Stanley A. Pimentel: [It is January 15], 2008 and I’m in Dumfries, Virginia, with William E. Dyson  Bill has agreed to be interviewed by the Oral History Project of the Society of Former Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He has signed and dated the Copyright Release form and we’ve gone over it. He’s conveying the rights to the intellectual content of this interview to the Society of Former Special Agents.

Bill and I were classmates in the Class of July 10, 1967 … NAC-1 of ‘67. I will let you, Bill, begin your story, if you want to start with your early years of your life, where you were born and raised, and schooling, and go on from there.

William E. Dyson, Jr.: Fine. Thank you very much. I was born in New York and my early years were in New York. I was born in a working class family. My parents both worked for Republic Aviation, that was a large manufacturer of warplanes. However, during the 1950s my dad realized that his job was in jeopardy because the war had ended, the Korean War. We were in peace time, and he realized that Republic Aviation probably wasn’t going to make it because it had not adapted to civilian use … wasn’t producing civilian aircraft. He saw the handwriting on the wall and he decided to put his small home for sale and try to move.

It was a wonderful thing for him to do this because of the fact that he was able to sell the house just before Republic Aviation went out of business and literally put Long Island into a state of depression because tens of thousands of people were put out of work. He could never have sold the house later.
Dyson: I didn’t realize at the time how courageous my father was. He relocated his family; we sold the house, sold the furniture, got into a seven-year-old car and drove to Florida with no prospect of a job, no idea where to go. Dad just knew he had to do something because there was no real hope in New York for him any longer.

We got down to South Florida. We moved into a hotel and dad went out looking for work and couldn’t find anything. Eventually he was able to find a job as a Good Humor man and he almost didn’t get that job. The reason he almost didn’t get that job was because when he went down to answer the advertisement, they looked at him and said, “You’re not qualified. You can’t have the job because it’s in a colored neighborhood.” And my dad didn’t know what he was talking about. Then the rules of segregation were explained. Even though Florida was not usually traditionally considered part of the south, it really was. There were segregated schools. There were neighborhoods where colored people lived and white people were not supposed to go in there. My dad said, “I’ve never experienced that in my life. I will go in there.”

So, he got the job as a Good Humor man in the colored neighborhood. And was able to use the money he’d gotten out of his previous home to buy a home. And we got established and then dad got into Food Fair stores which, at that time, was a large grocery store chain, fifth largest in the country, in fact. Dad was able to get a job as a produce clerk; eventually worked his way up to be a produce manager, which really isn’t saying much because most produce departments only have three or four people. In other words, he was an unskilled worker. My mother got a job as a clerk in the water company.

One of the things that my parents always made clear to me was education. You had to get an education. You were going to college. When I was ten-years-old my father went out and got me a paper route; took me to a bank and opened up a bank account.

Pimentel: (Chuckling)
Dyson: I was told I was to save money for college. I was going to college regardless of what I majored in, I was going to go to college because nobody in the family had ever gone to college. Both my parents were unskilled workers and they realized the value of education. As a paper boy, my father was constantly encouraging me to get more and more customers. And pretty soon I had the largest route, within the distributorship, delivering Newsday newspapers, until we moved to Florida when I was 15-years-old.

And my dad told me at that time, “You will get a job.” And I went out and got a job. We lived out near the Everglades and there was a farmer’s market which was really a grocery store plus, like a flea market. I managed to get a job in there selling hardware and eventually when I turned 16, I went to work for Food Fair stores. They hired me on a sort of a unique basis. I’m sure unions would go along with this idea, I mean the unions often would never go along with it. At that time, they hired me as a fulltime employee but on a part-time basis.

Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: (Chuckling) Because I was a teenager. And basically what they did is they allowed me to work 39 hours a week ... considered a part-time employee, but they had me work every Sunday, eight hours. So my work week was 47 hours a week but I was considered a part-timer and, therefore, didn’t get vacations or holiday pay.

I worked all through high school doing that and I went to college. I saved up enough money to get into college. Food Fair agreed to keep me on at 47 hours a week but they gave me a one-third scholarship.

Pimentel: What college was that?

Dyson: It was the University of Miami.

Pimentel: Okay.
Dyson: That was the closest university. There were no junior colleges in those days, in the 1950s. So, you had to go to a college and there was no State University down in the Miami area so I had to go to the University of Miami and pay my entire tuition. There was no loans in those days. And, of course, I wasn’t an athlete so there were no scholarships either.

As a result, I worked for Food Fair fulltime all through college. They paid a third of my tuition and I worked to pay the rest of it. During the summers they’d have me as a fulltime employee. Now I could work 40 hours, plus eight hours. Because of my background, I grew up in a blue collar neighborhood, blue collar parents. I never knew any professional people.

Pimentel: Where was that that you grew up?

Dyson: I grew up in North Dade County. It was unincorporated, right out by the Everglades.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: And because of that, I didn’t know any professionals. I didn’t have any role models. The only role model I had was my teachers. Otherwise, everybody else was working as a laborer of one type or another. So, as a result, I was going to be a teacher because I admired my teachers. There were several high school teachers I really admired and loved and I wanted to be like them. So, I graduated with a Degree in Education and I left Food Fair. Actually had to take a pay cut to become a school teacher because teachers were paid very little in Florida in those days.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Even though I was working for the fifth largest school system in the country, they paid very little money and I was the youngest male teacher in the county. And I was teaching senior high school, seniors.

Pimentel: Whew!
So, I go in, barely turned 21, graduated in May and I had turned 21 in February. I became a teacher and I realized very early on that this was not for me. Maybe I was too young, inexperienced. I looked younger than a lot of the students and I just didn’t find it, to me, to be the right profession.

But, my parents instilled in me this idea of education. So I immediately enrolled in graduate school. So, I’m teaching school during the day and I’m working on my Master’s Degree. Three years later I finished my Master’s Degree and I started working on a Doctorate. And I still realized I was not in the right profession but I became a high school guidance counselor, in addition to teaching. And during the summers, in addition to going to school, I painted aluminum fences in a factory to try to make ends meet because there really was no money to afford graduate school and continue doing this.

Anyway, I decided that, as a high school guidance counselor, I was going to try to give the students something I did not have an opportunity to have; and that was experience or exposure to all types of professions they might go into. So I held a Career Day. I talked the principal into allowing me to bring in speakers of all types to talk to the students. And it wasn’t just the normal doctor, lawyer type of thing; I also brought in skilled people, maybe plumbers, maybe carpenters, maybe semi-skilled - perhaps hairdressers and things like this. I also brought in factory workers; and I brought in salespeople and this type of thing so the students could meet with all these individuals. And they could select, I think, six or eight professions during the day; people they could visit.

One of the people I brought in was the FBI. And everybody signed up for him. So I had to put him in the auditorium and I think everybody who went to Career Day went to see this one man. So I assigned him to make one presentation where everybody could go to see him and then they could go around to all the other speakers. And he was fascinating. The Agent’s name was Maurice Miller.

Oh, I remember Maurice. Yeah.
Dyson:

I believe he was an attorney, but I’m not positive of this. In either case, he was very, very impressive. And the students loved him; he told a lot of stories. But he was there to recruit people to work in Ident at Headquarters. He really wasn’t recruiting for the Miami Field Division. And he brought the applications and he said, “Everybody come up here and get the application.” Well, as a matter of fact, everybody came up and shook hands with him. There were people lined up all over and they wanted to ask him about various things. But nobody took any applications.

After it was done, I apologized for wasting his time. I took him back to the teacher’s lounge. [This] was a very old school so it was a rickety sort of building. I took him in there and gave him, you know, a cracked cup with some coffee in it. And I apologized profusely and I said to him, “You gave all your time. I’m sorry. But these people really probably don’t want to leave Miami to go back to Washington.”

And he said, “Well, don’t worry. That’s fine. What about you?” And I said, “Well, quite frankly, I’m not interested in being in Ident back at Headquarters.” And he said, “No. No. How about being an Agent?” And I said, “Well, gosh, I … I don’t know.” I mean, to my way of thinking, an FBI Agent was somebody who was built like a V, an athletic type, or a Rambo type and I’d also heard attorneys. And I said, “You know, a Rambo type or an attorney; I’m not an attorney and I am not built like that. I’m not that type of person.” “No. No. No. No. You would qualify. You’d be fine.” And I said, “Well, how can I qualify? What about my education?” He says, “Well, even though you hear lawyers are FBI Agents, we do have lawyers and we do have CPAs, but, as a matter of fact, most FBI Agents, have only Bachelors Degrees.” He said, “Probably 75 percent, that’s all the education they have. But you have a Masters Degree. You’ve got 30 credits above your Masters. Educationally, you’re way above most Agents.”
I said, “Well, I don’t have any police experience.” He said, “Well, as a matter of fact, most Agents don’t have police experience but they have to have three years of executive, professional or investigative experience and you’re in your fifth year of teaching, which we consider to be professional experience; plus you were a relief manager at Food Fair for a long time. We could count some of that. So you’d easily qualify that way.” And I said, “Well, I don’t know anything about the FBI.” “Fill out the application!” I filled it out; I personally took it to the office and gave it to the secretary about two or three days later, and didn’t think anything about it.

Next thing I know, Maurice called me and said, “How about taking your test?” So, I went down; I had to take a day off from teaching and there was three or four of us that I met down there. People I had not known before and we took this exam. A couple of weeks later I’m called, “You passed the test. No problem at all, we’ll do a background.” They do a background, then I am told to take a physical. So I go in for the physical. Ironically, I flunked the physical.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: They flunked me because they said I couldn’t see… they told me to read an eye chart at some military facility and I couldn’t even see the wall. And they said, “Well, put your glasses on.” And I said, “I don’t wear glasses.” (Laughing) And they said, “Well, how do you drive a car?” I said (laughing), “Well, I have a driver’s license.” And I said, “In fact, I just passed a flight physical.” I had decided to take some flying lessons. I didn’t have a license. I had a Solo Permit. They said, “You fly a plane! And you can’t see that chart!” So I had to go to an eye doctor. And he said, “Well, you need glasses!” I never realized, I thought everybody saw blurriness. I didn’t realize. So they put me in glasses. I went and took the physical and passed it. So, I started wearing glasses, never having worn them before. (Laughing)

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: I passed the test and then they said, “You’ve got an Appointment. You can leave within two weeks.” I think it was in December of 1966.
Dyson: I said, “Well, in addition to teaching, I’m the Senior Class Counselor. I can’t leave this class. I have an obligation to them. I fill out their college recommendation forms, and so forth and job applications. I can’t leave.” “No problem. Tell us when you can leave.” And I said, “Well, June.” “Well, we have a class starting July 10th, NAC-1, 1967.”

Pimentel: Yep.

Dyson: “You’re in it.” I said, “Fine.” So, now I’m in the FBI and I’ll have to frankly admit to you that I was terrified. I didn’t know anything about what the FBI did. Now, I later realized that people who joined the Bureau, or people who wanted to join the Bureau, many of them had wanted to do it all their lives. And here I was, didn’t know anything about the FBI. So, I went out to the library. There was no internet in those days so I went out to the library. I got every book J. Edgar Hoover wrote. I got everything I could find on the FBI, started reading it, to learn what the FBI was about.

Then I found out there was a television show ... Lou Erskine. So I started religiously watching that, every Sunday, to try to figure out what the FBI did. I soon learned that FBI Agents flew around every week in helicopters. Well, as I was later able to find out, I’d spent 32 years in the FBI and never flew in a helicopter once! (Laughing) But that’s the way the show depicted it and they also shot somebody every week.

Pimentel: You never flew in a helicopter?

Dyson: I never flew in a helicopter (laughing).

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: I never shot anybody either. I came close a couple of times but the times I did, ultimately, come close to shooting people, was always off duty, coming home from work or going to work. I drew guns during the course of the Bureau, but never with the idea I was really going to shoot anybody.

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: Anyway. In the television show it seemed to depict that. So, now it comes time to leave and I was so nervous that I told the students that I was leaving teaching, but I refused to tell them where I was going. Because I felt I’d really gotten myself into something way over my head.

Now, I go to Training Class. I got on an airplane and flew to Washington. It was the first time I’d ever been on a commercial airliner in my life! First time I’d ever been to a commercial airport. Now, keep in mind I was flying solo …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … small planes, but I’d never been on a commercial airliner. Now I fly to Washington, DC; I’m all alone; I stayed in the Harrington Hotel, across from the office, because I think it was Maurice Miller, told me that’s where people stay. I walked across to the FBI and now I meet the new recruits, including you.

Pimentel: Yep.

Dyson: And it made me even more terrified because I listened to the backgrounds of these people. I think the first person in the class was Keith Aiken.

Pimentel: Oh yeah.

Dyson: And Keith Aiken was very young. In fact, I believe he was only twenty-two at the time.

Pimentel: Right. Yeah.

Dyson: I think we celebrated his birthday during Training Class.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Keith Aiken introduced himself as an Aeronautical Engineer from McDonald – Douglas. And I said, “Oh my God!” And somebody else … Bernie Currigan. He introduced himself as a CPA and I believe he was a self-employed CPA.

Pimentel: Right.
And Wally Willey was a military Colonel or something like that. And there was a doctor, there was an eye doctor.

Right.

And I’m saying to myself, “What have I gotten ... These are people who I would say ‘mister’ and ‘sir’ to. Now they’re going to be my fellow … how in the world am I going to compete against them? I had never met people like this. I had never been in a group of thirty people that had this type of education and background. Impressed, but scared to hell! I didn’t know what to do.

Anyway, we all go through class and I found out these people were wonderful people. I mean, they were willing to talk to me! And I’m the low man on the totem pole as far as I’m concerned. And I went through Training Class terrified that I was going to flunk, but only had trouble with Firearms. And even then it wasn’t terrible. I had never fired a gun in my life. I wasn’t in the military. I had never held a gun. So, consequently, I’m starting off as a total novice and there were other people starting off as sharpshooters. Keith Aiken, who could hit the target with one hand with his other hand tied behind his back (laughing), you know. And then it goes down the line … Wally Willie could blow away the target (laughing). And I’m sitting here. How do I load the gun? Still, I think, one of the funniest things, or things I remember, was with the tear gas gun.

Oh yeah.

Shooting that thing and being knocked over! … having no idea what sort of concussion I would get from this thing. But I qualified in Firearms. I mean, I couldn’t shoot in the 90s but I could at least get in the 70s and 80s. So I didn’t really have a problem. And in terms of the academics, there didn’t seem to be a problem. And then I was sent out to Detroit.
Now Detroit. I wasn’t afraid when I got there - the Detroit Division. Somehow, I was introduced to Mort Nickell. Mort Nickell had been a veteran Agent there. He’d been in Detroit for many years. I don’t know where he was before that. He worked on the Bank Robbery Squad. I was assigned to the Applicant Squad with Tom Nally, who was the ASAC.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

And he was a fine man. But, for some reason, I got together with Mort Nickell. He was assigned to show me housing … but I don’t think he was on the squad. So I go out with him and the first thing he said, “Well, let’s get your coat and head out!” Coat … I came in from Miami, Florida. I didn’t own a coat. (Chuckling)

Pimentel: (Laughing)

I didn’t have a coat. (Laughing) He says, “You don’t have a coat?” I said, “Well, I got a little jacket I wear.” He said, “Well, you can’t wear that with a business suit. Where’s your coat?” So, he took me to Sears and he says, “I’m not supposed to do this but you’ve got to have a coat.” This is October and in Detroit, it was getting cold. So he took me to Sears and he said, “This is what people normally wear.” And he shows me these trench coats. That became my coat! And I still wear trench coats. Some people say I still have the same one but I don’t. But, I started wearing trench coats, London Fog trench coats (laughing). But prior to that time, I never owned a coat, a business-type coat.

So Mort gets me the coat; now we’re going to go out to look for housing. Well, we never found housing. That day, that first day, we were called out to not one or two, but five bank robberies.

Oh, my goodness!

Now, keep in mind when you’re in Training Class in those days, when you went to Hogan’s Alley …

Right.
… that was the big project you had. You were going to solve a bank robbery. And it was almost like if you are lucky, as a First Office Agent, you might get a chance to go to a (emphasized) bank robbery.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Well, I didn’t realize that Detroit was the bank robbery center of the country at that time, that and Los Angeles, and they had branch banking and many of them were in mobile home type things. And, as a result, bank robberies were routine. I go to five the first day and, I think, within the first couple of months, I’d gone to twenty bank robberies and I had been the first car at some of the bank robberies. (Laughing) After leaving Quantico and getting the impression I would be honored to go to a bank robbery, now I find out that this is what you do as a normal part of your job everyday in Detroit.

Eventually I get housing and I get with a bunch of single Agents. They had rented a house and they let me have a room so now I’m part of it. And the first year in Detroit was exciting. Detroit may not be the best place in the world to live, although I did live in the city. The house was in the city. But the crime problem there was something you would relish as a young Agent.

Pimentel: So what squad were you assigned to?

Dyson: I was assigned initially to Tom Nally’s Applicant Squad and that was typical for First Office Agents.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Then you were sent to another squad. I was sent to the Organized Crime Squad but I did not work Organized Crime. They also handled draft dodgers. So, as a result, the 42-cases.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: That’s what the young Agents did who went to that squad. So we had a chance to experience Organized Crime …
… which was intricate work. And to meet these veteran Agents that worked it. And you could help them out periodically and go on leads with them and so forth, and maybe work surveillance on it. But you were primarily working 42s.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Now that did get me involved in terrorism to a certain degree because of the fact that there were all sorts of protests, and so forth, at draft facilities, military recruiting stations, and the Draft Boards. There were protestors there, and so forth.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So I’m getting a touch of what’s going to be in my career. But, a lot of the time I spent on the road. The reason being they found out that I had a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling, which is education, and they wanted me to recruit help.

Pimentel: Hmm!

Dyson: And even though I was not happy doing that in the sense that I came in to work the big stuff, if anything, and here I’m out recruiting people to come in to the FBI and I’m barely in the FBI myself. And it’s sort of embarrassing to go before a class and say, “Well, I’ve been in the FBI three months, you ought to come with us!”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: And I was sent out to work out of the Marquette Resident Agency and the Senior Resident Agent, well, actually the only Resident Agent was Clyde Graven, who turned out to be a saint. What a wonderful, wonderful man and a mentor; I mean, he could tell you and show you what to do. So I did recruiting out there and, of course, if he needed somebody to help him with a lead, I would do that type of thing. And I really experienced snow out there. That’s up in the Upper Peninsula. And I mean, if there’s any snow in the United States it’s going to snow there before it snows anywhere else. So, I had never experienced anything. I got clothes out there in order to survive!
Pimentel:  (Laughing)

Dyson:  I remember one time, I was staying in a motel.  I couldn’t stay at Clyde’s house, and there was no RA so I stayed at a motel.  I remember one morning coming out and the car won’t start, the Bureau car.  So I called the office, they said, “Call a tow truck.”  I called a tow truck; the guy looks it over and said, “Well, why didn’t you plug it in?”

Pimentel:  (Laughing)

Dyson:  I said, “Plug it in?  What are you talking about?”  And he shows me in the grill of the car, there’s a plug and there’s a wire under the front seat and all I have to do is plug it into the motel.  I had no idea.  I thought this was like a parking meter in front of the motel.

Pimentel:  (Laughing)

Dyson:  Plug in a car!  I never heard of such a thing!  So anyway, (laughing) I hadn’t plugged in the car, but I learned to plug the car in.  They jumped the battery and got it started.

So a year in Detroit and it was a wonderful year.  I went to scores of bank robberies.  I had all sorts of experience in Organized Crime.  I worked 42-cases.  And one thing I found out, I could work as an FBI Agent.  When I went to Training Class, I was terrified.  And one thing I found out was that a lot of young Agents had difficulty with paper.  And that seemed to be my bag.  I could do the paper, it just came natural to me.

