she said, “When you move your mouf, then you talkin’.” I said, “Nawww, you can move your mouth in a lot of ways and you not talkin’.” She said, “Welllll, Lynn, can-- can we ha-- can we have you come back to the... Classroom 2?” They es-- escorted me out.

Jimmy, Interview #3, 11/20/01

So, in spite of Jimmy’s attempts to “lay low” and limit his self-acknowledged urge to talk to his peers, he did occasionally break CCJDC rules. The no-talking rule was a focus of Jimmy’s complaints about the facility, as in these two excerpts (first presented in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively):

They don’t want you to talk about what what you’re here for. They don’t want you to talk about when your next court date. They don’t want you talkin’ about

nothin'. You can't even- [beginning to sound frustrated] maaan, you can't talk about *nothin'*. You can talk to the minors if you in the classroom and /stuff/ and they let you. That's about it.

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

Jimmy: Why can't you talk to nobody? I feel the [cell and/or pod] doors should be open from about... about 8 to about 9:30, 'til bedtime...

Kate: Do they tell you why you can't talk? Do they give you a reason?

Jimmy: No. (contemptuously:) "You can't play 21 cuz it might start a fight..." What they got correctional officers here for then? They ain't *nothin'*. They a bunch of *pansies*.

From fieldnotes, 11/14/01

The latter statement implies disrespect for the rule itself and for the rationale behind it. Jimmy suggests that the correctional officers should be able to control any conflict that might break out among juvenile detainees. Using the term "pansies," Jimmy belittles CCJDC officers' strength or their courage, suggesting that the detainees are much less dangerous to staff than the rule implies. In other words, CCJDC is misjudging its inmates, Jimmy among them.

Jimmy expressed open, hostile resistance, in the school context, to reflected appraisals that did not match his self-image, and received a new term in detention as a result. His irritation about the no-talking rule may have been enhanced by a similar perception of misjudgment and unfair treatment. In both situations, Jimmy's righteous indignation seems to contribute to his response, which in both settings was to break a cardinal rule for detainee/students. In an alternate interpretation, Jimmy may have difficulty controlling his impulses to talk, leading to numerous infractions and restrictions in CCJDC and, thus, resentment toward this particular rule. In either case, his resistance in CCJDC seems to be expressed through violating rules and defending his own innocence, but not through direct confrontations like the one he had with his teacher at school.

#### Jordan: Resisting the Detainee Role

In comparison to the other study participants, Jordan was the most critical of CCJDC staff members. His typology of officers started with "bitches" and "hoes," and at the top of the scale were people he simply called by their names. The scale had no positive terms, and his

overall description of staff was that they were “smart alecks.” Like Franklin, he wanted staff members to treat him with respect. However, when he felt disrespected by staff, he did not “lay low.” Instead, he would communicate, through his behavior, the assumption that he is equal to staff and deserving of their respect. For example, when he asked for permission or assistance and was refused by one staff member, he would ask another staff member for the same thing; staff interpreted this as manipulation or insubordination, but to Jordan, it was the logical next step. When he was restricted during a class period for not getting to work as quickly as a staff member expected, he “snapped,” telling the staff member he hated her. In the latter interaction, his behavior acknowledged a personal component to his interaction with staff members, and communicated an assumption that his personal feelings about a staff member were relevant in the situation. In so doing, he resists not only the perceived unfairness of the restriction, but the role that is prescribed to him as a detainee, that of “smiling, joyful” acceptance of the circumstances, whether fair or unfair. The same is true of the “salute interaction” between Jordan and Burt (European American male officer). Jordan based his decision about returning Burt’s salute on his limited respect for Burt, (based largely on Burt’s sex, rather than on his character). Burt, however, expected a return salute based solely on protocol (one always returns a salute) and/or power and authority in the setting (officers decide what detainees will do). Again, Jordan looks to his beliefs about himself and his rights to determine what the right course of action is; as a result, he is restricted to his cell/room.

In fact, Jordan acknowledged having a “bad attitude” at least part of the time during his incarcerations in CCJDC, in the context of making plans for better behavior during a sentenced period in DOC. In the example he gives here, his attitude stems from being treated like he is ignorant or stupid, an appraisal with which he disagrees.

I argue with them here [at CCJDC], I ain’t gonna lie. They come and get me up, man, I be in so bad attitude, I be like, “Man, man, just don’t talk to me, man.” (Imitates adult/authority voice, low and solemn), “Well, you’re upstairs today.” “Okay.” Why would you tell me I’m upstairs and I can hear that somebody else is in the shower, over there [in the downstairs shower]? Of course I’m upstairs. Any dumb dimwit could see that.

Jordan, Interview #4, 4/25/02

Jordan was also vehement in refuting the State’s Attorney’s claim that he doesn’t respect



people. As noted previously, this was the only time I saw a detainee take the opportunity offered by the judge to respond to charges or claims made during a hearing.

To get through his days at CCJDC, Jordan says he “doesn’t think about this place.” Even in his choice of coping strategy, Jordan is going against the grain of the facility’s intentions by resisting its influence on his thinking. Unlike Jimmy, whose resistance transgresses the manifest content of rules, Jordan resists CCJDC through “role violations,” behaving in ways that transgress the latent content of CCJDC’s expectations. He rejects the facility’s ready-made detainee narrative in favor of a more personal, powerful, and self-respecting story. This is consistent with Jordan’s self-presentation to me, in which he talked about being a “player” and striving to be a man. He was unwilling to be “punked” or disrespected by anyone, and felt it was natural and necessary to resist these denigrations. He was proud of being honest about the illicit things he had done, and so was doubly upset when he felt falsely accused. In a sense, CCJDC messages were, to him, a false accusation, one that needed to be refuted.

#### IDENTITY NEGOTIATION IN CCJDC

Overall, the six young men in the study had positive views of their personal characteristics and abilities, and high hopes for their future accomplishments. However, several of them were unsure whether they could reach their desired futures, referring specifically to the need to “stay out of trouble” in order to make it. Additionally, these first-time detainees incorporated the possibility of “ending up in jail” into their descriptions of a feared future self, suggesting that arrest and detention have some influence on how detainees think about their futures. The young men’s beliefs about how others see them, especially in the context of the detention center, shed some light on how the fact of being in detention might be translated into a belief about oneself. Most detainees could identify officers who had gotten to know them, and who would predict success for them. However, the detainees were aware of the detention center’s goal of changing them, and they believed that some CCJDC officers would probably expect to see them back in detention, or otherwise failing to achieve their hoped-for selves. Noah, Jimmy, Markus, Corey, Franklin and Jordan did not simply agree with positive and disagree with negative appraisals, rather, they judged the appraisals’ legitimacy against their

self-knowledge and their relationship with the observer.

The dynamic of responses to reflected appraisals was paralleled in detainees' relationship to the setting, where they were subject to, and aware of, frequent appraisals of their behavior and character by staff members and the setting as a whole. Resistance to incorrect assumptions by staff and setting took several forms, from a publicly passive, internalized rejection of the appraisal to vocal disagreement with officers' and others' statements. Acquiescence, too, took a variety of forms, as some detainees expressed wholehearted belief in the importance of changing their ways, and others had, in balance, a positive experience of the detention center. The degree to which detainees resisted or acceded to the implied judgments of CCJDC appeared to be part of a network of beliefs, experiences, qualities and behaviors including self-image, perceptions of labeling and false accusations, beliefs about racism and fairness in the justice, identity development status, interpersonal and cognitive styles. Table 2 provides an overview of study participants' detention survival strategies, along with descriptions of some of these relevant factors.

While coping strategies are understood to be an aspect or outgrowth of personality and cognitive style, they are not frequently associated with the process of identity negotiation. However, in a setting whose underlying goal is to change youth's behavior, identity and peer groups, ways of coping with the setting become part of the identity negotiation process. Detainees at CCJDC are confronted, through classroom materials, interactions with staff, rules and structures, with ideas and images of who they are and who they can be; these ideas and images may or may not coincide with how they see themselves. The rules of CCJDC limit detainees' avenues of resistance or even self-expression, as well as their ability to connect with peers who might otherwise be a source of identity "reassurance" and social support. At the same time, the CCJDC experience may, for some youth, echo previous experiences with negative labeling by authority figures, thus increasing the sense of urgency with which they resist similar assumptions by staff members and the facility itself. For some detainees, resistance will take the form of breaking rules or simply letting the experience wash over them, getting it over with so they can go on with their lives. For others, resistance will be more public and fundamental, a refusal to take the assigned role of an acquiescent, attitude-free object of

someone else's rules and decisions. Finally, some detainees may find themselves unaffected by the experience, because it matches what they believe about themselves or because it has no bearing at all on their self-images. Like many other negotiations, this is a process that has no clear end point. Rather, entry into CCJDC contributes a new component to identity development, eliminating some existing paths and creating others.

## CHAPTER 8

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The preceding chapters draw a composite picture of meaning-making in juvenile detention from a set of in-depth observations in the Corbel County Detention Center. The initial research questions asked how detainees make meaning of their experiences and respond to the setting, how detainees' perceptions were related to the goals of the setting, and how issues of race and racial identity affected interactions and meaning-making. The next step, to be taken in this concluding chapter, is to describe the "big picture" drawn in the process of answering these specific questions. I will argue here that the physical structure of the Corbel County Juvenile Detention Center has a presence, a powerful "persona," that outweighs the contributions of human personalities to the setting's identity. Just as the cold, imposing physical setting overshadows efforts to brighten its ambience or detainees' experiences there, so the history of punitive practices and ambivalence (at best) toward detainees overshadows and outweighs attempts thus far to build a framework of rehabilitative<sup>34</sup> philosophies and practices.

I do not intend to demean the intentions, good will and abilities of individual administrators and staff members. Rather, I see the personnel of CCJDC, their good intentions and efforts, being constantly undermined by the setting and its history. Like young people whose social context is limiting, demeaning and invalidating, those staff members who try to change their approaches to correctional work find themselves constrained by history, politics, social dynamics and limited success. I will attempt, in my description of these dynamics, to use a strengths-based approach, much as I would in a clinical psychological assessment of a family or individual. After laying out the strengths of the setting, I will describe limiting factors, those

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<sup>34</sup>I use the word "rehabilitative" loosely here, as a proxy term for a model of intervention that runs counter to punitive philosophies. While pure punishment and restriction are understood by many academics to be counterproductive, rehabilitation and behavior management in correctional settings are still being studied and refined. A discussion of specific findings is beyond the scope of the current report, and the remainder of this final chapter focuses on CCJDC in particular. However, my suggestions for alternative approaches in that context are based on the assumption that even "rehabilitation," as it is currently framed and practiced at CCJDC, falls short of an "imperative ideal" of anti-racist, strengths-based, culturally sensitive practices.

elements of the setting that keep its strengths and new practices from fully taking root and succeeding.

Following the ground-level analysis of the setting's strengths and weaknesses, I will return to the question of how the detention experience affects detainees' self-perception and behavior. It appears that the "juvenile delinquent" label is less salient to detainees, and less damaging, than the more pervasive assumption, conveyed in the center, that detainees do not deserve respect or personal validation, that they are in effect lost causes. Detained youth recognize that the system is trying to change them, and at least some take issue with the nature of the intended change. While the current study does not provide direct data on recidivism of detainees, it does provide ample foundation for imagining some possible outcomes. Exploring these possible outcomes and linking them back to the overall description of the detention center, I will offer specific recommendations for building on the center's strengths, removing barriers to change, and reducing the negative effects of those influences that cannot be changed outright.

## STRENGTHS-BASED ASSESSMENT OF CCJDC

### Rationale

Before I started my work at CCJDC, I already had an idea about what it would be like. I was prepared for the worst, meaning (in my view) jail-like surroundings and harshly critical, cold, judgmental, punitive staff members with no interest in children. Not surprisingly, then, my memory of early conversations with staff are reduced to one or two examples of speech or interaction that seem unfair or punitive toward detainees. Over time, however, I gained a richer, more fine-grained view of the setting and the staff, allowing me to see unexpected strengths. This process is the foundation of strengths-based assessment, a practice that is in a sense a radical, particularly in the arena of juvenile delinquency. A strengths-based assessment of a delinquent youth often flies in the face of received "wisdom" and dominant cultural narratives about "who these kids are." In the same way, I hope this strengths-based assessment of CCJDC will move me and the reader beyond the assumption that a list of problems is a sufficient analysis, or that those problems are insurmountable.

## Strengths

### *Staff Commitment and “Good Attitude”*

CCJDC’s key strength comes from its staff members. The superintendent, Carrie, worked as a detention officer herself, and has advanced to her current position in part because of her belief that the center could do better for the youth it serves. She is trusted and respected by her staff members and her own supervisors, and thus has the ability to create changes in the detention center without facing direct opposition at every step. Along with Carrie, every staff member I spoke to expressed caring for detainees, a desire to help them in some way. Staff members appear to support each other’s work, and they are able to identify their own and each other’s strengths and weaknesses in working with detainees. The personal commitments of Carrie and her staff are matched by administrative commitments to improve the detention center by increasing funds, adding personnel, and changing policies and practices. The new building itself is the most obvious example, but the addition of new teachers, detention officers and program development staff, the implementation and refinement of the behavior level system, and CCJDC’s willing participation in this research project all demonstrate administrators’ interest in improving the center.

### *Attention to Race and Racism*

Although discussing disproportionate confinement of African Americans appeared uncomfortable for some staff members, the issue was not ignored completely. Keep in mind that this setting is immersed in dominant community and cultural contexts that frame race and racism as “uncomfortable truths” at best, and “unrealities” at worst. Within this “racism blind” context and the national reality of (often unquestioned) disproportionate confinement of African Americans to correctional institutions, a detention center that makes any room at all for discussion of racism is to be commended. Administrators were attempting to increase the number of African American detention officers, and teachers made obvious efforts to have positive images of African Americans in the classrooms and curriculum. Regardless of their explanations for racial disproportion, officers were committed to fair disciplinary practices and agreed that ideally, race should not be a factor in how detainees are treated. Indeed, the detainees in the study did not recall any examples of racist behavior by CCJDC staff. Although

“absence of blatantly racist practices” is probably the absolute minimum we should be able to expect of any public facility, the reality is that eliminating such practices is worth celebrating. However, CCJDC’s improvements on this front are tempered by larger challenges, to be discussed below.

#### *Attention to Detainees as Individuals*

In spite of the need for officers to work with detainees in groups much of the time, several officers tried to make warm, personal connections with detainees, in ways that were greatly appreciated by youth in the study. Brief, casual conversations on the pods were mentioned by some staff and detainees as high points of their days, and both groups also appeared to enjoy occasional playful banter in the classroom, cafeteria or gym. These semi-public interactions were augmented by more private conversations and mentoring-type relationships between some detainees and staff. One officer, Serena, was known by detainees for her playful personality and her interest in music and dance. She used positive relationships with detainees to encourage their successes, making custom audio CDs for them to listen to when they reached a behavior level that allowed them to use a personal CD player. Other staff members often mentioned Serena’s popularity with detainees, pointing out the number of youth who would call, visit or write to her at CCJDC. Serena was not alone in her ability to connect with youth; she may have stood out because of her vivacity and energy, but some other officers also used their personalities, knowledge bases and talents to connect with individual detainees.

#### *Strength Focus of Classrooms*

As noted earlier, the CCJDC classrooms were markedly different from the rest of the center, in part because of the change in social roles and in part because of the physical surroundings. The teachers themselves contributed a great deal to the classroom atmosphere as well, trying to balance warmth, firm guidance, and encouragement. At their best, the classrooms and teachers offered detainees slightly increased freedom and a chance to be acknowledged for creativity, achievement or participation. Because her classes included writing, art and sometimes music, and because of her years of experience teaching CCJDC detainees, Norma had (and used) more opportunities than other teachers to bring out detainees’ creativity, to identify their strengths and build on them. The existence and expansion of CCJDC’s

educational program is commendable, and Norma's contribution cannot be overestimated.

### Challenges and Limitations

The above description of CCJDC's strengths should not surprise the reader, as it simply summarizes selected elements of the preceding several chapters. As in this report, however, the strengths of the CCJDC (are seen like flashes of light) amidst several shadowy layers of context, such as the setting's history, its physical structure, and correctional practices and philosophies designed for adults, but visited upon children in this setting.

### *Setting History*

As detailed in Chapter 4, CCJDC's history can be understood by examining cultural, legal and local personal/political influences. These forces combined to produce a philosophy that decontextualizes and individualizes "delinquency," creating it as an inherent quality of each allegedly guilty youth. This belief system understands youth with delinquent behavior as Dead End Kids (Fleisher, 1998), unable to be "redirected" or "turned around." Approaching delinquency in this way moves judges and corrections staff definitively away from the protective intentions of the Juvenile Court Act of 1899, and into a purely punitive approach. Ironically, this person-focused understanding of delinquency is linked to detention practices that discourage or prevent staff members from knowing detainees as individuals. Restrictive, aggressive treatment of youth in custody has become a habit, perhaps even a tradition, at CCJDC, thanks to a combination of Judge Steigmann's determination and influence, local residents' media-fueled fear of delinquents, and staff hiring and training practices that perpetuate the beliefs and goals of administrators long after they have left the scene. In addition to these "institutional memory" factors, staff members' acculturation into the mutually supportive "staff family" likely includes the inculcation of a particular set of beliefs and values regarding the detainees and the center<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup>Officers' comments and complaints about other officers' way of working with youth shows this tendency. Although I interviewed staff members representing the center's full continuum of approaches from strict to lenient, I never heard an officer complain that another officer was "too harsh," while a few officers commented on the perceived "softness" or playfulness of their co-workers. The joking and banter among officers at the staff station often  
(continued...)



