

WE REMEMBER

OKC BOMBING: Twenty Years Later

by Charles Shepherd

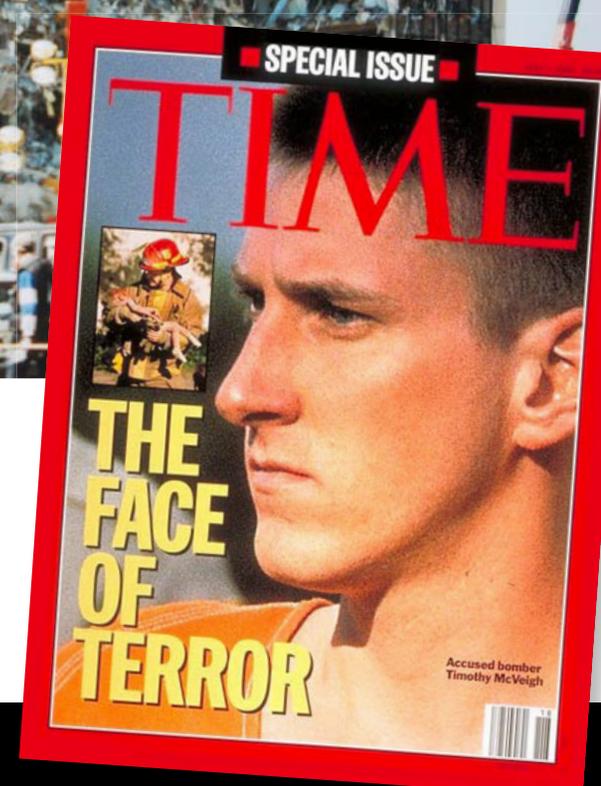
You have seen the headlines, *"Terror in the Heartland: The Forerunner to 9-1-1,"* *"America's Worst Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh,"* and many more. These headlines will be remembered just as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's quote on Pearl Harbor, *"A date which will live on in infamy"* is remembered.

It was a typical cool spring morning in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. The sun was shining and a light breeze was blowing through the trees. People were watching the weather (would tree pollen or ragweed affect their allergies today), attending meetings and dropping children off at daycare or school. It was just your regular spring day until 9:02 a.m., when Oklahoma City and the world changed forever.

At the corner of Fifth and Robinson, a yellow Ryder truck was parked in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. People walked by it, cars passed by it and people saw it out of their office windows. One yellow Ryder rental truck parked at a meter. **NO ONE GAVE IT MUCH THOUGHT!!** However at 9:02 a.m., all thoughts were on the truck after the smoke and dust cleared.



Read the stories of those who remembered and survived that day 20 years ago.



HEARTLAND TERROR:

The DOC Story

The staff of the Oklahoma Criminal Justice Resource Center and the Truth in Sentencing Commission will not soon forget the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER DESTROYED BY MURRAH BOMB BLAST

Our office was located on the third floor in the Journal Record Building, directly across the street north of the federal building. Four employees -- Fran Ferarri, Melissa McLawhorn, Anetta Howard, and Michael Connelly -- and intern Michelle Williams were in the building when the bomb exploded. The remaining staff -- Michael Parsons, Paul O'Connell, Cindy Brown, Bill Huntington, and five interns -- were not at the office due to medical appointments or meetings being attended elsewhere.

When the explosion occurred, windows on the south side of the Journal Record Building shattered. Fran, who sat directly in front of a large window sustained multiple facial lacerations, a broken cheekbone, chipped teeth, fractured forearm, numerous cuts that required stitches, and eye damage from the shattered glass. She was taken to St. Anthony's Hospital where

she underwent surgery twice before being released on April 23. She is recovering at home now, but still have much healing to do and will undergo reconstructive surgery when her current wounds heal.

