



Official State Historical Center of the Texas
Rangers law enforcement agency.

**The Following Article was Originally Published in the
*Texas Ranger Dispatch Magazine***

The *Texas Ranger Dispatch* was published by the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum from 2000 to 2011. It has been superseded by this online archive of Texas Ranger history.

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Funded in part by grants from
the Texas Ranger Association Foundation

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Captain Barry Caver
on the Republic of Texas Standoff

by Captain Barry Caver
as told to Robert Nieman

In the early 1990s Richard McLaren began to organize a group of individuals with antigovernment sentiments in an effort to overthrow the State Texas government. In his mind, he believed that the Republic of Texas had been illegally annexed by the United States in 1845. Thus, Texas was not a state in the United States but an independent, sovereign nation.

By 1995, McLaren was representing himself as the ambassador and general counsel of the provisional government of the Republic of Texas (ROT).

By March 1996, he had become so brazen that he declared that the so-called independent nation was demanding control of all the original land owned by the Republic of Texas. This included half of New Mexico and parts of Oklahoma, Colorado, and Wyoming.

In an effort to carry out his warped plan, McLaren began a paper war in which he flooded local courthouses with self-styled legal documents, filing liens against the personal possessions of government officials and others, a scam he had learned from the Freemen in Montana.



Joe and Margaret Rowe's
Ranch

©2004 Capt. Barry Caver
The West Texas desert
around Fort Davis can be
—and usually is—quiet.
The quiet is one of the
reasons so many people
love the sparsely settled
area. That calm was
shattered in the early
morning hours of

Sunday, April 27, 1997, when two men and one woman suddenly attacked the home of Joe and Margaret Rowe. One of them fired several shots, striking Joe in the left arm; then all three stormed the house, taking them hostage.

The ROT attackers called the Rowes “prisoners of war.” The state of Texas termed the action aggravated kidnapping and attempted capital murder. Jeff Davis County Sheriff Steve Bailey contacted Captain Barry Caver, commander of Company E in Midland, and requested that the Texas Rangers assume command of the incident. At the time, Captain Caver had been the commander of Company E for about six months. At thirty-nine years old, he was the youngest Texas Ranger captain in the history of the Department of Public Safety.

Thus began a potential deadly standoff between the Republic of Texas and the state of Texas.

Interview with Capt. Barry Caver, June 2007

CAPTAIN CAVER: I’m Barry Caver, Captain of Company E, Texas Rangers headquartered in Midland.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When did you first become aware of the Republic of Texas?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Just of their existence, probably the latter part of 1996. We started hearing rumors of some of the things they were doing, some of their ideas and beliefs they had. We heard that there was a fairly large faction of them in Fort Davis and the Odessa area, and we started trying to monitor their activities and to figure out what they were doing, where they intended going with their beliefs, and so forth.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What were some of those core beliefs?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They didn’t believe that Texas was legally annexed in 1845 when we entered the Union as a state. They wanted to revert the state of Texas back to the Republic of Texas and to claim trillions of dollars for their own use to further their goals and objectives.

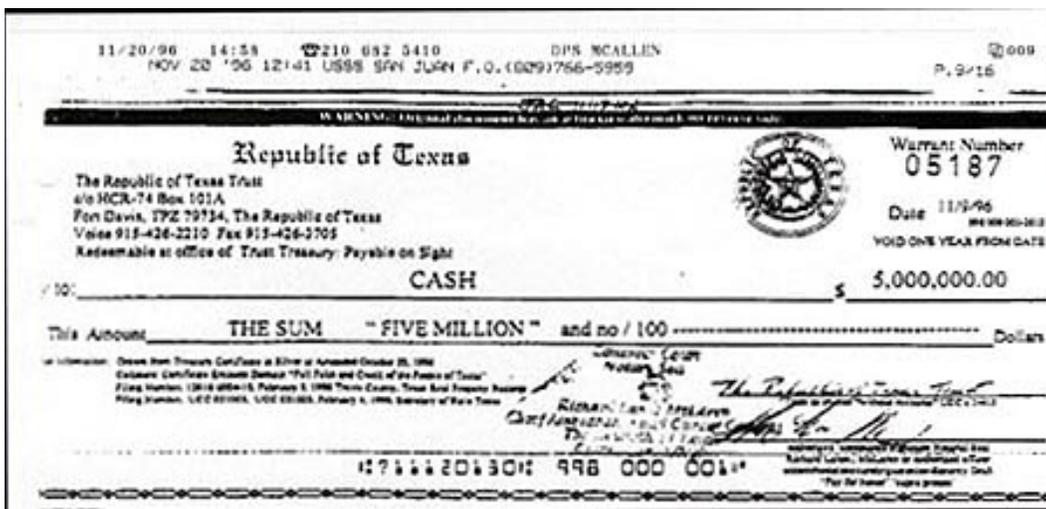
ROBERT NIEMAN: Did they claim the Mexican Texas that goes all the way up to Wyoming?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They never did really stipulate as far as some of the other states, but they were basically making their claim within the state of Texas itself—at least within the confines of the state

ROBERT NIEMAN: Coming on the heels of Waco and Oklahoma City, did you consider them a militant organization?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Early on, no. They were fairly new to us, and we weren't real sure what their beliefs were or what kind of violent tendencies that they may have. We were obviously a little cautious about what to expect. We were playing it by ear, really.

ROBERT NIEMAN: During my reading on this and trying to do a little research, I see that they [ROT—the Republic of Texas] talk about the Montana standoff with the Freemen. These Freemen had held classes for possibly hundreds of militants from states all over, and they were running a bogus money scheme. Were you aware of this—that there were tie-ins? If not, when did you become aware?



Bogus Republic of Texas Currency Warrant
Courtesy Texas DPS ©2004

CAPTAIN CAVER: I was not aware of it at that particular point in time. Later on, after this incident happened and we finally resolved it, I found out after interviewing some of the people involved that, yes, they did receive some training up there as to some of the schemes that they had and scams. To get something for nothing is what it amounted to.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What were their [ROT] common courts and what did they hope to accomplish with them?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I believe to scare or intimidate people into thinking or complying with some of the things that they were trying, some of the scams they were trying to pull. You know, they may get stopped on the side of the road by Highway Patrol and may not have a driver's license or registration on their car. The officer would take enforcement action against them. Afterward,

the officers would get letters in the mail saying they were being sued in this common law court. If they didn't appear, then they were going to be held in contempt and fined hundreds or even thousands of dollars. They [ROT] would file liens against that particular officer's personal property. So it was just a way to further their scam and scheme of getting what they were trying to get.

ROBERT NIEMAN: They were filing all these bogus liens and whatnot against not only officers but civilians and any one else, were they not?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Anybody that got in their way or tried to prevent them from furthering what they were trying to do. Then they would put this fear and intimidation into them and file these bogus lawsuits.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did they get involved with counterfeiting?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Yes, they did. About the time we were getting involved with them, they started. [They got] a computer and a color printer and created their own treasury warrants on the state of Texas, but it would say "Republic of Texas" at the top. They actually tried to cash some of these, and they would even pay some of their bills with them. And, of course, people receiving them. They looked authentic: they looked like the real thing. If you read it, you'd know that it wasn't a good document. But they tried every way they could to use this. Again, to further their whole organization.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And people working in, say, a convenience store wouldn't necessarily pay as close attention as they could.

