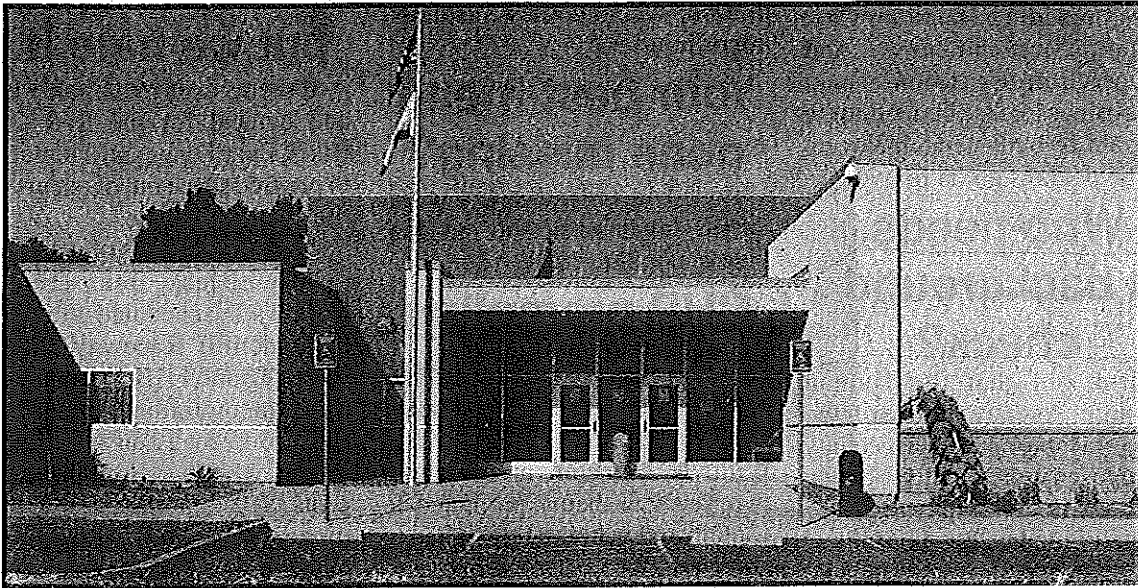


# Sex, drugs and violence in Tehama Juvenile Hall



**RED BLUFF** — Former employees, juvenile inmates and those children's parents, say that Tehama County Juvenile Hall, above, was the scene of sexual exploitation of detainees and extreme violence. Photo for *The Valley Mirror* by Barry Clausen.

## Officials mum on abuse allegations

By Sara Inés Calderón  
of *The Valley Mirror*

### Part 1 of 4

**RED BLUFF** — Miguel learned about real power in the Tehama County Juvenile Justice Center.

He spent time there for different reasons, but said he was always anxious to get out — not just for the usual reasons, but also to avoid the sexual advances of his mental health counselor, Melissa Jones, 40, who used to rub his leg with her foot and “talk sexy” to him during their sessions.

But once he got out of juvenile hall and wanted to chill out with some friends at a party, he ran into his probation officer, Alicia Allen, 30, hanging out in a parked car with continuous visits from several male minors in what he termed a “train.”

As a former juvenile hall resident, Miguel, who feared using his real name because of retaliation from law enforcement, was witness to a whole host of physical and sexual improprieties perpe-

trated by county staff and covered up by county bureaucrats.

A *Valley Mirror* investigation has uncovered that, at least since 2003, physical and sexual abuse was perpetrated against minors within the Tehama County Probation Department, which oversees juvenile hall, and no one tries to stop it.

Counselors and probation officers reportedly had sex with juveniles inside and outside of juvenile hall. On the outside two women in particular provided their former charges with drugs and alcohol, offered them guns and money and even paid for them to have piercings and tattoos.

A former employee of the probation department, as well as a current county employee, attest to the allegations of physical abuse, parents have attested to the sexual exploits of the two women and several former juvenile detainees have also told their stories to *The Valley Mirror*.

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## Abuse, From Page One

It's unknown whether either Ms. Jones or Ms. Allen still work for Tehama County because county officials will not respond to requests for comments, deferred comment or flatly refused to discuss the issue. Neither Ms. Jones nor Ms. Allen returned a call for comment.

Tehama County Administrator Bill Goodwin responded on behalf of the entire board of supervisors, none of whom returned a call requesting an interview, to decline comment.