And for the first time in my life, I found something that could come natural.  My brother had been a tremendous baseball player, All-City Baseball player, and so forth, in Florida.  And, to him, baseball came natural.  All athletics.  He could bowl with either hand, and so forth.  And he couldn’t sort of understand why other people couldn’t do it that way.

Pimentel:  (Laughing)
Dyson: And now, all of a sudden, I come in the FBI and I found something I can naturally do. Nothing seemed difficult, you know ... maybe I wasn’t the best shot, but I wasn’t gonna go out shooting people but I could interview people; I could develop informants; I could do the paperwork.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And I realized that not everybody could do it that easily. So all of a sudden, now I found something that was a natural. And I remember one morning in Detroit. I’m shaving and I’m looking at myself in the mirror and I’m saying to myself, “I don’t believe that they’re paying me to do this!”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: And you know something, when I left the FBI, I was saying the same thing. And I say it today, “I don’t believe that they’re paying me to do this. I would have done this for free.”

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Now albeit, you’d have to give me per diem to keep me living; but on other hand, you didn’t have to pay me to do this. I didn’t come for money in the first place but, more importantly, I fell into something. And after I left the Bureau, and even today, I’m still related with the Bureau in what I do. I still go to church every week and it’s not because I’m a religious fanatic or anything like that. I go to church so it gives me a reason to get down on my knees and thank God for what he gave me.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: How many people work jobs for their whole adult lifehood that they love and would do for free! Most people don’t have that advantage today.

Pimentel: No. No, they don’t. Well, any exciting or any notable case that made notoriety while you were in Detroit that first year?
Dyson: Yes. There was one case, well, there was a number of cases that the office had, but there was only one case that happened to me that really made an impact. It was good fortune. There was a bank robbery and it was in Grand Rapids, Michigan. And I happened to be the only FBI Agent floating around and they called out on the radio, “Any Agent available?” And I’m out doing applicant work and so I responded. So I’m the only FBI Agent there and there’s all these local police, and so forth. The reason the case is so important was that somebody was killed.

And the way they were killed was that the perpetrators went out and stole a car that belonged to a painter. And the painter had all cans of paint and everything in his car. As he was coming out to the car to pick up a can of paint, they jumped this guy. They threw him in the trunk of the car and they took the painter’s car. It was really a messed up car, ladders and everything. They took this vehicle. They went to the bank. They robbed the bank. They came out of the bank. They jumped into their getaway car and drove it a few miles away. They pulled up near a school, jumped out of the car with the money and ran off. Unfortunately, one of the men tripped over one of the cans of paint and got paint all over his shoes. So there are footprints of paint wandering across the school parking lot and so forth.

The painter, who’s in the trunk of the car, died because of all the fumes and so forth. So we had a person dead, plus a bank robbery. So everybody … every agency possible was out there, almost all local, with me as the only FBI person. And they come across two suspects and they picked them up because they trace the footprints back to a public housing project. And somebody says, “Well, yeah, they went up there.” That type of thing. So they have two suspects but they can’t prove they’re the ones that did it because the paint footprints did not quite go to their apartment. They couldn’t find the shoe, and so forth. So they couldn’t completely tie these people in. So these are suspects.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.
And I remember they had a big meeting in an auditorium. And they had all the police agencies in there and they’re talking about, “Well, what do you have on this? What do you have?” And everybody’s throwing up what evidence they have and so forth to try and tie in these people to the robbery. So they come up with a hypothesis. What these two people did is that apparently three weeks or four weeks prior to the bank robbery, they went to a downtown store, took a brick and threw it through the front window of the store in front of a bunch of people and were arrested for vandalizing the store.

And the hypothesis was the date of their court hearing was the day of the bank robbery. So the feeling was these people deliberately got themselves arrested so that they would go to court. And what they were going to do was apparently try to do the bank robbery and run back to the court and try to use the court as an alibi so they couldn’t be convicted for the robbery. That was the theory that they were putting out. The question is whether they could prove it or not.

And what had happened was that the robbers did come to court, but they came after the case was called so the judge put them in jail for coming in late. So that’s why these people were currently in jail. They weren’t really arrested for the robbery but they were identified as suspects and now they’re in jail. Now the question is to try and prove that they’re the ones. Because they have the theory, but they can’t prove it.

So everybody’s throwing up various things as to how there’s no fingerprints or anything. They couldn’t come up with evidence. And, while I’m listening to this, I’m saying, “Well, maybe these people did not anticipate going to jail for breaking this window.” My theory was that they thought they were going to get a fine. I wondered if they dipped into the money they robbed and took extra money so that they would be able to pay the fine. Because, after all, they thought they were going to get to court before their case was called. So I said to myself, “I wonder what they had on them when they were arrested in court?” In other words, what did they have on them when they went into court? So, I went to the jail.
Dyson: Now, of course, I don’t know, you know, where the jail is. I said, “Where’s the jail?” They tell me where the jail is … right next to the courthouse. I go over there; I go to the turn key of the jail and I said, “Do you take people in?” “Yeah.” “Did you take their possessions?” “Oh, yes.” “Did you do an inventory of their possessions?” “Yes, I did.” “Can I see the inventory?” So he shows me the inventory and I said, “Well, it shows that this man had fifty dollars (or whatever it was) in his pocket.” “Did you get identification from the fifty dollars?” He said, “No. I just wrote it down … fifty dollars.” I said, “Who has custody of that money?” He said, “I do.” I said, “Do you have the right to show it to me?” He said, “Yes.” I said, “Do you have the right to inventory it completely?” And I said, “If I asked you to identify these five dollar bills or ten dollar bills, do you have the right to do that?” “Well, yes, I do. But I don’t normally do it.” I said, “I want you to do it. Take the money out and I want you to take the serial numbers down.” So he says, “Alright, if you want to do that FBI, I’ll do it.” So he writes it down. I took out the list of bait bills and there’s a bait bill.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: So I went back to this big meeting. Now, keep in mind, I’m the youngest person there and nobody knows who I am. I’m the only FBI. So they’re still calling various agencies, asking, “what do you think” agency … “what do you think?” “Well, how about you from the FBI. What do you think about this?” I said, “Well, I think I can prove these people did the robbery. Or, at least, this one man did.” “Well, how are you going to do that FBI?! Sonny!” And I said, “Well, the man’s got a bait bill in his wallet.”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: “What do you mean he’s got a bait bill in his wallet?” (Laughing) I said, “Here it is.” And I’ve got this thing in my hand (laughing). And everybody says, “I don’t believe I’m hearing this!” But that resolved the case. Now, I was called back later to testify in the case …

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: … but they pled out so I didn’t even have to testify. But, I guess that was my claim to fame.

Pimentel: That’s great!

Dyson: But that’s not the end of the story. The company I’m working for now is a federal government contractor. I’m doing a school in Maryland and I’m teaching police officers and there’s a whole bunch of Bomb Techs in this class. So after the class, we’re talking maybe ten and 11 o’clock at night, we’re all at this hotel where the meeting was taking place and a lot of these people are staying at the hotel. So a bunch of us gather in this bar and, even though I’m not a drinker anymore, I’m still sitting with these people and we’re shooting the bull. And this one guy says, “Let me tell you about this robbery.” And he describes this paint robbery in Michigan. He’s talking about the paint footprints and he’s talking about the bait bill and all this sort of stuff. And I’m listening to the story and I’m looking at this guy and he’s about 35-years-old and I finally stopped him and I said (chuckling), “I don’t believe this.” I said, “I’m the one that found this bait bill.” But I said, “This happened 30 years ago. You couldn’t possibly have been there.” He said, “I wasn’t. My father was a detective.”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: He said his father kept telling that story over and over again about that robbery and he thought it was so interesting that now he’s using it in his storytelling.

Pimentel: Incredible! A small world.

Dyson: What a small world that was. What a small world. I always remember that particular case because it was very unique that I was the only Agent. I felt like I was coming totally out in the dark. (Laughing)

Pimentel: (Laughing) Oh, that’s good. How to meet your counterparts! In one easy lesson!
Dyson: (Laughing) One easy lesson. And I never saw them again because I had no reason to be there. I was just out applicant recruiting so it wasn’t as though I was going to be working with these people again or anything of that nature.

Pimentel: That was in Grand Rapids?

Dyson: I’m thinking maybe it was in Battle Creek but I think it was in Grand Rapids and I believe there’s an RA in Grand Rapids now. In fact, I know there is, but I’m not sure there was one then.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But that was my life in Detroit. And, of course, there were a lot of other big cases. There was a man called the Trailer Bandit who, I think, robbed - oh, God, probably - almost thirty banks. But they were all in mobile homes. That’s why they called him the Trailer Bandit. And, ultimately, he was apprehended. I worked on some of the cases only because I responded. I wasn’t on the Bank Robbery Squad. I did some interviews, that type of thing. But I never was involved in the apprehension of him. But that was a big case when they apprehended him.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: But Detroit had a lot of crime, to say the least … Organized Crime, and so forth.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And there were a lot of draft dodger resistance, and so forth. Then I come to Chicago.

Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: My reward after a year, it was almost to the day, I get transferred to Chicago. Another big city, another northern city, another place that I had never lived. And, of course, in the FBI, in those days, J. Edgar Hoover’s philosophy was you never went back to a place where you lived.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: Second Office, you could OP a Second Office but you almost never got it; maybe if you put New York down, but, otherwise, you didn’t get it. So now I arrive in Chicago.

And in Chicago, I’m assigned to the Accounting Squad, even though I’m not an Accountant. The Supervisor was Leo Pedrody. And Leo had been around for many, many years … a really sharp guy; a nice guy. I think he probably had thirty years or so. But I didn’t really spend much time on the Accounting Squad. I’m assigned to it, but shortly thereafter, shortly after arriving, of course, there are a lot of young Agents coming to Chicago, or they were already in Chicago when I arrived. They would have been there for a few months. This is right after the Democratic Convention; so, as a result, we had a lot of infusion of Agents. Some of them are there on TDY; others being assigned there. So there’s a build up in Chicago. There was also something else happening. And that was the Bureau was trying to hire people. They were trying to hire Agents because the Omnibus Crime Bill of 1968 had been passed and increased the FBI size.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: So there was going to be a big infusion of Agents. But they’re also trying to hire people for Washington to work in Ident. That was the big thing or to work any place in the Washington area. They could not hire enough people. So, as a result, J. Edgar Hoover sent out something to all the SACs saying you’ve got quotas. You gotta hire so many people, you better figure out a way to do it. Our SACs decision was to get a contingent of young people, young Agents to go out full time recruiting. And I was drafted. And, again, the SAC, well, no, I didn’t talk to the SAC. The ASAC told me, “The reason you’ve been selected, besides the fact you’re new in the office, is because you were a former teacher. You can relate to these people. Plus, you’re young. You can relate to these people. You gotta convince these people to go back to Washington.” Well, from Downtown Chicago, they’d take a pay cut to go there.

Pimentel: Right.
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Dyson: Well, “no, we know we can’t recruit in Downtown Chicago. You gotta go out to the farmlands.” So all of us, there were, I think, ten or twelve of us that were selected to go out. Well, most of the people really didn’t want to go and I wasn’t really jumping up and down with joy with doing it, but I’d done it in Detroit so it wasn’t as though I was uncomfortable. You had to go out and speak to Career Days. You had to go to every school and try to just encourage the counselor, which I could do because I was in professional associations in counseling, and so forth, so I could relate to them that way.

Go to businesses and see if they’re laying anybody off. Use your imagination.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: One thing, you had a car. In those days, you didn’t get cars. The Squad got cars and you could use them, you know. And, of course, the New Agents got the oldest car and you could bring it back home at night. Well, hell. I was given the car and told, “Get a hotel room. You bring it to the hotel.” So, geeze, you know, I got a car! But I couldn’t take it to my apartment.

So we head out to recruit. And, you know, it’s not easy trying to recruit farm people to go back to Washington, DC. Their parents will say, “You’ve got to be kidding!” You know, you might be able to get the application but as soon as you went out and talk to the parents, they would be, “My daughter’s not leaving here to go back to Washington, DC!” So, we’re out recruiting and I do this, probably six months …

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: … out there, working out of the Rockford Resident Agency with Jerry Nolan as the Senior Resident Agent. And they have four Agents out there, the nicest people you’re ever going to find. I mean, I wouldn’t have mind being assigned to Rockford except it’s really sort of a residential type area; I don’t know whether a young, single guy would be happy out there. But I’m a workaholic; I’m single, you know. I’m willing to put the time in and so forth.
Dyson: It’s a new experience to me. And also, I’m the only person in most of this area. The Rockford RA covers all the way out to the Mississippi River. And, as a result, in most cases, I’m the only FBI Agent in the area. So if there was a Federal crime, like a bank robbery, or something, they’d put a call out on the radio and I’d be the guy to respond to it.

Okay. I’m out by the Mississippi River and I remember the date. It’s May the 28th, 1969. A day that was going to change my life or actually the next day was going to change my life. I get a call on the three-channel radio that the SAC wants to see me. Well, I mean, when I called in I was told this and I said, “Well, I’m out by the Mississippi River, there’s no way I can make it in, it’ll take me four hours to make it in.” “Don’t worry, he wants to see you the first thing tomorrow morning. But I don’t know why.” And I said, “Well, I’ve got these speeches set up. I’ve got cases.” “Don’t worry. We’ve already called Jerry Nolan. You are to give everything to him and he will see to it that members of the RA will do it.”

So I went in to see Jerry Nolan and I said, “Jerry, what’s wrong?” He said, “I can’t tell you. I don’t know. SAC called and said you were going back.” I said, “Did I do something wrong?” He said, “I can’t tell you … don’t know.”

Pimentel: Uhmm!

Dyson: And I said, “This is bad.”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: About the only thing I could think of is the car. You know, did I do something wrong with the car? You know, maybe they caught me going to McDonald’s to get lunch. I mean, I don’t know what I’ve done. Did I say something in these speeches? I’m making speeches in all these high schools. Did I say something that somebody didn’t like? Did somebody complain? I don’t know.
Dyson: But I remember I came back to my apartment that night and one thing I did was I took out my badge and my gun and I cleaned them all up. I figured if nothing else, if they let me go, it’s going to go in my termination paper, it’s going to say “but he had a clean gun!”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: Anyway, the next morning I go in and I find out I’m not the only person. There’s about, oh, I don’t know, ten of us or so. Not the same people doing the applicant recruiting, but there were about ten of us. Basically we’re told about college campus violence; there’s bombings on college campuses, including the University of Chicago in Illinois … anti-Vietnam … and you’re being reassigned to a Squad which was an FCI Squad led by Supervisor Hugh Mallet and you’re going to be working on these anti-war activities; and we’re not really concerned about legitimate picketing and protest … we’re concerned about bombings.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: Now, at the time, I didn’t realize what the problem was. I was to find out, not from the FBI, incidentally, but from other research that there was something like 120 bombings on or around college campuses between the middle of 1969, or, middle of 1968 and the middle of 1969, a year period, twelve months. From mid-‘68 to ‘69 there were something like 120 bombings on or around college campuses. I didn’t know that! There were arsons. There were attacks on FBI Agents who came to try to recruit people. And here I’m one of the recruiters but I’m recruiting primarily at high schools. But, if I’d gone to a college campus I could have been … my car could have been vandalized; my table could have been overturned, and so forth. And it wasn’t just the FBI. It was CIA. It was Secret Service. But it was also corporate entities. I mean, these protesters were opposed to capitalism, as well.
Dyson: And we’re being assigned to the squad and none of us were all that happy because we were hoping if we got reassigned, especially a person like me who was out doing the applicant recruiting, I thought my reward would be assigned to a Bank Robbery Squad; or assigned to the big (emphasized) squad. The squad where people smoked cigars, you know …

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: … the Fugitive Squad! And here I’m being assigned to an FCI Squad that’s going to do what?! I’m not quite sure what. And I remember asking Hugh Mallet and some of the other managers and the ASAC, and so forth, where do I turn in the manual to find out what I’m supposed to do. Because remember …

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: … the old manuals, you know, in the Training Class, if you had a speaker come in talking about, say, stolen cars, he’d say, “Open your manuals …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … to the 26 Section.”

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: You’d go to it and it would tell you everything to do. Here I am; I’m in a situation where what part of the manual do I turn to and I’m basically told, “We don’t know. All we know is the FBI is supposed to be involved in this.” And, of course, then you come up with big questions and these are questions that still haunt the FBI, I believe, today.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And that is most of this violence is coming off college campuses. SDS, Students for a Democratic Society. They’re a college group. Progressive Labor Party. There’s various organizations based on the campuses. What can we do on those campuses?
Dyson: You’re telling me to get involved in these things. Obviously if there’s a bombing, I can do crime scene. But what else can I do? Can I infiltrate a college classroom? Can I go and listen to a professor? Can I talk to a professor in a college classroom? Can I go to his office? Can I put an informant in the college classroom? Or even on the campus. Can I penetrate any college organization? What can I do? And nobody had any rules or regulations. There was nothing. And, say today, a lot of people say, “Well, our hands are tied because of all the rules and regulations … that’s why we can’t catch the terrorists.” I would have given my eye teeth for any rules and regulations because this was going to come and destroy us. We were going to end up with FBI Agents arrested. Not because of what they did wrong, but because nobody knew what was right or wrong.

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: We didn’t have any rules and regulations. And this was a very unique experience for FBI people. Because we live by rules and regulations and here I’m on a Squad with a Supervisor who knew the rules and regulations for FCI but, when it came to this work, nobody really knew exactly what we could and could not do. We had to use our own minds to figure out what’s right and wrong. And if we were wrong, we were wrong. We’d get criticized. If we did it right, we might get praise. But it wasn’t as though somebody would say, “You violated this rule in the manual” because there really was nothing for us.

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah. You couldn’t find it in the 105 Section.

Dyson: No. There wasn’t anything. In fact, 105s, I think, considered Puerto Ricans as terrorists.

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: And that’s supposed to be international.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: The Puerto Ricans … you had to tell the FBI Headquarters, eventually, that Puerto Rico was not a foreign country.
Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: But Puerto Rico was not the immediate problem. (Chuckling) That was going to be my problem later in my career.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But this was a very unique experience to start getting involved in this. The first thing I got involved in was when I went to Hugh Mallet … who turned out to be a saintly man. This man, he was an Emory Law School graduate, and he had a like country boy personality. He was the best punster I’ve ever encountered in my life. It was like he took nothing seriously and, yet, he took everything seriously. But he buried it within himself to the point that his heart blew up when, I think, he was 43-years-old.

Pimentel: Oh, my gosh. Ohh.

Dyson: He died at FBI Headquarters. But this man was a wonderful man and a wonderful advisor and counselor, and mentor and every other kind word I can use. The first thing he did when he saw me was he said, “We’re going to be putting in a wiretap.” I said, “A wiretap. I don’t even know what a wiretap is. I’ve never really experienced that.” And I’m led to the bowels of the Chicago Office, to parts I never saw before and go through these various, in those days … it wasn’t cipher locks, it was key lock type of thing …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … but you go into this area … and I never knew this place existed … and it’s a windowless type of area and there’s all these machines all over the place; and there’s these various people wandering. I don’t … what is. I never saw anything like this before. And they take and said, “Here’s your machine.” And they sit me down and there’s three recording machines here. Now, actually, I couldn’t sit down because there was a man sitting there … his name was Bill Broderick. Bill Broderick was introduced to me as “the Agent who was running this during the day; you’ll have it at night. You’ll work from four to midnight. Bill Broderick will work eight to four.”
Dyson: I was subsequently told … taken aside and told that Bill Broderick was dying. He was only in his 40s … early 40s … that he had a major heart attack and that they could not stop his blood pressure and that he was living on borrowed time and he would never be able to function as a fulltime Agent again. He was on limited duty. Bill Broderick was a saint. He must have been, when he finally died, there must have been a thousand people easily. There had to be 150 police vehicles out in the funeral. I’ve never seen anything like it. But this man was a wonderful mentor and he knew that he would never be able to use the knowledge he was getting from that wiretap. All he could do was transmit it to other Agents because he knew he could never function as an Agent again after that heart attack.

