**“Glen’s Parallax Perspectives”** is a series of TV programs offering fresh ways for people to see issues such as foreign policy, social and economic justice, governmental functioning, the environment, and so forth. We provide voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

**Mainstream media, politicians, and culture see the world in conventional ways. Therefore, in order to solve problems, we need to see things in fresh ways.** Glen Anderson created this TV series to help people see things differently so we can solve problems at all levels from the local to the global.

This series title refers to “***parallax***,” which is the view you get by looking from a different perspective. For example, put one finger in front of your nose and another finger farther away. Close one eye. Then open that eye and close the other. Your fingers will seem to move. This is called a “parallax” view. **This TV series invites you to look at issues from fresh perspectives.**

Each program airs three times a week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for cable TV subscribers in Thurston County, Washington. TCTV is part of Thurston County Media. You can see their schedule at [**www.tcmedia.org**](http://www.tcmedia.org)

**You can also watch the program described below through your computer** at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). All episodes of “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” are posted on this blog’s “TV Programs” part and also in one or more of the categories listed in the right side of the computer screen. Also, see information about various issues at the category headings at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

**🡪 I saved this document in Word format with live links.** If this document does not load or print properly for you, please e-mail me at **glenanderson@integra.net** and I’ll promptly send you the links you request.

**🡪 This document includes a few more pieces of information that we did not discuss during the interview.**

**🡪 Please invite other people to watch this video and/or read this thorough summary at these parts of my blog,** [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)**: “TV Programs” and “Media” and “Organizing.”**

**“Whistleblowers Serve the Public. Let’s Protect Them.”**

Glen’s Parallax Perspectives TV Series

February 2022

**Glen introduced our topic and our guests, Louis Clark and Dr. Scott Allen:**

The February 2022 interview on “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” informs you of a powerful and proven way to solve serious problems.

Throughout all levels of government – and in the private sector – there are many cases of fraud, abuse, corruption, negligence, and dysfunctional systems. These hurt people, hurt the environment, waste money, interfere with honest services, and cause other kinds of problems.

Fortunately, some people with first-hand experience decide to act on their consciences and report on the problems internally – and, if necessary, expose the problems publicly. These whistleblowers serve our society by telling the truth – sometimes at great risk to themselves.

This hour’s interview informs you about whistleblowers and focuses on an excellent non-profit organization that protects them. Two expert guests share information, insights, and first-hand information:

* **Louis Clark** is the Executive Director of a non-profit organization that helps whistleblowers, the Government Accountability Project (GAP), whose website is [**www.whistleblower.org**](http://www.whistleblower.org)
* **Dr. Scott Allen** is a medical doctor with 40 years of experience working in refugee settings, jails, etc., along with his regular medical practice. Dr. Allen was responsible for monitoring activities at the Department of Homeland Security’s detention facilities. He and a colleague, Dr. Pamela McPherson, found serious problems and reported them, but the problems continued, so the doctors contacted Louis’s organization, the Government Accountability Project, for help. In this interview, Scott Allen is speaking on his own behalf, NOT speaking for the Department of Homeland Security.

**We briefly explained the concept of whistleblowing:**

Louis explained that whistleblowing is when a person within an organization sees wrongdoing (such as waste, fraud, or abuse) and decides to raise a concern about that. The person could blow the whistle by reporting the problem to the boss – or by reporting it to a person or entity outside of the organization.

Glen said if the person reports the problem to the boss, the boss might say, “Thank you. We’ll fix that problem.” Or the boss might say, “Sit down and shut up. This matter is beyond the scope of your responsibility.” Sometimes bosses try to suppress it in some other way – perhaps including retaliation. Louis agreed with Glen’s examples.

Glen said we want people to understand what whistleblowing is, so we should clarify what it is NOT. He asked Louis to help people understand that too. Louis distinguished Wikileaks from whistleblowing, because Wikileaks is a media organization that reveals wrongdoing by providing transparency for information that has been hidden from public sight. He said whistleblowing comes from persons inside organizations rather than persons outside of the organization (such as journalists) whose job it is to publicize wrongdoing.

Glen added that a whistleblower is not just a disgruntled employee with a personal ax to grind. The whistleblower is really trying to solve a problem because something has gone askew within the organization. Louis agreed with this distinction. Not every person who calls themselves a whistleblower really is. He added that sometimes managers of those organizations sometimes try to disparage whistleblowers as merely disgruntled, so that is inaccurate. Glen added that those managers are merely acting from defensiveness because they do not want to be held accountable for mismanaging their organizations.

Dr. Scott Allen added insights from his own experience as a whistleblower who was helped significantly by Louis Clark’s organization, the Government Accountability Project (GAP), [**www.whistleblower.org**](http://www.whistleblower.org). He and a colleague worked with GAP in the context of actual laws that go beyond the common public understanding of whistleblowing. He said federal and state laws actually define who is – and who is not – a whistleblower. The whistleblowing process has legal implications.

**A recent well-known whistleblower is Edward Snowden:**

Louis said one of his organization’s well-known whistleblowers is Edward Snowden, who blew the whistle on the federal government agency for which he worked, the National Security Agency (NSA).

He said the U.S. government has been trying to prosecute Snowden, so he is staying in Russia because it’s not safe for him to come home. Louis said Snowden blew the whistle on the NSA’s broad surveillance operation over hundreds of millions of people including a huge number of Americans.

**We summarized the work of the Government Accountability Project:**

Glen said he very much appreciates Louis’ organization, the Government Accountability Project ([**www.whistleblower.org**](http://www.whistleblower.org)). He quoted from the organization’s Mission Statement:

Government Accountability Project’s mission is to promote corporate and government accountability by protecting whistleblowers, advancing occupational free speech, and empowering citizen activists. Founded in 1977, Government Accountability Project is the nation’s leading whistleblower protection and advocacy organization. Located in Washington, DC, Government Accountability Project is a nonpartisan, public interest group. In addition to focusing on whistleblower support in our stated program areas, we lead campaigns to enact whistleblower protection laws both domestically and internationally.

