

Pentagon Attack

Interview with John Jester  
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Rochester: We are interviewing John Jester, Chief of the Defense Protective Service. The interviewers are Alfred Goldberg, Diane Putney, and Stuart Rochester from the OSD Historical Office.

As the head of the Defense Protective Service, what are your key responsibilities for the protection of property and personnel in the Building?

Jester: Basically, I am responsible for ensuring that the organizations and personnel in the Pentagon have a safe and secure working environment which will allow them to perform their missions. That will involve all elements of security from physical security to information security.

Rochester: Had there been any special upgraded threat or alert in the days prior to the September 11th attack?

Jester: No.

Goldberg: You had previous incidents here though.

Jester: We have had previous incidents off and on through the years. We had gone to Threatcon "Alpha" for a while, but it was based on information that was briefed. We never were really sure whether it was valid or not—whether it was good information or not, but nothing like we experienced on the 11th.

Rochester: Had you prepared or practiced for an emergency or anything on this scale or this type?

Jester: We had always thought about a plane hitting the Pentagon.

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Goldberg: Hitting the Pentagon or bombing it?

Jester: No. Actually hitting the Pentagon, because we are in the flight path of National.

Goldberg: And how.

Jester: So the short runway—the one that is used by commuter aircraft—it's running along with the river. We actually had a command post exercise last year. We had a model of the Pentagon. A guy from Pennsylvania came down who does this kind work, and he basically puts you through the paces like it is a real event—what would you do in the event? He actually had a toy helicopter and a plane. He had pieces of a plane falling in the parking lot. It was more from an accidental problem, which could cause a great deal of problems. The worst case would be a plane taking off because it would have more fuel. But the planes that go over the river are commuter aircraft, and there are more commuter aircraft crashing than larger airliners. I know, since my son is a commercial pilot. The young pilots fly the commuter aircraft first and work their way up.

Rochester: As events were unfolding on September 11th did you have any time or opportunity to react between news of the initial attack on the first of the World Trade Center buildings in New York and the time of the moment of impact here at the Pentagon?

Jester: Very little. Initially, I received a call from Glenn Flood in Public Affairs saying, "Did you see what is happening at the World Trade Center?" I immediately turned on CNN. By that time, I saw the second plane hitting. I actually talked to Doc Cooke briefly about it. I told him that we were going to

beef up our security on the outside of the Building—thinking more of a typical terrorist situation around the Building and putting more officers on the outside of the Building. Actually, Paul Haselbush and I did talk about, “What if a plane were to come here?” We pretty much decided, “If it comes here, what can we really do?” I walked into my office. I was just inside the office when the plane hit.

Rochester: Where were you located?

Jester: I’m in 4A275, which is probably about 600 feet from the crash site.

Rochester: What was your initial reaction and your first thoughts?

Jester: I remember that very clearly. My first thoughts were, because I’m in one of those A-ring offices, which is a part of a hallway, above me is a hallway, and there is an expansion joint there. You have seen those pallet jacks that roll around the Pentagon with all of that furniture. Sometimes they hit that expansion joint real loud. It makes a lot of noise. When it first went off, I thought, “Boy, that is a big load of furniture.” It usually doesn’t shake me. One of my employees looked out of the window and said, “We’ve been hit.” My first thoughts were, “No, not here. It can’t happen here.”

Goldberg: There’s a book by that name, way back in the 1930s, *It Can’t Happen Here* by Sinclair Lewis.

Rochester: So you were located in the wedge that was hit?

Jester: No. The crash is here, and I’m about here. Each side of the Building is 950 feet long. I’m on the inside ring about here.

Rochester: What were your initial actions? How long before the alarms were activated?

