Managing Terrorism Events: The Oklahoma Experience

(Excerpt: 2:11 – 46:01)

Ken Hines – KH

Gary Marrs – GM

Sam Gonzales – SG

Dr. Peter Maningas – PM

Caption: April 19, 1995. 9:02 AM.

Voiceover: Welcome to the Emergency Education Network. Tonight, live from Oklahoma City, "Managing Terrorism Events: The Oklahoma Experience". And now your host, Ken Hines.

KH: Good evening and welcome to the Emergency Education Network. I'm Ken Hines, your host for this broadcast which is coming to you live from the Firefighters' Memorial Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Now, the topic of this broadcast is "Managing Terrorism Events: The Oklahoma Experience. Tonight we are focusing on a serious plague that seems to be spreading rapidly across the globe and affecting every nation, including our own. It appears and strikes without warning and leaves a trail of anger, fear, and frustration in its path. It's name? Well, it's called terrorism, a word that has been ringing in our ears all too frequently of late. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma is a city that just over a year ago experienced a devastation of mammoth proportion as a massive truck bomb exploded and ripped apart the Murrah Federal Building in the downtown area. This violent act of terrorism killed an injured hundreds of innocent victims and caused severe property damage. Emergency personnel and law enforcement officers from every corner around the country worked around the clock in and around the remains of the Federal Building to extricate survivors, retrieve victims, and search for clues to the cause of this horrific scene. Now, it seemed as though the entire nation stood still, holding its breath as each hour passed, watching as the death toll continued to climb, trying to comfort that families and the friends of those locked inside the rubble. This tremendous tragedy of violence and lost lives in middle America is one that we will not soon forget.

Slide: Program Topics: Overview of Initial Initial Response. Disaster Scene Became Crime Scene. One Year Later. Training Initiatives.

KH: We'll start tonight…we'll start tonight's program with a review of the initial response by representatives of Oklahoma's fire, police, EMS, and public works. Now, we will learn from these departments how cooperation was not only required but vital between response and enforcement personnel as this disaster scene became a crime scene. Our focus will move on to look at one year later at the aftermath, at what we have learned, and how we can become better prepared as a result of this terrible, terrible emergency. Now we will hear from federal authorities and technical response trainers from Virginia as they describe how processes and procedures and training initiatives have changed nationwide. And, of course, as always you'll

have the opportunity to speak directly with our presenters during two call-in sessions tonight and share your views and opinions with them. Now, we are very, very fortunate to have with us tonight a group of experts who were first on the scene after this terrible bombing incident occurred. The first 12 hours were the most critical in regard to the initial response and caring for the injured. Now first let me welcome Oklahoma City Fire Chief Gary Marrs. Chief Marrs was involved with the incident from the very beginning and we will give us an overview of what his responding fire companies encountered on the scene and how it was handled. Chief Marrs, welcome, and I'll let you begin.

Caption: Gary Marrs. Chief, Oklahoma City Fire Dept.

GM: Thank you, Ken. I'm very happy to be here and welcome to Oklahoma and our museum. I'm proud to have you. April 19th of '95 certainly started out as a typical spring day in Oklahoma, warm and sunny, and of course, the explosion occurred. (Includes several photographs.) You see that this picture here is pretty indicative of the type of debris that was laying around the Murrah building and was what we encountered when we first responded. The first crews coming out of Station 1 were approaching this scene from the west and as well as the Incident Commander also coming out of Station 1. But this is pretty indicative of what they were finding in the streets. You see a lot of debris out of the building – briefcases, office equipment. We were also encountering a lot of the walking wounded, which inhibited the response coming down the street. We found many damaged buildings and many…many, as I mentioned, the walking wounded coming up. Started stopping some of the companies before they actually got up to the Murrah building so we kind of had a staggered response coming in.