Louis has worked for the Government Accountability Project since 1978 and is its Executive Director. He summarized what the organization actually does to implement its Mission Statement. He explained that they serve as lawyers for whistleblowers. In that sense, they are like any other law firm that represents its clients. This organization specializes in knowing and using the laws that protect whistleblowers. They represent their clients by applying the law through administrative processes and by going to court.

He added that a second major part of their work differentiates them from law firms. They investigate what the whistleblowers are saying and substantiate their assertions if possible. They use this information to develop plans to propose solutions to the problems that the whistleblowers have exposed.

Louis said the third major part of their mission is working on legislation, including 35 federal laws that deal with whistleblowing. They also work to change the American political culture so it will more strongly support whistleblowing. He pointed out that 43 years ago when they started, people assumed that whistleblowers were tattle-tales that did not deserve respect, but this has changed now. They have been informing the public and changing public understanding so whistleblowers will be understood and appreciated. He said that just one year ago a credible poll of public opinion found that 86% of voters want legal protections for whistleblowers.

Louis showed a circle diagram to illustrate how the Government Accountability Project operates – and the role of their strategy. The diagram showed a big circle with a little dot representing the whistleblower. Within the circle, some red arrows pointed at the whistleblower to represent the forces of managers, other employees, and other forces pushing to suppress the whistleblower and prevent the truth from coming out. They might be isolating or retaliating against the whistleblower. This is **before** GAP gets involved in the situation.

Then he showed a different circle diagram showing what happens **after** GAP gets involved and substantiates the validity of the whistleblower’s assertion. GAP publicizes the situation outside of the organization, so the media, public opinion, government regulators, law enforcement agencies, Congress, and other entities support the whistleblower and apply pressure on the organization from the outside. He said sometimes – such as in Dr. Scott Allen’s case – they brought professional organizations and non-profit organizations together in support of the whistleblower. All of this substantially changes the power dynamics of the situation. Louis said that every major organization of doctors in the U.S. supported Dr. Allen. GAP’s efforts result in putting on trial the organization that the whistleblower has exposed of wrongdoing.

**We did not have time to add these two additional points from Louis:**

* Louis provided a link to an article explaining five common myths about whistleblowers: [**https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-whistleblowers/2019/04/05/8a5de2ac-5624-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e\_story.html**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-whistleblowers/2019/04/05/8a5de2ac-5624-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e_story.html)
* Before the interview he told Glen that almost half of GAP’s thousands of cases are people who were doing their jobs and –inadvertently without prior intent – became whistleblowers when they were asked to do something wrong, so they got into trouble. They had not planned to blow the whistle. This is an important aspect of the work. It’s important for the public to know this.

**Dr. Scott Allen discussed his experience reporting on problems at a family
detention center operated by the Department of Homeland Security.**

**Here is a combination of what Scott said during the interview and information he had provided to Glen before we conducted the interview:**

Dr. Scott Allen briefly summarized how GAP’s help worked in his case. He is a medical doctor (internal medicine) with 40 years of experience working in refugee settings, jails, etc., along with a regular practice. His colleague in this effort was Dr. Pamela McPherson, a psychiatrist specializing in children and adolescents. Both of them were motivated by professional ethics.

He said that under the Obama Administration, until 2014 it was very rare to detain families. But, he said, because many people were arriving at the U.S.’s southern border, the Obama Administration decided to start detaining mothers with their small children. Many problems arose, so much pushback occurred. This is what caused the federal government to ask Dr. Allen and Dr. McPherson to go there and inspect the conditions.

He and Pamela were sent to New Mexico to examine a family detention center with mothers and children. The Obama Administration wanted to send a message of deterrence to other potential refugees by not releasing them into the community. Long experience has proven the problems of detaining children in this way. Many good people had been deployed there to keep families and children safe there, but the problems existed. The detainees were anxious for their future.

He said that in 2014 both of them were asked by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – because of their expertise and positive reputations – to participate with DHS’s Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in inspecting DHS’s family detention centers. DHS asked them to evaluate complaints DHS was receiving about care in the detention centers. He and his team members visited detention facilities and evaluated cares. They wrote reports, etc., and reported the troubling information they discovered.

During our TV interview he said that both doctors already knew the extensive publications establishing the facts that such detention is extremely harmful to physical health – and even more harmful to mental health. Serious lifelong consequences result from detaining young children. He added that both doctors already knew – based on their experience inspecting institutional systems in bureaucracies such as DHS – that detaining children would be deeply problematic in additional ways.

He said the first facility they inspected in 2014 was on the edge of a law enforcement training facility in Artesia, New Mexico. It had been quickly set up to meet the immediate need. He said they found serious problems, including immediate threats to the detainees’ health and safety. They found problems that the regular on-site medical staff had not noticed.

Scott and Pamela found that about one-fourth to one-third of the children were losing weight while in custody. Many arrived malnourished and suffered further in detention. The institution’s staff members did not notice the problems – including a baby who was seriously malnourished and lost significant body weight (30%). (See the next paragraph for more information about this.) Since the children had traveled on foot from Central America through Mexico to the U.S. border, it would be reasonable to expect them to be malnourished, but they should have started gaining weight when they reached the U.S. Instead, they failed to gain weight here – and actually were still losing weight while in the detention center. The food that the detention center provided was strange and unpalatable to the children, instead of being food that they would willingly eat.

The two doctors also found a 16-month-old child suffering from diarrhea. The regular on-site doctors there did not know how to treat this child. The doctors – despite having examined this child repeatedly – did not notice that this child had lost almost one-third of its body weight. He said that it’s normal for a diarrheal child who has lost 10% of body weight to be sent to an emergency room, but this child had lost about 30% without any special attention or care. He said, “It’s a miracle that this child didn’t die.” Doctors Allen and McPherson said this horrible lack of care was so outrageous that DHS should shut the facility down. DHS did shut it down but opened two new facilities in southern Texas. The two doctors inspected them too and recommended some improvements.