Jester: I just went flying out of the office. The first thing I do when there is any kind of an incident, I go down to our communications center which is pretty much down below me on the first floor to find out what is going on. Going down there, I'm yelling at this lieutenant to get me a camera—"Get a camera up there. Show me a camera that works over there." He finally said to me, "The cameras have been knocked out." We had lost power to the cameras that we would use to see that area. When the plane came in, it cut the connectivity to those cameras. That is when I ran over to the A&E drive, because a lot of people were running in that area. I went in there looking for fire extinguishers. I ran down there, and that's where the plane nose came right through the wall. There were just flames and smoke. We were trying to find a way to get into the Building. It was just so hot you couldn't get there. And then somebody said, "Run," because the windows were beginning to blow out from the heat.

Goldberg: How long after it hit do you think the windows were blowing? Were these the new windows?

Jester: No, these were the old windows. Tons of water was just pouring down from the broken water pipes, plus the sprinkler system that was installed in the new wedge. I lost my cell phone in that area that day. Then I finally got on the outside to see the big picture. Those windows were blowing out pretty quickly.

Rochester: Did you have any of your men in the area of impact?

Jester: No. Fortunately, we had a contract guard over in that site, but one of our contract alarm installers was killed. He had gone for a smoke break, and probably went out the Corridor 4 door. There were two of them standing out

there, and one guy went inside. The other guy said that he was going to stay a little bit later. So that day, they couldn't find him. We found out later that he was killed.

Rochester: Amid the chaos of the moment, how did things begin to get organized? Was there a standard plan that you were following in such emergencies, a clear-cut pecking order of who had authority and how to set up your command centers?

Jester: Yes, since we deal with emergencies. We had a process set up, and we also worked closely with the Arlington County Fire Department.

Goldberg: You had agreements with them?

Jester: We had agreements and understandings, and we know that the fire departments operate under what is called an "incident command system." In this case, we had a major fire. That was the big thing that we were dealing with initially. The senior fire person becomes the "incident scene commander." They are the ones who know what they are doing in terms of fighting a fire. There is a whole series of vest colors to identify functional leaders (PA, EMS, etc). It's actually an outgrowth of the Air Florida incident in terms of how you coordinate with other parts of the metropolitan community. So when the fire chief was there, we knew that he was the key person to deal with. Our role immediately was—after trying to rescue people—our police officers did go in and pull people out of the fire site. Then we had to basically try to get some kind of control of the area, because we had people just pouring in there from everywhere. We had employees. We had people from the Virginia State Police—troopers—the

Arlington County people—people just everywhere pouring in. We had to get some kind of control, but at the same time it was a balancing act. We had to have people come in there to rescue people and to save people. We didn't want to hinder that, but at the same time, we had a big hole in our Building. So as the fire got more under control late in the afternoon, I met with the police chief and the fire chief, who I know—I belong to the Council of Governments Police Chiefs Committee, and there's a Fire Chiefs Committee—so we know each other. I know Ed Plaughter well, the fire department chief. I know his assistant, Jim Schwartz. I know Ed Flynn, the police department chief, which pays dividends in these kinds of incidents. I knew the FBI agents who were over here, too. We were actually under the bridge because we were looking for the second plane for quite a while that day. Arlington County brought in their command post vehicles. So we were over there, and we said, "We have to get a handle on who is going to do what and get some kind of structure to this." So I arranged to use the Public Affairs briefing room for a meeting place, where we had the fire, police, local police, FBI, whoever was there to come in, and we talked about how to control this—what's going to be the command structure.

Goldberg: At what time did you have that meeting?

Jester: This was probably about 6 p.m.—maybe a little bit later. It was getting dark. It is hard to put times on that now. From the procedures that we worked with in the police and fire environment—when you have multiple agencies involved in an incident—you go from what's called an "incident command system" to a "unified command system." So you have more than one

