

Pentagon Attack

Interview with Michael Bryant
October 31, 2001

Putney: This is an oral history interview with Michael Bryant, Pentagon Building Manager. It is October 31, 2001, and we are in the Pentagon. [The interviewer is Diane T. Putney.]

What do you do as building manager in terms of your key responsibilities?

Bryant: My key responsibilities deal with the operations and maintenance of the building itself. We have specialized programs and special events we coordinate. We do landscaping and energy conservation--pretty much the whole spectrum of facilities management.

Putney: Before September 11 were you concerned with some kind of terrorist attack, and if so, what were you envisioning as the nature of the attack, and what was being done to prevent it from succeeding?

Bryant: Our office doesn't deal with security issues. That is done either by the Defense Protective Service or the individual agency security officers. On a personal level, my concern for security would be more in the realm of a drive-by shooting or a car bomb. Certainly not an airplane hitting the building. I don't really see bio-nuclear terrorism as a viable option here, although I guess maybe it is. Prior to the incident it would have been on the level of a car bomb.

Putney: Were you asked to do anything in terms of your job to prevent that from happening?

Bryant: We coordinate whatever tasking DPS gives us. We may put jersey barriers out or close off particular openings or entrances to buildings for standoff purposes, but we are not security experts. We rely on the Defense Protective Service for that guidance.

Putney: You would carry it out, if you could?

Bryant: Sure, in coordination with DPS.

Putney: Would you do that with your internal staff or work with contractors?

Bryant: We can do it both ways. We have contractors on site if we have to physically pick up jersey barriers, which are the concrete construction barriers that you see on the roadways, to put them in place, or we can do it ourselves.

Putney: Was there a crisis action plan that was fully or partially implemented on September 11, and who is responsible for developing such plans?

Bryant: Real Estate and Facilities has been working on a crisis response plan, and, in conjunction with that, a response plan to an NBC attack. The basic outline is that we look for the incident commander who is set up at a certain point, depending on what the situation is. Normally, Arlington County is the prime responder and is in charge of the incidents. We are there to facilitate and support them once the emergency is declared.

Putney: Who in Real Estate and Facilities would have been in charge of pulling the plan together?

Bryant: I would say that would be the Management Support Office, right now that would be Tom Tucker, who then would task that out to the Defense Protective Service and the Federal Facilities Division.

Putney: And chem and bio--you were thinking about that, and that was part of the pre-September 11 thinking?

Bryant: Yes. That was brought on by the Defense Protective Service, not by our thinking.

Putney: But you are players in it. You have an annex to it.

Bryant: Yes. Our role in that is more or less to secure the building, identify utilities, coordinate power, and provide utilities to those who are responding.

Putney: Were you here on September 11 and can you describe how you learned of the attack and how things unfolded that morning?

Bryant: We were at our morning director's meeting, and we heard that the planes had hit the World Trade Center towers. That was about 8:30 or so, when the meeting started. That meeting ended, and I went out to the front of the office. Dennis Smith came up the back exit and notified us that the plane had hit the building on the heliport side. I don't recall feeling the impact or hearing the crash. Everyone else seems to have seen or heard it. (I guess I was in my own little dream world.)

Putney: Where was that meeting?

Bryant: Across the hallway near the cafeteria.

Putney: What did your staff do next?

Bryant: We evacuated the office. We had people in the building operations center who were responsible for trying to get utilities coordinated. Myself and Mr. Candido went out to the center court to find the command center. Typically it would be set up in the center court or somewhere on the south parking side. There was confusion, with people trying to figure out whether to evacuate and where to go. DPS was coordinating some of that. Center court was pretty chaotic, with people dragging the injured out into the center court to triage them as best they could.

Putney: How did you know that a command center would be established? Had you exercised that?

Bryant: We had done those exercises before, but that is typical when there is a building emergency. The exercises were certainly not on this scale, but there are logical places where you would try to coordinate with other groups. It may be in the Defense Communications Center. This time they were doing evacuation, so we were looking for something set up outside the building.

Putney: Who would set it up and be in charge of it internally at the Pentagon?

