

Philip A. Chovan
Deputy Fire Chief
City of Marietta Fire Department

Interviewer: Grace Agnew, Georgia Tech Library

Q: Okay, Phil, would you start by stating your name and title for us so we have it on record?

A: Good morning — Deputy Chief Philip A.Chovan, Operations Officer for Marietta, Georgia Fire Department. I am Section Chief, Georgia Mutual Aid Group.

Q: Okay, I'm going to ask you a couple of questions, and we're basically going to have conversation about [biochemical] terrorism. How likely is it, do you think, that a biological or chemical terrorist attack will happen in the U.S. in the next five to ten years?

A: I think it's highly likely, and in our training and budgeting and so forth, we're just planning for it. I might point out, a biological attack has to do with intent. At the present time here in the Atlanta area, this is the winter of '99/'00, we're already going through a severe flu outbreak that has affected my operations, and my folks have to stay home sick because they are sick or there are child care issues. The response of my department and many, many other fire departments would be the same for a severe flu outbreak as it would be for biological attack. The thing that we could not do is assess meaning and intent for a biological attack that had been generated by someone, whereas the flu is not generated necessarily by someone, but it burns through the population.

Q: Right. Why do you think it's likely? I mean, a lot of the experts I'm reading say that they think, at least for the foreseeable future, terrorists are going to stick with what they know, which is gun and bomb.

A: Gun and bomb will be the predominant. That's the easiest. There are several initiatives afloat to put possible taggants or other identifiers with bomb-making materials and chemicals. By and large, we probably could enforce that in this country, but when you understand that we have a number of free trade agreements with other countries in the world and they don't subscribe to that then the materials are still going to be there, so predominantly it will be bombs. Secondly, on a percentage scale, a terrorist has a far greater affinity to go ahead and use what already exists; Chlorine is chlorine, for instance. It was used with some moderate effect in World War I. What was done on the battlefields of Europe could easily be done using chlorine in an enclosed office area, in a subway area, something of that nature? When you get to biological attack, it's very difficult, and several of my colleagues in the medical community have for all intents and purposes downplayed the capability of someone going into the bathtub and mixing up an exotic array...It's

basically an issue of epidemiology. I can't even say the word. But what I can say is there are millions of billions dollars out there worldwide, that I could use to buy people. So if I have a bin Laden, who in himself may not be the terrorist — he's a broker. He has the money to buy folks that can do this now, using naturally occurring smallpox, tularemia, and things like this — camel pox. Those things are already in existence. To bioengineer them would require a lot of...a sophisticated lab, spaces and time. So if you have a very large country who is in dire financial straits, who is needing hard cash and hard currency...there may be some folks out there who are willing to pay. So the idea that we'll have some terribly exotic strain or bioengineered bug — I don't think so. Not within the next five years. However, there are those bacteria and viruses and public forms of agent that in the lab have been reproduced and were transformed in the lab for use, but it's a pretty long process — ask anyone who is waiting on a series of drugs for the FDA approval.

Q: So you think basically a chemical attack would probably then be more likely than a biological?

A: Yes. And it just has to do with the chemical industry. And these folks as a result of some right to know issues, have done risk management plans, a lot of their information is out, and it has been for years, on the 'net. If I were a reasonably thinking terrorist, why go to all the expense and trouble of finding the mechanisms by which I can import exotic stuff, when I can drive through just about any town in the country and just plan one night or one evening when security is low to go and do something.

Q: If a chemical attack would occur in America, what would the fire department's role be?

A: It would be quite similar to the role that it plays today with an industrial chemical incident. One, to assess what the incident is and confirm that it is an incident. We're able to provide reconnaissance and some insertion into the hot zone. At the present time, almost all fire departments have some capability to respond to a chemical attack. They don't call it that; they call it a hazardous materials release. Our response would be the same. We could not make a sense of the [intent behind the] release. What we could do, however, is to provide real time reconnaissance to those follow up forces. I think of a scene from "Saving Private Ryan"...The fire first responder types would be in essence the beach and the corridors off the beach. Beyond that we don't have the capabilities to sustain multi-week, multi-month operations. Those are state and federal functions there. But what we can do is gain high ground first. One of the things we are desperate to have done has to do with technology for the first responders to assess actually what is going on.

In talking with our colleagues in the medical profession, they're very, very keen — and rightly so — on [minimizing] false positive reports back from what they perceive to be a biological attack. If we had a device that had a minimal false positive reading in the hands of a person, a basic EMT, who was looking at a very strange purple-looking person, that would reduce that false positive. Now, I as a first responder and my colleagues in the fire service would not necessarily

be able to address a meaning to what we are seeing, but we could pass that information along. At some point, hopefully, at the state and federal level, there would be a person that could say, "We have intelligence that this has occurred. We know this transporting and trafficking in these chemicals or these whatever has occurred, and now an event has occurred at Mall of the Americas," and they could put the whole package together.

The first responders will not have everything. But what they can do is, one, reassure the public, because now that the attack is on the government, whether it's local or state or federal, it doesn't matter. Now what is occurring is that local people are providing the face that the local people are seeing. Unlike my state and federal colleagues, the people I am stepping over and seeing at one of these events, be it a car wreck or biohazardous material, are people I go to church with, people I party with, people I have business with. So in that sense, this first responder group needs to say, "Well, as bad as the attack may be, we are still out there functioning. We will nourish hope that in time we will be able to take the hit and then return better than ever."

Q: You said most fire departments have some ability to respond. Do you all have hazmat suits and things like that? Is that like standard gear in fire departments now?

A: It's not standard gear. It is what the perception of that department is. If they want to get into the hazardous materials response business, and I would like to be able to say all fire departments are that way or no fire departments are that way. That's one of the problems. You have it ranging all the way from management decisions and labor group decisions not to have anything to do with chemicals or hazardous materials, therefore they don't—equipment, training, all the way to the very sophisticated, well-funded, well thought out, management-labor teams working to have a group of folks highly trained to insert into the hot zone. And everywhere in between. In my case, especially with the Georgia Mutual Aid Group, we can put together a mix of management resources to address the particular problem as opposed to having just a "stand and wait for something to happen" group. We're pretty sophisticated, and the thing that we do far greater than our state and federal colleagues is we do it every day, so we have a combat history out there. Are we going to change markedly against a chemical attack that's launched by terrorists? No. We have things that work and poisons that we know, military poisons...are quite similar cousins. And of course my chemical colleagues will say, "No, no, no — it's considerably different." Well, I'm sorry, I don't know the molecular bonding of what this poison is; I do know it does behave the same way as a pesticide, the same way an acid base will behave. Our response would be the same. We would not be able to address it in any other way.

Q: Okay. American government has three levels — federal, state, and local — and you kind of alluded to that in your last answer. Each has considerable autonomy, and that's been really good for us as a nation. We have a lot of checks and balances. But it can pose significant problems that other countries might not face for coordination...If there were a major attack in Atlanta,

would the feds show up and have a role, and is everybody prepared for that? Do we all know who does what among the three agencies? Is that a problem?

