

Dear Catherine

Content warning: This following article contains some detail regarding sensitive themes and topics, such as child abuse and sex crimes.

In a compelling journey of courage and resilience, Jane Turner's story unfolds as a testament to the power of standing up for what's right, even in the face of inordinate adversity. A 25-year veteran and trailblazer within the FBI, Turner's career is marked by her pioneering role as the first woman to head an FBI resident agency, where she passionately fought crimes against women and child sex crime victims. Her incredible resolve and integrity were put to the test when she courageously exposed systemic failures in the investigation of child abuse cases, despite retaliation from her superiors.

In this *Sunday Read*, the National Whistleblower Center ([NWC](#)) revisits the twists and turns of Turner's career – from selflessly exposing and correcting horrible injustices, to becoming an unstoppable force in today's whistleblower landscape.

Law Enforcement Career and Retaliation Victory

Jane Turner was a highly decorated, 25-year veteran Special Agent with the FBI. She served in the most difficult investigatory positions and was the first woman named as the head of an FBI resident agency, combating crimes against women and child sex crime victims on North Dakota Indian Reservations.

From 1998 to 1999, Turner discovered and exposed failures to properly investigate child abuse cases at the FBI's child crime program. An abridged account of her landmark ordeal was chronicled in [Rules for Whistleblowers: A Handbook for Doing What's Right](#), written by NWC Founder and Chairman of the Board [Stephen M. Kohn](#), who later represented Turner in her retaliation suit against the FBI.

“Turner had challenged one of the most tight-knit and insular agencies in the country—an employer with an authoritarian history...” Kohn wrote. “Turner had directly taken on the FBI’s ‘old boy network.’ She had accused respected and high-level G-men of incompetence and misconduct in handling horrendous child-crime cases. She had accused her bosses of ignoring the brutal rape of a five-year-old Native American. Shocking allegations.”

The charges stemmed from the aforementioned boy’s hospitalization in 1999, when initial investigations indicated that his stepfather had raped him, with the injuries reportedly traumatizing even the emergency room nurses.

A botched investigation by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the FBI agent for the Turtle Mountain reservation left the case closed without pursuing charges. Turner’s visit weeks later forced her to reopen the case at the beckoning of hospital staff. This horrific ordeal coincided with the bureau’s allegations of her “performance issues.”

Rather than turn her back, she pursued the case and secured a confession from the abusive stepfather which led to a guilty plea. Despite her commitment to justice, the FBI shunned Turner for doubting a fellow agent. Turner also exposed criminal theft of property at the 9/11 crime scene by a handful of FBI agents. She was harshly retaliated against for reporting these violations to the Department of Justice, Inspector General.

Furthermore, Turner was removed from the senior resident agent position.

Turner successfully fought her removal and in 2007, Kohn’s trial team won a historic victory on her behalf – and for all [FBI whistleblowers](#) – before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. After a 10-year battle, the jury unanimously sided with Turner, awarding her more than \$1.5 million, the largest compensatory damage amount permitted under the law for federal employees (under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act). Turner is only one of a small handful of FBI agents to win her cases under the [FBI Whistleblower Protection Act](#).

On The Mic and in the Public

Turner’s experience was the catalyst for the next phase of her career, with the mission of helping to uphold integrity among public agencies and protect whistleblower rights.

She serves on the Board of Directors for Accountability at the FBI, is the director and chair of NWC’s Whistleblower Leadership Council and is a Member of its Board of Directors.

Demonstrating a need to use her voice to raise awareness, [Turner](#) became the host and writer of the Whistleblower Network News feature, “[Whistleblower of the Week](#),” and its acclaimed companion podcast of the same name, exploring the realities of coming forward.

Turner is one of the public faces for the campaign to make July 30th the permanent National Whistleblower Day in the U.S., having served as NWC's Mistress of Ceremonies for past years' events.

[Most recently](#), she led the opening of NWC's National Whistleblower Appreciation Day celebration in Washington, D.C. in July 2023, where more than 100 attendees, experts, legislators, and whistleblowers commenced on Capitol Hill and at NWC's office in Georgetown to discuss accomplishments, updates and share strategies on building effective claims.

Revered as an authority on the topic, Turner has been interviewed by worldwide news outlets like Rolling Stone and CNN on whistleblower stories.

“[W]e cannot allow this to happen,” Turner has said, recounting her experience blowing the whistle. “I was just doing my job as far as I saw. It's very hard to interview a child; they take time... I can parse out whether they're lying or not without putting them under the glaring spotlight. Those skills are something that have to be learned and taught.”

More Whistleblowers and Trailblazing Lawyers

For more inspired reading about people who have come forward to speak expose injustice or fought in the courtroom, visit recent and past NWC coverage:

- [Sarah Carver and Jennifer Griffith](#) – Social Security Fraud Whistleblowers
- [Jacey Messer, Esq.](#) – Whistleblower Attorney
- [Sherron Watkins](#) – Enron Whistleblower

Resources For Whistleblowers

The decision to come forward is not one to be taken lightly, nor should selecting a whistleblower lawyer. [NWC provides resources](#) that can connect you with the right legal professional.

Support NWC

NWC fights to bolster whistleblower programs, inform the public and employees in all

sectors about available laws and protections, and help connect them with the right legal representation. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit our awareness building work is made possible with the support of our generous donors. [Please consider donating \\$100 today](#) to help us continue to educate the public on how to find help when it is time for them to blow the whistle, and donors will receive a copy of [Rules for Whistleblowers: A Handbook for Doing What's Right](#).

DONATE TODAY

This story was written by [Justin Smulison](#), a professional writer, podcaster, and event host based in New York.

Share this email:



Thank you for reading,

Justin Smulison

Contributor

National Whistleblower Center

3238 P Street NW | Washington, D.C. 20007

To ensure you continue to receive emails from us, please add info@whistleblowers.org to your address book

Follow Us!

[Unsubscribe](#) or [Manage Your Preferences](#)