Anyway, Bill mentored me for a few days … how to do it. Then I take over the console at night. It was so exciting that I would come in maybe two o’clock in the afternoon and Bill Broderick and I would work together and he would transfer the knowledge he had picked up during the day. Then I would work until sometimes six, seven o’clock in the morning. I … sometimes I’d work a night through and see Bill Broderick when he came in the next day. I mean, this was exciting! And we were monitoring the Weather Underground. Well, actually, it was the Students for a Democratic Society and I watched (emphasized) them become the Weathermen! I was with (emphasized) them when they became the Weathermen! I was with them when they became clandestine. I knew more about these people than they knew about themselves.

If you work a wiretap, a good wiretap, you will become that way. And it was, to me, it was exciting. I was watching history.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But I was like a part of it. I remember there was one humorous thing, well, not humorous, this was one of many things. There was one girl they had brought into their movement and she was a cutesy sort of person. She wasn’t a beauty queen, but she was sort of a fun-loving.
Dyson: She certainly wasn’t unattractive, but she was fun-loving and happy and giggly, and so forth, and not exactly what you’d feel to be a terrorist, but that’s the type of person she was. And she was interested in boys. And there was another guy that worked there that we were monitoring. He was tall, slender, and very good-looking. And she had it for him. I mean, she’s, “ohhhh, he’s here. Ohhh ....,” you know. She was really enthralled with him and I always wanted to call her. I felt I had to call this girl because I knew he was gay. But I never called.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: But she didn’t know. And most, some of the other people in that office knew, and some didn’t, and I wanted to call her and say, “By the way, do you know ....” Now, in those days we didn’t use the word gay. That was just coming into our vocabulary, but I knew he was homosexual. Because of the wire. I knew all sorts of intimate things about these people. Now, that was going to become very, very important to me.

Pimentel: Uh-huh.

Dyson: Very, very important to me, the fact that I knew so much about these people, because they were my people. I lived with these people sometimes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And there was one person who worked in that office that we were monitoring who was part of the movement but a little different. I knew there were certain things about him. And so, one day, I went out and hit him. And he flipped just like that (snaps his fingers). First time we’d ever flipped anybody in that group. He flipped ...

Pimentel: When you say you “hit him” you better explain that.

Dyson: Alright. I went out and I talked to him and I threw out the right words that I knew would work with him. And he agreed to be an informant. Not immediately ... I’ll have to admit that. Because when I went out that day, I went out with another Agent, and we made the approach. “Will you work for me?” And he said something like he was going to kill me.

Pimentel: Humpfh.
Dyson: And then he picked up a broom and he chased us out of the house. So, in that respect, I guess that was not the proper way. And I recall we were coming back to the office, with this other Agent saying, “He threatened to kill us!” (Laughing) And as we were driving down this street, all of a sudden I hit my brakes. This other Agent flew onto the floor and I likely flew under the dashboard. The reason I hit my brakes is I could see this person running through this red light from the other side. This person went flying past me and broadsided the car next to me. It was a four-lane road. And anyway, this other Agent said, “What happened?!” You know, he’s lying on the floor and I said, “Well, there seems to be a car mangled over here.” And he missed us by just inches, you know, and I sort of backed away and got around it and then went to try to help the people and then police arrived, so I left.

We left and we started driving back to the office and we get this radio message, “You got a telephone call. Call this person.” And it’s the guy we made the contact with. And I called him on the phone and he says, “Where do you want to meet?”

Pimentel: Hmm!

Dyson: I said, “Look, you know, if you’re not going to cooperate.” He said, “Don’t worry. You said the right things to me. It’s just that there were people around and, I had to put on an act. Let’s meet.” And we met and, as soon as we met, he said, “I’ll tell you what’s going on. I’ll run them for you. I’ll be your informant.”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: I had found out that this guy was a little bit different. He was a professional criminal and they had recruited him out of prison during a demonstration, a protest, they encountered him. And he was a real criminal; he had a criminal background. And they were trying to recruit everybody … students and everybody else and this criminal was willing to listen to them. Whereas, everybody else in the prison were laughing at these people, ridiculing them, calling them Communists, threatening to kill them and all this type of stuff.
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Dyson: And this guy was willing to listen to them. So they recruited him and brought him in; had him working in the office, and so forth. And they relied upon him for the muscle. Because most of these people, they were college students …

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: … they really weren’t used to physically beating somebody up. This guy, they felt, could kill people, literally tear them to shreds and he could have. He certainly could have and he had the record to prove it. So, as a result, from listening to him, and so forth, I came to the realization this guy was no more of a convert than I was. That this guy was in it because he liked the women and money.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … he was like a dry sponge, you know, they’re going to feed me, I will eat (laughing). If he could rob money from them, he’d steal money from them. Hell, he was in it to get whatever, so, as a result, I offered him more. And that was only that wiretap that did it. I knew what words to say to him that would convert him and the best thing was money.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: I will pay you! So now I go back to Hugh Mallet, I write this memo, passed it in to him. I open this guy as an informant. He looks at it and says, “No. No, you don’t understand the rules. You don’t put down that you intend to approach somebody. You only open an informant if you actually have the guy.” I said, “He’s mine.”

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: (Laughing) “You converted this guy? You’re only on this Squad a week! You made this guy an informant?!” I said, “Well, you know, I’ve been on the Squad for months. I mean, I was only the Case Agent for …” “Oh, alright.” “Well,” I said, “but there’s a money problem. He wants more than the two hundred dollars a month.” … We only had two hundred dollars in authorization …

Pimentel: Right. Right.
Dyson: I say, “He’s got to have more money than that.” Hugh says, “Well, you know with FCI informants we can pay, we can put them on a stipend of some type. Gotta get Bureau approval.” “Then let’s do it.” So we got him on a stipend. I think we got him on a stipend of four hundred dollars a month. Which, in those days, …

Pimentel: Yeah. That was a lot.

Dyson: … you know, you just couldn’t do that. But, of course, I had to justify it and everything. So, we turned an informant and that began my informant career. Because this was the first time I ever turned anybody like that though. I mean, when somebody was really in … flip ‘em. After that I went to different techniques because with terrorists you don’t usually, you can’t usually do that.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: There’s got to be other methods.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So, in my book, when I talk about developing informants, I don’t usually stress that type of method because that’s a hard one to do. I admire anybody that can do that. But about the only way you’re going to do it is if you get to know the person like the back of your hand. You almost have to have a wiretap.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: In order to get that type of information. And a lot of times you don’t have wiretaps in these cases; or, if you do, they’re not as good that you can really get to know the people.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: So, now I’m involved in terrorism. I’m excited as you can possibly get. The only problem is this is not even called terrorism in those days.

Pimentel: No.
Dyson: No. If you looked under the word terrorism in the dictionary in those days it would say the use of force or violence, or somebody who uses force or violence. Well, hell, that could be even our Organized Crime figure … goes out and breaks people’s legs for … on a juice loan case.

These people are called what? These people who are doing these bombings on campuses, these anti-Vietnam War people, people that are trying to overthrow our Government and get rid of the Capitalist system. They’re called, well, militants, …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … revolutionaries, radicals, Commies, Pinkos, wierdos, beatniks … I mean, there’s all sorts of terms. And then you got the people in the South who are trying to fight integration, usually they’re Klan-type people, or called Klansmen or something of that nature, or segregationists or whatever other words you want to use. But the word terrorist is only used by a few people. Now, albeit, the reign of terror comes from that era in France …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And you also have the UN, I’m sorry, the League of Nations came out and declared some people as terrorists who were fighting against the new countries that were formed, primarily in Eastern Europe, in connection with World War I. They might talk about some of these ethnic people doing terrorist attacks against the newly-established Governments and so forth. But, the word terrorism was not a commonly used word to refer to this. There’s no single word. That word … so I don’t know what I’m working.

In the early 1970s, the word terrorism creeps into our vocabulary. And I’m not sure who did it, you know, the news media or something. I guess they have to have a common word. So all of a sudden, in the early ‘70s, these people are all sort of lumped into the word ‘terrorism.’ And actually the dictionary starts to change their definition. So, now if you look in a modern dictionary, it’ll say the use of force or violence for political purposes or to make social change. That’s now the first definition of terrorism.
Dyson: And then you have to go down three definitions and it might say use of force or violence in general.

So this term terrorism … I’m working terrorism before terrorism is accepted as a term for this kind of violence.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So we start with the Weather Underground. I’m blessed because there is a veteran FCI Agent by the name of Bob Glendon. And what a man he was and still is. He’s an older gentleman now. I guess he’s 80-years-old now. In fact, I dedicated my book to him. This is the man who taught me ethics, morals, and how to investigate. A man that could do paper, nobody could do paper like he could.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: I mean this man was an outstanding … I used to love to read his reports. Even though they weren’t on a case I was involved in, just because of the way that he could write a report; the way that he could do an investigation and write it up, and so forth. He taught me a great deal.

He was assigned to be the SDS National Case Agent and did a fine job. Ultimately, the Weather Underground takes over the SDS case. Bob Glendon goes back into FCI type work and I become the SDS, or the Weather Underground National Case Agent. And the Weathermen are all over the United States. And between their first bombing attack that I’m aware of, which would have been October the 7th of 1969, and the last bombing attack, which is in February of 1977, they do thirty-eight bombings that I’m aware of.

Now, there are some others that they may have done, but we don’t know, that they didn’t really claim. Their bombings are some of the most sophisticated bombings ever done in the United States, certainly by terrorist groups. I mean, we can look at the attacks we have today, but theirs is as good as any that’s ever been done. They were able to get into the U.S. Capitol; build a bomb into a wall and blow it up at will.
Dyson: They got into the Pentagon, where I can’t get in with my credentials and built it into a wall and blow it up at will. They got into corporate headquarters that were secured to the point that there may be only one elevator that could get there and there’s a guard at the elevator. They were able to get into corporate headquarters like that and build bombs into walls. They were able to call up and say it’s going to go off in exactly five minutes and it would go off in five minutes. They were as good as any terrorist group in the world in terms of their sophistication and being able to build devices and put them in buildings.

Pimentel: Where do they get their training?

Dyson: Well, that always has been a question. When the Students for a Democratic Society began to be taken over by what was going to become the Weathermen faction, many of their leaders did go to Cuba. And, this is of significance. That question’s a wonderful question because of the fact that it’s going to come back seven years later, and I’ll try to respond to that.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: So that’s a good question to bring up at this point because it’s something that, later in the story, it will come up. Where they got their training? I’m not exactly sure. They certainly didn’t get it the way they do today. You can’t go to the internet and say, “How to build a bomb?”

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Now, albeit, there were books that they did read, and so forth and they did get ideas there. They did try to teach each other when they had found a device they could build correctly. They taught other people to build the same device. So that they would build it by rote memory as opposed to experimentation, and so forth. But where they’d learned how to be clandestine? And, it’s not just building bombs;

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … it’s how to be clandestine.
Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Where did they learn?

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: We really don’t know. But they developed it to the point that we couldn’t catch them. The thirty-eight bombings, as I told you, I was the National Case Agent after Bob. Between Bob and I, you know how many cases we solved out of the 38?

Pimentel: No.

Dyson: None!

Pimentel: You’re kidding.

Dyson: To this day, to this day, and I still monitor these people … to this day, I can’t tell you who did any of those bombings specifically. Now, I can tell you who was clandestine but we’re talking about up to 150 people clandestine. I can’t tell you specifically who did each bombing. Now, there’s a couple I have pretty good suspects on some bombings. But, to this day, don’t know who did any. That’s how good these people were.

Now, a lot of people would say, “Well, that’s how bad you were.” Well, yeah. We had problems. We, meaning not only the FBI, but law enforcement, in general. We didn’t know how to investigate terrorism. We didn’t realize this is a specific, unique type of investigation.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And it’s one that a lot of veteran Criminal Agents can’t work. Their methodology is so different that a veteran Criminal Agent, …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … that he can’t adapt to these people.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: There are differences … major differences. Anyway, it took years to learn this. And I’m one of these people, I, unfortunately, I will put my hand on the stove. But if I do and burn myself, I’ll never do it again.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: So, that’s one good thing. I’m stupid enough to put my hand there in the first place but I’ll never do it a second time. And that’s how, over the years, I learned how to investigate terrorism because I burned myself or, if I didn’t burn myself, the guy next to me did and I watched him scream and learned, you know, I’m not going to do that again.

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah.

Dyson: So, that’s basically how I learned. There was no rule book on how to do these investigations. So, as far as the Weathermen are concerned, they functioned very well and almost without us bothering them, so to speak. Even though we had hundreds of FBI Agents looking for them, they couldn’t apprehend the fugitives, for the most part. There were a few exceptions.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And we couldn’t solve the bombings, and some cases it was bad luck on our part.

Pimentel: Do you think it was because they were that sophisticated that we couldn’t … I guess the question would be that we hadn’t penetrated them enough because of their sophistication or what do you attribute that to?

Dyson: A number of things. They were sophisticated. More sophisticated than we gave them credit for. They were more than a bunch of college kids.


Dyson: Here we’re veteran investigators.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: Well, they may have been a bunch of college kids but they’re also intelligent.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Somebody probably taught them … Cubans probably. Chinese … maybe.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: So they probably had some lessons.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: They’re not stupid. In order to apprehend them … in order to stop them, we have to use different techniques and we didn’t know those different techniques. Another problem we had was we didn’t work with other agencies.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: It was almost the police departments over here …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … and the Feds were over here. And you also … I mean, there were earlier investigations where you had the House Committee on Un-American Activities sending investigators to the scene. You had every agency in the world out there.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: We also didn’t know how to do crime scenes.

Pimentel: Okay. We’re back from the little break here. It’s now back at 12:04. And, okay Bill, go ahead and continue your story …

Dyson: Okay.

Pimentel: … of the sophistication of these people. We’re talking about the hard core Weather Underground.

Dyson: That’s correct. The clandestine people.
Pimentel: Clandestine folks.

Dyson: And they would do bombing attacks primarily … they like to do bombing attacks. Now, that’s not true of all terrorist groups, but they liked to do bombings. And we really didn’t know how to do crime scenes. And when I say we, again, I’m not talking about just the FBI because a lot of these things, the first responders were the police department, not the FBI. It was assumed, in many instances, that when something blew up, especially if it was a hellacious bombing and took a building down, that there wasn’t anything to be found. So the crime scenes were amateurish. We now know that everything that was there before the bombing is there afterwards.

Pimentel: Hmmm.

Dyson: And you can literally put together that bomb again if you do a good crime scene. You can put it together so the most minute wire that was involved, you can find little pieces of wire that you can identify as being cut with a particular tool, and so forth. We didn’t realize that in those days. As a result, I can recall going out in crime scenes with big garbage bags and throwing everything in because there was a big truck, street Sweeper, waiting to come to clean the street up. And I had ten minutes to pick that up. Well, you can’t very well number and identify everything if that’s all you got. You’re doing everything you can to grab it …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Then sending it back to who? Who’d want to hold a big bag of debris? We now know. We now know how to do a crime scene. We now know you can do a scene like the World Trade Center. Find enough to identify the truck within hours.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: By finding the VIN number. In those days, it wasn’t believed that way. And we should have believed it because of the University of Wisconsin bombing.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: They were able to make an identification. And yet we still didn’t know. I mean, we knew, but we didn’t know. So we didn’t do good crime scenes on many of these attacks. It wasn’t just the Weathermen … there were other groups. So, as a result, we lost a lot of evidence there. And of course, a lot of times the FBI couldn’t even get out there to do it ‘because other people would have, sort of, tainted the crime scene. They all cleaned it up before we even got there. There were a number of reasons.

The philosophy of the FBI. We didn’t have a philosophy. Some offices assigned all of these cases to Reactive Squads.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So the Weather Underground might be assigned to the Bank Robbery Squad because it was assumed these guys were the guys that knew how to investigate. The office, in the neighboring state, might assign it to an FCI Squad; the idea being these people are trying to overthrow the Government, so are the Commies. Therefore, they’re assigned over there. This guy’s over here trying to get subpoenas; this guy’s over here trying to neutralize and trying to turn, you know, turncoats and this type of thing. Different type of philosophies.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: So you couldn’t even send communications to each other and get the Agents who received the communication to understand exactly what you wanted to do.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: You had some SACs who said, “I don’t think these people are even worthwhile.” You had offices that, literally, wouldn’t answer leads.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: You could send them Teletypes, “Apprehend.” They wouldn’t even answer.

Pimentel: (Laughing)
Dyson: And, I mean, you laugh, but that’s true!

Pimentel: I know.

Dyson: That is true. You could not get offices, there were certain offices that would not cooperate, whatsoever, in the investigation. Others threw everybody they could into the investigation. There just was no consistency.

So I’m not going to say that we failed because we were stupid. There were a number of reasons why we did not succeed.

Pimentel: Did you have the tools? For example, being able to throw … you know, go to do wiretaps on anything and everything?

Dyson: That is a good question to ask. First of all, we didn’t know who to wiretap.

Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: So that became a problem.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Second of all, I’m not sure that we really knew how to do it. Are we going to go FCI? Are we going to go Title III?

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: What were you going to do?

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: It wasn’t clear. It wasn’t crystal clear. So the wiretap was something we rarely used in these groups. Both largely because we didn’t know who to go to or go on. But I’m not so sure we would have known how to do it if we’d wanted to do it. So we didn’t have that. That’s a good point.
Dyson: There were problems. And this is one of the worst times in the history of the FBI that happens in connection with this investigation. When they hit the U.S. Capitol and when they hit the Pentagon, these people sent a message out to us that “we want the war in Vietnam ended” and these are symbolic attacks.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: “That bomb in the Capitol, that restroom that was blown up was used by Congressmen. If we had chosen to set that off when Congress was in session, we could have killed a Congressman. We chose to do it at night.” Pentagon … same situation. “We have the ability to put a device where we choose and to detonate it when we want. And if you don’t end the war, we’ll kill your Congressmen; we’ll kill your Senators; we’ll kill the President.” And that was the message they were sending to us. And, unfortunately, we did not have enough intelligence on these people to know whether they were serious or not.

Today we realize that they had made a decision not to kill people, but we didn’t know it at the time. And I’m not so sure they’re telling us the truth today. They may have been lying. There may have been some people willing to kill people. In other words, these people could bring down our Government.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Maybe they couldn’t overthrow the United States Government but, if you kill the President, if you kill key Congressmen …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … key Senators, you do change the philosophy. You kill Supreme Court Justices. And they were telling us they had the ability to do it.

That presented the FBI with a terrible problem. What do we do? The American public demands we do something. There were certain people in the FBI who made the decision “we’ve got to take a step … anything to get rid of these people.”
Dyson: Anything! Not kill them per se, but anything went. If we suspect somebody’s involved in this, put a wiretap on them. Put a microphone in. Steal his mail. Do anything! There were other people who were opposed to it.

I can say, in all honesty, that as the National Case Agent, I never violated the law. I was opposed to doing anything. But (emphasized) I do not criticize those Agents who said, “We’ve got to save our Country.”

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: And who did. That seems contradictory. And it’s very important … but it seems very contradictory because here I am the National Case Agent who won’t do this.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: But it’s not necessarily condemning other people. But if those other people came to me and said, “I did this.” I would say you’re wrong.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: That was the way I looked at it.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: There was also a situation dealing with undercover.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: There was a decision made to put FBI Agents undercover. And J. Edgar Hoover was very opposed to this. This idea of putting people undercover fulltime. I don’t believe J. Edgar Hoover knew exactly what was going on but we sent a whole group of people undercover. I had done some undercover work, very minor undercover work. I found I, personally, could not do it. I loved the technique. I can’t be something I’m not. It was very difficult. Every time I was undercover … I have false ID and everything … but every time I was undercover, it was hard for me to sort of say, “My name is Ralph Floy” without doing something like … putting my hand in front of my face.
Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: That incidentally, was the name I used. But there were other Agents who had a talent to do this, mostly young Agents. So, a whole contingent of Agents was sent undercover … fulltime. Fulltime! And, again, I don’t know if J. Edgar Hoover knew this. But they were sent fulltime. My SAC was vehemently opposed to it … Roy Moore.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: Roy Moore said, “The technique is fine.” He had no problem with the technique. But he said …

Pimentel: Roy K. Moore.