A: Yes. The problem is there are very elaborate plans to say who does what. In this arena, this is no different than in combat, and most anyone who has experience in combat — and I consider our police, fire, EMS folks in combat every day — it has to do with direct face-to-face. "I know your face and you know mine." Therefore, in the military that translates into, "I'm in foxhole with you; I have no strategic concept of why I'm necessarily fighting this particular war or anything like that. All I know is you're watching out for me and I'm watching out for you." That is the way the locals respond. They work with their police folks day in and day out, their hospitals, their medical teams, day in and day out. Now that you've started adding in tiers, follow-up forces, these are very necessary because the local folks are not generally geared to have a sustained operation, and these types of attacks will be a sustained operation. The initial insult to the infrastructure and environment will have fire and police people responding, making that first contact, developing the parameters — how wide, how long, how deep, how concentrated, how many casualties — they will begin that development process.

At issue is that many do not have the capability of handling 800 to 1,000 casualties that are out in the field. Therefore, without follow-up forces within the next 6, 12 to 24 hours, especially in forensics and clean-up and let's get things back right the way they are — local will not be able to handle that. The problems have to do with terminology and communications, and the technology of communications. There are 13 counties and 57 jurisdictions in the greater Atlanta metropolitan area, and just about each one has their own radio frequency for police, for fire, for EMS, and so forth. So from a technological standpoint, can that be overcome? Yes — but it costs money. The communication problems of who has the authority to do what. I have no doubt in my mind, for instance, when I go onto Dobbins Air Force Base, who is a member of GMAG, that that base commander owns the dirt he's walking on. I take one step out on the state highway and have a bad wreck and a chemical spill, if you were to ask me, I would tell you that I own the asphalt that I'm standing on. Now, my colleagues at DOT go, "Well, no, not exactly — we own it." Well, fine — bring your fire trucks. So that's what you end up seeing, unless it's a face-to-face, and I know that Division supervisor, which I do, he does an excellent job, we get along fine. If he has issues that I need to be concerned with, I'll listen to what he has to say and try to work with him.

But this idea of a bomb or a chemical attack attacking the seams of the infrastructure, the terrorists will not attack the strength. If you could look at the hand, it won't attack the strength with the fingers here, it will attack at the seams, and the seams have to do with the local folks talking to the state folks talking to the federal folks. With a biological attack, it's much simpler. That is a species versus species attack, and the bug does not know where the county line is, it could care less, it has generally a very small temperature range within which it can live, so we have one species attacking homo sapiens. It could care less about all the infrastructure problems or

coordination problems. It would burn through the community regardless of who has authority and jurisdiction.

Q: What do we need to do to develop this coordination? I mean, face to face is great, but the likelihood that Washington can get to every county or state or even all the large cities and establish credibility with the local responders is remote. Is there any way to accomplish this?...Do you feel that first response should just be in the hands of the locals and they should simply update state and federal? Is that a better answer?

A: No. The first responders, we also... We have history for this over the ages. The easiest one to visualize would be the home force during World War II in Britain. At this particular spot, you and I on the end of a hose after a bombing raid are representing at that time Winston Churchill. Okay? At this present time, that connection has to be made —the autonomy of my city — the City of Marietta's fire department--doesn't represent President Clinton. There just hasn't been that tie there. But there are things we do that very much impact the President, as the representative of the federal government. There are things that we do that impact their operations. Therefore, from a political standpoint, which I served well in Mr. Johnson's army to protect the autonomy of the local, state, and federal separation of powers. But at this particular point the attack is coming to attack all three of us, therefore I can provide you with reconnaissance. I have people, I have fire trucks, I have immediate response. The idea, for instance — the concept — of having a mechanism in place, that isn't a dual thing, with the appropriate checks and balances to screen out false positives or whatever, that one of my fire trucks can respond to a mass casualty event at a local mall or at underground transportation events, something of this nature, a large sporting event, and be able within 60 minutes to have a system that wakes up the president of the United States and says, "We've been hit." At the present time, it doesn't exist. We're unannounced. You have to go through all the local folks, and then they call for help, and at some point down the stream somebody puts two and two together. That is a dual thing. We already have the paradigm there on announced events, the Olympics, the Superbowl. Here in Atlanta, we've been very fortunate. We've had a lot of good publicity in the press to have sporting events here, so that allows us to work very closely with our FBI colleagues, our ATF colleagues, our U.S. Marshal Service colleagues.

There are a number of federal agencies that we've worked with for the attack perspective. We've worked day in and day out with public health officials and the medical community on events, big national disaster events.... We work on a day to day basis because members of the team also work at various hospitals and on ambulances and at various fire departments. So it's a dual thing. It's a question of saying one person has been designated, for instance, as the FBI-WMD person for the Atlanta area. Well, fine, that person can't be at every fire station; what that person can do is meet on a quarterly basis with the firefighters' and fire chiefs' association meetings and just say, "Here's who I am. Here's an information sheet of what we will develop as a capability for you in the fire department to having quick access that we didn't have in the past." The concept, for

instance — especially in some of the larger jurisdictions that have population density — to have key folks in the fire department with security clearances so that they would know what FBI and ATF and security people would know. We have had, to give a very clear example, we have had two of our paramedics respond to a person down and when they arrived on the scene they began working the person and immediately recognized that the person had been shot, looked over, and saw two law enforcement officers in this jurisdiction saying, "What are you people doing there? There's a bank robbery in progress." There's something wrong there. We need to correct the thinking.

Q: Most experts believe a cyber-terrorist attack is most likely to be adopted by terrorists in the near future, probably more likely than biochemical terrorism. In fact, in '96 a 19-year-old hacker brought down the 911 system in 11 counties in Florida for several days. If 19-year-olds can do it, then there's a wide range of possible attackers, anywhere from pranksters to true terrorists. Are we ready for something like that? We're all very computer dependent now. Are fire departments or any other first responders ready to have their 911 systems taken out, their fire alarm systems taken out? What do we do if that happens?

A: For those of us that firmly believe that there's sort of a higher force at work here that we don't understand, we just know that it is. The planning that had to go on for the Y2K event — out of the mouths of babes, all kinds of gems — about three years beforehand in the Mutual Aid Group planning session as to how our 40 departments were going to handle Y2K, we had a number of veteran 40-year experienced folks who were going through a lot of the algorithms in their brain and what if this and what if that. And one of the younger persons there in the group said, "Well, how did we fight fire in 1900? Why don't we just plan to do it that way?" Well, everybody immediately got quiet, ordered another round, and said, "Well, you know, the kid's got something here." So what we ended up doing was saying to each one of the fire stations out there, "We plan to go back to 1900." And that [depended on] the precinct station... The doors were open, they knew the neighbors that lived down the street from the fire station. "You be prepared to cover your half of the square or one square mile area without any communications out there." Those were the plans we had — also plans for putting the fire watches on several nightspots in town. With telecommunications, we were prepared to have several of our junior colleagues plan to do as we did in the 1900s, send it by Morse, and we pulled out our old street box alarm system and each one of our intersections in the city of Marietta had a number. And so we would hear over the Morse code a tapping out of 821, you knew that was Allgood and whatever, and a unit would be dispatched to that alarm to determine what the proper course was. So we're very, very pragmatic and very good at problem solving.