"I am not commenting on any specific allegations or any corrective action that was taken," he said.

Instead Mr. Goodwin, in a carefully-spun denial, referred to the 2008-2009 grand jury report that gave a glowing evaluation of juvenile hall, noting its "excellent communication between the staff and supervisors." He added that the superior court judges in Tehama County oversaw the probation department.

Tehama Superior Court Judge Edward King refused to be interviewed for this story, instead he directed a staff member to provide The Valley Mirror with an address and directed we write a letter to the county's juvenile justice commission with any concerns.

Leslie Wright, 56, is the mother of several juveniles who were witness to abuse, and physically and sexually abused themselves, while in juvenile hall, and said she reported problems to then-Chief Probation Officer Dan Emry repeatedly for three years.

"I complained three years ago but nobody did anything about it," she said, referring to the aforementioned female employees. "They were involved in all this mess in juvenile hall, they knew what the people were doing, they were at the places where they were having sex with kids and (doing) drugs."

Ms. Wright's children have since moved on from the problems in juvenile hall, but it still upsets her to think that the people who were charged with helping her children were endangering them.

"How can you get help from people who are screwing your friends and using drugs and giving drugs to you? How does that help?"

When Tehama District Attorney Gregg Cohen was asked whether any county employees had been investigated for improprieties with juveniles, he admitted that his office had conducted one such investigation involving a minor male but that, ultimately, no charges were filed because the three-year statute of limitations had expired.

The case of Ms. Jones is slightly more complicated, as she is currently facing charges of making

terrorist threats and assault with a deadly weapon for a March 31 incident in which she pulled a .45 Glock firearm on freelance Valley Mirror reporter Barry Clausen.

The two had arranged to meet to discuss a story Mr. Clausen was writing about her alleged sexual improprieties with male minors in Tehama County. District Attorney Cohen said he has encouraged Mr. Clausen, 67, to share any information that may be pertinent to a future investigation about such improprieties.

In addition to working as a freelance reporter, Mr. Clausen is a former Tehama County employee, who worked as a juvenile hall counselor from 2003 to 2004 in juvenile hall and alleges he was fired once he attempted to report the abuse he saw there.

Mr. Clausen, who was wrongly charged with a crime — taking documents that weren't created until three months after he left the county's employment, filed a lawsuit against the county, one which was settled out of court in 2004. This information was provided to the Valley Mirror before he retained an attorney for a civil suit against Ms. Jones.

A county employee who is familiar with the events described in this article said that former Chief of Probation Dan Emry, Alicia Allen and Melissa Jones all resigned this summer. He confirmed the years of physical abuse and said he heard rumors of Mses. Allen and Jones' sexual exploits with juveniles from the children and around the water cooler.

Renny Knoll has 37 years of experience as a chief probation officer and has been serving as interim in Tehama County since July 1. Upon arriving here in Tehama County Mr. Knoll admitted he found the department in turmoil.

"I found a lot of people that were looking for a lot of direction," he said in his office in Red Bluff. "There's a lot of good people here. Most of the problems here are structured. There may be some personal problems, some hanging onto the past, but generally I'm feeling really good about the staff here."

Mr. Knoll consistently emphasized he was working to help the probation department move forward but would not comment on Ms. Jones, Ms. Allen or any other allegations of physical or sexual abuse, but did say he expected things there to change.

"I don't own that stuff but it isn't going to happen again," Mr. Knoll said.

For Miguel, who is now an adult, life goes on. He's moved on from his bad experiences in juvenile hall and hopes to make something of his life. When he reflects on everything, he doesn't get bogged down with details.

"They had a job with power and they were able to get away with it," he said.

## Sex, drugs and violence in Tehama Juvenile Hall **Tools of the trade: pain, bullying and drugs**

### **Part 2 of 4**

By Sara Inés Calderón  
of *The Valley Mirror*

**RED BLUFF** — Raquel lost faith in Tehama County Juvenile Hall's ability to help her when she walked into a friend's house and saw her probation officer, Alicia Allen, snorting lines of coke with a group of minors.

Or the exact moment could

have also been when counselor James Mossman threw her on the ground and put his knee in her back, or perhaps the time he pulled her arm out of its socket. Of course, having spent up to six weeks at a time in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day as a minor also gave her a lot of time to think about it.