Michael Connelly also was injured. He suffered multiple cuts to the head area. His supervisor, Paul O'Connell, found Connelly on the street immediately after the incident and drove him to a hospital in Edmond for treatment. Other staff members in the office at the time of the blast received minor cuts and did not require treatment.

As far as the office goes --it's history! The Journal Record Building was a beautiful structure -- most memorable for its marble stairways and hallways. Looking a the building from the outside, you can see that the roof has blown off and all the windows are broken. As you enter

the building, looking down the hallways, you see crumbled marble walls, shattered glass, ceiling tiles, and blood stains. The stairways are the only part of the building that appear to be intact. The offices themselves are totally trashed. Shattered glass covers the floors of the OCJRC offices, the ceiling no longer exists, interior walls have either collapsed or are leaning, and the offices are in such disarray that most items are not where they were before the blast or cannot be found at all.

Employees were allowed to return to the office to retrieve what could be salvaged. Although glass and fertilizer were found in some of the computer disk drives, the data was all okay. Most of the other office equipment did not fare as well. Chairs were a total loss as glass was embedded in the upholstery. Furniture, office supplies, and paper goods are being removed from the building to be cleaned for reuse.

*More than 250 ODOC employees aided in the search and rescue effort
at the Murrah building - most of them by providing area and perimeter security.*

CENTRAL REGION

Steve Feehan
Zorka Iricanian
John Rollins
Donald Reed
Shirley Tyra
Paul Gibson
Evelyn Caples
Carol Hester
Joe Pribble
Pat Bridgeford
Fred Copeland
Rick Shea
Jan Harkins
Earl Lovins
Terry McDonald
Ron Guthrie
Bill Waddell
Rick Pearman
David Adney
William Robb
Francis Harkema
John Barber
Tracy Beckelheimer
Phillip Clouse
James Dye
Kelly Wilkey
Gary Mock
Robin Jones
Scott Haynes
Mark Sherman
Brian Woods
Byron Mooney
Raymond Rutten
Levy Dorris
Thomas Crotty
Melinda Matthews
Jimmy Brown
David Garner
Ugene Marshall
Steve Hill
Cody DeCamp
Joe Gilleland
Randy Lynch
Matthew Davis
Tim Rickert

Rita McCain
Paul Gibson
Cliff Thomas
Jeff Carter
MaryAnne Secrest
Melanie Dean
Nolanda Lightfoot
Jody Steen
Debbie Dorris
Glenda Lee
June Stephens
Shawn Dobson
William Francis
Raymond Evelyn
Frank Welch
James Smith
Ricky Rice
Frank Griffin
Will Melton
Ronnie Bruner
Kirk VonTungeln
Patti Ormerod
Lori Williamson
David English
Welborne Richmond
Jeffery Flesher
Chris Ayers
Cheryl Blosser
Linda Butler
Stephanie Coldiron
David Craft
David Durant
Joe Ellis
Scott Farrell
Andrea Faudree
John Ford
Tony Georgiades
Jeff Griffin
Christie Hagar
Dana Hammond
Norm Henson
Richard Komele
Chris Lamar
Susan Leonard
Kristi Loper
Tom Lynch

John Martin
Laura Monkres
Gordon Nelson
Jerry Northcutt
Tami Ohm
Patti Parker
Thomas Pogue
Terry Rayner
Jim Sales
Shola Shopeyin
Larry Thomas
Kevin Walsh
Bernard Ward
Susan Warner
Denise Welker
Benito Williamson
Jack Willis
Fred Copeland
William Parks
Carlos Melendez
Tory Stinnett
Demetrious Sunlin
Joe Barchue
Andra Faudree
Kay Johnson
Ron Lock
Nick Massotti
Gordon Nelson
Chris Richards
Walter Simco
Jim Skelton
David Slayton
Ray Aldridge
J.C. Colbert
Mike Dunn
Scott Farrell
Debra Huggard
Dale Kitzman
Roy Phifer
John Roberts
James Rudek
Kristin Tims
Bernard Ward
Eloise Brown
Sonja Ford
James Taff