That was easy, though. That was the easy one. At issue is the easiness of having the 911 system collapse. I know that. I can work around it now. I also can work around the idea that the 911 system is fully operational and I can rely wholeheartedly on it. What we have not been able to deal with—the deadly thing-- is to have data coming in but not have accurate data, therefore I

think I'm getting information that's good, but it's not. If it could collapse, I'll go on my own capabilities and back it up with methods by which I get data. In this particular case, I don't know if it's good or not. I'll respond to what I see. That's the problem we're experiencing. I don't have the answer for that. We have some very bright officers there who are very smart in stuff like that, so I could say, "Make it go away." They'd give it their best shot.

Q: So is that a top priority? I mean, how would you rank that as a priority for preparing first responder agencies?

A: That would be the second priority. The first priority, again very selfishly looking at this, but unless it happens, nothing else happens — you won't have state intervention, you won't have federal intervention. Nobody will come to your party if that first responder doesn't have some sense that this is something out of the ordinary. Therefore, first priority, technology transfer, sustainability of training and technology. Second priority, now it gets into the communications. Both telecommunications and cyber-war types of issues, both hardening the existing systems and expanding those systems to have redundant backup systems. You can look at it in either one of two ways. Our Mutual Aid group has chosen to look at it in the second way. The first way is we'll just build a barrier around it and not let any attack on the 911 system occur...— whether it be solar wind or whether it is bad people from another country. It's such a hardened area there, electronically and physically, that they just can't breach it. The second one says, and this is what we prefer, that if that particular receptacle gets taken out, that immediately there's another one that's going to be there. So you can start mashing all you want, but there's always something else to fill the gap. Therefore, in the Mutual Aid Group, if one of our branches, say the East 20th Branch on the east side of town, for some reason cannot respond, all the rest of the branches are not rendered helpless. They just flow in and flow around it, expanding toward the idea that the water flows around the rock. We haven't tried to move the rock — we're not big enough to do that locally. We just flow around it and keep moving on.

Q: The fire department has always taken its responsibility for saving and safeguarding lives very seriously. I mean, it's always the goal that you don't lose anybody going in and that whoever's trapped in a building, or the child trapped down a well, or whatever, that nobody quits. I mean, we all remember Baby Jessica...That's the American way; that's the American paradigm. We've always said the individual matters in our country. The likelihood is if there were ever a really serious biochemical attack, or even, you know, a cyber-war attack, that lives would be lost and that decisions would have to be made about who was expendable. Now, that would be a major attack, but that could very well happen. Can we or should we change the way we look at trying to save every single life and making every life matter to, say, for the greater good, we're letting those at the epicenter of the attack go? I mean, is that something we could ever do? Is that something you could do?

A: This perhaps may offend some, but we've already done it. Been doing it, that I know of, since the late 18th century...I have made decisions in my career, both at fires, chemical spills, and in vehicle events. I only have so many resources and I know I'm not going to have help come for another four to five minutes, and there are six people here bleeding out and I've only got two hands and two feet. Well, I can handle two, maybe three of them, but there are some that are just not going to make it. We respond daily, speaking on that perspective, we respond daily to fires in which the decision must be made. The fire, one, has enveloped the building to such a degree that I cannot afford to send my people in, that the probability of the people surviving is remote. The decision-making steps are what put wrinkles and gray hair on your face.

However, when the time comes for a massive attack, that same thought process will be utilized. At issue is, again, to be able at the very first contact with the affected area, to be able to positively identify that this is a nuclear or a chemical or...a biological agent, to make those hard decisions. You ask any physician, especially practicing physicians that handle ER types of things, they routinely go through triage if they get mass casualties once they come in on a scale that needs to be...We already have examples of this. And you end up seeing this in other countries: in the floods in Venezuela, Guadalajara, Peru, Columbia. They have massive mudslides and insufficient resources to go get folks. We're attuned to that, from an emotional standpoint, to say, "That's over there. It's not here." Yet when a tornado first goes through, the first responders are completely overwhelmed. Just visit anybody in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. There are people still in the buildings that we just can't get to, and so we get to the ones we can first and then we start working our way into it. So from a psychological standpoint, the fire folks have already been practicing that particular kind of triage.

What would be very difficult, and it's very difficult as it relates to the future, is when it comes on a massive scale. There's about 15 thousand folks now who will not be allowed out of this particular town, village, or community, for the very reason — not so much that they're contaminated; I mean, sure, I'll wash them off, get to them in that sense, or they have been massively irradiated and you know from a medical standpoint that with that amount of contamination that they will not survive. We already have the mechanisms to handle that. From a biological standpoint to tell you that you're not going from here to there, when you're feeling well? We're not prepared to handle that.

It's with great interest that we watched the films from the Aum Shinrikyo attack in Japan. The Japanese culture had a number of emergency rooms with folks sitting there in great pain, suffering, very obviously they were suffering, but the thing that impressed those of us in the first responder uniform business was that it was quiet. You could walk down the hall and doctors and nurses and people were talking — not in a conversational tone, in very hushed, very tense tones — but they were getting information across and these folks just sat there, had the discipline and sat there. I think that if you would have that same event in any emergency room in any major hospital in any major city, you would hear it two blocks down before you would ever get there.

One of the contingency plans that we had, and this did not sit well with our medical colleagues, was that if we had a massive contamination and these folks would find a way to get from where they were to the local hospital — as was the case in Oklahoma City — that I was fully prepared to order a fire truck to drive into the emergency room door at the local hospital just to keep this large influx of contaminated people out of the hospital. We'll handle them outside — we can do that. Will there be some people that will suffer because of it? Yes. But that's the cost of doing business. What's inside that hospital, still-birthing babies and gunshot wounds, people falling off of buildings, running into each other — all those crazy things that we seem to do — we still have that patient load continuing and now we're got this big bolus of people for the hospitals to contend with.

Q: One reason that bombs are so popular is ingredients are readily available, you know — basically fertilizer — and also chemical agents, like you have pointed out yourself, are essentially pesticides and common household things like chlorine. We could conceivably assign tracers and track the purchase — large-scale purchase, at any rate — of certain ingredients, but it would be a massive effort. Is it worth it? Is there any point to that at all?

A: Not that much of a point because the presumption is that the raw materials would be processed in this country, advertised in this country, sold in this country, and blown up or released in this country. I could've said during the time of isolationism prior to President Wilson taking on that issue, that yeah, I could probably prevent a lot of that. But that was at the turn of last century. We are now in this century, and the idea it's very, very possible that the attack will be launched not from some homegrown person out in some rural area somewhere, but it may be an attack originating from ...Islamabad, and then 18 hours later we have something that we have no control over that has made it into our country. We have a very long, uncontrolled border to Canada. We have a very long, heavily controlled border with Mexico. And yet still thousands of people make it across. We have what? 17, 18 thousand miles of shoreline? So it's a nice clean concept and I would say, "Oh, yes, in theory I definitely support that." If you ask me to prepare a budget to make it happen, I would start chuckling then and there and say, "Absent putting a plastic bubble all over this country which then inhibits free speech and free rights and so forth because we can control what goes into and out of the bubble?...[otherwise] that won't happen as long as we're a free country."