Dyson: Roy K. Moore. He said that these people … there were certain things that were involved with these people … sex gangs. These people believed in free and open sex. And that meant love of brothers and sisters. In other words, not just man or woman, it also meant homosexual sex.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So you had to show true love for your brothers. They also used, into drugs. And people like Moore, and others, felt that we can’t put FBI Agents in that situation.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: We cannot have them put in that situation where they’re going to engage in sex.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Especially when you know that the partner has a sexually transmitted disease. Now, AIDS was not in.

Pimentel: No.

Dyson: But most of these people, many of the people, had gonorrhea …

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: ... and certainly herpes, and syphilis ... but more like herpes.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And we can’t put FBI Agents into that situation. Somebody could get hurt or suffer for the rest of their lives. Oh, of course, destroy their reputation and everything else. So there was the issue of putting people undercover. And we did. They really weren’t that successful. Oh, I shouldn’t have said that. One group of people ... it was two Undercover Agents out in California that were successful in taking down a cell of the Weathermen. But it really wasn’t ... it was not commonly successful. But that was part of the technique and so forth. And not all SACs agreed with that. So there was some philosophical problems.

It hit the fan in 1976. I shouldn’t use the word “hit the fan” for this recording but problems happened in 1976, where we were caught. It came out what we were doing. These improper things. Not so much the undercover because I don’t know as anybody would say that was illegal, but some of the break-ins, and so forth. And we ended up with charges being filed against L. Patrick Gray and Mark Felt and Ed Miller, Assistant Directors.

Pimentel: Oh, I remember that. Yeah.

Dyson: And ... I think it was fifty-six FBI Agents, all charged with crimes. And that became a national scandal. It became one of the worst scandals ever to hit the FBI. And it affected me tremendously because I’m the National Case Agent in what’s going on here. And Bob Glendon is the previous National Case Agent. Still, as a mentor to me, was still involved in this case.

Dick Held, senior, Assistant Director, at that time, to Clarence Kelley, contacted me and said, “Bill, what do you think of this?” And I said, “I’m opposed to these break-ins, but I don’t think the Agents should be criticized for what they did.”
Dyson: He said, “Can you defend them?” And he also asked Bob Glendon. So the two of us got together and we decided to defend them … we could defend these people. And we wrote a document …

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: … I think it was something like four or five hundred pages long defending these people. And what we basically said was that “if these people are foreign influenced and we can prove it” … and this document, we felt, proved it. If we had decided to go this route back in the 1960s, to investigate these people this way, this is the defense we would have written … their foreign influence.

We would have been allowed to do wiretaps. We would have been allowed to do black bag jobs and other things under foreign counterintelligence rules and regulations. We didn’t do it. We’re sorry. We didn’t do it. But we could have done it.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: And, therefore, all these things would have been legal. They would have been accepted.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: So that was our defense. It would be sort of like you have somebody parking in a handicapped parking space … so you give them a citation.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And the person shows up in court and it turns out to be an Iraq veteran who’s lost his legs in the war. He’s violated the law because he didn’t get the handicap license plate.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: But what judge is going to sentence him?

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: And that’s what we were basically saying. “Yes. Yes, they didn’t put the proper papers in. But if they’d put them in, you’d have given them permission to do this.” That was our defense. And we wrote that document and we sent it in. It went to the Justice Department and somebody stole it and gave it to the New York Times or at least parts of it. And this document gets into the New York Times and, of course, by being released piecemeal in the New York Times, it destroys what would have been the defense.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: This was the whole thing. We’re going to hit them like this and now they’re leaking this information. The next thing I know, a couple of the Inspectors are out talking to me thinking I gave it to the New York Times ‘cause I wrote it. And I don’t know whether they interviewed Bob Glendon or not, but I’m sure they did. I denied it and I’m sure he denied it because we never gave that away.

So that’s how I get involved in this thing where I’m opposed to the principle of it but I could defend it.

Pimentel: Right. Yeah.

Dyson: And, incidentally, something of importance that came out of this is that this pitted Bureau people, some of the Bureau people against Agents. Because there were certain Bureau people who said, “We don’t know anything about this.”

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah.

Dyson: So it almost looked like Mark Felt, or Ed Miller, or Patrick Gray was contacting Street Agents …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … in, say, New York, and saying go out and do this and nobody in between knew.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: So what’s so significant about this is that many of the Agents in the field said, “We can’t trust the Bureau to protect us anymore.”

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So they started the Special Agents Defense Fund first, which grew into the Agents Association we have today.

Pimentel: Right. Yeah.

Dyson: Now, I wasn’t sure I agreed with an Agents Association, but I did join it very early on. But I was not one of the people who created it.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But I saw what had happened and it really scared me. We did not all join together and defend.

Pimentel: But part of the problem there, Bill, was that there was nothing in the books that would allow you to do these type … or use this as a tool … to penetrate the group.

Dyson: No. Absolutely nothing. But remember …

Pimentel: There was nothing in the books.

Dyson: … but remember when I first told you when we first started the investigation of terrorism … when we first …

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … there was no rules and regulations that really covered it so you had to sort of look around and what Bob Glendon and I were sort of saying is you could use FCI rules to investigate this …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … if we had chosen to do it that way, but we never did.

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: But you’re right. There are no crystal clear rules and there was …

Pimentel: And I think, till today, there’s still no crystal clear rules. Or, well, there are crystal …

Dyson: There are a lot more guidelines …

Pimentel: … guidelines …

Dyson: … when the Levi Guidelines (Attorney General Edward Levi) came in in 19 what was it …

Pimentel: Seventy-eight.

Dyson: … seventy-eight. When they came in …

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And then there are superseding guidelines … plus the Patriot Act …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … and various other things now. You have a lot more rules and regulations to cover these. But there’s still some issues like, again, the college campuses.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: I’m not sure if FBI Agents today really understand exactly what they can do and can’t do. For example, a Middle-Eastern group is recruiting some of their people from Iran or Iraq, or people … Saudi Arabia … who are students in college campuses. If some group, a militant group, starts trying to recruit them on campus … or if some professor starts advocating support of Osama Bin Laden or something of that nature … I’m not sure that FBI Agents really understand exactly what they can do.

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah.
Dyson: And I’m sure local police fall in the same category. And even campus police. They really aren’t quite sure what they can and cannot do. So, I believe the issue still exists today.

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah. That’s a shame. It’s a shame, maybe, because it should be technically a straight-forward criminal investigation. If you can define terrorism as a criminal act, it should be a criminal investigation. But, yet, we’ve kind of put it in that grey area between domestic security or FCI type of work in criminal. So, kind of put it as a separate layer, I think. And it should be.

Dyson: Well, there still is the issue of intelligence-gathering.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And this is where you run into your problem. If you have a clear cut crime, there’s no issue doing the investigation. It’s when you have this conspiracy to commit the crime. When do you have enough probable cause to investigate it? If somebody is saying, “Down with the Government” is that enough to investigate it? Or does he have to say, “Down the Government by killing the President?”

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Or does he have to gather a weapon?

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And this issue still exists as to what you can and cannot do. And this was to hurt the Bureau during the late 1970s.

Pimentel: Oh yeah.

Dyson: First of all, during the Weathermen era, but we start developing Puerto Rican terrorism.

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: It becomes a big issue starting in 1974. And I got myself really involved in that, deeply, and that becomes a large part of the next part of my career as I’m going on. I’m still working the Weathermen, but now I’ve become the National Case Agent for the FALN. So, we start working on the Puerto Rican terrorists who are doing attacks here starting in 1974.

Dyson: The problem here, we have so many Agents burned as a result of what we call the John Kearney Situation, because he was the New York Supervisor, but it’s also other various individuals, as well Horace Beckwith.

Pimentel: John Kearney?

Dyson: He was the supervisor in New York who got blamed for a lot of this, but I’m not so sure as he was even guilty of doing anything. I mean, he was certainly never convicted or anything.

Pimentel: He was part of the 56 …

Dyson: Yes, it was his squad. I think it was 56 … it may have been 57 for all I know. But that whole group of individuals in New York … and I’m not saying New York was the only Division involved, incidentally. Please don’t … I’m not criticizing New York per se …

Pimentel: Oh, no, no, no. No.

Dyson: But, stressing New York is important because of the fact that these arrests, these charges, scare the entire FBI; not just the management but the Agents. Nobody wants to work terrorism. Everybody is trying to run away from working terrorism. You had Supervisors say, “I won’t take that Squad.” You had Agents say, “I’ll do anything. I’ll work Applicants. I’ll work on a Surveillance Team. I’ll do anything, but I won’t want to work this.”

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: “Because nobody will support me. The Bureau won’t support me. The Justice Department won’t support me. The citizens won’t support me. I’m not going to work this stuff.” And you have people bailing out all over the place. And people, still today, ask me, “Why did you stay?” I loved the work.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And I thought that somebody had to protect the Government because I think, thought, and still think today, that terrorists can bring down our Government, can bring down our way of life. Therefore, I stayed with it and, you know, by that time I had gotten married and had a child. So it wasn’t as though it was just me single. If somebody sues me, takes away my livelihood and costs me my job and my family, now, suffers but I still stayed with them and I don’t know why. But, I was one of the few. When I left the Bureau, I had worked terrorism for almost 30 years. Nobody in the Bureau has ever worked terrorism that long and it’s because a lot of people bailed out during this period. And we have some fine, fine people. Not only that, the people that were in New York, those 56 who were indicted, they were all transferred out. In other words, taken away from the work …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … but also taken away. And I’m sure none of them wanted to work it again. But even if they wanted to, their SACs probably wouldn’t let them work it. So, they were gone … but a lot of other people. And nobody wanted to get into it. So when you get the FALN, now you have a problem. And the problem with the FALN is a lot of the Agents … and I’m not going to talk about specific Agents or even particular Divisions … but a lot of the Agents are saying, “We will investigate their bombings. We will investigate their arsons as crimes! But we will not investigate the FALN.”

Pimentel: (Chuckling)
Dyson: We will not investigate it. Refused absolutely, will not investigate the FALN. “We will investigate each crime.” Well, you can imagine, if you have a man robbing twenty banks and you open twenty Bank Robbery cases and assign it to twenty different Agents and they’re all investigating the bank robberies and you got one guy doing it all, you’re going to have some real problems. And this is one of the reasons why we have problems with the FALN, trying to solve these cases, because we don’t have a National case.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: It took a long, long time before we could put all the stuff together and get a National case. And even when the National case was open, some of the Field Divisions refused to open it.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Chicago becomes the National Case Agent because, runs the FALN investigation, even though it doesn’t have most of the attacks, because other Divisions refused … you couldn’t get anybody to open a case … because they wanted to investigate the crimes. “You’ve already attacked me; you’ve arrested my cohorts because of investigating terrorism. I ain’t going to investigate terrorism. I’m only going to investigate the crimes.”

Pimentel: Right. Yeah.

Dyson: Which limits you on how you do investigations.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: It limits your intelligence because everything is in individual files but nobody puts anything together. For years, for three or four years, we didn’t have a list of all the FALN bombings. No official FBI list of … you could go to the Director and say, “Give me a list of FALN bombings.” “Sorry, I don’t have it.” There was no official list of bombings. It would be like having one man robbing ten banks but no list of the banks he robbed.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: And that all came out of this mess, that came out of the Weather Underground, because of these people being arrested and accused of doing violations … nobody wanted to work this type of work. So now you lose all your expertise. You lose all your experience.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: You’re starting over from scratch (chuckling) … I mean, we didn’t know how to do a lot of stuff in the first place … some expertise was developed on the Weather Underground investigation and others. There were other terrorism investigations going on, as well … New World Liberation Front in California, for example. So it wasn’t as though it was just one investigation. Symbionese Liberation Army … there were other organizations. But a lot of these experts, if you can use that word, bail out and don’t want to get involved after these FBI Agents are arrested. You know, you had the Milwaukee bombing …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … in August of 1970. The worst terrorist attack I had ever seen. Not done by the Weathermen but would-be Weathermen, four individuals. So it wasn’t as though we didn’t have expertise. We did develop expertise, but we tend to lose it because people don’t want to be involved in this any longer. And it’s not as though we didn’t have some successes because that … that Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin bombing was solved. And solved because of hard work, and not blind luck.

Pimentel: That was Madison, Wisconsin?

Dyson: Madison … I’m sorry, did I say Milwaukee?

Pimentel: Yes.


Pimentel: Was solved.

Dyson: It was solved, because we identified the four perpetrators. One, of whom, Leo Frederick Burt, is still a fugitive.
But the other three have already been released from prison after serving murder charges.

In fact, one of them’s a lawyer now. Albeit, not a member of the Bar. They won’t let him be a member of the Bar, but he graduated from law school … David Sylvan Fine.

Karleton Armstrong, you can go visit him. He owns a, like a café, up in Madison, Wisconsin.

(Chuckling) Strange. And you mentioned earlier that most of these bombings have not been resolved … ah …

No, they have not been solved.

… thirty eight. So that means that these people who committed these bombs … the masterminds, et cetera, are probably running around out there in this country … free and whatever … if they wanted to start this all over again, they could.

If they chose to do so, yes.

Yeah.

I try to monitor these people, whenever I hear about them. Bernardine Dohrn was the leader of the Weather Underground …
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Dyson: … a very attractive young lady; a law school graduate … University of Chicago. I probably couldn’t get into the University of Chicago and she’s a law school graduate from there, when she was in as a leader of the Weather Underground. Bernardine, now, she can’t become a member of the Bar because she did spend time in prison, but not for a particular bombing, for riot-type situations. Although, in her case, it was Contempt of Grand Jury, I believe. But Bernardine worked for a law firm …

Her name is Bernard-een … she lives in Chicago. She’s married to Bill Ayers. Bill Ayers was another leader of the Weather Underground.

Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: Bill Ayers went on to get a PhD and now is a leading expert, if you’ll call it that term, in juvenile delinquency.

Pimentel: Hmmph!

Dyson: Kathy Boudin …

Pimentel: Yep.

Dyson: … was another member. Her father was Leonard Boudin, prominent civil rights attorney. Kathy Boudin was sent to prison because of an armored truck robbery, two police officers killed. She has been released from prison, about four years ago, lives in New York City. She was married to David Gilbert. Well, I can’t guarantee they were married. Let’s put it like this, they were living … at the time she was arrested and David Gilbert was also arrested … they were living together. Whether they were legally married or not, I don’t really know. They had a child. Their child, after they were arrested, their child was raised by Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers. The child, last I heard, was a Rhodes Scholar. So the child went on to be very well educated and so forth. I’ve tried to monitor all of these people … where they are.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: Did some of these people do the bombings? Yeah, some of them did. But I can’t tell you which ones.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And it’s possible there’s some people that were associated with the Weather Underground that I never knew. In other words, there were people that were recruited after they went clandestine.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: And they may have done some of the bombings. I just don’t know who did what bombings. Most of them are still alive as far as I know. I’ve got some reports that John Jacobs died. Somebody sent me an obituary for him. And John Jacobs remained a fugitive for years. In fact, he never was apprehended. And, at various schools, I would put out word he’s still missing and then somebody sent me an obituary and said, “I think this is your man.”

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: But I can’t be positive. As far as I know, all the other fugitives have been apprehended from the Weathermen. Now there were other militant fugitives out there. But, from the Weathermen, as far as I know, all of them have either been apprehended or voluntarily surfaced and never were prosecuted for something. Others were prosecuted but usually for riot-type situations, but not for the bombings.

Pimentel: Yeah. Incredible.

Dyson: Well, anyway, want to continue on?

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Well, we get away from the Weather Underground. I wrote the closing report; I believe it was something like February the 17th of, I want to say ’78, but I’m not positive on that. The Weather …

Pimentel: The closing report?.
Dyson: The closing report of the Weather Underground investigation. The Weathermen were no longer in existence. Now, the Weathermen didn’t dissolve because we dissolved them. The Weathermen had internal strife and it involved several issues.

One of the issues was male chauvinism. The feeling that men were trying to run the organization and the women wanted to have a strong influence. That was one issue that caused problems.

Another issue that caused problems had to do with race. There never was a Black Weatherman. Yet, the Weathermen championed the Black cause. And, in the early days, they used to like to say, “The Blacks are the vanguard of the revolution. And, as such, we … white people … don’t have the credentials to speak, to be part of their movement.” They’ll lead, we follow type of situation. As time went on, people in the Weather Underground, the clandestine group … was saying basically, “This is hypocrisy. We’re basically saying if we’re trying to say we’re not good enough to be part of them, but what we’re really saying is they’re not good enough to be a part of us.”

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: So there was a clash there. And these type of things, plus the fact that the war in Vietnam ended and the fact that these people found themselves isolated without a surface support organization caused the group to start falling apart. Some of them remained underground; Kathy Boudin being one; David Gilbert being another. And they joined with Black militants, members of the old Black Liberation Army. And they formed a new group, which I’m not so sure really even has a name per se, you know, certainly not a public name and they start doing armored truck robberies. Did about five as far as I know.

But the big one, October 20, 1981, Nyack, New York …

Pimentel: Nineteen eighty-one?
Eighty-one … October 20th. They did an armored truck robbery in New York. They accosted two armored truck guards and tried to kill them. One died and the other one was wounded. And they stole millions of dollars and they took off. And they had various vehicles; one of which was a truck, full-size rental truck. And Kathy Boudin was driving that, I believe. Or, at least, was in the front seat.

Anyway, the police pull them over and they’re talking to the women and the women claim they don’t know nothing about nothing. You know, “why are you stopping me” type of situation. At the rear of the truck … two of the officers go to the rear of the truck and as they’re standing there. They don’t have probable cause to open it, per se, and all of a sudden the door flies open … there’s Black guys with machine guns and they mow down those two police officers. So we have an armored truck guard and two police officers murdered. Big case. This is a major, major investigation, national attention, and so forth. And, virtually, all of them are apprehended that are involved in this thing. Matula Shakur being a Top Ten Fugitive for awhile. In fact, it was Dave Mitchell who, ultimately, goes from New York to California to arrest him. Dave Mitchell subsequently retired as the SAC in Milwaukee, wonderful, fabulous Agent.

This sort of brings back terrorism. All of a sudden, now, the Agents in New York are willing to investigate terrorism, not just crime.

Go ahead.

In fact, the Bureau’s willing to do this now, because now the whole nation is saying, “What the hell! What are you doing about this? We’ve got a clandestine black-white group doing terrorist attacks” and so forth. They’ve got the Puerto Ricans blowing up buildings all over the place. And all of a sudden now, the Bureau’s willing to come back into this. The Agents are willing to come back. The Bureau’s willing to support it and now terrorism is okay to investigate.
Dyson: Now you’re getting the Bill Dyson viewpoint here. Because there are some other people that might look at this and say, “Well, that never happened.” Well, it did happen. We couldn’t get anybody to work terrorism. Now, all of a sudden, it’s okay to work terrorism. It’s okay. And the management’s supporting; the Headquarters supporting, everybody’s supporting, we can now work terrorism. And these people are terrorists. They’re accepted as terrorists.

There’s one issue that I want to get brought out here because it’s an important part of my life and that’s the Terrorist Task Force concept.

Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: Back when I first started working terrorism, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I was sort of dumped into this work. I didn’t ask to do it. It didn’t even have a name, wasn’t even called Terrorism. I found out very shortly thereafter, when I’m assigned on Supervisor Hugh Mallet’s Squad that I wasn’t the only one that was assigned. Well, I mean, there were other FBI Agents, but there was also the Chicago Police Department. They had the same type of situation.