From 2014 to 2018 the two doctors continued working with the Department of Homeland Security and conducted 10 or 11 detailed inspections. They found serious problems and reported their findings internally within DHS. DHS corrected some problems but kept failing to hire adequate pediatricians and other specialists. DHS had lightly remodeled a prison to hold children, but children kept hurting hands and fingers in the prison’s heavy doors, so the doctors kept finding children’s injuries to their hands and fingers caused by the heavy doors.

Both doctors kept pushing the bureaucracy to act responsibly. In the summer of 2018 the Trump administration made things even worse by starting to separate children from mothers. This made the news, and most Americans were horrified. Scott phoned Pamela and they discussed what to do. When the kids were separated from mothers, the kids went into a different federal agency – outside of DHS – so Scott and Pam had no official way to deal with the worsening crisis. But the public and some people within the government opposed this new harm to children and families.

Scott and Pam anticipated serious problems when the Trump Administration escalated its family separation policies. They sensed the potential to use their professional expertise and reputations as doctors to strongly oppose the escalating cruelty to children, so they used their professional ethics in order to take strong actions beyond their four years of pushing up the bureaucratic chain within the Department of Homeland Security. Nationwide, all doctors do have an affirmative obligation to report certain things. (*e.g*., reporting suspected cases of child abuse). They invoked this to take urgent action.

**Scott explained how the Governmental Accountability Project helped him:**

This is when Scott reached out to the Government Accountability Project. He said when he called GAP, Louis was the person who answered the phone. They started making great progress.

Glen said our society needs high quality resources to be readily available, and it’s nice when the head person answers the phone. He said that actually, GAP does have a good staff. Louis said that any of their staff members would have given good service to Scott. Glen said that – based on what he has learned about GAP – everybody on staff is “very mission-driven.” Everybody shares the commitment to GAP’s powerfully good work of serving clients such as Scott and Pamela.

Scott and Pam acted upon their professional ethical responsibilities to blow the whistle. By the time Scott contacted GAP for help, both of them knew they needed to do something beyond their efforts to report the problems within DHS. He said they contacted GAP so they could take their additional efforts both legally and effectively. He said GAP’s intake process asks whether a new client simply wants to report what they have discovered or whether they also want to solve the problem. In order for a whistleblower to solve the problem, the process that Louis had summarized a few minutes earlier is what is needed. GAP works with whistleblowers to develop practical plans that can actually cause the employer to make necessary changes. Scott said he and Pamela wanted the children to be protected instead of harmed, so they worked with GAP to develop plans to accomplish that.

As a result, he said that he and Pamela have enjoyed an ongoing relationship with GAP that has continued to the present time. He said this is different from somebody who deals with a law firm to solve a legal problem and then they’re done. He said even this morning (on the January 2022 afternoon when we taped this interview) he had been on the phone with some of Louis’ colleagues to deal with some related concerns on behalf of the health of detained families.

Louis said that Scott’s summary reflected accurately how they have been interacting in these past few years to make effective changes in the system. They’ve been communicating with the Inspector General, with law enforcement agencies, with Congress, professional medical organizations, and other entities. They have made a tremendous difference. Louis added that the 2018 whistleblowing from Scott and Pamela have inspired other people to blow the whistle on similar kinds of systemic problems all over the country in the past few years.

Glen expressed appreciation for GAP’s crucial question about whether a new whistleblower wants to merely make a statement or also wants to make a change. He thanked GAP for helping people actually make changes beyond making statements. He appreciated GAP’s strategies and resources that provide leverage that helps people pivot toward making positive changes that solve problems.

Scott said that if anyone watching this TV interview at any time in the future thinks they might need to blow a whistle on waste, fraud, abuse, threats to public safety, etc., and thinks they might be protected by whistleblower laws, he urges them to contact the Government Accountability Project and get advice before taking any action or risking anything. He said it was crucial for him and Dr. McPherson to get GAP’s legal help early. GAP advised them how to protect themselves while taking each step in the process of blowing the whistle on the Department of Homeland Security. It is very important to take a sequence of steps in order to blow the whistle effectively in order to protect themselves while also pushing for the changes that DHS needed to take. After taking their sequence of steps up with necessary reports, etc., up the chain of command, then Scott and Pamela could safely reach out to Congress’s Whistleblower Protection Caucus with a legally protected disclosure of their findings.

Louis mentioned that whistleblowers typically see serious problems in specific policies, so they want to talk about those policies. Louis said GAP helps whistleblowers talk effectively about the specific facts of the problems they have observed. Other people can fix the wrongheaded policies that led to the specific problems. After the whistleblowers have exposed the facts, other people who have the authority to change the policies will be able to fix those. Louis said the whistleblowers are legally protected when they report the facts, but they are not legally protected if they get involved in trying to change the policies.

Glen thanked Louis for that savvy insight. He added that within any governmental agency, before somebody who feels the agency has wronged them must work within that agency’s internal appeals process and “exhaust your administrative remedies” before a court will accept your case. This seems somewhat analogous to what Louis said just now. The internal work is necessary before going outside of the agency to the media or a state legislature or Congress or elsewhere.

**Here is more information that we did not have time to say during this part of our interview:**

Scott and Pamela were delighted to learn from GAP how federal laws could protect them. Whistleblowing is NOT a partisan issue. In fact, Congress’s Whistleblower Caucus has bipartisan support.

Doctors Scott Allen and Pamela McPherson are medical and mental health experts, respectively, with the Department of Homeland Security’s Office Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (DHS CRCL).

GAP’s website [**https://whistleblower.org**](https://whistleblower.org/)provides interesting information about Scott’s case:[**https://whistleblower.org/?s=scott+allen**](https://whistleblower.org/?s=scott+allen)and this press release about the doctors’ case: [**https://whistleblower.org/press-release/immigration-whistleblowers-drs-scott-allen-and-pamela-mcpherson-win-ridenhour-prize**/](https://whistleblower.org/press-release/immigration-whistleblowers-drs-scott-allen-and-pamela-mcpherson-win-ridenhour-prize/)

**Information and insights about publicity:**

Scott summarized the steps he and Dr. McPherson developed and took with their own professional organizations – and the Government Accountability Project – before they blew the whistle publicly about the facts. They knew they needed professionals to substantiate the facts that they would be exposing, so they made necessary arrangements. Professional organizations have developed professional ethics, so they tapped into that resource too in order to help them justify their whistleblowing. He said within two weeks of when they reported their findings to Congress, 14 nationwide professional organizations officially supported their whistleblowing.