Q: There have been a lot of hoaxes lately — I guess basically since about 1997. Anthrax hoaxes. There was the famous B'nai B'rith, and then we had one here at one of the television stations, and those do a lot of damage. Part of the damage, of course, is they're diverting resources that would be used in a serious emergency if one should happen at the same time. One thing I've noticed personally is that we fussed big time over B'nai B'rith but now when we get an anthrax scare it tends to be like page 7. Unless it happens on New Year's Eve 2000 it tends to be on page 7 of the local paper. So what can we do about hoaxes, and what's the biggest danger of hoaxes? Is

the biggest danger that we're diverting resources? Or is it the biggest danger that people are going to say, "Anthrax — who cares?"

- A:** Historically we have a good example of that with fire alarms in dormitories. It hasn't been three weeks, four weeks, at a dormitory in a college in New Jersey in which almost to a person — and I say "almost" because I did not hear every member or every person that occupied that dormitory — but almost to a person, everyone said, "The alarms are going off there all the time. We just ho-hum and forget it." By design, the anthrax is on the seventh page now. Once, the uniqueness of it, when the hoaxes began, was the driving engine. "Anthrax" — and immediately folks would see horrendous piles of bodies, partly mutilated, and all this stuff. And then when the information got out, and it wasn't the critical thing where federal and state folks could really support the local folks, because there is a credibility gap there where the person in the street says, "I'm not so sure I trust what my government's telling me."

When the ground shakes, to quote a character in one of our more recent disaster films, "When the ground shakes, people want to talk to the seismologists." An event like this happens, people want to talk to someone who's in on the know, whether that's a federal person, a closer governmental state person. A local person? Nah — that person lives and works in that community. So what we've seen happen is that the hoaxes, now the response to the hoaxes get a lot less resources, and go back to this first responder sustainability — the technology. If that first responder can definitely say, "There's a 90% probability that this is nothing but baby powder," and have the backing of local equipment, sensing devices, to say that that's the case, then we won't have what has occurred now — "Oh, it's just another anthrax scare." Well, okay, two things have occurred. One, the response of the first responders has been reduced. Two, the thinking of the entire federal system, it doesn't go into a paroxysm of shaking now when they hear of an anthrax letter in Des Moines, Iowa because the folks that are over matters in Des Moines, Iowa have had education put in. So this is one of the two-pronged events.

We already have neighborhood watch programs, stop, drop and roll programs. We already are making the presumption, and rightly so, that the American population is reasonably intelligent, although from time to time we see elections that don't reflect that. What ends up happening is I've given you the information you need to be informed. And if it says, "I will not park my car on the railroad tracks because there's 88 trains a day coming through town," then you're making that decision. You don't have a federal or a state or a local person telling you that you shouldn't do that. So the hoax issue is going through the normal evolution that all hoaxes do. A big response to it, and then as more is seen about it and the education suffuses out amongst the population, it drops back to page seven. It would be of some interest, and this has to do with psychobabble here, perception is 90% of reality. If people perceive that, for instance, this latest round of flu, which has hit this area pretty hard, is in fact a terrorist attack, then the perception for them is going to be that it is real. But they are also seeing their...there's no...they've not known anybody who has died from it. Everybody's complained about how bad it is, but they don't of any fatalities of it.

In that same line at 6:30 on the News, if one of the local talking heads turns around and says, "Worldwide there's been 191,000 people die from this strain of flu," now that gets attention very quickly. So my 5-year-old grandson who has the sniffles, I feel pretty sure I'll be getting a telephone call — "Do you think we need to take him into, you know, one of the local care places?" I would say yeah — not so much that I think he would die from the flu, but because there needs to be a peace of mind there, and that's 90% of it right there. You can nurture that hope that there is a system there, and as hard as we're hit, we're still going to be there for you.

Q: Well, you said something... You said that, you know, we reduce — “we,” meaning the first responders — reduce our response because we've been trained and we now know there's a 90% probability it's not anthrax. Well, what about that 10%? I mean, America is a litigious society. If you guess wrong and it's that 10%, you know, are there laws in place to protect, like the Samaritan Law, to protect first responders? Because, I know what will happen and you know what will happen. The survivors of that person will file a lawsuit the next day.

A: And by and large this sounds terribly aggressive from a dusty-boot, field grade combat officer, but just go ahead and load the shotgun. I will not compromise the thought process while all this is going on worrying about getting sued. There are Good Samaritan laws here, and it's only been for the last six or seven years under Governor Miller, I believe, that would allow corporations to come out from behind their security tents to help us with a chemical spill. So we have had chemical spills involving the product that this manufacturer either shipped, made, stored, or used and they could not, because of this threat of suit, come out from behind their security tents. Now they can, and with reasonable improvements in some of the legal accounts...not be grossly negligent. But this by extension says, and here is a primary example: if we in fact have a chemical release and it involves people — up to a thousand, two thousand, three thousand people — to reasonably expect us to be able to, clearly, technically decontaminate all those people is impractical. We could, but it would take eight hours. Therefore, I have capabilities in the Mutual Aid Group, working with the Georgia Tech Research Institute, they have developed a drench drill. And this is nothing more than a colossal water shower. So it says if you and I are shopping and we're contaminated, our eyes are burning, we're exhibiting symptoms of being under attack, ideally our medical colleague says, "Well, take all your clothes off, because that's the way we're going to handle it." That's not going to happen. So what we can do, though, is walking through a massive shower for about 90 seconds or so, removing 80% to 90% of the contaminant on the surface. Now, are you going to sue me because you get pneumonia later on down the line? Again, please don't look upon this as over-arrogance — well, sue. I'm going to make that decision. I have to make the decision from the facts that I have in front of me.

Q: There was a TV show, I guess 20/20 or one of those, that alarmed me recently. A man was suing a local fire department because he and his wife had been trapped in their back bedroom, and he thought she was following him out the door and she didn't. And he was trying to break through the front door, and he had like 60% burns on his body. And they took him away — they said he

was hysterical and needed treatment. And they tried [to reach her] from the back end, and she was probably... I mean, it was a massive fire. The likelihood is she would not have survived anyway, but he questioned their judgment in pulling him away and in not going through the front door, and he sued them. And, you know, it kind of raised alarm bells in my mind because we're second guessing people that are using their best judgment. It's not like the fire department had said in that case, "Let's go get a beer." I mean, they were doing their best, but they made a different judgment call than he appreciated. And what I'm wondering, in the case of preparing for a massive biochemical attack, should we not set laws in place that protect police and fire, etc. when they're making a judgment call — not negligence, but making a judgment call that Monday morning quarterbacks might have chosen differently. There was quite a bit of that, actually — second guessing the police in Oklahoma City, second guessing the police in Columbine, you know, "You should have done this or that to save the teacher." I'm concerned that we're going to find ourselves bogged down. Everyone probably won't take your attitude. Columbine may or may not take your attitude, you know — the police supporting Columbine — because they're going through the lawsuits now. So what I'm wondering, is that a critical issue? Is that something critically that we need to address?