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# Sex, from Page One

The truth is Raquel, a former juvenile detainee who experienced abuse while in custody, has absolutely no faith in the system's ability to do anything but harm. She was threatened earlier this year by one of her former abusers and thus feared using her real name.

A *Valley Mirror* investigation has found that the physical abuse of children like Raquel in Tehama County Juvenile Hall was routine, according to victims and eyewitnesses, and went unchecked at least since 2003, despite attempts from former employees to put an end to excessive use of force within the facility, particularly from counselor James Mossman, in his early 40s.

But once juveniles left the hall they often found themselves in the path of former mental health counselor Melissa Jones, 40, and former probation officer Alicia Allen, in her 30s, who bullied and threatened some of the children, offered others prescription and illegal drugs, alcohol, money and sex, paid for tattoos and piercings and even offered to obtain them guns.

Former juvenile detainees, as well as current and former employees, confirmed that all three employees were tight-knit; the two women were friends and flirted with Mr. Mossman during working hours. He is described as a big bully who was fond of using violence.

## Unnecessary violence

"Everyone in there is all scared of him. He's mean, he'll talk to you like you're a piece of shit. He's got a lot of power," said Miguel, one former juvenile hall resident who is now an adult. He declined to use his real name for fear of retaliation from law enforcement.

Mr. Mossman purportedly enjoyed "tweaking" juveniles in the hall, picking them up by their hands handcuffed behind their backs and nothing else, as well as forcing his knee in the middle of children's backs.

"He's just a big bully," said former juvenile hall counselor Barry Clausen of Mr. Mossman; Mr. Clausen occasionally freelances for *The Valley Mirror*. He worked there from 2003-2004 and believes he was fired because he attempted to put an end to the abuse he witnessed there.

Mr. Clausen said he never needed to physically restrain any juveniles during the time he worked in juvenile hall, although he witnessed one boy being pepper sprayed in the face for calmly refusing to go into his room; he witnessed the tweaking and finally decided to speak to Mr. Mossman about it.

"I confronted him one time and he just ignored me like I didn't say anything," Mr. Clausen recalled in an interview before he retained an attorney for a civil suit against Ms. Jones. "When I finally decided to report it, that's when I got fired. He's protected for all these things he's done."

State law mandates a written report of all incidents resulting in physical harm and Interim Chief Probation Officer Renny Knoll, who's been on the job since July 1, said he has not seen any physical violence since he took office — although he did mention problems with past reporting.

"Our incident reports were not written as well as they should have (been)," he said, adding that he held a meeting with the staff stating that he no longer wanted the reports to be late and expected better.

The "cooking" of these reports would be met with "aggressive action," he said.

Other allegations involving children in juvenile hall against Mr. Mossman include: twisting arms, even breaking one boy's arm; chokeholds, sometimes choking children into unconsciousness; throwing children to the ground, twisting wrists, poking fingers into the sides of jaws, splitting lips, pepper spraying juveniles directly in the face and placing a pillowcase over one juvenile's head.

Tehama County District Attorney Gregg Cohen said his office had not been notified of any physical abuses taking place in juvenile hall, but said the sheriff's office or police department would have to be notified before he could press charges.

A county employee familiar with the physical abuses in juvenile hall said Tehama County bureaucrats systematically covered up for Ms. Jones and Allen, as well as Mr. Mossman, for unknown reasons.

"Had it have been certain people that were having sex or twisting people's arms, we would've been fired. People that say something — legitimately, more than one — have been fired. It doesn't make any sense."

But Mr. Mossman's physical tactics weren't the only ones used to abuse juveniles in Tehama County.

Raquel and others experienced psychological trauma as well.

## Head games

Leslie Wright, 56, has no love for Tehama County staff, Ms. Allen, Mr. Mossman, or the system that she says nearly drove her children to a mental breaking point.

"He had a psychotic break because Mossman had kept him isolated for months in a cell by himself," she said in tears recently, recalling the trauma her son experienced while in juvenile hall. "(Ms. Allen and Ms. Jones) said they knew but there was nothing they could do. It made him lose it.

It wasn't my son anymore."

Her daughter also fell victim to problems in juvenile hall. After stumbling across the extracurricular activities of her then-probation officer Alicia Allen and sharing that information with her friends, she was threatened with a dirty drug test.