GM: We had a lot of other buildings damaged also. We had, as you can see in this picture, the smaller buildings in the foreground – the Water Resources Board and the Athenian Building received severe damage and were certainly some of the ones that were first seen. The Regency Tower High Rise Complex, residential complex you see in the background, also had a lot of people coming out of it evacuating that building. You see the smoke from the car fires – parking lot across the street – was certainly inhibiting some of the view and blocking some of the view as was the dust from the explosion itself. The…. All the fires that we had were in the parking lot, the cars that were on fire. We had no fire in any of the buildings whatsoever that morning. So all the fire that was fought was in the first thirty minutes or so until we could get those car fires extinguished. And then the remainder of our operations were all rescue and recovery operations. One of the first things we did…we had so many structures that were damaged and had people in them that we set up the Incident Command System to where each of the buildings was a separate division. Rather than setting up a different Command for each building, we worked under one Incident Command, set the different buildings as a division. So we had a Murrah division and a Regency division and so on and so forth. Some of the initial search and rescue certainly involved the floor areas that were still standing in the Murrah building. You see here a picture of where the rescue operations on the north face of the building. You see a 135 footer working the far east end of the building. In the foreground, there's a 95 platform. Just a few minutes after this picture was taken, a 100 foot aerial came up between those two. So we had three aerial apparatus working the front of the building and certainly the rubble pile also. We had numerous that could free themselves or that we got freed very easily. Could also make it out the south side of the building down a stairwell that remained intact. So we had a lot of walking wounded coming out of the stairwell onto a plaza. But all of the north side rescues were taken off this aerial apparatus.

GM: Our initial Command Post area was at 6th and Harvey, which is one block north of the Murrah Building. You can see in this picture that some of the agencies are starting to organize here, some of the Command Post and Operations that were going on here and set up here. The…. Some of the hanging debris and the rubble that were being cleared in that first day. I think we have another slide coming up here. This is pretty typical of the hanging debris in the building that was certainly presenting a hazard. Some of the rescue that were taking place in the rubble pile at the front of the building, we had one of the civilian rescuers, a nurse, was struck by something falling off one of the floors making a rubble pile and died later in the hospital. But the initial search and rescue of the floors come off the rubble pile remaining floors. We also started to address those long term issues, starting to worry about the…we knew it was going to go on into the night, certainly looking at lighting, food, sanitation problems at the…for the long term aspect of it. Also expanding the ICS system into the logistics and finance, we knew…later in the day we knew we had the Urban Search and Rescue Teams coming in, we needed a large logistics area. We started working toward an emergency procurement procedure to start getting those things – the supplies and things – that we needed, that we knew we were going to need in a long term operation. And then by nightfall, the first USAR teams arrived on the scene and we started working, coordinating with them. And as you see in this slide, here, we also had heavy storms and high winds move in. I mentioned at the start of this morning it was a warm, sunny day this particular spring day in Oklahoma, went to thunderstorms and tornado warnings that night and that was pretty typical of the operations over the next two weeks.

KH: Very good, Chief. We'll get a chance to visit with you just a little bit later on. Now, we've heard the fire department's perspective and how they initiated their response service to combat this crisis. Now let's move and turn our attention to the law enforcement division and examine how this branch organized its branch activity necessary in this incident. Now here to give us that overview is Oklahoma City's Chief of Police Sam Gonzales. Chief, thank you very much for being here.

Caption: Sam Gonzales. Chief, Oklahoma City Police Dept.

SG: Thank you very much, Ken. It's my pleasure being here with you. The responding police units, the first responding units generally had one of three courses of action that they could choose. Now the first of these was to go into the building and assist with the injured people inside of the building. As you can see from the slide, the water mains inside of the building had burst. The inside was very dangerous to be in. We identified over 70 of our first responders who went into the building to assist in the rescue of the injured and the recovery of the bodies. A secondary objective of those responding was the transportation of the injured. As Chief Marrs had said, for blocks around, the streets were filled and lined with people who were injured. We've identified over five police cars that were used in the transporting and if we can bring up the next slide, we have identified over five of our vehicles that were used in the transporting of over 30 of the victims to the closest hospital to us, which was St. Anthony's Hospital, so certainly the rescue of the injured, the transport of those victims to the hospital. The third objective, probably one of the most important, was the immediate control of our streets so that we could have access for the later responding emergency equipment to be able to get to the scene. And we have a slide that should depict early on our maintaining of the streets. Now this is early on. We have set up the perimeters a couple of blocks back in any direction that allowed access of the emergency equipment responding to the location. We found, from a historical

perspective, that it's very important for the emergency equipment to be able to get to the location.

