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CRISIS INTERVENTION SECTION

NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CRISIS INTERVENTION SECTION

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*“You never know,
when you get there,
where it will take you.”*

*Former FBI Special
Supervisory Agent and
hostage negotiator
Dwayne Fuselier*

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Dear Readers,

Core to a negotiation strategy is the “what-if”: the team’s best guess about what will happen next and how to plan for it. But it’s the ones they never thought of that provide some of the transforming moments in the history of crisis negotiation.

In this special Law Enforcement issue, we look at three what-if’s from FBI incidents and how negotiators strategized around them. Included is a rare look at notes from one negotiator’s diary.

Some of the moments are almost surreal. Two occurred on a spring day in Montana, a little more than a decade ago, after Edwin Clark and the Freemen declared themselves a sovereign people and seceded from the United States. Dwayne Fuselier was there. A retired FBI negotiator involved in every major FBI hostage incident but one, Fuselier tells us about it in our special feature “The Rest of the Story.”

The third moment takes place during a negotiation with the last two members of the Texas Seven, when a Colorado Springs PD negotiator used his active listening skills to turn the standoff into a peaceful surrender.

We also were pleased to obtain an interview with Det. Lt. James Maher, Commanding Officer of the Suffolk County (NY) Hostage Negotiation Team, who, in addition to fulltime HNT duties, trains school officials and other educators in the dynamics of an emerging new profile in school violence, the Classroom Avenger. In this issue, we learn some of the indicators to watch for, and some of the guidelines for hostage negotiators who work in this fragile, explosive scenario.

We hope you will find these articles useful and informative.

All the best,

Lynne Kinnucan
Editor
Crisis Intervention News

When Dwayne Fuselier arrived at the Freeman standoff in Montana, Waco was still burning in his memory. “Some of the best feelings, and some of the most devastating, depressing times I’ve had in the past 21 years have been as a crisis negotiator,” he recalls. Waco was one of the worst. The Freeman standoff was about to become one of the best.



The Freeman standoff was an 81-day negotiation with a man wanted on federal felony charges (and 25 other people, including elderly men, women, and children, inside with him). The man was Edwin Clark; negotiating with him were Supervisory Special Agents Gary Noesner, Steve Romano and Fuselier. “It had been a long negotiation,” recalls Fuselier. “We tried everything to get Clark to come out. We even asked Senator Charlie Duke to try to get through to him. But they got mad and kicked him out, and then we basically just had no contact at all for two weeks. By this time we realized they needed a break, and we just let them alone for awhile.”

The negotiators who had been there more than three weeks were rotated back home, and Fuselier returned to the Denver FBI Office. Ten days later, Edwin Clark asked to talk again.

“He wanted two things: to know if ‘that guy Dwayne was still there’ and if we would arrest him if he came out to talk. We said yes, Dwayne would be here, and no, we wouldn’t arrest him. We thought, ‘What have we got to lose?’ ” They decided to meet Clark in a motor home that had been placed next to the Blackfoot church.

“It was the right decision, but it led to one of those unreal moments that just stay with you. We started walking up the steps into the trailer with Clark in the lead. As Clark stepped up into the trailer room he looked around and saw a 9mm, just lying right out there on a table. He stared at it for a second, and then said, ‘Somebody would probably like to take that out.’ Without missing a beat I said, ‘Yeah, we probably would,’ and handed it to Gary, who took it right back down the steps and out of the RV. ‘I appreciate you pointing that out to us’ I told Clark. ‘It shows we can work things out together.’ Clark responded with a smile, ‘My pleasure,’ and we all sat down to talk.

“We had a long talk in that trailer. What Clark asked us there was another one of the things that made this incident so memorable. He wanted us to fly him to Billings to talk to the leader of the Freeman group [Leroy Schweitzer, jailed at the beginning of the standoff].

“We decided to recommend Clark’s request to the on-scene commander in Jordan. But on the drive over there we started laughing at what we were about to do. We were going to recommend to the OSC that we take one of the principles in the standoff — a man wanted on federal felony charges — put him in an FBI plane, fly him to a jail in Billings, let him meet with the leader of the Freeman group, put him back on the plane, and drive him back to the ranch. Then we were going to shake his hand and say ‘See you tomorrow.’