"She's a horrible person," Ms. Wright said of Ms. Allen.

Ms. Wright's son has since recovered from his stint in Tehama County Juvenile Hall but the sour taste of anger lingers. She said she reported this information to the probation department repeatedly during the past three years and always her pleas fell on deaf ears.

Raquel believes that, once she found out about Ms. Allen's sexual exploits with male minors coming through juvenile hall, she became a target of retaliation; she was placed in a cell alone for 23 hours a day for up to six weeks at a time.

"I became bitter about life. I became really quiet, into myself. And when I would get out I would get in arguments with people, I would be defiant more than I normally would be, I just wouldn't care about anything," she recalled.

And even when she tried to work her way out of confinement, Ms. Allen and Mr. Mossman she said they'd find another reason to keep her there. So she just stopped caring. By the time she turned 18, Ms. Allen was being investigated by the county for her sexual activities with male minors, Raquel said.

## Illegal silence

What makes this situation perhaps even more ironic is the fact that, while arms were being broken and lips bloodied, the children in Tehama County Juvenile Hall were surrounded by mandated child abuse reporters.

Probation officers and employees of juvenile halls are required by state law to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, either by phone or in writing, within 36 hours, said Sue Burrell, staff attorney with the Youth Law Center, a public interest law firm that works to protect children in foster care and juvenile justice systems from abuse and neglect in San Francisco.

What's more, it's a criminal misdemeanor for a mandated reporter not to report suspected abuse, Ms. Burrell said, adding that there's no time limit to reporting the abuse.

"Juvenile hall is not jail," Ms. Burrell said, adding that state law defines them as places that are meant to provide a homelike environment.

In California employees who work in juvenile halls are governed by the state welfare and institution code — not the penal code, which governs adult prison, said Sharon Persall, president of the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association, a voluntary statewide

professional organization.

"Juveniles are to be rehabilitated and dealt with as individuals. We want to make sure we're not always going towards the punitive side — there are better ways to do things," Ms. Persall said, adding that the chief probation officer and presiding judges of the Superior Court develop the procedures and the tone for how juvenile halls run.

Tehama County Superior Court Judge Edward King declined to be interviewed for this story.

Basic standards for care in juvenile facilities call for never physically restraining children unless absolutely necessary, Ms. Burrell said. You never lay your hands on a child if you can otherwise handle the situation — part of standard training for working in such institutions — if you have to take a child down you use the least amount of force necessary and only use pepper spray in the most severe of conditions, Ms. Burrell explained.

"You're never supposed to lay a hand on kids, and only to the extent to ensure the safety of others," she said, noting that the use of force in institutions increases when staff are not well-trained or inexperienced.

Retaliation against institutionalized children aggravates the abuse, she said.

"There's a real serious issue with retaliation against kids who speak out," Ms. Burrell said. "A lot of times these kids will, out of the blue, have new charges filed on them or they'll be charged with a disciplinary violation."

## Drugs and guns for sex

Miguel said Ms. Jones maintained strange sexual relationships with the male minors she met in juvenile hall: they would take money out of her purse, she would offer them all types of prescription drugs, offer them guns — she even offered to get him whatever type of gun he pleased.

Ms. Jones' unique relationship with the young men extended beyond sex: Witnesses say she once offered plentiful amounts of Xanax, guns, \$2,000 and a trip to Hawaii to someone who would violently intimidate someone who she had a grudge against.

"I got the feeling that she likes hanging around with people like that — drug addicts and gang members," he said of Ms. Jones.

Why all this violence, drug use and intimidation has gone on for years unchecked seems to be beyond anyone's ability to answer. People who have worked in juvenile hall are clueless. Former juvenile detainees don't understand. And yet about 20 juveniles are currently in the facility, with more set to trickle in once the school year gets rolling.

"I know that some of the kids that are there are still young and they're probably still going through some shit," lamented

## **Sex, drugs and violence in Tehama Juvenile Hall** **Easy access: County workers had sex with minors for years**

### **Part 3 of 4**

By Sara Inés Calderón  
of *The Valley Mirror*

Red Bluff — Sex in the Tehama County Juvenile Hall was not a secret.