Several young investigators and a sergeant from the Homicide Squad were suddenly grabbed by the Superintendent and said, “You’re going to work this stuff.” And they weren’t even told what it was. So now we’ve got people out there from the Chicago Police Department who are just like me and these other young Agents dumped into this type of work; not really sure what they’re supposed to work; not sure of the rules and regulations, and I ran into them.

And I was single at the time and I was willing … I was always a workaholic. I was willing to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So were these guys. There was Sergeant Joe Grubisic and Maury Daley was a Detective and Jimmy Nolan. And the three of us got together and we started going around. The things that I did that the Bureau never knew about. I would work during the day as an Agent and at night I’d get in the police car and we’d drive around all over the place, clandestine undercover police car …
Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … and we’d go out and interview people, and so forth. And I’d write 302s. (end Side B – Tape 1)

Pimentel: Okay, we’re back. It’s now 12:30 or 12:40 in the afternoon and I’m changing the tape on the cassette.

Bill has a thought here or wants to make a point here. Go ahead, Bill. Okay.

Dyson: Okay. I became friends with these police officers and we went out and did various things to investigate. We’d do interviews. We’d do surveillance. Things that really my supervisor wasn’t aware of. I’m sure the Chicago Police Department wasn’t aware of. But we became dear friends, as well. Maury and Jimmy were married; well, so was Joe. I was the only single one. But we were all totally dedicated to the work. And totally dedicated to police work.

And that was important because it was going to become a part of me that was going to come back. We did these investigations. Eventually what happened, lawsuits start to develop. I mentioned the situation that involved FBI Agents being charged with doing illegal acts. Well, that was nothing compared to the police departments around the United States. The intelligence divisions which were commonly called Red Squads; they were being attacked by civil libertarians all over the United States during the 1970s. Lawsuits of all types claiming these people were investigating when they shouldn’t have been … investigating religious people; investigating universities; investigating citizens who hadn’t done anything other than spoke against the Government, all sorts of allegations. And many of these Red Squads were abolished because of lawsuits and so forth. Chicago PD was the same thing.

Various lawsuits filed by civil libertarians caused the Intelligence Division to be abolished or greatly altered so that it did not do political type investigations. And Maury and Jimmy and Joe were reassigned.
We’re talking about the early 1970s now. So I no longer have this relationship with these people because they no longer have these positions and there are no replacements for them. It’s not as though they were personally criticized. It was just that the police department came under a lot of criticism for even having units that were doing this type of investigation.

Joe and Maury, as I said, I developed a tremendous relationship with them. In fact, one of the highest honors I ever (emphasized) had in law enforcement dealt with Joe Grubisic. Joe and I remained friends for years. And he later became in charge of the Bomb and Arson Squad in Chicago. He had the rank of Captain. There were only a handful of Captains in the Chicago Police Department in those days.

I’m talking about maybe six or eight of them at that time. In other words, in his position and his rank, he was one of the highest ranking police officers in the department, and the department’s got something like 13,500 Officers or Investigators. And he was one of the highest ranking ones.

Anyway, Joe came down with leukemia. And I would meet with him quite regularly and I got a call one day from the Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department. This would be in about 1996. And he says, “Joe died yesterday.” And I said, “I’m aware of it. I talked to him yesterday night just before he died.” He went in to surgery and he died during … and I talked to him before the surgery. And I said, “I’m aware of that.” He said, “Well, we’re going to have a police funeral for him and we would like you to give the eulogy.”

Pimentel: Huhmm!

And I thought that this was a tremendous honor. The fact that here’s an outsider, an FBI Agent, going to a Chicago Police funeral to give the eulogy for a top-ranking police officer. But that’s the relationship I had with Joe Grubisic. That was important to know because this always stuck with me.
Dyson:

I learned a lesson in 1969, 1970 that was going to stay with me for the rest of my Bureau career, and that was terrorism is not just an FBI problem. It is a local police problem. It is a County police department problem. It is a State problem. It is a Federal problem. It’s all of our problems. Everybody has to work together if we’re going to solve this. And I learned that through Joe, and from Maury, and through Jimmy Nolan. Incidentally, all three of them are now dead.

I’m the only one of the four that’s left. Jimmy Nolan died during surgery in his 30s. A routine operation went bad. And Maury Daley suffered a brain aneurysm. He became, also, one of the top-ranking police officers, a Police Commander. And he retired and a year later died at the age of 60 from a brain hemorrhage.

But, in either case, I learned that this was important that we had to work together. Only now we’re in a situation in the ‘70s, well, first of all, the Bureau wouldn’t tolerate this type of thing, but more importantly, the local police are all bailing out on a lot of these cases. They’re responding. They’ll have their bomb squad …

Pimentel:

Right.

Dyson:

… and respond to a bombing, but in terms of doing any actual investigation, if they did it, they did it apart. It is strictly criminal in nature and it was done apart from anybody else. So, as a result, this sticks in my mind because this is going to become very important in formulating the first of the Terrorist Task Forces.

Pimentel:

Okay. We’re back from lunch. We took a break from about 12:46 to now, 2:03 in the afternoon of January 15, 2008. I’m here, still, with William E. Dyson. He was relating to us about the Terrorism Task Forces and their beginnings.

Bill, go ahead please.
My background with law enforcement, particularly Chicago Police Department in the late 1960s, early 1970s, convinced me that we have to have a relationship of all law enforcement officers working together in order to deal with the terrorism threat. That wasn’t generally agreed upon in the law enforcement community during the 1960s and the 1970s … and even in the early 1980s.

The FBI was the primary agency handling terrorism, from a Federal standpoint, and really didn’t work very closely with the locals. The locals same situation. They didn’t really look for the Federal Government, particularly the FBI, to be involved in investigations. And, as a result, there really wasn’t a good working relationship. We were willing to share information if it meant we were the beneficiary of the information … really to get involved in a sharing situation. It was a symbiotic relationship with them but not for them. It was to our benefit if we had any relationship.

And they knew it too.

And they knew it.

The task force.

Yes. Yes. It was kinda like the story of “I’m with the FBI and I’m here to share information, now why don’t you give me what you got.”

Right. Right.

And that’s as far as it went. And if you were really good and I feel you deserve something back, I might give it to you. But, otherwise, thank you very much for the information.

Right.

By the time we had this, the terrorism situation, in the 1970s, 1980s. We really weren’t having tremendous success. The FALN had a bomb factory discovered in Chicago. But it wasn’t through excellent police work, certainly not through FBI work. It was discovered because a particular individual broke into the bomb factory, stole the dynamite and was trying to sell it on the street corners.
And a local police officer saw this and from that the bomb factory was located. So that would be good work on the local police officer but he wasn’t investigating terrorism or the people involved in terrorism. But the local police or FBI didn’t find that bomb factory, despite a lot of investigation … the New York bomb factory blew up. That’s how they found it. It wasn’t through a good investigation either.

But it became apparent that locals and Federal people were working terrorism but not working together. New York had formed a Bank Robbery Task Force and had had some success doing that. Because both agencies were working bank robberies and rather than fall all over each other they might just as well work together. And, I guess, there had always been a close relationship on bank robberies particularly. And maybe some Interstate Transportation of Stolen Properties because there was always some conflict and the agencies would need to work together on those cases.

In Chicago, in 1981, certain people in the FBI and other agencies decided to start working together against the FALN. It seemed to be the right people coming together. I don’t know how else to describe it. I don’t know. A lot of people look at me and say, “Well, Bill, you’re the one who created this.” Well, no, I’m not the one who created it. I was involved in it. It may not have been created if I hadn’t been there. But the fact of the matter is, there were people like Rick Hahn, in the FBI; Chris Brennan, in the FBI. These people were very, very much involved in it.

I like to look at Rick Hahn and say, “He was the guy that started it.” But I have a suspicion that he would be the first to say, “No. Bill was involved. But also we have Chicago Police Officers and if they hadn’t been there, we couldn’t have founded it.” And he’s right. We had people like the late Marty Barrett, who was a Police Sergeant with the Intelligence Division. We have Kurt Blanc. We have John Eshew, who were Investigators. If they weren’t there, there wouldn’t have been a Terrorist Task Force. But they couldn’t have done it alone either. They needed those right FBI people. And then there are some people who say Mark Foster was the man who did this. Mark Foster was a Secret Service Agent.
Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: And what was his responsibility? His responsibility was to go to various agencies that would have any involvement in terrorism and find out if there was a threat against the President or some other protectee. That was his responsibility. And he was the one who looked at the Chicago Police Department, the Illinois State Police, and the FBI and realized we were all working the same case. He could see it because he was going to all three agencies. And he was saying, “You people ought to work together!” So some people say he founded the task force.

Then there was Jeremy Margolis, a Federal Prosecutor. And he definitely (emphasized) saw the need for the agencies to work together. Even though he’s primarily dealing with Federal prosecution, he sees the need. So I guess you could turn to any one of those people I just mentioned and say they (emphasized) were the ones who founded it. But it really wasn’t true to say they were … it’s everybody. We all contributed something to create this Terrorist Task Force. And the Terrorist Task Force we created was very unique because it was done clandestinely. It wasn’t done under the blessing of anybody!

We used to meet at Mike’s Tavern. Mike had a police bar, a true police bar. You couldn’t go in there unless you buzzed and Mike recognized you as a law enforcement officer. And he would allow us investigators, working terrorism, to go in his back room and we could meet and we could coordinate surveillances, and we could work together. But we didn’t have the blessing of anybody!

Now, I don’t want to make it seem that nobody in management in the FBI knew. Our ASAC at the time, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, was Tom DuHadway. A fine man! And he knew. He knew. But I don’t think he ever put it in a communication and told FBI Headquarters. The SAC probably knew but he knew even less than maybe DuHadaway. And DuHadaway knew what was going on but he may not know specific intricacies of every investigation that we were working on. The SAC probably knew less, but he knew.
In terms of the Chicago Police Department, the Commander of the Intelligence Division, Jules Gallet, he knew. But I doubt if he ever told the Superintendent of Police. And in terms of the State Police, we had Phil Kruse, Commander Phil Kruse. He knew. But I doubt if the head of the State Police did. And if he did, he didn’t put it in paper. It wasn’t officially written. Secret Service knew they were getting information, valuable information. But I doubt if the head of the Secret Service or even the Special Agent in Charge of the local office was aware of what was going on.

We’re working together and we’re sharing information. We’re doing surveillance together; we’re doing interviews together. We are working as a true task force, but it’s got no management blessing from anybody! And we’re working intricately on specific investigations, investigations dealing with the FALN. And finally we hit the jackpot.

We knew we were going to hit the jackpot because we came together because we had shreds of information and we found the safe house, the FALN safe house, where they were building their bombs. And we identified the members of the cell, all the members of the cell. And we followed them. And when we finally found this bomb factory then we knew we had to get in that bomb factory. We couldn’t get an informant into the group, into the bomb factory. We did have informants but we couldn’t get them into the bomb factory. So we knew we had to use either the FISA Court or Title III.

Using Title III would be very difficult because of the fact that it would have violated tradition. The way the law was written in 1968, it seemed to imply (emphasized) that somebody had to tell you what was in the bomb factory. You had to have an informant. You had somebody view through a mirror or a window … a landlord, something like that, see what was in there. But our prosecutor, Jeremy Margolis, said the law doesn’t really say that. You can use circumstantial evidence. And we called it the ‘duck’ theory. If it looks like a duck and walks like a duck and quacks like a duck … it is a duck! And he sold it.
Dyson: We actually changed the nature of the interpretation of the Title III Statute to allow us to enter there and to put cameras inside, build cameras in there. And then we discovered that Title III doesn’t even incorporate cameras. There’s nothing in the statute. Because at the time it was passed, you couldn’t create a camera so small that people wouldn’t see it, so why would you write about it. So we had to figure out a way to get a camera in there. We could do it under Title III, but it might be appealed.

So, what we did is we went to a Chief Judge and we told him what the circumstances are. We have a wire; we need the camera. And he gave a Court Order. So we were able to guarantee that nobody could ever come back and appeal this because the Chief Judge’s order was that we could put a camera in there.

And, also in the FALN investigation … this comes two years later … we run into another circumstance. And that is we know that terrorists are traveling across the country. We know they’re going to have transportation of explosives in connection with a terrorist attack. We have no idea what state, what city, what county, anyplace. We don’t know where it’s going to ultimately end. We don’t know where it’s going to cross the country. So, as a result, according to the Title III Statute, we had to go to every single judicial district and get a Court Order to allow us to do this.

And through that, it became very apparent that this was ridiculous. This Title III had to be amended so that one Court Order could cover the whole country in a circumstance like that. So here, this is an Organized Crime Statute that the Terrorist Task Force is rewriting. So now Organized Crime can use our reinterpretation of the Title III Statute.

So, the Terrorist Task Force finds the bomb factory and we’re able to arrest the people. Stop them from doing a bombing. And it was a very interesting case because once we went into the bomb factory we found the explosives concealed in there. Now the question was, “What do we do with them?” We made the decision to leave them there but (emphasized) disable them!
Dyson: So we went out and got substitute explosives and then we find all these bullets. So we got every reloader we could find in the FBI and police department; brought their machines in. We took every single bullet, unloaded every bullet and reloaded it with inert materials so that none would fire. Of course, we took all the guns, every gun and we disabled the guns so they would not fire. So we could guarantee, to the Court, that the material we discovered could not be used for a terrorist attack. Exciting … interesting.

And, I recall, Rick Hahn and I stayed in that apartment because we only had one entry. So once we made an entry we couldn’t leave it and go back and make reentry, according to the Court Order. So we had to stay in that apartment. And it was very exciting. We took all the material out and then (unintel) disabling and substituting everything. And we did this and, of course, eventually it took them down.

And then after we were done with this, then the Special Agent in Charge and other people in the police department said, “This is a fabulous idea. You guys have got to stay together. You’ve created something here that we never had before. What can you do for us now? Can you do this again?” And, of course, none of us had any idea whether we could pull it off again. Could we come up with another terrorism case? Because now, all of a sudden, we’re getting resources! One of the reasons we came together was because nobody had enough resources within the agency. There’s only four FBI Agents working this. Can’t do much of a surveillance on that. We only had three police officers. I mean, the bottom line is there wasn’t enough personnel from any agency to do it. But, together, we could do it!

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Together we could make it work. So the question is, could we do it more? Well, now we have a task force. It’s now official, but it’s not in writing. We also have questions … how we can operate it. And all during the operation, even though those first two years … 1981, 1982, 1983 … when we take this thing down and now we’re sort of getting it approved by everybody, that we can have this entity, the questions were “What about crossing state lines?”
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Dyson: The FBI could cross state lines. But our people are leaving. They’re crossing state lines. Well, could the locals have jurisdiction?

Well, we came up with the idea they could be sworn in as Federal officers. Now, of course, this is typical in investigations. Because, in those days, that was totally unique. And we had the locals sworn in as U.S. Marshals … Deputy U.S. Marshals. So now we have the locals with Federal jurisdiction. Then we discovered another problem. And that is, in the State of Illinois, Federal Government officers are not considered Peace Officers.

Pimentel: Humph!

Dyson: So, as a result, the FBI or any other Federal Agents, Secret Service, they are not considered local police officers. If they make an arrest under a local statute, they’re going to have to do it as a private citizen.

Pimentel: So it’s a citizen’s arrest?

Dyson: Citizen’s arrest. This is not necessarily the best idea to do things. So how do we determine this? Well, by this time, what we did is we got sworn in as officers with the State Police and I, subsequently become a Supervisor of the Terrorist Task Force and I’m sworn in as an Inspector with the State Police. I go through the swearing in ceremony …

Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: … and I have the credentials that show me as an Inspector.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: About a dozen years later, I was mentioning this to somebody and they asked me, an FBI Agent asked me, “What did Headquarters say about this?” And, at that moment, I suddenly remembered we never told Headquarters. FBI Headquarters was never aware that I, as a Supervisor of the FBI, was a sworn State Trooper with credentials, not only a State Trooper, an Executive with the State Police. I never told them!
And I don’t know what FBI Headquarters would have said. Of course, the various investigators who were Federal on the Squad were also sworn in through the State Police. I mean, they weren’t Inspectors, but they had some rank with them. We never told FBI and it wasn’t because we were trying to hide it, we just never thought about it. But that’s how we overcame that problem.

Then, of course, the next problem came as we started getting the more sensitive investigations about security clearances. And we went into Headquarters and said, “Why can’t the police department have security clearances?” And we got a lot of answers, “That can’t be done.” “It can’t be done.” But certain people came to our rescue and said, “We think it can be done. Have them apply.” And we had them apply for … because we talked about the FBI National Academy.

They have to have some sort of a clearance to go here. Why couldn’t these people?

Well, we had opposition. But they approved it. And, as a result, we ended up with the Chicago Police Officers and the State Police Officers getting security clearances, Top Secret security clearances. So they had the same clearances that we did. Now we could share all our papers.

Then we had the idea of vehicles. The Chicago Police Department had a wonderful surveillance vehicle. It was a meat truck. And, I mean, you couldn’t see the … I mean, the way it was done, you could not realize that somebody was observing from inside that meat truck. It looked like a totally sealed vehicle. It was a wonderful vehicle. But the issue was only the police department could drive it. I mean, an FBI Agent couldn’t drive it.

And, of course, the FBI had cars but the police department couldn’t use them. So, if we were on a surveillance and you had to abandon a car, you couldn’t ask a police officer to pick it up because somebody got on the subway train or something.
Dyson: And we said, “Well, we’ve got to be able to overcome this.” So, what we did is we hired a private attorney and he drew up a contract. We had a contract drawn up between the police department, the FBI and the State Police that basically said, “them who wrecked it, them is responsible for it.” And they signed off on it. So we had a signed contract but we never went through contract review or anything. We just did this. Now, of course, in terms of Terrorist Task Force today, these are routine standard things.

But, in those days, this was pioneering. We never had done this before.

At the time that this task force is being founded, New York is also founding a task force. Now we still have debates today, “Who founded the first Terrorist Task Force?” New York claims they did. We claim …

Pimentel: New York always claims first.

Dyson: They claim they first did it. Chicago claims they first did it. As a matter of fact, it was probably both done essentially at the same time.

New York was done under a more specific case. The old Weather Underground had joined with the Black Liberation Army members and had formed a clandestine group that was doing armored truck robberies and the New York Bank Robbery Task Force was very much involved, and it turned out it was terrorists that were doing it. So they get involved in this investigation. And, there’s no question, the New York Terrorist Task Force … and I’ll use that word Terrorist Task Force … was in existence as of October 20th, 1981, because that’s when the robbery took place in Nyack, New York. But the fact of the matter is they claim that it was founded earlier than that. But I’m not gonna argue one way or another. Both Terrorist Task Forces were founded in or around 1980, ’81. New York for a more specific reason; whereas Chicago was not trying to solve a specific crime, we were trying to solve the FALN …

Pimentel: Right.
... and we were trying to stop them from starting new cells; whereas New York was more reactive in that sense. But both were still founded to fight terrorism. New York was much more formalized. They formed a contract very early on and the New York Police Department provided some funding; whereas Chicago did not have a contract. In fact, Chicago existed on a handshake up until... probably the first five years of existence, was basically a handshake ... before any formalized contract, other than the agreement on cars, and so forth was created.

So the Chicago Terrorist Task Force still exists today. And it’s one of the, if not the first of the Terrorist Task Forces, and it started very clandestinely. And, we think, it’s the answer to terrorism. We think it’s the way to go. Of course, after 9-11 so did the Director think so. By that time, there were probably a dozen task forces. But, after that, the Director of the FBI said there will be Task Forces in every part of the United States.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Every law enforcement agency will have the opportunity to join a Terrorist Task Force and the FBI will start it.

Now, when it came to the leadership of the task forces, in New York, I believe, and I think I’m correct, it was a joint leadership in the beginning. Because the New York Police Department was supplying part of the fund.

