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**Robert R. Martin**  
**February 5, 2002**

Interview conducted by Janet McDonnell  
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
SEPTEMBER 11TH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with  
ROBERT R. MARTIN  
Chief Ranger, Northeast Region

Conducted by  
Janet McDonnell, Ph.D.  
February 5, 2002  
Washington, D.C.

## START OF TAPE

Janet McDonnell: It's February 5, 2002, and I am here with Bob Martin who is the regional chief ranger for the Northeast Region. We're here today at the Main Interior Building to talk about the September 11th terrorist attacks and the aftermath. Probably the best place to start is for you to tell me how you first learned about the attack and what your immediate response was.

Robert Martin: I had had about an hour-long meeting with our local park police captain, Jimmy Moore, in my office. And we kind of made the decision that okay, that's long enough for any meeting and he had left to go over to his [office]. And within a matter of seconds, he was back in my office. I remember joking with him saying, "Jimmy, I love you man, but I've got to get some work done." He said, "Boss, you need to come over." I said, "Jimmy, come on." You know sometimes we have little tricks and little things that we do in our office, kind of camaraderie. And he said, "No, seriously. You need to come over and look at this."

Robert Martin: Whenever I got over to the little conference room that they had, the television was on. And I was looking at the first tower that had been hit, the smoke that was billowing up. And a group had gathered there, a number of agents, the Park Police captain, myself, and a couple other folks from nearby and we were just kind of, a little bewildered. You know, what was this? What happened? Gee, that's quite a beautiful day for a plane to just go off course, you know, and hit a tower. And then a few minutes after that a second plane had hit the towers and we realized this was something that was, obviously, terrorism oriented.

Robert Martin: And it was interesting to just kind of go back just a little bit. I just had been hired as the new regional chief ranger. The position had been vacant for about seven years. And all of my group, the folks that are in Boston, and the folks that are in Philadelphia had just had a retreat the last week in August up in Roosevelt-Vanderbilt. And we talked about all of the things that we needed to do, what we were doing right, what we needed to pay more attention to. And we made the decision there that we really needed to have a person focused on terrorism, physical security, and personnel security. Just in that we decided that was the major void just given the realities of the world and the way things were. And the next week I moved into my house and the following week was 9/11. So, we had just made the organizational decision that one of the park police captains up in Boston would actually serve as the counter terrorism physical security section for the region.

Robert Martin: So, after we went through with our initial shock of this whole thing, we started to just ask questions. Me, being new to the region, I was quickly asking some of the others, okay, what is the normal protocol for this sort

of thing? What is the emergency operations plan? Jimmy Moore had been new also. He had only been in the office about a month longer than I. So, we just kind of started just brainstorming about what kind of things needed to be done. We actually established a quick little incident command team there using the staff that had, you know, that will teach people to come into the office and watch the television. We ended up with folks from interpretations and operations, and then our little group there, the law enforcement group. And we set up an incident command post there.

Janet McDonnell: So, what sort of issues were you discussing? What sort of needs were you highlighting at that point?

Robert Martin: Well, one, we knew in New York, we have an awful lot of park units in the immediate area, so we were trying to get an idea of what kind of, how close is that to park units? What kind of issues should we be thinking of, be aware of? How do we go about contacting folks? At the time Marie Rust had been out of state at a, I think it was a general superintendents' conference, something that she was down in the southeast somewhere. And Dale Ditmanson, who is the associate regional director for operations, was off. So, we were just kind of starting by the seat of our pants, to where we should go and what we should do.

Robert Martin: And so, we started, I called Washington and talked to the chief ranger down here, just to get a feel for, if he has any thoughts, if there were any indications of what else might be going on. I continued to watch the television. We just started formulating a strategy of okay, if there is a decision made to close parks and we'll start doing it in such a manner. We ended up spending a little bit of time just trying to figure out a grand plan. About that time, Dale Ditmanson came in from being off at his home. And he talked a little bit more of a long term strategy, but not sure exactly how this is going to relate, but maybe we ought to think about activating our Northeast Regional Risk Management Team and put them on standby or just go ahead and alert them that we would like for them to come in and help manage the incident.

Robert Martin: Shortly thereafter, we started hearing indications of other things that were going on, like the Pentagon, the Flight 93 aftermath. So, we started hearing from the Park Service that then there was going to be a shutdown, and so we helped with notifications of the shutdown. I sent out an email message to all of the chief rangers, just to heighten their awareness that this has happened, to be thinking about what steps they should take to help facilitate an evacuation of the parks, and also to secure the parks, and what types of thing that they should be looking at, thinking of. And that this isn't, obviously, operation normal.

- Robert Martin: So, we ended up being involved in making phone calls and helping out with different things. We asked all of the parks to report their available resources, thinking that maybe we'd start getting calls to actually send rangers and or equipment to different places to help out with the incident. And it's hard to imagine, but by that time the day was just pretty much shot. We made a decision that myself and Jimmy Moore would stay over in the command post that night and just be available, not knowing whether we would have more terrorist incidents and whether it would involve national parks and all.
- Robert Martin: The other folks left. We started getting a fair amount of press. We set up an information officer, one of our interpreters, our managers, had volunteered to help out with public affairs. So, we were fielding some calls. There were different things that were coming in about, are the park service areas going to be used as mortuaries. We started hearing information about the Federal Hall and the ranger that was there that was pulling people in off of the streets and giving them first aid. We got a hold of the Park Police and we asked the Park Police if they would be able to send some people over to help that one lone protection ranger that works there at Federal Hall and that we knew had hundreds of people there. Some needed first aid. There was an issue of caring for that group. It's just literally right around the corner from Ground Zero. So, the Park Police said, yes, they would send some folks over. We heard some reports about some damage to Federal Hall.
- Robert Martin: And so, we overnighted. There wasn't an awful lot that happened, just a lot of general information. And then in the wee hours in the morning, a call came from Shenandoah saying the decision had been made to reopen the parks. So, we then facilitated notification of all of the parks through a phone tree with superintendents of the different sites.
- Janet McDonnell: Before we go to the next day, I'd like to ask a couple of questions. Were you also seeking information about NPS personnel in that first afternoon?
- Robert Martin: We had asked. There were general messages about accounting for your people and what not.
- Janet McDonnell: As well as what's the status of your resources, or was that part of it at all?
- Robert Martin: Yes, we weren't too terribly concerned about other than Manhattan Sites was the only facility in our region that was kind of right there and impacted by it. We did make them contact if there was anybody that was missing that type of thing. And folks were reporting back that everybody was accounted for. And so, we weren't terribly concerned. It was just the Manhattan Site that was right there. There were other sites that are around the Federal Hall, but we knew the ranger was okay, and we had