Bryant: That's WHS. That breaks it down all the way to Real Estate and Facilities. The Defense Protective Service normally takes the lead role in that. They are in communication with Arlington County Fire and Rescue. They are the ones who place the call and tell them where to come. We look for their hierarchy out in the center court--Chief Jester, the deputy, or an officer in the Defense Protective Service.

Putney: Were they out there?

Bryant: There was DPS presence out there, but there wasn't a command center set up at the time we got there. They were still in the process of bringing Arlington County in.

Putney: Does your staff go out this back exit, or how does the evacuation work?

Bryant: Our exit for this particular evacuation was out the front door and out corridor two.

Putney: That puts them out in south parking. Was it an orderly evacuation? Was everybody leaving the building?

Bryant: As far as I know, everyone was leaving. I wouldn't call it the most organized evacuation I've ever seen, but it certainly wasn't panic or chaotic. It was the typical building evacuation.

Putney: How did you know that all your people were out? What procedures did you take to be sure no one was caught at the impact site?

Bryant: We have an evacuation guide which calls for individuals to report to areas based on their location, and their supervisor is responsible for making sure that everyone is on site. It's hard for us to do, because we are on a 24-7 schedule.

Putney: It took a while?

Bryant: It took a while to figure out where everyone is.

Putney: And you went to the courtyard.

Bryant: Yes, with a handful of mechanics, and we were in radio communication with them and with the plant. At this time we learned that the plant was losing water pressure, which they need to keep up and running. My first tasking from them was to secure the utilities. The plane tore such a large hole in the side of the building that it ruptured some major piping, which caused the loss in water pressure, because all the water was going out ruptured pipes. That was our first call, to secure utilities, including electric.

Putney: So you were in the center court with your radio when you got a call from the building heating/refrigeration plant?

Bryant: We either call via the radio or on the telephone. Normally that is done through the building operations center, but our building operations center is in wedge one, and lost power.

Putney: Could you describe the operations center, the BOCC, how big it is, and its importance?

Bryant: It was formerly the Building Operations Center, and we renamed it the Building Operations Command Center. Basically it is an area where we can monitor the status of a lot of the building systems--water pressures, electrical vaults, fire alarm systems, elevators--all that information is brought into one location where we can see it on monitors.

Putney: Is that operating 7 days a week, 24 hours a day?

Bryant: Yes.

Putney: What kind of shifts?

Bryant: Three shifts.

Putney: How many people does it take to operate that?

Bryant: About 20 individuals.

Putney: If you walk in, what do you see?

Bryant: It's kind of like the Star Trek console on the Enterprise. There is a half-moon layout of desks with monitors, and on the front wall there are large monitors with big 56-inch TV screens. Each screen shows the status of some system--vertical transportation, elevators and escalators, which ones are running and which are not; sections of the building with certain air handlers; fire alarm systems; alarms coming in--such as a room getting too hot or cold. If the system is not operating within the set parameters we can adjust it or send a mechanic.

There are different scenarios for different alarms. Sometimes a number will flash, sometimes there is a beep. In another scenario, the controls are clustered in

concentric circles almost like a spider web, with a series of colored dots. The closer the dots are to the center, they could all be points in rooms that are maintained within a certain temperature, and if they get outside the parameter they change color, and we can look and see what's going on and recalibrate it if necessary.

Putney: Who was down in the command center that morning?

Bryant: Steve Carter, Kathy Greenwell, and probably some Johnson control contractors loading software. There may have been others.

Putney: That's where you got the word from, the BOCC, about securing utilities? What does that mean, what do you have to do to secure utilities?

Bryant: Basically, they were losing water pressure, and the heating and refrigeration plant has chilled water condensers feeding the Pentagon and FOB 2 from a series of pipes. These are good-size pipes filled with water. When the plane hit, it hit some large pipes, so the water in the pipes went out the route of no resistance. The plant had the ability to put new water in, but not the capacity of the size of the water that was going out. So they were losing water pressure. In order to do that, we had to secure a series of valves in different locations to isolate the section of the building where the plane had hit.