CAPTAIN CAVER: That's right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did they counterfeit anything else such as warranty deeds, quit-claim deeds, contracts, or anything like that?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Not that I'm aware of.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Representative Will Harnett of Dallas sponsored a bill making it illegal to file bogus liens. Were you familiar with this when it happened?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I could be wrong, but I'm thinking that most all the laws that we deal with now as a result of this came after this particular standoff ended. There were several laws passed in the month of May after this ended.

ROBERT NIEMAN: McLaren was impeached as an ambassador of the Republic of Texas by another unit. Of course he ignored this impeachment,

but I understand that the Republic of Texas was not one central organization: that there were several splinters of it. Could you describe the different splinters and different philosophies?

CAPTAIN CAVER: At that particular point in time, I knew of about three splinters: the one that McLaren ran, there was another one out of Odessa, and then there was one around the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Basically, what you have are different groups that don't like the other groups telling them what to do. It may have all started as one central group, but because of the organizational chart or the structure or who was president and who wasn't type of thing, they decided to split off on their own so they could be the king of their own little kingdom. To my knowledge, they all had basically the same beliefs as far as anti-government sentiment and that sort of thing. As far as I know, that's the only reason that they had the different splinter groups.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Were they all militant?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They were all anti-government. I'm not sure you would call them militant at that point.



Republic of Texas Brochure, License Plate
and Fake "Texas Rangers" Badge

ROBERT NIEMAN: And of course I'm assuming you were watching all three groups—or the two in your area—and I'm assuming Company B was in Dallas.

CAPTAIN CAVER: We had a lot of intelligence from the Dallas area. They [ROT] were being monitored whether they knew it or not.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When was first time that you were aware of their threatened use of violence and force to get what they wanted?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They made several threats against Dan Morales (at that time Texas attorney general), and they made several threats against Governor George W. Bush, but they never really followed through with any of the things. So I guess the first actual violence that occurred was the Fort Davis standoff where they kidnapped Mr. And Mrs. Rowe. Up to that point, it was just verbal threats. They never carried out any of them.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What was their reasoning for kidnapping and attacking the Rowes?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They accused the Rowes of being spies for the sheriff, which in essence I guess they were. They [the Rowes] were feeding the sheriff information because they lived out there amongst them [ROT]. They all lived there in the Davis Mountain resort area. If they saw any suspicious activity, they reported it to the sheriff. McLaren was inundated with supporters. They would come out there on the weekends to train, do some shooting, and that sort of thing. And they did a lot of trespassing on other people's land to do their shooting. The Rowes would feed the sheriff this information. I think that was the main reason they [ROT] decided to kidnap them.

The other reason: there's only one road leading into this resort area, and the first residence on this road off the highway belonged to a border patrol agent.

The second residence was the Rowes, and from a military logistics standpoint, it was up on a hill. Again, there's only one road in and one road out. You could see forever: it [the Rowe home] was a two-story house. Logistically, from that standpoint, it was a just a good place to take over to control everything that occurred within that resort. So to me, those were the two main reasons that they decided to do that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: This is Jeff Davis County and Steve Bailey was the sheriff. Did he call you immediately?

CAPTAIN CAVER: About February of 1997, Steve came to see me in my office in Midland. He had been receiving a lot of these threatening documents. He actually had some meetings with McLaren face to face. They [ROT] didn't like Bailey, for whatever reason. Steve knew they were drumming up support. It seemed like, as time went on, their threats got a little bit more escalated. Steve was getting concerned that if something did happen—if they did try to do some of the things that they were talking about doing—he knew that he and his department could not handle it.

Jeff Davis County is the second largest county in the state of Texas [2,258 square miles] and there's the sheriff and a chief deputy. That's it: a two-man department. They had a couple of non-paid reserve deputies that helped. He [Steve] knew right away that he couldn't handle it. So he came to me and asked that, if something happened, would I be willing to assume control or take command of the situation? And I said sure.

I called my boss in Austin—at the time, Chief Bruce Casteel—and visited with him about it. He agreed as well: we'd take control of it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: The assistant chief was Gene Powell. He was your predecessor, I believe, in Midland? Had Gene had any dealings with this group?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No. I think they had been there during Gene's tenure, but it hadn't escalated to the point that it did until after I got there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What day did this kidnapping happen?

CAPTAIN CAVER: April 27, 1997.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you put anything special—not necessarily just for them but for anybody—with the April 19th date, the anniversary of Waco and Oklahoma City? Were law enforcement in general and the Rangers in particular taking any special note of that date?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Not with this group, no. We had no idea that they were going to revert to this type of violence. It was just all of a sudden. Again, other than the verbal and the paper threats that they had made, we had no indication that they would actually follow through with anything like that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you take it very seriously when they were making their threats? They had all kinds of clichés like: "If you're not willing to die for your freedom, you don't deserve it," "We will fire upon them; a civil war will erupt," and all that kind of stuff before the kidnapping.

CAPTAIN CAVER: We didn't put a whole lot of faith in what they were claiming. I mean, it was what we call a paper war. It was just an obvious threat on paper to try to get what they wanted to accomplish without actually having to follow through with any of it. We took it with a grain of salt, considered the source, and didn't really take it too seriously at that time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Around this April 19 date—it's not the exact date, but in that area—I read where (and it all turned out to be innocent) but a truckload of heavy

weapons—.50-caliber machine guns, 81-millimeter mortar and ammunition, and a truckload of four unarmed U.S. Air Force missiles— disappeared. Were you alerted to that?

CAPTAIN CAVER: We definitely were made aware of that. We were putting our feelers out. Obviously, all the Highway Patrol was looking for the vehicles involved. We were putting that into context with the Oklahoma City bombing, obviously, but we never really linked it with ROT, to speak of, at that particular point in time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And of course it all turned out innocently. One driver's satellite system went out, and the other one I don't remember, but it was all innocent.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: McLaren was still making these wacky statements, like to the *Houston Chronicle*, that he had ordered all federal judges, legislators, IRS agents, etc. around the state to be arrested. But once the kidnapping happens, they are locked in. You've been brought in to head it, but do you remember offhand when the sheriff notified you of the kidnapping?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Actually, my Ranger, David Duncan, in Alpine called me at my house to tell me what had taken place. I immediately called my lieutenant and all the Company E Rangers, asked them to pack their equipment and clothing and head toward Fort Davis. I then called Chief Casteel to tell him what had taken place. I then contacted Highway Patrol Captain David Baker in Midland. We made arrangements to get with our helicopter pilot, and we flew down there to get a jump on everybody else. We wanted to figure out what we had as quick as we could; to determine what other manpower, equipment, and anything else we were going to need to handle the situation.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you ever consider these religious zealots or just militants? The reason I'm asking this question is, like at Waco and as far back as Masada and the Jews and the Romans, religious zealots don't mean to come out alive. History has proven over and over [that] they mean to die. Did you ever look at these people as religious-zealot types?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No, religion was never mentioned that I can recall. You hear of all kinds of fanatics—anti-government-type fanatics—that you know. After this thing happened, I was very concerned of the fact that they may want to die as martyrs to further their cause. So yeah, that was in the back of my mind later on.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You've got all of Company E there. Eventually, there are going to be Rangers from just about all over the state there at one time or another.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who made the first contact with McLaren?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I guess you could say I did. I made first contact with two of the hostage-takers initially: Richard Keyes and Greg Paulson. I eventually talked to McLaren that same day. He denied any knowledge of what happened. He would only agree that the kidnapers were some of his people, ROT members, but he wouldn't take credit for actually ordering the kidnapping to take place.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did the FBI and ATF get involved?