Although CCJDC's superintendent and many staff members have spent years working to develop more rehabilitative practices, they started from, and are held to, the standards set by Judge Steigmann and more recent, like-minded community and judicial bench members. Furthermore, the center's genuine need for a new facility required funding, which depended on a successful sales pitch to Corbel County. A shift to innovative, rehabilitative practices housed in a warm, supportive environment may have seemed too drastic a change to gain community approval. This is purely speculation, of course, as the center's actual media messages during that period focused on the violent, impulsive and uneducated "nature" of detainees, pointing to safety, security, increased educational facilities and vaguely defined "programming" that would be provided in the new building. The campaign, in turn, would have created a community expectation to be met when the new facility was designed and built. In fact, the contract for the building's design was awarded to a company specializing in building jails. Administrators and staff members told me that they contributed ideas that "softened" the design somewhat, but the end result appears and feels like a jail for children, rather than (for instance) a place meant to encourage individual, social and educational growth<sup>36</sup>.

#### *Physical Structure*

Administrators' decision to contract with an architectural firm specializing in prisons (rather than, for example, schools, homes, offices, residential facilities or hospitals) shaped the physical structure, bringing into being a concrete example of the panopticon discussed by Foucault (1979) and Bentham (1843, cited in Foucault, 1979). This building physically represents its creators' (the community's, or at least the court and probation administrators')

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<sup>35</sup>(...continued)

included sarcastic chiding about someone being a "hardass." This type of joking makes it clear that such an event—criticism of an officer for being too harsh—was so unlikely as to be laughable.

<sup>36</sup>Admittedly, this is an easy statement to make, in comparison to the difficulty of imagining and describing a positive, growth-supporting institutional setting for children. While schools are certainly closer to this ideal, their similarity to correctional settings is uncanny (Foucault, 1979; Wilcox, 1996), and their success in fostering social and individual growth is notoriously dependent on individual classroom teachers and willing administrators and communities.

values and beliefs about who detainees are and what we should do with them. It is a looming, cold, impenetrable structure facilitating control of docile bodies via constant observation. Specifically, this space constricts detainees' behavior and in so doing denies them speech, individual expression, emotional warmth and physical comfort, all as part of a "deserved punishment" for a misdeed.

CCJDC's physical space follows the letter, but not the intent, of the original Juvenile Court Act (1899). The Act was intended to remove young people from the adult correctional system and create a flexible system to address the needs that purportedly caused or supported the problematic behavior. CCJDC, like many other youth facilities, separates youth from the adult system, but imposes physical conditions as harsh as those in adult jails, and behavioral/structural conditions that are even more punitive and restrictive, addressing only the most immediate behaviors and needs of detainees while conveying a message of invalidation and presumed failure.

The CCJDC building is not only a constant reminder of the philosophy that created it, but a mold shaping the ideas and energies of staff members and detainees alike. It is the most constant element of detainees' experiences: Staff members and situations change, but everything happens against a backdrop of polished concrete, an atmosphere notable as much for what is absent—noise, color, movement—as for what is present. The brightly painted doors and railings and the classroom decorations can hardly counter the overpowering starkness of the building itself. In a setting like this one, colorful paint or a Christmas tree in one of the pods seems almost pathetic, simply emphasizing what the place is not, rather than improving the ambience. It is hard to remember, on entering CCJDC, that many detainees have not yet been adjudicated delinquent, and many of those adjudicated are serving sentences for minor, non-violent offenses including "contempt of court" (e.g., missing curfew or appointments repeatedly while on probation), shoplifting small amounts of merchandise, or entering an unoccupied apartment through an open door or window.

The physical experience of CCJDC is literally one of dislocation from one's home, family and community; it may also dislocate youth from their own self-narratives, particularly those youth charged with relatively minor offenses such as those listed above. How does one

reconcile self-descriptions such as “smart,” “funny,” “creative,” and “a good friend,” with the images and descriptors conveyed by such a restrictive and punitive setting (e.g. (perhaps) “undeserving,” “bad,” “dangerous,” “failure,” “loser”). For first-time detainees and those with minor offenses, the extreme behavior restrictions and jail-like ambience may force a kind of identity dislocation, a sense of unreality, a feeling that “maybe I am worse than I thought I was.”

Just as small decorative touches do little to counteract the overall jail-like feeling, staff members’ attempts to move toward more positive approaches pale in comparison to the overall messages of the physical setting and the realities of most interactions between staff and detainees. For example, when officers tried (as noted previously) to engage in mutually respectful, casual, positive interactions with individual detainees, they were thwarted by their own perceived need to maintain silence and order within the entire group of detainees. The result was an abrupt, harsh return to the hierarchical and controlling relationship that forms the foundation of detainee discipline and officer behavior at CCJDC. Detainees appeared taken aback and frustrated by these harsh transitions, and seemed also to feel they were being treated unfairly<sup>37</sup>. Here the punitive and controlling atmosphere of CCJDC haunts and contorts what might otherwise be a positive form of “intervention” for detainees.

The setting’s narrative, expressed through history, practice and physical structures, is not only dominant but despotic, creating a social and atmospheric backlash against interactions or even self-narratives that resist it. The dominance of the punitive narrative is strengthened by rules that empower officers’ voices and opinions at the cost of detainees’. In this jail for juveniles, youths’ self-expression is denied outright, or controlled so tightly that there is no opportunity for detainees to disprove (to themselves, each other, the officers or the community) the denigrating myth that they are inherently, permanently flawed. Many detainees confront this overwhelmingly devaluing context up to 30 days a year, over two or three periods of detention

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<sup>37</sup>Detention officers were quick to point out that they treated detainees fairly, explaining that all youth were treated the same way. Extrapolating from detainees’ behavior and interview texts, I believe detainees defined “fairness” differently. They were invested in “fairness” that involved consistent and reasonable expectations for detainees’ behavior, and acknowledgment of officers’ contributions to some of the problematic interactions in the facility.

(CCJDC, 2001). Given these repeated immersions, it would take a great deal of energy, personal strength, conscious resistance and external support for detainees to maintain a positive self-narrative.

### *Restrictive Practices*

At the same time that the center's history and physical structure convey a predominantly negative message to detainees and officers, current rules and practices may prevent detainees from proving themselves better than the stereotype. The natural exuberance, curiosity and independence of adolescent detainees are tightly curtailed by the center's rules regarding speech and behavior. Even for those who can tolerate the narrow behavioral repertoire that remains, there is little opportunity to show strength, humor, resilience, common sense or intelligence<sup>38</sup>; the default, a quieter shadow of the detainee's "full self," might be easy to control, but not easy to know. Those detainees less tolerant of the expected role would show resistance, perhaps by breaking the rules, or by flavoring their otherwise bland compliance with "attitude." In addition, the inconsistent and unpredictable tone of social contact between officers and detainees seems at times like a (purposive) test of detainees' ability to control their tempers, a test that many detainees will fail in this context. Even "social work-minded" officers in this setting might have trouble keeping a positive view of detainees, while officers with a more traditional correctional philosophy might simply find their negative assumptions confirmed.

By distancing officers from detainees' individuality, rigid restrictions on speech and behavior are, in a sense, self-maintaining. Emotional distance supports officers' continued use of rigid, hierarchical and sometimes capricious disciplinary styles with detainees. Although some officers learn a great deal about some detainees, no officer has opportunities to create lengthy, free-flowing conversation with every detainee in the center. Their knowledge of detainees, then, is confined to what they get from the youth's file and what they see of the youth's role performance, given the center's limited script. Were detainees and officers encouraged to get to know one another, officers would be hard pressed to maintain the rigid discipline necessary to create order as currently defined by CCJDC.

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<sup>38</sup>(Not to mention musical ability, humor, spontaneous social or practical skills.)

### *Cultural and Institutional Racism*

Disproportionate minority confinement at CCJDC is another facet of the negative, self-fulfilling prophecy described above. In the detention center, the group of people with power, control, and a socially-granted halo of “good-person-ness” are mostly European American. Conversely, those in the setting with no power, no control, and an imposed status of “people who do ‘bad things’” are mostly African American. These images reflect broader cultural imagery, expressed in news media, popular films and music videos, not to mention some detainees’ thinking<sup>39</sup>. Like a fish that could neither fully describe the feel of water or imagine a life without it, detainees and officers are immersed in a pool of familiar images and concepts, many of them supporting negative views of detainees. At the same time, the local and national Zeitgeists are suffused with ambivalence and discomfort around issues of race, racism, social justice and cultural competency.

As a setting, CCJDC appears almost paralyzed when it comes to the issue of race; in this way, too, the immediate setting resembles its setting, both locally and nationally. Among CCJDC staff members, as among many U.S. citizens and lawmakers, disproportionate minority confinement seems to be taken for granted, but still causes social and cognitive discomfort. At CCJDC, race-related discomfort and ambivalence are evidenced by staff and administrators’ response to the phenomenon. They adapt to it in a variety ways, without making any organized or overt attempt to change it. Their adaptations include cognitive strategies, such as trying to be “color blind” in one’s thinking, attempting anti-racist explanations for the disproportion, and putting a positive spin on the situation by focusing on the chance it provides for African American youth to interact with European American adults (or “positive” African American role models). Social adaptation strategies include increasing the representation of African Americans among staff members or in classroom displays, or (especially for African American staff members) designing one’s self-presentation in partial response to the fact of racial

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<sup>39</sup>(For example, an African American detainee told an African American officer, “You’re not black [because you are an officer here].”)

disproportion<sup>40</sup>.

### Barriers to Change

This laundry list of problems begs the question, “Why doesn’t CCJDC change?” The most obvious answers are that CCJDC continues to change, albeit slowly, and that old habits and practices die hard, even more so when they have been publicly touted as well-founded and essential to the community. While politics may play into CCJDC policy and practice, my observations at the center, and my conversations with staff people tell me that if they truly believed they were harming detainees *beyond the point of “deserved punishment,”* they would change their practices immediately<sup>41</sup>. However, current policies and staffing are products of *improvements* in the center; CCJDC has moved away from its most blatantly punitive, shaming and otherwise regressive practices. As a result, it wouldn’t be too difficult for officers and administrators to feel they were serving detainees and the community well. Making a drastic change would require acknowledgment that what had gone before was, in fact, *not* good enough.

### *Cognitive Dissonance*

CCJDC is held captive by the threat of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), a discomfiting sense that one’s behavior is incompatible with one’s beliefs. In general, individuals will adjust behavior, thinking, or both to reduce or avoid cognitive dissonance. Many CCJDC officers felt that their work gave them an opportunity to “help the kids.” This belief helped offset the tiring, stressful nature of the job. Given limited power or knowledge to address the possibility that the detention center really doesn’t help young people, officers would

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<sup>40</sup>Interviews with two African American staff members uncovered two different strategies, one in which the officer made a point of being formal and avoiding “street language” (i.e. greetings and turns of phrase) when talking to detainees, another in which the officer used her own interest in rap, hip hop and dance to connect with African American detainees. Both officers, however, felt they should show detainees that (officers’ or detainees’) race/ethnicity was not going to affect their enforcement of rules or their use of discipline in the setting.

<sup>41</sup>In addition, staff members’ ambivalence and self-consciousness about being observed by me suggests that they are aware of the possibility that they are “doing something wrong” and that this does, in fact, matter to them.

be faced with a choice between leaving the job, keeping the job and trying to remain separate from the dominant work/policy culture, or adjusting one's beliefs to support ongoing participation in the status quo. The setting's immediate social environment, particularly the value placed on strong, family-like relationships among officers, provides social support (or pressure) to maintain the dominant narrative and practices. The same can be said of the reality that CCJDC's perspective is a close match to prevalent cultural portrayals of "delinquent youth." As a result, major changes in policy, practice or philosophy would be difficult to implement, because those changes would require the local setting to fight dominant cultural trends, and in so doing, to undermine detention officers' beliefs in the value and meaning of their prior work. Further complicating this dynamic is the spectre of racial disproportion and racism. "Rational" explanations for the too-high percentage of African American detainees allow those working in the center to accept the situation and work within it, without having to acknowledge the potential truth that they are participating in the publicly unacceptable reality of (institutionalized) racism.

Administrators, officers, teachers and even detainees do try, in a variety of ways, to resist the tide of historically, procedurally, structurally and socially maintained roles and images. At the administrative level, policies have been developed to attempt to ensure fairness and combat potential racism in decisions to detain or release youth; the center has also tried to recruit and retain more African American staff members. Teachers and some of the officers try to engage detainees in warm, personal, "normal" conversations; the teachers have also made an effort to present positive images of African Americans in their teaching and the classroom context; detainees joke and banter with officers, volunteer to help with various projects, and will happily discuss positive aspects of their lives. Unfortunately, the combined staff making these efforts is something like a person trying to freshen a bucket of saltwater a few drops at a time: It won't be drinkable for a long, long time, and it may never truly taste good unless you dump it out and start over with a clean bucket.

### *Race Blindness*

The efforts of administrators and staff to deal with racial disproportion exemplify this dynamic. Except in the actions of a few staff members, cultural sensitivity appears relegated to

CCJDC classroom walls. In its stead much of the time is a sort of “color blindness” on the part of officers, who insist that a youth’s race or ethnicity makes no difference in how that youth is treated. While I believe this is an accurate portrayal of the officers’ intentions, I am not sure they are any better than the rest of us (Americans) at undoing the lessons of cultural racism and cross-cultural miscommunication that characterize American culture. In a setting where the “attitude” of detainees makes an enormous difference to their progress in and beyond the facility, it would seem important to be able to acknowledge cultural differences in social interaction, including role expectations, speech and body language. Similarly, the attempted “color-blindness” of some staff members may be thwarting the development of trust between African American and European American staff members. Increasing the numbers of African American staff may provide better social support for those who are already there, but it may actually increase cultural tensions among staff if cultural competency and sensitivity are not addressed seriously and directly.

#### *Ambivalence Toward Detainees*

One of the most striking features of CCJDC’s history, seen particularly in its self-presentation through local newspapers, is the facility’s “negative ambivalence” toward detainees, its understanding of “delinquent youth” as both weak or damaged and dangerous, both vulnerable children and “monsters.” This ambivalence is endemic to the setting, and underlies the paralysis, described above, regarding treatment of detainees and responses to racial disproportion. The result, observed throughout the course of this study, is a mix of approaches to detainees, combining rehabilitative and punitive, personal and distant, permissive and controlling—but always emphasizing the punitive over the rehabilitative, whether intentionally or not. The new building was an attempt to add and improve “programming” (i.e. rehabilitation) to a system built on principles of harsh deterrence and punishment. Efforts to improve programming are limited by a belief that there can be “too much programming” or “too much fun,” such that young people would think of CCJDC as being “like summer camp.” Officers’ behavior toward detainees ranges from warm, concerned inquiry, through neutral commands, to capricious and imperious displays of power. Transitions between behavioral modes, for example the shift from classroom to cells or from free-flowing conversation to



controlled silence, are socially awkward for both officers and detainees.

The setting's ambivalence toward detainees dilutes the effectiveness of either rehabilitative or punitive practices. Without a coherent, shared set of assumptions about detainees and the role of the center, officers' individual approaches vary with sociopolitical beliefs, moods, personality conflicts, and social subgroupings within the setting. Staff members' disagreements about how to address detainee behaviors sometimes result in unclear interactive messages to detainees (e.g., if one officer laughs at a detainee's joke while another tells the detainee to stop talking), inconsistent application of consequences across detainees and situations, and unreliable ratings on the behavior level system. Detainees recognize these inconsistencies and may adjust their behavior as a result, but because the ambivalence of the center is between two negative impressions (dangerous criminal v. damaged, needy child), they come away knowing they have been found lacking and treated accordingly. In the end, what detainees know is that this is a place that wants to change them; the message is delivered in a context that defaults to the punitive and restrictive only because that is the most coherent and longstanding approach developed in the setting thus far.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR DETAINEES' SELF-PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIOR

This study was developed, in part, to find out how detained youth perceive and respond to labels or appraisals expressed in (or by) the detention context. Labeling theory focuses on the formal, public process of labeling through adjudication and the resulting adoption of a culturally-established delinquent role. CCJDC detainees may not have been (and may never be) formally adjudicated delinquent, so to the extent that the courtroom scene and the judge's pronouncement are considered essential to the process, labeling is not a relevant concept for them. However, being detained at CCJDC can likely serve as a proxy for the courtroom labeling process; detainees were clearly aware of the formal and punitive nature of the setting.

The inherent power imbalances in CCJDC's role structure place young people and African Americans in an "object" position under adult European Americans. Consistent with the labeling theory tenet that people in power will label those with less power as deviant or lacking, detention center staff commonly talked about detainees' parents as "the root of all evil," their home lives as emotionally, educationally or socially impoverished, and the detainees

themselves as having bad attitudes and no social skills. Trying to improve detainees' behavior and thinking defines much of the detention officer's role, and was implicit in interactions observed throughout the course of the study. The young men in the study interpreted this to mean that they should "do better" or "learn a lesson." In study participants' and my observations, CCJDC staff members seldom labeled detainees in an explicit manner paralleling the formal application of the label, "delinquent." The "hoodlum" excerpt at the manuscript's beginning is an important exception to this general observation. Some detainees showed awareness of a "delinquent" role, which they used as an example of something they were not, or did not plan to be<sup>42</sup>. Thus the labeling of detainees as deficient occurred as much in behavior and structure as it did in actual language.