In fact, talk of former probation officer Alicia Allen's and former mental health counselor Melissa Jones' sexual exploits with the male juveniles was talked about around the water cooler by staff, amongst the juvenile detainees, by family members of those involved, and even with law enforcement.

Why such activities were tolerated for so long, why no one was disciplined and why county officials remain mum on the is-

sue is unknown. What is known, however, is that the juveniles themselves, former and current employees in the hall, family members and advocates say the two women had sex with male minors within the facility, as well as once the young men left — over a period of years.

Both women, as well as the Dan Emry, the chief probation officer who supervised them, resigned this summer. Neither woman returned a message seeking comment for this story.

### **Pleas falling on deaf ears**

Miguel is a former juvenile hall detainee who never had

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a sexual relationship with Ms. Jones, 40 — although it wasn't for a lack of trying on her part.

"She'd put her hand on my leg, put her foot up my leg, nibble my ear, flirt with me and stuff," he said. Miguel is a pseudonym, as he was threatened earlier this year by Ms. Jones and fears retaliation from law enforcement.

"I didn't find her attractive, I thought she was ugly," he reflected. "She was ugly inside and out."

Adults working with children in juvenile halls are not supposed to be having sex with their charges, said Sue Burrell, staff attorney with the Youth Law Center, a public interest law firm that works to protect children in foster care and juvenile justice systems from abuse and neglect in San Francisco.

"(Juveniles) are supposed to be getting rehabilitative services and I don't think by that the state means 'have sex with your counselors,'" she said, noting that the district attorney would have to deal with the allegations.

Tehama County District Attorney Gregg Cohen acknowledged that his office received information about sex, drugs and violence in juvenile hall and encouraged any parents or former victims of abuse to inform law enforcement.

"If the conduct occurred in juvenile hall it needs to be reported to the sheriff's department, if it occurred in an apartment, home or car, that conduct needs to be reported to a police department," he said.

Earlier this year Miguel said he spoke to the district attorney's investigator about Mses. Allen, 30, and Jones, specifically about their sexual involvement with minors; shortly thereafter he said Ms. Jones confronted him about what he had told the investigator and threatened him.

District Attorney Cohen could not explain how his investigator's interview was shared with

Ms. Jones.

One woman, Leslie Wright, 56, she she'd informed the former chief probation officer of the abuse three years ago and several times since; Mr. Cohen questioned whether she reported the abuse at all, or to the proper authorities.

"One investigation we conducted involving one minor male, so our office is aware of that one particular situation," he said of the investigation into a woman unlawfully having sex with a minor this year, although he wouldn't elaborate.

That investigation went cold, he said, because the three-year statute of limitations expired and he was unable to file charges, although he said otherwise she would have been prosecuted for the crime because it's of the "utmost importance" to protect minors.

When asked about Miguel's contention that information provided to his office was leaked to Ms. Jones, Mr. Cohen simply replied that such problems needed to be reported to his office.

A Tehama County employee familiar with juvenile hall's sex scandal said the teenagers in the facility would routinely talk about the exploits of Mses. Allen and Jones and rumors of their exploits circulated the office.

"People that say something — legitimately, more than one — have been fired," said the employee, adding that after Ms. Jones was charged with assault, she, as well as Ms. Allen and Mr. Emry resigned.

"There's no possible way I can tell you why it's happening. It's crazy. It doesn't make any sense, the former employee said."

Ms. Wright is the mother of a son and daughter who passed through Tehama County Juvenile Hall several times since 2006 and said she's reported physical and sexual, as well as drug abuses to authorities there repeatedly to no avail.

"They were both, at different times, at places where these ladies were, where they were

having sex and doing drugs with juveniles" she said of her two children, who are now both adults.

Ms. Wright said she first reported incidents involving sex and drugs and Ms. Allen that her children witnessed three years ago to recently-retired Chief Probation Officer Emry. She claims to have made the reports several times since 2006 and as recently as June of this year, when he told her he had "taken care of that."

Ms. Jones made passes at her son, her daughter was sexually involved with a male employee during her stay in juvenile hall and both witnessed the two women doing drugs and engaging in sexual activities with other juveniles.

"All the ones they're having sex with, we're all poor and we couldn't afford to keep our kids out of juvenile hall," Ms. Wright lamented.