CAPTAIN CAVER: The FBI was there. I don't think we had any ATF agents there. The FBI knew of ROT before this particular incident happened because McLaren had been filed on in federal court in Pecos with Judge Lucious Bunton. Because of some of the bogus lawsuits that he [McLaren] had filed, he was prosecuted in federal court. Judge Bunton told him to cease and desist filing any more of these types of things. He [McLaren] disregarded Judge Bunton's order and, as a result, the feds actually had a contempt of court order against McLaren when this thing happened. They [FBI] were very hesitant and didn't want to take any enforcement action at that time because of the ghost of Ruby Ridge and Waco. They did not want to see another type of incident happen like that again. They were going to wait until there was some clear-cut, substantial violation of the law before they took any action.

ROBERT NIEMAN: So they didn't come in and try to take over?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They did not. As a matter of fact, it was just the opposite. They were there willing and able to assist me in any way that they could. But what was ironic about it later on, Janet Reno, the U.S. Attorney General, found out about it, and she basically ordered all the federal agents to leave, even though they did not. I'm glad that they did not.

There was a small contingent of FBI agents that stayed there. A lot of Border Patrol agents were there to help us. It was obvious to us that Janet Reno didn't want any part of that, either. Knowing that the federal government had already received two black eyes for Waco and Ruby Ridge, she couldn't stand another hit like that.

There were some reservists. I'm not sure if they were National Guard or State Guard. There were some folks out of Fort Bliss. The U.S. Army supplied us with Black Hawk helicopters. They served us basically as a support role to provide us equipment and that sort of thing.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Describe the Texas Republic's "embassy."

CAPTAIN CAVER: It was about a 1950s model travel trailer that had been added onto with a little lean-to shack. I guess that's what made this whole thing so absurd. It didn't help their legitimacy any when you've got an ambassador to the Republic of Texas and this is the embassy in some rundown shack. I mean, I've been in deer camps in East Texas that were a lot better and nicer than this place.



Republic of Texas "Embassy"
©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

ROBERT NIEMAN: They were demanding the release of two prisoners that had been charged with a misdemeanor. Who were the two prisoners, and what were the charges?

CAPTAIN CAVER: The only one I can think of offhand is a lady called JoAnn Turner, who was also held somewhere around Austin for the same type of violation that McLaren had done. She had also filed some bogus liens against some folks, and she too was held in contempt of court for not honoring the judges' orders.

[Oh,] the other guy was Robert Scheidt. He was the person that was arrested by Sheriff Bailey on the morning that this thing happened. He had left the Davis Mountain resort area. Sheriff Bailey had made a traffic stop on him and arrested him for some minor traffic violations: no insurance, unlawfully carrying a pistol and some illegal knives. And they were demanding his release as well.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Before we proceed with this: You had a headquarters set up, and later you moved it. Can you describe the first one, why you moved it, and the second headquarters?

CAPTAIN CAVER: The first command post was set up at that first residence I mentioned earlier that belonged to a U.S. Border Patrol agent by the name of Johnny Wofford. Johnny agreed to let us use his little bunkhouse area and anything else that he had there that we could use. We set up there because, again, this was the first residence within the resort, and the next residence was the Rowe residence, which was about a half a mile away. So this was the closest place we could get to without putting ourselves in harm's way and also had telephone, electricity, and that sort of thing.



Texas Ranger Command Post
©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

The ROT members retreated back some eight or ten miles back into the resort. We decided we needed to move closer because we didn't want to take the chance of them kidnapping some other innocent person along the way to where they were going back into the resort. We also didn't want to get too close: that would endanger our personnel as well. So we moved on up to the Davis Mountain Volunteer Fire Department and took over a second command post there. We moved everything from the first one to the second one. This happened on Monday. The SWAT team arrived with equipment, and we were able to determine it was safe to move our personnel without endangering anybody, so we moved the next day.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Since the Rangers don't have a SWAT team, what division would they have come from?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Yes, this was DPS SWAT team out of Austin.

ROBERT NIEMAN: In your first interview [with ROT members], you talked to McLaren briefly. What demands did he make in that first negotiation?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Really, they didn't have many demands, which was awfully strange, because when I got there, I talked with Sheriff Bailey and Ranger Duncan and said, "Well has anybody made contact with them to see what's going on, what they want?" And the answer was no. So I took it upon myself, at that point in time, to use Mr. Wofford's spare bedroom, which had a telephone in it, and called into the Rowe residence. And one of the hostage takers, Greg Paulson, answered the phone, and I identified myself. He was always extremely polite, courteous, and respectful to me. I told him why I was calling, but he never would really go into any detail as to what they wanted. Paulson said he would only take orders and instructions from Robert Scheidt, who they considered to be the commander of their security forces at the embassy. And again, Robert Scheidt was the person that Sheriff Bailey had arrested earlier that day. Since Jeff Davis County doesn't have a jail, we made arrangements to carry all their prisoners to Marfa, which is in Presidio County about fifty miles away. So we had to make arrangements with a couple of my Rangers to go to Marfa, get Mr. Scheidt out of jail, bring him back to where we were, and try to figure out again how to resolve this thing.

Visitor Info History Research Center Hall of Fame Student Help Family History NewsIn an effort to make sure that Mr. Scheidt didn't see the manpower and everything that we had, I instructed Ranger Johnny Allen out of Del Rio to take a pillowcase and put it over Paulson's head. That way, he didn't see where we were [and] what kind of equipment, manpower, and resources that we had available. Once we brought him into the house, we took the pillowcase off. I visited with him awhile to tell him what had transpired. He tried to claim he had no knowledge of it even happening. He didn't have anything to do with the hostage deal. And, again, he claimed that he had no knowledge that this was going to take place. I explained to him how important it was for him to help. I told him that Greg Paulson and Richard Keyes would not take any instruction from anybody except him. He said he would be willing to help us in any way he could to resolve this problem with the hostages.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who were Albert Valadez and Terrence O'Rourke, and what was their involvement in the negotiations?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Albert Valadez was the local district attorney out of Fort Stockton who had jurisdiction over Jeff Davis County. Terrence O'Rourke was another lawyer out of Houston that McLaren had dealt with in the past to help him try to resolve some of the legal issues that he was trying to accomplish through the ROT. O'Rourke was somewhat familiar with the jargon and lingo that these guys tried to use and [with] all legal documents that didn't make any sense to me whatsoever. So we felt like O'Rourke showing up on the scene could help us interpret and understand what it was that they were trying to ask for.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Before we get on into negotiations, about how many people did you have and from what departments? I know there were Rangers there, Highway Patrol, TDS Intelligence, Border Patrol, FBI, U.S. marshals' and sheriffs' offices, Texas Forrest Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and even the FAA. What were the Forest Service and Parks and Wildlife doing?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Actually, the Forest Service was probably one of the most valuable resources that we had, believe it or not. They fight fires all over the nation, and they go to other states and help fight wildfires. They've got a system in place called an Incident Command System that they use to keep up with manpower and resources as to scheduling when the guys have to be relieved, when they need to take breaks, and when they ought to be replaced. And they came immediately. I had never heard of this system until this happened. They came out, took control, and started handling all the manpower issues that we had with three hundred plus folks. It was a manpower and scheduling nightmare.

