

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2025

**C.B.; R.C.; J.E.; S.H.; A.H.; A.H.; M.J.; J.L.; M.N.; E.P.; S.R.; M.S.; A.S.; N.T.; K.T.; R.W.;  
I.W.; and J.W. v. EDWARD ABER; BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF LA PLATA; SHERIFF SEAN SMITH; LIEUTENANT JACOB HARRIS AND  
SERGEANT MICHAEL SLADE**

**Denver, Colorado, September 4, 2025**—RATHOD | MOHAMEDBHAI LLC and JOHN BAXTER, ATTORNEY AT LAW have filed a lawsuit on behalf of a class of over a hundred women who were forced to strip naked on camera and endure physical manipulation and penetration by jail officials, only for the commander of the jail to later view those videos thousands of times for his own sexual gratification.<sup>1</sup>

For years, the La Plata County Sheriff has forced every person booked at the La Plata County Jail to disrobe and endure an invasive strip search, capturing the entire ordeal on camera. Rather than delete the videos that revealed no contraband or incident, the Sheriff's policy was to store every strip search video on the Jail's database. The Sheriff allows everyone ranked lieutenant or higher to access those videos, for any purpose, at any time, from anywhere, as many times as they want, no matter how old the video, and regardless of whether the person was still incarcerated at the Jail.

When choosing someone to run the Jail and this database, the Sheriff scraped the bottom of the barrel. He hired Edward Aber, even though Mr. Aber was credibly accused of sexual harassment at his prior law enforcement job. Commander Aber's tenure was marred by his inappropriate conduct to female inmates and employees.<sup>2</sup> Commander Aber told employees that he was watching videos of the women being strip searched, he told male subordinates to join him in watching these videos, he would visit female inmates in their cells, and he would take female inmates out of the Jail to accompany him on errands. He even brought female inmates into his office and shut the door. On one occasion, a Jail employee walked into Commander Aber's office to find a female inmate under his desk while he sat in his chair. Commander Aber's harassment also extended online, where he would send women who were once in custody at the Jail sexually suggestive messages.

Even though Commander Aber's misbehavior was visible to all in the Jail, no one in La Plata's government stood up for the women abused by Commander Aber. The Sheriff did not

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<sup>1</sup> We will amend this complaint to add tort claims after the expiration of the CGIA notice period.

<sup>2</sup> At least one of the people housed in the female cellblock of La Plata County Jail, whose strip search videos Commander Aber abused, identifies as male. While the Complaint focuses on Commander Aber's targeting of people whom he perceived to be female, some of Commander Aber's victims may in fact be male or nonbinary.

adequately train, monitor, or discipline Commander Aber or other Jail employees, and Jail employees did not adequately raise concerns about Commander Aber's conduct.

Commander Aber's reign of terror came to an end only when fourteen female Jail employees collectively came forward to report that Commander Aber had sexually harassed them. Only then did investigators think to check Commander Aber's history of accessing the female strip search videos.

When investigators finally audited Commander Aber's viewing history, they revealed conduct that is abhorrent but unsurprising:

- Commander Aber accessed the Jail's evidence database at least 3,166 times over a five-year period;
- Commander Aber accessed at least 117 videos of strip searches of 115 women;
- Commander Aber also viewed videos of women on suicide watch, who were forced to strip naked while being recorded;
- Commander Aber rewatched the same strip search videos multiple, and by one official's description "countless," times;
- Commander Aber would watch these videos from the Jail, his home, hotel rooms in Denver, residential addresses in Arizona, and elsewhere;
- Commander Aber would watch these videos late at night and into the early morning;
- Commander Aber would watch the same videos even years after the strip search occurred; and
- Commander Aber would preserve videos and photos of the strip searches on his personal devices, which he wiped when he discovered the investigation.

The full impact of Commander Aber's abuse is not yet known because the Jail's system purged evidence of his improper access. But it is already clear that Commander Aber's abuse fits into a pattern of institutional and personal failures. Blame for his campaign of abuse rests not only with Commander Aber, but with the County of La Plata, the La Plata Sheriff, and individual Jail employees who enabled and excused his history of misconduct.

The survivors of Commander Aber's abuse deserve justice, which is why our firms have brought claims on behalf of our eighteen clients,<sup>3</sup> and an entire class of women whose identities are not yet known. We are proud to partner with the Rocky Mountain Victims Law Center to ensure that our representation is holistic, survivor-centered, and trauma-informed.

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<sup>3</sup> The complaint list eighteen clients. The law firms currently represent an additional nine clients who will join the lawsuit at a later date.

More information about the case can be found here: <https://rmlawyers.com/la-plata-county-jail/>. We encourage anyone with additional information about this matter to email, [info@rmlawyers.com](mailto:info@rmlawyers.com), or call, (303) 578-4400.

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