In general, detainees were more aware of and responsive to global appraisals of what kind of person they might be—respectful, respectable, intelligent, depressed—than to specific labels. Detainees' responses to specific reflected appraisals seemed to depend on a network of related cognitive processes, whereby the meaning and applicability of the appraisal was judged against the youth's self-perception and other reflected appraisals. However, it was detainees' immersion in the psychological, social and physical dislocation of the setting, rather than the specific appraisals themselves, that appeared to have the most impact on behavior and self-perception.

In addition to the difficulty of being physically and socially dislocated by a stay in detention, study participants' talk was suffused with images and concepts of dislocation in self-perception, behavior and thought: making a long-term move away from an existing identity ("becoming a better person"), altering behavior in the short term to avoid trouble (sliding by, laying low, or preventing social communication), and avoiding thoughts about being in detention. These strategies have costs and benefits in terms of both contextual feedback and personal integrity. In a system that metes out punishment and reward on the bases of behavior

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<sup>42</sup>Noah, for instance, talked about his discomfort being seen as someone who committed "armed robbery" or who had a sentence of intensive probation; Franklin, in spite of his willingness to commit illegal acts, was clear that he would not do so just for fun, but out of perceived economic necessity.

and attitude, silent acquiescence may be a positive strategy for some detainees. However, this acquiescence may be too much of a burden for some detainees' self-respect and integrity, as when the imposed behavior or culture is markedly disparate from the youth's personal values, or when the youth's environment outside of CCJDC has already eroded his or her fund of self-respect. Even if we accept that some detainees enter CCJDC with deficits in social skills or behavior, the setting's response is to erase the purportedly negative self without providing an adequate, functional, powerful replacement.

A single period of detention might be unpleasant and rattling, with little permanent residue. However, repeated experiences of this dislocation from self and immersion in CCJDC's (or any other) negatively ambivalent context could exhaust a youth's hope and resilience, particularly for those with limited social support or empowerment on the outside. Those detainees who actively resist the powerless role inside CCJDC may do the same on the outside by seeking power and respect in a potentially "delinquent" social network. These are the youth we should consider "at risk"—not at risk of carrying out delinquent acts or being incarcerated, but of losing themselves and their hoped-for selves to the negative, powerless and meaningless roles offered by the dominant cultural narrative and its local expression in the detention center.

In essence, CCJDC limits its effectiveness by using a mix of leftover and current punitive practices with a new move toward rehabilitative approaches, all in the context of strong negative assumptions about who detainees are and who they can become. At every stage in the detention process, detainees are presented with a weak positive message and an overwhelming negative message. Although they will appreciate positive individual interactions, those interactions alone are unlikely to ward off the cold and punitive atmosphere, the "bad attitude" of the detention center as a whole. At the same time, the center's attempts to "give the kids something positive to take back to the community" don't build on the strengths of either detainees or staff members. Existing rules and protocols leave little time or social space for staff members to build strong, positive, consistently respectful relationships with detainees. In addition, the identity offered to detainees as a positive role is functional in restrictive settings, but allows little or no self-expression or empowerment. As such, it may not be readily adopted

by older adolescents, who have already begun to solidify an independent identity, by African American adolescents, who may find it difficult to silence themselves even further than is required by schools and the dominant culture, and by young men, who in our culture are encouraged to be strong, assertive and independent. In other words, CCJDC's suggested role for detainees is one that begs resistance from the majority of detainees (i.e., African American males aged 15-16 (CCJDC, 2001)).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corbel County Juvenile Detention Center is in the difficult position of trying to improve its public image and its services to detained youth while still awash in the philosophies and practices of a juvenile justice system based on antiquated, quasi-religious notions about the importance of penitence and the spurious belief that punishment deters crime. The setting's history cannot be changed and its physical facility is so new that there is no chance of replacing it. However, CCJDC's greatest limitations lie in its chronic, negative ambivalence toward detainees, its attempts to find a compromise between punitive and rehabilitative practices, and its efforts to be both culturally sensitive and race-blind. Changes in philosophy and practice can address these problems, and the recommendations below, including changes in thinking and practice, are attempts to do just that by imagining a strengths-based, culturally competent model of juvenile detention for Corbel County<sup>43</sup>.

### *Philosophical Change*

As this report makes clear, the staff and administrators of CCJDC are committed to helping detainees in their care, and they have designed practices according to this commitment. Unfortunately, those practices are founded on the uneven ground of ambivalence—a desire to see detainees as “just kids,” while nagged by doubts about their upbringing, their “true selves” and

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<sup>43</sup>These recommendations are influenced by the following assumptions of the author: deterrence through incarceration doesn't work; punishment has little or no value as an end itself; children and adolescents are probably more vulnerable than adults to the messages of incarceration and the system, and the economic and social costs of “losing them” are greater; it is not possible to understand an individual's behavior without acknowledging his or her sociocultural and interpersonal contexts, including issues of power and privilege; it is not possible to change an individual's behavior without changing his or her contexts; egalitarian cooperation is a better path to change than hierarchical coercion.

their abilities to change. The neutral statement of the center's purpose is that it provides a "safe and secure holding facility" for young people. However, staff and detainees alike recognize the reality that CCJDC's goal is to change detainees, forcing or encouraging them to stay out of trouble and develop into successful (read: prosocial and economically independent) adults. Moving away from the punitive and denigrating assumptions of the setting's history will require a radical shift in philosophy, a rethinking of values and beliefs. Rather than changing what already exists, something entirely new needs to be created.

Because of the center's long history, its place within the larger state system of probation and corrections, and its role in the community, making a radical change will not be easy. However, the alternative is to make small adjustments in the "symptoms" (programs and practices) of a disease without ever eliminating the cause. The recommendations here assume that the entire culture of CCJDC needs to change in order to have a meaningful effect on detainees' experiences in the center and their chances for success afterward. Adding outside programs, as the center has done in the past few years, may be helpful, but it does not address the core of ambivalence and negativity that looms over detainees' daily life. A clear statement of beliefs about young people and the intentions of the center can guide further changes in structures, programs and practices.

#### *Strengths-Based, Restorative Approach*

Taking a strengths-based approach means consciously resisting and replacing the assumption of the dominant culture that young people in detention are flawed or needy in some way. This is not to say that adolescents don't have needs or weaknesses. Rather, it suggests that focusing on the identification and eradication of those needs or weaknesses, without acknowledging and building on strengths, leads to a skewed view of the "subject" (i.e. the detainee) and limits the relationship we can have with him or her. Maintaining a strengths-based philosophy within a juvenile detention center seems almost contradictory, but given the success and increased credibility of strengths-based and restorative practices in juvenile probation (Beyer, 2003; Maruna & LeBel, 2003), and even in detention (Glos, 2003), it may not be impossible.

At CCJDC, strengths-based philosophy would start with assuming that every youth has

strengths and abilities, and the job of the detention center is to identify those strengths and find ways to capitalize on them during and after the period of detention. From this perspective, the allegation that the youth has committed a delinquent act would be of less interest than developing a plan to use detention time positively. Aside from the initial intake interview, focused on basic identifying and family information, assessments would balance attention to psychological symptoms with inquiries about hobbies, abilities, interests and strengths. Limitations such as psychological problems, disabilities or family strife would also be acknowledged, but the focus would be on identifying strengths and supports to cope with those challenges. Rather than removing a youth from his or her social context, the center might work with parents and family or provide transportation and snacks to encourage family visits. Detainees would be given the opportunity to demonstrate their own skills and talents, and to develop lesson plans and handouts and teach their peers and the adults in the center.

Focusing on strengths would also require changes to setting practices that convey messages of shame, punishment and disempowerment. Strip searches may be an accepted part of correctional practice, but they should not be repeated more than is absolutely necessary during a period of detention (e.g., strip searches after family visits would be eliminated in favor of staff supervision of the visit; strip searches after supervised outside appointments would be eliminated completely). Clearly, detainees would need much more freedom of movement, behavior and speech in a strengths-based system, with officers taking responsibility to intervene as needed, and the establishment of a “peer jury” system within the center for residents to address ongoing misbehavior. Admittedly, it is easier to describe a strengths-based philosophy than it is to imagine it working in a juvenile detention center, particularly one with the background and community constraints of CCJDC. However, since the close of this study’s observations, CCJDC has begun to incorporate elements of a “restorative justice” (Zehr, 2002) approach, as modeled by facilities in other Illinois counties and as emphasized in recent Illinois reform efforts (Illinois Juvenile Court Act, 1999; Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2003). Restorative justice attempts to strike a balance among building on the offender’s strengths, emphasizing his or her “accountability,” and improving relationships among community, institutions, family and individuals. As a philosophical framework and a

practical approach, it could provide guidelines for CCJDC to “erase and replace” its own, formerly punitive identity.

### *Cultural Competency*

Regardless of the ethnic/racial makeup of the staff and the population of detainees, there will be cultural differences within and between the two groups. The extent to which these differences lead to either tension or social learning will be a function of the staff’s cultural competency. Disproportionate minority confinement is a reality in Corbel County, increasing the complexity and the urgency of incorporating culturally competent practices in the center. Rather than being a topic for in-service training alone (as it is in many organizational settings), cultural competency must be a value held and expressed by administrators and woven into the fabric of staff and detainee orientation, staff training, and decisions regarding promotion and hiring. With a strong, committed and culturally competent staff, the center might be able to discover and nurture the strengths of African American (and other minority group) children whose “risk” comes in large part from the prejudice they face in local schools and in the community.

### *Staff Education*

Planning for changes to the center’s structure and practice might be improved by increasing officers’ and administrators’ understanding of current knowledge about any of the following topics: adolescent development, group dynamics, theories of behavioral change, influences on delinquent behavior and recidivism, psychological disorders and learning disabilities. Ideally, these trainings would be practically oriented and designed specifically for correctional or law enforcement professionals.

### *Facilitating Cultural Change*

To encourage a shift in philosophy and practice, administrators should include staff members, adult community members and detainees (or former detainees) in redesigning the CCJDC. Key opinion leaders among the staff—that is, respected staff members whose voices and leadership are influential with their peers—should be encouraged to participate in planning, regardless of their initial perspective on the value of the changes. Their presence and involvement will increase the credibility and visibility of the project among the entire staff,

making its success more likely in the long run. Administrators should avoid forcing change too quickly. Like all long-time employees, CCJDC officers are wary of changes in their job descriptions and more so of changes in the workplace culture. Some are also jaded, having experienced numerous programmatic changes which do not reach completion, or which are eventually abandoned for something newer. Slow, steady progress, starting with a strong statement of philosophy and goals and developing into a coherent plan of action and change, would be the best way to support staff members through the changes recommended here.

### *Combating the Dominant Narrative*

Shifting to and maintaining a strengths-based approach will require direct intervention in the creation and dissemination of stereotypes about juvenile detainees. CCJDC has years' worth of data on admissions and re-admissions, and has access to county- and state-wide data regarding juvenile arrests, detention, convictions and Department of Corrections sentencing. With these data and the resources available through the nearby university, it should be possible to find out whether most detainees really do come back a second or third time, how many detainees commit crimes "just to get back to CCJDC," and how many detainees perceive CCJDC to be "like a summer camp" in its current state. Furthermore, statistical analyses could assess the effect of detention time on later recidivism, as compared to release upon screening or probation without detention time. Increasing the role of research in the facility would allow ongoing attention to accountability and communication to the community about the center's successes. Such research could also help to identify "problem areas" needing additional attention or resources.

### CONCLUSION

"Nuttin', naw, nothin' really make it a good day. Ain't nuttin'—as long as you're in here, ain't nothin' good."

Jimmy, Interview #1, 8/27/01

Jimmy is just one of six young men in this study, detained in just one of many county juvenile detention centers in the country; the small scale of this study may limit the utility of its precise observations for other facilities. However, the philosophies, structures and practices observed at this detention center stem from guiding principles and dominant narratives that suffuse our culture, media and communities. It is those principles and narratives, filtered



through local history and practice, that shaped Jimmy's experience and my observations of CCJDC. To the extent that we, as a community, attach ourselves to familiar, historical approaches—punishment as an end in itself, denigration and replacement of detainees' identities, substituting the illusion of color-blindness for legitimate cultural competency—we do a disservice to the young people in the community's care. Every period of incarceration is a period of exposure to the dominant story, told in elements of the center's physical facility, its rules and its practices, that there “ain't nothin' good” in the young people themselves, that we know better than they do who they should be. CCJDC has already made some positive changes, again mirroring national trends toward the incorporation of restorative, strengths-based approaches. The challenge will be to overcome the setting's imposing, punitive history while remaining in a jail-like physical facility. To accomplish this feat, CCJDC's administrators will have to bolster the commitment, talents and good will of facility staff with a strong statement of guiding philosophies and a coherent set of new practices within a youth-centered, strengths-based framework. Just as detainees' voices and strengths formed the narrative foundation of the current study, they can provide new narratives and a new focus for change at the Corbel County Detention Center.

## FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Percentages of selected ethnicities for Champaign County, CCJDC staff, and CCJDC admissions in the year 2000.

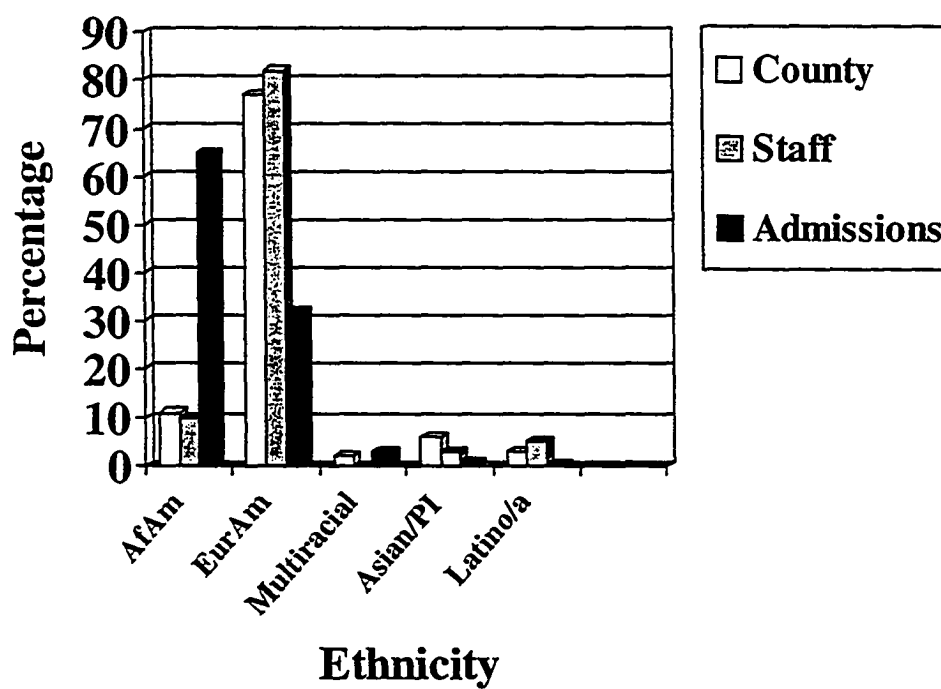


Figure 2. Research procedures timeline.

