



Transcript: Perspectives in Law Enforcement—The Role of Information Sharing in Counter-Terrorism Investigation and Prevention: An Interview With Director Richard A. Marquise

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Justice Podcast Series is designed to provide the latest information in justice innovations, practices, and perspectives from the field of criminal justice. In this edition, Michael Medaris, Senior Policy Advisor at the Bureau of Justice Assistance, is joined by Richard A. Marquise, Director of the SLATT® [State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training] Program and former FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agent, about his experience with counter-terrorism prevention and investigation.

Michael Medaris: Good morning. This is Michael Medaris [and] I'm with the Bureau of Justice Assistance [and] I'm a Senior Policy Advisor for Law Enforcement, and today we have with us Mr. Richard A. Marquise. He is a retired FBI agent with a long history in terms of counter-terrorism investigation and prevention. He was the lead agent with the Lockerbie investigation and it was through his efforts and the efforts of his team in which they achieved a conviction in a very, very difficult and complex case. He's presented hundreds of times throughout the United States and internationally on issues pertaining to counter-terrorism and terrorism prevention for state and local law enforcement. He is well known in the anti-terrorism community and we are really really happy to have him with us here today.

So, Mr. Marquise, based on your experience with the Lockerbie investigation, what are some of the important lessons that we can draw from your investigation and your knowledge of that horrific event?

Director Richard Marquise: Certainly. First of all, good morning, Michael. The most important lesson I think that I learned from that terrible crime, which took place in 1988, was that without cooperation, whether it be international, in this case it was, or even in this country between state and local law enforcement, [and] federal governments, if you don't cooperate and share information, you are not going to solve cases, much less prevent crimes and terrorist crimes in particular, from occurring. So I learned that sharing information and cooperating, because we made great strides in solving that case once we began to final share, truly share information.

I also—because of the enormous crime scene, which turned out to be 845 square miles—know how significant it is that even the smallest detail can help you solve or prevent crimes from occurring. And in this case that piece of evidence was a fragment that was so small it would fit on the end of my

small finger and was found in this very large crime scene in Scotland. So I believe in paying attention to detail.

And the third, and certainly as important, is dealing with the victims of this crime. Certainly all the passengers and crew were killed, as well as 11 people on the ground, but we learned that we had to deal with the survivors, the survivors of the victims here in the United States. And dealing with them on a daily basis really caused me to think differently about the way we dealt with victims, particularly of these horrific terrorist crimes and the fact that they need to have information provided to them, something that now is part of U.S. law.

Michael Medaris: Yeah, as I understand it, Dick, that many years after this event and the successful investigation and conviction at trial, you still have a relationship with many of the remaining families and victims of this particular event.

Director Richard Marquise: I do. I still get e-mails from them, I see them on occasion. Last year, I was asked to speak at a 20th anniversary memorial service. Actually, in 2008 I spoke to the family victims meeting up at Syracuse University because they lost 35 students from that university. But I still stay in touch with them by e-mail and occasionally visit them, some at their homes and we've met others for dinner.

Michael Medaris: It's just a remarkable effort and it's all to your credit and to the FBI's credit [that] they were able to close that case.

I was wondering if you could talk to us a little bit, bringing it more closer to home now, is can you describe the current threat environment from extreme, as most domestic and foreign, that state and local law enforcement in America are currently facing?

Director Richard Marquise: Well clearly it's going to probably be a state or local law enforcement officer that is going to encounter terrorists before anybody in the federal government and often before a crime actually occurs. We've seen recently, here in 2010, the arrests of the Hutaree Group [called the Hutaree Militia] up in Michigan before they could carry out any of their crimes. But just about 6 weeks ago there was a shooting, a double shooting of two police officers in West Memphis, Arkansas, by some people having some possible right-wing affiliations, a father and son shot and killed, two police officers who had no idea that this was coming. So certainly there is a threat from domestic terrorists.

And it continues because of things like people that are very unhappy with the way the government is headed, unemployment, [the] recent election, various policies of the government, immigration, there are any number of issues that are hot buttons for people who may want to carry out an attack against the government because they feel the government is either doing too much or too little in certain areas.

Michael Medaris: And probably the most visible and immediately available sign of that government are police officers.

Director Richard Marquise: Yes, there's 850,000 state and local police officers in the United States and they do, by/ with uniform, represent the government and very often they're targets of particularly domestic terrorists.

Michael Medaris: Now Dick, I know that you're a huge proponent of the role that state and local law enforcement has in preventing an act of terror. Can you walk me through why you believe that state and local have such a critical role in terms of the behaviors and activities that generally seem to always take place in a run up to an act of terror?