Putney: Could it be called hemorrhaging water, and a tourniquet was needed?

Bryant: Sure.

Putney: Was the primary system water, at this point?

Bryant: Water was primary, and the other system was our electrical vaults in that area. You don't want them to get wet. You are better off shutting them off, so we also shut those off.

Putney: If too much pressure is lost at the plant, and you don't turn off the valves, what is the consequence?

Bryant: The heating plant would have to shut down, and the building would lose its air conditioning. If we lose air conditioning, we lose the computer rooms, the communication rooms; basically, with no air conditioning the building would not operate.

Putney: So air conditioning is not just a convenience. It is a critical function.

Bryant: To cool mission-essential computer rooms, basically.

Putney: The computers would overheat.

Bryant: Yes. They would lose a lot of communications capacity. People communicate a lot through computers.

Putney: So it is a critical mission. How did it happen, then, that those valves were turned off and the systems secured?

Bryant: The building's utilities are run by wedges. A wedge might be corridors three and four, five and six, seven and eight, nine and ten. The building was built in almost compartments, so that you can isolate one portion of the building from the remainder and still keep the rest of it running. If you isolate a loop, the water still goes to the balance. As long as you have feeds coming into it you are OK. You can shut any portion off and still operate the rest of the building.

Putney: That portion of the building that you shut off was near the impact site. Whose job was it to go and shut those valves off?

Bryant: Steve Carter was in charge of the building operation center at the time, he was the one in communication with the mechanics, directing them where to go and what to shut off.

Putney: That would be for water?

Bryant: Water, and also for electricity, but we had in-house electricians that are familiar with the voltage switchgear. We get in touch with them by radio and tell them what to do. Fortunately the guys know the systems well enough that when we explain the situation they know what to do, so we don't have to micro-manage them. We tell them what the situation is, and they know how to address it.

Putney: Steve Carter was there that morning, but is someone in charge of the command center there?

Bryant: There is no one in charge of the command center. It is under the systems building manager, and we have an operations and maintenance manager who the BOCC really falls under. He doesn't sit there. He sits closer to the shops and the hands-on place where they daily repair things. The monitoring control is where we take service calls; when you call for repair they put in a work order in and dispatch a mechanic from there.

Putney: To get more information on it, whom do you recommend that I talk with, along with Steve Carter?

Bryant: You can speak with Kathy Greenwell; those two are the prime ones.

Putney: Basically the staff did their jobs. When told what the situation was, they just knew what to do. They were near the impact site--did they have a difficult time getting to the valves?

Bryant: I don't believe they had a difficult time getting to the valves themselves. The electrical vaults were a different story. Those present a bigger challenge. They may have had water going in at the time.

Putney: Mixing water and electricity doesn't sound like a good idea.

Bryant: No.

Putney: How many vaults are there around the building, did they have to visit more than one?

Bryant: I don't know how many, but more than one. The way the building is constructed, it is probably flexible. The electric system is all tied in to each other, so you secure electrically one section of the building and re-feed other portions through other vaults. It's hard to explain. The vaults are interconnected, and that allows us to transfer electrical loads on different sets of wires depending on what the need is. Once again, that is fairly standard procedure.

Putney: Whom should I talk with about the electrical vaults?

Bryant: Probably Dan Murphy and Bill Thomas. They are involved with physically going in and pulling switches.

Putney: Where the plane hit, there is a utility vault and a generator. What did the plane hit, and how did it affect the building's operation?

Bryant: On the outside wall of the Pentagon there is a vault where the heliport building is. The vault is underground with a cover on top of about three or four feet, aboveground. There are a lot of steam lines and water lines coming in from the heating plant that feed into it and tie back into the building loop, and from there up into FOB 2. To the right of that was a temporary generator and a fuel tank. If you look at the TV shots you can see a flaming box, that is the fuel tank. That was a temporary generator supporting the safety systems in wedge one. Those are the fire alarm system, the firefighting water system pumps. The plane took out the fuel tank, the generator, and,

as I understand it, the cover off the heating plant vault, which made it difficult for them to get down there and secure whatever they needed to secure. When it hit, wedge one lost emergency lighting, the fire pumps--but they may not have been operational anyway, based on the size of the pipes that were ripped out--and the fire alarm systems. They lost all three functions.