organization there, and you have to be able to work together. So then we determined that the best thing to do was to establish a Joint Operations Center (JOC). Incidentally, this is just before the scheduled International Monetary Fund (IMF) protest. The FBI had actually gone out and purchased computers and new equipment to establish a Joint Operations Center for that week for the demonstrations. They had also arranged with the Military District of Washington to use the recreation center as a JOC. We said, "Let's establish the JOC at the recreation center at Fort Myer at midnight tonight." So at midnight I went over there, and they were still installing computers and hooking up telephones. People started coming in during the night. We had someone from the FBI, Arlington County Police Department, DPS, WHS, and different parts of the Army. There was a whole room full of people. That center stayed operational for close to two weeks. If a question came up, and someone said, "Okay, what's going on in a certain area?," you could go to the next desk over and ask. It was a place to share information. That was the Joint Operations Center. At the crash site, we had the Incident Center. That is where we brought in some mobile command centers. We had the fire chief operating from that location. Through mutual aid agreements that the Virginia fire chiefs had, you may go there anytime during the night, and the battalion chief or the person who was actually in charge of the fire unit at the time—from Fairfax County or it may be someone from Falls Church—will be there. When you looked at the scene, you had trucks from Arlington, Fairfax, Alexandria, DC, Montgomery County, Cherrydale in Arlington, and Prince Georges County. They had a mutual aid agreement so they could come in.

That's how we worked under these agreements, and by having worked with one another before.

Goldberg: Did you have too many?

Jester: Maybe at one point, we probably got close to it, but they just stood over to the side.

Goldberg: They took turns.

Jester: Yes. It was a very demanding period.

Rochester: Even before—between the mid-morning attack and 6 p.m. when you were organizing your command center—how did you or what did you do to get a handle on the situation in the initial hour or two?

Jester: The one thing we had to do was recall all of our officers on duty. We operate normally on three eight-hour shifts. We had to call all of the ones off duty that we had. They started coming back to work, which was difficult because of the traffic. I talked to an officer today, and he had to use his badge to get through all kinds of roadblocks on the way here. We had a Building full of smoke. It was difficult to get into the office where their pistols were located. We had a basic problem trying to get the manpower here to help us out.

Rochester: What time did the Pentagon Metro station shut down?

Jester: I don't know. There are some things that were going on behind me—they occurred. The next day I looked behind me, and there was this whole camp community. I was focused on the Building and behind us was this great little community showing up—the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. But we were just focused on the attack site for quite some time. Things like Metro and—our

people did it. I know we actually commandeered some Metro buses. We asked Metro, and they said, "Sure, take a bus." We took it to the site, and we had a place for firemen to sit down and take a break.

Rochester: Do you know which of your people were the first ones on the scene?

Jester: We have a list of the people that we know went in to rescue people.

Rochester: Could we get that list of the key people who were there officially early on?

Jester: Sure. We had some people actually helping people out. One of them was actually on the Today Show with the guy he rescued. There was a guy who got out and was looking for his "angel." The "angel" turned out to be Officer Isaac J. Hoopii.

Rochester: He is the one that Michael Jordan, I think, escorted into a basketball game.

Jester: Did he? We kind of kid "Hopie." His name is not "Hopie," but Hoopii. In Hawaiian there's no silent letter. He was having difficulty with the event—like most of our officers—there's stress and it will be with us for quite some time. He was worrying whether he could have done more and what happened to the people that he tried to save. The following day, I saw the article in the paper about the person looking for his "angel" and the next day they made contact. So it was good for Officer Hoopii to get that contact to see what he did.

Rochester: How were your communications? Were they intact or were they disrupted by the attack?

Jester: Our cell phones were of no value. The cell phones just became overloaded, so calls could not get through. The landline telephones were of some value. At some point they were overloaded. Fortunately, for my wife's sake, I got a phone call out to her about 30 minutes after the incident. I managed to get my cell phone and made a call to her to say, "It's me, I'm okay. Got to go." She is an attorney down in Georgetown. She looks right down the river from her office. My son called and asked her what she saw down by the Pentagon. She told him that she saw a huge plume of smoke, and so she was going crazy until I called her. The phones were very necessary.

Goldberg: So you were in and around the Building the whole time.

Jester: I didn't leave the Pentagon until about three or four o'clock the next morning. I basically went home to get a shower, put some clothes on, and come back.