SG: The next thing we had to do then was find a way to establish a Command Center that was going to accommodate all of the law enforcement personnel that was necessary. This slide shows you that we've got National Guard personnel there, we've got the Department of Public Safety personnel there, and in the background, that's Bell Plaza that served as the law enforcement and fire's command center throughout this entire operation. The last slide that I have shows the size of our perimeter. We collected evidence and had evidence inside of 20 square blocks, so we had an extremely large crime scene perimeter. It took about 450 law enforcement officers on a daily basis just to maintain our perimeters. We had help from the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, the Oklahoma Sherriff's Office, and 114 other agencies from within our state came to assist us with our personnel.

KH: My goodness. Well, Chief, we'll be back with you also later on in the show to talk more specifically about things you did. Now also joining us is Dr. Peter Maningas. He is the Oklahoma City Medical Director of the emergency medical services and Doctor, EMS critical in this emergency, people seeking care, working with the fire department, law enforcement. Why don't you give us your overview of your initial response to the emergency.

Caption: Dr. Peter Maningas. Medical Director, EMS. Oklahoma City, OK.

PM: Thank you, Ken. I brought some footage which may help illustrate the EMS response. Within minutes following the blast, a massive emergency medical response was initiated. If I could please have that film…. The first call came in at 9:03.

Captions from 911 correspondence:

> **Voice 1:** We've got several injuries downtown on that explosion.
>
> **Voice 2:** Okay, where at?
>
> **Voice 1:** In front of the YMCA on 5th.
>
> **Voice 2:** Do you know how many we've got?
>
> **Voice 1:** There's injuries all over the place downtown.
>
> **Voice 2:** Okay, we got it. We're on the way.

PM: Even before this call came in at 9:03, paramedics began to arrive on scene. Between 9:02 and 9:05, two supervisors and seven ambulances manned by over 24 EMTs and paramedics converged on the scene. They came from the north and the south. From the north, they came from St. Anthony's hospital and AMPS' Corporate Headquarters. The first ambulance was in the process of unloading a patient at the time. When the paramedic heard the blast, felt the blast, he immediately gravitated toward the smoke heading south on Robinson – excuse me, on Harvey – until he made it to the northwest corner of the building where he was essentially overtaken by huge numbers of people, both injured and uninjured. He was followed by a supervisor who stopped at the corner of 6th and Harvey, where the fire department had established their incident command post. There were two other ambulances that came from the north. One was in the

process of refueling. The other was manned by paramedics who were being taught advanced cardiac life support at the time. They stopped at the corner on 6th and Robinson at the Journal Record Building, not knowing that the Federal Building had been involved because the smoke had been streaming into the skies from the car fires located in the parking lot across the street from the federal building. There were four other additional ambulances that came from the southwest from the fleet maintenance facility. Three of them went to the western side of the building and the fourth to the eastern side of the building accompanied by a supervisor.

PM: Following this first EMS response, the casualty count continued to swell out into the streets. You can roll it, please.

Captions from miscellaneous emergency correspondence:

> **Correspondence 1:** I've got two critical on 10th and Hudson. We need units.
>
> **Correspondence 2:** I've got 4 or 5 criticals now, and we've got about one hundred walking wounded.
>
> **Correspondence 3:** I'm at 4th and Harvey, I need a hospital. Critical head and eye.
>
> **Correspondence 4:** We're getting ready to depart, we've got two critical and one walking wounded. Any advice on which hospital?
>
> **Correspondence 5: (Voice 1)** This is EMSA emergency. **(Voice 2)** Hi, EMSA, it's OK City Fire. Could you advise us where you're going to be setting up your triage station?
>
> **Correspondence 6:** We need a triage staff, if you have it up here. We're starting to get multiple patients and need to start categorizing.
>
> **Correspondence 7:** All companies, all walking patients, we have triage set up at 6th and Robinson. All walking patients, have them go to 6th and Harvey or Robinson for triage.