“I could just imagine that call to the Director of the FBI. I was glad it was Gary doing the convincing.

“It sounds crazy, but we believed it would work. Clark’s request signaled us that something had changed. His uncle was ill, he needed medical attention, and Clark was worried. His first commitment was to his family now. He was looking for an honorable way to bring them all out.”

Clark did use the visit to convince Schweitzer that they should all come out, and the siege was ready to end peacefully. Then came another what-if.

When the Freemen, as a declared sovereign people, refused to pay the mortgages on their farms, their lands went up on a Sheriff's sale. They were bought by a consortium, one of whose members was Edwin's nephew, Dean Clark. It would be Dean's job to farm the land when planting time came.

In the talks leading up to the moment of surrender, the negotiators had agreed — at Edwin Clark's request — that no one would do anything on the property until he left. The what-if that they hadn't planned for was planting season.

As the siege dragged on and there was less and less time to get the crops in, Dean Clark told the Sheriff he had to plant now. The Sheriff, thinking he had the OK from the team, told him to go ahead. Dean started plowing, a furious Edwin Clark came storming out of the house, the negotiators thought he was going to punch someone out, and for a moment the whole scene went on red alert.

When the mix-up was explained to Clark's satisfaction, the carefully choreographed surrender ritual began. "We wanted him to be the last one out," says Fuselier, "not have him come out first and then everyone balk at it. So we asked him to send them out two by two, with him coming out at the end.

"And then at last there he was, this guy with whom we'd had this very intense personal dialogue for the last four or five weeks. He walked out, stopped and looked back over what was had been his farm, knowing he was never going to go back there. And he turned to us and said, 'You know boys, one day I'd like to sit down with a six-pack and go over what we done right and what we done wrong here.' Noesner and I said yes.

"You never know, when you get there, where it will take you. There are the times when we've gone home saying, 'We did a pretty good job today, something that was worthwhile, and maybe we saved some lives.' Then there are the other times, and the difference still brings tears to my eyes.

"About noon, April '93, I was sitting in the negotiation room at Waco with Clint van Zandt. We were watching CNN when we saw fire begin to come out two windows of the compound. After about 10 minutes, as the fire engulfed the building, I said to Clint, 'These people aren't going to come out.' I'll never forget that moment. They had 19 children in there, and remembering the instant when I knew they weren't coming out, I still get knots in my stomach. It's the worst feeling in law enforcement."



Edwin Clark with Noesner and Fuselier as Clark's father and uncle walk into custody: "One day I'd like us to get together over a beer and talk about what we done right and what we done wrong on both sides."

Fuselier has a well-researched and personally lived understanding of the place of feelings in crisis negotiation, and their pivotal and potentially dangerous role. As negotiators work to develop a trusting relationship while attending minute-by-minute to underlying strategy, emotions can become so intense that even physical safeguards have to be put into place. The secondary negotiator's, or coach's, job is to protect the primary negotiator (PN) during this time that is so high intensity for everyone involved. This means everything from filtering outside communications and messages to literally hanging onto the PN's belt. Feelings run deep between the subject and the negotiator and they affect the PN as much as they do the subject. In more than one instance a primary negotiator, lulled by the rapport and bond created, has moved from behind cover to talk face-to-face with the subject. The secondary negotiator literally hangs onto his belt to hold him back.

Yet there are those times when going outside the guidelines brings about the resolution. By his own account, Fuselier has broken from the guidelines many times. But he steadies and hones his instinct by constant training and a commitment to the guidelines. And in every case he made sure he had the rationale. "I teach these fundamentals because they're solid and because they're right in most of the situations we handle. Don't deviate from the guidelines too quickly. They were developed from hundreds and hundreds of guidelines, taken from cases done by local enforcement. I tell my students to not think zebras: most of the time when you see symptoms, it's a horse."

Briefly, the guidelines say that before you make a change, you should be able to state:

1. What is the guideline? What is the reason for deviating?
2. What are the risks involved?
3. Why do you believe this deviation will help in this situation (not "we're stuck")?
4. How will you monitor and assess whether the deviation is helping or hindering progress: are you going to go out and smoke a cigarette while Aunt Sally, your third-party intermediary, is on the phone?
5. If it goes sideways, how will you get things back on track?