Rochester: Can you reconstruct a little more for us what happened during the afternoon in between the initial shock of the event and when things came under more control by evening, in terms of your own activities and the activities of the Defense Protective Service through that afternoon?

Jester: During the afternoon most of my activities were focused on making sure we were securing the entire reservation. When you have a major event, certain people are like moths around a light bulb. They come to the scene as thrill seekers. The following day the DPS had to arrest three people who were in firemen outfits, but were not a part of the fire crew. We had some people in Red Cross shirts, but they were not Red Cross. So we were trying to sort things out.

With each day we kept getting tighter control. One day, everybody had to put a wrist band on. We brought out a portable badge station, and the one station burned up because we badged 3,000 people one day. Our pass office supervisor, Barry Jones, used to work at the White House, so he called someone that he knew with the Secret Service, and they said, "Okay, we'll be over." They brought over six badge stations, which were operated by the Army band. It was very neat that things just worked. The Secret Service showed up with two portable cell towers and a trailer full of cell phones, and said, "How many do you want?" Verizon came at our request and set up a portable cell tower, and said, "How many phones do you want?" So we were getting more communications established. The cell phones were critical during that time.

Rochester: Within DPS you had people who had specific responsibilities—somebody that might attend to the safeguarding of the facilities and others dealing with the personnel. What about classified information?

Jester: The uniformed officers maintained security of the site. Where we could later on, we called our Security Services people, and they went in after the fire was out looking to recover classified material. That went on for days, and it is still going on. We set up a twenty-four-hour operation. We had somebody on duty twenty-four hours a day. We had a truck, and we were recovering classified material that was actually being recovered by the FBI or some rescue people who would bring it to us, and we took it and tried to identify it. Actually over time, we had to open up 300 safes that were burned. They basically welded themselves shut. The electronic locks were burned out.

Goldberg: It was a hot fire.

Jester: A very hot fire. We had a saw that we were killing ourselves with trying to cut open the safes. We finally had to go out and buy a Jaws of Life that they use for the car accidents. We actually burned the motor out of one because we had to open about 300 safes.

Goldberg: What was the FBI doing?

Jester: You have several things going on. First, you have a fire scene. You want to put the fire out. Then you go in to see if you can rescue people. Most of the people that were rescued were rescued very early on—the ones who escaped from the crash site. The people on the plane had no chance. We couldn't rescue anyone from there, but the ones that were in the vicinity. Because of some structure work that was done, the fourth and fifth floors stood up, and the new windows that we put in stood up. Years ago, I had to fight for those. They didn't want to do that. I kept saying, "You're going to have to put in blast resistant windows because they work." I had to fight it. I felt good when I saw that. I'm glad I held my ground. That was the rescue part. Then after several days, we basically pulled out what was left of people. Then a crime scene was established where the FBI attempts to recover the evidence. The plane was of no value, because it was pretty much in small pieces. So as they started taking the debris out of the area, they took all of it to the North Parking lot, and they sifted through that. They actually found evidence of the hijackers on the plane. They found the box cutters and things that were talked about. They came across parts of passports. They also found pieces of people. A cadaver

dog went there looking for people parts. The Remote Delivery Facility (RDF), where we x-ray all of the package became a temporary morgue. All of the bodies and parts of bodies that were found were taken over to the RDF, where the remains were processed. Each day they were taken down to Fort Belvoir and then flown to Dover. It goes from fire to rescue, crime scene to a construction repair project.

Goldberg: So the FBI people who were there on the scene very quickly were standing by to have the opportunity to do their job?

Jester: They were there while the fire was still being fought. That very night, equipment started arriving on the scene. We had temporary tents put up. We actually had secured the crime scene overnight, and command post vehicles, trucks, and tents were assembled. In the next few days a little city grew up at that location with telephone wires, power lines and generators. We had command post vehicles loaned to us. Lockheed Martin said, "Do you want to use it? Here, it's yours to use at no cost."