PM: At 9:08, the first triage station was established at the corner of 6th and Robinson. It was next to the staging area where ambulances awaited receipt of patients, also EMS command post was located. The way in was south on Robinson and the way out was east on 6th Street. Following this establishment of the initial triage area, there was a second phase in the EMS response comprised of paramedics from other parts of the city and paramedics manned by off – excuse me – ambulances manned by off-duty paramedics. There were 12 ambulances in other parts of the city at the time of the blast. At 9:10, paramedics began to arrive at the fleet maintenance facility. At 9:15, there was a page for all off-duty paramedics to return to duty. And at 9:17, these ambulances manned by off-duty paramedics and coming from other parts of the city converged on the scene. Can you roll that please? They came from all directions. From the north and the southeast, they converged on the initial triage area. From the south and southwest, they converged on the western side of the building. By 9:25, most of EMSA's resources were depleted. So at 9:25, a call for mutual aid went out and between 9:25 and 10:30, 14 other municipalities sent in an additional 20 units if I can have that, please.

Slide: Ambulances. OKC – 34. Tulsa – 34. M. Aid – 29.

PM: Again, these units converged in all directions. In the end, in that first hour and a half, there were 66 ambulances that would arrive on scene; 34 from Oklahoma City, three from Tulsa, 29 from mutual aid municipalities. They would transport over 100 patients that first hour; 32 percent would have serious injuries, major lacerations about the face and neck coupled with blunt trauma from falling debris, 12 percent would have moderate injuries, and 50 percent would be walking wounded. Following this evacuation of the initial stream of patients, there was a new concern. There was indication that the maximum occupancy of the building during normal business hours was approximately 900, so there was a fear that there were still hundreds of patients still trapped in the building. So it was a necessity to move the triage area next to the building itself. May I have that please? So the triage area was moved at 10:21 to the northeast corner of the building. The way in and out was somewhat circuitous because the presence of a charged fire hose that was across Robinson Avenue that was being used or had been used to put out the fires in the parking lot. At 10:29, an event occurred which changed the disaster response from that point forward. Can I have that, please?

Captions from miscellaneous emergency correspondence:

> **Correspondence 1:** Come on out, come on out, get out of there. Let's go. Get out. All companies, come out of the building right now. Everybody evacuate the Federal Building.
>
> **Correspondence 2:** Remove all your personnel from the building immediately. Possibly explosives planted in the building. I repeat. Evacuate the building immediately.

PM: At 10:29, the first bomb threat occurred. The exact nature of the bomb threat was not known at the time. All rescuers and medical personnel were told was that they were to stop all that they were doing and to immediately evacuate the area. This photograph was taken from the Regency Tower facility looking at the north face of the building. You can see that the streets are empty and the fire apparatuses abandoned. Next slide please. This caused the EMS to push to the east, the triage sector was located at the railroad tracks on 6th Street. The staging areas were pushed to the north and the south. Next slide. At 10:50, there was a second bomb threat. Next slide. And this pushed everyone back even farther. And the triage area was pushed back to 6th Street and Harrison at the location of an abandoned warehouse. Within minutes, that warehouse was turned into a field hospital manned by over 50 physicians and nurses and paramedics capable of providing initial stabilization in the event area hospitals became overloaded.

Slide: Transported: EMSA – 95. M. Aid – 44. Other – 65.

PM: But during the next few hours, it became apparent that there were not going to be a large number of patients that were going to be taken from the building alive. Therefore, at 3:30, the staging area and the triage area was moved to the western side of the building where it remained to support rescue operations. In that first hour and a half, 139 patients were transported; 95 by EMSA, 44 by mutual aid. Over 200 had been transported by other means – police, van, pickup truck. There would be 422 patients seen in 22 area hospitals that day. 389 would be injured, 89 would be admitted to the hospital, and of those that were transported, we only had six fatalities; one was dead on arrival, two died in the emergency department, and three died from complications related to their multiple injuries.

KH: Very good, Doctor. Thank you very much for being with us. We'll talk a little bit later on. Now joining us is Bob Ricks. He's the special former agent in charge of Oklahoma with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and he is currently the Director of Oklahoma's Public Safety. Also with us is Paul Brum. He's the Director of Public Works and City Engineer for Oklahoma City. And he supervises five divisions with over 580 employees, all of whom were revolved in the recovery efforts in 1995. By the way, Paul was selected as one of the top ten Public Works Directors in North America. Gentlemen, welcome here, a great deal to discuss. I guess one of the questions since we've…we've…we've brought Bob and Paul in would be…. Massive event. Before we went on the air, we talked about when the FBI responded very quickly after the emergency. Let's talk first about that law enforcement inter-cooperation. Obviously you two knew each other, knew the capabilities of the departments. Bob, why don't we start with you? What did you do when you're agents were initially deployed?