In Chicago, in the early stages, nobody was really leading it per se, we were all sort of joined together in a committee type thing. By the time that we did the CHIFAL case, against the FALN, as it was called, and found the bomb factory, it became more formalized, and it was pretty much agreed the FBI would lead the task force.

And in 1984, I was selected to be the Supervisor of the Task Force. And I think I was largely selected because the people pretty much agreed I had more experience working terrorism than anybody else and, therefore, it was felt that I would lead it. But it really wasn’t crystal clear because even in 1984 there was no written contract for our task force.
Dyson: So, in theory, if the Chicago Police Department had a veteran detective who worked terrorism for years, I guess he could have been the leader of it. Now, it’s understood. The FBI will be the leadership. But it was not understood, at least in Chicago, in the early stages, that the FBI would lead the Terrorist Task Force.

Now, my career was always as an investigator. And I loved being an investigator. I always wanted to be an investigator. I didn’t want to do any more than that. I didn’t want to be in management. And, in this particular case, in 1984, the SAC approached me and said that there were a number of people in the FBI who were opposed to the task force concept. This idea of allowing the Chicago Police Department or any police department to be in FBI space, reading communications in the FBI and sharing claims of credits, and so forth that they were very much opposed to it.

And, he pretty much made it clear … his name was Ed Haggerty, he was the SAC … he made it very clear to me that there were people in Headquarters who were vying to get the desk that was being vacated. The Terrorist Task Force was assigned to the particular Squad. The supervisor was being transferred, actually being promoted, and there were various people vying for the desk at Headquarters. And, at least one of them, was vehemently opposed to the Terrorist Task Force concept and would have done everything he could to abolish the task force. In other words, have the Terrorism Squad but with no other agencies involved.

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: And the SAC said that he was sure that if he put my name in, that Headquarters would take me as a supervisor. And I suggested another Agent and he said, “I don’t think they’ll accept that Agent, number one. And number two, that Agent doesn’t want the desk. He has other objectives for his career.” He wants a transfer, but he has other objectives. So, as a result, I said, “Alright, I’ll take the desk.” Now, in those days, there was no Career Boards.

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: So he said, “Well, you’ll have to write a memo.” So I literally typed a memo and said, “I want this desk.”
(Laughing)

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: And it was only maybe a one paragraph memo. I didn’t even put down my qualifications; I just wrote I want the desk. And based on that, he nominated me for the desk and then, all of a sudden, I’m now the Supervisor of the Chicago Terrorist Task Force, or the Chicago Squad that had the task force on it; which, basically, was the same thing, because, by now, every case being handled by the Squad is terrorist because we’re expanding. The SAC says, “Let’s handle all terrorism that deals with domestic.”

Now, another three or four years we expand and handle all terrorism, all international terrorism is on the same squad. Eventually the Terrorist Task Force got to the point where it had a TSL, Targeted Staffing Level. I don’t know whether they use that term anymore.

Pimentel: Yeah

Dyson: But a TSL of forty-seven investigators. So we have forty-seven investigators, plus we had clerical support. And, also, we started expanding. We had all kinds of off-sites. We had specialized apartments where we rented where we met informants. We had buildings that were rented for surveillance purposes. We had vehicles including ones we bought at used-car lots and that type of thing. So we had a huge fleet of vehicles. I mean, it was like a small corporation.

Pimentel: Sure. Sure.

Dyson: I was blessed. I was blessed because of the fact that I had some very, very fine people assigned, not just from the FBI. There were very capable and competent FBI people. Tom Smith, for example, was my …

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: … right-hand arm. I depended upon him tremendously. Fabulous Agent; did a wonderful, wonderful job. T.D. Smith. They always called him T.D. But I had people like Terry Hillard. Terry Hillard was a Chicago Police Sergeant. And Terry Hillard was a fine man.

I put him in charge of all surveillance operations because we had our own surveillance team; three surveillance teams under Terry Hillard’s responsibility. Terry Hillard, subsequently, left the task force after five years. He was recognized because of his expertise in terrorism and other things in the police department. He had a Masters Degree. He rose up and eventually became the Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, one of the highest ranking police officers in the whole United States. And he retired from there, after six years on duty, and is now doing, I guess, some sort of security work or something like that. But, he’s basically retired. I had Bruce Brown, from the State Police. In other words, fine people I could appoint to handle certain things. Because when you have a squad of forty-seven … people …

Pimentel: Sure.

Dyson: … plus support people, you really can’t run every operation. So I was blessed to have these people. But, it was always understood, I wasn’t going anyplace. I made it clear I loved to be an investigator. If they ever tried to transfer me to Headquarters I would want to step down. And, I don’t know what it was, maybe it was the size of the squad, but nobody wanted to bid to take it over (laughing). I don’t know. But I stayed on until the end.

And finally, the last year, I met with Louis Freeh and he said, “Well, we’ll put you in for an extension.” So they extended me for the last year. But the way the rules are for the extension, it was understood that I would do something different. I couldn’t just continue working the same type of job. So what they did is they made three Terrorism Squads and made me the Coordinator of the Terrorist Program. But, since there was only one squad in the past I, obviously, was the Coordinator all along.
Dyson: They also had me do some instructing work. So I traveled for the Bureau doing teaching and so forth. And then they were going to extend me again but it just didn’t seem, you know, it was obvious that the career was over. So I left the FBI.

Pimentel: You retired when?

Dyson: The extension ended the last day, the 31st of 1998, December 31st. So that’s when I left the FBI.

Now, as far as the Terrorist Task Force is concerned, the Terrorist Task Force continued after I became supervisor. And the issue was could we make another case. And we started working on the FALN. Trying to see if we could make another case.

Well, it sure turns out we could. We could because the FALN leader was located in Leavenworth Penitentiary. He was there forever (emphasized)! He was never going to get out. Well, these people decided they were going to liberate him from Leavenworth Penitentiary.

Pimentel: Who was that?

Dyson: His name was Oscar Lopez.

Pimentel: Oh yeah.

Dyson: Oscar Lopez-Rivera but Oscar Lopez is what they called him. And they made a decision they were going to liberate him. And we found out about it. So we decided to penetrate them and to try to stop them. But we weren’t just going to take them down immediately. We were going to do whatever we could to try to develop a case and take down as many people as humanly possible.

And through various wiretaps and informants, and so forth … undercover people, what we basically did, without going into great detail, we made an arrangement to sell them explosives. And what their tentative plan was, was to buy a load of explosives.
Dyson: They were going to blow up one of the towers at Leavenworth Penitentiary so that this would create chaos. While the chaos was going on, they were going to attack all the military helicopters at Fort Leavenworth, the military base, because they had the feeling that they would support the prison. So they were going to try to take them out, just like the Macheteros group had done in Puerto Rico when they bombed a bunch of military aircraft. They were going to try to do …

Pimentel: Yeah. I remember that.

Dyson: They were going to try to do the same thing. They were also going to have a helicopter swoop down and pick up Oscar Lopez and various other political terrorists and take them away. They had a safe house already set up near Leavenworth Penitentiary and they were going to put the person in there. That was in Kansas, they had the safe house, and then, subsequently, get them away from the area. And they didn’t care, really, how many people were killed in this whole operation. This was their ultimate plan.

How to get explosives? They put the word out and we decided we were going to sell them the explosives. And we were able to come up with Roger Rubrek, who had nothing to do with the terrorists. He was an Agent down in Louisiana. And he agreed to go undercover. And man was he sensational! Good old boy, he talked to these people on the phone; he could sell them anything. And he convinced them he had these explosives; he couldn’t stand Puerto Rican terrorists; he didn’t care about right-wing, left-wing, he’d sell to anybody type of thing, mercenary seller. And they came down, it was a real intricate operation in Louisiana. We all went down there after all these secret code words and all this. This is something you could make a movie out of … the operation. I never saw anything like it my whole life. (Laughing)

You gotta understand, I couldn’t get close to the operation because these people know who I am and if they’d ever see me around … so I had to stay in the background. And that was to be of significance, the fact that I had to stay in the background. But, I was there.
Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And so we had all these task force people down, they came to Louisiana. We had the dynamite located; buried out in a swamp area and we had all sorts of snakes and everything down there, in the middle of the swamp area. And Roger, of course, good ol’ boy, he was going to take them out in that. I don’t think he was even from the South but he was based there and he played the role of a good ol’ boy.

Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: These two people show up, a man and a woman. I’m sorry, a man showed up, he made the secret message, they met at like, it was like a 7-11 store. They had a secret, you know, “do you smoke Kools?” “No, I smoke Winston” type of thing, with a code word. Then they get into Roger’s car and they head out into the swamp. And, of course, they have to walk a long distance. While they’re doing this, we’re wiring up the bad guys car so that we can monitor him. And this turns out to be a rental car.

So now we go into the swamp and out in the swamp Roger says, “Well, let’s get the shovels out. We gotta dig up the stuff.” And they’re digging up all sorts of explosives. Roger’s got all types of explosives, none of which will actually explode. You want this, you want that? You know, whatever you want. “Well, I want the dynamite.” “Alright. Well, we got these rockets. We got all this stuff out here.” The idea being that maybe they’ll come back and buy some more if we show them we got all this stuff. Plus, it builds up Roger’s credentials.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And, of course, we got this all surveilled on camera, and all this sort of stuff. The problem is we don’t know who the guy is. He’s not one of our people. Our surveillance people know all the people and can’t recognize him. I have no idea who this guy is. He agrees to buy the explosives but he doesn’t have enough money.
Dyson:

“We told you, you gotta have …” X amount of dollars. I think it was five thousand dollars. I mean, six thousand. He only had five. Alright, we open up the case of C-4, pull out a couple of sticks. “Alright, now that’s what you get. You don’t get the whole case because you don’t have all the money.”

Now, he takes it back. We give him a water cooler. “Put them in here.” This is a water cooler, a big Coleman cooler type thing. Of course, it was all wired up. “Take this. You can carry it out.” Well, this guy’s too smart for that. He takes it, puts it in his rental car, he takes off.

We’re following the rental car and he eventually takes the C-4 out of the cooler and he takes the cooler and gives it to some people on the side of the street. “I’ve rented this car. This cooler’s in here. I hate to give it back to the rental agent, here why don’t you take it?” And gives them the cooler. Of course, we’ve got to jump in there and take the cooler back from the person, because we’ve got all sorts of surveillance vehicles. We’re following, we don’t know where this dynamite … I’m sorry, I keep saying dynamite … this C-4. We don’t know where it’s going to go, but we’re going to follow him.

We had an intricate operation. We’re in the biggest building in Baton Rouge. And I’m watching! And this guy’s driving around and around this building and, all of a sudden, we notice there is a female and she’s counter-surveilling for him. And he’s driving by all the time and she’s watching. But the trouble is for the woman, we don’t have any cars moving because we got a plane. Plus, we got us up in this big tower watching! Of course, when we set up in the tower, we didn’t know he was going to go around and around the tower! (Laughing) But, anyway, eventually he stops and picks her up. So now we’ve got a woman and a man.

And this is of some significance … the fact that I can’t get close to him because I could have recognized the woman. But I could never get close enough to look at her. The man, I would never have known. But these people are not Puerto Ricans. They have nothing to do with the Puerto Ricans. These people are all Weathermen types. And they’ve come in from California.
And the girl is Donna Jean Willmott, who used to work in Chicago. So I knew her from the past. The other man is Claude Marks. I do not know Claude Marks but he’s very active in the Prairie Free Organizing Committee, a Weatherman front group out in the West Coast. These people have been hired by the FALN to pick up the explosives and they’re going to transport them back to the West Coast.

So, they return the rental car; they abandoned the cooler; they stay in a hotel; they go to the Greyhound Bus Station and they take off in a Greyhound bus. Now we gotta follow the Greyhound bus …

(Chuckling)

… with the explosives in it. Now they get to … where’d they get to? Houston, Texas. They get off the Greyhound bus and go to a motel. Still got the explosives. We still can’t recognize who these people are. I have no idea. And we don’t know where we’re going. But everything they drop … every piece of trash they drop, we have a pick-up vehicle. We pick up everything, trying to get fingerprints. Eventually the vehicle gets so full, we have to send it back to Chicago. We can’t put any more in that vehicle.

Now, the next thing is, they go to the Amtrak Station and get on an Amtrak train. So now we gotta ride with them on the Amtrak train and we’re trying to wiretap. Trouble is, when we tried to drill a hole through the wall it makes so much noise you can’t drill a hole through the wall. But we do have court orders by this time to go to every state in the Union.

Now, they get out to California and they rent a truck and they go to a used furniture store and they buy some furniture and they store the explosives, along with this used furniture in a storage locker. So now we’ve got to go in the storage locker and verify the explosives are there and find out what else is in there, which meant we had to do a search. And the search was quite interesting too, you know, because they booby-trapped the place but they booby-trapped it in a different way.
They booby-trapped it in such a way that the chair only had three legs on it. So they balanced everything on this chair so if you even breathed the wrong way, the chair would go down. So there’s ways of doing these and I’m not going to go into it here but there’s ways of doing these searches so that you can recreate the situation. So we verified the explosives were there, and so forth. Now, keep in mind, these are explosives that are de-armed. They will not fire.

So, now, an investigation takes place on the West Coast. They’re able to come up with a total of six people in this cell; they’ve got two safe houses. We were able to bug them all and everything like that. And, unfortunately, things went awry months later. The Chicago Task Force pulls out. Now Los Angeles has to take over because we can’t stay out there. First of all, we’re in another Field Division.

And second of all, you know, our supply line ran out sort of to speak. I mean, we’re supposed to be investigating terrorism in Chicago.

A microphone was put in their car. And what we didn’t know is that they had been trained to do security. And they have a checklist. And after a while, they went out and did the checklist. Claude Marks did the checklist, and found the mike. But all he did was give a code word and, of course, these people all gather Indian-style in a park. And what they said, we don’t know. But they disappeared in six different directions and vanished off the face of the earth, abandoning everything, the safe houses, everything. They knew they were made. They abandoned everything. Disappeared. And Claude Marks and Donna Jean Willmott became FBI Top Ten Fugitives.

Yeah.

Yeah.
And it took us about four years before we finally were able to convince them to surrender to us. So they surrendered to us and they surrendered in Chicago, came into the FBI Office and really wouldn’t say what they were doing. But they had quit the movement, basically, because they wouldn’t compromise anybody else.

Yeah. Yeah.

So, that was an exciting case. But we stopped the liberation of Oscar Lopez.

Yeah.

And we stopped the prison break. And as we're doing this, another case develops. Actually two cases develop. And one of them involved the El Rukin Street Gang. They used to be known as the Blackstone Rangers and they were a Chicago street gang. And to make it very quick in summarizing it … what basically happened is that another wiretap came up with suspicious activity. They were being investigated by the FBI and ATF for drug distribution. They were probably the largest distributors of drugs in the Southside and probably Westside of Chicago. They ran the whole area, they were like organized crime. The killings and the violence they did made Al Capone look like an elementary school gang leader or something. I mean, these were violent people. The El Rukin’s ran Chicago’s criminal conspiracies that would make the Mafia look meek.

They were being investigated and during the course of a wiretap strange conversations came up that led them to believe there was some type of a conspiracy and they turned that part over to the Terrorist Task Force which, in turn, developed information that these people had been hired by the XXXXX Government to attack the United States. It seems that Ronald Reagan’s Government, the Presidency of Ronald Reagan, they had attacked the XXXXX because the XXXXX had bombed a nightclub, tried to kill some Americans. Did kill an American. As a result, the United States had bombed XXXXX and almost killed XXXXX.

Right.
Dyson: Bombed his XXXX but killed his XXXX …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … one of the XXXX. The XXXXX leader was very upset and what he basically did, I guess, he tried to send his Navy out but couldn’t get out of the blockade, his ship couldn’t get out. He tried to send his Air Force but he couldn’t get his plane off the ground. In other words, he didn’t have any ability to attack the United States. So what he did was he decided, he tried, I guess, to try to rally XXXXX in the United States to attack but the problem is all of them had left because they fled from him, not because they were sympathizers. In other words, he didn’t have a network here.

So he decided that he would reach out to individuals in the United States who, he believed, would be dissidents against the Government.

Now, I don’t believe I’m at liberty to talk about all the groups he reached out to.

Pimentel: Yes. Yeah.

Dyson: Because he didn’t succeed, but he did succeed with one. And that was the El Rukin gang.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: He found out that they were Muslims. Well, they were Muslims like I’m a Muslim. They converted to be Muslims in prison and declared themselves to be Muslim, but a lot of people believed they did that in order to get special privileges, food, visits from Imams, and so forth. In other words, whether they were true Muslims or not is hard to imagine but they depicted themselves as being Muslims. But they’re still a violent crime group. He reached out to them with the idea we’ll give you so much money, you go commit terrorist attacks, get revenge against the United States Government, and felt they would do it.
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Dyson: The problem is, that we found out from wiretaps, these people haven’t the slightest idea how to do a terrorist attack. I mean, they knew how to murder people. But terrorism? I mean, what do you do that gets attention that shows you’re trying to overthrow the Government. They really didn’t know.

Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: And it becomes comical as you listen to the wiretaps. But, essentially, what they were doing is somebody saw a movie and they saw some guy named Clint, who was Clint Eastwood, using some sort of a weapon and they’re describing it. It turns out it’s a LAW rocket. Well, why don’t we take down an airliner? So, where do we get a LAW rocket?

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Well, that gave us the opportunity to introduce an undercover gun dealer who pretended that he was with the military and was stealing weapons out of an armory, I think, out of Tennessee or Kentucky. And the word was, you know, “I’ll sell to anybody.”

So, one thing led to another and we had a transaction in which we sell them one LAW rocket. And it was a very intricate transaction, very well covered, to the point that it was just silly some of the things that we did to make sure we could have everything covered. Like, for example, I went in to a Hostess Bakery discount house and I bought all this junk food and threw it around the hotel room. The idea was if they came in to negotiate maybe somebody would see a cupcake and eat it. (Laughing) And wouldn’t you believe it, Melvin Mayes, who became a Top Ten Fugitive, did put his hand on one thing so we have a fingerprint.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Because we didn’t know who was going to come but we wanted to be able to prove who they were. So we had things that’s just a sideline right there. It really wasn’t a vital part of what happened.
But, in either case, we have planes up and so forth. We have the meeting and we transfer a LAW rocket, one LAW rocket. Now, of course, you can’t test a LAW rocket because if you test the thing then you don’t got it no more!

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: So, as a result, the idea was … the rocket would not go, but, as I understand, the way we set it up, it would actually fire to the point where it would fall out the end.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: So the idea was if the guy did try to fire it, of course, the thing would drop on his big toe. We were going to try to tell him you have to use a real man to do this. You have to press the trigger real hard and, obviously, if it fell out the end, you didn’t use a real man to do this (laughing).

So anyway, it never came to that because they didn’t test it. But what they did do is they took it back and put it with their arsenal of weapons. Things they used to murder people. They put it with that. So we found out where that was and eventually we take them all down except Melvin Mayes. He wasn’t there when we did the take down. It was a massive take down! We took down leadership. We wiped out the El Rukin group. It was a group that ran crime in the City of Chicago and we wiped them all out, took them all out. Put them in jail forever! They’ll never get out! We took them down on a terrorism charge. This is being taken down virtually the same time we’re taking down the FALN.

You got two of these major cases going on at the same time and then a third case develops at the same time. And the third case involved a group of … A young First Office Agent on the Squad came up … Chad Lattimer, who sadly, he left the Bureau, subsequently. They tried to transfer him to San Juan and he just, with all his children, didn’t feel he could go down there. And he went to IBM. He was a computer expert and spoke languages, just a fine Agent, first office agent, first year in the Bureau. He comes up with this case and it was just unbelievable because we didn’t know what it was exactly.
It was a group of people. He developed an informant who ran a gun store and this man came and tried to recruit people to be part of some sort of a mercenary operation. It was very confusing as to what it is. So we all got together on the squad, Task Force leaders, and we figured, “How are we going to do this?” So we decided to use … we get three people who’ll be undercover. And we had an FBI Agent and the FBI Agent we used was Tony Dunbar and he, subsequently, went on to bigger things in the FBI. Tony Dunbar was a veteran law enforcement officer with undercover experience before he came into the FBI.