Rochester: At what point did you have the luxury, I suppose, to start thinking about altered security procedures for the next day whenever the Building was reopened? Was it your call or did you coordinate that with people in the secretary's office and with Doc Cooke in OSD?

Jester: There was no luxury of time. I always tell people to think forward. So the next morning I had to start thinking about where to go from here. We have to obviously establish security with this big hole in the Building and hundreds of workers here whom we don't know, and then set up security procedures. Pretty

much I just kept Doc informed. He pretty much concurred with my recommendations. We changed our threat level. We now call them Force Condition. I still want to use the word "Threatcon." We were at "Normal," and quickly went to "Alpha" before the plane crashed. Then we went from "Alpha" to "Delta." "Delta" is used after a terrorist incident.

Rochester: Given the magnitude of the event or emergency, were you satisfied with the reaction of your organization and, for that matter, the other groups that participated?

Jester: I was very pleased with the way all of DPS came together. We have different parts. We have a uniformed police officer side, a security services side, security specialists. Everybody just came together as one organization. I was talking to Ed Flynn, the Chief of Police for Arlington County, today. Ed and I have been invited to participate in a workshop at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Convention, which I had cancelled. I wasn't going to go, but they asked me if I would go for a workshop on a Sunday in Toronto. So I've got to go. They are sending an individual from the New York City Police Department, Ed Flynn, and me to talk about that event. Ed is going to be talking about mutual aid programs and things. He said, "What things stand out in my mind?" I said, "What stands out in my mind is that we all know each other. So when we all arrive on the scene, there is no need to build a trust between us, because we knew each other and we had worked together." So the cooperation just happened. There is no, "Who are you, what is your jurisdiction, why are you here?" We know why you are here. For example, the Virginia State Police.

They have a headquarters by the Navy Annex. First Sergeant Keevil—we had known Rick. Rick has been a good friend of ours for years. He came down here and said, “What roads do you need blocked off?” We said, “This, this, and this.” There was no question. He blocked them off. All of the things that we do to know one another, and we meet periodically, and sometimes just in casual ways—it pays dividends.

Rochester: What about any weaknesses or problems that you feel need to be addressed either with regard to jurisdictional coordination...

Jester: There are no jurisdictional problems at all—none at all. The Arlington County police came on the scene to rescue people from the site as well as State Troopers. There were no jurisdictional issues. They were trying to save humans.

Rochester: As in terms of your planning, training, or equipment.

Jester: In terms of planning, I had been to training programs, as well as read articles about “incident command.” But when this happened, someone actually talked to a Fairfax County fireman who had just the day before been to an “incident command” program. He said, “You can go to the class, but something like this just overwhelms you.” That was the big thing that we saw. There was just so much going on that it just simply overwhelmed your mind. When I got home that night, my mind, my brain felt like when you put a disc in the computer and it just winds up and spins. That is what it felt like. It was spinning. There were so many things. You have to sit down. I use a “To Do” list to plan what I need to do each time. In terms of weaknesses in equipment, that is probably

what we need to do the most, because of many reasons, and one major reason being money. I guess also, you make some assumptions that these kinds of things will never happen. We have to change that. We have to say that it could happen here and then press for the resources, because we didn't have the equipment that we probably should have had. A command post vehicle, for example. We had to go out and borrow one. That was a very interesting thing. We knew we had to have one. In fact, we had the specifications all developed, but that was one of the things that I questioned, "Do we have the money to do that?" I held off doing it. We're going to do it now. Logistical things—extra flashlights—we didn't have them in stock—didn't have them in your possession. Because you can't go out to Wal-Mart and buy them all the time. We had done that in some cases—just going to Wal-Mart and buying flashlights—buying things that you need. You need to have a stock of supplies for a major incident, which will rarely happen, but when it does happen, you've got to have all of these things in order to perform your function.

Goldberg: Did you have any jurisdictional problems with the Military District of Washington (MDW)?