Caption: Bob Ricks. Director, Oklahoma Dept. of Public Safety.

BR: Initially, my agents were deployed directly to the scene even before I arrived. They were assisting in the rescue mission as the initial response as well and starting to…to conduct some preliminary evidence gathering and looking at where perimeters were. When I arrived, the first thing I did was to seek out Sam Gonzales, the Chief of Police, because I know primarily would be the decisions that he and I made on…on the scene and at that moment that would probably pretty much solidify what we would do in the future. Sam also was looking for me at the time. Sam, fortunately, and I had attended various schools back at the FBI, we knew each other on a personal level as well as a professional level. And if there's one thing I could stress is it's not a time to develop a relationship after a bomb goes off; you must have that relationship developed beforehand and in the case with Sam Gonzales and myself, we already had that. Sam because of his prior training at the FBI National Academy as well as other advanced management schools, had to have training with regard to terrorism and to understand what the FBI's role was in regard to such incidences. Sam, when he and I got together, said, "Bob, this looks like it's obviously a terrorist incident and under the guidelines that are in existence, it's primarily the responsibility of the FBI. We will give you every bit of assistance that you need, but we understand that the criminal investigation must rest in your hands." And I appreciated that and that we had that agreement and that pact in the beginning. After that, we both went together to search out the Chief of the fire department, Gary Marrs, and we had also had a previous relationship through various groups that we belong to, same types of groups where we did benefits for fire and police as well as we knew each other on a professional and social basis. So again Gary Marrs indicated that he would be there to assist with whatever had to be done. But it was at that moment because of the nature of what existed, that catastrophe, that we said the primary focus initially had to be the search and rescue mission. We can always obtain the evidence later, but primarily we needed to set up the perimeters, we needed to secure the inner and the outer perimeter, and but nothing interfered with that rescue mission and that was the agreement we had with Gary from the beginning.

KH: I think it's important to note for the viewers that, in fact, the FBI did not have its offices in this Federal Building, did it not?

BR: That's correct. We were…we were about ten miles away from where the explosion took place. We were in a commercial office building instead of a federal building.

KH: And how many agents were since deployed who assisted the police department?

BR: We had approximately 70 FBI agents in the Oklahoma City area and the entire office did respond at least in one fashion or another. We also had to maintain a Command Center at the main office as well. Within the first, oh, 24 hours, we probably had another 200 FBI agents that responded to the area. So that also creates a logistics problem. I mean, you have 200 or so other people who are coming to town. You have to find space, you have to find cars, you have to find telephones, you have to equip people who are coming into the field office, sometimes with nothing other than their person. Some were close enough to the vicinity that they actually drove and brought materials with them, but in some cases we had agents arriving from throughout the country who were only bringing their person. We had to fully equip these people.

KH: Sam, I know it's very chaotic. I keep trying to get a grasp on what was occurring. What were you looking for from the FBI?

SG: The Murrah Building has 19 federal agents, some of them federal law enforcement – the DEA was there, Secret Service was there, ATF. It was important for us to establish immediately that the FBI was going to be the lead federal agency that was going to do the investigation and to make sure the other federal agencies knew that our coordination was going to be with and through the FBI. As Bob had said, we had a personal relationship, we had a working relationship and it made it extremely easy for us to accomplish these. The same with Chief Marrs. We all got together in the Oklahoma City motor home (?) at about 10:45 or 10:50 that morning, along with our mayor, and established some guidelines, some areas of responsibility, set up some times to go public and have our first press conference. And from there it seemed to fall in place as well.

KH: Paul, we're not ignoring you on the end here, but a lot of people may not realize that an operation of this magnitude from the discussions that we've had here calls for a lot more players than just the initial emergency responders, the fire police and EMS. Paul, let's talk a little bit about what Oklahoma City Public Works did providing portable toilets, barricades, things like that. What was your initial…. When did you get the initial call and what were the first things your organization did?

Caption: Paul Brum. Director, Oklahoma City Public Works.