Scott said GAP is highly skilled in how to use media and publicity effectively and legally. GAP helped his case significantly. He said neither he nor Dr. McPherson enjoys working with news media. He said their entire careers have focused on quietly performing high quality medical work within the bureaucracies. They do not want publicity for themselves. Nevertheless, they knew that they would need to reach out to the news media in order to change the situations within DHS that they knew needed to be changed. Scott said GAP respected him and Pamela. Their findings were promptly reported on the front page of the New York ***Times***. [**https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/24/us/politics/biden-border-immigrants.html**](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/24/us/politics/biden-border-immigrants.html) Many media wanted on-camera interviews, but he and Pamela declined. They wanted time for Congress to deal with the facts that they had reported to Congress.

He said they made their disclosure in the summer of 2018, and later in the fall of 2018 this drifted out of the news. Then CBS’s TV investigative news program “60 Minutes” asked GAP to help them run a segment about this for their TV series. Scott said GAP’s lawyers helped them overcome their reluctance, so they agreed to participate in this news reporting program.

Because of the 3-hour time difference, people on the East Coast could see the “60 Minutes” program three hours sooner than he could watch it in his home in California. He said that before he could watch it, Trump had immediately tweeted a message saying this was “fake news.” Scott said the “60 Minutes” program revived public concern about the problems that he and Pamela had exposed, and the public concern has remained strong ever since then. He said it was an issue in the 2020 election, and it’s still in the news. They have succeeded in making some of the changes that they were seeking.

The “60 Minutes” interview for November 26, 2018, was the #1 most popular segment for 2018. It shows a 3-year-old child who was reunited with his mother. The mother was extremely sad when the child showed great fear of being reunited for fear that another separation might later occur, according to Pam McPherson. CBS won an award for that episode. [**https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-family-separation-policy-mexican-border-60-minutes-investigation-greater-in-number-than-trump-administration-admits/**](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-family-separation-policy-mexican-border-60-minutes-investigation-greater-in-number-than-trump-administration-admits/)

Louis said GAP does not push whistleblowers to publicize their information in the media more than they are comfortable doing. He said almost no whistleblowers want media coverage. They simply want to solve the problems – but without drawing any attention to themselves. He said that people who oppose whistleblowers often criticize them for simply wanting attention for themselves, but that accusation is not true. Louis said that GAP tells their clients that once they have started to blow the whistle they can’t pull back; they have to keep going and see the process through. They might end up with a bigger audience than they had wanted at the outset. GAP trusts the clients to decide for themselves how much they are willing to risk being in the public eye. GAP helps the whistleblower guide the path until it becomes publicly known, and then other powerful entities do other things with it.

Glen said that in the past few minutes he was hearing from both Scott and Louis that there is a lot of respect flowing in both directions between clients and GAP. He said the whistleblowers respect their roles as employees of the organizations where they work – and they want to actually solve problems rather than merely complain about them. The whistleblowers also respect the expert consultation and services that GAP provides.

In return, GAP respects the integrity and autonomy of their clients, the whistleblowers, to make their own relevant decisions about how to proceed.

Glen said he feels immersed in the positive relationship of mutual respect they create so all of them can move ahead and solve problems. He said this positive mutual relationship is lacking in many settings, so he is happy to see GAP and the clients create this so they can take positive actions.

**Whistleblowers and professional organizations:**

Earlier in this interview Dr. Scott Allen had mentioned how he and Dr. Pamela McPherson drew upon their professional ethics for strength in taking their actions. Now Glen said that people in many professions are required by their **professional ethics** (as doctors, as nurses, as teachers, as lawyers, and so forth) to report serious problems that they encounter. Some whistleblowers who belong to professional organizations receive validation and support from those organizations. Scott had worked with Physicians for Human Rights **(**[**https://phr.org**](https://phr.org)). Someone at that non-profit organization urged Scott to contact GAP, so he called and talked with Louis.

Also, people some kinds of occupations are actually **required by law** to report suspected cases of abuse and so forth. Glen said that in the state where he lives, if a public school teacher suspects that a student is being abused at home, that teacher is **required by law** to report it to the appropriate authorities. Glen expressed appreciation for those laws and those professional organizations that support reporting or blowing the whistle.

Scott said he is glad Glen raised this point. He said that as a doctor he is required to report suspicions of abuse of children or abuse of adults who are elderly or disabled. He said the law in such cases is much stronger than the laws protecting whistleblowers. He said the whistleblower law approach says if you CHOOSE TO report suspected abuse you would have some protections against retaliation. The **mandatory reporting laws** for certain kinds of occupations are much stronger: You ABSOLUTELY MUST report suspected abuse. He said whistleblower laws protect employees who report waste, fraud, abuse, threats to public safety, etc. He said ALL public employees and ALL governmental contractors should be REQUIRED to report suspected examples of waste, fraud, abuse, threats to public safety, etc. He urged us to work toward that kind of model.

Scott added that this kind of change would also protect whistleblowers from the pejorative sterotype that some people try to impose upon them. If the law recognized a POSITIVE REQUIREMENT to report problems, the public would see whistleblowers in a more positive light than currently exists. Whistleblowers are not seeking attention for themselves. Rather, they are acting upon their integrity and protecting the public’s well-being. This would be an ethical approach.

Glen said Scott’s approach is actually grounded in the public’s consciousness and ethics. Earlier in the interview Louis had said that whistleblowing is not a partisan matter or a narrowly political matte. Society wants and needs this kind of honesty, fairness, and efficiency. This is practically universally supported in our society. Glen said these laws exist precisely because these values are held widely, broadly and deeply. He is glad GAP is pushing ahead with this approach.