If you've covered these five points, says Fuselier, you have logical, valid, empirical reasons for deviating. They're the solid ground from which you take the leap.

The very quality that makes someone a good negotiator is also what makes it so hard to be one. It's hard to get the what-if's and if-only's out of your head; it's hard to not take it all home with you. Says Fuselier, "Emotions and the way they affect you personally are a big part of negotiations. One of the most terrible, the most sinking feelings is being in the car, on the phone to a subject and boom! The gun goes off. It's 2:30 in the morning and there's no one there to say, 'We did the best we could.'"

"It comes down to this," says Fuselier. "We're all responsible for our own behavior. There will be times when things go the way you don't want them to and you can beat yourself to death. But you did the best you could. That's all you can do."

The terrible and wonderful times, says Fuselier, brought something else just as important. "I knew the inside story of every major hostage negotiation in the U.S. Being at these scenes, or being interviewed about them, gave me the ability to stand in front of any experienced cops and say, 'I may not know every answer, but I know how it works because I was there.' It has allowed me to be a conduit, to be able to say, 'What we learned may be able to help you: you won't have to make the same mistakes.'"

Five years later, Fuselier was involved with another famous group. The Texas Seven, serving 99 years to life, drove out of their prison one cold December morning in a white prison truck. They held no hostages and wanted nothing other than to escape. They were ready to die rather than go back to prison. After a cat-and-mouse chase brought them to ground, the lead negotiator found that there was something else they wanted and parlayed that information into a successful surrender.

Fuselier's SWAT training gave him an unusual perspective as events unfolded. The following excerpts from his diary take us through the days from capture to surrender, and some of the actual dialogue with the negotiator.

On a Sunday afternoon in January 2001, Fuselier is notified that the Texas Seven may have been spotted in an RV park in Woodland, Colorado. FBI agents check it out and, about midnight, the Denver FBI says that it looks like it is the Texas Seven. With a team of local and federal law enforcement, Fuselier is deployed to Woodland Park.

Sunday, Jan. 21, 2001

At about 5 p.m.

I am notified that there has been a report of the Texas Seven being spotted in Woodland Park.

The Supervisory Senior Resident Agent from the Colorado Springs Resident Agency [branch office], Greg Groves, takes some agents to Woodland Park to see if they can wash out the story. [Typically when such cold calls come in, basic investigation indicates that the people in question are not the fugitives.]

At about midnight, Greg Groves calls the Special Agent in Charge of the Denver FBI and says that they can't wash them out [meaning there is likelihood that these are the real guys].

The Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Mark Mershon, SWAT Team, with coordinator Ron Knight, and Negotiation team, with me, deploy to Woodland Park.

Monday, Jan 22, 2001

1 a.m. or so.

The FBI SAC meets with sheriff of Teller County, Chief of Woodland Park PD, U.S. Marshall's Service, and FBI assumes "lead agency" status: this will be a combined operation, with the FBI in charge.

Ron Knight starts coordinating the development of tactical plans for SWAT teams from FBI, Teller County (TCSO), and El Paso County (EPCSO).

I start having the FBI's negotiation team contact the Texas Command Post and having them fax us all background information on the Seven, including history of violence, charges, family history, etc.

2 a.m.

Covert surveillance is set up on the RV identified by the RV park owners, Wade Holder and his wife. The Holders are big fans of America's Most Wanted, which is how they identified the Seven.

2-5 a.m.

Tactical plans including emergency assault, mobile plan, and call out and negotiation are in place.

8 a.m.

All teams in position.

[The men had said they were itinerant pastors, doing Biblical work and ministry. The Holders held Bible study classes and one of the Seven would routinely come to these.] The team asks when the next Bible study class is and is Brother Bob always there. The answer is yes. The plan is to place the FBI SWAT team

in the RV park office and have them wait to see if Larry Harper, known to the Holders as "Brother Jim," will come down for a cup of coffee, Bible study and discussion, as he usually does.

10:30 a.m.

Harper is a no show.