A: I think there are already... Yes, it needs to be addressed, but there are already laws on the books that with some expansion would be far preferable because they now--those laws that have been on the books--have been tested in the court, upheld under appeal, so they then in fact become law, once they've been appealed like that, as opposed to creating some other set of laws that would only be used in a terrorist attack. At issue, for instance, I could ask you for the definition of a terrorist attack, and you could give me the definition according to what the federal government says it is. I suggest to you Columbine was not a terrorist attack by federal definition. Was it a response by first responders as if it were? It surely was. Oklahoma City, easily. Was that a terrorist attack by federal definition? Yes, it was. Now, were the first responders to do anything different, thought process-wise, sending in their resources? Absolutely not. You can take the two... their policies were followed, their procedures were followed, they did exactly what they were supposed to do under both of those horrific events. And they were acting within the scope of the laws and the rules that were on the playing field at that time. To try to say we need special laws if it's a weapons of mass destruction attack, then we somehow or other absolve everybody of this or we hand this additional burden of proof to you or anything like that, I would advise strongly against it.

And I can vote — I vote against stuff like that. Because we already have things there from the medical perspective... I, as an EMT, came upon a vehicle wreck, and this particular one had seven victims, all... 7, 8, 9 — excuse me — 9 victims, all of which were hurt. There was one me and several family members and several stopper-by's, and that's the only resources I had. I called for help and I knew that I was going to have massive resources within the next ten to twelve minutes. But they weren't there then. Therefore, I had to step over people who I knew were hurt, who I knew I could do something with, to get an assessment of what the big picture was

here. And as it turned out there was one fatality and there were several critically injured folks. When the lawsuits started to revolve around it and my name was listed there as a deep pocket representative of the city, I pointed out that I wasn't representing the city at that point; I was just driving by. Did I have a duty to respond? Yes. Did I respond? Yes. Once I did, did I have a duty? And so they went through the whole thing. These laws and the rules of engagement in existence then were the ones that protected me, but I did what I was trained [to do].

Q: Were those state laws? Because the incident that was I guess on 20/20 or whatever was New Jersey. So are those state laws that protected you?

A: Yes. It was state law for paramedics and EMTs, what we can do and we can't do.

Q: See, I think that's needed country-wide because I think that people need to feel free to use their best judgment, and I'm not sure everyone would be as strong minded as you. I suspect that a lot of EMTs, if they were sued once would be gun shy twice.

A: They will. I have been sued. And again, I'm at stage in my career, nearly 40 years in this business, I'm not making my buttons. So if I were 4 years in the business and I knew, because we reward and promote those folks who do not lose lawsuits, who do not get sued to begin with, who don't hardly do anything wrong. And this is — if I might, this is just an aside — the high point of those people's careers frequently is their retirement dinner. We're in a line of work that in essence is inherently dangerous. We're going to get people [who are] hurt. People do not call their first responders if everything is going fine. It's arguably the worst day in that person's life, making this call. Given that, you've throw me into that arena and you're saying, "I'm covered." You somehow or other stabilize it and make it right, and make it whole if [you] can. And I'll do the best I can with those resources that you've given me — training and experience and the scope and so forth.

We've talked weapons of mass destruction ...What are we going to find? To date I've had one federal person or state person, I have had my local people tell me, "Here is what a mass casualty incident is — eight or more people." Now eight, I can count. Weapons of mass destruction, what's a mass? Is it a thousand people? If it's a biological attack and I lose 2.3 million people — which is what we prorated on a project I was in — the Spanish Flu epidemic, if we fast forwarded it to today's population, with the same medical support they had then, we'd lose 2.3 million people in six weeks. Now we have a much more sophisticated medical system, so the morbidity and mortality rate would be considerably lower. But the idea of saying, "We're under attack here," there are existing rules of the game...there are some things that the state governors can do — we're going to ask the National Guard. If it's a presidential declaration, there's some things that the president can do to federalize the National Guard. So we already have some things in place as opposed to putting another layer in the pot.

Q: Dealing with, you know, with biological or chemical attack can mean decontaminating the victim at the scene. You kind of talked about this. We did have an incident in Atlanta where people had their clothes removed and they were hosed down, and they didn't react very well. I mean, as you pointed out in talking about the hospitals, we're not a docile crowd — we're not Japanese. That's not the American way. We like to make a big noisy fuss. Are people... I mean, that's going to be difficult to decontaminate people, to run them through a shower or whatever. I guess we could use Olympic Park — we have one already set up there.

A: Not actually. Collect them now, you know, and have them say a prayer or whatever. Our best guess is if we have a release, unannounced release, we are looking conservatively two-thirds of those folks self-evacuating, self-triage. So how does that impact on the service and on the delivery? The people that cannot self-triage and assess themselves, and you and I are, again, shopping, and we smell something that doesn't smell right and our eyes are burning, we feel a sore tight throat — "Oh, I must be getting the flu." We get in the car, we go home. That I can't capture. Your problem is while you are there. The first responders, who incidentally — and this is a subtle nuance, but it's a very critical one — the first responders are not the fire crews or the medical personnel. The first responders are the people that are there when it happens. If one ascribes to the fact that these are reasonably intelligent people and something like that happens, that they have the capability and the empowerment, if you will, to do something about it right then and there.

If you visit any European country, visit Israel, and see what precisely what happens when you educate the public. Now, a fire person was riding the train, this person — I'm not even sure what city it was, in England — popped on with his wife and said, "Oh, how fortunate we are — there are seats available on this car." And he saw the car after it had "Standing Room Only," [people] hanging by straps, and there was nobody in this car. They plopped on in, they sat down, the train pulled away from the station. Then he got to looking, curious as he was, which is a fire person, and then he saw there was a satchel bag underneath one of the seats. And it was one of those types of things where he goes, "Well, we need to have another seat." But in this country, as we saw on MARTA, a person walks in, throws a satchel in and walks back out, and folks are standing there, "Oh, well, the guy sort of left it there — we ought to open it up and see what's in there." So that's an educational thing.

The idea that we can expect our citizenry to bear some brunt, some burden, if you will, of being capable of handling stuff for themselves, it was not unreasonable until — and this is not a political statement, it just is — until the 1930s, and there was a massive shift in what the population expected from its government. Since that point, we expect the government to do for us... And I'm not talking welfare, I'm not talking Social Security. I'm saying it was a significant shift. In 1900 to 1920, historically speaking, we had self-reliant folks who said, "We'd just as soon not have the government doing anything." For a number of reasons it gradually changed through the '20s. After the depression, the pendulum for quite some time, for two decades, swung to say, "Government

here. Big government, big government, big government." So you're seeing the pendulum swing back now with the political process. How that applies to the response, it says now that the individual at a shopping center, instead of saying, "Federal, state and local folks are going to come here to save me;" [saying] "I need to do something to save myself."

And presumably, I think it's completely disrespectful to the American public to presume that they don't have that intelligence and that sense. We can tell it by the people here. Just hit us — we'll show you how tough we can be. And so what we're saying is, "Hold on. My first responders will get there and get you started in the system. My state colleagues and federal folks are, you know, half a mile long. But that first hit, you're going to have to do what you're going to do." Now, does that already work? During the recent ice storm — or both of them — in Atlanta we saw that routine re-exhibited when we told folks that some telephone lines were still up — and where they were — we put it to where it's now into the subdivision — but you guys just hold on. We're doing everything we can, but the hospitals are number one first, the communications centers are going to go on first. We're going to get to your subdivision as soon as we can. Given that, neighbors are out talking to neighbors, they actually started cooking over — dare I say it? — an open flame in the fireplace. Skills that were thought lost, I guess through evolution or whatever, were found to be right under the surface. And cold water over an open flame, it doesn't require a microwave.