Putney: Are these fire pumps in the older sections, or are they a feature of the newer sections?

Bryant: That's a feature of the newer sections.

Putney: Is that a sprinkler system or what does it do?

Bryant: It charges the sprinkler system. The sprinkler system has water pressure, but since it is such a large system, it needs a boost. It's also geared up so that a fire truck can hook hoses directly up to the hose bibs on the building, instead of to a pumper-truck.

Putney: So it could have affected the ability of Arlington County to fight the fire?

Bryant: It could, but being as this was an airplane fire, they didn't want to put water on it. At the airports they use foam as opposed to water. I'm not sure how great an idea it was to put all that water on the building.

Putney: Once the valves are turned off, the water stops gushing out. What else happens?

Bryant: Yes, the water stops flowing, the heating plant can recharge the system, and the rest of the building is pretty much operational, as far as air conditioning, electricity, heating, and ventilation. We had to operate the fans differently than we normally would because of the smoke. There was so much smoke that we couldn't do some

procedures we would normally do to keep some areas pressurized positively and negatively, which means taking the air from one end of the building and pushing it to the other end. We would have liked to push the smoke back into wedge one, but there was so much smoke, it would have just pulled back in through the building's air handlers and made the situation worse.

Putney: How quickly are these fans in operation?

Bryant: In this particular instance I think we had to do them manually. The building operations command center can do it electronically, but it went out in the hit, so it lost power and we weren't able to operate from there.

Putney: That day or the day after, you had the fans in operation?

Bryant: Yes, depending on what the smoke patterns were.

Putney: You were in the courtyard. Eventually did the DSP folks set up their command post there? Walk through what you were doing out in the courtyard.

Bryant: Cy, Steve Carter, and Bob Candido usually perform the building operations center function, but at the time it was down. I went to look for the incident command center. It wasn't in center court, and I went out to South Parking to see if it was there. I started at the heliport side where the crash was, and I tried to communicate with the Defense Protective Service, but they were more interested in keeping people away from the building. I was directed away from the building because there were reports of more planes coming in. Meanwhile there were lots of individuals responding from Arlington County and Alexandria. I finally managed to find the command center and reported in to them. They didn't need our assistance as far as utilities, because that was already set up. We had already controlled what we needed to control. I passed along our

names and numbers and touched base with the DPS, who was there at the time. I then tried to get back into the building, but they weren't letting people back in.

Putney: When you got out, what could you see at the crash site?

Bryant: I was in the parking lot.

Putney: You could see the smoke?

Bryant: I could see the smoke and the flames.

Putney: What was your reaction?

Bryant: The black smoke looked like it was from the fuel tanks, and some smoke was in the building itself.

Putney: Where did you find the command post?

Bryant: It was under 395. They had brought in an RV from Fairfax County to set up the command post. It was on Fern Street.

Putney: How did you know it was the command post?

Bryant: We were directed there by the DPS.

Putney: What time was this?

Bryant: I have no idea.

Putney: What was south parking like?

Bryant: There were a lot of emergency vehicles in it, but not a lot of individuals, other than police officers. There were people from DPS, Arlington County, Alexandria, and local jurisdictions. They were focused on keeping people away from the building, based upon reports of other planes coming in.

Putney: Was there more than one plane? What was the message?

Bryant: We got reports that there was one 2 minutes out, it turned out to be a false report. We got another report of a plane, but it never materialized.

Putney: What was it like trying to get back into the building?

Bryant: We had to get hold of a DPS officer to escort us back in.

Putney: Who was with you?

Bryant: My boss, John Irby, and Rick Marcey.

Putney: What were you going to do and where did you report?

Bryant: We came back here and checked in with Steve Carter to make sure that they had all utilities secured, and we walked the building to check out damage to different parts of the building. I basically just hung out.

Putney: You could still reach Steve Carter in the command center?