PB: Our first response was there within minutes after the bomb went off. They actually utilized their pickups to take part of the walking wounded to the hospital. Then in turn they would bring doctors and nurses back to the bomb site while they were waiting on the barricade crews who naturally followed up. As soon as the bomb went off, I made a call to my barricade people and asked them to head toward the site and so within about 12 or 15 minutes, we had barricade crews en route that were actually there to support the police department in trying to take care of the perimeter in trying to keep people out that shouldn't be in the area.

KH: And that raises an interesting point that we discussed earlier in the day, Doctor, was one of the things we saw on television was that this…just this massive response of volunteers, doctors, nurses. I don't know whether the reports of the media requested doctors and nurses, probably off-duty police officers from all over Oklahoma, firefighters, everybody came. What kind…. Let's talk specifically about EMS, the problems that presented for you.

PM: This incident was unique in that it was located within two miles of five major hospitals – the V.A., the University Hospital, the Children's, St. Anthony's, and Presbyterian. Because of that, the physicians and nurses initially went to the emergency departments, but soon the emergency departments themselves were inundated. St. Anthony's indicated that at one time they had approximately 1,000 medical volunteers poised to offer their medical assistance. Then there was some unsolicited, apparently unsolicited, requests on behalf of the media that…for anybody with any type of medical training to go into the Federal Building itself. And indeed they went. The problem was – with that was – these medical volunteers converged on the scene, were not a part of the Incident Command System, and were essentially unprotected and acted in an uncoordinated fashion. It was really a two-edged sword. We needed assistance in evacuating people from the area; however, as Chief Shannon indicated to me when he…later on when he told me that not only did he have the responsibility of his firefighters and those still trapped in the rubble, but now those volunteers entered the Federal Building and the rubble pile became his responsibility as well. And the risk of the medical volunteers, which is exemplified by the death of Rebecca Anderson, who was that licensed Practical Nurse who was struck in the head by some debris and later died.

KH: One of the things that seems to be a common thing in disaster responses across the United States is initially those first arriving police cars, ambulances, fire trucks are almost like a magnet for the walking wounded and often it's not the walking wounded that need the care, it's the people that can't get to the ambulances. And Chief, let's go to you. What was…. When the first arriving unit arrived on the scene, the first engine company, what did he do? Did he just put out a general alarm, multiples? What did he do?

GM: Well, as I stated earlier, our Incident Commander District Chief was responding from the same station that the first crews were so the Chief was able to establish Command very quickly and it wasn't necessary for one of the first companies to do that. But you're correct, the walking wounded…. The streets were so clogged that…with not only the debris but the people. The crews were having to go slowly. When they would…when they would eventually have to stop because of people or whatever. And they got out to treat those people; they might have been minor but they might have been, as you say, a magnet, other people saw the firemen working on those, they would then come over and it was almost like they were starting to stack up around there wanting to get treatment and of course they're not going to walk off and leave them at that point. So those first few crews were taken up by the walking wounded and so forth that were actually preventing them from getting up, getting up close to the building themselves.

KH: From an EMS standpoint, Doctor, was it a problem…maybe "problem" is not the correct type of word, but was it a challenge to set up that triage area because you had such a massive number of folks walking toward the ambulance?

PM: It was a challenge. I mean, there were so many people about the streets, injured and uninjured, all trying to get help or offer assistance. It was, as in any disaster, chaos and that's why the Incident Command System was so important.

KH: One of the things I have found kind of amazing talking to Bob here was pretty early on, you all are thinking that this is a crime scene, which we're going to discuss in our next segment, but fire people are thinking, you're thought was natural gas explosion?

GM: Well, certainly. And your fire training and your fire experience, you're trying to go through some of those catastrophes that fire people think of, whether it'd be chemicals, or a gas buildup, or a gas pipeline, and so on and trying to figure out from those choices what it could have been.

KH: Speaking with all five of you sitting here, as you put your collective heads together that morning thinking back and there's a lot of lessons learned there in terms of things you did right, things you wish you had maybe modified just a little bit, is there anything that jumps out of a real success you had? Obviously you had the relationships. Everybody knew everybody and I think that's an important element. Bob, let's start with you.

