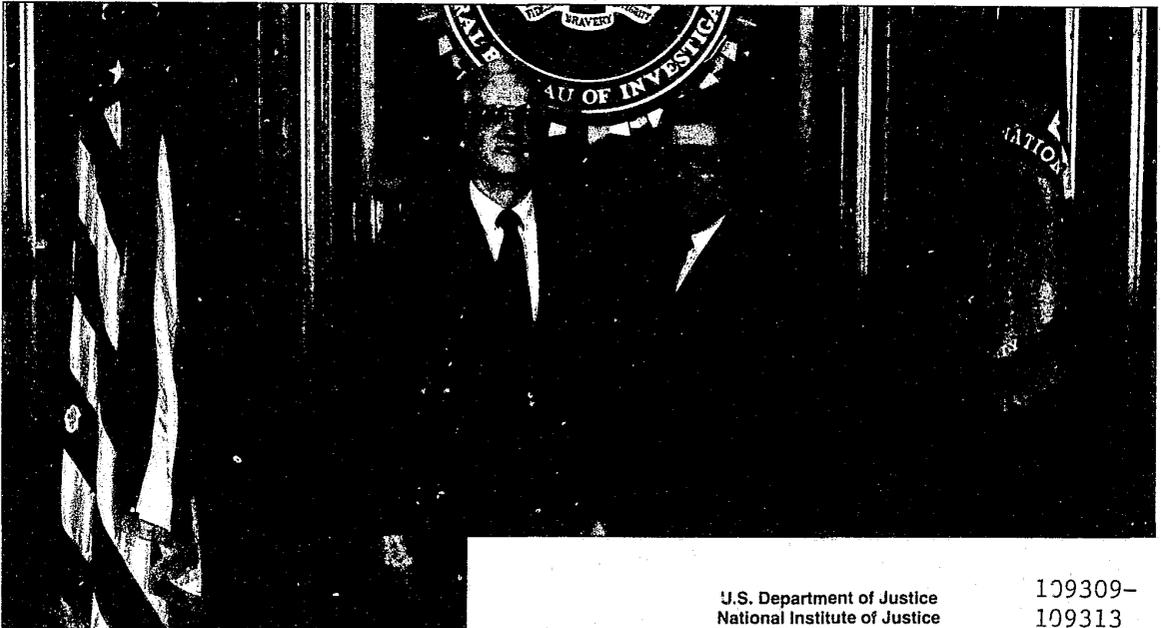


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... the New FBI ...

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Law Enforcement Bulletin

United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, DC 20535

William S. Sessions, Director

The Attorney General has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department of Justice. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget through June 6, 1988.

Published by the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs,
Mark A. Zettler, Assistant Director

Editor—Thomas J. Deakin
Assistant Editor—Kathryn E. Sulewski
Art Director—John E. Ott
Production Manager/Reprints—Mark A. Zettler

The Cover:

Director William S. Sessions meets Julien C. Gallet, the new President of the FBI National Academy Associates.

The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (ISSN-0014-5688) is published monthly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 10th and Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20535. Second-Class postage paid at Washington, DC. Postmaster: Send address changes to Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, Washington, DC 20535.

ISSN 0014-5688

USPS 383-310

109313

Crisis Management A Command Post Perspective

"Crisis management has always been one of the most complex issues facing law enforcement...."

By
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It is 2:00 a.m. and an extortion payoff is about to go down. The radios in the command post are crackling with bursts of information when suddenly you hear, "We have shots fired, one down, we have another one down. . . ." What do you do?

Crisis management has always been one of the most complex issues facing law enforcement and frequently one of the most misunderstood. As a result, it is mismanaged far too often. Very few who chose the law enforcement profession came in to ride a desk. We wanted to be where the action is, to be involved. As law enforcement managers or executives, our place is generally in the command post, usually for the duration of the crisis.

We have all seen it happen hundreds of times at nearly every level of law enforcement. As a major case begins to develop, one of the first things we tend to do is to inundate the area or

the crime scene with manpower. How many times have we heard, "Get everybody on the street!"

Proper planning must begin prior to the emergency, whatever it may be. Without a plan, personnel are kept on the street, frequently conducting uncoordinated investigations or even duplicating investigations. After a 24-hour period, the result is exhausted personnel and no fresh reserves. Rather than planning, some law enforcement executives and managers insist on being at the scene to "see for themselves" and provide "hands on" direction. In today's highly technological world, there is less reason for this to occur as often as it has in the past. However, proximity of the command post to the crisis site is desirable because it provides the on-scene commander immediate access to key personnel and facilitates communication.