Discussions between FBI on scene command (OSC); they decide to allow Wade Holder to go to the Brothers' RV and simply ask if "Brother Jim" is going to join them for Bible discussion.

EPCSO has the perimeter, FBI team is in the office, and TCSO has a "mobile assault" responsibility [for following any cars that leave].

10:45 a.m.

Holder comes back and says Harper and others are in the RV, but will be "leaving soon."

11 a.m.

Observer/snipers report a jeep with three or more men leaving the RV.

11:05 a.m.

OSC determines it is too risky to try to stop the car in the RV park, so TCSO is told to follow the car and make the stop when they are away from the RV park.

11:10 a.m.

TCSO Swat follows the jeep to a Safeway Grocery store, but still too crowded. Follows them to a convenience store, where they stop for gas. The TCSO Swat team arrests the three men in the car.

At 11:15, three of the men were taken into custody; at 11:16 Highway 24 next to the RV park was closed to traffic. Halprin and Harper, still in the RV, were alerted to the chase when they heard the radio traffic on a police scanner in their RV. At 11:30 FBI SWAT took over inner perimeter around the RV, with the intention of negotiating the remaining men out. They attempted to contact the two men in the RV by bullhorn, but got no response. A rifle

was spotted in the RV window. At 12:41 Randy Halprin came out, saying that only Larry Harper was left inside, and that he had an M-16, handguns and ammunition.

After failed attempts to establish verbal contact, the team heard a sound like gunshot from the RV, but no other sound. Minutes later a clear gunshot was heard, along with a sound like a moan from inside the RV. Movement was reported near the windows. After 30 minutes of silence, agents entered the RV and found Harper dead from two self-inflicted gunshot wounds to the chest, and a goodbye letter to his family lying next to him.

The remaining two suspects, Murphy and Newbury, had left the day before and were not expected back. At 4 p.m., an all-points bulletin was issued for two armed and dangerous men in a brown van. A command post was set up in Colorado Springs and the SWAT and negotiation teams were sent home to rest.

5:50 p.m.

Desk clerk from a nearby Holiday Inn calls the hotline at the Command Post and says yesterday she checked in someone who looked like Newbury.

9:00 p.m.

CSPD SWAT and detectives approach room 426. SWAT knocks on door, no answer. Detectives call room, no answer. Desk clerk confirms TV is on in room. News media helicopters now flying overhead.

Call from room 426 to desk clerk, asking if someone was trying to reach them.

CSPD detective takes call, explains to caller that they are following up a lead on possible Texas Seven fugitives, and that the room is surrounded. Detective still has no confirmation that these are the two. Patrick Murphy says "Well, Detective, you found us." Says he heard the "police" helicopter, and knew they were located.

Murphy and Newbury then said they would only talk to the FBI, not local police, and hung up the phone. Back in Denver, Fuselier and the negotiation team were notified and began the 75-minute drive back to Colorado Springs.

10:20 p.m.

FBI supervisor Dan Bradley arrives on scene, along with CSPD negotiator Matt Harrell. Bradley gets on phone and says, "This is Dan Bradley, a supervisor with the FBI; I am going to let you talk to Matt Harrell," and puts Matt on the phone. He does not identify Matt as CSPD, so subjects think they are talking to the FBI.

10:30 p.m.

I arrive, along with other FBI negotiators, and stick my head in the negotiation room. Matt (whom I did not recognize) says "Hi, Dwayne." I ask where we have met and he says "I've taken three of your negotiation courses."

I get briefed, along with FBI SAC Mershon, and CSPD Deputy Chief Lou Velez (now Chief of CSPD). I am told by SAC that CSPD will keep the perimeter with their SWAT team, but that I am to "assume control" of the negotiations.

After briefing, I tell SAC and Deputy Chief that Matt seems to have them calmed down, and negotiations are appropriate. I recommend that Matt remain as the primary, and that FBI negotiator Mark Holstlaw, who is familiar with Odinism and Asatru religious beliefs, act as the secondary negotiator. (We knew that Newbury had left writings in prison espousing Odinist/Asatru religious ideas, from an ancient Norse religion.) I will be the overall negotiation team coordinator.