Louis added that the vast majority of people who became publicly identified as whistleblowers were basically ordinary, good employees who acted upon their high-quality ethical standards. They were just doing their jobs. Then they got retaliated against because they were acting honestly and responsibly. They had never intended to go public with their information – and never intended to become whistleblowers – and in many cases don’t even like the term “whistleblower.” They were just doing what was honest and ethical. When they got retaliated against, they recognized that they turned out to be whistleblowers.

Glen thanked Louis for making this distinction. This is important for the public to understand.

**How to protect whistleblowers:**

Glen said that whistleblowers stick their necks out – sometimes way out – and while they may receive support, some whistleblowers actually do incur great risks. We need strong laws to protect whistleblowers – at both federal and state levels. Also, we need news media and other entities to understand and support them.

Louis said GAP has worked with federal laws that protect whistleblowers and with a few of the states that have laws protecting them. He said about 43 states have whistleblower laws, but some are not very effective while some other states’ laws are much better. He said federal laws protect all federal employees and all federal contractors. Also, he said, federal laws protect whistleblowers who work for all publicly traded business corporations and are blowing the whistle on many kinds of corporate problems, such as those related to financial abuses, public health, and the environment.

Louis said we need access to federal district courts in order to protect whistleblowers. Without access to federal district courts, the problems get trapped within the bureaucracies, and the bureaucracies are terribly hostile to whistleblowers. He said it is very difficult to protect your rights within those bureaucracies, but GAP does win most of its cases because they provide high quality services to their clients, GAP has a good reputation, and GAP can generate effective media coverage. Unfortunately, many people do not reach out to GAP for help, and they get absolutely squashed within federal bureaucracies, he said.

Louis said an important reform would be to create the same standards and processes across every part of the corporate world, so people who work in meat processing plants, food processing plants, pharmaceutical companies, and other industries regulated by the federal government should have the same kinds of rights, but that’s not the case now. For example, he said you are protected if you work for a pizza company and blow the whistle on a serious problem with a pizza that has meat on it, but you are not protected if the pizza does not have meat on it. He said these kinds of absurd inequities exist in the private sector.

Glen said that the public has known for decades that many governmental regulatory agencies have been “captured” by the industries that they are responsible for regulating. Presidents and governors very often appoint corporate “insiders” to positions in charge of those regulatory agencies, so instead of holding the businesses accountable, they let those businesses abuse the public, abuse the environment, abuse public health, and so forth. We end up with “sweetheart deals” instead of honest regulation to protect the public. Glen said the voters need to hold the politicians accountable for this corruption.

**We did not have time to raise these issues during our interview:**

* Washington State has a law to protect whistleblowers, but it should be strengthened.
* In early December 2021, a friend sent Glen some information about reforming the federal government’s Espionage Act, which was passed in 1917 and has been amended a few times, but needs significant reforms now to protect people’s rights. The 1917 Espionage Act prohibits obtaining several kinds of information related to the national defense that might hurt the U.S. or help any foreign nation. This law is seriously unfair in restraining potential whistleblowers because the law prevents legitimate whistleblowers to say why they leaked information, and it assumes they were intending to hurt the U.S., and it prevents them from challenging that assumption. The federal government can retroactively claim that the information leaked was “top secret,” even if it was not. In early December 2021, Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) offered an amendment to the Protecting Our Democracy Act that would have protected federal whistleblowers in several important ways. Unfortunately, the congressional committee ruled the amendment “out of order” and prevented discussion. Rep. Tlaib will try again.
* Another great non-profit organization, the Project on Government Oversight (POGO, [**www.pogo.org**](http://www.pogo.org)) celebrated National Whistleblower Day in July 2021 to recognize the contributions made by all those who are willing to speak truth to power even at great personal risk to themselves. These truth-tellers are a first line of defense against government corruption and abuse of power. POGO has been working on such issues for decades and helps people expose wrongdoing. POGO is urging Congress to pass the Whistleblower Protections Improvement Act.

**More information about GAP’s strategies and activities:**

Glen said that earlier in the interview Louis had provided interesting information about how the Government Accountability Project works to help whistleblowers. (See page 3 above.) Louis summarized GAP’s strategy with two drawings of circles. Both Louis and Scott have explained GAP’s effective work. Now Glen invited Louis to share more information about GAP’s intentions, strategies and activities.

Louis said their work – and the courageous work of whistleblowers – is really about the concept of truth-telling. He said the public might more warmly support someone who is labeled a “truth-teller” than a “whistleblower.” The concept of “truth-teller” really gets at the core purpose of what a whistleblower is trying to do. He said truth-tellers should be recognized and honored and appreciated in various ways. He suggested, for example, if a truth-teller is a member of a local faith community, that congregation should publicly affirm their courageous action. The whistleblower battle can be lonely, so support from faith communities and other credible organizations is important. Louis said many whistleblowers lose many of their friends, so other people need to stand up in support and solidarity.

Glen said he has heard that some whistleblowers suffer other kinds of traumas, such as their marriages falling apart. He said that when we were preparing for this interview, Scott had said those kinds of traumas often do happen, but fortunately his own marriage stayed strong. Glen invited Scott to share what has happened to him since his information became public in 2018. Scott used this opportunity for publicly thanking his wife for standing solidly with him. He said his wife’s father had worked actively in the Civil Rights struggle in Mississippi, along with Medgar Evers and other courageous people. She comes from a family tradition of doing what’s right, even against strong odds. He said Dr. McPherson’s husband also stood solidly with her when she became a whistleblower.

Scott said both he and Pamela emerged rather unscathed from this difficulty, and both of them still work with the Department of Homeland Security. He said he was able to continue working with DHS partly because he had great support from the medical profession and especially because he received great advice from GAP about how to negotiate his efforts. He said GAP not only provided expert legal advice but also drew upon decades of expertise from Louis and GAP’s other professionals about how to engage with the government. They convinced DHS that they were sincere in trying to do what’s right – and do it in the right way. GAP’s comprehensive support was essential for the successful experiences that Scott and Pamela enjoyed throughout this process. GAP’s support was important not only for the substantive case they were presenting, but also for their personal well-being.