Bryant: He was in center court by that time. By then the clinic had set up a triage area and there were people being treated by a lot of medical people there. Arlington County Fire and Rescue had managed to get in, and they had fire trucks in the center court and were sending rescue teams into the third corridor apex.

Putney: Steve was now in center court; he had to leave the building operations center?

Bryant: Because of fire and smoke. There wasn't anything operating, so there wasn't a need to be in the operations center. The fire never reached that area, but water damage later did. Steve lost power down there, so he was in a dark room.

Putney: You had good communication; everyone said the cell phones were useless.

Bryant: We have two-way radios. They aren't phones. They are walky-talkies. Phones are worthless.

Putney: So you were in communication with your people the whole time?

Bryant: Yes. We only had two channels, and it was sometimes difficult to get in because everyone was trying to talk at the same time.

Putney: What did you do for the next couple of hours?

Bryant: We walked around figuring out what we needed in terms of support. We ordered Port-a-Johns for center court. We ordered some emergency lighting. We had gotten water from our water vendor and coordinated delivery of water to the center court and outlying areas--bottled water.

Putney: Did you get in touch with a contractor for the lighting?

Bryant: We called up United Rental and asked for emergency lighting. Arlington County had already made a call for that kind of equipment, so we just added to their order.

Putney: How close did you get to the impact site? Was the Pentagon empty by this time?

Bryant: I didn't go near the site until later that afternoon. There were certainly enough rescue folks at that time going in and doing whatever they could to pull people out. There were a lot of military people and civilians going in and rescuing people, but it was not what Arlington County recommended that people do. It was kind of a judgment call.

Bryant: At that point Mr. Irby and I had separated. He had gone to his director to see what they were doing on an infrastructure level. We were the hands-on level of what we needed to get through the night. It would be dark soon, and we needed light. Not everyone on my staff went home. Mr. Candido, John Black, Dennis Smith, and others were here.

Putney: So you were still functioning right in your own office space. Were you called to any meetings?

Bryant: No.

Putney: So you were just doing your job, making calls, and trying to anticipate what would be needed.

Bryant: In an emergency like this, Arlington County is in charge of the site. They dictate who goes where and what gets done. We worked with them through the command center. At that point we were also working with the command center in south parking.

Putney: You had a van in south parking, what did the command center in center court look like?

Bryant: There was a fire chief inside a fire truck, a couple of Arlington County police officers, some Defense Protective Service personnel, a couple of our guys, and some medical folks. Steve Carter was assigned to work with the center court, and if they needed anything they knew where we were.

Putney: As time went on, toward later afternoon, what were you doing?

Bryant: There were reports of some power still active in that wedge, and we were trying to isolate the circuits and find out where the power was coming from. It turned out that some rooms had UPS systems, which had batteries as back-up power--a series of car batteries, basically, which fed temporary power for a certain period of time. We weren't able to shut that off from center court.

Putney: Why is it important to turn off the power?

Bryant: There is an electrical hazard to the firefighters, because they are walking in water.

Putney: So it's life threatening.

Bryant: Yes, and there is also fuel and fumes, so it could be a source of ignition.

Putney: Were you able to find them or did they just run out?

Bryant: They just ran out.

Putney: Were there any additional problems or issues thrown your way toward evening?

Bryant: Not really. They did set up a JOC, joint operations center, at Fort Myer, staffed by the FBI, Arlington County Fire and Rescue, building and security folks, and the DPS, as a central coordination office. While the fire was still being fought, the area became a crime scene, which was off limits to just about everyone.

Putney: Was that a hindrance in any way?

Bryant: No, because once we shut off the utilities, our role is over. We are not here to fight fires or risk the lives of employees, but to operate and maintain building systems. If a firefighter needs information, we will do as much as we can to give it to him, but we are not going into the fire and flames. At least we're not supposed to.

Putney: Did you have a representative at the JOC?

Bryant: Yes. That was a 24-hour operation. I had one stint, Steve Carter had one rotation period, and Jim McKinney had one. We manned it the first week.

Putney: Did you go to the first meeting of the JOC, when it was established?