In addition to that, at certain points and time [when] we dealt with McLaren, he threatened to set the canyon and the valley on fire. I got with the Forest Service folks, and they gave me their expert opinion [for] if that occurred, what are the wind currents going to do, [and] what's it going to do to us where we were. And so they gave me a lot of knowledge, not to mention all the equipment they brought: bulldozers, tractors, and that sort of thing, [and] to cut windrows, cut firefighting ditches, and that sort of thing. So they were just totally invaluable.

The Parks and Wildlife, the game wardens, they're trained in outdoor tracking and survival, that sort of thing. This was an extremely remote terrain area. We felt, because of their expertise and especially the guys that were stationed in that area, they could be nothing but of value to us as well. So we used every possible source that we could imagine to use to help further our needs and to help us with the situation.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well, what about the FAA, Federal Aviation Administration?

CAPTAIN CAVER: The only thing I'm aware that the FAA did was put up what we call no-fly zones or restricted air space. But to my knowledge, there was nobody actually there from the FAA.

ROBERT NIEMAN: The DPS Dive Recovery Team, what did they do out there in the middle of the desert?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They formed this team several years ago. They'd actually

been doing some training with the SWAT team, and it got to the point to where we were there so long that the SWAT team needed relief. So they felt that the dive team could come in and give them some relief because they knew the basic maneuvers. They knew some of the training, so it was just a good mix for them to come in and relieve the SWAT team to give them some relief.

ROBERT NIEMAN: A lot of this I'm going to get rid of before we get back into the meat of this. What was Mount Media?

CAPTAIN CAVER: This was a particular area on the highway that was located in a small picnic area that we basically isolated. We had roadblocks set up there to where no one could access any further than that. And obviously, with this situation coming again right after Waco and Ruby Ridge, it was a big publicity hype. So we knew that we were going to have a lot of influx of media people. We had to basically put them in a certain location to be given news briefs, information as to what was going on, and so forth. And this particular location was so isolated away from where we actually were. We didn't want their long-lens cameras and that sort of thing to give up what strategically we were trying to do to deal with [as far as] the ROT people.



Media gathering Outside Controlled Area ©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

ROBERT NIEMAN: Talking about communications, what kind of communications did you have?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Just the basic police-type radios: walkie-talkies. Cell phones were somewhat limited. But what came to play probably the most important [role is that] we were able to monitor ham-radio traffic. We knew that McLaren and his people had ham radios that they used to communicate with each other. We got some of these volunteer ham-radio groups to come in and set up a base station. We hooked up recorders to this equipment and constantly monitored their jargon and talking amongst each other. So that came to be very important later on.

ROBERT NIEMAN: One other thing I'm sure you had that most people wouldn't, off the top of their head, think about: you had to have medical facilities set up [and] not just for the possible obvious gunshot. But that's pretty remote territory: you got snakes and everything else to deal with out there.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right. That's why we asked the Army to send MEDEVAC helicopters. They came and set up first-aid tents. We had a lot of EMS and fire personnel on the scene as well to set up little triage units and that sort of thing. We had the medical end of it set up pretty well.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Was anybody from a non-violent position injured? Snake bite, falls, whatever?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No, not that I know of. There could have been some minor things that I wasn't aware of.

ROBERT NIEMAN: During this time, how were the residents of Fort Davis reacting?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They were actually glad that we were there. They felt like it was long overdue. This McLaren had terrorized everybody that lived out there. He had made threats against them, and so none of the neighbors had any use for him either. So they wanted him out of there. They were glad to see us and, other than a couple of supporters of theirs [ROT], they bent over backwards to give us anything that we needed to help us.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How many people were in the embassy?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Well, initially we didn't know. That was part of the problem. We didn't know who was in there, how many, what kind of weapons they had, and so forth. You know, as it ended up, there were a total of eight after it was all said and done.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who were they?

CAPTAIN CAVER: There would have been Richard McLaren; his wife Evelyn McLaren; Robert "White Eagle" Otto, who was kind of the second in command; Mike Matson, who's the guy that ended up getting killed later on; Richard Keyes; and Greg and Karen Paulson.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Let's go back to the negotiations. When do they start making their actual demands, and what they've got to have to release the Rowses?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Once we got Mr. Scheidt back out there, we allowed him to call and get on the phone with Greg Paulson. He told Paulson basically what's going on, what's happened, what's transpired.

They started giving these codes, and I was afraid something like that might happen. His code was "A hat has three corners," which didn't mean anything to me. I'm still not sure what that means. He told him that, I guess, as a code to tell him everything was okay. I don't know, other than that. But anyway, Scheidt agreed to whatever I told him we wanted. He was willing to do that. And I told him we had to get those hostages released, and he hawed around and said if that happens, then he needed to go back in there. And I know that's unheard of in any kind of textbook and hostage negotiation: you just don't make deals with terrorists. But that's what we were doing.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And you're going to get a lot of heat for this?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I did later, but the thing about it was, we knew that Mr. Rowe was shot and had just had heart surgery about two months prior to this, and he was very much a health risk. We didn't need to lose any more blood, so we felt like we had to get him out of there as soon as we could to make sure he survived.

After I told Scheidt what we wanted to do, he agreed to do it, but he wanted his van back that the sheriff had impounded. He wanted all of his weapons and ammunition back that the sheriff had also impounded.

I explained to him I could give him his van back because of the distance he would have to drive. We weren't too worried about it at the time because he was actually going back into the resort. Again, there was only one way in and one way out: he wasn't going anywhere. He was only under arrest for several misdemeanor violations; he would have been able to post bond out of jail the next day anyway. So I felt like I needed to use that to my advantage. I don't think he realized that at the time. But I explained to him, too, that I could not give him his guns or ammunition back because of everything that had taken place. And he didn't really offer much argument over that. He agreed, "That's fine."

Then we tried to work out the logistics on how the exchange would actually take place. That was my biggest fear then: to make sure that they didn't double-cross me in the process of not only Scheidt going back, but them maintaining control of the hostages too. So that was probably the climax of the whole thing: to make sure that it went like it was supposed to.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you let Scheidt go back in, or was there a second person?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I let him go back in the van, followed by an ambulance to get Mr. Rowe out and followed again by the sheriff, by a Ranger, and a couple of deputies in one patrol car.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you remember who they were?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I just remember the sheriff and Ranger David Duncan. I don't recall anybody else.