Several years ago, a massive ar-

rest situation dealing with motorcycle gangs and involving scores of police and FBI Agents was carried out without incident, while command officials remained in the command post in the event policy and command decisions were needed. This was possible because closed-circuit television cameras had been installed during the night prior to the raids. When the raids began, the television signals were microwaved back to the command post. This enabled command personnel to have access to communication equipment while viewing what was developing on the scene. Because of previous planning, adequate communication was available to diverse law enforcement groups, on-scene commanders were available for consultation with headquarters, and ranking individuals were available for informed decisionmaking.

At times, it may be necessary for a command official to leave the command



SAC Walton

post and actually be on the scene, although these are the exceptions rather than the rule. It is the talented law enforcement executive who can discern the difference and act accordingly.

In prolonged cases involving such crimes as kidnapping, extortion, or aircraft hijacking, the place for command personnel is in the command post. If there is an injury to either a law enforcement personnel or defendant, barring extraordinary circumstances, the command officials should go to the scene to "plant the flag" of their agencies and exhibit concern for their personnel. The urge to leave the command post and thereby create a vacuum in the decisionmaking process should be resisted, and whenever possible, replaced by the tenacity that prolonged crisis management requires.

With the advent of concurrent drug jurisdiction in January 1982, transactional drug situations were an area fraught with potential danger for the FBI. Our experience over the years with fugitives, kidnappings, extortion situations, and the like provided the FBI with an experience base, but it was an experience base that had not dealt with the subculture of narcotics traffickers. As a result, planning became graphically more important than merely reacting to situations as they developed. One method used by a number of FBI offices is a formalized documented plan, prepared by the line supervisor and submitted for review to the command personnel before it is placed into effect. While it may seem to some that this is just another method of generating additional paper, it is not. It forces the line supervisor and the personnel who are going to carry out the plan to look for

potential eventualities that, without prior planning, they would merely react to.

The following is an example of a transactional order, as applied to drug matters. However, similar plans can be formulated for nearly any arrest or search situation involving potential danger or which are manpower intensive. Obviously, there are other situations which would require more detailed and complex information, and this order is meant to be a handy sample, not a comprehensive model.

Transactional Order

In order to insure the proper coverage of the transactional situations whereby an undercover Agent/police officer is purchasing narcotics or dangerous drugs, the following policy will apply:

- 1) The line supervisor or the person designated by him/her is responsible for planning, execution, and followup of any transactional situation, absent the presence of anyone higher in the chain of command.
- 2) If the anticipated transaction involves a large sum of money, narcotics, or is potentially dangerous, it is the responsibility of the supervisor or designee to discuss and provide their immediate command-level supervisor with a formally documented operational plan.
- 3) The operational plan will consist of either a five-paragraph order, a basic assignment chart, or both, depending on the complexity of the operation.

“Generally speaking, the smaller the command post in terms of personnel, the better the command post.”

Upon completion of the assignment chart and plan, it will become a permanent part of the investigative file.