He took the role of being a former military operative like a Navy Seal or Army Ranger, who was still into that type of activity despite being out of the service. A second investigator took the role of being a religious idealist who wanted to help the oppressed. I believe the third guy acted like he was a gun nut who was willing to do anything as long as it was violent. All three met with the man who had approached the informant about locating people for a mission. Subsequently, the guy contacted Dunbar and brought him into the operation. It took some time, but eventually Tony learned that this man had a couple of dozen mercenaries – the kind you would find in Soldier of Fortune magazine – and they were planning to overthrow the communist government of Suriname in South America. (end Tape 2 – Side A).

Well, you can imagine what would have happened, this was during the Reagan Administration, if all of a sudden it looks like the United States Government was somehow involved in overthrowing a foreign country.

I mean, you can have all these bad visions. Anyway, we were penetrating these things. And, eventually, Tony’s gotta bring in a dozen recruits. So we have to bring in all sorts of these undercover people to be part of this operation. And the plan ultimately worked out that they’re going to take off from a remote airport in Louisiana. So Tony has to bring his force down there and they’re bringing all their mercenaries in and we have a plane supplied. We’re going to fly them out of there. And Tony actually drove the bus heading for the plane, you know.
Dyson: And eventually, I guess, there was some sort of … I don’t remember exactly… the exact words, but something to the effect, “Tony’s driving a bus.” And somebody would say, “Wouldn’t it be funny if we had some Federal Agent on the plane?” And Tony says, “That’s funny,” you know, and pulls over. “You’re under arrest” and they swoop down and take everybody away. (Laughing)

It was such a great case that everybody was arrested! All these mercenaries … it turned out to be all sorts of people of Soldier of Fortune. They were written about in that magazine all the time as doing all these mercenary things all over the world. Everyone of those people pled guilty! Never even had a trial. I mean, they were caught. And this is going on the same time these other two cases are going … all three of these cases are going down within the same month.

Pimentel: Wheww!

Dyson: So, this became very exciting and the Terrorist Task Force is really going great guns. At this time, nobody wanted to sleep; nobody wanted to do anything. I mean, this was exciting. And then, of course, it continues. I mean, the Terrorist Task Force keeps on going. We get into single issue; we get into special interest and then we start getting into international terrorism. And the Task Force, it’s very successful at making cases as time goes on it becomes … it just went by like that (snaps his fingers).

The time just sped by and all of a sudden it’s over for me. And hope for the Terrorist Task Force continues to exist and continues to develop the cases. I’m not allowed to listen to what they do now. I have to wait for the newscast.

But we were able to make a lot of successful cases over the years. We had another case in which we developed an informant, a female, who told us that a bunch of … a small group of black extremists … I’m sorry, I should say black people had been converted, shall we say, into political extremism. Their hope was to set up a black nation within the United States and I think they also, if it didn’t work here, they wanted to set up in Saudi Arabia. I don’t know what, you know, whether the Saudi Arabians would have agreed with that.
Dyson: But they had this idea they were going to set up a black nation but they didn’t have the money to do this and they didn’t know how to raise money. So they looked around the community and they found the richest people were the drug dealers. So they decided they were going to deal cocaine, but the trouble is they didn’t know anything about cocaine. They weren’t cocaine users. They weren’t young people, by any means, middle-aged type people. And they got involved in this type operation. But, unfortunately, we were right into them very early on. Eventually, we took them all down on drugs. And we never tried them on terrorism! We never let them know we knew. But, of course, it totally eliminated what they were trying to do.

Pimentel: Right. Right. Incredible.

Dyson: So, it turned out to be an exciting time.

Pimentel: Yeah. Now, the FALN, of course, was the first arm, I believe, of the extremist Puerto Rican terrorists. Later on, I guess, there was an off-shoot or something of the Macheteros. Now, you worked some of those, didn’t you?

Dyson: Well, when it came to the United States, there had been some Puerto Rican activity prior to the FALN. But in terms of real violence, you know, the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … of course, they tried to assassinate Truman.

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: And shot up the Congress.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And these people, the FALN, regarded them as martyrs.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: They always wanted to get them out of prison or to get revenge against the United States for arresting them and so forth. The FALN. It’s related to the Machetersos and the Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican Revolution (OVRP) on the Island.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: And, I guess, to a certain degree, owed allegiance to the Nationalist Party. But I don’t really know as they were really part of them.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But they are separate entities.

Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: But there’s a working relationship. We knew there was a working relationship between certain FALN members and the Machetersos. We get this through a person we turned in the group called XXXXXX. And he is telling us stories. Now, he personally is not involved, but he’s telling us stories that he has been told by the group about them being trained with the Machetersos and working with them.

Pimentel: Oh, okay.

Dyson: So we know they had a close working relationship. But, the Machetersos and the OVRP, any attack they did was on the Island.

Pimentel: I understand.

Dyson: They did not attack the United States. Now, I would put an asterisk next to that because the Machetersos was involved in an armored truck robbery …

Pimentel: That’s right.

Dyson: … in New Haven.

Pimentel: New Haven … right.
And the money went back there. Or at least part of the money went back to the Island. So, we know they did it; but that was not a claimed terrorist attack. This was designed to raise funds in the United States.

Pimentel: Right.

Victor Gerena had become a Top Ten Fugitive …

Pimentel: Right.

… and still is a Top Ten Fugitive.

Pimentel: Right.

And he’s a Macheteros person.

Yeah.

But, in terms of doing violent attacks, they did not do that in the United States. The FALN is attacking the belly of the beast, the beast being the United States. And rather than attack on Puerto Rico to try to make the United States liberate Puerto Rico, they’re attacking the United States with the idea of making … well, two things. Number one, making the United States liberate Puerto Rico; but also, bringing the issue to the public.

Like, for example, the first bombings in New York, if you read the newspapers after the attacks, you saw pictures of the maps of Puerto Rico. You saw descriptions “this is what Puerto Rico is.” “This is where it is.” “This is why these people attacked.” And that’s why they did it.
They wanted the United States people to realize it and they were hoping the United States people would say, “Well, geez, we didn’t even know we owned Puerto Rico. Let’em go!” You know, if they don’t want to be there, you know; they were trying to lead the United States to believe that everybody in Puerto Rico wanted freedom and that we were suppressing them. Now, of course, we know on the Island there’s plebiscites and the vote is almost 50-50 year after year after year …

… in favor of either Statehood …

… or continued commonwealth status.

Very rarely do you get more than five percent at the most for liberation. Even among the people who want to be free. They don’t all agree as to what they want. So these people are trying to lead the United States citizenry to believe that everybody in Puerto Rico wants to be free.

So they do their attacks on the United States. Now after … the last attack that was done was what … 1983 … yeah, it was ’83. They wounded police officers December 31st, over New Years. They maimed several New York Police Officers in a bombing attack.

In 1991, there was another attack in Chicago against a military recruiting station if I remember right. And that wasn’t claimed by the FALN, but it looks like FALN-related people did it. And there was a person arrested for that, and convicted after I retired from the Bureau and it was done by the Terrorist Task Force.
Dyson: So the attacks still continued on the Island done by the *Macheteros*. The last attack, that I understand was done, I believe was August of 1999. There has not been another violent attack of any type on the Island of Puerto Rico since that time.

Now, there have been violent protests on the Island of Vieques.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But now Vieques, President Bush said, “We’ll get out!”

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: “We’ll leave!”

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: So now the only argument there, the protestors are making, “We gotta clean the place up more.”

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: But that’s not the same argument; it doesn’t get as much emphasis as, “Liberate this island.”

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So, as a result, the Puerto Rico independence movement still exists, but, in terms of violence, it does not exist.

Pimentel: Also, I understand the Governor wants, because they lost a lot of funding from the Navy and the Navy moved out, their bombing sites or whatever …

Dyson: Uhm-hmm.

Pimentel: … that the Governor’s trying to get the Navy to go back in there because they lost, I don’t know, several billion dollars a year.

Dyson: All because of the militants.
Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: The protest drove the military out. That’s what they wanted! They wanted the military driven out, they’d like to have all military out. But, on the other hand, the island’s going to flounder without the military support, the finances of it, and the jobs. So, I don’t know what’s going to happen. The Governor’s caught in a very vicious cycle because every time he encourages the military to come back, he’s encouraging the militants to attack in one way or another.

Pimentel: It gives them an excuse. Very enlightening.

Dyson: It was a very interesting career and I want to emphasize that I’m not taking credit for any of these things. These are things that occurred during the Terrorist Task Force time. I was either an investigator or I was the supervisor. We had wonderful Agents. It looked like we had this capability of developing these Case Agents, these people who could run these operations, and didn’t necessarily have to be FBI people.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: They were wonderful people. I had some tremendous Case Agents. It just seemed like you’d lose one. You had a person like Ron Reddy, who ran the operations dealing with the El Rukins. When he left, it was, “Oh, oh God,” you know, “what are we going to do?” And somebody else would come in and take over and all of a sudden, “Where’d he come from?” All of a sudden, he or she, “Where’d she come from?”

We had one case, Judy Coughenour, just to mention a female Agent. She gets involved in a conspiracy, a right-wing conspiracy. And it looked like it was a nothing case. And all of a sudden it turns out to be a very significant case. These are right-wing militants led by one particular man by the name of Anderson. And they’re attacking, the last attack they did was in a roller rink.
And you’d say, “A roller rink! Why would anybody attack a roller rink?” Well, this place gets bombed but they’ve got it written on the side, “No Blacks.” And whoever did the bombing, wrote, you know, put this graffiti up there. Well, it turns out that the roller rink was … there were groups of black people who would use the roller rink at certain periods of time and this group was opposed to blacks being in the neighborhood so they were attacking the roller rink.

But then when Judy starts digging into it, she discovers there’s a bunch of unrelated attacks that nobody put together in different municipalities within Lake County, which is north of Chicago, that were never put together before. And Judy puts them together.

There was an attack on a synagogue. In fact, these people attacked a Jehovah’s Witness meeting hall because they thought they were Jews.

(Chuckling)

They didn’t even understand what they were attacking. So we had these various attacks and one of the things that Judy did … and this was something that I’m proud of it … I’m proud of this, but I can’t take credit for it … Judy should be proud of it. A man had been arrested for breaking windows and vandalizing a synagogue. What happens is the attack took place and when the police arrive they found this guy lying in the stupor. He was drunk. He was a homeless-type person.

And one thing led to another, they tried to interview him. I guess he was incoherent but he was charged with vandalizing the synagogue ‘cause he was there. I don’t know whether he said he did it or didn’t say, but whatever it was, he may have said, “Get me in out of the cold weather, I’ll say anything.” You know, “Get me into a home or someplace.” He gets convicted of doing this attack.

Well, later Judy gets a confession from one of the perpetrators or two of the perpetrators that they did it! So Judy was able to go to the authorities, the court, and get this man liberated from prison, where he’s already been serving several months in prison for this sentence.
Dyson: Now that’s something that you don’t normally see. A law enforcement officer liberating somebody who was innocent. We found out this person was innocent and we liberated him from prison. And that’s a proud accomplishment.

Pimentel: It is.

Dyson: Now, of course, we convicted everybody else of doing all of these attacks and Anderson gets into prison and, I guess, he was so violent in prison. What a racist! I mean, he was fighting when the Marshal’s are trying to bring him to court. If they got him anywhere near a black person or anybody they could see was not white, he’d attack them. Well, he gets into prison and he gets murdered. So his problems are eliminated. And the prison system doesn’t have to deal with him for twelve or fourteen years, whatever it was.

But that was an interesting case. In other words, we were equal opportunity. If it was terrorist, we investigated … right-wing … we found militias that we penetrated … left-wing … or extremists … single issues … special interests … anti-abortion. It didn’t make any difference. If a crime occurred, we were going to investigate it. And, of course, international. We got deeply involved in certain investigation we probably shouldn’t talk about. I don’t know. Let’s just say we got involved with investigations that, of course, after 9-11, became very important.

Pimentel: Sure.

Dyson: But maybe were not particularly important at the time …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: But there were a couple of international investigations that were highly significant but I don’t know as we should talk about them.

Pimentel: Yeah … probably not. Although the Bureau will be reviewing these tapes and the transcripts that we give them and will delete anything that might be classified.
Dyson: Well, maybe I could just say something and then …

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … and they can erase it if they want to. But one of the cases that we deeply got involved in was the Abu Nidal organization having secret clandestine cells in the United States.

Pimentel: Right. Yeah.

Dyson: We were deeply involved in that investigation and spent many, many, many hours working on that case.

Pimentel: Right. Abu Nidal was a known terrorist residing here in the States, I guess.

Dyson: Well, no. Let’s just say he had clandestine cells in the United States. Of course, Abu Nidal, that whole situation with him, was the Osama Bin Laden of the day.

Pimentel: Right. Right.

Dyson: So there are some people who accuse the United States of not knowing, you know, how could these things happen in the United States. Well, we did know.

Pimentel: Uhm-hmm.

Dyson: But they don’t all materialize.

Pimentel: Exactly. Exactly.

Dyson: Some things happen. Abu Nidal had a lot of internal dissention and apparently became mentally unstable to the point that he started killing all his own people because he thought everybody was out to get him. So could Osama Bin Laden.

Pimentel: Yep.

Dyson: And then maybe the problem’s over with.

Pimentel: Right.
In other words, you can be on top of everything you want and maybe you’re going to miss one over here but you’ll get all the others. And we did do a lot of work. And Hamas was another group that we …

Right.

… did an awful lot of work on and I won’t go any further on that.

Right.

Other than to say that some of the cases did come, you know we also did a lot of work on Irish terrorism. And I think I probably can talk to a certain degree …

A little bit. Yeah.

We were able to develop an informant and I’ll give you the name of the Agent, you may delete it later, Ed Buckley. He did outstanding work on Irish terrorism. I don’t even know if he’s Irish. He may be Irish, but I don’t know. He just got into this and what a fabulous Agent he was. I say was because he transferred to another Division, ultimately. So … he’s still in the Bureau as far as I know. But Ed did tremendous work on Irish terrorism and he came up with several very good cases.

But one of the cases he came up with, he was able to penetrate the Irish extremism to the point that we relocated the informant to Ireland where he became a ranking member of a clandestine terrorist group called the New IRA. And took ‘em down. And that took place, oh, it took five years. It was long after I retired. When I look in the newspaper and say, “Taken down by this informant from the FBI who is now working over there.” Tremendous operation.

Yeah.

See, one of the things we had on the Terrorist Task Force, we had a lot of imagination. How can we take them down? We had wiretaps all over the place. This is difficult on a squad when you have FISA and Title III on the same squad …
Pimentel: Right. Right. Yeah.

Dyson: … (chuckling) you have this Chinese wall.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: You know. That’s not all that easy to do that. But we did it. Multiple wiretaps. Wiretaps on this case and also on that case.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But undercover operations, a lot of undercover operations going on. And it was always the idea of who best to use undercover. Many times police officers were real good.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And this is where the Task Force can really, I mean, you’ve got an FBI case, it’s opened as an FBI case, but you’ve got a Chicago Police Officer that’s undercover.

Pimentel: Right. Yeah.

Dyson: A State Trooper as an undercover officer.

Pimentel: Right. Yeah.

Dyson: Or an FBI, I mean, it depends. We tried to use the best person we could use.

Pimentel: Oh yeah.

Dyson: We had one extremist group that came in. I won’t mention the name but it’s an international terrorist group. But I won’t mention the name of the group. But they were told you set up a cell here and, so far as we know, they were told by their superiors in the Middle East, “You’re on your own in terms of operations.”

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: So they had to figure out a way to make money. So they looked around the community and somebody, at a flea market, discovered cassette music tapes. And he felt that he could counterfeit them. So they got themselves a little warehouse; and they got themselves machines - a duplicating machine, and a shrink wrap machine, a label machine, and so forth.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: I think, at one time, we had a quarter million of those tapes stacked up in the back of the squad area because we took them down on that.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: We took them down. And our hope was if we took them down on this, we’re going to send them to the penitentiary and maybe somebody would talk. But we didn’t want to let them know we knew.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Well, nobody would talk. So they all went to prison. But we stopped the operation.

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah.

Dyson: We cancelled out the operation, had all these tapes. In fact, I think it was 1993, and I believe it was the largest copyright violation in the Northern District of Illinois, and, yet, this is a Terrorism Squad.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: I mentioned Claude Marks and, and Donna Willmott, who were Top Ten Fugitives, we took them down.

I think it was four months later that we arrested Melvin Mayes. So we took down three Top Ten Fugitives in four months. Well, how many squads do that? And this is not a Fugitive Squad. This is a Terrorist Squad.
Pimentel: Right, right.

Dyson: So this was exciting. Boy, it seemed like every time you turned around, there was something going on.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: There was always a case going on but there was usually several cases going on. Not all of them went all the way and some of them we couldn’t solve.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Like, for example, we had a fur farm, the Frye Fur Farm. Now, try to say that fast.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: The Frye Fur Farm. They were the sole suppliers of minks for Saks Fifth Avenue; in other words, expensive minks. The Animal Liberation Front attacked them. This is in McHenry County. A very rural area so this is not Downtown Chicago, by any means; but it’s part of the Chicago Division and the Chicago Terrorist Task Force had to investigate the case. They were wiped out … they put them out of business … thousands upon thousands of minks released.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And then they took all the breeding records. So, even if they found the mink, the breeding record wouldn’t … you know, you have to have the pedigree in order to make it valuable. They put them out of business. The company had been in a family, been running the operation for generations. This is a terrorist attack.

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah.

Dyson: Did millions of dollars worth of, well, it may be more like hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage.

Pimentel: Right.
Dyson: I’m not sure exactly how much damage was done, other than they put them out of business. We could not solve that case. And that’s one of the few cases we couldn’t solve and I was very, very disappointed that we couldn’t solve that case. We sure tried.

Pimentel: Yeah. And the Earth Liberation group …

Dyson: Never had the Earth Liberation Front attack in Chicago. The Animal Liberation Front also did another attack in Downer’s Grove at a smaller fur operation. We couldn’t solve that one too, and we suspect it was the same people who did the first one. The other one at Frye Fur Farm. Could not solve that case. And that’s disappointing.

Pimentel: Yeah. Did you find on these different terrorism cases that there seemed to be linkage. We know, for example, the FALN, they had links with, you had mentioned earlier, with the Weathermen Underground.

Dyson: It depended upon the group. Now, obviously, you wouldn’t have right-wing groups having a link with a left-wing group.

Pimentel: No. No. No.

Dyson: But among left-wing groups, yes. And I’ll give you an example of where I really saw it. When the robbery took place at Nyack, New York; which is October the 20th, 1981. Immediately after it occurred, I got a telephone call from Headquarters telling me to go to New York immediately. So I reported to New York and I’m trying to think who the SAC was, Neil Welch, I think, but I’m not positive. Anyways, he grabs me as soon as I come in and said, “We’re going to serve a Search Warrant.” I was sent there because they felt I knew more about the Weather Underground than anybody. And since all their Agents that had previously worked there, who handled the Weather Underground, were gone; they needed somebody who could recognize some people …

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … and so forth and they knew they had some of the Weathermen arrested like Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert.
Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So, they sent me there and the SAC said, “I need to have a Search Warrant served.” And he says, “We’ve got a night Search Warrant. It’s going to be in the Bronx, New York; it’s somebody who we believe is associated with this robbery. It’s a female. I want you to go out to this house. We don’t believe she did the robbery, in fact, we know she didn’t do it. But we believe that she was supportive of this.” So I go out with some people that have now arrived in from the FBI Laboratory to do a crime scene. Well, it’s not really a crime scene, but it is a search of the apartment. So I got out there and we set up an assembly line and I’m going to do the search and these technicians … they weren’t really technicians … they were clerks …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … they have set up. One’s going to number the item, another’s going to put it in a bag and, of course, I’m going to initial everything. So I’m going through this file cabinet she has. There’s no weapons; we don’t see any weapons or anything like that but there’s a file cabinet. So, I pull out the top drawer and I start going through, “Alright, this is a document dealing with a meeting of …” pick it out … “the American Committee to Free” somebody. The clerk would write down “evidence piece number 1” and they’d put it in the envelope, and so forth. And this is a document … this looks like a road map, et cetera … “alright, we’ll put that in there.”