Glen said he very much appreciates Louis’ work since 1977-78 and the Government Accountability Project, which spun off from the Institute for Policy Studies ([**www.ips-dc.org**](http://www.ips-dc.org)), which Glen said he has been financially supporting since the mid-1970s. IPS does excellent work on a variety of issues. He said he recently featured a professional economist from IPS on a recent TV program.

**We did not have time during the interview to discuss insights about various other aspects of whistleblowing:**

* Different variables occur in some whistleblower cases. Sometimes – as in Scott’s case – professional standards and organizations might provide solid support, but in other cases – as we said a moment ago – whistleblowers might suffer very serious pushback and retaliation from the bureaucracies and other entities, and might even lose friendships.
* It’s important to emphasize that whistleblowing transcends partisanship and enjoys support from politicians in both political parties. Whistleblowers do not talk partisan politics with anyone. Whistleblowers are ethical, not partisan.
* Scott kept his bosses informed every step of the way. This worked well for him.
* People do have a right to report problems up the chain of command in their jobs – and to Congress and other relevant entities.
* In some cases a “smoking gun” could be exposed, and this compelling evidence can win a case.
* Because whistleblowing is based on facts and a deep desire for valid public policy, emphasizing the commitment to truth and other positive values can protect a whistleblower from being marginalized as a vindictive action from a disgruntled employee. “Taking the high ground” can protect the integrity of the whistleblower and make it easier for people to support and protect whistleblowers.
* Let’s protect the concept of whistleblowing and debunk some myths about it. Two years ago Dana Gold, GAP’s  Dana Gold, senior counsel and director of education, wrote an op-ed that was published in the Washington ***Post***. Here is a link to the op-ed, which clearly debunks five misleading concepts about whistleblowing: [**https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-whistleblowers/2019/04/05/8a5de2ac-5624-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e\_story.html**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-whistleblowers/2019/04/05/8a5de2ac-5624-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e_story.html)
* Let’s help move our national culture even further in support of whistleblowing. A fairly recent poll (a year ago?) showed that 86% of the public want protections for whistleblowers. Every federal law that GAP has helped to pass has enjoyed huge bi-partisan support (unanimous or nearly unanimous). Republican Senator Grassley from Iowa strongly supports whistleblowing. The only serious problems recently have been related to Trump (especially his impeachment evidence, some of which came from whistleblowers). That’s the only time there had been a partisan divide.

**We did not have time during the interview to discuss some other recent cases:**

* About 50 years ago Daniel Ellsberg famously reported in the ***Pentagon Papers*** how the U.S. government had lied to us persistently about the Vietnam War. [**https://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers**](https://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers)
* Likewise, a number of other people throughout the “national security” establishment have blown the whistle on extremely serious abuses by the CIA, the National Security Agency, and other entities. I read the book written by John Kiriakou, a whistleblower who worked for the CIA. John Kiriakou and Thomas Drake know firsthand what’s at stake. As a CIA whistleblower, John went to prison for two years. As an NSA whistleblower, Tom was dragged through years of Espionage Act prosecution. People of all ages need to read about the experiences of John Kiriakou and Tom Drake. Their personal finances were wrecked by legal persecution.
* Chelsea Manning (formerly Bradley Manning), Daniel Hale, Reality Winner, Edward Snowden, and others have become well known for releasing information about serious governmental abuses related to foreign affairs. (Earlier in the interview Louis had distinguished these kinds of whistleblowers who meets GAP’s criteria from journalists or other persons who “leak” information without being the kind of whistleblower that GAP represents.)
* On May 9, 2016, Chelsea Manning was honored (in absentia) with a Whistleblowing Prize awarded by a different organization, Blueprint for Free Speech, a non-profit dedicated to supporting freedom of expression for all individuals and seeking improved government transparency. Also receiving wards were John Kiriakou and Dr. Raj Mattu. On that day, Chelsea Manning said, “I keep fighting to warn the world of the dangerous trend in which the only information you can access is the kind that someone with money or power wants you to see.” Suelette Dreyfus, one of the judges who awarded the prizes, said, “Whistleblowing is the right to dissent from wrongdoing. … We are proud to publicly acknowledge the bravery of these tremendous people, who have endured persecution and great personal sacrifice because they chose to reveal wrongdoing and corruption in the public interest.”
* Air Force veteran Reality Leigh Winner was charged under the Espionage Act for leaking a report documenting cyber-attacks upon U.S. election infrastructure in June 2017. Upon her arrest, Courage to Resist took the initiative to form a collective response. Watch a CBS “60 Minutes” segment about her experience at this link: [**https://couragetoresist.org/reality-winner-60-min-intv/**](https://couragetoresist.org/reality-winner-60-min-intv/) Also see the “Democracy Now!” broadcast or transcript from June 15, 2021, at this link: [**https://www.democracynow.org/2021/6/15/reality\_winner\_released\_from\_prison?utm\_source=Democracy+Now%21&utm\_campaign=15b1a10f60-Daily\_Digest\_COPY\_01&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_fa2346a853-15b1a10f60-191704661**](https://www.democracynow.org/2021/6/15/reality_winner_released_from_prison?utm_source=Democracy+Now%21&utm_campaign=15b1a10f60-Daily_Digest_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fa2346a853-15b1a10f60-191704661)
* Daniel Hale, who worked for the U.S. Air Force as an intelligence analyst, blew the whistle on U.S. military drone attacks. Daniel Hale was sentenced to almost four years in prison for telling the truth about drone warfare. Hale is not a spy, nor a threat to society. His revelations were not a threat to national security. If they were, the prosecution would be able to identify the harm caused directly from the information Hale made public. Many people who support peace are urging President Biden to pardon him. He was imprisoned in the notorious Communications Management Unit (CMU) at the maximum-security U.S. Penitentiary (USP) at Marion, Illinois, to serve a 45-month sentence, rather than to the low-security prison at Butner, North Carolina, where federal Judge Liam O’Grady had recommended he go. Butner is a prison hospital complex, and O’Grady was cognizant of Daniel’s need for psychological therapy to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder from his time as a U.S. Air Force drone operator. In July 2021, the women-led peace organization CODPINK created a page to support drone whistleblower Daniel Hale. See the five links below, plus video of fellow whistleblower John Kiriakou's analysis of Hale's 45-month prison sentence and the letter Hale wrote to the judge before sentencing.