Robin Berry
Debbie Carpenter
Mary King
Susan Nicholson
Danny Pickett
Robert Puckett
Willie Robinson
Marlin Thomas
Kathy Cooper
Rick Earley
Kathy Flinn
Kay Johnson
Dale Kitzman
Ken Skidmore
Penny Blackmon
Renee Brown
Jody Farthing
Mark Jacobs
Susan Leonard
Tammi Spencer
Valerie Harris-Brown

**NORTHEASTERN
REGION**

Johnny Blevins
M. Case
Tim Edminster
A. Scott
T. Dunn
S. Kluts
K. Titsworth
Larry Webb
Tim Coppick
Les Leach
Gary Anderson
Ken Thomas
Johnny Butler
Mike Lance
R. Vass
B. Fowler
C. Duncan
R. Robison
D. McDaniels
D. Fullbright
C. Rector
R. Been

J. Fowler
DeWayne Jones
Jim Roden
Mike Brown
Phillip Wilson
Robin Hanson
Mike Bolt
Paul Moore
Daniel Owens
Eugene McCloud
Gary McClary
John Ware
Shane Davis
Thaddeus Workman
Charles Reeves
John Ware
Bill Waltrip
Stacia Littledave
Dean Jimison
Anthony Stokes
Virgil Pitts
Todd Brown
Kelly West
Linda Blackburn
Warren Blackburn
William Justice
Johnny Nixon
Straude Lewis
Kevin Newberry

**SOUTHEASTERN
REGION**

T.R. "Huck" Nelson
Mike Taley
David Layton
Eddie Benedict
Jerald Capshaw
Jay Goodwin
James Whiting
Chris Collins
Larry Dunn
Dan Denny
Dale Cantrell
James Martin
Paul Brown
Alelardo Martinez

George Dugan
Ralph Luttrell
Frank Morgan
William Ward
Paul Brown
Ronnie Troxel
Billy Sockey
Otis Burks
Glen Bailey
David Wotham
Claude Jones
Danny Harris
Chris Crouch
Jimmy Minor

WESTERN REGION

Rick Caywood
Ron Judd
Kevin Hodgson
Phil Reuss
Gregg Sheik
Rick Whitten
Ken Girty
Robin Mackie
Ted Durfey
Rex Lasater
Don Frech
Dennis Price
Rodney Hess
Brett Gaff
Steve Ellis
David Kliewer
Robert Woodmore
Todd Wellman
Joe Goodballet
Mike Kitchens
Darrin Secrest
John Lewis
Jimmy Bowers
Dan Smith
Keith Poole
Kenneth Hamilton
Perry Landsale
Reginald Deaton

Where Were You?

April 19, 1995 at 9:02 a.m.



Twenty years later Department of Corrections' employees tell their story of where they were at 9:02 a.m.



Fran Ferrari, former Oklahoma Department of Corrections employee



"I was talking on the phone with the District Attorney from Lincoln County in Stillwater, Oklahoma, the morning the bomb went off. My office was in the Journal Record Building and my window faced the parking spot where Timothy McVeigh left the Ryder truck. I don't remember hearing the blast. All I can remember was being on the floor. I had a lot of pain and I was screaming. I could not see and I heard Mike Connelly calling my name. I kept going in and out of consciousness but I do remember Mike pulling me through a wall that had blown away. I remember Anetta Bullock and some guy named Forrest helping me and carrying me in a chair. I don't know who Forrest was because he did not work in the building and I have not seen or heard anything from him since. I think of him as my guardian angel. They got me out of the building and I still could not see because glass was in my eyes. I had cuts on my face, a fractured cheek bone, a concussion, a severed tendon in my right hand and my thumb was just hanging on. The surgeons did not know if they were going to be able to save my right eye because of all the damage. But through a miracle they did! I had two surgeries the first week and over the next five years I had plastic surgeries, dental work and more eye surgeries. Since April 19, 1995, it has felt like I have been asleep for 10 years. The following years are when I began feeling like I was getting back to normal. I know I would not have made it without the support of the people at the Oklahoma Department of Corrections."