BR: We…we had, I think, many successes, you know, when you consider the immensity of what occurred. One area, though, where we had a weakness early on which we displayed pretty glaringly was our failure to communicate early on. We did not have a common band that we could communicate. We really had never thought of that. We had worked joint exercises with the police department where we would share FBI radios and so forth, but as a general rule, we worked separately. In this case, though, we usually thought that we could use cellular phones and what we found out because of the catastrophe occurred, all of the cells were locked up and initially we could not communicate. Literally, we were having to meet on street corners. We'd have to send runners and say, "Let's go to 6th and Harvey and have a meeting." It was likely technology had dropped backwards about a hundred years. We literally…. The only way we could communicate was almost face to face. This was corrected later in the afternoon, but during the early morning of the chaos, as was described, we really went back to a primitive form of communication.

KH: Sam, let's go to you. Things you thought that really, really went the way they were supposed to go.

SG: Only probably the key was the existing relationship between the three players, the FBI, the fire department, and the police department. But I think, and looking back, one of the things I'm proud of us of that the Oklahoma City Police Department did was a lot of us responders that took the initiative to set up street barriers and to stop the traffic and to do some perimeters under control when you know their hearts are "Let me go in the building. Let me help effect a rescue. Let me help somebody that's hurt," but knowing in the long run what we really needed to do was seize control of the perimeters and seize control of the egress and access to the building.

KH: Okay. Chief, one of the things that we – that I – want to touch on in the initial response is the media. All right. Now this was…. As soon as it occurred, it was going out over CNN and all of the news services that something had happened in Oklahoma City. Let's talk a little bit about what you did that was very positive in terms of dealing with the media early on, the pool coverage, I believe.

GM: Well, we were getting a lot of questions in later days on the slowness of – or what they thought slowness – of the efforts, what was taking so long and why wasn't progress being made and so on. Now, so we put together a pool camera network to where we took a representative from the broadcast media, print media, still photographer, radio, put them into what we called a pool and took them down inside the building and walked them around and showed them what was going on, the operations that were going on, the amount of shoring, embracing that was having to be done, the tremendous efforts that were being used to get people out of their traps

safe, and so on. And that had a very positive impact because they were able to come back out; one of the agreements with those that were selected to go in was that they had to come back out and share that information and film footage and everything else with all of their counterparts. And they were able to come back out as the media and explain what they saw and what was going on in there and…and they weren't hearing it from someone that they might have been skeptical of. So it had a very positive effect and I think it certainly enlightened a lot of them.

KH: Okay. Paul, let's go to public works again. What have you all learned or what did you have in place that…that functioned the way you expected. We don't…. Like I said before, we don't think of Public Works as involved in disaster situations.

PB: Well, naturally, we know that any time we have a disaster that we're a big player in that disaster, whether it'd be a tornado or a flood, we know that we're going to be the ones that have to provide the equipment necessary to assist the police or fire department. It's not unusual for us to dig for evidence for the police department or to help the fire department with a HAZMAT operation. So I was amazed my personnel were taking the initiative because a lot of times when I would call for something, I would find that it was already on the way and one of those issues was lighting. When I called and said, "We're going to need some lights tonight to assist the fire department." They said, "We already got it. We're taking care of the fueling and we're heading that way with it." And so I found that happening a lot of times. I found that a lot of my people were willing to get involved that perhaps they didn't need to be involved or actually having to hold some of those people back.

KH: Very good. Now, thank you gentlemen. We've heard from representatives from the core response groups explain how they organized their response efforts within the first 12 hours of the bombing incident. Next we'll take a look at how the response teams worked in cooperation, as we heard a little bit about already, at the bomb site and how they quickly became…and how the bomb site quickly became a crime scene as well as a disaster scene. We'll be right back.

"Disaster Scene / Crime Scene"

KH: Welcome back. And for those of you who may just be joining us, we are in Oklahoma City speaking with the group of experts that spearheaded the response efforts following the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in April of 1995. Now after the initial response efforts were underway, it was apparent that this horrific scene was also a crime scene. Now, how does one continue a search and rescue effort without disrupting any criminal evidence and how do personnel teams work as a unit to receive – retrieve – victims, brace and shore the building, and remove rubble and debris without disturbing that critical evidence of this criminal act. Well here to tell us how this all took place is Chief Gary Marrs. Chief, let's start again with you. How did your department work towards that goal of rescuing folks but trying to help out the police department, the FBI without disturbing evidence?