We move in with Matt; all are set up with earphones. Matt continues as primary. Both subjects talk on the phone.

They say that they know they will die in prison, so they might as well "come out hot" as die there.

This became the key for the negotiators, who kept them talking about prison life. The men complained about unfair sentences, unfair parole tactics, and left no doubt about how they felt: My life is gone already anyway. I'll tell you point blank: if I go back to the penitentiary it's gone, or if I die here it's gone. If I have to, I will make my statement known." Hearing this, Fuselier made two points to Harrell: (1) the theme

should be to keep them talking about their gripes about the Texas prison system, and (2) the negotiation strategy should be based on giving them, especially Murphy, a future:

- “...you can still tell your story.”
- “...you’ll be able to write more in the future.”
- “...people will know who you are.”
- “...they will want to hear what you have to say.”
- “...we gotta think about the future.”
- “...you’ve got a story to tell.”
- “...your story is important to those still in prison.”

As we support their statements that they had “a story to tell that is important to all the other people in their situation (prison),” they begin to focus on a live TV interview. I go to the OSC and recommend that we allow each of them 5 minutes on local TV, after which they “promise” to come out.

Rationale

Positive aspects of negotiation so far:

- Hadn’t killed since Christmas Eve;
- Both talking;
- Could hear into room while on phone;
- Not out of control – sounded rational;
- No outrageous demands;
- Settled on 5 minute interviews;
- Convinced them they had future;
- They had no hostages.

Negative aspects:

- Had already killed a police officer;
- Murphy admitted to capital murder during negotiations;
- They were calm/calculated;
- Already made up their minds?
- Repeatedly mentioned their firepower; we weren’t sure what they had in there;
- Verbalized willingness to use violence;
- They knew they would die;
- Were convinced they would get the death penalty or rot away in prison;
- Said they were prepared to shoot it out;

- Suicide had already been a factor;
- We started with nothing to bargain with and still have nothing they want.

Murphy and Newbury had mentioned wanting to be interviewed on TV by either “the local guy on Channel 11” or Geraldo Rivera. That’s an easy decision for us; we lead them to agree to Eric Singer. They finally state that if allowed the time on TV they will come out peacefully. We bring Eric Singer in; ask if he is willing to assist. He checks with his producer, who says OK.

We bring Eric back and have a frank discussion about do’s and don’ts. Will be 5-minute limit for each, and certain types of questions are off limits as too inflammatory (e.g., why did you kill Officer Aubrey Hawkins? Do you know you are facing the death penalty for that?) Singer agrees.

Rationale and guidelines for allowing statements:

- Live broadcast at 3:30 a.m. on local channel;
- No demand for taping or rebroadcast;
- 5-minute time frame;
- Discussion and agreement regarding what they were going to say and use of profanity;
- Alternative was high-risk assault of room; also consider safety of the SWAT officers outside;
- If they reneged on the agreement, we are in no worse position than we are now;
- The media request is ALL we have that they want. Absent that we have nothing to “negotiate.”

2:30 a.m.

After trying to get them to agree to do the interview/statements after they are in custody, which they don’t agree to, each is allowed to make a statement to Eric Singer, on live TV (so they could see it happen, and know that we didn’t trick them) for 5 minutes. After the statements, they are told to come out without shirts on. We try to get them to come out one at a time; they insist on coming out together, holding hands (to signify solidarity).

Fuselier’s diary closes with three words: “Arrest is uneventful.”

“Brooks, I like you. Go home.”

One of the shooters, to a friend in the parking lot at Columbine, moments before the shooter entered the school.



Columbine signaled the emergence of a new profile in school violence, dangerous and elusive as a virus. Nick-named the “Classroom Avenger” by the FBI’s Critical Incident Response

Group, the person who fits the profile is about 15 years old, male, from a small town or rural blue collar area, and generally perceived as a “geek” or a “nerd,” with a history of being taunted and bullied.

Before Columbine, violent incidents tended to occur suddenly and spontaneously, in an inner city school, and in a struggle over drugs, money or gang membership. The incidents perpetrated by the classroom avenger have a far different look: meticulously planned over a long period of time, the killing is not about drugs or money, but about self-esteem, humiliation, and revenge.