	Feb 2001	Mar 2001	Apr 2001	May 2001	June 2001	July 2001	Aug 2001	Sept 2001	Oct 2001	Nov 2001	Dec 2001	Jan 2002	Feb 2002	Mar 2002	Apr 2002	May 2002	
JDC	Participant observation throughout →																
01M			Y-1	P-1	Y-2				Y-3, P-2					Y-4		Y-5, P-3	
02M			Y-1			Y-2, P-1								Y-3			
03M				Y-1	Y-2, P-1						Y-3, P-2						
04M						Y-1	P-1			Y-2, P-2						Y-3, P-3	
05M								Y-1, P-1		P-2			Y-2		Y-3, Y-4		
06M							Y-1	P-1	Y-2	Y-3, Y-4	Y-5		Y-6				

Legend	Period of contact with facility or family	
	Y: Youth interview	Youth interviewed in CCJDC
	P: Parent interview	Youth/parent interview at home

Figure 3. Conceptual Map of CCJDC Rules

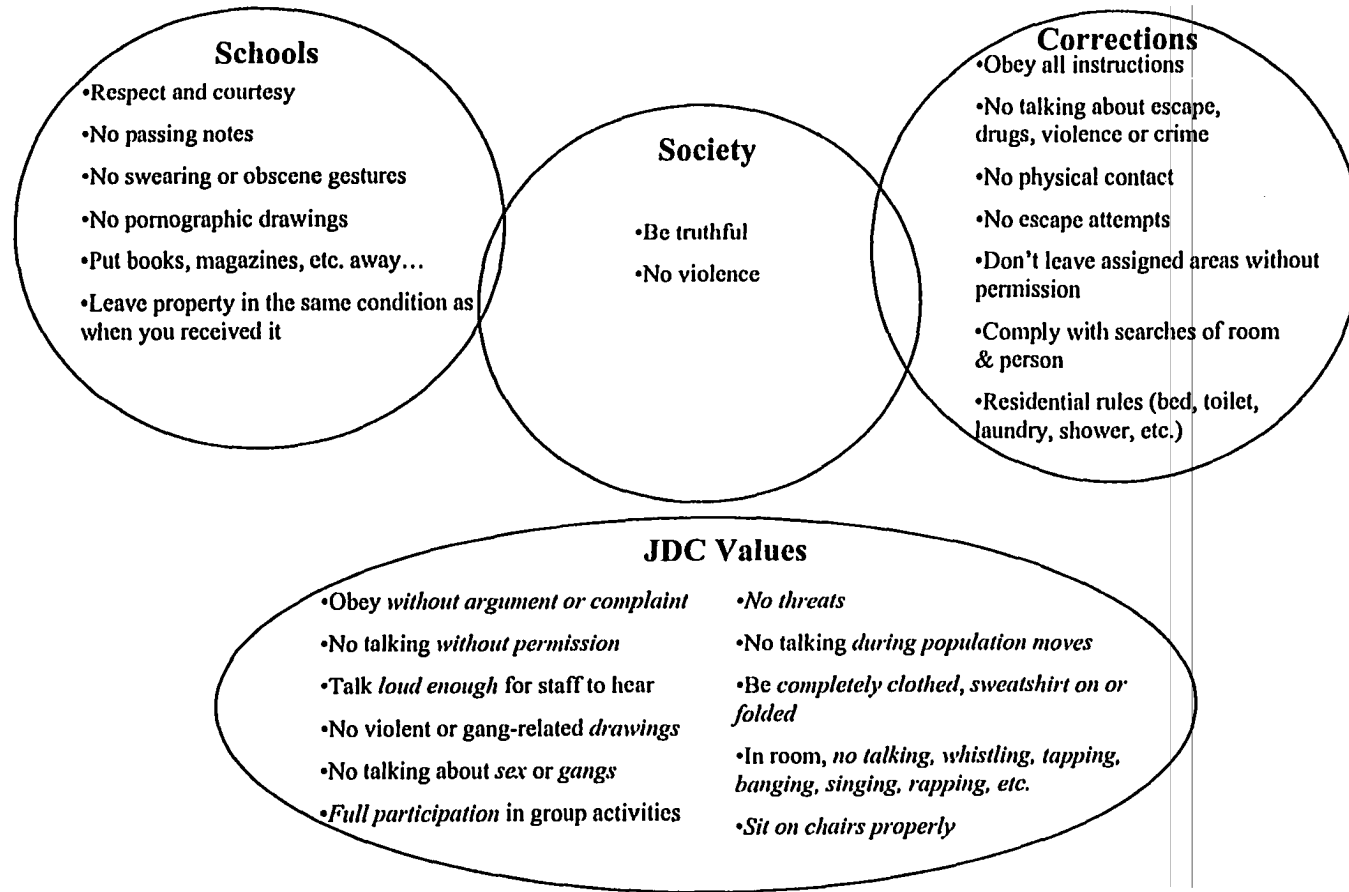


Figure 4. Layout of CCJDC building.

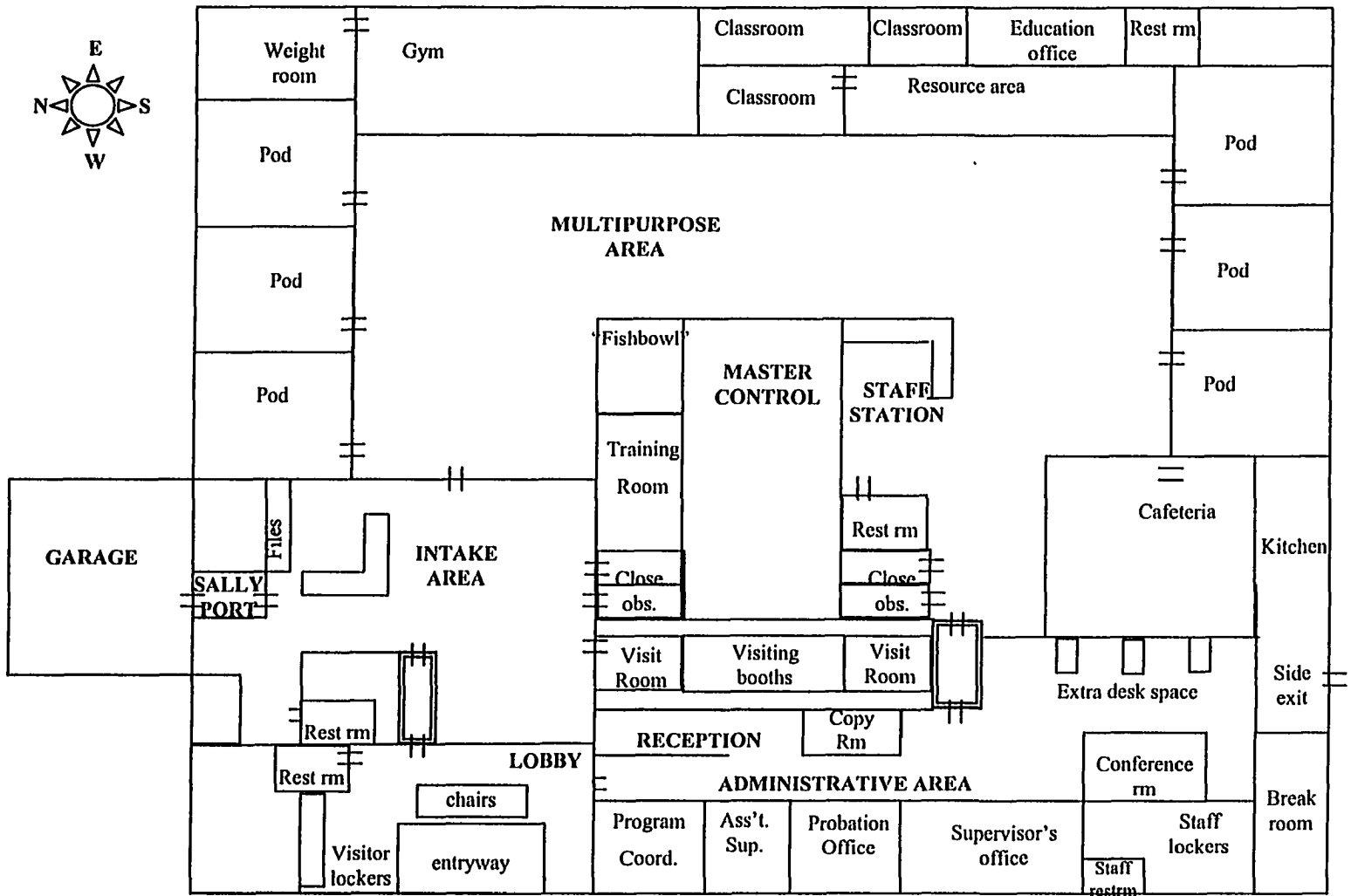


Figure 5. Layout of typical CCJDC pod and cell.

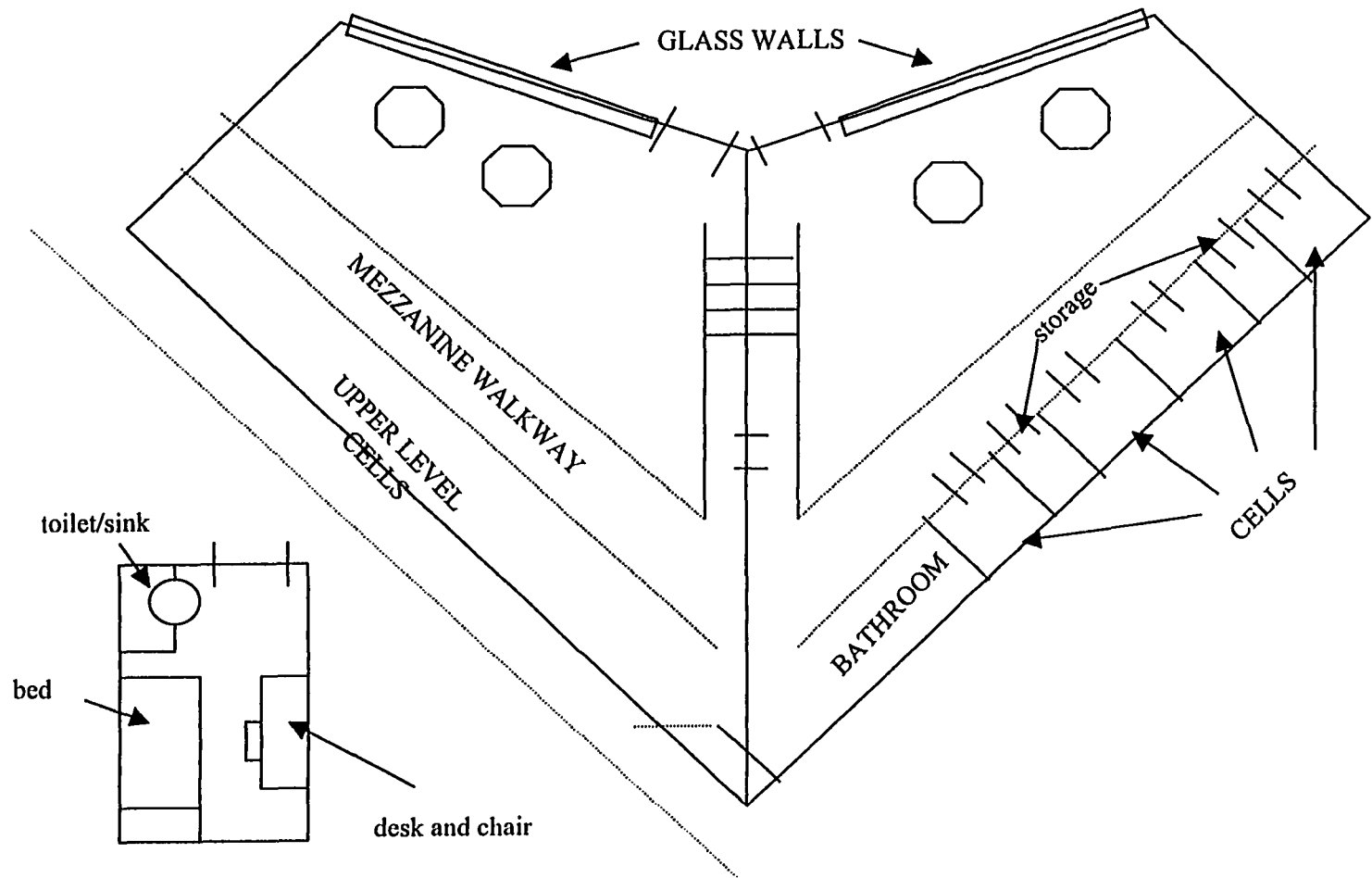


Figure 6. Layout of typical CCJDC classroom.

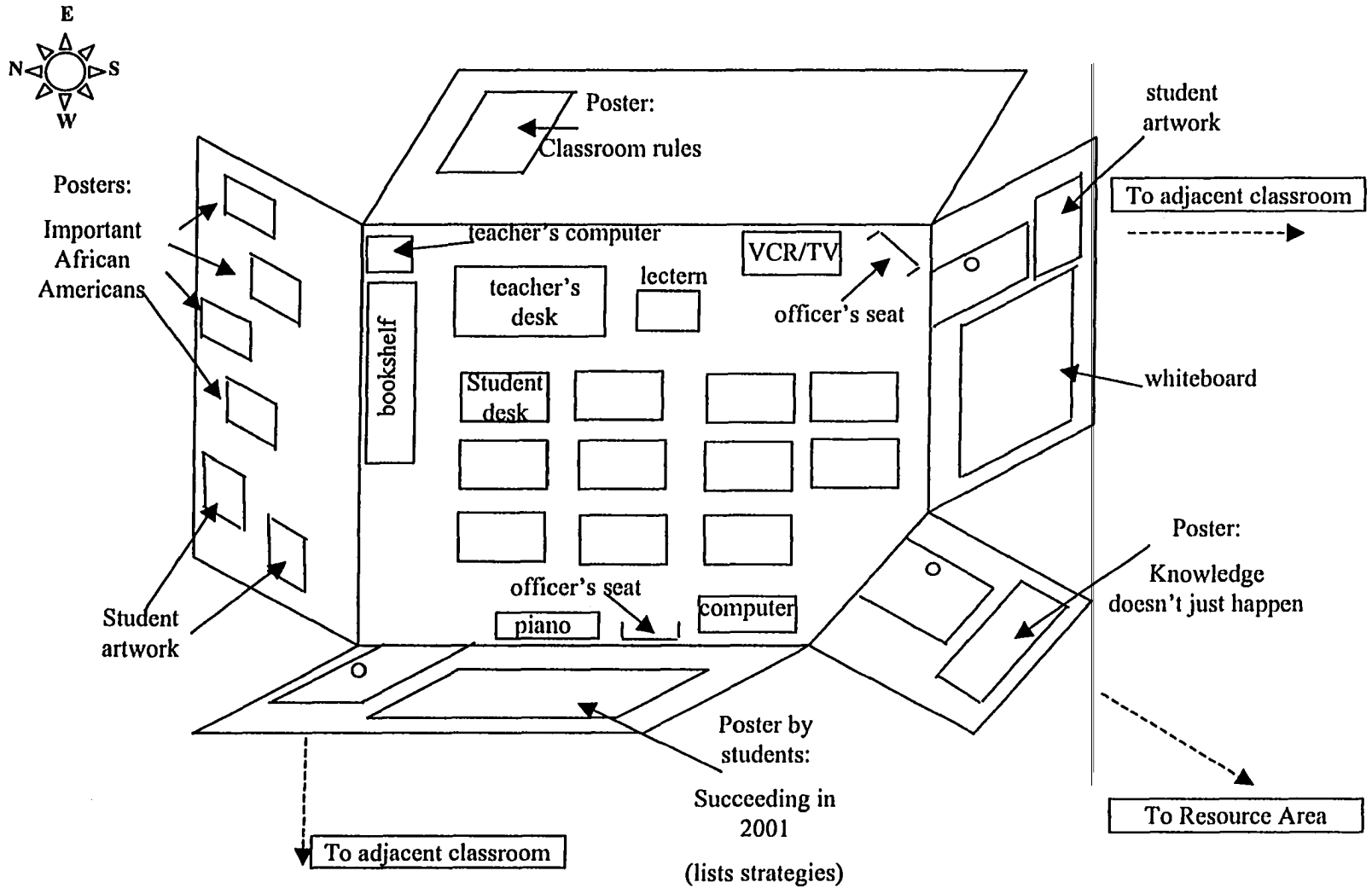
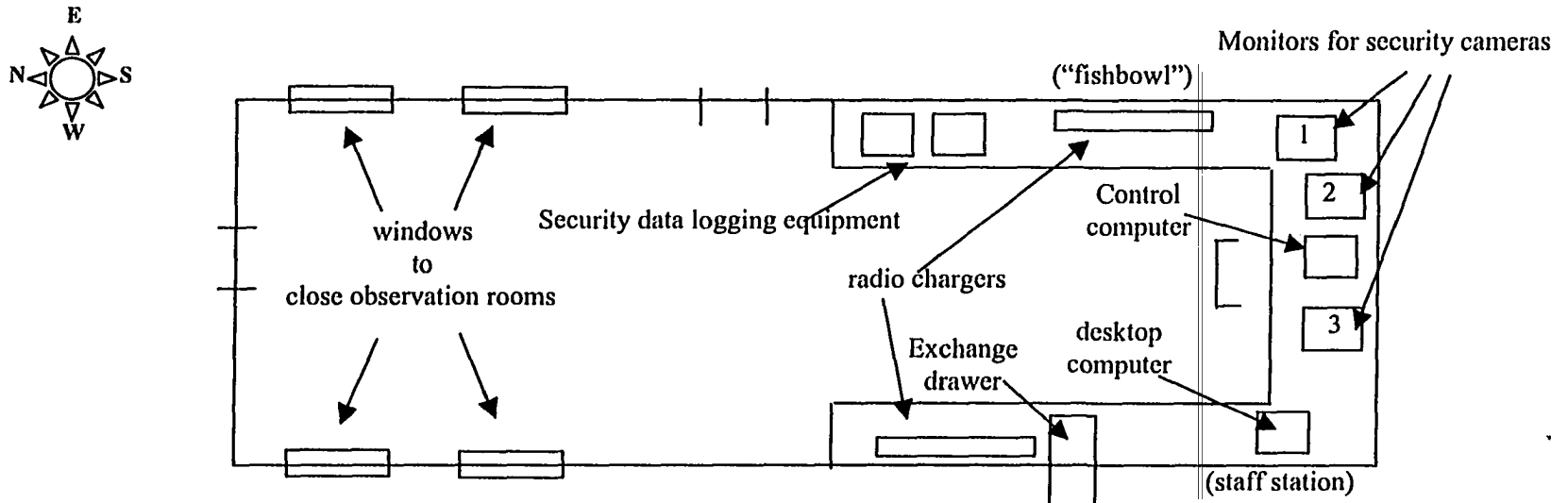
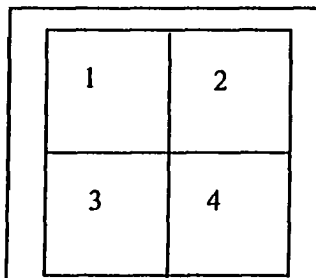


Figure 7. Layout of CCJDC Master Control Area



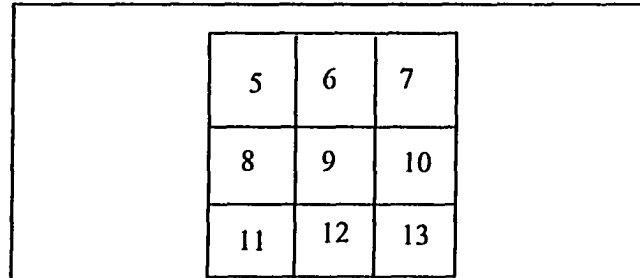
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**VIDEO MONITOR #1**



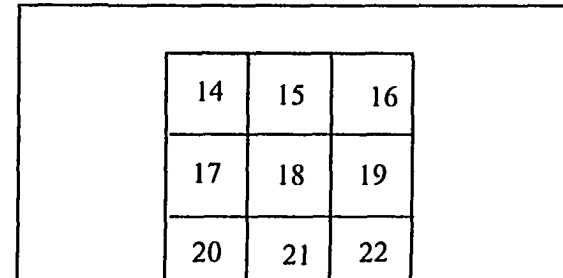
- 1. Detention-intake door
- 2. Hallway by cafeteria
- 3. Resource area
- 4. School testing room

**VIDEO MONITOR #2**



- 5. Outside, NW corner
- 6. Vehicle sally port entrance
- 7. Outside, rec area, NE corner
- 8. Outside, rec area, SE corner
- 9. Inside sally port
- 10. Intake walkway
- 11. Mezzanine corridor
- 12. Fingerprinting
- 13. Intake area

**VIDEO MONITOR #3**



- 14. Front door
- 15. Lobby
- 16. Visitation area
- 17. Visitation area
- 18. Staff entrance
- 19. Cafeteria
- 20. Admin. hallway
- 21. Training room
- 22. Visitors' hallway



Figure 8. Conceptual map of detainees' CCJDC narratives.