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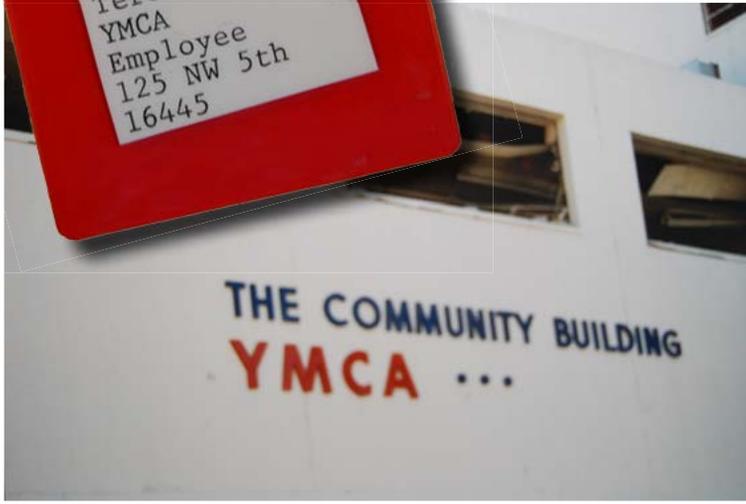


PHOTO COURTESY OF ANETTA BULLOCK

Teresa Patton, Administrative Assistant
Oklahoma Department of Corrections

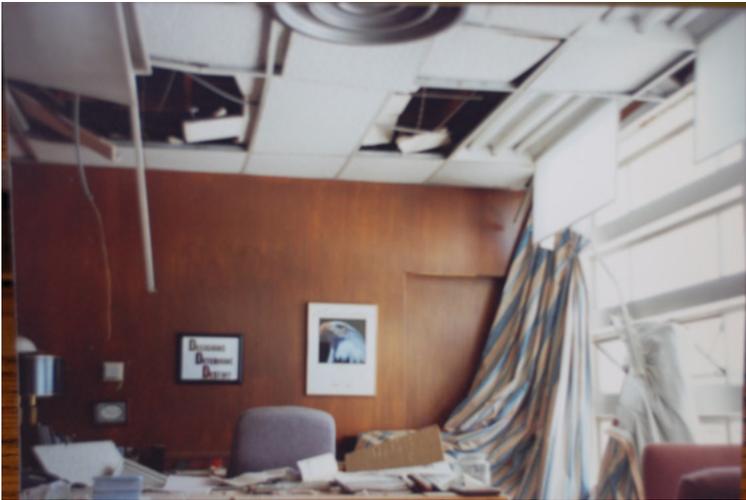


"I was working for the YMCA on April 19, 1995. I was organizing a media binder in my office while talking with my boss when all of a sudden there was this tremendous boom. The windows blew out behind me and I was getting hit by glass and things falling from the ceiling. It seemed to have gone on forever, but in reality it was only a few seconds. At first I thought that our building had blown up because we housed men who were homeless or who had been released from corrections. Every now and then, there would be altercations between residents. The Friday before the bombing one of the residents had been in my office extremely upset with another resident who had taken his clothes. He made a statement that he would not be responsible for his actions if something wasn't done about the situation. That is why I thought it was in my building. When we exited the building, police cars were coming up the street fast and stopping in front of the YMCA. Another reason I thought it was the YMCA that was bombed. I walked to the parking lot and noticed glass had peppered my shoulders. I was standing outside bleeding when someone yelled, 'Oh My God,' and pointed to the Murrah Building. That is when I noticed the devastation! It was like being in a war-torn foreign country."



YMCA building located in downtown Oklahoma City.