Statistics compiled by the U.S. Secret Service, Department of Education and the FBI Critical Incident Response Group show that most incidents that are stopped are done so by means other than law enforcement. For this reason, Detective Lieutenant James Maher, Commanding Officer of the Suffolk County Hostage Negotiation Team, works with school officials and other educators to set in place the best prevention strategy now known: information and training so thorough that together, police and community may have a chance to interrupt the plan.

Here are some of the indicators to which they ask educators to be alert:

- The school shooter will have experienced rejections by social groups, or a love interest;
- He has experienced censure by “unfair” school authorities or his parents;

- He feels continually frustrated in achieving what he needs, and believes that he has failed at everything;
- He appears to withdraw; loses his sense of humor;
- His appearance changes; he may dress differently;
- Web site writings or drawings may appear with graphic indications of violence;
- There may be leakages, and talk of planning.

The issue of “leakage” is paramount in attempting to prevent school violence, says Maher. School administrators, safety officers and other staff should be constantly alert to what they hear from students, keep communication open with them and notify police when and if appropriate. But there is an important caveat: Maher cautions educators to keep context in mind. Telling a close friend to “Stay away from school tomorrow because there will be shooting,” or “I Plan to get her and some others too,” is different from, “If I don’t get a date I’ll kill myself,” or “If he doesn’t give me an A on the test, I’ll kill him.” It’s a high-wire act: maintaining a balanced look at the context, yet knowing when to move.

In their efforts to create a shared and evolving knowledge base to determine if a student is a threat – and how to proceed from there – Maher and his team hold training and brainstorming sessions about how to get information on a student about whom there is concern. They ask educators to be open to tips and to “leaks” from other parties who may be involved. They emphasize the value of having a central point of contact in the school to help coordinate with law enforcement. Maher also tells them about another disturbing piece: two of the offenders in the Wisconsin, Toronto and Pennsylvania incidents had previously played an Internet video game in which players re-enact the violence from the Columbine incident. While no one knows the extent to which this may affect the violence, says Maher, “Internet video games that simulate school violence are not helpful in preventing it.”

Once the tragedy has taken place, however, it presents a scenario of terrible fragility for the negotiators. Lt. Jack Cambria, Commanding Officer of the NYPD Hostage Negotiation Team, notes that law enforcement officers have a long and successful history in

urban negotiations, including databases of what worked and what didn't. But in the new school violence cases, other approaches have to be invented. Asking open-ended questions, for instance, a traditional method of building rapport, may give the shooter the opportunity to demand something, and should be avoided.

While new approaches are being developed, no one knows yet what will work and what will not. Says Cambria, "I don't know what the answers are. Sometimes you go with your gut in negotiations."

In developing new strategies that fit the new profile, Maher emphasizes the following points:

- Be very, very cautious;
- Keep him isolated; contain & evaluate;
- Reassure him that he won't be hurt, that we have to work together to help anyone who is hurt. We need his help to fix the problem;
- Knowing that you are dealing with young man who has failed at everything, and has rarely been praised, let him know that you will praise him for anything he does to help;
- Reassure him that things will get better and that you will protect him;
- Minimize his past behavior;
- Make no demands, give no orders, avoid open-ended questions, set no deadlines.

He tells negotiators to remember that they are dealing with a young man with poor social skills who is planning to act out — or has already acted out — a revenge fantasy, is unsure of what to do, and is only now, in the midst of the chaos, learning consequences of his actions. This is a predatory act of aggression that is selective, calculated and premeditated. He has not thought about anything except getting even. The post-attack has not been planned: the shooter will discover the consequences of the attack after it has taken place. In almost every case, he wants to kill and be killed. He does not intend to survive the massacre.

Maher has researched and shares information from many sources. The Offender Profile compiled by the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education

includes information that underscores the importance of the keys that Maher relates to educators:

- Acts are rarely sudden or impulsive;
- Others know about it;
- The suspect's prior behavior shows that he has needed help;
- He has trouble coping with loss and failure;
- He may have felt persecuted;
- He has access to weapons and has used them before;
- Others are involved in some way.