Director Richard Marquise: Yes, certainly. But let me just mention before I go into that, that we also have an international terrorist threat here in the United States. In 2009, there were nearly 11,000 international terrorist attacks that took place all over the globe. And in 2009, we had several successful attacks. One of them being the shooting of an Army recruiter in Little Rock, Arkansas, in June 2010 [2009], as well as the shooting at Fort Hood in November of 2010 [2009] by a U.S. Army Major who killed 13 people. So certainly, we do have significant threat in the United States. There have been a number of successes: several men who were recently arrested in New Jersey as they were on their way to Somalia to commit attacks against American troops there. The attack at Times Square by Faisal Shahzad that took place. But we've also had some others that could have been very significant if had they been successful, including the Christmas day attempted bombing of the Delta Airline flight near Detroit. There have been some successes, but the threat remains there.

But as you said, there are a number of indicators that would lead up to an attack. For law enforcement to see these things, it could possibly prevent some of them from occurring.

Michael Medaris: I was wondering if you could tell us what some of those are. And these behaviors and activities would be consistent between both foreign and domestic terrorist groups, is that correct?

Director Richard Marquise: Yes. Terrorists, whether they be inspired from/for domestic reasons—people who are home-grown from here—or have particular inspiration from abroad, whether they be U.S. citizens or foreign persons here in the United States, all have to do the same thing. They have to select the target. And, by doing that, they may have to go do surveillance or collect intelligence about that target. And while they're doing that, people are going to see their behaviors and see some of the things that they do.

Once they have determined the target, and they've conducted the necessary surveillance, they have to begin to acquire materials. Whether they be explosives to build a bomb, whether it be ammonium nitrate or liquids that are, most, readily available at beauty supply shops, they have to start to collect these materials so that they can carry out their attack. They may have to rent vehicles. They may have to train someone else because maybe they're not going to carry out those attacks. They may rehearse their attacks. And in each one of these steps prior to them actually undertaking the attack, is the possibility that someone, whether it be law enforcement, a citizen, a knowledgeable citizen hopefully, will see these behaviors, see that they're unusual, see that they're strange and have the ability to stop them before it happens.

Michael Medaris: And I know that you talk a lot about this in the SLATT Program, and I was wondering if you could tell us about what the SLATT Program covers, who is it available to, and how often it's offered.

Director Richard Marquise: The SLATT—State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training—Program [www.slatt.org] was actually created after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and the primary focus initially was on domestic terrorism because a lot of people believed that we had an unaddressed threat here. We had had very few international terrorist attacks in the United States up to the Oklahoma City bombing. After the attacks of September 11th, there was a recognition in government that we faced a global threat, we faced a threat from abroad, and certainly the statistics bear that out when you look at any number of cases that have taken place here in the United States from the Fort Hood attacks to the attempted attacks at Fort Dix a couple of years ago by people who were living here in the United States but took their inspiration from abroad. They want to attack us here in the homeland.

There was a belief at the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the U.S. Justice Department that state and local law enforcement need to be key players in the role to combat terrorism. There's no longer just a federal requirement. The FBI is the lead agency for preventing and investigating terrorist attacks in the United States, but there's recognition that 12 or 13,000 FBI agents could not replicate what 850,000 state and local law enforcement [officers] bring to the table. As a result, SLATT was expanded after September the 11th to include discussion of international terrorism and the threat that we face here in the United States. And if we just look at the cases that were prevented in 2009, and there were some significant cases, to include the arrests of Daniel Boyd in North Carolina, also the Najibullah Zazi case that was brought down in late 2009 because of joint efforts between the JTTF [Joint Terrorism Task Force (FBI-NYPD JTTF)] in New York as well as the New York City Police Department, [which] prevented a major attack to the New York City Subway System.

So SLATT was created to provide information, not just training, but to provide them materials as well as a web site they can go to get online training, to get additional materials so that police officers can understand the problem, see the indicators, and get an appreciation for what it is that we face as a nation to prevent these types of attacks both domestic

and international. A web site, slatt.org, was created for law enforcement to sign up on a secure web site to get information about the terrorist threat, to get access to resources, [and] to get access to our training. We have provided training to hundreds of thousands of police officers around the United States, either through direct training or through train the trainer, where we trained police officers to go back to their departments and bring some of the same materials to them. Since the events of September the 11th, and I think we've had training in almost all of the 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Michael Medaris: And again, that's slatt.org—to sign up for courses, to learn more information—and it is a secure web site. And when folks do apply for admission to the site, their bona fides have to be checked by their department.

How does the Communities Against Terror [CAT] Program fit in with your overall philosophy of terror prevention?