ROBERT NIEMAN: But there wasn't a second ROT member, JoAnn Turner, allowed to reenter?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No, we would not agree to the release of her. No, I told him that we had no control over what they did at Austin. I could not make that happen, and I wasn't going to make any promises that I couldn't keep.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Rowe and his wife got out.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Yes. Everything went as planned. What was kind of funny [is that] whenever Paulson and Keyes rushed Mr. Rowe's residence, they had an old . . . I think it's an Ambassador station wagon of some sort. They blocked a cattle guard on this one little old road, and they shot the tires out of it. So now they're ready to leave and have no way to leave: they disabled the only car they had, and it's about eight or ten miles back in there where they need to go back to. So they managed to get the Nash cranked and move it off the road and just left it along the side of the road. And then, as Scheidt drove his van through that area, they all jump in the vehicle with him, and they continue on back toward the embassy. We're not dealing with a bunch of rocket scientists.

ROBERT NIEMAN: McLaren would claim that 5,000 militants from all over Texas were headed for Fort Davis. Carl Weathers, Captain of Company C out of Lubbock, and four of his Rangers [Marshall Brown, Steve Foster, Larry Gilbreath, and Gary Henderson] arrested seven armed men at the Flying J Truck Stop in Pecos. So how much credence did you give to this 5,000 figure?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Well, I think he was definitely exaggerating his numbers to try to scare us into thinking that there's going to be that many people trying to help him. And we really didn't feel like there would be that much support until this particular thing happened.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What kind of armament did they have? Or did they?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I think around eight or ten weapons, mostly long guns, high-powered rifles, food: MRE type meals [Meals Ready To Eat]. They had some medical supplies and even a little marijuana to go along with it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you have any other incidences of taking people trying to get in?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No, that was the only one that we had. But you know, once this happened, it really got our attention because we knew that he had an influx of people coming in on the weekends to do their training and having their meetings and all this kind of stuff. Until that happened, we really didn't take a whole lot of stock into that. But, yeah, [that] just kind of brought us back to reality, I guess, and told us how much of a danger that really was. But my biggest fear was the Highway Patrolmen out on those remote roadblocks. There are usually only two of them out there at any given time. I was afraid there was going to be somebody killed. That obviously weighed a lot in my mind.

ROBERT NIEMAN: [Let me] make a little commentary of my own because I hadn't really given this any thought until you just mentioned about those Highway Patrolmen at these roadblocks: That, as you say, you have to been out there to realize how remote that area is.

CAPTAIN CAVER: That's true.

ROBERT NIEMAN: But I have been out there, and I could imagine the apprehension that they [Highway Patrolmen] felt. Some of those incidents could have turned deadly real quick, and maybe even innocent people ended up hurt.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Absolutely.

ROBERT NIEMAN: So they showed a lot of restraint, the Highway Patrolmen out there. You could imagine what could be going through their minds every time a vehicle is coming down the road, especially after this deal with Carl.

CAPTAIN CAVER: After that happened, that's right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You eventually appointed Ranger Jess Malone to do most of the negotiating. Why?

CAPTAIN CAVER: At the time this happened, I had had some hostage training

years before that I didn't really remember much about. And, of course, the number-one rule is you can't be a commander and be a negotiator at the same time: it just can't happen. And after actually going through it, I can understand why. Because you can't do that: there has to be a boss to go to ask.

ROBERT NIEMAN: A buffer.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right, to meet their demands and so forth. And if you are the commander, you can't do that. The buck stops with you.

So it's not a good situation, not to mention having to handle all the other logistics that would go along with being in command. After we got the hostages released, I figured that out. I mean, I couldn't even go outside to the little porta-potties that they had set up without getting asked 20,000 stuff that I didn't really care anything about. So after that, I realized I couldn't do both. That's why I asked Jess to take control of the negotiation after we got the hostages released: so I could tend to everything else that needed tending to.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Had he had recent training in negotiations?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No, he didn't have any. But I knew the type of person Jess was. He's real low-key; he could be articulate if he needed to be. He's the kind of guy that could talk to anybody on any level. He's very calm. I just knew he would do a good job at it.



Negotiating Post
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ROBERT NIEMAN: Gary Noesner: he's one of the FBI's chief negotiators. Did he help you?

CAPTAIN CAVER: He helped us a lot. Gary was the FBI's chief negotiator out of Quantico, Virginia. I had actually met Gary during the Branch Davidian siege in Waco. Gary, at that time, was also their chief negotiator, and he dealt with David Koresh and some of those folks. Gary was extremely helpful in giving me ideas [and] giving me advice on if I do certain things, this might happen. He did not want to see this incident end the way Waco did. So he was there to help me in any way he could, and since then, his friendship means a lot to me.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How big a shadow did Waco cast on this whole thing?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I guess it depends on whose perspective. As far as mine goes, it was always in the back of my mind. I knew all the repercussions:

everything that happened as a result of what the FBI did, the way that situation was handled, and all the flack and bad press that they got out of that. I did not want to see this happen to me or the DPS or [for] the Texas Rangers get a black eye like the FBI did. So, you know, I wanted to do everything I could possibly [do] to resolve this thing peacefully without that happening. But I was prepared to do that if it got down to it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you ever really consider a direct assault on the embassy?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Yes, we come very close to it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Are you at liberty to discuss...

CAPTAIN CAVER: Well, it just got to the point after a week of listening to this guy amble on and make his threats, no progress appeared [close] to being made. I got tired of it. I had all the people that I needed, all the resources with the tanks and the two armored personnel carriers. I knew that I could go in there, but it was just whether or not I wanted to face the heat that was going to go along with it. But I got to the point to where, had if they not surrendered that Saturday morning, I was prepared to start doing something that afternoon.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I was by coincidence at Company B's headquarters in Dallas, and Captain Sweeney (lieutenant at that time) was gathering up vests, bulletproof vests, and what not to send out there to you. Today, do all the Rangers have vests, because I don't guess you did then?

CAPTAIN CAVER: We had regular body armor but did not have what they call level 4 body armor, which will stop a .308 round or a .30-06 round. At that time we only had, I think, four sets per company, and they were located at each company's office. And whenever this thing happened and we knew that we were going to need more manpower, they [Rangers] immediately drove from wherever they were stationed to our location. They didn't have time to go by the company headquarters and get the equipment, so they loaded up some vans from some of these other company offices to transport all that equipment out there for us so we'd have it. You know, since this time, all the Rangers are issued the level 4 vests, too.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you ever consider you might have to bring in more than thirty-five Rangers-bring 'em all?

CAPTAIN CAVER: We were prepared to bring as many as needed. But with all the other agencies there and all the regular DPS troopers, there were over 300 officers there. So we knew we had plenty of help.