These indicators present the high-stakes challenge of knowing what the context is and when to act. It is a frustrating jigsaw whose pieces merge and dissolve into new shapes even as they are fitted into place.

And now there is a frightening new element in school violence: outsiders coming into the school. The new category of offender is not affiliated with the school. He is not a "classroom avenger", says Maher, but a male "who maximizes his notoriety and aberrant behavior by attacking that which we value most, our children, in an environment in which they are usually believed to be safe."

Another new factor is that the killings are occurring frequently over a short period of time. In addition, the killer is growing more sophisticated. The predator has listened to and watched the details of previous classroom killings on TV and on the Internet, where in-detail coverage of the incidents creates an unintentional but deadly after-effect. Says Maher, "Tomorrow's hostage taker is watching today's hostages, and future incidents will be more planned, more deadly, and will involve more than one subject."

Like Maher, Cambria emphasizes the importance of context as well as thorough investigation of the information. To underscore the importance of in-depth investigation, he cites an example of an on-location training exercise: a school hostage siege in which educators are walked through a scenario that has all the real elements in place: tactical, emergency services and SWAT. The dialogue, which takes place over several hours, centers on an irate father upset over accu-

sations his daughter has made that her teacher molesting her. He enters the classroom carrying a weapon. As further information is revealed, we learn that the daughter was failing and made up the story because her father was “getting on her case.” In this scenario, previous data on crisis negotiation techniques were useful. The negotiators focused on the emotions driving the case, talked the father down, and resolved the crisis.

But Cambria says that there is little corporate memory to draw on in a post-911, suicide bomber, terrorist era. One of the issues facing negotiators in the three back-to-back school incidents in Colorado, Toronto and Pennsylvania, for instance, was that under “normal” circumstances police would not tolerate a felony taking place in police presence: they would intervene immediately. Yet in Colorado, where the subject was sexually abusing the female students, the police were forced into an impossible decision: negotiate while this was going on and hope to save the girls’ lives, or intervene and risk their deaths. In this case they put their tactical team together and made a quick entry; as they breached, the man shot and killed one girl and then himself. Can we tolerate a rape taking place in our presence, Cambria asks? Can we get in quicker than he can pull the gun? Do we want to be the trigger squeeze? Do we have to rethink our approaches? We do the math. We make our best guess. In some cases, that’s all we have.

Every negotiator plans for the what-ifs. Sometimes the back-up plans work. And sometimes there are no good choices. But shared knowledge is a powerful preventive; it is this that drives Maher and his team to connect with schools and communities to minimize the opportunity for the tragedies to happen at all.

After Words

As Det. Lt. Maher grapples with this tragedy from one end, researchers like Evelin Lindner and Maria Volpe are grappling with it from the other. Lindner’s work has gained worldwide attention; her recent book, Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict, offers anecdotes and analysis such as the following;

“Early childhood neglect and humiliation may lead people to perpetrate acts of humiliation inadvertently,

through mere affective blindness. Bruce D. Perry relates a gruesome story that testifies to the severity of the potential effects of childhood humiliation. It is a story of affective blindness:

A 15-year-old boy sees some fancy sneakers he wants. Another child is wearing them – so he pulls a gun and demands them. The younger child, at gunpoint, takes off his shoes and surrenders them. The fifteen year old puts the gun to the child’s head, smiles and pulls the trigger.

When he is arrested, the officers are chilled by his apparent lack of remorse. Asked whether, if he could turn back the clock, would he do anything differently, he thinks and replies, “I would have cleaned my shoes.”

His bloody shoes led to his arrest. He exhibits regret for being caught, an intellectual, cognitive response. But remorse – an affect – is absent. He feels no connection to the pain of his victim. Neglected and humiliated by his primary caretakers when he was young, this fifteen-year-old murderer is, literally, emotionally retarded. The part of his brain which would have allowed him to feel connected to other human beings – empathy – did not develop. He has affective blindness. Just as the retarded child lacks the capacity to understand abstract cognitive concepts, this young murderer lacks the capacity to be connected to other human beings in a healthy way. Experience, or rather lack of critical experiences, resulted in this affective blindness – this emotional retardation.”