Bryant: No, I was told by my director to report to an operations center at midnight.

Putney: What time had you come in that morning?

Bryant: 7:00 a.m.

Putney: So you were still going at it at midnight.

Bryant: Yes.

Putney: Was there any major problem then, up until midnight?

Bryant: No, not really. The major problem was more in the line of access to the area. That seemed to change hourly as to what badges were required.

Putney: What was it like when you went to Fort Myer?

Bryant: The first night they were still setting up computers on desks. We took laptops for ourselves. They were still setting up phones, so the first night wasn't very productive, from my perspective.

Putney: Where was it at Fort Myer?

Bryant: At a facility like a family recreation center. It was by the church after you go in the gate off Washington Boulevard.

Putney: You arranged to have 24-hour coverage over there.

Bryant: Yes.

Putney: What time did you leave?

Bryant: I left at 6:00 a.m. to come back here.

Putney: Did you ever get a chance to eat?

Bryant: Food wasn't an issue, there was plenty to eat and drink.

Putney: How were you getting it?

Bryant: It was set up in south parking. I guess the Red Cross, Arlington County, or FEMA set it up. There was a similar situation at Fort Myer.

Putney: It was part of the response system.

Bryant: It just shows up.

Putney: What happened the next morning?

Bryant: We were pretty much just operating the building as we normally would.

Putney: The Secretary said the building would be open, and people should go to work. It was up to you to make sure there was a workable environment.

Bryant: It was, but there was still smoke and fire. Parking was a nightmare, trying to drive in was a nightmare. I was in early enough that I had no problem. We were helping DPS set up the security perimeter. The rest of our job was to operate as usual.

Putney: Was air quality and smoke a problem? Was your office involved with that?

Bryant: There is an occupational safety office that is under Real Estate and Facilities. It was their responsibility to come in. I'm not sure what Arlington County's role would be as far as measuring air quality. We have an industrial hygienist on staff. He's not certified, but we use him for a host of issues. He has some equipment for monitoring carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide--basic indoor sampling of air quality.

Putney: Whom does he report to?

Bryant: To me.

Putney: So you had first-hand information, but not optimum?

Bryant: No, because we could have also measured lead, dioxin, a host of other things.

Putney: Asbestos as well?

Bryant: The asbestos is pretty much a given, although it was not a problem because it was wet.

Putney: That day, you were monitoring and doing smoke control. Is that done through fans?

Bryant: It's done primarily by operating the existing building fans. We can overpressurize some zones and decrease pressure on others so that the air is all going in a certain direction.

Putney: And you were trying again to send the smoke back to the impact site?

Bryant: Yes.

Putney: I gather you had some success doing that?

Bryant: I would say yes, but it's hard to measure. If you were in the second corridor, it was smoky. Certain areas outside the building were still smoky. There was still smoke in the occupied portions of the building.

Putney: The wood under the slate on the roof was burning, and the building was still burning?

Bryant: Yes, the building was on fire for four or five days after the attack.

Putney: That includes the wood under the roof?

Bryant: I can't tell you how many days the roof was on fire, probably three or four, but they kept having fires within the crash site itself, whether with fuel re-igniting or from sparking up. I guess the fire on the roof was hard for them to contain because with the slate on top, it was a system designed to repel water. There is a catwalk that was built so that we could walk to different areas of the roof. That was burning, and also the wood underneath the slate was on fire. Not to be critical of Arlington County, but I think they did a less than stellar job fighting the fire on the roof. They don't fight fires at night, for safety reasons. That is their call, but they certainly could have put in more firebreaks sooner than they did. That's just my observation. I'm not a firefighter, but as a building

operator I felt they could have done more. I don't want to throw stones at anyone, because we all could have done more.

Putney: Were there any major problems thrown your way on the second day, the 12th?

Bryant: Probably our biggest problem was that everybody, that is, our management chain, wanted information on how much damage there was, what was operating, and they wanted information we are not typically geared up to have.

Putney: Who was going to do the first damage assessment, and then prepare reports for up the chain? I guess you were able to do it verbally, talk to Mr. Irby, and he could then report to Doc Cooke.