Jester: There was a little bit of friction there for a while. Somewhere in this process, and I don't know where, the secretary of defense had directed the Army to take over the crash site. There was never anything put in writing. They came on the scene. I had no problem with them in the beginning, because they were just bodies. They were doing things, and everybody was kind of working together. Then one evening—it was very soon after the attack. I can't remember

which day it was—the second day or maybe the third day. I had a call from the deputy secretary's office, General Batiste, the Military Assistant. He said, "John, we're going to put this in your lap. Jesse Jackson want's to tour the crash scene."

Jester: I said, "Thank you very much." So I took Mr. Jackson over and Jaymie Durnan from Wolfowitz's came over too. Actually, he may have had his own agenda, but he actually meant a lot to all of the workers. They flocked to him. The night we were there, the families were at the viewing site looking down at the crash site. Mr. Jackson wanted to go to see them, and I said, "Okay." Actually, it meant a lot to the families too. While we were over there, General Jackson who is the MDW Commander came over. He was very upset. He wanted to know who authorized him to be over there. I said, "The deputy secretary authorized him to be over there." His words were: "I guess I have to set up a machine gun to keep people out of here." Those were his words. Meanwhile, I ran into General Van Alstyne, the three-star who took care of the families. He did a fantastic job. He was there with the families. He saw that the General was all upset, too. I will never forget his comment. He said, "Well, he's just a young general, he'll get over that when he gets older." But the next day General Jackson wanted a meeting. So I went over to Fort Myer—and I know some of his staff—one guy I have known for years. Jackson starts the meeting off by saying, "Well, I guess I have been given the responsibility for the Pentagon." And his staff said, "No Sir, you have been given responsibility for the crash site." And that kind of put him—okay, he's not in charge of the Pentagon. Later on, when

the site was being transferred from a crime scene back to the Pentagon, that's when Doc got his nose bent out of shape, because it was like the scene was going to MDW rather than to WHS. I know Doc got a little upset with that. There was never anything put in writing—it was not very clear.

Goldberg: We'll have to ask Rumsfeld.

Jester: I guess. Somehow it happened, and no one was really sure. I heard someone say, "It happened at a press conference—the Army is going to take charge of the crash site." I don't know.

Goldberg: Press conference—we'll be able to find it.

Jester: After my meeting with Jackson—when he saw that he was just in charge of the crash site—after that we got along very well.

Goldberg: What did being in charge of the crash site mean as far as MDW is concerned? They had some soldiers there securing the area?

Jester: I was securing the area.

Goldberg: Didn't they bring in some MPs?

Jester: They brought in soldiers to remove the bodies and to serve as laborers. At some point they brought them in to carry four-by-fours up to the rescue workers to do shoring for the Building.

Goldberg: Weren't there MPs that came in?

Jester: Later on. The Maryland National Guard was called in to help me. So I had two companies of MPs from the Maryland National Guard. We used those to help us secure the Pentagon. They stayed here until about two weeks ago. You can see that I'm losing track. They activated an MP battalion from the 18th

Airborne Corps with one company from Fort Bragg and one company from Fort Stewart. The MPs went home. They have since been activated and have been sent to Fort Stewart. It is kind of funny. The Army acts in strange ways. I have two companies of activated MPs right now supporting us.

Goldberg: Those are the people we see when we come to the Building.

Rochester: Although you had good personal relationships with the chiefs of the other agencies, you feel that there is a need for greater clarity in terms of institutional relationships and what the chain of command is in cases like this?

Jester: I personally don't, because I have no problem with it. Some other people may have, but I belong to different organizations in town. And the only reason for doing that is to have working relationships with all of the police chiefs. It helps me. In this city, as many of you know, it's not what you know, but who is in your rolodex.

Rochester: One month later, what remains the biggest challenge from a Building security standpoint?

Jester: It depends—if you are talking about the crash site or the overall?

Rochester: Overall security procedures and precautions.