**See the links about Daniel Hale at the top of the next column:**

[**How to Support Daniel Hale**](https://www.codepink.org/supportdanielhale)

[**https://www.codepink.org/supportdanielhale**](https://www.codepink.org/supportdanielhale)

[**Daniel Hale's Letter to the Judge Prior to Sentencing**](https://sparrowmedia.net/2021/07/former-air-force-intelligence-analyst-daniel-hale-explains-why-he-leaked-us-drone-secrets/)

[**https://sparrowmedia.net/2021/07/former-air-force-intelligence-analyst-daniel-hale-explains-why-he-leaked-us-drone-secrets/**](https://sparrowmedia.net/2021/07/former-air-force-intelligence-analyst-daniel-hale-explains-why-he-leaked-us-drone-secrets/)

[**https://www.codepink.org/nyt\_danielhale?utm\_campaign=nyt\_daniel\_hale&utm\_medium=email&utm\_source=codepink**](https://www.codepink.org/nyt_danielhale?utm_campaign=nyt_daniel_hale&utm_medium=email&utm_source=codepink)

* GAP has represented many dozens of clients at the U.S. government’s nuclear waste site at Hanford in Eastern Washington. Since 1945 Hanford has been accumulating nuclear waste from nuclear weapons production and local nuclear power plants. The nuclear waste has been leaking horribly and contaminating nearby lands and waters, including the Columbia River. Billions of our federal tax dollars have been spent (often wasted) trying (sometimes merely pretending) to clean up the nuclear waste. Several non-profit organizations are working on this.
* Conscientious health professionals at the Veterans Administration really are committed to providing high quality medical care to military veterans. Some professionals at the VA have been blowing the whistle on various systemic problems. A reliable non-profit organization has been reporting that the VA has been retaliating illegally against whistleblowers who have exposed the VA’s embarrassing failures to provide adequate care. A different non-profit organization that I mentioned earlier in this document has provided some information at this link: [**http://www.pogo.org/blog/2017/04/will-trumps-veterans-affairs-executive-order-make-difference-whistleblowers.html**](http://www.pogo.org/blog/2017/04/will-trumps-veterans-affairs-executive-order-make-difference-whistleblowers.html)

**More information about the Government Accountability Project:**

Glen said he greatly respects the organization whose work we have been discussing during this interview. He said he has been reading information from the Government Accountability Project ([**https://whistleblower.org**](https://whistleblower.org)), and he has enjoyed donating financial support for this non-profit organization’s powerfully effective efforts.

He said he appreciates GAP’s four main activities, which we have discussed during the interview:

1. They represent people like other law firms do.

2. They investigate, organize, etc., for the whistleblowers’ concerns, so they don’t drown in the waves they create, and so they end with reforms.

3. They promote legislation.

4. They educate the public.

Louis said that during the past 43 years GAP has been proving the importance of focusing on truth and accurate information. Truth and accurate information are a source of power. People have been using these to make positive changes in the world. He also said that on the other hand, some other people who are corrupt try to suppress truthful information. They try to keep it known by just a few people within their organizations and try to prevent it from being shared with the outside world. Louis said GAP keeps seeing this dynamic play out over and over again at the national level.

Glen said he strongly supports democracy. Democracy requires truth-telling and information-sharing so the public can make their best decisions instead of being fooled by people who are trying to baloney us into seeing things only from their angle. He said we must get the public very well informed, and he appreciates how well the Government Accountability Project has been doing this.

Glen said all of his TV programs create opportunities for ethical, well-informed people to educate the public so the public will be empowered to make smart decisions to solve problems and improve our local communities, our nation and our world.

Glen mentioned only briefly a few recent examples of whistleblowers that he summarized on pages 9-10 above. He said some of what they did was “leaking” information, and some was the kind of whistleblowing we are discussing here during this interview.

**Many excellent sources of information exist:**

Glen said we need to engage the public in understanding these things. He encouraged people to connect with the Government Accountability Project. See GAP’s website [**https://whistleblower.org/**](https://whistleblower.org/) and information about Dr. Scott Allen’s case at [**https://whistleblower.org/?s=scott+allen**](https://whistleblower.org/?s=scott+allen)

He invited the people watching this interview to look for the many additional sources of information that exist. For example, he also appreciates a different non-profit organization, the Project On Government Oversight (POGO, [**https://pogo.org**](https://pogo.org)), a nonpartisan independent non-profit organization. This watchdog investigates and exposes waste, corruption, abuse of power, and cases where the government fails to serve the public or silences those who report wrongdoing. POGO is committed to making sure our government serves the public interest. They do this by reporting on various kinds of problems and holding our elected officials and government agencies accountable.

**A different source produced this 3-minute video that explains why whistleblowers are important:** [**Watch our video today on why whistleblowers need our help.**](https://click.everyaction.com/k/33138999/297963073/-1767434987?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9QR08vUEdPLzEvNzg5MjIiLA0KICAiRGlzdHJpYnV0aW9uVW5pcXVlSWQiOiAiZGIzMjc2Y2EtZTZlZi1lYjExLWE3YWQtNTAxYWM1N2I4ZmE3IiwNCiAgIkVtYWlsQWRkcmVzcyI6ICJnbGVuYW5kZXJzb25AaW50ZWdyYS5uZXQiDQp9&hmac=0lhT_iYoRf479UC-xegE_Wqp_HGYX_3Z28aSqsKLJAc=&emci=227c247c-c9ef-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&emdi=db3276ca-e6ef-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&ceid=19751)

Glen said mainstream media often fail to adequately cover whistleblowers’ disclosures, so he appreciates the alternative, progressive news media sources that report about whistleblowers and the truths they expose. Anyone may contact Glen at **glenanderson@integra.net** to receive a list of good news sources that report on a variety of issues. Many whistleblower news cases have been publicized through “Democracy Now!”, which broadcasts on TV, radio, and through the internet. He invites people to search for specific whistleblowers’ names and topics through [**www.democracynow.org**](http://www.democracynow.org)

**Glen said that when he posts this interview’s video to his blog, he will also post a very thorough typed summary of what we said during this hour. (This is what you are reading now.)** This thorough summary includes links to some sources of good information. **Please tell your friends to watch this TV interview video and/or read the thorough summary.** Simply visit Glen’s blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org), click the “TV Programs” category, and click the title of this TV episode: “Whistleblowers Serve the Public. Let’s Protect Them.”