For Barry Clausen, 67, the story of Ms. Jones' sexual improprieties became an all-too-important part of his life: on March 31 during a pre-arranged meeting with her to discuss an article he was writing for *The Valley Mirror* Ms. Jones pulled a .45 Glock firearm on him and said "I'm going to blow your head off."

A struggle ensued and now Ms. Jones is currently facing charges of making terrorist threats and assault with a deadly weapon. Mr. Clausen, a former Tehama County Juvenile Hall employee from 2003-2004, is battling a resurgence of post-traumatic stress disorder and hopes that county officials will ultimately be held accountable for covering up for years' worth of statutory rape there.

## Sex inside juvenile hall

Raquel remembers that staff would take juveniles into the mental health counselor's room, the janitor's closet, the kitchen or a pod out of the range of the cameras for sex. She should know, as she and a former male treatment counselor maintained a sexual relationship inside of the hall while she was there.

"There are other staff that had sex inside the juvenile hall — it would go through the grapevine," she said. "There was a lot of staff in there that knew about it."

Raquel is not her real name, but she was threatened earlier this year by Ms. Jones and fears for her safety if her identity is revealed. She's no longer a minor but still remembers that children and staff would talk about Ms. Jones and Ms. Allen having sex with young men "on the outs," or outside the hall.

"In juvenile hall she would flirt with the boys. Melissa (Jones) was having sex with underage kids on the outs, but I never heard of it actually happening in juvenile hall" said Raquel.

Young men would insinuate that they would have sex with her in juvenile hall, however, Raquel said. They would see

Ms. Jones, the mental health counselor, "to get what I want," she recalled. She and Ms. Allen passed out their personal phone numbers to the young men in the hall, she added.

Of Ms. Allen, Raquel said she knew four of five young men, most Latino and affiliated with either the Norteño or Sureño gangs, who had sexual relationships with the probation officer. Ms. Allen even broke one young man's heart, Raquel said, and subsequently threatened to "ruin" him and his family if he said anything about their relationship.

While some young men were hurt by the women, others enjoyed the power trip, Raquel said.

"Some of them, they liked it, and they felt like they had power, too. They felt like they were manipulating them while they were manipulating them back," she said. "There were kids who would say, 'I'm messing around with a probation officer — I'm cool.'"

Raquel said she frequently told other juveniles and staff about the extracurricular activities of both women to no avail. Staff would tell her she didn't know what she was talking about, that she could get in trouble for slander, or they would simply pass on the message to the women.

After enough retaliation from the women — including the threat of a dirty drug test — Raquel said she stopped caring.

"They had the power — and they would talk about it, too, how they were in control and we had nothing to do about it — that they would still win, no matter what," she said.

## Sex outside juvenile hall

Inside juvenile hall, "You're supposed to be keeping the kids safe, and if sex is going on, it's obvious you're not keeping the kids safe," said Pat Sansom, President the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and representative of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Shasta County.

"Just because you get locked up, you don't lose all your rights," she said.

Ms. Sansom accompanied one of Ms. Allen's former victims to speak to the Tehama County District Attorney's investigator about his relationship with his former parole officer. She said the young man had sex in juvenile hall, in the parking lot there, and once he was released, they had sex outside of juvenile hall, too.

Ms. Allen would arrive at the young man's home to pick him up — sometimes forcing her way in to look for him — and she would always provide him with sex, drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. The relationship finally came to an end when he found another young man at Ms. Allen's home, she said.

Inside juvenile hall, sex could be key to more privileges for the detainees or was even used as a way to obtain early release, Ms. Sansom said, adding that the investigator spoke to several other children about Mses. Allen's and Jones' sexual interest in minors.

"They're just babies. You think you're locking them up for punishment, but there, kids are prey," Ms. Sansom said. "It's a systemic problem."

It was during his employment as a counselor in juvenile hall that Mr. Clausen, an author and sometime journalist, first became aware of Mses. Allen and Jones' proclivities for sex with minors, drugs and alcohol.

One young man's story in particular caught Mr. Clausen's attention for the stark and reckless nature of Ms. Allen's behavior. The young man met Ms. Allen in juvenile hall when he was a teenager and they began a sexual relationship inside the hall; once he was released the sexual relationship continued.

She would provide him and others with alcohol and drugs, as well as the sex, and Ms. Allen even went to the boy's home on several occasions looking for him until he eventually moved into her home, where he lived for at least a year, Mr. Clausen said.