Jester: Well, from the crash site, we have a big hole in the Building. We still have some classified materials in there that we didn't get out. So we have this big hole in the Building, and we have hundreds of workers. So it is a challenge for me working with the renovation every day, and some days, I shut them down—like we did yesterday, for example. They pressed too far, and they had people who didn't have their escorts in sight, and we said, "Move them out." So

we moved a hundred workers out of the site yesterday. So there is a little battle between us and renovation, but I'm not going to let them run over me. I have to maintain security. Overall, with this crash site, we are in a high threat period. Right now, we are concerned about biological agents. It is almost like my worst nightmare come true. I was here until three o'clock this morning getting biological tests conducted. I'm trying right now to get employees calmed down. The problem with the bio agents is a lack of knowledge about them.

Rochester: What precautions are you taking with regards to anthrax and bio-chemical agents?

Jester: We're having biological agent tests done of the air systems. There are biological testing systems that are now available that I have just learned about. These systems have been in the research world and all of a sudden the Army comes out and says, "I'll make these items available to you." We can actually do test to see whether it is a chemical or biological agent. After the Tokyo incident, we had actually done some research in planning and developing training materials on what we call "weapons of mass destruction." We were versed in that. We were familiar with anthrax. I knew it was more than just a powder. We had some background and training in that. It helped. The problem is that the media just hyped it up so much that everyone is afraid, and our Communication Center was receiving calls for soap powder and sugar donuts.

Rochester: Do you have enough manpower?

Jester: No.

Goldberg: You have a lot of contract people, don't you?

Jester: Well, I do overall. I have some here in the Pentagon. We are not just only responsible for the Pentagon, we are also responsible for 45 buildings that we have. We have probably three hundred contract positions in the buildings in Crystal City, in Rosslyn, and around town.

Goldberg: What about here?

Jester: Here, we have a few contractors on construction sites.

Goldberg: That's it?

Jester: That's it. We have always been short police officers. We can hire them, but because our pay system is so terrible—we hire them and someone hires them from us. They take our best, brightest, and well trained. So like last year we hired 40, and we lost 42. They go all over town. We are trying to correct that with legislation.

Goldberg: Are the contract people satisfactory?

Jester: They are like a typical bell curve. Some are very good, some are very bad and the rest of them are in the middle. Overall, you can't depend on them. They are only good for certain things. So we learn where we use them. The people we hire are federal police officers. We send them down to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia for a ten-week basic training course. It is very intensive. They have to pass a series of tests, which some people cannot complete. It is a very difficult course. When they come back, they go through twelve more weeks of on-the-job training where they receive instructions on local procedures and actually work with a field training officer, and they are evaluated. By the time they finish, they are well trained.

Goldberg: How about the contract people? What kind of training do they have?

Jester: Very little. They receive about 40 hours of training and that's about it.

Goldberg: Like the security people at the airports?

Jester: A little better than that, but it's degrees of how bad.

Goldberg: How is your statistical data of what happened—that is, the number of people that were killed, the number injured, and the number who escaped?

Jester: We know the data, but I bet you if we looked back to the report of the incident, it is probably a very brief report, because everybody was focused on actions. We were not focused on writing the incident report.

Goldberg: Who made the report?

Jester: I couldn't tell you. Usually, a police officer will complete what we call a preliminary investigative report. Basically, who, what, how, and when.

Goldberg: So we might be able to get a copy of that sometime?

Jester: Right, but I bet you it's not a detailed report. We are going to get a consultant to do an after-action report for us. So we can have someone who has the time to write it and sit down and talk with us—and say, "Okay, what went well, what didn't go as well, and how can we improve?" The improvements can involve additional training, equipment, and other kinds of requirements.

Goldberg: You want somebody who has some background and knowledge.

Jester: Someone who has done this before. It is a real skill to get the information out of people. One of our continued concerns is that we have to work and provide some counseling for our officers. They are still working 12-hour shifts. A lot of them saw some real horrible things that day, and then simply the

stress of that event, the stress of our high threat condition—guys walking around with MP-5s, and something can happen here at anytime. The stress builds up. The concern is that if you do start slowing down, that is when it really hits you. Your adrenaline wears out.