GM: Well, after that first day that we've discussed, we settled into the long-term rescue and recovery operations and it was very slow going. The type of debris and rubble was almost picking by hand and…and doing…bringing up that debris out. As you can see in this photo here, it was such a cooperative effort because on back of the coveralls you can see firefighters from different scenes, but you also see FBI and DEA coveralls. So they were working side by side. Initially, it started out as the firefighters bringing the rubble out in their search and rescue

activities while the law enforcement was looking at that and searching for evidence and personal belongings and so forth. But it very quickly evolved to where everybody was pitching in there and bringing that rubble out in a very coordinated effort. We…we did a coordinated search of the building. You see in this picture here how one of the Urban Search and Rescue team was working one specific spot. You had to coordinate all of this activity so that you were covering it in a very coordinated fashion and you were not going back and repeating certain areas. Bracing and shoring activities were something that was taking a long time to do and certainly had to be very coordinated.

GM: We…. Bob Ricks mentioned earlier the coordination and realizing search and rescue was so important. We simply had to make sure that as the FBI and the law enforcement people did their crime scene search and their evidence recovery that we coordinated that all together so they weren't off digging in a part of the building that we weren't aware that the building was very unstable. Now, bracing and shoring was something that was taking an awful long time to do. It was extremely slow due to the instability of the building; it had to be very carefully monitored. And this slide you can see three distinct floor levels of bracing and shoring with the concrete floors in between them. You see the black steel pipes bracing between the columns. All of the columns were a real concern to us because when they lost their floor connections, they're very unstable and we had to make sure that we got those columns stabilized. The…. We worked around the clock. We was doing 24 hour a day operations. You can see in this photo, it's a nighttime shot, but you can see how well lit the front of the building is. And Paul mentioned earlier the lighting systems that were brought in. We had it very well lit. It…it took a lot of coordination also because the heavy machinery. Those large cranes we was using was not something that you could pick up and move something very easily. When you realized you had to move a crane, operations seized for a while so that you could reposition that. And again, that had to be coordinated with a lot of the crime scene work because, as they needed that heavy equipment, we had to free up what we could and work with them and get moving it and get repositioned took an awful lot of time.

GM: One of the things that we stressed very heavily in this incident was our CISD activities. We started doing diffusing with our Critical Incident and Stress team the very first morning where all of our people had to go through diffusing before they could leave the site. And we continued that through the whole operation. After the operation was over with, some 17 days later, we put everybody through mandatory debriefing sessions, the entire department. And because of these activities, I certainly think that we got a handle on the mental stress aspect of this incident and certainly lessened our impact of it. One of the key parts of the incident was the…what we called the MAC Center – Multi Agency Command Center. This was a…one room in the Myriad Convention Center where we had representatives from all of the agencies and it was staffed 24 hours a day. It became the one area that you could go to and…and…and get supplies ordered, get them delivered, you could get your questions answered, and it worked out very well for us. The Myriad Convention Center, I mentioned it earlier was where we housed a number of the strike teams and it also became our center for our feeding operations. The Oklahoma City Restaurant Association was preparing for a convention there, which they had to cancel. But because of that, they already had cooking facilities and food and stuff on hand and they started preparing meals that very first morning. And they continued that throughout the entire operation, serving hot meals 24 hours a day. It had restricted access in the Myriads. Only volunteers and rescue workers were allowed in there and the media and the general public wasn't. So it became a way for

them…. It became a place for them to get away from a lot of that hectic activity that was going on. This is where the volunteers from the community came out and made such a difference because there just wasn't anything any of the people working down there wanted but they didn't get, either out of the Myriad or somewhere. And the…the…. Lot of talk has gone on around the country about the Oklahoma Standard and the Community Caring I believe was set right down here in the convention center because they had such a tremendous response from the community and working with the rescue workers.

GM: We finished up activities on May the fourth at 11:45 at night. We had worked down to where we only had two victims unaccounted for. We thought we had a pretty good idea where they were at in the remaining rubble, but yet it was in such a place that the stability of the building would not allow us to clear that area off. So we ceased our operations that night. We pulled all of the people together and said a few words and the chaplain said a prayer and then we all went home. We had a closure service the next on the site where we put the word out and let all of the people that had worked in the building or around that building or in the activities showed up the next day, put whatever closure they needed to do to this incident. They could bring their families down. And then at the end of the closure service, we turned that building back to the police department and seized our operations.

(End of excerpt.)