Director Richard Marquise: Well certainly, Communities Against Terrorism is a recognition that the terrorist threat is not just against the federal government, it's not just against state and local government and using the police; it's against all Americans. And we believe that all Americans should be involved in looking at the indicators of terrorism and assisting the joint terrorism task forces [and] state and local law enforcement with preventing these attacks. So SLATT has begun, in conjunction with BJA, to create fliers called Communities Against Terrorism. And right now, there are about a dozen of them that are distributed to various facilities.

And for one example, we have a flier that is distributed to storage facilities, and there is a reason for that because we talk about the fact that terrorists have to store components that can be used to build an explosive. Timothy McVeigh stored explosives at a storage facility. The terrorists at the first World Trade Center bombing used a storage facility to store some of their materials and mix them. We have a Communities Against Terrorism brochure related to shopping malls because several years ago there were a couple of men in the greater Chicago area—and they were going to blow up the Rosevale Mall by using explosives they were going to put in garbage cans. And this investigation was going to them so they could recognize people that are doing surveillance and casing things.

There are also Communities Against Terrorism fliers involving rental cars and trucks. Timothy McVeigh rented a truck. The bombers of the first World Trade Center, the first time, rented their van that went into the basement of the World Trade Center. There's also fliers related to bulk fuel distributors people who can, where they can go get racing fuel and fuel in great quantities. Dive and boat shops have a Communities Against Terrorism flier because there was some intelligence several years ago that terrorists were going to go down below the surface of bridges and plant explosives at the base of bridges to bring them down. There are also fliers pertaining to financial institutions, construction sites, farm supply stores, general aviation airports, hobby shops, hotels and motels, home improvement stores, and stores that sell peroxide-based explosives because we've seen a great increase in the number of explosives being made with liquids that can be easily purchased from beauty supply shops.

Michael Medaris: So basically you and some other experts deconstructed a number of acts of terror and developed the CAT program based on your assessment of all the activities and behaviors that took place in the run up to that act of terror.

Director Richard Marquise: Yes, every act of terrorism is preceded by indicators that, if someone had recognized them, they could have—if they shared the information with someone—perhaps that could have been prevented. And it may be something as simple as someone going in and buying large quantities of hydrogen peroxide at a beauty supply shop. Why are they doing that? This is significant; why are people buying those things? Because prevention is certainly worth much more than solving an act of terrorism. We want to make sure these things never happen. There have been some great successes in the United States, particularly since the events of 9/11, but the reality is we have to continue to collect the information, to share the information, to analyze what we have, to share the information not just with each other—with state and local law enforcement and with other federal agencies—but to share it with the general public at large because someone's going to recognize these things. And the CAT Program I think is significant in terms of giving information to people so they can say, "Well that doesn't mean anything to me, but someone that has looked at these attacks said this is significant, [so] maybe I should share that with someone" and that could possibly prevent an act of terror.

Michael Medaris: Well, you have the last word, what would it be?

Director Richard Marquise: I am a big believer in sharing. I know that we have not always done a great job, but if you look and see—every single terrorist event, including the attempted attack against Delta Airlines Christmas Day 2009, other terrorist attacks—there was information that someone had. And we are a big country. We're still trying to figure out a good way, a good concept, to take all the information—sometimes I think there's too much information—but I would tell people, citizens, state and local law enforcement officers, other federal agents, if something looks suspicious to you, you're the expert on that scene at that particular moment. This isn't quite right, take that next step. Share the information. Give it to somebody who can take that, compare it with something else that may already be known and allow law enforcement to prevent the next act of terrorism, because we can't afford to have 9/11 happen again. None of us want that to happen. We want to be sure that we prevent that. And the reality is there are people in the world that don't like us, don't like Americans, don't like our way of life. Some of them are domestic terrorists. Some of them are inspiration from overseas. But their goals are the same as to disrupt our country, to kill people, and disrupt our organizations and our financial infrastructure. We have to be sure that doesn't happen.

Michael Medaris: And that's the last word from Richard Marquise. This is Michael Medaris from BJA saying thank you for listening and stay on the Justice Today web site where this podcast and other podcasts in the future will be publicized. Thank you.

Director Richard Marquise: Thank you.

Closing: Thank you for taking the time to join us for this conversation. If you found the discussion interesting, we encourage you to visit the BJA web site for more innovative ideas and best practices at www.ojp.gov/BJA. From all of us here at BJA, thank you for tuning in to today's podcast. We hope you will join us again for another edition of BJA's Justice Podcast Series.

CONTACT US

Bureau of Justice Assistance
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street NW.
Washington, DC 20531
Phone: 202-616-6500
Toll-free: 1-866-859-2687
E-mail: AskBJA@usdoj.gov
Web site: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA