

My Experience at the OKC Bombing Recovery Effort

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April 19, 1995 is a day of infamy in the hearts of many American people, myself included. It was on this day I began to question the 'official' story regarding major events.

Little more than six months before this day I had been hired onto the Oklahoma City Fire Department. I was young and was elated I had a good job to support my young family.

The morning of the 19th, I had woke to a beautiful spring morning. The sun was shining, and the weather was picturesque perfect. It was my last day off on a four day off cycle that our fire department used. I was supposed to go to downtown OKC to run a few errands, but that I decided could wait. I had grass to cut and trees to trim.

Despite living roughly 9 ½ miles from the Alfred P. Murrah building, at 9:02 am I was walking thru the field behind my home and was shaken to my knees when the first explosion went off. As soon as I hit the ground, I heard the second smaller blast and then the final and smallest blast. Startled and bewildered as to what the ear-piercing noise was I'd heard, I noticed cars on the busy street near my home were stopped. A few people got out and looked around to see what the commotion was. I went back to trimming trees thinking the Air Force base a few miles south was deploying training bombs again. Note the official story claims there was only one explosion, despite everyone reporting two to three explosions.

A few minutes later family tore into my driveway honking to get my attention. They yelled, "There was a huge explosion downtown!" We ran inside and turned on the television and I saw images that will forever be etched in my brain.

I tried unsuccessfully to help at the scene, but much to my chagrin the scene was overloaded with hundreds of volunteers. They told me to go home and rest for my shift the next day.

The next day, I was at the station ready for shift a little before 6 am, knowing I would have to go assist in the recovery effort. Our district chief came by and told us to secure the station and grounds, because there had been threats of terrorist attacks to fire and police stations. We had to check the station's generator, lock every door, and lock the security gate going into the parking lot. We were to do a walk around the grounds every two hours with a radio in hand to report any suspicious activity.

After a long quiet morning and afternoon at the station, my company finally got dispatched to the scene, for our appointed slot. When I mean quiet, the streets were almost dead. It was a ghost town for a beautiful Thursday.

Before getting dispatched one of my coworkers brought photos he'd had developed of what he'd seen the day before. One of the things of note was a photo of a truck axle in front of the Regency Towers Apartments, due West of the Murrah Building. He told me that a federal agent guarding the axle had informed him the axle belonged to the Ryder truck that had been used to blow up the building. While none of us understood the significance of this gem photograph at the time, it resonates loudly in the case against the official story told of the bombing. Upon arrival to the scene, I saw the same axle, with a young ATF agent guarding it as well.

As of April 20th, the day I was allowed on scene, the official story told to us was that a group of two to four Middle Eastern terrorists had taken the building down with internally planted bombs and possibly a car bomb as distraction. Every local media channel repeated this story, and even had artists sketches of what the

suspects looked like. The now official Ryder truck version of the story didn't surface until a few days later, after Timothy McVeigh had been picked up.

What struck me as odd about the official story change was twofold. First why were they looking for Muslim terrorists, complete with detailed sketches, if that wasn't the real story? Where did that come from? But even more bizarre was the above listed axle. The media went into great detail about how they tracked the axle to a Ryder truck that was from Kansas. They claimed to have found a serial number on the axle, which was issued by the axle manufacturer. Then they tracked that number to what plant the truck was made, which lead them to the truck. The entire process took them a few days of phone work and manual record checking. This was when the Internet was in its infancy and few records were online. Yet 2 hours after the bomb went off a Federal agent was telling fireman that was the axle from a Ryder truck, used to blow up the building. This detail didn't stick out in my mind until a few months after the bombing. When it did, it was the final straw that caused me to doubt the official story.

Once we had been assigned, which took roughly two hours to get an assignment; I was assigned as the medical liaison to the medical chief of the department. My job was to decontaminate other firefighters from possible biological hazards (blood or body parts) and or from bomb related contaminates as they left the building.

After a few hours of inspecting firefighters, I was sent to establish a second decontamination station on the far side (SE corner) of the building, to handle the large number of personnel leaving the building. What I was to be witness to would become my first red flag.