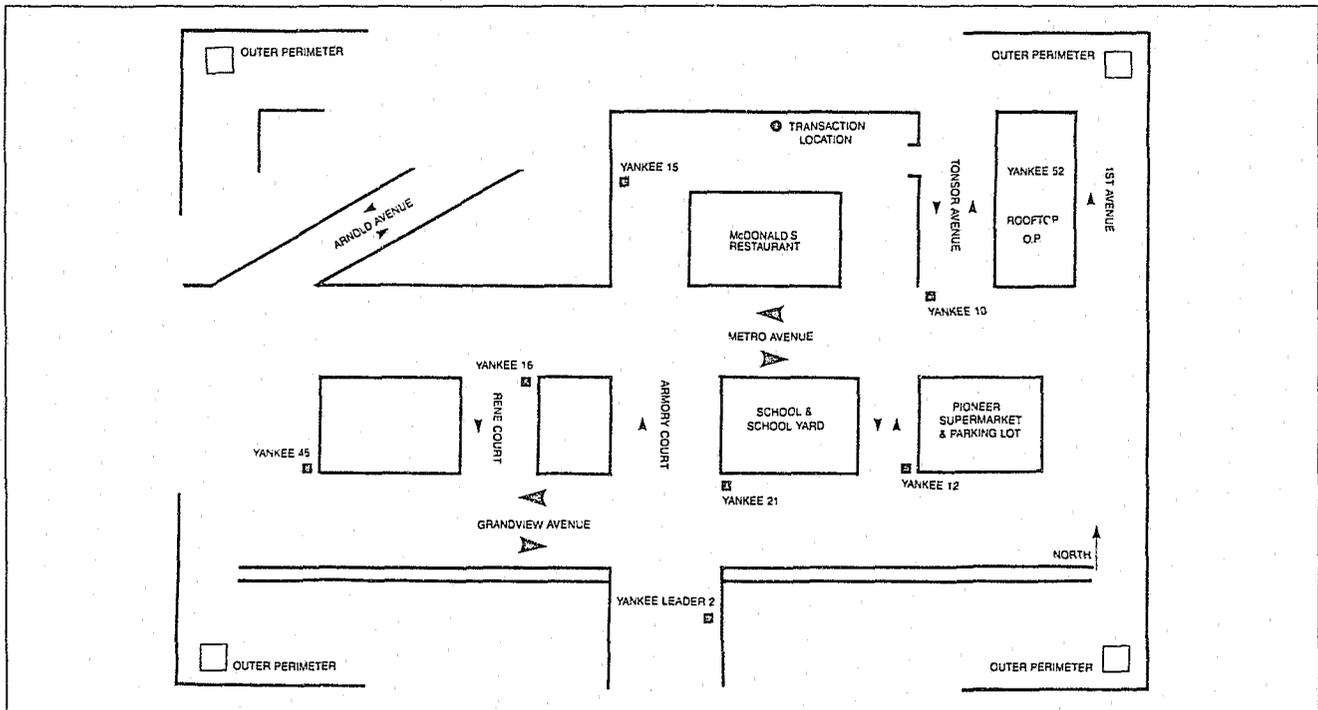
- 4) The line supervisor or designee will confer during the planning stage with his/her counterparts in charge of support units, i.e., surveillance, technical components, or officials of other law enforcement agencies involved in the operation. The

line supervisor will insure that all personnel covering the transaction are familiar with the assignments and what their role will be if contingency situations arise. In addition, either during the briefing or at the staging area, all participants will assemble to insure they know the identity, clothing, and the role of each of the participants. THERE SHOULD BE NO SURPRISES!

- 5) With the exception of undercover Agent/police officer and their immediate support, all personnel involved in the transactional coverage will have “POLICE” or “FBI” raid jackets and they will be worn prior to the arrests or raids in the public area. This will serve to identify the participants to off-duty police and other law enforcement personnel who may be in the area and not involved

Assignment Sheet					
TEAM DESIGNATION CALL SIGNS	TEAM MEMBERS	VEHICLE	SPECIAL EQUIPMENT	ASSIGNMENT	RADIO CHANNELS
Yankee Leader 2	ASAC John Johnson	Car YL2 White '87 Buick	Car Phone (Open Line to CP)	Overall Control of Operation	A-5
Yankee 21	Supervisor Jones Squad 1 Supervisor Smith Special Ops.	Car C-10-1 Blue '84 Olds Two Door	Shotgun	Outside Perimeter	A-5 PVT
Yankee 15	SA Wilson Sgt. Lewis, DPD	C-10-5 White '86 Ford LTD	Shotgun	Escort UCA to Buy Area and Provide Immediate Backup	A-5 PVT
Yankee 16	SA Gardner SA Hermann	C-10-2 Tan Rental, '86 Buick, Ohio Plates	Recorder for T-4 Transmissions Hand Held Radio For OPS Channel	Tape Conversation Between UCA and Subject	T-4 on B-4 A-5 PVT
Yankee 45	SA Green, DEA	DEA 9-14 '84 Blue/Tan Ford T-Bird	Field Test Kits	Obtain Evidence From UCA. Primary Arrest Team in Event of Crisis	A-5
Yankee 12	Det. Williams, DPD Det. Wood, DPD	'85 Black Mercury '86 Cougar Rental	Ram Pry Bar	Liaison with Local Precinct. Secondary Arrest Team	A-5
Yankee 10	SA Bisk	C-2-1 '86 Red Cadillac Rental		1. Fisure of Subject's Home 2. Fisure to Site	A-5
Yankee 52	SA Harper SA Peters (Tech Agent)	C-6-2 '87 Green Chevy Van	Video Equipment	Video Tape Buy Contact Point with Special OPS Plane/CP	A-5 C-7

Schematic of Transactional Site



in the transaction. The line supervisor will insure similar attire is available for support units, if any are on the scene.

An example of the five-paragraph order as it applies to a simple narcotics transaction situation is as follows:

—SITUATION: Brief background of case and anticipated transaction. Complete description of undercover operatives, to include clothing.