ROBERT NIEMAN: At this time, the colonel came in-I think it was Dudley Thomas-and Senior Ranger Captain Bruce Casteel came in. They're both your boss.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did they put any suggestions or try to take command?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No. I talked to Bruce quite a bit about what we had done already and what I felt like needed to be done. He was very supportive. They were there, as I found out later, really just to help us, to show support for all the DPS people that were there, and to provide us with whatever we needed to get the job done. They never tried to take over command or tell me I had done a bad job on anything, which made me feel good that they were allowing and had enough confidence in me and my ability to do what I needed to do.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You sent three men to the top of the ridge to do what? And do you remember who they were?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Buster Collins out of El Paso; Bobby Grubbs out of Brownwood; and I know Ronnie Watson was with DPS Special Crimes [and] he was there with them; and I think Johnny Billings out of Snyder was there. They were there because the location of this embassy was surrounded by high mountains, and it was down in a canyon. So we felt like if we could get somebody up on top of the mountain looking down into the canyon, they could be our eyes and be able to see what was going on, what they were doing, and that sort of thing. You know, later on it really helped out a lot because they were able to monitor their comings and goings and that sort of thing.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When you sent them up there, were you 100 percent sure there wasn't anybody up there?

CAPTAIN CAVER: No, we didn't have any idea. Again, we didn't know how many people were there. It was a very tense moment on every move that we made because we didn't have any idea who we were going to come across.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Is it true that McLaren had sent you a message demanding that you surrender to him? That's one of the stories I heard: that he relayed you a message demanding that you do the surrendering. Or is that one of those stories that just springs out of...

CAPTAIN CAVER: Well to be honest with you, I really can't recall. You know,

there was so much rhetoric and jargon that he was talking. I mean it could have happened; I really just don't remember at this point in time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: On the sixth day, I understand, you started moving in even closer to the compound. Can you describe?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Like I said earlier, I was getting to the point where I was getting frustrated, and I was getting tired of fooling with this guy. And we felt this was an approach that Gary Noesner with FBI had talked about. We had reached a stymie in the negotiation.

He [McLaren] got to the point where he got mad; he wouldn't even talk to us. So the only way we knew to break that barrier of communications was to make him call us. What we decided to do was move in closer with some of the tanks and some of the APCs [Armored Personnel Carriers]; that we had to make him get on the phone and call me. And it worked. If you listen the mayday call that I gave you, that was a result of what the mayday call was about. He felt like we were fixing to invade him right then.



Armored Vehicles from Smith County used in Standoff
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ROBERT NIEMAN: By this time, you had the compound completely sealed except by, I think, what was called the back door over the mountain and the desert.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When did you involve Julie Hopkins and Lisa Rutledge, stepdaughters of McLaren?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They were both Evelyn's daughters. I think they were both from around Dallas. We started getting phone calls from McLaren's tennis coach; from all kinds of people wanting to call and help. I'm not sure if that's what their true intentions were other than to gain publicity for themselves. But

anyway, both their daughters ended up driving out there [and] showed up at one of the roadblocks wanting to talk to their mother. They felt they could talk some sense into her to giving up. I think they had some grandchildren and that sort of thing. And we really thought that would be a good idea. Again, another rule of negotiation: you normally don't use a third party to negotiate for you. But it had gotten to the point to where I was almost willing to try anything that might work.

We were going to do a three-way conference call, get them on the phone, and then call in and let them talk to their mother. Earlier that day, we talked to Evelyn and told her that they [daughters] were there, they wanted to talk to her, and we were going to allow that. She said, "Well, let me think about it for awhile." She thought about it for a few hours and called us back, and she decided not to do it. I think that she [thought] that if she talked to them, that it would touch her heart, and she would end up going against McLaren and come on out. The daughters were devastated, obviously. They almost accused us of not letting them do it because we didn't want them to do it. That was certainly not the case, and we tried to explain that to them. But that was their role at that time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did they [ROT] have full utilities at the embassy, and did you ever cut them all off?

CAPTAIN CAVER: You know, again, that's one of those times when Murphy's Law was in full effect. We'd try to take over the phone lines, we tried to take over the electrical lines, but we never were able to do that. This particular junction box, the way the electrical lines were scattered out, we thought that we did shut off their power. We cut off somebody's electricity, but obviously it wasn't theirs. We did finally manage to get their internet access revoked so they couldn't communicate with the outside world over the internet. And we did finally capture their phone lines but still did not gain access to their electricity even though we knew they had power generators. So it really wasn't going to accomplish a whole lot.

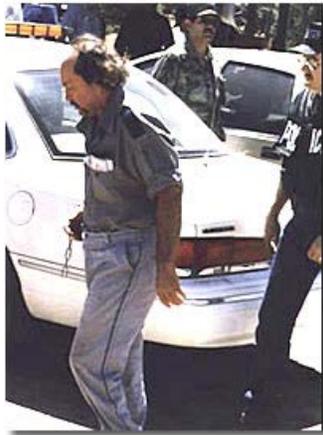
ROBERT NIEMAN: Up until the first [group] surrender, is there anything that should be added that I haven't asked about?

CAPTAIN CAVER: There's one part-again another funny moment, I guess-[involving] Robert Scheidt, who we originally released from jail, who drove back in, picked up Paulson and Keyes, and drove them back to the embassy. On Friday, he ended up walking up the road, supposedly to deliver one of these diplomatic pouches that we were constantly dealing with back and forth on communications basically. And, every time, these pouches would contain

just volumes of this legal jargon and all this stuff. It didn't mean anything to me. But he told McLaren he was going to deliver this diplomatic pouch to us [and] leave it in the middle of the road, which was how we did it all week. They'd leave it in the road, [and then] we'd send our armored personnel carrier down to pick it up and bring it back to me. We didn't even know he was coming out to bring this pouch. And all of a sudden, he comes walking up to one of our roadblocks, and it surprised everybody. And they weren't prepared for anything like that. I mean, it scared everybody, and we didn't know what was happening. Of course, we immediately took custody of him. We stripped all of his clothes off, and the only thing we had available to redress him with was some TDC [Texas Department of Corrections] guards had some extra uniforms. So we put this guy in a TDC uniform.

We then put everybody on alert around the compound because we felt like if he could walk up there without anybody knowing, what's going to prevent the rest of those guys from ambushing us and attacking us? So we went on full alert and put out guards and posts.

Scheidt told us, "I've had enough of this. I could see the handwriting on the wall-what's fixing to happen next-and I don't want any part of that." And, of course, McLaren was furious after he found out that he [Scheidt] came up and gave himself up to us.



Robert Scheidt in Custody
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ROBERT NIEMAN: That was the first crack in McLaren's so-called armor.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What was the next?

CAPTAIN CAVER: That was Friday when Scheidt turned himself in. Again, we kept working on Evelyn. We felt like she was the weak link in the bunch, and if we could convince her to come out, then the whole thing would crumble. And sure enough, we talked to Evelyn late into Friday night and told her about her daughters being there, and she said, "Let me sleep on it. I'll give you an answer in the morning."

I'm assuming she talked to McLaren about it and got everything worked out. She said, "I'll call you at eight o'clock in the morning." Eight rolls around and we hadn't heard from her. Nine o'clock. It got close to ten o'clock and still hadn't heard from her. So we finally pick up the phone and call her. I asked her, "What are you going to do?"

She said, "I'm going to come out." She had been doing typical ladies' stuff. She was in the bathroom primping, doing her hair and her makeup, and all this stuff. She said, "Well I'm fixing to drive out." She got in her little S-10 Blazer; started driving up the road to our forward command post. And, of course, she was bombarded with Rangers and other officers to make sure that her vehicle wasn't booby-trapped. She wasn't carrying any weapons or explosives or that sort of thing.