But Ms. Allen and Ms. Jones were friends, he said, and so they would help each other out — like the time Ms. Allen paid the young man to take six friends to Ms. Jones' house in Chico to "party." Mr. Clausen said the young man and his six friends — all minors — had sex with Ms. Jones in her home there, and then helped themselves to her liquor cabinet.

Ms. Jones was Miguel's mental health counselor and Ms. Allen his probation officer. Yet, despite these official relationships Miguel said he frequently observed both women engaging in inappropriate behavior with his fellow juvenile hall detainees.

One incident that stood out in his mind involved Ms. Allen in a "train" in 2007, wherein she stayed in a parked car in front of a party and was visited by three male minors within a half hour period. They were having sex, he said, and when he was asked whether he wanted a turn in the car, he took one look at his probation officer and left the party.

## Sex, drugs and violence in Tehama County Juvenile Hall **Tehama officials mum on juvenile hall abuse**

### **Part 4 of 4**

By Sara Inés Calderón  
of *The Valley Mirror*

**RED BLUFF** — No comment.

That was all Tehama County officials said about the statutory rape of young men and women in juvenile hall over a period of years. The same was said about the physical abuse of those children; one young man even had his arm broken.

Despite years of sexual abuse

by former probation officer Alicia Allen, in her 30s, and former mental health counselor Melissa Jones, 40, despite juvenile hall employees reporting physical abuses, despite parents making officials and law enforcement aware of the abuse, and an investigation into some of the concerned parties, not a single official in Tehama County would comment directly on the allegations.

But most alluded to them.

Through thinly shrouded denials, word games and avoidance, several county officials acknowledged that they'd heard of the problems, although none would comment on what action was taken to correct them.

Why should anyone care about the alleged abuses in Tehama County Juvenile Hall now most of those involved have resigned?

Because no official charges have been filed, Ms. Allen and

Jones could, potentially, apply to work in Glenn County, or anywhere else, and their involvement with young men would never be discussed under the guise of "personnel issues." In other words, unless charges are filed or a comprehensive review of Tehama County Juvenile Hall is completed, potential abusers could be coming to your county.

Neither Ms. Jones nor Ms. Allen returned a call seeking com-

ment for this story.

### **Willful ignorance**

The entire Tehama County Board of Supervisors was contacted for comment on this story and only one returned a call for comment, the rest deferred to County Administrator Bill Goodwin, who acknowledged "dealing" with *Valley Mirror* freelancer Barry Clausen on previous

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occasions but refused to comment on specific allegations pertaining to juvenile hall.

The sole supervisor that commented was Charles Willard of district 3, who said, "I don't know anything about it." Mr. Willard admitted that he had heard about problems in juvenile hall, but said, "There's nothing I can help you about this with."

Instead of commenting on the allegations of abuse, Mr. Goodwin referenced the 2008-2009 grand jury report that gave juvenile hall a glowing evaluation.

"They captured what they tried to do, good employee morale, and so if these kinds of things were happening there would be good communication," Mr. Goodwin said, essentially denying the allegations.

The county would "definitely take the kind of corrective action necessary," if the allegations were true, he said. When asked if the county avoided addressing the abuse for fear of a lawsuit, he said the county doesn't anticipate being sued, but deals with them on a case-by-case basis.

Whatever may have been happening in Tehama County Juvenile Hall, the presiding judge and chief probation officer are responsible for developing policies and the tone for the facility, said Sharon Persall, president of the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association. Running juvenile hall is really up to county bureaucrats, she said.

Tehama Superior Court Judge Edward King refused to be interviewed for this story, instead directing a staff member to provide The Valley Mirror with an address and write a letter to the county's juvenile justice commission with any concerns.

"No comment," was also the message at the probation department, where Interim Chief Probation Officer Renny Knoll disowned past allegations and instead declared that he wanted the department to move forward.

"This department was in turmoil. What's happened over the years is this probation department has been operated in an old-fashioned way, and after a while people forget why they're doing it that way," he said. "People haven't asked those questions."

Mr. Knoll said he hadn't seen any signs of physical abuse since he started July 1, although the incident reports that allude to such abuses were not up to par.

## Ignoring cries for help

Leslie Wright, 56, has been through all of this before.