—MISSION OR OBJECTIVE: What will be done. Statement that undercover operatives will offer no resistance. Affirmative statement as to whether undercover operatives will identify themselves upon completion of trans-

action, depending on the scenario formulated prior to execution of the plan.

—EXECUTION: General overall scenario followed by specific assignments for all personnel involved. Contingency arrest teams should also be identified and placed.

—ADMINISTRATIVE: Chain of command, case Agent, or police officer who has case assigned, file number of case. Identity and telephone number of assistant U.S. attorney, district attorney. Telephone numbers for contingency options, local precinct telephone numbers, location, and directions to nearest hospital.

—RADIO COMMUNICATIONS TO BE USED: Call signals, channels, voice privacy, or codes to be used.

Naturally, in a simple buy-bust situation, as shown in the schematic of the transactional site, the command post would actually be the automobile of the on-scene commander, Yankee Leader 2, with communication capability to personnel on the scene and at the office. When a command post is activated because of a prolonged or major undertaking, it becomes the nerve center for crisis management. The first decision the law enforcement executive should make is WHO will be assigned to the

“...the law enforcement executive [should] have confidence in his or her personnel. . . . They should be told what their mission is, not how to perform it.”

actual command post and define their respective roles. All too often this decision is not clearly articulated, and as a result, the number of people in the command post grows as the crisis gains momentum. Generally speaking, the smaller the command post in terms of operational personnel, the better the command post.

Who should be present in the command post? The ranking law enforcement executive responsible for the overall matter at hand, barring extraordinary circumstances, should be in the command post. Assisting him should be a surveillance coordinator, a technical coordinator, and an Agent or police officer tasked with maintaining a contemporaneous log of the instructions given, the radio traffic, and investigative developments. If the particular crisis has the potential of developing into a prolonged matter, such as a kidnapping or extortion, the number two ranking law enforcement executive should be held in reserve. In the event the crisis extends beyond 24 hours, he or she can step in, thereby eliminating a decision-making vacuum and exhausted leadership.

If the particular crisis is being worked jointly with another agency or police department, as is frequently the case, the ranking police officer or at least an officer empowered by his department to speak and make decisions on behalf of the department should be in the command post and be available for consultation.

Ideally, a command post should have a separate switchboard with direct inward dial capability into the command post, bypassing the standard office switchboard or private branch executive (PBX). In addition, a minimum of

two Agents or police officers should be in the command post for the purpose of placing and fielding incoming telephone calls at the direction of the on-scene commander.

Equally important to have present in the command post is the principal legal adviser, who could handle legal questions as they arise. Is it necessary to obtain a third-party search warrant prior to entry? Do we have enough probable cause for a search warrant? As these questions arise on the street, they should be promptly answered. As mentioned previously, care must be taken to prevent too many people from being in the operational command post. SWAT commanders, hostage negotiators, media representatives should be in close proximity to the command post and the on-scene commander, but not actually in the operations center, as a general rule.

Law enforcement has increasingly become more and more specialized during the past several years. We now have legitimate experts in a number of different fields—technical, support, surveillance, etc. It is important for the law enforcement executive to have confidence in his or her personnel and recognize the services they perform. They should be told what their mission is, not how to perform it. Many managers believe it is their responsibility to make surveillance assignments and physically place their resources because they are in charge. All too often, the law enforcement executive has little real knowledge or expertise in the area in which he is making decisions. Clearly, the plans and tactics to be used by these technical assets should be presented to the on-scene commander and ultimately approved by that com-

mander. However, if you have a SWAT team or a technical coordinator, tell them what you want done, not how to do it.

Thought should also be given at the very beginning of the crisis for backup communication capability. In an emergency, the radios almost unfailingly malfunction. Equally frustrating is undisciplined radio traffic. Backup communication capability can be as simple as an open line from a pay telephone at the scene to the command post, a second radio functioning on a different frequency, or as sophisticated as real time monitoring from the command post with closed-circuit television that is microwaved from the arrest or search site to the command post. This technique is also an excellent source of material for the critique that should occur after every command post exercise.

How important is this critique? A critique insures that you and your forces are not destined to keep making the same mistakes repeatedly. Each command post crisis management exercise is fundamentally the same—the issues and principals remain constant. The inability, for example, of not being able to communicate because some of your resources are in the subway, and it has always been that way, is not reason enough to accept that situation. Something can be done about almost any eventuality, if the proper persons are tasked with finding the answer. But before anything occurs in the command post, the proper place to start is with a plan. This will prevent you from finding yourself in a position where you have to react to events, rather than making the events occur.

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