From Maria Volpe, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Dispute Resolution Program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice - CUNY:

Conflict resolvers are asked again and again how to prevent violence and help those who have violated others to not do so again. There are no magic formulas or easy solutions, and “just saying no to violence” is too simplistic and non-instructive. It also does not provide a reminder of what could be done.

But in instances where individuals experience violence connected with conflicts, conflict resolvers have many tools to help counter ineffective ways of managing differences. One of these is encouraging parties to “make talk work” — mentally restructuring their ways

of thinking so that they will focus on a positive outcome, rather than just trying to avoid a negative one.

People often resort to whatever methods they are accustomed to using or seeing. Illustrating with a hand to fist, a student once told me, “Where I come from we punch lights out.” Contrast this image with the visual imagery of someone thinking, “I have to ‘make talk work.’”

Conflict resolvers’ natural work is creating those structures and then making opportunities for parties to strengthen this image, to learn the skills captured in this simple slogan. Repetition, reminders, coaching, reinforcement and practice make it possible for ordinary people in everyday situations to build up a skill set that reduces their likelihood of using violent ways of interacting with others.

As essential as these skills are to making talk work, rarely are they deliberately taught in the schools or at home. There is tremendous potential for the work conflict resolvers to create a new worldview.

Dr. Volpe initiated the **Make Talk Work**[®] project, packets of 12 bookmarks with ideas and simple phrases that can be used by people in a variety of everyday conflict situations. For more on the **Make Talk Work**[®] and the Bookmarks Projects, funded by a grant from the Judicial, Arbitration and Mediation Services (JAMS) Foundation, go to http://johnjay.jjay.cuny.edu/dispute/resources_bookmarks.asp.

Resources from the Centers for Disease Control

Research from the Centers for Disease Control has found that most school-associated violent deaths occur during transition times such as the start or end of the school day, or during the lunch period, and that school-associated homicides are more likely to occur at the start of each semester. Here are other resources with more about what they know.

CDC’s “Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention. A source book for Community Action.” Best Practices is the first of its kind to look at the effectiveness of specific violence prevention practices in four key areas: parents and families; home visiting; social and conflict resolution skills; and mentoring. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm>

“Blueprints for Violence Prevention” which identifies 11 violence prevention and intervention programs that meet a strict scientific standard of program effectiveness. The 11 model programs, called “Blueprints,” have been effective in reducing adolescent violent crime, aggression, delinquency, and substance abuse <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html>

The first Surgeon General’s report on youth violence in the United States summarizes an extensive body of research. It clarifies trends in youth violence, identifies risk factors, and reviews the effectiveness of specific prevention strategies. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/>

“Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools.”

This guide offers research-based practices designed to assist school communities identify these warning signs early and develop prevention, intervention, and crisis response plans. <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/gtss.html>

Resource Corner

Want to listen to a hostage negotiation in progress? Go to <http://www.hostagenegotiation.com/Audio.asp>.

Look for a review of Tom Strentz’ new book, [Psychological Aspects of Crisis Negotiation](#) in our next issue.

YOU ARE THERE

November 2006, Jacksonville, Florida

Police say the victim, a hospital pharmacist, was shot three times and took one fatal blow in the head. Investigators say Brenda Coney was the shooter and there were several witnesses. “She took the gun and went ‘bam, bam.’ She shot the lady twice. Everybody started running. Then she went out of the pharmacy door, went back in and shot the lady again,” said one witness.

The incident started inside the pharmacy at Shands when the suspect, Coney, asked the victim why she couldn’t come to the front of the line. “I gotta get back in line?” she asked. ‘Yeah, you gotta get back in line.’ And then they started arguing,” said another witness.

Police arrested Coney in the parking lot without incident and say she admitted to shooting the victim. Hospital officials say they are looking at new security measures now. Thousands of people walk through the doors at Shands daily and putting up bulletproof glass barriers would make communication difficult, according to hospital security. Normally the hospital has about 100 security officers on rotation and Jacksonville Sheriff’s officers are there 24 hours a day. But many of them are concentrated near the emergency room. The victim was pregnant and leaves a husband and two small children. It is estimated that approximately 20 others directly witnessed the shooting.

You are there when this happens. What will you do? How will you follow up?