But the biggest thing with [Richard] McLaren then is that she [Evelyn] be treated with dignity and respect, and she was not mistreated at all. I assured



him that would be the case. We wouldn't disrespect her at all. And come to find out later, that was a big factor in the whole deal, and I gave him my word again. I wasn't going to promise him anything that I couldn't live up to. I told him that we would have to handcuff her: that's just standard procedure. I said we're not going to slam her on the ground or on the hood and search her.

Evelyn McLaren and Texas Ranger Malone ©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

Once we got her in custody, we brought her out just like I told him that we would. McLaren wanted her to call back on the phone and tell him she made it out okay and give him a report of how she was treated and that sort of thing. And I knew that was going to be a real important role and, sure enough, it

was. She told him everything happened just like I told her. We allowed her to call back in. And at that point in time, she tried to convince him again that he needed to go ahead and give up.

That is when she brought the final paperwork out again: all these legal documents with this cease-fire agreement. Terrance O'Rourke was there; he met with her also. I told him, "Look, she may be your client, but we're fixing to interview her without you. I don't care anything about her rights at this point in time. This is something that we've got to do whether you like it or not." And we went through with the deal.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What was his response?

CAPTAIN CAVER: He didn't really comment much. I didn't have to let him even be there: that was a generosity on my part. We went over the cease-fire agreement. There were something like twenty stipulations in this agreement. And I looked at those and said, "There's no way that I can do every one of these. I don't have the authority, I don't have the jurisdiction, and I don't have the power to do this." I don't even recall what some of them were, but it was just totally out of my area. I got with the D.A., Mr. Valadez, and I talked to Chief Casteel again (he was already gone [back to Austin] at that time). I called him and we went over these different stipulations. We marked through everything I couldn't do.

I talked to her [Evelyn McLaren] after we did that. I said, "Look, this is what I can do. This is why I can't do these other things. I'm going to sign it right now."

She called back in [to the embassy] and says, "He signed it." "We've won" is basically what she thought. And that's all it took: that's all he wanted to come out. A couple of hours later, he came out. McLaren and Otto started walking up the road to give themselves up.

And after we got them into custody, I said, "Where's everybody else. Where's the two Paulsons and Keyes and Matson?"



Confiscated Weapons
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He [McLaren] said, "They didn't want to give up the way we did. They [Paulsons] want to do it in a military fashion," which was sit down by the flagpole [and] put their weapons in a semi-circle. I wasn't in the military, so I don't know, but that's supposedly some kind of military way of doing it. And sure enough, I got with my guys up on the top of the ridge, and they could see them. They were doing exactly what they said they were going to do. With the exception of two of them. They started, you know, running out the back.

ROBERT NIEMAN: That would be Matson...

CAPTAIN CAVER: Matson and Keyes. I decided there's nothing I could do about it at the time. Let's take what we can get, take control of that, and then we'll deal with those two guys later.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Only two of your people were injured: Troopers Billy Horton and Sylvia Cardona.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right. They had a wreck. One of them had a broken arm: that was the most severe.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay. McLaren drives out and surrenders. Did you have a conversation with him?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I met them as they drove up to the command post. He wanted to meet me and shake my hand. He was very cordial, very respectful to me. There was actually one photo that I have of my shaking his hand even though his hands are handcuffed behind him. He wanted to shake my hand because I lived up to everything I promised him, and he appreciated that. The respect and the dignity issue came in effect again. White Eagle did the same thing. They didn't resist at all; they were very helpful.



Capt. Caver takes McLaren into Custody
©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

ROBERT NIEMAN: But it's not over. You still got Matson and Keyes. What's happening with these two? CAPTAIN CAVER: Well the problem was, at that time, we were already aware that they had booby traps scattered around the compound or that embassy area because of some prior video footage from some news people that showed some gasoline type bombs and pipe bombs. So we knew we had to deal with explosives. We had already called the EOD, Explosive Ordinance Disposal, team out of Fort Bliss.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Which is in El Paso.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Yes, El Paso. They came out to assist us in dealing with the explosives. We also had a guy by the name of Andy Glasscock with the Midland Police Department and another guy from Ector County Sheriff's Office who were bomb techs.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you remember who they were?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Andy Glasscock and I don't remember the other guy's name. He still works there. Anyway, they came out to help us, and Paulson agreed to stay behind because he was primarily the one that built most of the bombs and actually placed them in various locations. He agreed to stay behind to show all of our people where the bombs were so they could either detonate or disable them. And sure enough, had we gone in like I wanted to do, we probably would of got some people hurt. I don't know how severely-we had the armored carriers-but still there was one bomb in particular that was placed right along side the roadway that was like a five-gallon propane bottle with a pipe bomb attached to it. The experts told me had that gone off, it may not have killed anybody, but it would certainly have disabled that APC and

probably given them some bad headaches to say the least.

So because of the bomb issue, we couldn't go after Matson and Keyes right away. We had all that stuff to deal [with] and we didn't know where all the explosives were.



Concealed Improvised Explosive Devices
Pipe Bomb (L) and Propane Bomb (R)
©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay, let's follow Matson and Keyes for a while. What happens with Matson?

CAPTAIN CAVER: This was on Saturday. It was Sunday we got on the trail. The TDC had their tracking dogs there. I deployed Ranger Coy Smith and Calvin Cox to go with the tracking dogs and TDC personnel so they could deal with it in the event that they came across these guys because normally TDC folks, they're armed, but they're not really licensed peace officers. We wanted somebody there that was trained in dealing with these types of folks.



Manhunt with Texas Dept.

of Corrections Dogs
©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

ROBERT NIEMAN: Texas Department of Corrections: they run the prisons.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right. They got on a trail and actually ended up flushing Matson out.

ROBERT NIEMAN: He had fired on the tracking dogs, I believe.

CAPTAIN CAVER: After they flushed him out, some of the dogs found him and tried to bite him. He started shooting at the dogs and actually killed one of the TDC dogs. At that point in time, we heard the gunfire. We tried to zero in on their location and, again, this is such rough terrain, mountainous and trees, we couldn't exactly pinpoint where they were. So we had a helicopter flying over with Ranger Gene Kea in it with his Mini-14, 223 rifle. And when we finally pinpointed and could see where they were, we're still hearing the gunfire, which is a very eerie sound coming from a place when you don't even really know where it's coming from. You can hear the echoes. Ranger Kea returned fire in the area where Matson was. I guess Matson, according to the people on the ground, looked up and saw what was happening, so he starts firing at the helicopter, and that's when a guy by the name of Eric Pechacek, who works for TDC on the dog team, actually fired the fatal shot from ... I think it was a 270 deer rifle that killed Matson.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Matson's down; he's dead. Now Keyes.