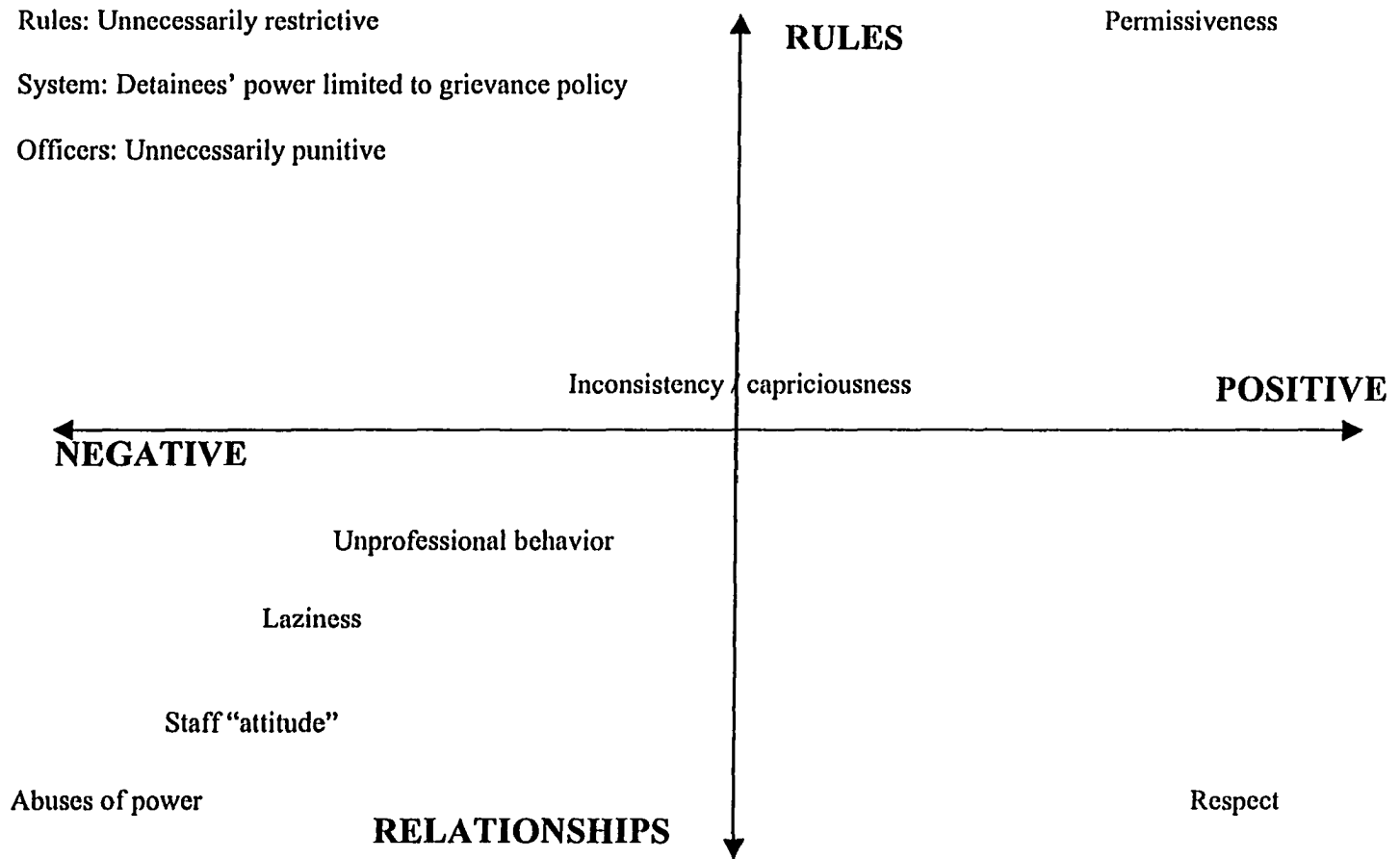


Table 1. Summary of Contributor Characteristics

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age at initial contact</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Housing arrangement</b>	<b>Employment of household adults</b>
Noah	16	European American	With mother and older brother, rented house	Hotel, landscaping
Corey	13	European American	With mother, father, younger brother, and older brother's girlfriend, rented house	Mom: nurse Dad: long-distance truck driver
Franklin	16	African American	With mother and younger sister, rented apartment	Cashier
Markus	12	African American	With mother and younger sister, rented house	Cashier
Jordan	14	African American	With mother, younger sister, and two younger brothers, public housing complex	Office assistant, community organizer
Jimmy	15	African American	With father, older brother (occasional) and family friend, rented house	Unknown, sporadic
Kate	35	European American	With male partner, in a mortgaged house	Kate: Researcher, graduate student Partner: Research programmer, network architect

Table 2. Youth Participant Characteristics, Detention Strategies, and Juvenile Court Outcomes

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Themes of self-presentation	Possible selves	Detention "strategy"	Court outcomes
Noah	16	European American	Good kid, responsible, dependable, close to mother	Pos: working, family Neg: in jail Exp: qualified positive	active acceptance	1 detention; 5 years probation; rejected from boot camp
Corey	13	European American	Smart, creative, misunderstood	Pos: author, scientist, entrepreneur Neg: not making it to positives Exp: working at McDonald's	passive acceptance	1 detention; probation; eventually committed to IYDOC
Franklin	17	African American	Independent, stubborn, determined to earn money by licit or illicit means	Pos: making lots of money, getting out of hometown, rapper; later added tradesman, traveling Neg: in jail Exp: qualified positive	laying low	1 detention; joined Job Corps (lost contact)
Markus	12	African American	Good friend, good at math and art, helpful to mother and family	Pos: architect Neg: in jail Exp: qualified positive	active acceptance	1 detention; completed probation
Jordan	14	African American	Becoming a man, a "player," helpful to mom, misunderstood, unfairly detained	Pos: pro basketball player Neg: in jail Exp: qualified positive	resistance to detainee role	~5 detentions; eventually committed to IYDOC
Jimmy	15	African American	Funny, smart, good at sports	Pos: college, playing pro baseball, home and family Neg: In jail Exp: qualified positive	resistance to rules	~4 detentions; went to a "work camp"

**APPENDIX A**  
**TEXT OF CONSENT FORMS**

Consent to Participate in a Research Project – Youth Participant  
**Identity Construction in the Juvenile Justice System**

**PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The project described below is being conducted by Kate Hellenga, an associate of the psychology department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Professor Mark Aber, also in the psychology department, will supervise the project. The reason we are doing this study is to look at how kids see themselves when they are at the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC), on probation or involved with the juvenile court. We are interested in how you think and feel about your time at JDC, what you think about yourself and who you are or can be, and how you believe other people see you. If you choose to help with the study, we will ask to interview you between 3 and 8 times in the next 1-1/2 years. We also want to talk to your parents or other important adults in your life, and to the people who work at the JDC, the probation office, and the juvenile court; we would ask them what kind of person they think you are, and what kind of future they hope and expect for you. We would also want to spend some time watching them and you at the JDC, the probation office, and the court, to see how things work and what it's like for you in those places. If you agree to participate, we'll ask your parents' permission too. You can change your mind any time, and stop doing some or all of the parts of the study. *Your decision about being in this study won't change how long you have to be at JDC, or what happens in your court case.*

**PROCEDURES**

*Your Interviews*

If you choose to be in this study, you will be interviewed 3 to 8 times in the next 1-1/2 years, and you will be paid \$5.00 each time you are interviewed. The interviews will last about an hour. They will be about how you see yourself: your strengths and abilities, your limitations, your hoped-for and expected futures. You will also be asked about what things are like for you at the JDC, and with probation officers, police officers and judges. You will *not* be asked about any illegal things you might have done or might be planning to do. In fact, you should avoid talking about those things in the interviews.

Your interviews will take place at the JDC, until you leave there and return home. After that, you will choose the place for future interviews, with your parents' permission. You can refuse to answer any question for any reason, or to stop each interview at any time. We'll come back for more interviews with you (about one interview every two or three months) until you or your parents say to stop, or until the end of 18 months, or when you and the interviewer agree that nothing new is being said in the interviews. To make sure we're getting things right, we'll tape-

record your interviews, type them, and go over them with you, so you can be sure we have understood you and tell us any important changes to make.

#### *Family and JDC/Police/Court Interviews*

We will interview your parents or other important family members, and we will give your family \$30 at the end of the study. If you or your parents choose to stop being in the study before the end, we will give your family \$8 for every completed parent interview. We will also interview your probation officer, some JDC staff members, and possibly police officers or a judge, about you. When we talk to these adults about you, we will be asking them what they think you are like now, how they think you'll do in the future, and what they think they can or should do to help you do well. We will also ask them for their ideas about how the juvenile justice system works, and how it should work.

#### *Observations*

We will also spend time at the JDC, the probation office, and/or in the courtroom, when you are in those places, to see how people act and what happens while you are there. Some of the times we might want to observe are: JDC school, mealtimes, group activities, and conversations with staff (if it's a private conversation we'll always ask for your permission). We are also interested in your conversations with your probation officer, and your time before, during and after court. When we observe, we want to know how people talk to you, what they do when you ask a question or disagree with a decision, and how they let you know what they expect or want you to do. We'll also want to find out who you enjoy talking or working with, and what it is about those people that works for you. Finally, we'll pay attention to how you act in JDC or in court – are you comfortable, interested, worried, angry, bored, or something else? Whenever we observe you, you'll have a chance later on to tell us what was going on for you during those events.

### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

This study is not expected to hurt you in any way. Some things may be hard to talk about, but you may refuse to answer any question that you don't want to. It is possible that this study will lead to suggestions for improving how the JDC, probation offices, and courts work with kids like you and their parents.

If you say something that makes us think a child is being abused or neglected, we would have to tell someone in order to keep that child safe and healthy. We don't expect that the things we talk about in the interviews would include anything about abuse or neglect. Also, if you talk about something illegal that you did and the police don't know about, or something illegal you are planning to do, the interviewer has to tell that to the police. We won't ask you about anything like that, and if we think you're about to say something like that, we'll remind you not to talk to the interviewer about it.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Whatever you say in your interviews will be just between you and the interviewer; nobody else (like your parents, JDC staff, or probation officers) will be told what you say. Juvenile justice personnel (JDC staff, probation officers, judges) will never get any information that would connect you to anything you say in the interviews. All audiotapes and observation notes will be stored at the University of Illinois, and no juvenile justice personnel will have access to it. Your name will not be attached to anything we write about the project. You may have a copy of the report(s) we write if you would like one.

We would have to break this confidentiality in the cases described in the "Risks and Benefits" section (suspected child abuse/neglect or reporting of illegal activities).

## **PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS**

Your participation is entirely up to you and your parent(s). If you choose not to participate in this research project, you won't be punished or lose any rights or privileges. If you do participate in this project you are free to withdraw at any time, and there will be no consequences for withdrawal. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

You have the right to ask any questions now and after the study starts. If you have more questions after you sign this form, you can ask them by calling Kate Hellenga ((217) 367-3664), the main interviewer, or Professor Mark Aber ((217) 333-6999), the responsible professor at the University of Illinois. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this project, you can contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at (217) 333-2670. You can call collect if you need to.

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The purpose and procedures of the project have been explained to me. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I am also aware that I may have a copy of this consent form for my records.

I give my informed assent to participate in the evaluation of young people's identity development in the context of the juvenile justice system.

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Signature

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Date

Parental Consent to Participate in a Research Project  
**Identity Development in the Juvenile Justice System**

**PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The research described below is being conducted by Kate Hellenga, an associate of the psychology department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Professor Mark Aber, also in the psychology department, will supervise the project. The purpose of the project is to study the experiences of young people involved in the juvenile justice system, especially the way they think about themselves and their futures. We are also interested in how parents/caregivers and juvenile justice personnel think about the system and the children in it, and how those people affect the development and self-image of young people in the legal system. Finally, we would like to know whether the actual places that make up the local juvenile justice system, like the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) building, the probation office and the courtroom, have an effect on the way kids think about themselves and their legal involvement.

Before we can speak to you or your child, it is your right to decide whether he or she may participate in this study. *Your decision to allow or not to allow your child to participate will have no effect on the length of your child's stay at the Juvenile Detention Center or on the outcome of his or her legal involvement.*

**PROCEDURES**

The project has several parts: interviews with you, with your child, and with JDC staff and other court personnel, and observations of your child at the JDC, the probation office, and the juvenile court. Details of each part are given below. During the interviews, all participants will be free to pass on any question, or to stop each interview at any time. The series of interviews will be stopped at your or your child's request, at the end of the 18 month time period, or when the participant and the interviewer agree that no new information is arising from the interviews. To ensure accuracy, interviews will be tape recorded, typed, and reviewed with each participant, so he or she can be sure we have understood and make any important changes or additions.

*Your Child's Interviews*

Your child will be interviewed several times (3-8 in all) over the course of 12 to 18 months. He or she will receive \$5.00 for every completed interview. The interviews will be about how participating children see themselves: their strengths and abilities, their limitations, their hoped-for and expected futures. They will be asked about the places they go as part of their legal involvement, and about their experiences with JDC staff, probation officers, police officers and judges. Participants will *not* be asked about any illegal activities in which they may have participated, or in which they plan to participate.

### *Parent Interviews*

We will ask to interview you between 1 and 4 times during the same 12 to 18 month period that we are interviewing and observing your child. Families who complete all the family/parent interviews in the study (4 maximum) will be paid \$30.00 at the end of the study. If you choose to stop participating before all the interviews are done, you will be paid \$8.00 for every completed family/parent interview. Interviews with parents will be about how you see your child: his or her strengths and abilities, limitations, and the future(s) you hope and expect for him or her. You will also be asked about your child's and your experiences in the JDC and other juvenile-justice settings, and your experiences with JDC staff, probation officers, police officers and judges.

### *JDC/Court Personnel Interviews*

Interviews with JDC staff, probation officers and other police/court personnel will be much like the parent interviews. We will be asking people what they think your child is like now, how they think he or she will do in the future, and what they think they can or should do to help him or her do well. We will also ask them for their ideas about how the juvenile justice system works, and how it should work.

### *Observations*

We will also spend time at the JDC, the probation office, and/or in the courtroom, when your child is in those places, to see how people act and what happens while he or she is there. Some of the times we might want to observe are: JDC school, mealtimes, group activities, and conversations with staff (if it's a private conversation we'll always ask for your child's permission); meetings with probation officers; and time before, during and after hearings in court. We'll be paying attention to how people talk to and about your child, and how they react to his or her talk and behavior.

## **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

This study is not expected to cause any harm to you or your child beyond those normally associated with daily life. If either of you leads the interviewer to believe that a child is being abused or neglected, the interviewer is required to report this information to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services; it is unlikely that the interviews and observations will include this type of information. If the interviewer is made aware of planned illicit activity, or past illicit activities of which legal authorities are not aware, she is required to report this information to the police; your child will be reminded not to discuss this kind of information during his or her interviews. Although discussing some issues about your experiences with the juvenile justice system may cause emotional discomfort, you and your child will not be required to continue talking about anything if you would rather not do so.

This study may lead to suggestions for improving the juvenile justice system's working relationships with children and parents. We hope that this study will be helpful in understanding how juvenile justice involvement affects children's beliefs about themselves. We



also hope that participation will be interesting and thought-provoking for those involved.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Whatever your child says in his or her interviews will not be shared with you, with juvenile justice personnel, or with other child participants. Similarly, what you say will not be shared with your child or with juvenile justice staff. Juvenile justice personnel (JDC staff, probation officers, judges) will never receive any information that would link any specific answers or information to your child. All audiotapes and observation notes will be stored at the University of Illinois, and no juvenile justice personnel will have access to it. Your name and your child's name will be left out of any report of the study's findings, and identifying information will be changed or left out as much as possible to ensure confidentiality.

We would have to break confidentiality in the cases described above in the "Risks and Benefits" section.