Three years ago she reported abuses to then-Chief Probation Officer Dan Emry, to no avail. She's reported the same several

times since, and yet, no heads have rolled at juvenile hall.

"I went over this three years ago and (Emry) called me a liar," she said.

Earlier this year she again spoke with Mr. Emry and asked him if he remembered the conversation, to which he replied that he'd "taken care" of the situation. Ms. Wright is generally disappointed with the lack of action on Tehama County's part, but now her children are adults and out of the system.

A former Tehama County employee was angry that nothing had been done despite repeatedly reporting the abuses.

"They never did one single thing about the abuse — or the sex — until Jones tried to kill me, and then Emry resigned, Allen resigned and Jones resigned," said Mr. Clausen, who worked as a counselor there from 2003-2004 and alleges he was fired for reporting the abuse.

Mr. Clausen feared for his life on March 31 when Ms. Jones pulled a .45 Glock on him during a pre-arranged interview to discuss this story for The Valley Mirror. He met Ms. Jones when he worked in juvenile hall and said administrators there systematically covered-up for her and other abusive employees for years; in 2004 he reported abuse to the former supervisor of the juvenile probation department.

"I reported it to him and he said he'd take care of it. Shortly thereafter he quit and then it was turned over to the interim chief of probation and they did nothing except fire me," Mr. Clausen said.

Tehama District Attorney Gregg Cohen is handling the assault case of Ms. Jones and said he was aware of the allegations Mr. Clausen made against both her and Ms. Allen, as well as other problems in juvenile hall.

However Mr. Cohen said his office has only investigated one incident — involving unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor by an adult — within the last six months. No charges were filed in the investigation because the three-year statute of limitations expired, he said, adding that any county employees accused of misconduct wouldn't be given special treatment.

One children's advocate who accompanied the victim in question to his interview with Mr. Cohen's investigator said the district attorney himself has closed the investigation into abuses at juvenile hall.

Pat Sansom, President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and representative of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Shasta County said Mr. Cohen's office interviewed a total of eight children for about abuses but inexplicably "shot down" the investigation.

Another problem within Mr. Cohen's office is that one young man interviewed by his investigator David Baker — who used the pseudonym Miguel — said that Ms. Jones became aware of the information he provided about her and Ms. Allen's sexual appetites for minor males. Whether potential witnesses feel safe sharing information could make or break an investigation and Mr. Cohen couldn't explain the alleged leak.

"I can't tell you whether the information was provided to Ms. Jones by Mr. Baker," he said.

## Employees knew of abuse

There were staff at juvenile hall fully aware of the sexual activities of Ms. Jones and Allen, said Raquel, a former detainee who feared law enforcement if she used her real name.

"When I told them, some of them would be, like, 'Oh, you don't really know that, it could just be other people talking,'" she said.

Raquel also wrote letters to her friends detailing an acquaintance's sexual exploits with her probation officer, Ms. Allen — the letters were recovered by staff and she was threatened for "slander."

After a while Raquel said she stopped trying to expose Ms. Allen because life for her inside juvenile hall only got worse. She was threatened with a dirty drug test, placed on "gang terms" to avoid Ms. Allen's former lovers, her probation was revoked for small things and she wound up

back in juvenile hall; and once she was there, she'd get locked up in solitary for up to six weeks at a time.

Top juvenile hall officials have been covering up for Ms. Allen and Jones for years, said one current Tehama County employee who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of being fired; some previous employees tried to report the abuses but were promptly fired.

"A legitimate investigation would yield a lot of problems. (But) nobody has talked to any of the kids, nobody has been called to speak to the employees. How are they supposed to find anything?" the employee asked.

Changes at Tehama County's Juvenile Hall may already be underway; the interim chief of probation has a reputation as a reformer and the two women at the center of the statutory rapes have resigned, but county officials' silence on the matter is deafening to Mr. Clausen.

Reporting physical abuses at juvenile hall became a passion for Mr. Clausen, who said over the years he's shared information with the following Tehama County officials: the board of supervisors, district attorney, sheriff, county counsel and Superior Court Judge Edward King.

To this day he has no idea why his pleas for help, and those of others, were ignored. He hopes change comes to Tehama County if not for those already affected by the abuse, for those children who have yet to suffer from it.

"Who would deliberately cover-up for child abuse?" he asked. "They all had it, they all know, they just didn't do anything."