Q: I wanted to follow up on something you said. You know, with the ice storm — and I was one of those with trees down on my power lines, etc., it was something I could see and something I recognized and something I knew. Sooner or later someone would show up and take the tree off my power line. If I go to the mall, and I'm exposed to something like smallpox and I develop flu-like symptoms in three days, I'll go to a doctor, the doctor will say, "Hey, there's now some anti-viral, so let me give you a shot," or whatever. He's not going to recognize smallpox because nothing has broken out on me yet. The next attack, people will be ready. We recognize ice. You know, that's a paradigm we're used to. We recognize a fire. If there's a fire in our neighborhood, that person has a place to stay immediately and everybody will gather close, etc. We recognize those. We're talking about things, though, particularly with biological, that are totally unfamiliar to us. I would agree with you on the second attack — Americans will rally around, they'll be ready to go — but we're still a pretty complacent bunch.

While Y2K had its good side, I think the down side of Y2K is... the government lost a lot of credibility. What people said is, "Big government making a lot of fuss over nothing. How many of my dollars went to Y2K don't...What a waste of time." ...I think that did a lot of damage to government credibility. We looked... The government — and I say "we" because we spent a lot of effort here in the library on Y2K — everybody that did looked like Chicken Little. And, you know, I agree a lot of good came out of it. We were forced to harden a lot of procedures. But I think the public perception was, "What a laugh." So I think the second attack, yes, but what

about the first attack? People aren't going to know. I mean, if I've got what looks like the flu, I'm working from the flu paradigm. I'm not working from the tularemia, anthrax, smallpox paradigm.

A: The Y2K is an excellent example, and I'm a consumer so I'm saying, "Well, yes, there was a lot of... 'Much Ado About Nothing.'... The thing of it is, if you picked up your phone and you asked me as a first responder, "If I fall off my house, can you come and get me?" And the question was not, "Are you prepared for Y2K? Do you think it's a problem?" The question was, one-to-one, "can you come help me if my leg is broke?" And I had to [be able to] look you in the eye and say, "Yes, ma'am, I can." And I can say it right now — "yes, ma'am, I can." So now we have a biological attack and I'm going to separate explosives, radiological and chemical from biological. The chemical and explosives, we handle day in and day out. So if you pick up a phone and you say, "I really don't believe my federal government or my state government that this whole terrorism thing. It's just sort of... It's a make-up. It's actually not anything to worry about." And then, while we're at the local restaurant eating... you just lean over and in an aside ask "But if it happens, have you got a plan?" And I'm looking you in the eye and saying, "I've got a plan. That's what you're paying me to do." For you, that local responder is reality, you see them day in and day out. You don't care if somebody is somewhere else saying it is or it isn't.

Q: But let's go back to the point of relying on the innate sense of the human being. I mean, I think, yes, Americans are a great, self-reliant country... we're fussy, we're noisy, we're all those things, but, yeah, I wouldn't be anybody else. I wouldn't be anything but an American, you know? I think we're a pretty terrific bunch. But... like all human beings, we operate off paradigms that we know. And, you know, we're not ready, I mean, people are not educated, people are not ready for a biological attack. And actually, the neighbor helping neighbor in an infectious biological attack would probably be the wrong thing. The best thing would be if everybody said, "Oh, you look like you have cooties — get away." So that... paradigm actually, while it works beautifully for ice, it probably would not work particularly well for a biological attack. So really there's nothing... We're just going to have to wait and learn our lessons as regular American citizens, it seems like.

A: ... The technology here, I think it's an excellent opportunity for technology to be applied to do exactly what you're talking about. Now we have that position of going ahead and making the diagnosis, giving you a couple pills, and you know, if you don't feel better let me know. Okay, a couple, few, three days into it, supposedly we have arguably one week, six or seven days... Now we have patients showing up at a medical facility. Well, technologically speaking, we have the capability of assessing there in those medical facilities, and I can't tell what the meaning of the little red light coming on means, but what I can tell you is that if the red light would come on that says that there's something here that this sensing device has picked up— whether it's smallpox or camel pox, tularemia or anthrax or whatever. Okay, at that point the system gets alerted. What we can do is address the issue of how fast, once we know that you have presented, one infestation, now, was presented to one ER, how long it takes the system to react to that. At the

present time, I concur; we're just sort of happy and lazy here, sort of rocking on along. Will we take casualties? We sure will. We have a history of that. And I could pick Pearl Harbor as the easiest one of that. So if we end up doing things like that, on a second go-through we're vigilant, but even then it becomes a memory fatigue in that, "Well, yeah, there was this biological attack, but it hasn't happened over the last five or six years, and each year the sensitivity curve drops, so I'm sort of forgetting it." So will we take casualties on the first get-go? Yes, we will.

Q: Well, that happens — the curve goes down — but the American way is also to spike sharply. I mean, the 1996 anti-terrorism act was really...there's been a lot of discussion about that. The ACLU has come down very strongly, as have other groups, because a lot of things like habeas corpus were really tampered with in that act because of the, I think, the picture of the fireman carrying the little boy out of the building. And that's all it takes for us; that's enough for us, a picture like that. And we tend to react very strongly and perhaps overreact. In our volatile political situation, that could be very dangerous. Most of the reading I'm doing says that our greatest terrorist threat from terrorism from within is from the anti-government type terrorist groups, and so all we need to do is, you know, let them think that their worst nightmares are coming true and that the black helicopters are around the corner. And yet that is what we did with the '96 terrorism act. Now everything is sliding back down. But if we have a major terrorism incident, we're liable to stoke the flames by overreacting as much as underreacting.

A: The reaction part, again, gets to the spot, not so much being afraid of doing the right thing, but being afraid of not doing the wrong thing. And this is not a live alone fact in the fire business, but on the 6:00 News when you see an apartment building burning down and you see this large area of ladder trucks starting to rise up. In our profession, when the ladder packs go up, the building comes down. I have put hose lines in service that did not pose a threat to my people at all, primarily to be seen having those lines put in place. Did it cost anything extra? No, we had them out there anyway. Did it put them in harm's way? No, they drag them across the street and just feed water in. So what you end up seeing on the reaction part of it is an intent to say, "If you choose to mount an attack," — that's what it is — "we will find you wherever you go and the retribution will be swift, as much as we can make it, and terrible." Therefore if we have a biological attack, and in one of the recent scenarios — fairly realistic — you had the following sequence of events, and I hope that I'm answering your question. This is an election year, we have a plethora of candidates out there. Each one of them has their positions, they've made a statement to one...the left or the right doesn't really matter. As the election process moves on through, people drop out of it, and pretty soon instead of having 15 candidates, you're down to one or two. In order to be elected, they get far more centrist, and then pretty soon they're pretty well close together and when it gets right down towards the end of the campaign process. That alienates the people back at the right. They mount an attack ... domestic — probably not even national — but ...domestic has international contacts... The idea that a reaction to the 1996 terrorism act, and a lot of the funding is exactly as you pointed out. We have probably had bombings...We've had bombings for years, but it's nothing that...In our culture, it's very easy to

rally around when we end up having an enemy to go for. In this particular case, you end up seeing the idea that the Russian tech folks are the bad guys. Well, now, they're all off the scene and now terrorism is inside...