### **PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS**

Your child's and your participation in this project is entirely up to you. If you choose not to agree to your child's participation in this research project, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to you or your child. If you do allow your child to participate in this project you are free to withdraw him or her at any time, and there will be no consequences for withdrawal. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

You have the right to ask any questions now and after the study starts. If any additional questions arise after you sign this form, you are free to ask them by calling Kate Hellenga ((217) 367-3664), the primary interviewer, or Professor Mark Aber ((217) 333-6999), the responsible faculty member. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this evaluation, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board at 333-2670.

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The purpose and procedures of the project have been explained to me. I understand that my child's and my participation in the study is voluntary, and that I may withdraw myself and my child from the study at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in the study of identity development in the juvenile justice system, as it is described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my informed consent for my child to participate in the study of identity development in the juvenile justice system, as described above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Consent to Participate in a Research Project – Juvenile Justice Personnel  
**Identity Development in the Juvenile Justice System**

**PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The research described below is being conducted by Kate Hellenga, an associate of the psychology department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The purpose of the project is to study the experiences of young people involved in the juvenile justice system, especially the way they think about themselves and their futures. We are also interested in how parents/caregivers and juvenile justice personnel think about the system and the children in it, and how those people affect the development and self-image of young people in the legal system. Finally, we would like to know whether the actual places that make up the local juvenile justice system, like the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) building, the probation office and the courtroom, have an effect on the way kids think about themselves and their legal involvement. If you choose to participate, we will ask to interview you several times over the course of 12-18 months, and to observe you in the normal course of your work at the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC).

**PROCEDURES**

*Interviews*

The interviews (1-4 in all) will be about how you think about the juvenile justice system and JDC in particular, and how you see your own role within that system. In addition, we will ask you about the young people participating in the study: their strengths and abilities, limitations, and the future(s) you hope and expect for them. Each interview will last about an hour, and will take place wherever and whenever is most convenient for you. You will be free to pass on any question, or to stop each interview at any time. The series of interviews will be stopped at your request, at the end of the 18 month time period, or when you and the interviewer agree that no new information is arising from your conversations. To ensure accuracy, interviews will be tape recorded and we will give you a transcript so you can correct any misunderstandings and let us know what are the most important parts.

*Observations*

We will also observe participating staff and young people at the JDC, in the probation office, and/or in the courtroom. Observations will occur once or twice weekly for a few hours at a time, for the full 12-18 months of the study. Some of the times we might want to observe at the JDC are: school, mealtimes, group activities, and conversations between staff and detainees. We are also interested in probation meetings and courtroom interactions. We will be observing interactions between minor participants and juvenile justice personnel – how people express themselves, how they express opinions and resolve disagreements, and how minor participants behave in different situations.

## **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

This study is not expected to cause any harm to you. Although discussing some issues about your work may cause emotional discomfort, you will not be required to continue talking about anything if you would rather not do so.

This study may lead to suggestions for improving the juvenile justice system's working relationships with children and parents. We hope that this study will be helpful in understanding how juvenile justice involvement affects children's beliefs about themselves. We also hope that participation will be interesting and thought-provoking for those involved.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We will not share the specifics of your interviews, or the details of our observations of your work, with other study participants or with your employer. All information that you provide will be kept confidential unless you ask us, in writing, to show it to someone.

All audiotapes and observation notes will be stored in a locked office at the University of Illinois. Only the investigators and trained research assistants will have access to the tapes and other data. At the end of the study, all information that could identify you will be destroyed.

A summary report of observations and interview results, with identifying information removed or changed as much as possible, will be provided to the JDC. Other reports from this project may be presented at conferences or submitted for publication; in these cases, quotes and observations will include only limited description of the people involved (e.g., "a long-time employee of JDC," or "a Caucasian employee").

## **PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this research project, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to you. If you do agree to participate in this project you are free to withdraw at any time, and there will be no consequences for withdrawal. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

You have the right to ask any questions now and after the study starts. If any additional questions arise after you sign this form, you are free to ask them by calling Kate Hellenga ((217) 367-3664), the primary interviewer, or Professor Mark Aber ((217) 333-6999), the responsible faculty member. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this evaluation, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board at 333-2670.

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The purpose and procedures of the project have been explained to me. I understand that

participation in the study is voluntary, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

I agree to participate in the study as described above.

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Signature

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Date

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDES

#### A Note on the Interview Process

The interview guides contained in this Appendix should be considered as *guides*, rather than as *protocols* or *structures* that I followed during the interview process. The interviews with adults stayed much closer than those with youth participants to the order and topic structure of the interview guides. With the youth participants, I tried to adjust my interview style to their individual comfort levels, and to gear my interactions with them to getting as authentic and clear a description of their beliefs and experiences as was possible. This included letting youth participants to define, to some degree, the level of importance of various topics, and following their lead in this respect. For instance, Corey was very interested in talking to me about having learned to play the guitar in CCJDC. This was not a topic I would have known to raise, and at first I listened with half an ear, waiting for an opportunity to return to “the important questions.” However, his interest in that and other, similar topics eventually drew my direct attention, and I followed more willingly. This led me to important realizations about his experiences in CCJDC and how they differed from those of other participants. In my efforts to follow the youth participants’ leads, I did not always ask the questions in the same order or phrasing as they are listed in the guides, nor did we always complete every question on a particular interview guide before ending the interview.

## INTERVIEW #1 WITH MINORS

### Guiding interests:

- How they see themselves and what influences their view of themselves
- How they think about their futures
- How they experience their time at JDC – what it's like there
- How they think about their time at JDC – what it means to them
- What they think their being in JDC does to other people's views of them

### Open-ended descriptions

How did you come to be here?

What's it like to be here – if you were going to tell another kid about this place, what would you say?

### Descriptions of JDC – experience and “hearsay”

Did you know anything about JDC, or anyone who had been here, before you got here yourself?

What kinds of things did you know, or had you heard?

Did you ever expect you'd be in here yourself?

Is it anything like what you expected? What's the same, what's different?

What's a good day like at JDC? A bad day?

### View of self/possible selves

What kind of person would you say you are? (How would you describe yourself? How would a friend of yours describe you?)

What kinds of things do you hope for yourself in the future (what kind of person do you want to be, what do you want to do)?

Is there anything you really don't want to be/do in the future? Anything you're afraid you might be/do?

What do you expect you will do or be?

### Parents' view, behavior, speech

What about your parents – what did they do and say when you first got here?

Has that changed at all now that you've been here a while?

How do your parents think about you – how do you think coming to JDC affected what they think about you?

Staff view, behavior, speech

How do JDC staff get to know you/kids?

Do you think any of the staff members have gotten to know you? Which ones?

What do you think they think about you?

How do the officers act toward kids in detention?

The judge & court

Have you seen the judge? What is the judge like?

What was it like being in court? What happened? *or* What happens at your next court date? How do you think it will turn out? What makes you think that?

Prompted details

Who brought you here? What was it like when you first came in?

What did the police officers do/say?

What did the JDC officers do/say?

What happened when you arrived

What were you thinking

What were you feeling

Tell me about... (favorite/least favorite, specific stories)

Officers

Activities

School

Food

Other kids – what are they like; are you like the other kids in here? how so?

Visits

Rules and rule-breaking

Rewards and consequences

Level system

## INTERVIEW #2 WITH MINORS

### Check-In-General

For our first interview, you were in JDC. Since we last talked (recap events that I know about or was there for). Can you catch me up, tell me what's happened since then?

Follow up on events, situations, interactions reported.

### Check-In-Specific

#### *School*

Have you been back to school since being in JDC?

How was it going back?

Did the other students know you'd been in JDC?

(If yes, how did they react?)

Did your teachers know?

(If yes, how did they react?)

Did you act differently when you got back to school, or did people act differently toward you?

#### *Home*

What's it been like being back at home?

What was it like when you first got back? Did your (mom/dad) treat you differently?

What did your (siblings) say?

Are things at home the same as before you went to JDC, or different? Different how?

#### *Sentencing*

So, remind me how things ended up -- what was your sentence?

Ask about specific requirements of probation (community service, fees, meetings, curfew and rules)

Why do you think that's the sentence you got?

Does it make sense to you?

How are things working out?

Making meetings, able to pay fees, strictness of rules and scrutiny

#### *Probation Officers*

So, you have to meet with your probation officer (frequency).

What are those meetings like? How long do they last? What do they talk about, what do you talk about?



Does your mom/dad go with you?

How do the probation officers talk to you? Are they businesslike, chatty, nice, mean? Do they give you suggestions or directions?

*Individual Issues/Circumstances*

Ask about things that come up during the course of the interview, re: JDC, probation, adjusting to life outside.

## INTERVIEW #3 WITH MINORS

- Check in (general)
  - Last time we talked ...
  - How are things going?
  - Accomplishments, plans, changes...
  
- What's happened since last time?
  - Court dates
  - Probation
  - Police contacts?
  - Arrests, detention?
  - School
  - Home
  
- What else is going on?
  - Typical day (yesterday, start to finish)
  - Work/school
  - Activities, groups, gangs
  - Friends
  - Family
  - Best/favorite way to spend time
  - Worst/least favorite way to spend time
  
- Some history
  - Police contacts prior to being detained (including just being stopped or talked to)
    - first time
    - how many times/how often?
    - how often when you weren't actually "doing anything wrong?"
  - Probation before being detained?
  - City court/tickets?
  
- Life story, like a book
  - divide life into chapters
  - characters; plot; high points; low points; turning points

## LATE/FINAL INTERVIEWS WITH MINORS

### **Detention – reasoning & success, race**

What is detention supposed to do for kids? What does it do?

Why would they think that detaining kids would accomplish that goal?

What do you think happens in the detention center that works toward that goal?

Does anything happening at the detention center get in the way of achieving that goal?

Do you think kids get anything else, either good or bad, from their time at the detention center?

If you could, what changes would you make in the way this community deals with kids who have done something negative or illegal? Would you have a detention center? Why or why not?

### **Attitude**

A lot of people talk about the importance of having a “good attitude” about detention and probation. Did anyone ever talk to you (in detention) about having a good attitude? Did they tell you what they meant? What about a bad attitude?

How do you know when a kid has a good or bad attitude?

Do you think some kids see the detention center or the police as being unfair? (If so), do you think they might have a hard time letting detention officers tell them what to do? When you feel like someone is treating you badly or being unfair, is it harder to do what they say without being mad or having an attitude?

Any thoughts about the high numbers of black kids in detention? Do you think being in detention might be different for black kids than white kids? How so?

What about the relatively low numbers of black officers? Would the presence of more black officers change kids’ (black kids’) experiences of the detention center overall? How?

### **You and your mom/dad – parenting**

I also wanted to ask some questions about parenting and discipline.

What do you think a parent’s job is?

What does your [mother/father] do as a parent?

Has your [mom/dad] acted differently toward you since you were detained that first time?

When you were younger, how did your mom/dad teach you about acceptable and unacceptable behavior? (Discipline methods, rewards, explanations, modeling, talking...)

One of the things I sometimes hear from people is that kids end up in detention because their parents don't care or don't do a good job. What do you think about that? Are there other explanations for kids ending up in JDC, or for parents' difficulties with their kids?

### **Effects of your detention and JJ involvement**

I also want to ask some questions like ones that I asked you when we first met, about the kind of person you are and want to be, and about being in detention.

Do you think you're different than you were before you were in detention? Did going to detention change how you think or do things? Do you spend time with the same people as you used to? Spend your time the same way? Talk about the same kinds of stuff with your friends?

Do you still think about being in detention, or about things that happened while you were there?

What kinds of things have you learned about yourself in the last year? Have you changed as a person?

Has your relationship with your mom/dad changed since you were in detention? How?

What kind of person are you? How would your friends or teachers describe you?

What kind of a person do you want to be? Any goals for how you'll live or what you'll do in the future?

When you think about your future, is there anything you worry about?

Is there anything about you that might make it hard to reach your goals? Anything about your life that might make it hard?

What about you will help you reach your goals for the future? Are there other people or resources that will help you reach those goals?

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ASKED OF MINORS

### Thinking Back to Detention

What do you remember most about being in detention?

Do you think about it much?

Looking back, what was the worst thing about it? The best thing, or anything good?

Do you talk to other kids about being in detention? What do you tell them?

### Issues coming up from observations/interviews

Okay, and I wanted to ask what you thought about a couple of ideas I've been having, after observing at the detention center and interviewing you and other people.

### *Predicting Recidivism*

It seems like a lot of people, both kids and staff, look at kids in the detention center and think they know whether a kid will be back again, or get out and stay out. Did you ever look at the other kids and think that way? What told you they would or would not be back again?

### *Manhood*

Sometimes I hear parents or staff people talking about young people in the detention center, saying, "He thinks he's a man, but he's not" or "He's tryin' to be a man," or sometimes "He needs to learn to be a man." Have you ever heard people saying stuff like that? Have they ever said it to you? What do you think they're talking about? What do you think it means to "be a man"? Would you describe yourself as a man? (Why/why not)

## INTERVIEW #1 WITH PARENTS

(Re-introduce study and self)

Tell me a little about your family -- who lives here/in your home. Is \_\_\_ an only child? Who are the other important people in your life and his?

What kind of a person is \_\_\_? How would you describe him? What was he like as a baby? A little boy?

Tell me about the day \_\_\_ went to the detention center....

What happened? Were you there when he was arrested?

How did you find out about him being in detention?

What was your first reaction -- what did you think and feel?

Were you surprised?

What did you say when you first talked to him?

What did he say?

How did his being arrested and taken to detention fit with how you see him?

How did the police and the staff at JDC act toward you? People have had a lot of different experiences -- friendly, supportive, disrespectful, "obstructive..." what about you?

How about \_\_\_'s attorney? Have you had much contact with (her)?

Had you heard anything about JDC before \_\_\_ was detained? What did you know? Do you remember how you heard that?

Some (parents) are relieved, or angry; others are sad, or lonesome, when their child is detained. What was it like (has it been like) for you while he (is/was) in detention?

Did you get/have you gotten a chance to visit or talk on the phone with \_\_\_ while he is/was in detention? How was that? What did he talk about?

Okay, back to \_\_\_ and how you see him. What are your hopes for his future? What about your fears, what you are afraid he might do or become? Okay, so you've got hopes on one end, and fears on the other -- what do you think or expect he'll end up doing? Any guesses?

Do you think \_\_\_ is learning/has learned anything from his experience in detention? Was there anything you wanted him to learn?

I'm hoping the report I write will help the JDC make things better. Is there anything you'd like to see changed, to make things easier for parents to deal with JDC, attorneys, or the police?

## INTERVIEW #2 WITH PARENTS

### Check-in

What happened at \_\_\_'s last court date?

Any news since then?

Any special successes? Problems?

Has your life changed at all since \_\_\_ was in the detention center? How so?

How much are you involved with helping \_\_\_ meet his probation requirements?

Do you notice any changes in \_\_\_ since he was in detention?

Behavior

Emotions

Attitude

Has your relationship with \_\_\_ changed at all? How so?

How about \_\_\_'s relationships with his sibling(s)?

Do you think the fact that \_\_\_ is (black/white) has made any difference to how things have gone for him with the police, detention, probation or the court? Why/why not? How so?

Just so I understand where \_\_\_ is coming from, it would be helpful to know a little about your family's history, how he grew up -- can I ask you some questions about that?

For: 1<sup>st</sup> few years -- before school; early school years; grade school; middle school/current

- birth, temperament
- other people in your life
- family situation, economics
- health, learning

## LATE INTERVIEW (#3+) WITH PARENTS

### **Detention – reasoning & success, race**

What do you think is the goal of detaining kids? (Why detention and not probation or some other way of intervening)

Why would they think that detaining kids would accomplish that goal?

What do you think happens in the detention center that works toward that goal?

Does anything happening at the detention center get in the way of achieving that goal?

Do you think kids get anything else, either good or bad, from their time at the detention center?

If you could, what changes would you make in the way this community deals with kids who have done something negative or illegal? Would you have a detention center? Why or why not?

Any thoughts about the high numbers of black kids in detention? Do you think being in detention might be different for black kids than white kids? How so?

What about the relatively low numbers of black officers? Would the presence of more black officers change kids' (black kids') experiences of the detention center overall?

### **Parenting a growing young man**

I also wanted to ask some questions about parenting and discipline.

What do you think a parent's job is?

The job of parenting changes a lot as kids grow up – what are your goals at this point in being a [mother/father] to [your child]?

What do you do to achieve those parenting goals?

You may have done some things differently just after [your child's] first detention. Did you make any longer-term changes in how you think about or do parenting?

When [your child] was younger, how did you teach him about acceptable and unacceptable behavior? (Discipline methods, rewards, explanations, modeling, talking...)

In your contacts with JDC and probation personnel, did they ever express or imply an opinion



about you as a parent? Did they ever give you parenting advice (solicited or unsolicited)?

One of the things I sometimes hear from people is that kids end up in detention because their parents don't care or don't do a good job. What do you think about that? Are there other explanations for kids ending up in JDC, or for parents' difficulties with their kids?

### **Effects of your child's detention and JJ involvement**

Finally, I want to ask a few questions specifically about [your child]. We've been talking periodically for almost a year – have you seen changes in him during that time?

Did his time in detention have a (long-term) effect on him? (Did they achieve their goal with him? Other effects?)

What has he learned over the last year?

What have you learned about him in the last year?

Has your relationship with him changed in the last year? How? Why?

What kind of a kid do you think he is? What kind of an adult do you want him to be? What are you most worried about in terms of his future? What about him will help him succeed? What about him might get in his way?

### **Last words**

Is there anything you'd like to say to the detention center or the community, if someone asked you about your experiences, your son, or the juvenile detention center here in town?