“...I was getting hit by glass and things falling from the ceiling. It seemed to go on forever, but in reality it was only a few seconds.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERESA PATTON



William "Butch" Francis, Construction Maintenance Administrator, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

"On April 19, 1995, I was a correctional officer at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center and also the Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) commander. I had just worked the midnight shift and had gone home to get some sleep. I felt a shake in my sleep, but dozed back off. The Mabel Bassett Correctional Center warden called and said, 'Get your team together, they need you downtown!' I had no idea what was happening! I met my team (dressed in full riot gear) at the facility. We still did not know exactly what we were about to do. One thing that stuck in my mind when I saw the devastation (not being in the military, or anything like that) was this must be what a war zone looks like. There was total chaos with people bleeding, running and screaming. My team was ushered to the bomb site and told to secure the surroundings. One of the funny things (it wasn't funny at the time) was a guy from Oklahoma County told me to follow him. While we walked, he talked about a 2nd bomb. I said, 'Well, what do you need us for?' Come to find out, we were dressed identical to the Bomb Squad so they assumed we were with the bomb team. That is when I spoke up and said, 'Hold on, we are with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. We don't do bombs!' From that point forward we were assigned to set and protect a perimeter. We kept people from going in and coming out if they did not have proper identification. It is one of those things that you never forget, like remembering where you were when President Kennedy was assassinated. It will never be forgotten!"



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERESA PATTON

“It is one of those things that you never forget, like remembering where you were when President Kennedy was assassinated. It will never be forgotten!”



Jody England, Secretary V, Oklahoma City Community Corrections Center, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

"I was in my office at Oklahoma City Community Corrections Center located at I-44 and Broadway Extension. We heard an explosion, went outside, and looked south. There was a plume of white smoke and then black smoke. I thought it was a gas explosion, but my co-worker said it was a bomb. Correctional officers were called to duty to protect the perimeter. I never will forget when one officer returned to the facility after working perimeter. He told me what he had seen and I held him as he cried. It was so devastating! All you could see were grim faces on the first responders. The only smiles came when my sister-in-laws' therapy dog, Tessie, was allowed to go to the area and do tricks."

“...I will never forget when one officer returned to the facility after working perimeter. He told me what he had seen and I held him as he cried.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERESA PATTON



Anetta Bullock, Executive Assistant, Employee Development, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

“I was working in the Journal Record Building across the street from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. I was typing on the computer when I felt a weird sensation, like a compression, then a rumble and everything began caving in on me. I was struck on the head by an air duct cover which forced me to bend over my desk. It only took a few seconds to realize that something bad had happened. We could see fire and smoke from our windows because my office faced the federal building. We could see straight through the windows of the building. There was no glass there! The cars in the parking lot, near the survivor tree, were on fire and exploding. I had a few cuts but nothing serious. My co-worker Fran Ferrari was seriously injured. She was bloody and could not see after her office collapsed. A group of us carried Fran to safety in a chair.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANETTA BULLOCK

Patti Ormerod, Human Resource Manager, Payroll, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

“I was sleeping when the bomb went off. I remember thinking it was a sonic boom from a plane. I worked the midnight shift at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center and was a member of the Department of Corrections’ Correctional Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.). I remember that we were called shortly after that to secure the bomb site perimeter.”



Office space for the Oklahoma Criminal Justice Resource Center and Truth in Sentencing Commission, located in the Journal Record Building, sustained heavy damage.

Carmen Jackson, Assistant District Supervisor,
Oklahoma City Community Corrections Center, Oklahoma
Department of Corrections



“The day before the bombing my family and I were at the Alfred P. Murrah Building enrolling my son in daycare. My mom pushed my son in a stroller on the sidewalk near the spot where Timothy McVeigh parked the Ryder truck the next day. My son was accepted and scheduled to begin his first day of daycare on April 19, 1995.