About the fifteenth document I pulled out, I said, “This is a FBI report of William E. Dyson, dated such and such” and the clerk says, “Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You want me to put your name on the top of the report, of the paper?” I said, “No. I want you to copy what I said.” “Well, where am I supposed to copy it?” I said, “Put it as evidence.” “What do you mean evidence?” “It is my FBI official report.” Not the cover pages, but, after the cover pages, there’s the FBI report that I wrote on the Weather Underground in 1970. This is a black woman’s apartment in 1981 and I have this in my hand. In other words, somebody …
Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … got this in discovery and turned it into the Underground …

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … and it subsequently ends up at a black terrorist …

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … bomb factory or, not bomb factory but safe house …

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: … or whatever word you want to use in New York City.

Pimentel: Incredible.

Dyson: Now, I use that a lot of times in the classes I now teach to show the relationship between these people.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: But also to show these people gather intelligence. Like, for example, in the FALN case, after the initial convictions, in 1980, some of the people were arrested in Evanston, Illinois, and I didn’t mention this before. In Evanston, Illinois, on April the 4th, 1980, a whole group of FALN people, eleven of them, are arrested during the course of what. They didn’t know what it was, but it was actually they were going to rob an armored truck at Northwestern University. At the time, we didn’t know why they were arrested. They were arrested because they had stolen a truck and there was suspicious activity and a neighbor dropped a dime and the Evanston Police Department arrested all these individuals. I had to go up there and talk to these people and so forth.
Dyson: The Evanston arrest took place on April the 4th of 1980, and I had to go up there. It was Good Friday, and I’m one of the very few FBI Agents even on duty that day. It’s a Friday afternoon. I get called on the radio to go up to a strange activity at the Evanston Police Department. They have picked up eleven people, nine at one time, and two at another; two of them robbing a Budget rental truck, or after robbing the Budget rental truck agency. They found it in a parking lot with these people in it. And the other nine, strangely loading themselves, pretending to be joggers, getting into a van in a residential neighborhood.

And I have to go up and interview these people because they think they’re Iranians. We had broken relations with Iran and they thought they were Iranians because none of them would say a word. So they look dark-complexioned and they didn’t know what they were. I go up there and, of course, I meet with Greg Rodriguez, another Agent, and Chris Brennan also shows up. And it’s like us being kids in a candy store because these are the FALN people.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: They’re fugitives. We got Carlos Torres, Top Ten Fugitive. I mean, we’ve got these Wanted posters all around our desk and here we walk in and they’re in various rooms. “Yeah, that’s him. That’s him.” Now, there were some we couldn’t recognize immediately, but we subsequently identified all of them. But that was the FALN.

Anyway, one of the people arrested was Freddie Mendez. Now, I did not know Freddie Mendez. It turns out he was a new recruit in the FALN and had only been in the group six months. Greg Rodriguez recognized him but I didn’t recognize him as being an FALN person, just as an overt support person. And I don’t know if Chris Brennan knew him at all but I did not know the man.
Dyson: In either case, after these people are convicted and are sentenced to lengthy prison terms, Freddie Mendez talks to the prosecutor, Jeremy Margolis, and says, “Look, I’m the new recruit in this group. I didn’t even know these people had done these horrific things and I’ve been charged with all this conspiracy. I got 65 years in prison. Yeah, I admit I was with ‘em and I was with ‘em on a couple of attacks but I was just the bag carrier. I really didn’t. What can I do?”

“Well, if you talk we can do something.” So, he agrees to talk. So now he’s going to talk to … who? Jeremy Margolis? Margolis is the prosecutor. He says, “You’re going to have to talk to the FBI.” “Alright, fine.” So now they bring him into a room and Margolis calls me and says, “Bill, talk to this guy.” So, I walk into the room. He looks at me and he says, “I know you.” And he calls me by name and I said, “Well, I’m sorry, I don’t know you.” I mean, we have not met, I know who he is by this time. “I don’t think we’ve ever met.” I said, “Did I ever interview you?” “No.” I said, “Well, how do you know me?” He said, “Well, we have your picture.” I said, “What do you mean you have my picture?”

He said, “Well, we have an album.” And he says, “It’s in our safe house in Milwaukee.”

Now, we went into that safe house, subsequently, and we never found the album. He says, “We have an album up there.” He says, “We have pictures of all you FBI people and law enforcement people, anybody we can come up with. Yeah, we have your picture.” And then when Greg Rodriquez comes in, he says, “We have a videotape of you.” And he says, “What you did is you went into a Mexican radio station or Spanish radio station trying to recruit Hispanic people into the Bureau.” He said, “You spoke in Spanish.” He said, “We made a video of that!” Now, in those days, we’re talking about 1980, videos were not that easy to make …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: He said, “We have a video.” He said, “We’re told to watch these things. We’re told to recognize who you people are.” And, of course, “we’ve got pictures of your cars …” and all that sort of stuff. So it taught me a lesson.
Pimentel: Yeah. Well, …

Dyson: These people are meticulous.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: They’re careful.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And it’s not just FALN. All these terrorists do this. This is a lesson of terrorists. They are investigating you as much as you are investigating them.

Pimentel: Sure.

Dyson: Now a lot of other criminals don’t do that. Organized crime may do it to a certain degree but not like these people do. That’s the point I was trying to make.

Pimentel: Right. Regular criminals wouldn’t do that. They don’t have the time, or they don’t know that.

Dyson: Well, that plus they don’t have the discipline.

Pimentel: Right. (unintelligible)

Dyson: This is one of the differences between a terrorist and a … a criminal of any other type … discipline.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: The terrorist will do it. If the terrorist group says, “Here is a security manual.” They will read it and memorize it.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: They will live by that. Whereas a criminal, if the leader of the Mafia says, “I want you to read this security manual.”

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: The mafia member will only do it if the leader of the mafia says, “I’m going to give you a test and prove you didn’t read it.”

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: “And I’ll kill you if you don’t read it.” Then they’ll read it.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Otherwise they ain’t going to read it.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: Because they’re not disciplined. And I don’t care what criminal conspiracy they’re in. Whereas, terrorists will always read it. A terrorist, if they are made, just like Claude Marks and Donna Willmott, they will quit their movement.

Pimentel: Yeah. Yeah.

Dyson: When was the last time you saw an organized crime figure who gets made in a surveillance quitting the mafia?

Pimentel: No.

Dyson: Becoming a non-criminal.

Pimentel: (Chuckling)

Dyson: Sure, they won’t do it when you’re watching them but two weeks later …

Pimentel: Sure.

Dyson: … they’ll be back doing it again. Terrorists will quit. And we had to lose several of them before we realized they will. They’re so dedicated to their movement, they soon as sacrifice themselves than sacrifice anybody else.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: This is the lesson that I sort of got out of terrorism. (Chuckling)
Pimentel: Yeah. Now, any other major cases you recall? You’ve given us a lot here. Any other case of interest?

Dyson: Well, I’m not sure what else to cover. I’m not even quite sure which cases we went through. But we went through a lot of the cases in which I was involved. My life was the FBI, was dealing with terrorism.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: So I’ve outlined, I think, the major terrorist cases that I was involved in that I can talk about. There are some that might be sensitive that I wouldn’t want to talk about.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: You know, we worked with XXXX; worked on XXXXX and had some pretty good investigations there, as well.

Pimentel: Yep.

Dyson: I don’t know whether we want to talk about some of those and we were equal opportunity, in terms of the Terrorist Task Force.

Pimentel: Exactly.

Dyson: And it was a “we” … constantly a “we.” Not “me.” Not the FBI, but “we,” most of my career that way.

Pimentel: Yeah. Maybe if you could give us a little thumbnail of what you’re doing now since you’re retirement. Just for the interest of the reader, here.

Dyson: When I retired from the FBI, and it was not a voluntary retirement, per se. I hit mandatory retirement; Louis Freeh extended me for a year. There was an extension opened again, that I could have taken, but it was uncertain as to how long it would be. And I just made the decision that I wasn’t opposed to a mandatory retirement. I kinda liked the idea they extended me; but it was time to leave, I guess.
Dyson: Otherwise, I’d probably still be with the FBI today. Despite my age, I still feel I can physically can do it and I certainly loved the FBI. So, I wouldn’t have left it.

I went with the University of Illinois because I had developed a relationship with Dr. Dick Ward, who was the Vice-Chancellor over there. Dr. Dick Ward was a former New York Police Officer, who rose up through the ranks. I think he became a lieutenant. Then he went to Berkeley, of all places, University of California at Berkeley and got a PhD. And then became a college professor and headed the Criminal Justice Department at the University of Illinois.

And I met him 20 years before and I’d done various terrorist presentations for him on behalf of the FBI. I’d written articles, also, for him, all approved by the FBI. He had written books and I had written chapters in three different books. So as a result, Dick had been after me, actually since I turned 50 years old to come with him, join him. He wanted me to get a PhD through the university and I considered it but I loved the FBI too much. So I stayed with the FBI till the end and then finally he talked me into it. So, I wound up with him.

I had gotten involved with the SLATT Program. And what the SLATT …

Pimentel: You want to spell out what that is?


Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: Essentially what happened … April the 19th of 1995 was Oklahoma City. And as a result of that bombing, the Department of Justice got a lot of pressure from Congress about what local police agencies needed to know about terrorism. Because Oklahoma City wasn’t exactly a New York City or a Chicago, or a Washington, DC. It was a large city, but not something you’d normally think would be targeted in terrorism. Also, there were other areas in the country that had been targeted in terrorism.
And this company, the Institute for Intergovernmental Research, was founded by Bill Reed, who had been formerly a top Deputy of Clarence Kelley when he was the head of the FBI. Bill Reed, previous to that, had created the organization called the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. He was their J. Edgar Hoover. And, before that, he’d been a law professor, brilliant man. Bill Reed created the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR) which is a not for profit group that does nothing but contracts for the Department of Justice.

The Department of Justice approached IIR and asked them if they would create a terrorism-type program to train state and local officers about the terrorist threat in the United States and how to prevent it. Not to respond. It wasn’t the idea of responding to it. It was the idea of how to prevent terrorism, and just to alert them what the situation was here. They made a decision the best way to do it was to have a focus group in which they would call in the victims of terrorism. People like the executives in Oklahoma City; the police executives and state police, and so forth. Call in the Sheriff of Kootenai County, Idaho, where the Aryan Nations were. Call in the head of the State Police in Utah, where they had the Marion standoff where a state police officer had been killed. Call these victims in, so to speak.

And have them all meet together and say what they would have liked to know about terrorism; and how to respond, and so forth, because they are the victims of terrorism. What would you in Oklahoma City like to have known a week before the terrorist attack? Could you have done something if you’d known? And from that arose a curriculum to teach a program. And some of these people actually agreed to be instructors. And one of them was Doug Bodrero. Doug Bodrero was the head of the Utah State Police. He said, “Sure, I’ll do presentations. I’ll talk about what we did and how we did it,” and so forth. And they also recruited Mark Pitcavige who is a college professor. He was not a former law enforcement officer. He was different from the other people that they had, but he was an expert on right-wing extremism, anti-government extremists. And he even ran a public service web site reporting on this type of thing and militia activities. So they formulated a program.
But IIR said they would not do this program unless it was in joint cooperation with the FBI. The FBI had to be involved. So the FBI agreed to do it and several Agents were assigned to provide some instruction from Headquarters. They reached out and asked me if I would be an instructor in their program. And I was sort of surprised because I figured that FBI Headquarters would do this. Why pick somebody from Chicago? But they felt that I could do it and they wanted me to do it. So, as part of my job, I went around the country for a couple of years doing programs for SLATT, as a representative of the FBI. And I would talk usually on the history of new-left terrorism or Puerto Rican terrorism, or something like that.

But primarily it really was dealing with task force operations in those days and right-wing extremism. Because the program originally started, based on Oklahoma City, as opposed to international terrorism. In other words, what we were doing to ourselves …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … as opposed to outsiders. Anyway, after I left the FBI, I went with the University of Illinois and I was part of the Department of Criminal Justice; and I did teaching and I did research for them. Bill Reed asked if I could continue doing programs, could I talk, now, as an outsider, as part of the SLATT program. And Dr. Dick Ward, at the university, said I could. So I did that and eventually Bill Reed kept working on me to come work for the company fulltime. And eventually, after about eight months, I agreed to do it. So I left the university but, in between, I wrote a book on terrorism. And Bill Reed liked that and he liked the idea of using it because, see, the book’s about 500 pages long and it talks about how to investigate terrorist incidences. So he liked that idea …

Pimentel: What’s the name of the book?

Dyson: I was … I was very fortunate with the book because I wrote the book and Anderson is a major publisher. I had no idea that they would really accept it. First thing, I had to go to FBI Headquarters, and it took them two months but they approved it. And then I sent it to Anderson and they took it just as it was; didn’t ask for any editing.

Pimentel: Oh, geeze.

Dyson: So, all of a sudden I now have a book. (Laughing) I figured I’d, you know, send it out to a major publisher and they’d say, “Well, I’ll send it to somebody else.”(chuckling). They approved this thing and it came out, actually, it took them a while to get it out, but it came out just after 9-11. So, obviously, it sold fairly well even though it’s a college textbook type. And the FBI did adopt it and so did ATF, and so forth. And they bought a number of copies of the book. Anyway, now it’s getting ready to go in the third edition. It had been in the second edition in 2005 and I just finished the third edition, which should go out this year. You know, all I’m doing is updating it with current statistics.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: So I’m not going back in my past and bringing anything else into it. Anyway, I go to work fulltime for IIR. SLATT starts expanding, I guess largely because of the things I brought in. I went into single issue; we went into international. And now we train all over the United States. The program is sponsored by the Department of Justice. We put on any type of school, dealing with terrorism, other than response to terrorism.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: We don’t talk about how many ambulances should come or something like that. Anything dealing with terrorism, we will teach. We do it for law enforcement officers all over the United States. It’s designed for state and local. Federal can come, Federal can even sponsor it, provided that locals attend.
Dyson: Because that’s what the mandate is. The training is free. And this makes it very desirable for locals.

Pimentel: Sure.

Dyson: All our instructors are -Mark Pitcavige is no longer with us - so every one of our instructors is a current or a former law enforcement officer of some type. Every one of them has a terrorism background and everyone’s got a minimum of a college degree. We probably have a third of the staff who have PhDs.

Pimentel: You got your PhD?

Dyson: No, I did not.

Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: I did not finish up. I started on one when I was teaching; I never finished it up. I worked with the University for eight months. I never finished it up there and I probably will never go back to school again.

Pimentel: Well, you’ve got that 500-pager out there. They should consider that as your thesis, right.

Dyson: Well, I will never, you know, I’m not the PhD type … I don’t think.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: The people I work with who have PhDs are just outstanding. I mean these are people that are truly brilliant and, yet, can work … everybody that I work with … it’s like working in the FBI.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: I can put my wallet down and if it’s anywhere near any of those guys, they’ll guard it. They wouldn’t touch it.

Pimentel: Yeah.
Dyson: And they’re just wonderful, wonderful people to work with. They’re hand-selected. Bill Reed has passed on. Bill Reed suffered a massive heart attack and died at the age of 64 …

Pimentel: Oh boy.

Dyson: … but his philosophy continues. And everybody is hand-selected. Like, for example, we chose a former SAC, Dick Marquise.

Pimentel: Oh yeah.

Dyson: Dick was in Oklahoma City but he was the Case Agent on PanAm 103.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Code name SCOTBOM.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: And he ran that beginning to end. In fact, Dick just wrote a book on SCOTBOM. And, so, he’s the type of person that we select to be part of us. Every one of these people are experts in something and do a fine job at teaching.

We also do terrorist research. And this is one of the things that they have me do. I monitor every terrorist incident or every terrorist thing that happens in, dealing with the United States every day. And it’s sent out to all police agencies, through the RISS System, Regional Information Sharing System.

We also have a new web site, SLATT.org. Any law enforcement officer can get into the secure section and can get all the current terrorist information. Every time there is a terrorist incident of any type, it’s recorded on a certain part. Another part is the diary of all terrorism in the United States. Any thing that impacts the United States that happens, whether it’s an arrest, a conviction, an attack, that’s recorded in an essay form. It’s sent out like a diary entry to all these law enforcement agencies and we do that every single … well, we don’t do it every day, but we do it on a daily basis.
Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: It may go out once a week or something like that. For example, I’m sitting with you here today, by Saturday, I’ll send in the whole week. And I’ll have the weekend home because I go out again next week. Probably on Monday I’ll send out another summary.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: We started that officially January 1st, 2000. So now we probably have hundreds of thousands of entries in this. But nobody else does this.

Pimentel: That’s incredible.

Dyson: So it’s available to the FBI.

Pimentel: Yeah.

Dyson: And FBI Agents monitor this on a regular basis as well. But it’s all public source information.

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: Nothing classified in it. I no longer have a security clearance. One of the things that the SLATT Program does is it teaches at the FBI National Academy. There is a terrorism class there and we provide the instructors for the terrorism class. We cannot be the lead instructor. There is an Agent Instructor …

Pimentel: Right.

Dyson: … and we provide topic instructors. So I teach there every quarter and Dick Marquise also teaches and we have several other people. We have a former ATF Agent that teaches as part of our program, a real, real tremendous bomb expert. And so we have various people. Dr. John White comes in sometimes, formerly of the Michigan State Police, but a PhD and a college professor, and an author of many books.
Dyson: Dr. Dave Carter from Michigan State University, former police officer from, I think, was it Kansas City or St. Louis, long time police officer. He’ll come in and talk on intelligence and terrorism, and so forth. So, we do teach this course on a regular basis. And, so we do have a relationship with the FBI. The SLATT Program is a joint operation with the FBI. So we still stay close and that makes me very happy.

Pimentel: Well, that’s good. Well, I appreciate your time, Bill. Anything else you want to add?

Dyson: No. I think I’ve said everything. In fact, I’ve probably said too much.

Pimentel: (Laughing)

Dyson: This is probably a lot longer than you wanted and I didn’t mean it to be that way.

Pimentel: That’s okay.

Dyson: And I didn’t, you know, and I’m hoping that you understand when I’m talking, if I ever use the word I, I should say we.

Pimentel: Yeah. No problem. Well, you’ll get a chance to review this transcript. Thanks to some dedicated folks, this will be transcribed and you’ll get a copy and you can review, add, delete, whatever …

Dyson: I’ll get a copy! It’ll be like my book!

Pimentel: It will be like a book.

Dyson: By the time this thing comes out. My God! (Laughing)

Pimentel: It will be like a book. I’ll get a copy and I’ll be reviewing it. So, and then it’ll go back and then it’ll go to the Pre-Publication Unit of the FBI. And normally, within a few weeks, we’ll get it back, either yea or nay, or they’ll scratch out some stuff.

Dyson: I don’t think very much I said here that …
Pimentel: No, I don’t think there is.

Dyson: … I deliberately tried to avoid classified.

Pimentel: I don’t think there is. But anyway, on behalf of the Oral History Project and the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, I thank you for your time and your efforts and this interview.

Dyson: Well, thank you for letting me be involved. I appreciate it.

Pimentel: Okay.

Dyson: Because I’m a member of the Society, just as you are.

(Chuckling)

Pimentel: Okay. Thank you. (Chuckling)

This interview terminated at 3:30 pm on January 15, 2008.