## INTERVIEWS WITH JUVENILE DETENTION STAFF

Review project, consent, confidentiality.

Tell me a little about yourself -- how did you come to be doing this kind of work?

- How long working . . .
  - with juveniles
  - in corrections
  - in residential or detention facilities
  - at this job in particular
  
- How did you decide to take this job?
  
- And what about the JDC – its history, what it's like here now, where you think it's headed.
  
- What is the purpose of this place (your opinion, policy or official story, your observation of how it actually works)?
  - What is it supposed to accomplish?
  - How is it supposed to do that (by what methods)?
  - How do activities and practices here line up with the goals of the system?
  - What way, if any, do you think might be more effective or more in line with JDC's goals?
  
- What did you expect to get out of this kind of work? How has your experience met or not met those expectations?
  
- What do you do here (i.e. which shift, job duties, daily routines)
  
- More generally, what do you like most about your work here? What do you like least? (What makes you go home feeling like you've had a good day? A bad day?)
  
- What are the kids like who stay here? How are they similar to or different from kids who are not in detention?
  - How do you think they end up here? (Why do they do what they do, why do they get detained)
  - How do you get along with the kids here? Do you get to know them at all?
  - People have different kinds of preferences for the way they work and the people they work with -- what makes your job easier or harder, in terms of the kids you encounter here?
  - It seems like some people (both staff and detainees) have a sense that some kids in here will "make it" and not come back, and that others will probably be back in again -- what does your experience tell you about that?

- What kinds of things can help a kid do well while they're in here? What gets in the way of them doing well?
  - I hear people talking a lot about "attitude" -- how would you define or describe good and bad attitude?
  - How does attitude affect your perception of kids?
  - How does attitude affect discipline in JDC?
  - How does attitude affect kids' experiences in JDC?
  
- Do you have much contact with the parents of detained kids? What is that like? What is your impression of the parents you have encountered?
  
- If someone was coming to work here, what advice would you give them?
  
- If you were me, what would you be paying attention to, to find out about how this place works and what it's like to work here or be detained here?
  
- Would you be willing to talk with me about issues of race/ethnicity and the racial imbalance among detainees and staff members?
  - *Asked of all staff members*
    - This place is like the rest of the JJ system -- high rates of contact/detention for African Americans, especially boys.
      - What do you think that's about?
      - How might African American and European American kids' experiences in JDC differ? What about in with police, probation, judges/courts?
  
  - *Asked of African American staff members:*
    - What's it like for you, as an African American (Black) person, working here?
      - Do you think you see things differently than a white officer would?
      - Do you feel a different sense of duty or obligation to the kids?
      - Do you think you interact differently with the kids because of their ethnicity and yours?
      - How might your work be different for you if there were more African American staff members, or more staff of color in general?
  
- Any other thoughts, comments, or suggestions?

## INTERVIEW WITH “CARRIE,” SUPERINTENDENT OF CCJDC

Two main parts to interview (there will be overlap).

(1) Review the history of the facility, changes in its goals and methods for working with detained kids, including your own changing role and current initiatives and changes. We’ve talked about some of this before, but I wanted to get it on tape rather than working purely from my own memory.

(2) Talk a little about yourself and how you think about and carry out your work here.

### JDC History

To start off, let’s talk about the original “youth home” (?) in Champaign, and what you know about the early changes it went through. Who was involved in developing and carrying out the policies and procedures at that time (“rehab” model and punitive model)

When did you first start working here? What was it like when you started working there? What did you know, then, about its history?

Tell me about how you came to be in your current position. How long have you been the director of the detention center? What goals did you have in mind when you started? What have you accomplished, and what’s next?

In terms of program development and policy, what kinds of things limit your ability to make positive changes? What kinds of things help?

How do you think the community at large views the JDC? What about parents of kids who are detained? Do you have any goals for the “public image” of the JDC?

What is the purpose of this place, in your eyes? What practices or programs help to achieve that purpose? What do you want kids to experience while they’re here?

Do you think the judges use this place the way you want them to? Why do you think they sentence kids to JDC when they do? (Instead of probation or DOC or straight release) What do they want kids to experience while they’re here?

When you are hiring detention officers, what do you look for in terms of their qualifications and/or personal qualities? In the past year, several African American detention officers have started working here – did you go out of your way to hire African American officers? (Why at this particular time (and not sooner) – if trying sooner, what motivated you to do so?) Why do you think so few African American people apply, in general?

How do you think that change in the racial makeup of the staff will affect kids’ experiences?

Officers' experiences? Any observations of how it's going so far?

Why do you think there are so many African American kids in detention (compared to European American kids)? How do you think black kids' experiences of this place compare with white kids' experiences?

What do you think officers mean when they are talking about kids having "attitude?" Why is "attitude" so important in officers' judgements of kids?

(Kids perceiving system as unfair automatically having an attitude... possible?)

— Okay, I want to shift gears a little and ask more about your personal experience of your work and this place ----

You started working at the detention center in \_\_\_\_\_. What led you to take that position? Did you have previous experience with juveniles/corrections/residential programs?

Did you think when you started that you would end up as the director of the detention center?

What did you expect to get out of this kind of work? How has your experience matched those expectations?

What does your current position involve – what are your days like?

How do you keep in touch with what's going on with the kids and the officers? How successful are you at that? Any challenges?

What do you like most about your work here? What do you like least?

How much contact do you have with the kids? What is that contact like?

Do you have any contact with their parents? What is that like?

What are the kids like who stay here? How are they similar to or different from kids who don't end up in detention?

- how do you think they end up here (why do they do what they do, why do they get detained instead of sent home or station-adjusted)
- how do you get along with the kids here? Do you get to know them? How?
- what kinds of kids do you most enjoy working with? Least enjoy?
- What kinds of kids are most likely to succeed at (and beyond) the JDC? What kids are likely to have trouble? A lot of people working in the system have a sense of which kids will succeed or fail early on – what kinds of things do you look for in making that kind of assessment?

How would you define a JDC success story? Any specific stories in mind? What about losses or failures? Any specific stories?

## APPENDIX C

### TRANSCRIBING CONVENTIONS IN FIELDNOTES AND TRANSCRIPTS

Interview excerpts are presented with a minimum of editing, to provide the reader a better sense of the personal and interactional context of participants' statements. The following symbols were used in the transcription process, and appear throughout the text.

/ / Pairs of slashes indicate overlapping speech. In the following example, the participant is speaking, the interviewer talks at the same time, and then continues speaking after the participant has finished. For example:

Participant: So then I was on my way /to detention, / and I was a little worried.

Interviewer: /Going to detention./ What were you worried about?

In many cases, my conversational "support work" (words like "uh-huh," "mm-hmm," "right") would overlap with participants' speech. If one of my speech turns contained no other content, I deleted it from the transcript presented here, resulting in two simultaneous turns by the interviewee.

( ) Parentheses indicate a portion of text that was not clear on the tape; if the parentheses are empty, the transcribers and I could not hear enough to guess at the probable content. If they contain text, the text is our best guess at the speaker's actual words.

[ ] Brackets contain editorial comments or explanations of terms, background, or other material necessary to understanding the conversation presented.

(( )) Double parentheses surround descriptions of non-verbal behavior, such as laughing, or noises in the background during the interview.

**APPENDIX D**  
**CCJDC ORIENTATION MATERIALS: HANDBOOK,**  
**BEHAVIOR LEVEL SYSTEM, AND QUIZ**



Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center Handbook

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook has been provided to help you during your stay at the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center. If used properly, all of the information in this handbook can help you make your stay at the Detention Center a beneficial one.

This handbook explains the type of behavior expected of you during your stay, the rules and regulations of the Detention Center behavior management program, and the extra privileges you may earn. You should review this handbook often, as it will serve as your guide to acceptable behavior. The handbook will be kept in your designated mailbox. If you have any questions, you should politely ask a staff member.

Why you are at the Center

You have been admitted to the Detention Center because the Court has either sentenced you or you have allegedly committed a violation of the law. Your parents will be notified as soon as possible.

If you are not here on a sentence, you will be detained until your next Court hearing. At your hearing, the Judge will decide if you should remain in the Detention Center until your next court date. If you return to the Detention Center after Court, you will be informed of your next court date.

Intake Process

Upon your admittance to this facility you were asked several questions regarding where you live, your family, and your school. You were also asked questions regarding your medical history and mental state. It is of great importance that you were truthful during this process, so that proper care can be provided to you during your stay at the Center. If you are not sure that the information you gave earlier is correct, please inform the staff immediately. False information can hurt your case, so it is of extreme importance that you be as honest as possible.

During the intake you will also complete a questionnaire. This is intended to help us decide how we can best meet your needs. A counselor will meet with you to discuss the results of this screening and make a plan on how to avoid future legal difficulties.

Your personal belongings have been inventoried and will be stored in a locked closet until your release. Your clothes will be washed, dried, and stored in the locked closet as well. If you are to attend court during your stay at the Center, you will be allowed to wear your own clothes. Your shoes will be stored in a locker on the main unit and you will be allowed to wear them outside of the building. While inside the Center, you will be given a uniform to wear, and a clean one will be issued at shower time each evening. You have been provided with a receipt, which lists all of your private belongings. You may keep this receipt throughout your stay at the Center. All of your personal belongings will be returned to you upon your release.



While many of your freedoms have been taken away, you do have the right to:

- ❖ To be treated humanely
- ❖ To be provided proper food and shelter
- ❖ To receive required medical treatment
- ❖ To consult with an attorney
- ❖ To consult with your probation officer
- ❖ To communicate with parent or guardian within a reasonable time after arrival

In order to maintain the safety of all within the Center, upon admittance minors are searched to assure that no weapons or drugs are brought into the facility. You will be allowed to speak by telephone to your parents or legal guardian as soon as possible, following completion of the intake process.

### Medical Care

Soon after your admittance, you will receive a physical examination by a registered nurse. If you become ill during your stay at the Center, notify a staff member immediately. If you feel hurt or ill while in your room, you should use the intercom by stating your name, room number, and need. A staff member will respond as soon as possible.

Medications will be administered as needed, with physician approval of prescription drugs. Over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol or Advil, must be approved by Detention staff and provided by your parents or legal guardians. ***Staff cannot provide you with any form of medication unless your parent or legal guardian has supplied it for you!***

The Detention staff is here to maintain your safety and security during your stay at the Center. If you feel depressed or need to speak to someone about your feelings or concerns, notify a staff member. If you do not want to speak with a staff member a counselor from the Mental Health Center will be called in to speak with you.

***We are here to help you; all you have to do is ask!***

### Daily Schedule

Every day throughout the week you will be awakened when your breakfast is served at 7:30am. Lunch is served around 11:30am and supper about 5:00pm. Whenever possible you will be allowed to eat your meals outside of your room. A snack will be provided later in the evening.

Following each meal, you will be allowed to brush your teeth and take care of other hygiene needs. You will shower in the evening, and bedtimes will vary depending on your level in the behavior level system. On weekdays you will attend school and participate in other programs. Although the majority of the cleaning duties will be done during the weekend, you may be assigned to complete a particular cleaning chore during the weekday.

While weekdays focus primarily on educational activities, weekends and holidays consist mainly of cleaning, recreation, physical education, and staff-led educational activities. For a complete look at the daily schedule here at the Juvenile Detention Center, look at the schedule on page 12.

### Education

Attending school at the Detention Center is extremely important! You will be required to participate in the Education Program every weekday, twelve months a year. School begins at 9:00am and ends at 4:00pm, with a break for lunch. To determine what level of work is appropriate for you in math, oral reading, and reading comprehension, the teacher will give you tests to complete before you participate in regular school activities. You will then be given regular assignments to have completed at the teacher's request. If you are enrolled in a local school and your stay is expected to be longer than one week, the staff will attempt to get assignments from your school for you to complete during your stay at the Center. If you live outside of the Champaign-Urbana area, efforts will be made to get your assignments if it will be worthwhile for you to complete the assigned work.

All of the rules are enforced in the classroom, and your complete cooperation is required. The teacher will provide Staff with a report on your behavior, attitude, and progress while in the school. This report will be given to the Judge.

### Recreation and Physical Education

You will be required to participate fully in the physical education program daily. The program will consist largely of physical workouts led by the Center staff. The exercises will vary day by day, and could include the following: calisthenics, running, volley ball and basketball drills, etc. If you have a medical problem, such as asthma, you will not be allowed to participate in the physical education program or specific recreational programs.

You will also have an opportunity to participate in recreational activities with other detainees, provided that staff is available to observe the activity. These may include board games, puzzles, table tennis, etc.

### Telephone Calls, Visits, and Mail

You may place telephone calls to your parents or legal guardians between 4:30pm and 10:00pm on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Calls are limited to fifteen minutes, and a staff member will dial the telephone for you. You may have non-contact visits with your parents or legal guardians twice each week. Visits last thirty minutes, and must be scheduled in advance. Visitation hours are as follows:

Wednesdays > 6:00pm to 10:00pm

Saturdays > 10:00am to 12:00pm

1:00pm to 3:00pm

Only your parents or legal guardians may visit you at the center or speak to you during your phone call, this does not include brothers, sisters, girlfriends, boyfriends, or small children. If you would like to add someone to your contact list, you must make your request with the Shift Supervisor on duty. The decision to add someone to your contact list will be based upon your behavior.

Detention staff will monitor all visits and phone calls. If staff becomes aware that you are speaking to someone who has not been approved, the visit or phone call can be

terminated. The staff recommends that you use proper manners and a respectful tone of voice whenever you receive a visit or phone call with your parents or legal guardians. If staff members become aware of any unusual behaviors during your visit or phone call (i.e. use of profanity or hostility), staff may interrupt the visit and attempt to settle the problem. If the negative behaviors continue and all efforts to calm the situation have failed, the staff may terminate the visit or phone call in order to prevent the situation from escalating out of control. You will not be forced to see a visitor if you do not wish to do so.

The Detention Center will provide three stamped envelopes each week for your use. If you wish to send more than three letters, your family must provide additional stamps and envelopes. All mail you receive will be opened by a staff member in your presence and checked for contraband. Detention staff will not read your mail unless there is a reason to believe that a breach of security exists. Any mail from your attorney, judge, or a government official will not be read by the staff. You may not send letters to other people involved in the incident that resulted in your detainment. This includes victims as well as others who may be co-respondents. You may not receive phone calls, visits, or mail from individuals who are residing in a locked facility or have been in the Detention Center with you. The address for the Detention Center is:

Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center  
1601 East Main Street  
Urbana, Illinois 61802

#### Detention Center Programs

The Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for youth staying in the facility. Representatives from several community agencies visit the Center to discuss self-help topics or to simply play relaxing games. Throughout the year members from the Boy's and Girl's Club, the University Extension, the Youth Education Supportive Services, Prairie Center, the Mental Health Center, and the Volunteer Illini Project will come to the Center to conduct group projects with the residents. At times individuals from these agencies may wish to meet with you individually in order to assess your needs. This is not to be considered as an attempt to pry into your personal life. The information gathered could be used to find a constructive way for you to deal with issues that may concern you. It is our hope that you will participate completely in any and all programs, so that we can find a suitable way to aid you in your goal to stay on the right track.

During your stay at the detention center, it is likely that you will complete a drug and alcohol evaluation with Prairie Center. A counselor from Prairie Center is available to speak with you about how your drug and alcohol use might have played a part in your being here. This counselor is meant to be a safe person to talk to about drugs and alcohol, whether it is your own experience or how a parent's use is affecting you. All discussions with this counselor are confidential, except in certain circumstances, which will be explained to you. This service is free of charge. The counselor from Prairie Center will also be available to you after you leave the detention center.

### Religious Visit

If you wish to have a religious visit with a minister, priest, rabbi, or other clergy member, please tell a staff member. Arrangements will be made for the visit to take place at the clergy member's convenience.

### Behavior and Attitude

While at the Detention Center, you will be challenged daily to grow and improve physically, intellectually, and emotionally. During your stay, it is of great importance that you display good behavior and a positive attitude. You are asked to follow all of the rules and regulations of the facility, in order for you to get along with the staff and other residents. Displaying good behavior will also earn you additional privileges and possibly help your time go by faster.

Daily recordings will be made regarding your behavior at the Detention Center. Detention staff will provide a behavior report to the court. This report will be used by the Judge to make a decision about your future.

*Always Remember That You Are Responsible For Your Own Behavior!*

### Rules and Regulations

1. Speak to others in a respectful and courteous manner at all times.
2. Obey all instructions given to you by staff members without argument or complaint.
3. Be truthful at all times.
4. You may communicate with other minors only with permission, always speaking loud enough to be heard by a staff member.
5. Physical contact between minors is not permitted.
6. Passing notes is not permitted.
7. Drawings that are violent, pornographic, or gang-related are not permitted.
8. Swearing, making obscene gestures, or talking about gangs, drugs, sex, escape, violence, or crime are not permitted.
9. Full participation during group activities is mandatory, unless a staff member has excused you.
10. Threats and violence are not permitted.
11. Do not attempt to escape.
12. Do not leave an assigned area without staff permission.
13. Walk on the stairs one at a time.
14. Talking during population moves is not permitted.
15. Use equipment only with permission and as instructed.
16. Leave all Detention Center property in the same condition as when you receive it.
17. Put books, magazines, and games away on the appropriate shelves.
18. Sit on the chairs properly.