Rochester: One of the purposes of interviewing you and the others is that this will be a key part of an after-action report that we are doing—a larger historical study. So we'll certainly want to know about that report and tie into that.

Are there any other lessons to be learned from this experience in terms of things you need to be doing differently, planning differently—anticipating?

Jester: Well, from the crash event itself, there are equipment and communication issues that we have to work on. We have ways to communicate with ourselves on the radio. We don't have a way to communicate with the medical clinic, the building manager or Air Force security. We are looking at communication systems which permit intercommunications between all of the organizations in the facility.

Goldberg: Do you have any notion of what the secretary and the deputy secretary and the other officials in the Building were doing during that incident?

Jester: The secretary went to the crash site, which he should not have done. One of my officers tried to stop him, and he just brushed him off. I told his staff that he should not have done that. He is in the national command authority; he should not have gone to the scene.

Goldberg: I think that is typical of him.

Jester: That is typical. I knew he was not going to leave the Building that day.

Goldberg: What about the deputy secretary, what did he do?

Jester: He went to the remote site. I'm not sure how long he stayed there. One of the things I can remember the second day, I was sitting in an Army tent. I'm on the telephone, and there are Hueys flying over head. It was a little bit of flashback to Vietnam. It was like a war scene. You came to the Building, and the smoke from the roof fire hung around for days. That, plus some things that we had been doing on the chemical and biological agents study. It was like a bad Tom Clancy movie.

Rochester: Is there anything else that you want to add that hasn't been mentioned that we have not asked, that hasn't come up?

Jester: I think the big thing is that I am very proud of what our officers did. All of our people pulled together. I made it a real point when they had the Memorial Service. One thing that really hurt our officers was that we were busy throughout the entire event. We had no break. After their fires were out, Arlington County had a big press conference, so all of the media went to Arlington County. When the officers came home at nighttime after their 12-hour shift, they looked at the TV, and it was like Arlington County people were the first on the scene. They thought, "Wait a minute, we were the first ones on the scene." All of the news stories were there and that really hurt the officers. That culminated with a television program called "America's Most Wanted" on Saturday night. I rarely watch it. Before that Saturday, they wanted to come to the Pentagon and film a tape for a "Heroes of the Pentagon" program. We actually brought the TV show staff on the scene to shoot video and when the program aired, the show talked

about Arlington County and the Virginia State Police and not about our DPS officers, and I was furious. They talked about the Virginia State Police trooper that was injured, but it doesn't say who rescued the trooper, which was one of our officers. An Arlington County police officer talks about the woman whose skin was falling off her arm. She was brought out by one of our officers. It was really gnawing at them. I came here on Sunday, and our union president on duty at Corridor 2 stopped an Army guy from coming into the Building with two staff members from the "America's Most Wanted" program. I just lit into her. I normally don't do that but I said, "You owe us an apology. I am demanding an apology for that program." So the next day the executive producer called me and said, "We want to come over and do another program." I said, "You owe it to the people who were here." In regards to the ceremony on October 11, I had to brief Rumsfeld's staff several times and I said, "It's for the families. If you don't recognize anybody, that's fine, but if you recognize any organization, don't dare say something about Arlington County police and not recognize DPS." The day before the ceremony, Rumsfeld wanted to know about the security for the ceremony, so I had to go give him a briefing. I thought, what the hell, I'm just going to say, "Please say...." What are you going to do, fire me? Give me a break. In the ceremony, he did recognize DPS. He is a character.

Goldberg: He always has been.

Jester: He did say that. That meant a lot to the officers. A Washington Post reporter had written a story the day before, and the editor was holding it to see if Rumsfeld would recognize DPS in the ceremony. During the ceremony, I'm

holding my breath because I was afraid the Post would put a remark in their story that he failed to recognize them. He did recognize them.

Rochester: Thank you very much.