Q: Of course, I don't know if they should be off the scene. I think the Russians are a very dangerous force, but it's hard to know what to do about that. Well, let me ask you this, though...We persuaded Saddam Hussein not to use chemical weapons and biochemical weapons by saying that if he did he wouldn't have a country to be worrying about. I think what Americans can't tolerate is anything that indicates the death of a child. I think that's what they reacted to, to a large extent, in Oklahoma City is the fact that there was a nursery there. I mean, not that we would've not regretted every lost life, but there's something about the death of a child. Hussein knew that very well. He relocated ...his orphanages right next to his munitions sites. If we actually followed through on a threat like that, yeah, we could wipe out the whole planet if we chose to, but what would that say about us as a country and how tolerant would our citizens, myself included, be if we ever did that?

A: Well, that has to do with a high moral ground. The fact that we have one very, very strong ethic for protecting basically our offspring, children. And that gives them an education, that gives them a good number of other initiatives that are already there. At some point, when you end up fighting with a dirty street fighter, if you drop down to that particular level, then what is it that you're actually fighting? It just turns into nothing more than a fight to fight, as opposed to [an effort] to establish something of a higher level, from both a moral and a spiritual standpoint. So what you end up seeing, we will in essence say to foreign governments and to the local event people, the terrorist persons, you know, "There are some limits beyond which we will not as a government go." So...

Q: See, they're counting... I think they might count on that. I mean, Hussein chose not to take that chance, but I think most people know Americans don't have the stomach for sacrificing civilians. One thing, you know, I'd just like to get your opinion on this. We could easily develop our capability of cyber-warfare, and we could respond and make that our retaliatory strike. Yes, people would probably die as a result because we're extremely dependent on computers, but it would not be an immediate death, it would not be a bloody death, and it would decimate these countries who, while they're getting more sophisticated at using the Internet, they are nowhere near where we are and never will be where we are, you know--Japan, but Japan's not an enemy. They'll never be where we are technologically. So maybe that's something we ought to develop.

A: Now, at this point, what we'd end up having as a history — and this country has a very, very strong history of when properly stirred up, [we] wreak terrible vengeance. We can go ahead and look at our Native American history...the World War. You know, I mean, when angered, properly angered, we can be just as vicious and as nasty as anybody out there. The thing that hopefully separates us from the other side — and the other side will change just about hourly, on a

day to day basis — is that, you know, we will take a higher road. But there are some things that...some boundaries beyond which we will not go. One, to develop and have weaponized biological warfare needs to hit and...if we even say so unilaterally and fully understand if we say we're not going to use nuclear weapons then ... in all probability there's something to replace that to enforce our [security].

Q: I don't know that we say that. I don't know that that's what we said to... We didn't spell it out with Saddam Hussein. You know, I wonder if we had a major...if we could trace back a major smallpox attack that wiped out 25% of our population, you know, I think we'd do another Hiroshima.

A: Oh, no, I agree. Once that sleeping giant gets aroused — and I think that's a part of it, that, again, chemical, nuclear is one, biological is another. To date I've not had anyone in the medical community tell me how you bioengineer a species. In theory it's possible, but if the practicality just doesn't exist, then if he launches a biological attack on the United States, what's to prevent it from boomeranging back to him? If, by the sake of discussion, there is...he is able to purchase, but I don't think he'll develop on his own, he is able to purchase smart people, smart laboratories and so forth, he goes and mounts an attack, and by some method is able to put a disease into our population that burns through our population, yes, you would end up seeing, one, an isolation of his country, and then destroying it.

Q: Yeah, I think we'd do it. But you know...

A: And the knowledge of that works.

Q: ...Somebody said this in one of the background documents I read, that if anybody releases smallpox, after we theoretically got rid of it, back in the world, then we don't deserve to be called human beings; we don't deserve... You know, that's a species-threatening event. If a species were to threaten its own species, then we don't deserve, you know, the title of human being...I think all bets would be off if someone did a species threatening incident.

A: Yeah. That, I guess from a local respondent, that may be a little above me on the debating scale. I can tell you how I feel on that. I would agree. And what that says now is, "It's me or them." And when I say me or them, I have two them out there — the ones that started it, and I'll get around to meting out that retribution. But right now the problem is I've got folks dying in the backyard. Now, how is it that I go about handling that? And if I can't overcome it, which I won't be able to do, what I can do is to take the hit, sort of, and if we take 15%, 20%, 30% casualties in our population, from a local perspective, my city may have even higher just by virtue of demographics, weather, or whatever. It says now that of the two countries, whoever launched it — and far greater, I think, is not that a country launches it, is that a series of folks who get together just for the sake of getting together because they want to make a statement for whatever

reason and they're several miles out and go through a number of hypothetical scenarios. I can't really address retribution. What I can address is the problem in my own backyard. Now, if that requires burning houses, if that requires isolation... I have asked the public health officials who in fact enforces a quarantine. They said, "Well, the police do." Well, that's well and good. The police department is a hundred and forty folks if they've got everybody there. Are they going to go ahead and say, "We have a quarantine in this and this area," or "this is beyond where you want to go?" They don't have enough people to do it. And that's just one small city.

Q: And, you know, you were talking about the trust. I mean, people know you, that you're...Marietta's not that big a town. If they see you coming, they say, "He's going to make it better," and instead you say, "You've been exposed. We can't treat you. Stay in your home." Are you responders able to deal with that?...For that individual person, you're suddenly the enemy. You're not helping them, you know.

A: No. I don't think that transfer of being for us or against us gets done. It can, the further you are removed from the individual. But it's occurring will be the same thing as if family members call, "Gee, do you think we need to go out to a church?" "No, it's too icy." However strongly they feel like going to church that day, they're going to go or not, based on an opinion of somebody who's been out in the ice and snow. I don't see that leap from now you're for us, now you're against us. We're saying, "Stay there." What definite problems I will have, and I don't think this is theoretical, this is going to be, because this is already a sub-routine in the medical community, if we have vaccines out there who says who gets them? That's not my choice to make.

Q: It could be your choice to enforce. Not necessarily yours, but the local police.

A: To implement. One of the scenarios that we had for the Olympics was that we had to have a massive infusion or an intent there, of some type of a vaccine, and our federal and state colleagues said, "Well, here, we have a million doses of this stuff." The question that I had was not theoretical, it was practical — how much do they weigh? How much can each one of my people carry? And how are we going to have 2.3 to 2.5 million people all come in to get shots? I have 428 fire stations in my Mutual Aid Group. Well, that's a start. I have 500 locations, or if I had every school, every church, and every fire station, now I've got a place where I can start distributing, but it says I need 2,000 people to do that. My paramedics can do some of the basic therapy, but they're not authorized to do shots. So what you ended up having was local folks were seeing to local people the best they can with the tools they have, so there wasn't this you and us. Again, you give it the best shot you can. And a certain anger for federal folks. You knew it was going to happen and you didn't do anything to stop it...that would be where that leads to anger, you're on the other side. You're not against me because I pay you. If you'd just left me alone, I'd have been okay.