I knew the area well, having spent time walking the streets of Oklahoma City sightseeing prior to this event. I'd even been in the Murrah building a few times, because the Social Security offices were there. Experience had taught me the fastest way to my new assignment was not by way of the streets, but was to go

through the parking garage under the building. I reasoned, the garage was well lit and the streets were dark and full of rubble, debris and a massive spaghetti like tangle of power cords.

Being that the garage was fairly intact and undamaged, it served as a port of entry to the recovery effort from the beginning. However that evening, federal agents had put up a barricade to direct rescue personnel into the building and to keep access into the far reaches of the garage off limits.

I went to the barricade and looked for the agent I had seen there just a few minutes before. Seeing no one I went under the barricade and proceeded through the garage at a prompt pace.

About halfway through the garage two things happened quickly. First as I went scuffling through, I noticed to my left a few unmarked black SUV's, one of which had its back doors open. Behind it were several men, some in black SWAT team gear, and others in casual clothes and windbreakers on. They didn't take notice of me, but I saw they were loading what appeared to be bands of plastic C4 type explosives connected to black straps. Some of the men were undoing wires, others were loading boxes in the SUV and two were un-strapping explosives from a large concrete support column for the building. I had heard from numerous fireman I had detoxed that they had seen unexploded explosives in the building. But as they were found federal agents removed them.

While this first event in the garage didn't bother me, as it fit with the story I had been told about the bombing, the second event didn't fit. Upon noticing the federal agents I slowed my pace down considerably and stared more than I probably should have. In this brief moment I attracted the attention of a U.S. Marshall, or at least this is what his jacket said; that was on the far side of the SUV's.

This agent, a tall heavy built man in his late 40's, sternly told me to halt and to make no sudden moves. He promptly got between me and the other agents and asked what I was doing, where I was going, who I was and other similar questions. Remember I was in full firefighting bunker gear, with my helmet on and my ID tag on my front pocket. I wasn't out of place. But he informed me that I was trespassing a federal crime scene and that I could be held in jail without question if I didn't cooperate. I informed him of my purpose and who my commanding officer was. He barked that none of that mattered. Finally in an attempt to trump him, I let it be known my commander reported directly to the on scene commander, and that OCFD had incident command of the scene established. To this the agent informed me with a smile, that the fire department just thought they were in charge.

Finally I guess the agent felt satisfied with my young naïve answers and he let me continue through. However he warned me, that if I so much as looked to the right or to the left or back he would arrest me. I was to walk straight and keep my eyes looking forward at all times. As I walked out of the garage, which was less than 150 feet, he spoke in a firm voice and told me to keep walking, until I had exited the building.

Never once was I told my life was in danger of bombs they were defusing exploding. Nor was there a presence of a bomb squad truck, bomb suits, a bomb defusal robot, or anything else one would typically associate with bomb defusing. Never did the barricades on either side of the garage at its exits have a sign informing firefighters to keep back for bomb defusing efforts. Lastly, my friends and fellow firefighters were in the main building, which was connected to the north of the garage. Never were they pulled out and warned that bomb defusing was taking place. These were a few of the thoughts going through my young mind as I sat for 6 hours manning the new (and unused) decontamination station that night.

From my new assignment, I was able to see into the garage partially. I could see part of a black SUV and occasionally caught movement for the next few hours, until the SUV's left around midnight. I was furious at the time that these federal agents had the gall to defuse bombs and not warn a soul about the possible dangers associated with what they were doing.

After I was relieved of my post, I asked my commanding officer if he knew of the defusing effort. He informed me he was too busy to keep his finger on what the federal agents were doing. After this evening, the barricades were taken away and my words fell on deaf ears every time I mentioned what I saw to my commanding officers.

My next shift at the bombing was two days later. I didn't have any earth shattering events happen, but I did notice several other pieces to the puzzle that would later make better sense.

On this shift I spent considerable time in front of the Murrah building and noticed a federal agent spray painting orange circles on a building directly to the North. I asked a police officer at a refreshment tent what the agent was doing. He told me the Ryder truck was full of long wood screws that had blown everywhere. Soon after, I had a chance to get closer to the building and in fact saw hundreds of 3" black wood screws stuck as if thrown by ninjas into the building.