Bryant: The PenRen office was on site, walking around with some of the structural engineers to see what the damage was. This was probably several days after the incident when they could get in there. We had people go in and look at the roof and see the damage there. Part of it's under renovation and part is the old building; you have two different sets of people.

Putney: There is PenRen, but you are also responsible for the newly renovated area. Is there a chain of command?

Bryant: That's kind of a gray area, because in conditional construction, the building is built, completed, and occupied. In a renovation, a section is built but not completed, the people move in, and PenRen is still operating some of the systems. We hadn't really accepted the majority of wedge 1. We only accepted a small area which is the B area, the offices on the A ring, first through fifth floor. The rest were still under PenRen control.

Putney: A few days afterward, what kinds of tasks did you have, were you up and running?

Bryant: Our staff was back, the next day or the day after. As emergency personnel we required to come back to work when the rest of the government is closed. They didn't really close the government, but we were lenient on the people who couldn't or didn't come in. We didn't need everyone here, anyway. We focused ourselves on getting the building back in order, touching base with the contracting office to get cleaners in. Our in-house cleaners were not sufficient. We worked on those kinds of issues.

Putney: Do you inspect their work? You had a massive cleanup problem.

Bryant: Yes. We had above and beyond what we normally would clean. We had light fixtures to clean, smoke odors to eliminate. It's a whole different process. We were wiping down everything. We normally don't wash furniture, and get behind everything that needed to get cleaned.

Putney: Did you have any contact with the FBI or FEMA?

Bryant: Our contact with them is through the Joint Operations Center at Fort Myer. We had a force up there 24-7, probably for three or four weeks.

Putney: Did they need anything from you?

Bryant: Not really.

Putney: The FBI people went over the impact area looking for evidence. The urban search and rescue had been through there looking for people; then the FBI moved in-- was that the sequence?

Bryant: I kind of feel it was all done simultaneously. There was also a need to secure documents, for instance in the Navy Command Center. The nature of a lot of offices there was to have a lot of sensitive material, and that had to be secured properly.

Putney: For the next few days, the kinds of things you did were massive cleanup, keeping the systems up and running, make the building as safe as possible?

Bryant: We were changing air filters, having the air filters tested. Since most of the building air goes through the filters, it is a good source for trying to figure out what kind of contamination we have.

Putney: How long did it take your office to get back to normal operation, or have you been able to do that yet?

Bryant: Our office is still not really normal. We are still keeping mechanics staffed through a different pattern than normal. We had a manager on duty up until about two weeks ago around the clock. We had the shop guys working 12-hour days. Some of it was to be pro-active in the event something else happened, some was to help clean up the equipment.

Putney: Are most of the people government employees as opposed to contractors?

Bryant: I wouldn't consider a contractor to be my people; my people are all government workers, but we do have contractors.

Putney: Are there any lessons learned that you've thought about since then?

Bryant: That's a tough one. You can do contingency planning geared around something smaller than this, but the reality is that it doesn't make sense to staff up to be prepared for something this size. The chances of this ever happening were two in how many years? Overall, I think the system worked well. The system was certainly

overburdened, but the local jurisdictions responded well, and we had plenty of people here. It would be nice to get rid of some of the south parking activities a bit sooner, they seemed to stay around forever. The parking was a nightmare, but I am not sure how you would do it differently. Under certain threat scenarios we are required to maintain different distances from the building, and that is not our call.

Putney: Has anything good or beneficial come out of this terrible event?

Bryant: I think we all got a good life experience. We saw people working well together, but certainly nothing good came out of it.

Putney: Had you lost any of your staff or contractors?

Bryant: No, we were all on this side of the building. We had folks on the A ring at the time, but it was far enough away that they weren't in immediate danger.

Putney: Have you walked through the area?

Bryant: Sure.

Putney: What does it look like?

Bryant: Just like it looks from the outside. There is nothing left.

Putney: Just charred remains.

Bryant: Yes.

Putney: Are you suited up when you go through?

Bryant: That depends on which period of time we went through.