- Q:** Do you think that the threat of biological terrorism is enough that we need to bring back more of a vaccination program? Should we bring smallpox vaccinations back? It hasn't been gone that long.
- A:** I wouldn't think so. I've got holes in my arm from smallpox vaccinations that I had as a child, and now that I understand...It's sort of a moot point there. When the assessment was made by the Russians on what's the best way, and they were assessing attacking the United States with biological warfare, and they said what was the best way to counter — not the attack, and that was very critical in the document. To counter the effects of the attack was to train quick first responders, not to get into a massive vaccination program. But if you could vaccinate for smallpox or we had the capabilities to engineer smallpox just enough so the vaccination doesn't work, and again I'm way...you know, being arrogant here in bioengineering, which is not my major, but excuse me, if we have viral agents during the flu season from the start to the end of it and we'd get our flu shot to handle A, B, and C, then by mid-spring we'd have a new mutant of that virus and everybody gets sick because you won't get sick by A, B, and C, but D has come along, okay. And if that occurs naturally, it's going to have to occur from a biological attack standpoint. The idea of vaccines, the sub-routine is, "Well, who is going to get it?" Well, that's distributed through the medical system. And the medical system says, "Well, now that we have it, I want to make sure I have it. And then the locals can have it." Once that word gets out, two things — one disastrous, one troublesome. The troublesome thing is that there's going to be a rush on fire stations and hospitals to get my folks a shot, but the disastrous thing is as a culture and as a people we have said, "These folks here are going to get it; these folks here are not"—both of whom are healthy populations. So have the terrorists won by not killing folks? Yes, because he or she has said, "See, we've proved to you yourself that that government is not the government that you really need. Anarchy is better," or whatever.
- Q:** That just kind of leads to the last question, which is the freedom of the press. Other than in possibly England, we have one of the most aggressive media in the world, I think. They are technologically very savvy. They have very much the aggressive attitude that the public has the right to know everything. And they have the ability to send their stories anywhere in an instant. How do we weigh what the public really needs to know — and also as a country we value freedom of speech, but there can be cases, particularly if you don't want to set off a panic or if you want to contain a situation, particularly an infectious biological situation, where we really shouldn't tell people things.... And the media often don't seem to be...they're looking for something that will sensationalize and make the news, and therefore it's sensational to say that firefighters flub their first attempt in a training exercise, and make everyone look like a bunch of idiots — and I saw that with Denver...You know, they're not doing their job properly if they're cutting people slack, because that's boring. So how do you work with the media? And how do you...who determines what the public has a right to know and what should be kept from the public?

A: Two issues — one, working with the media, and the public right to know. The fundamental presumption is that if you have facts presented to you, then you are an informed consumer, informed electorate, informed public, and you can make decisions however you want to do it. You can either buy it or not buy it because that is media, as well. Advertising is media. What ends up occurring is that there's no point for reflection in the existing, especially in the electronic media — you have a 30-second sound bite. You see what an editor says you're going to see. In print, it's a little different in that the editor says, "This is what you're going to read." But you have the opportunity to pick it up later and read it. Other folks have read the same words, so now you and I can discuss this particular article, the pros and cons. You can bring your history to it, I'll bring mine, and we say, "Well, this article is just full of innuendo and based on our history, they're saying this, but we know this isn't so." So I can weigh the media. Electronically you can't. You can see a sound bite or 30 seconds worth of this or 30 seconds worth of that. You only can hit the high spots of whatever the story is, and what I find particularly debilitating, really debilitating, is the fact that a reporter is giving the impression that that reporter is the expert in the field, as opposed to talking to someone. Therefore, when you see a Barton shooting in a financial district, the fact is that as a first responder, that I am now having to think globally, and that globally says that folks in Paris, in London in eight to ten minutes of that event beginning to see it live just as I am seeing it live. We have a third...no telling how much of the world's population saw the Centennial bomb go off when it went off, before my first responders — or in this case, Atlanta's, actually saw it.

So to answer your question... immediately the press will put a very high flurry of activity, much the same way yellow jackets do when you get close to their nest, and they keep going back to this freedom of the press, freedom of the press. There are just some things out there, and at this point, I don't need to know all the evil things in the world — I've got enough just to pay bills and to make sure my grandson grows up like I hope his parents would like him to grow up. So the restrictions on the press are a method by which information can get out, but the information that does go out needs to be done in a meaningful way that allows you to make your mind up — not to mould....There's one term we use in our training course here at Georgia Tech — it's called collaborative corroboration — in which I ask...I think it's to the class to pretend that we're evacuating an industrial park, and again, if the public knows that this is a technique, then they can recognize it and in this collaborative corroboration I ask the first student, I say I know this scenario — "I notice the bells are going off. You're evacuating the building." "Well, yes — that's part of our evacuation drill." "Thank you very much," and I go on to the next student. And, "I talked with several of your co-workers and you are immediately evacuating the building under very hasty, disastrous conditions. Is this your disaster drill?" "Well, yes it is. We're all supposed to leave in a simple [manner] here out of harm's way." And I go to the third student, and I say, "Okay, there's a disaster in the making and you folks are running out very quickly to go to the safe zone. Don't you think the public needs to know where those safe zones are?" "Well, yeah, the safe zone's right over here." By the time I go down four or five students, we have a story there that indicates the [imminent] collapse of the world society, and then the first thing I had to see as I

respond ... is [person with] a microphone in my face saying, "You know that this threat to the world as we know it has existed in your city for 22 years. How come you haven't done something about it?" "Excuse me? Where did that come from?" "Well, um..." Say we need multiple press conferences; say we need to have a mechanism by which meaningful information can get out so that the public can be given the choice. Tell them, yes. Once it gets into that arena, then the reporter will have to be responsible because the reporter's reputation will depend on the information he or she is getting and that information comes from me as the first responder.

Q: Well, I will say, just in closing, that that's one other positive that I think emerged from Y2K is the press really did react as if the world were coming to an end. There were tons of articles about where to buy your shotgun and how much water to stock, I think they took a tremendous hit. They're, like you say, given two stories, and one story says we're all going to die and the other story says, who knows? Probably you should check your bank statement [for errors]. And because they have sound bites to fill, they go after the "you're going to die," because they want something that's going to get you turn to the News at 11. And so they took a tremendous hit because the public saw that paradigm. Not that I'm against the press, but they have to go for the sensational because that's their job mandate, and if they're given a choice between a non-sensational and a sensational and each could be equally valid, they're going to have to lean toward the sensational or I'm turning to Channel 5, and they know that.

A: That's it. See then, of course, they can turn it around. "We were only printing or publishing what the experts were telling us. So, you know, it's mea culpa — it's not my fault, it's their fault. I'm just reporting what their fault is."

Q: But just like two little kids can say, you know, it's not my fault that the vase was that close to the edge. It doesn't get them very far, and it doesn't get the media very far, so I think that was a very healthy thing. I think the Fourth Estate lost some credibility along with the government with Y2K, and I think that was a healthy thing.

A: Again, these first responder types, we're not past global issues. If I decide to have my baby at home, and this was an actual case, on January 1st, are you going to be able to be there? We'll be there. Now, if we have a home delivery, we can do that. If it's in the back of the ambulance, we can do that, and if it's in the hospital, we can do that. I can't say what the impact of Y2K is going to be if it runs around the world, but what I can say is if you give birth, we'll be there.