Glen has seen information and opportunities to support whistleblowers also through another organization whose website is [**www.whistlebloweraid.org**](http://www.whistlebloweraid.org).

Although the federal government’s Veterans Administration has often provided good quality health care for veterans, a number of problems have been exposed by whistleblowers working for the VA. The VA has been retaliating illegally against whistleblowers who have exposed the VA’s embarrassing failures to provide adequate care. A few paragraphs above I mentioned POGO. POGO provided this information: [**http://www.pogo.org/blog/2017/04/will-trumps-veterans-affairs-executive-order-make-difference-whistleblowers.html**](http://www.pogo.org/blog/2017/04/will-trumps-veterans-affairs-executive-order-make-difference-whistleblowers.html)

Our TV guest Louis Clark, who leads GAP, was featured as part of the “Americans Who Tell the Truth” (AWTT) project by Robert Shetterly at: [**https://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org/portrait-galleries**](https://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org/portrait-galleries) GAP and AWTT have worked closely together. Many of the people featured at this link are whistleblowers, some of whom have been GAP clients.

Doctors Scott Allen and Pamela McPherson, medical and mental health experts with the Department of Homeland Security’s Office Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (DHS CRCL), blew the whistle to Congress in June 2018 on the risk of harm to children posed by expanded detention implemented under the Trump administration’s “zero-tolerance” immigration policy after witnessing abuse and misconduct during repeated inspections of child and family detention centers. They won a prestigious award for their courageous whistleblowing effort. See information here: [**https://whistleblower.org/press-release/immigration-whistleblowers-drs-scott-allen-and-pamela-mcpherson-win-ridenhour-prize/**](https://whistleblower.org/press-release/immigration-whistleblowers-drs-scott-allen-and-pamela-mcpherson-win-ridenhour-prize/)

Earlier in this document was a link to an article that I’m repeating here in this list of useful information sources: **<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-whistleblowers/2019/04/05/8a5de2ac-5624-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e_story.html>**

GAP posted to their website a resource for people who might want to blow the whistle on some federal government agency or related entity. See and/or download it here: [**Download a copy of “Truth-Telling in Government: A Guide to Whistleblowing for Federal Employees, Contractors, and Grantees” today!**](http://url8416.whistleblower.org/ls/click?upn=MttSTUcvjCd0EKTauFebuerZeJnzKIoFDmZv6HMJrYKvXOrpCFDsE5BU00N-2FRvW2NmeOwTR3wUZRolW8SUHU6T3-2BY-2BcnC2U-2BSrkw5vxpHoyXGFHRP74Tb7iRE3lXq2Gt9dXL_U2fU0-2F0oxxBa0y2mvxlX3Mc49Kjo8Ymc6kweB6B7VO8FsaSGjhn8GBCxaIaU3WIcDfMAdjbpuAN5d-2B943vNPWCqmxboDr8OTkelgUyvchyToKKsWEIpgiSnoqyWrHKtxQ3XCEB0VNhz09XbbzKHp2yr-2BecMny6HWYfdMN4huZgRXy-2BCT1AcirbEfS-2FEN7o-2B02M3JGQZ07LCIv9xe-2Fiu1Z3CipNygXquRxlN3df-2FDnhmfKr3kBOjZjMWbrWoAJvJffX2ShCjzeF5tGBB-2BM2D0ElBv4kYOhIT2M9uh-2Fmny04XYmQIl-2B2q-2FFOirM2fCx0LM1jSpNGwX7-2FviQ4V26aEg8g-3D-3D)

**Glen’s closing encouragement:**

Glen thanked Louis Clark and Dr. Scott Allen for the courage and the truth-telling power they have been bringing into their work – and for the wisdom and insights they shared during this interview.

He also thanked the people who have been watching this interview.

Glen encouraged every person to pay attention to their best values and to find ways to act upon them. Even if you are not technically a whistleblower, you can stand up for truth, fairness, and compassion in various ways in your everyday life – whether or not it’s related to a job. Sometimes you might feel the need to take stronger nonviolent actions to support truth, fairness and compassion. Glen quoted the late Sister Jackie Hudson, one of the great nonviolent activists against nuclear weapons, who encouraged people, “Take one step outside of your comfort zone.” Even if you face headwinds against you, decent people will support your efforts. Truth is powerful.

Glen said that ever since he was a little kid, he has valued the importance of people’s consciences. In 1972 his draft board recognized that he is a Conscientious Objector. Instead of being drafted into the military, he performed two years of alternative civilian service working in a local welfare office for the Washington State government agency that ran the system. In that job he recognized many systemic injustices in the public assistance system. The problems were not criminal, but they were dysfunctional and cruel.

He wrote a report about it, moved to Olympia, the state capital, in order to keep a close eye on the state government agency and state Legislature. He got some state legislators to read his report. One said it was the best report he had seen on the issues. Another legislator got the head of the big state welfare agency to read his report, and we discussed it in a face-to-face meeting. He also testified to some state legislative committees at the request of a racial justice organization. While he was not technically a whistleblower of the kind that the Government Accountability Project helps, he did what he could do in the context of his first-hand experience in a job.

He encouraged other people to pay attention to their best values, consider how they might act upon them, and see how they could speak up based on truth, fairness, and other good principles in whatever settings they may find themselves in.

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence through my blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)or by phoning me at
(360) 491-9093 or e-mailing me at **glenanderson@integra.net**

Glen ends each TV program with this invitation to help make progress:

**We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.**

**We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.**

**The world needs whatever you can do to help!**