CAPTAIN CAVER: We look for a couple more days and can't find Keyes anywhere. It's kind of like finding a needle in a haystack: it's almost impossible. There were a lot of snakes; a lot of treacherous terrain. I was afraid we were going to get somebody else hurt just looking for the guy, so I decided just to call it off. He'd eventually surface. We knew that there were some sympathizers living in the area, and we felt like they would try to help him. About four months later, he was finally captured just outside of Huntsville on I-45.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I think it [was] around Sam Houston State Park?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: A personal comment: I was in Houston during this four month period, and I was visiting with the Rangers, and one of them said, "If he

[Keyes] got out of the desert alive, we know where his folks are. He will show up sooner or later.” And sure enough, he did.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Sure enough, he did.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Didn't McLaren call upon Keyes to surrender?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Not that I can recall.



Richard Keyes Arrest
©2004 Capt. Barry Caver

ROBERT NIEMAN: Whatever happened to the flag that they were flying at the embassy?

CAPTAIN CAVER: It was taken down by the SWAT team once they finally infiltrated that area. It was placed into evidence along with everything else.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you know where it's at now?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I guess it's with all the other evidence in the district clerk's office.

ROBERT NIEMAN: From start to finish, how long did the standoff last?

CAPTAIN CAVER: The initial thing lasted seven days, and we stayed a couple more days looking for Keyes. So about nine days all together.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How did the media act during this? And your relationship with them?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Mike Cox was the DPS public information officer who dealt with them directly. Mike would come in for daily briefings, [and] I would give him what information I wanted him to have to relay to the press. But for the most part, I think it went pretty well. Of course you know the press is never satisfied: they always want more and be able to see more. He [Cox] finally made arrangements to have a contingent of four or five, however many it was,

to actually come down to the command post to actually film some of the things that were going on and to see some things. But it was one of those deals where if you don't feed the sharks something, they're going to start making it up on their own.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well, on the whole, do you think the media treated it fairly?

CAPTAIN CAVER: I really do. Like I said, I did catch a little criticism later for dealing with the terrorists as far as making the exchange of prisoners for the hostages. But you can't argue with the results. The heat didn't last long.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well, I'll reiterate what you said: "Where were they going to go?"

CAPTAIN CAVER: Right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And he [Keyes] could have been out the next day on a misdemeanor bond anyway.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Exactly.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And where was he going to go?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Once we put it to them like that, they knew that they didn't think about that either.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Were they tried in federal or state court?

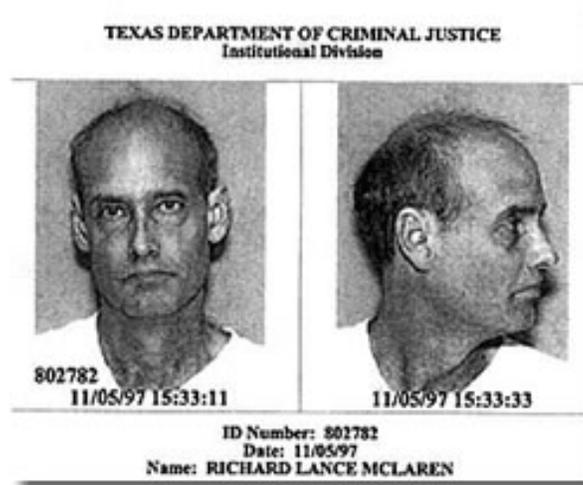
CAPTAIN CAVER: They were all tried in state court.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What kind of sentences did they end up with?

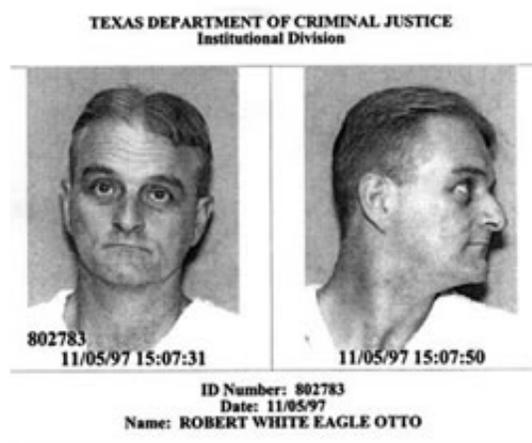
CAPTAIN CAVER: McLaren got life imprisonment with a \$10,000 fine. White Eagle Otto got 99 years with a \$10,000 fine. Greg Paulson got 99 because he's the one that actually shot Mr. Rowe. His wife got 50 years, I believe, and Keyes, I think, got 99.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What about Scheidt?

CAPTAIN CAVER: He actually was not prosecuted because he obviously wasn't there when it happened: he was in jail. And then he went back in [the compound] and then ended up surrendering himself later. He wasn't really involved in it.



Richard McLaren
Courtesy Texas Dept. of Corrections



Robert Otto
Courtesy Texas Dept. of Corrections

ROBERT NIEMAN: I teased you one time that you ran them out of West Texas into our back yard over in Overton, Texas, which is right outside Longview [where I live], deep East Texas. Is this part of the same ROT or...?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Again, it's one of those splintered factions, but as far as I know, they're all basically the same, have the same beliefs, and that sort of thing.

ROBERT NIEMAN: We really appreciate you doing that, Barry.

CAPTAIN CAVER: Had to run them out of West Texas.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How is law enforcement in general and the Rangers in particular— how are you looking at the militia problem today?

CAPTAIN CAVER: They pose a threat, to a certain extent, but I don't think with international terrorism the way it is right now—I think that's our primary focus now.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well that's a whole different story. Any comments you'd like [to] make, because that's about all I've got.

CAPTAIN CAVER: You know, there are a lot of lessons that I try to relate to the other police officers that I talk to about this: Don't ever be afraid to ask for help when you need it [and] don't let your egos get in the way of making good decisions. You've got to be able to share intelligence information about these things or anything else, for that matter.

And I think that unfortunately after 9/11, the FBI and the CIA have certainly caught the brunt of a lot of that problem. And I think that as we work as a team in law enforcement, it's not me against you, it's not my department against your department, it's us in law enforcement against them, the terrorists. We've got to be able to work together and share information to solve the thing. That's the only way it's going to happen.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Were you given any special awards [for this action]?

CAPTAIN CAVER: Sheriff Steve Bailey and Wofford and I all went to the state legislature. Sheriff Bailey and I both got—I don't know if it's a house proclamation or senate proclamation, maybe one of each, for the job that I did personally and the job that we did as a whole at that particular event, and it praised us for everything that happened. And I have those documents somewhere in my memorabilia at the house and, of course, obviously those mean a lot to me.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You got another, and the public doesn't know about it. At the 1997 Texas Ranger Reunion [held annually at the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in Waco], then-Governor George W. Bush came down and gave a speech. After the speech, there was a long line to shake his hand. By pure chance, I was standing right behind you in that line. When we got to Governor Bush, he leaned over from the waist, took your hand, and spoke to you very quietly. I remember it just like it happened yesterday. He took your hand and said, "Barry, thank you for what you did."

CAPTAIN CAVER: Yeah, as a matter of fact, I actually talked to him on the

phone the Saturday after it ended. He called the command post and told me that he appreciated the job we did, and that meant a lot. And my parents were actually in line with me as well. I forgot about that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Captain, that's all I've got. Is there's anything else? If not, I really do appreciate it.

CAPTAIN CAVER: No problem, I can't think of anything else.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Speaking for everybody, Texans and Americans, you and everyone under your command did a fine job, and we thank you.