Putney: The first time?

Bryant: No, just the respirator and hard hat. One interesting thing is that when you refer to the emergency generator, that was a temporary generator. There is a remote delivery facility, and part of its function is backup power in chilling the building. Had that

been operational, it would have been a different scenario for wedge one. The lighting wouldn't have gone out. The way a lot of office spaces were configured turned them into mazes, and I feel sorry for those people. The windows did what they are supposed to do, but they couldn't break them.

Putney: Are those the windows on the E ring?

Bryant: Exterior A ring, center court windows, and E ring exterior windows.

Putney: People were trying to pound out the windows on the E ring?

Bryant: Sure. I saw a fireman trying to break out a window on the A ring with sledgehammers. It took nine or ten hits to just put a spiderweb on it.

Putney: The people on the A ring could get out because it wasn't damaged, but the E ring people presumably--

Bryant: If you were E ring first floor, you would probably want to try to get out through a window, depending on what the situation was. I don't know, but they were not going through those windows.

Putney: You didn't actually see people, but you heard of this happening?

Bryant: People said they heard of it happening, maybe not those windows, but perhaps interior windows, not necessarily the explosive-proof windows.

Putney: Would it be difficult to break the inside windows, too?

Bryant: It depends on your thought process at the time. You can grab something and break it, or kick holes through the walls, they are just dry wall. But if people are focused on getting out of a door Hindsight is always better.

Putney: Is there anything we have left out that you want to add?

Bryant: No.

Putney: If you think of anything, you can add it later. When you are satisfied, we will give you a copy and make it a part of the record. One thing we are very interested in, because we anticipate a book being done on this, is documentation as well. Do you generate the building circulars? At some point could I look at the old ones that might have pertained to this incident?

Bryant: They are on the web.

Putney: I will pull some that might have pertinence to safety or anything related to what would happen on September 11.

Bryant: I don't think there will be anything insinuating a chance of attack.

Putney: Maybe I need your advice about plans. You mentioned Mr. Tucker pulling plans together for contingencies. We would like to get a look at that to see what the Pentagon was looking at to anticipate a variety of emergencies.

Bryant: We had a fire a few weeks back in the cafeteria area. As a result of that, we reemphasized the responsibility of the agencies to enforce the information. We can't make them post these things on the wall, but we placed good emphasis on that. I'm sure it helped us.

Putney: Who tells offices which evacuation routes to take?

Bryant: We provide them with guidelines and a blueprint of the building, giving them areas to exit from, and suggest locations where they can meet. It is up to each office to figure out where to go. There are many variables, and doors change daily. It is up to them to update their regulations.

Putney: Can I get a copy of the evacuation plan or things like that? We are talking to the DPS folks. We need plans that had been worked on or are in the process of being compiled to document that the Pentagon was thinking of contingencies.

Bryant: They discussed NBC attacks years ago. We had asked for initial training for our guys to respond to that, and what we signed up for turned out to be more than we were willing to swallow at the time. We were expecting a two to three-day class on firefighting, and it turned out to be six weeks, and we had to be certified to be firefighters. To send workers out for that length of time for something we might never need was prohibitive. Their mission is not to fight the fires, their mission is to walk firefighters down to a certain distance and show them the way. So they were working on that, looking at sites for decontamination and such things.

Putney: So the Arlington County folks always respond to the fires. Would you characterize interaction with them as adequate? Did you have a good working relationship with them?

Bryant: Yes. Yes.

Putney: It comes from other ways than responding to the crisis of a fire, is there a procedure to meet with them on a regular basis?

Bryant: DPS may have that role, we don't. DPS makes the decision to call them in or not. There are regional councils and authorities that meet regularly. I don't know what DoD components meet with them, but they cover a host of scenarios.

Putney: I guess being so close to National Airport, as in the 14th St. bridge incident years ago, that would be something discussed at a regional meeting.

Bryant: We coordinated with National Airport. They were closed, so they allowed us to use their parking garages. We contacted Pentagon City Mall and set up use of their garages. They pitched in to help out.

Putney: Thank you very much.