19. You are to be completely clothed at all times when outside of your room; this includes having shoes on and snapped, sweatshirt either on your body or folded next to you.
20. Call staff to your room only if you are sick or hurt.
21. When using the intercom, state your name and your need.
22. Comply with searches of your room and/or yourself as needed.
23. Unnecessary noise in your room is not permitted. This includes talking, whistling, tapping, banging, singing, rapping, etc.
24. You may have in your room only items given to you specifically for use in your room. This includes linens, paper cup, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, personal belongings receipt, religious literature, and two reading materials.
25. Make your bed and flush your toilet before leaving your room.
26. Return all hygiene items to the proper places.
27. Place dirty laundry in the hamper or washing machine as directed.
28. After your shower, remove any items from the shower, clean up any water on the floor, and wipe out the sink if it has been used.

Failure to abide by the rules will result in negative consequences. Consequences can range from writing a report on your behavior to spending time in your room while the other residents are taking part in routine activities. Consequences are at the discretion of the Detention Staff. Any of the following behaviors may result in a 24-hour room restriction.

1. Bringing contraband, such as weapons or drugs, into the facility.
2. Damaging or destroying Detention Center property.
3. Fighting.
4. Attempting to or talking about escape.
- ✓ 5. Refusing to attend school or misbehaving in school. ✓

Committing a rule infraction will hinder your progress in the Behavior Level System. This could keep you from earning the additional privileges that are available to you depending on your positive behavior. All of the rules in the Juvenile Detention Center have been created in order to maintain the safety and security of all within the facility. If you are having trouble understanding a rule, please respectfully ask a staff member to explain the rules to you in a better manner.

#### Grievance Procedure

If you believe you are being treated unfairly by the staff, you may request to file a grievance with a Shift Supervisor. There are three steps to completing the grievance procedure.

1. Request from the staff on duty a grievance form. The form will be provided to you as early as possible.
2. You must fill out the form as best as you can. Please explain in as much detail as possible what actually happened, and how you may have been treated unfairly.

3. Either hand the envelope to the shift supervisor on duty, or place it in a sealed envelope with the words "Shift Supervisor" written on it. In an effort to resolve the matter, the shift supervisor will read the grievance form, and discuss the situation with you and any staff member involved.

If you are not satisfied with the results of your discussion with the shift supervisor or your grievance is with one of the shift supervisors, you may request to report your grievance to Superintendent Connie Kaiser. The grievance form must be completed as soon as possible and placed in a sealed envelope with Mrs. Kaiser's name on it. Mrs. Kaiser will respond to your grievance as soon as possible. For an example of the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center Grievance Form please look at page 13.

## Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center Behavior Level System Manual

### *Purpose*

The Juvenile Detention Center is a short-term program intended to secure juveniles in a safe environment. The aim of the Behavior Level System is to provide juveniles the opportunity to spend their time in the center in a positive and constructive manner. By using the program the center reinforces appropriate behavior through the rewarding of extra privileges.

### *Levels*

During your stay at the detention center, you will have the opportunity to advance through the level system. The system consists of seven levels with the "Honors" level being the highest and level 0 being the lowest. As you advance to the next level in the program, you will be rewarded with additional privileges. Below is a description of each level:

#### Level 0

❖ This level will be effective whenever a minor commits a rule infraction that could result in a 24-hour room restriction. The rule infractions are listed below:

- Bringing contraband into the facility
- Damaging or destroying JDC property
- Fighting
- Attempting to or talking about escape
- Refusing to attend school or misbehaving in school

Minors on this level may be separated from group activities, and may lose all privileges for a time period to be determined by the JDC staff. The privileges can be earned back through positive behaviors. Minors will be at an automatic risk of losing all privileges. Privileges include:

- Three phone calls a week with parent or legal guardian
- Two visits a week with parent or legal guardian
- Two books or magazines and a religious material in room
- Fifteen minutes computer time a day
- Bedtime at 9:00pm
- Lights out at 10:00pm

Most basic services will continue to be provided.

#### Level 1

- ❖ Every minor will begin at this level upon his/her completion of the JDC Orientation process. Privileges include:
  - Three phone calls a week with parent or legal guardian
  - Two visits a week with parent or legal guardian
  - Two books or magazines and a religious material in room
  - Thirty minutes computer time a day
  - Bedtime will be no later than 9:30pm
  - Lights out at 10:30pm

#### Level 2

- ❖ Minors on this level will receive the same privileges as in level one. Extra privileges will include:
  - Three phone calls a week
  - Two visits a week
  - Three books or magazines in the room
  - Forty-five minutes computer time a day
  - Bedtime will be no later than 9:30pm
  - Lights out no later than 11:00pm

#### Level 3

- ❖ Minors will receive all level one and two services with the addition of:
  - Three phone calls a week
  - Two visits a week
  - Three books or magazines in the room
  - Sixty minutes computer time a day
  - An item to be added to your hygiene (Courtesy JDC)
  - A small puzzle game in the room
  - Bedtime will be no later than 10:00pm
  - Lights out no later than 11:00pm

#### Level 4

- ❖ Minors will receive the same privileges as levels one, two, and three. Additional privileges will include:
  - Four phone calls a week
    - A phone call with parent/legal guardian on Monday evening
  - Two visits a week
  - Three books or magazines in the room
  - A small puzzle game in the room
  - Opportunity to view an hour of a taped sitcom on Friday night
  - Bedtime will be no later than 10:30pm
  - Lights out no later than 11:00pm



### Level 5

- ❖ Minors will receive all services from the previous levels with the addition of:
  - Four phone calls a week
  - Three visits a week
    - An extra visit or a thirty minute phone call on Sunday
  - An additional approved visitor on either Wednesday or Saturday. The shift supervisor on duty must approve the visitor.
  - The use of a Walkman outside of the bedroom (music must be approved by staff. **No music with the Parental Advisory sticker on it!**)
  - Three books or magazines in the room
  - A small puzzle in the room
  - Opportunity to view a taped sitcom on Friday night
  - Bedtime will be no later than 11:00pm
  - Lights out at 11:00pm

### *Grading Procedure*

Throughout the day you will be scored using a grading system. The grades will be based on your behavior, attitude, and ability to follow the rules. You can receive good grades by maintaining appropriate behavior. There are five grades that a detainee can earn, and each grade will count for a certain amount of points.

- "A"—worth 4pts—for maintaining good behavior and an appropriate attitude during interactions with staff and peers. For not committing any rule infractions, being courteous, polite, and respectful.
- "B"—worth 3pts—for not committing any rule infractions. Behaving in an appropriate manner for the most part, but at times needing reminders to maintain this behavior. Needing to be redirected on some occasions, but responding well to the redirection without repeating the negative behavior.
- "C"—worth 2pts—For committing rule infractions that may not have resulted in immediate consequences, but responding in an appropriate manner when redirected by staff.
- "D"—worth 1pt—for participating in activities, but committing numerous rule infractions that may have resulted in immediate negative consequences. For not responding in an appropriate manner when redirected by staff.
- "E"—worth 0pts—for any refusal to participate in activities. For being rude or disrespectful to staff and/or peers. For verbal or physical threats upon staff and/or peers. For misuse or destruction of JDC property.

At the end of the day the grades will be averaged together in order to give each detainee his or her score for the day. After seven days, the scores will be added together and compared with the level system. The only day that advancement to the next level will be considered will be Monday. You must remain on a level for at least seven days before you can be considered for advancement to the next level. If you are admitted into the facility between Monday and Wednesday and score enough points to reach level 2 without receiving a "D" or "E" grade, you will be allowed to advance to level 2.

Scores for one week will not be carried over to the next week. In order for a minor to advance to the next level, his score must fit within or above the range that has been designated for that particular level. The score range is described below:

- Level 0 = 0-9pts
- Level 1 = 10-13pts
- Level 2 = 14-17pts
- Level 3 = 18-22pts
- Level 4 = 23-25pts
- Level 5 = 26-28pts

You can only advance to the next level in line no matter how high your weekly score may be. For example: if you are on level 3 and during the duration of one week your total score is a 27, you can still only advance to level 4.

#### ***Dropping Levels***

There is the possibility that a minor will fail to earn the score needed in order to advance to the next level. This will occur if a minor's behavior is inappropriate while in JDC. If a youth can not behave appropriately in detention, he will not advance in credits or levels and will not be eligible for any additional privileges. Youths on the lowest level will lose all of their privileges, if negative behaviors continue. Depending on the minor's score, he can either remain on the same level that he had been on or he can drop to the previous level. For example: if you are on level 3, but your score after one week is a 20, you will remain on level 3.

There are two ways that you can drop levels while in JDC.

- If your total average score is in the range of a lower level, you will drop to that lower level. For example: if you score a 16 while on level 3, you will drop to level 2.
- Multiple level drops will only occur if the minor commits one or more of the rule infractions described on page 1 of the manual. If you receive a multiple level drop, it will be administered and explained to you as soon as possible. You will not lose any points that you may have earned during the week, and will have the opportunity to advance or drop a level just as always.

#### ***Honors Level***

Any minor who is able to maintain an appropriate behavior and attitude while in the detention center can earn his/her place on the JDC Honors Level. In order to earn this level, you must advance to level 5 and remain on level 5 for a total of five weeks. If you reach this level, additional privileges can be negotiated with the Shift Supervisor on duty.

#### ***Questions***

If you have any questions regarding the level system please ask the JDC staff member that is helping you now. Please remember that the JDC staff members are here to help you. If you have a question about the level system or anything else, feel free to ask a staff member.

**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER DAILY SCHEDULE**

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:30am	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:00am	AM-Hygiene	AM-Hyg	AM-Hyg	AM-Hyg	AM-Hyg	Sleep-In	Sleep-In
8:30am	Chores	Chores	Chores	Chores	Chores	Sleep-In	Sleep-In
9:00am	School	School	School	School	School	Sleep-In	Sleep-In
9:30am	School	School	School	School	School	AM-Hyg	AM-Hyg
10:00am	School	School	School	School	School	Chores	Chores
10:30am	School	School	School	School	School	Chores	Chores
11:00am	School	School	School	School	School	Chores	Chores
11:30am	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch-Hyg	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:00pm	Noon-Hyg	Noon-Hyg	Noon-Hyg	Chores	Noon-Hyg	Noon-Hyg	Noon-Hyg
12:30pm	School	School	School	Chores	School	Leisure-Rec	Leisure-Rec
1:00pm	School	School	School	School	School	Leisure-Rec	Leisure-Rec
1:30pm	School	School	School	School	School	Leisure-Rec	Leisure-Rec
2:00pm	School	School	School	School	School	Leisure-Rec	Pri-Min.
2:30pm	School	School	School	School	School	Leisure-Rec	Pri-Min.
3:00pm	School / PE	School	School	School	School	Leisure-Rec	Pri-Min.
3:30pm	School / PE	School	School	School	School	Rooms	Rooms
4:00pm	Shower	Physical-Ed	Youth for Christ	Physical-Ed	Females/Males	Physical-Ed	Physical-Ed
4:30pm	Shower	Physical-Ed	Youth for Christ	Physical-Ed	Group	Physical-Ed	Physical-Ed
5:00pm	Dinner/Shower	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
5:30pm	Chores	Shower	Chores	Shower	Chores	Shower	Shower
6:00pm	Prairie Center	Shower	Physical-Ed	Shower	Physical-Ed	Shower	Shower
6:30pm	Prairie Center	Shower	Physical-Ed	Shower	Physical-Ed	Shower	Shower
7:00pm	Leisure	Shower	Shower	Shower	Shower	Shower	Shower
7:30pm	VIP	VIP	Shower	VIP	Shower	Leisure-Rec	Leisure-Rec
8:00pm	VIP	VIP	Shower	VIP	Shower	Leisure-Rec	Leisure-Rec
8:30pm	VIP	VIP	Shower	VIP	Shower	Leisure-Rec	Leisure-Rec
9:00pm	Bedtime-0	Bedtime-0	Bedtime-0	Bedtime-0	Bedtime-0	Bedtime-0	Bedtime-0
9:30pm	Bedtime-1&2	Bedtime-1&2	Bedtime-1&2	Bedtime-1&2	Bedtime-1&2	Bedtime-1&2	Bedtime-1&2
10:00pm	Bedtime-3	Bedtime-3	Bedtime-3	Bedtime-3	Bedtime-3	Bedtime-3	Bedtime-3
10:30pm	Bedtime-4	Bedtime-4	Bedtime-4	Bedtime-4	Bedtime-4	Bedtime-4	Bedtime-4
11:00pm	Bedtime-5	Bedtime-5	Bedtime-5	Bedtime-5	Bedtime-5	Bedtime-5	Bedtime-5
		Phone Calls From 4:30p-10p	Visits From 6p-10p	Phone Calls From 4:30p-10p		Visits From 10a-3p	Phone Calls From 4:30p-10p

**Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center  
Grievance Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Written: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for the Grievance:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If restricted, length of restriction: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Shift Supervisor Notified: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Superintendent Notified: \_\_\_\_\_

**Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center  
Orientation Test**

Your ability to behave in a positive manner while in the JDC will depend on your understanding of the rules of the facility. Detainees that understand the rules and follow them will succeed in the level system, receive extra privileges, and most importantly receive a good report from the JDC staff. This is a simple review test of the rules and regulations inside the JDC. Below this paragraph is a list of ten true or false questions about the JDC handbook; there are ten questions about the JDC level system on the next page. If you can answer at least sixteen questions correctly, you pass the exam. The test must be passed in order to advance to level one of the JDC level system. Help may be provided to you while you take the test, simply ask the staff member who is assisting you with the orientation process.

**JDC Handbook Questions**

1. If you have a grievance while in JDC, you must first ask permission to speak with Connie Kaiser about your complaint.  
TRUE OR FALSE
2. You are not allowed to talk while in your room, but you can whistle and sing.  
TRUE OR FALSE
3. Phone calls can be placed to parents or legal guardians on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays.  
TRUE OR FALSE
4. Visits are allowed on Wednesdays and Saturdays.  
TRUE OR FALSE
5. Phone calls and visits can be thirty minutes in length.  
TRUE OR FALSE
6. Before leaving an assigned area (bathroom, table, room, etc.) you must have staff permission.  
TRUE OR FALSE
7. There is to be no talking during population moves.  
TRUE OR FALSE
8. Communication with other detainees is allowed only with staff permission.  
TRUE OR FALSE
9. Breakfast is served at 7:30am, lunch at 11:30am, and dinner at 5:00pm.  
TRUE OR FALSE
10. Pencils and/or pens are allowed in your room.  
TRUE OR FALSE

### JDC Behavior Level System Questions

1. Your grades in the JDC level system will be based on your behavior, attitude, and ability to follow the rules. TRUE OR FALSE
2. You can advance a level once every four days. TRUE OR FALSE
3. Monday is the only day that advancement to the next level will be considered. TRUE OR FALSE
4. Refusal to participate in the school program can result in a level loss. TRUE OR FALSE
5. The Walkman can only be used outside of your room. TRUE OR FALSE
6. The latest bedtime is at 11:00pm for minors on Level 5. TRUE OR FALSE
7. If you are on Level 4, you are allowed to watch a taped sitcom on Monday night. TRUE OR FALSE
8. JDC staff will grade you every other day. TRUE OR FALSE
9. Upon completion of the JDC Orientation process, each minor will advance to Level 1. TRUE OR FALSE
10. An "A" grade can be earned even if you have committed one rule infraction. TRUE OR FALSE

**Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center  
Behavior Agreement**

During your stay at the Juvenile Detention Center, you will be asked to maintain an appropriate behavior and attitude. The rules and regulations within the JDC have been established to assist you in this endeavor. This form is an agreement stating that you understand all of the rules and regulations of the JDC. If there is anything that you are not certain of please ask the staff member that is with you at this time.

Below is a list of the procedures that you need to have completed prior to signing the Behavior Agreement:

- I have received the JDC handbook
- I have watched the JDC orientation video (effective in Summer of 2000)
- I have read through the JDC handbook with the video
- I have read through the JDC Behavior Level System Manual
- I have scored an 80% on the JDC Rules and Regulations Questionnaire

**In Review:**

During your stay at the Juvenile Detention Center, your rights include the following:

- To be treated humanely
- To be provided proper food and shelter
- To receive required medical treatment
- To consult with an attorney
- To consult with your probation officer
- To communicate with parent or guardian within a reasonable time after arrival

The rules are as follows:

- Obey all instructions given to you by a staff member
- Assigned duties must be completed quickly and correctly
- You may not lie or attempt to deceive staff
- Communication with other minors, verbal and nonverbal, is only allowed with staff permission
- You are not to make noise while in your room
- You must have staff permission to leave an assigned area or to move about the facility
- You may not touch, threaten or strike anyone while in detention.
- You may not damage any property belonging to the JDC
- You may not touch, threaten or strike anyone while in detention.
- You may not possess or attempt to possess any contraband.
- You must not attempt to escape or talk about escaping, including checking doors
- All the rules apply while in the classroom

**Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center  
Behavior Agreement (continued)**

Remember that privileges granted to you during your stay in the JDC are rewards for appropriate behavior, and your conduct and cooperation will affect what privileges you are awarded.

By signing these rules you are indicating that you have completed the procedures described and have a firm understanding of the behavior that is expected of you. If you have any questions, you need to ask them now.

**\*\*I have received, read, and understand the Juvenile Detention Center Handbook**

\_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_  
Detainee    Witness    Date

**\*\*I have watched the Juvenile Detention Center Orientation Video**

\_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_  
Detainee    Witness    Date

**\*\*I have received, read, and understand the JDC Behavior Level System Manual**

\_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_  
Detainee    Witness    Date



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