The next day we arrived at the daycare center in the Alfred P. Murrah Building. We knocked on the door. There was no answer! My husband and I left downtown Oklahoma City extremely upset and frustrated. We didn’t have a daycare facility for that day.

We made it home and heard the explosion. We didn’t realize what happened until the news announced that it was the building where our son was to attend daycare. When we finally calmed down, we watched the news coverage and heard that 168 people had died, including 19 children in the daycare. We realized it could have been 20, if someone had opened the door that morning.”



The Alfred P. Murrah Building as viewed from the Journal Record Building.

Borman Stell, Recruitment, Retention & Recognition
Coordinator, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

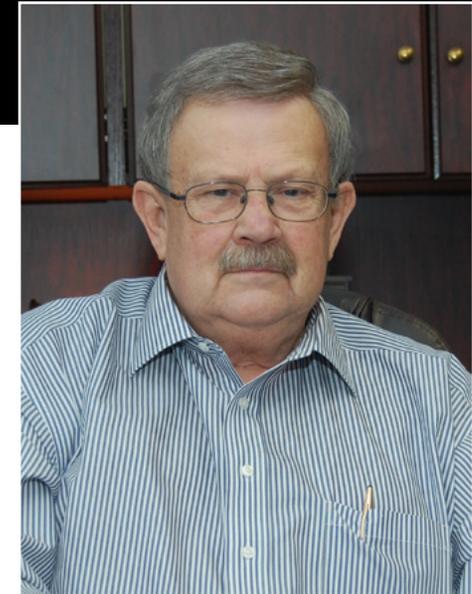


PHOTO COURTESY OF ANETTA BULLOCK

“I was teaching at Putnam City High School and my classroom had a big garage door that started shaking when the bomb went off. I turned on the radio and heard talk of an explosion downtown. I thought a natural gas line had exploded. To my horror, it was the Murrah Federal Building and nearly half of it was gone.”

J.D. Colbert, Administrator, Oklahoma Correctional Industries, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

“I was driving to get my oil changed in my old truck, about 6 miles away from the bomb site when I both heard and felt the explosion. I had retired from Southwest Bell Corporation and my old office had all of its windows blown out. I am happy that the guy who replaced me was not there at the time, because he would have been seriously injured or worst. When I got to the oil change place, the television was on showing the news and I was glued to the set. I thought that I was looking at something from Beirut, not in the middle of the United States, not in Oklahoma.”



Janet Dowling, Warden, Dick Conner Correctional Center, Oklahoma Department of Corrections



“I was doing my student teaching practicum in a class of 5th graders at Timberlake Elementary school in Jet, Oklahoma, when the bomb went off.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANETTA BULLOCK



Shirley Cole, Information Systems Operation
Systems Specialist II, Information Services
Division, Office of Management and Administration

“I was working for Fleming Companies located near N.W. 63rd and Shartel Street in Oklahoma City. On April 19, 1995, I had an appointment at the Social Security office in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building at 9:00 a.m. I arrived at work and decided to mail my information into the Social Security office instead. While I was addressing the envelope, the bomb blew up. The glass front doors of our office blew open and we learned from the news that the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building had been bombed. A hush fell over the office! I was in shock! That could have been me in the lobby of that building at 9:02 a.m., when it exploded! It was nothing but God and a miracle that I am here today!”



Jim Roberts, Human Resources Management
Specialist IV, Payroll, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

“It was a frightful day! It felt like something fell on the top of the building! I was working for the Hartford Insurance Group (off N.W. 58th and Portland) when the bomb went off. The whole building shook and dust fell out of the ceiling. Seems like I was in charge of everything. I was the Customer Service Manager, Human Resources Authority and facility person. I went outside to see what hit the building. As I backed up in the parking lot to see the top of the building, I noticed the plume of smoke downtown. We thought it was a gas explosion at first, but we turned on the television and realized it was a bomb. Not much work got done after that because people were worrying about family members who worked downtown.”