I have never heard anyone else speak about the screws, even in conspiracy related books about the bombing. In my mind the significance of the screws is that the building in question was directly to the North of where the Ryder truck blew up. In the official testimony of the federal government, the North side and bottom of the rider truck supposedly contained a few cubic yards of sand to direct the blast towards the Murrah building. Had the sand been in place, the screws would not have been projected to the North, nor would there have been extensive damage to all buildings and cars in that area. Additionally there would not have been a massive crater where the Ryder truck had sat.

The other weird thing noticed was late that night. Out front of the Murrah Building was a huge crater from the Ryder truck bomb. They had been clearing debris from the crater and filling it with gravel during this day. My crew and I were watching the heavy equipment and we saw a semi-truck hauling gravel roll over. It was rear dump trailer, and he had just got his trailer to its highest point and was driving forward slowly to dump. He hit a soft spot in the crater and the trailer listed to the right and fell over. We rushed over to check on the driver, he was okay, just shaken up.

Why this is important, is local police protested the filling of this crater. There was evidence to be gathered from it, but it was covered up by gravel. The Fed's hurried this so quickly they didn't do what we commonly do in construction, compact the fill. Sure it was gravel, but even then it goes in incremental lifts and is compacted to remove air pockets. Instead they were dumping gravel in there as quickly as possible, which is why the truck rolled over.

My third shift at the bombing site was four days after my second. It was on this day I spent my entire shift in what was dubbed 'The Pit'. The pit was a large hole in the center of the building that extended from the basement to the third and fourth floors. Inside the pit, the support columns in this area were gone, yet the support columns between the pit and the front of the building were not only intact, but unblemished. Talk among fireman was that a bomb had gone off in the pit. From what I observed, I concur.

The official story is the Ryder truck blew up outside the building, and the concussion waves destroyed the face of the building and columns. Yet these waves slow down quickly in air. While the supposed waves wiped out some front columns, it selectively skipped other columns. The columns in the pit were so far from the location of the Ryder truck, scientists have calculated the concussion waves would be no stronger than a small gust of air. Yet they were gone.

My crew's mission was to help facilitate the effort to dig for bodies. We were told to report any explosives we found. That shift I found no explosives, however I did have the unfortunate experience of assisting in finding the youngest bombing victim, found where the daycare had once been.

One odd thing was the heavy presence of Federal agents. They had been on the ground since day one gathering up paperwork that was blowing around the site. In the Pit they were monitoring our digging efforts. They kept telling us if we found any paperwork that we felt was important to hand it over, without reading the contents. How would we know if it was important if we hadn't read it?

I spent a few more partial and full shifts at the bombing site. I noticed nothing else of significance in the building. However I did notice the overwhelming pressure from federal agents to make sure we weren't photographing any part of the building. I had two friends who had their cameras stripped of their film, one of which had his camera taken away when he protested.

The last and final oddity about the bombing was the debriefing meetings. I went just twice, because thankfully my crew leader hated debriefing and had an uncanny knack for slipping out of such meetings. In the first meeting we were told we didn't see explosives, a truck bomb brought down the building and evil Middle Eastern terrorists were responsible (Note, this Ryder truck story didn't officially surface until days into the bombing. This debriefing was the 2nd day). In my second debriefing a few days later, the story was the same other than we were told that McVeigh and others had brought down the building and that right-wing Christian extremists were to blame. Whenever anyone questioned the new narrative, they were told they were suffering from PTSD and their mind was playing tricks on them. The bombs many saw were dismissed as figments of our imagination.

I'm not alone in questioning the official story. Every anniversary OKC radio and television channels will interview people that doubt the story. News reporters,

Mayors, city council members, Legislators, Governors, bomb experts, forensic scientists, and many more across Oklahoma have pleaded with the Federal government to reopen the investigation. They want closure and to know the official story is accurate. Family members who lost loved ones want to have the memory honored with truth, and not a cover-up.

May the memory of the 169 people who lost their lives that day always be remembered. I pray the full story of what happened comes out some day.

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