communications and were hearing from them, but then there was nothing reported. We weren't overly concerned with any personnel.

Janet McDonnell: And also, you mentioned that one of the first things you did in that early period—that you contacted Dennis Burnett. My question is, with phone lines down in the Washington area, how were you communicating with—how much of a challenge was that? I guess some incoming calls were getting through.

Robert Martin: There was initially no problem. Obviously, then when I really started evacuating everyone, but this was still all of the New York stuff was playing out. I don't think the Pentagon had really played out yet. It was just kind of immediate, did you see that yet? Yes. Okay, I need to send out a message to the parks, you know, the heads-up kind of thing.

Janet McDonnell: What kind of guidance were you receiving from Dale Ditmanson or from WASO other than, we need information about the status of park units?

Robert Martin: Nothing more than that there was going to be a general closedown, so really nothing much from Washington. Really, I think things were starting to crank up here and all of the full-bore activity related to events here. Dale was just more of a, okay, let's think about this. Let's get some professionals to come in and help. We're going to have to bridge things in the interim, serve as the communications wing for the northeast. And there was interacting with Shenandoah during the night, touching base on a few things. They had received a few calls of suspicious nature that we found interesting and we passed that information on to the FBI. Interestingly enough, relating to folks that were seen in south Florida, that weeks later the investigation ended up centered into the folks down in south Florida.

Janet McDonnell: I heard that.

Robert Martin: So, the info was just passed on to the FBI and we just let them handle that. And just a few general touch base calls going into the wee hours of the morning.

Janet McDonnell: How would you assess communication? It sounds like you are saying they were pretty effective. You were able to get the information you needed and convey it. Is that accurate?

Robert Martin: Some of the phone systems up in the New York area were out. And with that, I think a few of the email systems had failed. So, I wouldn't say that it was perfect by any means. And to rely on phones or rely on email is not really the best. I mean obviously it would be better if we just had an ability to push a switch and talk to people on the radio throughout about what was going on.

- Janet McDonnell: Did you have the GETS card, the Government Emergency Telecommunications System? Were you keyed into that?
- Robert Martin: No.
- Janet McDonnell: Also, you talked a little bit about the initial planning. Does the region have a continuity operations plan? Is that something you pulled out and looked at?
- Robert Martin: We looked at that for both the support office and for the region. But most of that kind of relates to something happening to the regional office. And since this really didn't affect a closure of the regional office other than the administrative closure, people being sent home, it really didn't have a whole lot of bearing on this event as it was transpiring. We called in an IT [Information Technology] specialist to help set up a command center with this all Risk Management Team that were coming in, the Type 2 Team. We thought it would be best for them to really have adequate facilities where you could spread out and work. So, we converted one of the training rooms there in the Philadelphia support office into a command post. And one of the IT specialists came in and worked most of the night getting in all of the computers and telephones and all of that stuff set up, so whenever the team came in they were just ready to go right into their space and start working.
- Janet McDonnell: I read somewhere that you were the incident commander until the team arrived. Is that accurate?
- Robert Martin: Yes, that's what we had determined.
- Janet McDonnell: I'm just sort of looking for the basics here as to how the team was mobilized. Is that something that you sent a message to Shenandoah or how does that happen?
- Robert Martin: Yes. Actually, we had had a discussion with Dale as soon as he arrived. We had called Rick Brown, who is the incident commander for that team. And we talked to him about what was going on, what our thoughts were. Should we, shouldn't we. Is this overkill? We didn't know how it was going to play out. And then we just ultimately decided that let's go ahead with this team.
- Robert Martin: He had a short team. I don't believe he had a—I want to say he was short an admin person, and maybe a—yes, but we didn't have the full complement, a full Type 2 Team. So yes, then we asked Shenandoah to actually affect the callout of the group. Several team members were actually from the Shenandoah. Paul Pfenninger and Chester Mikus.

- Robert Martin: And I had worked with them during my time at Shenandoah, so it was good to know who was coming in and I had known Rick Brown from my days at the district ranger at Shenandoah. So, it's good to know that now the reinforcements were coming. Again, we really didn't have any idea of what the long-term implications of any of this and of, would there be possibly additional events.
- Janet McDonnell: Were there any challenges in bringing them in? Maybe they could all get there by car because the planes were grounded?
- Robert Martin: No, there was, they would all just do driving. And we had communications with them, where we made reservations for them, where we would need them, and what the plan was, and that sort of thing. They arrived, and then Jimmy and I after some briefings and what not, we went home and it was a pretty long, it was like 28 hours or something we had been at work. And I remember walking out and going down along Independence Park and out onto Market Street and there was a jet flying overhead.
- Robert Martin: And we had had conversations with the folks here in D.C. and they said that they had just had a scare. A plane had made a sharp turn from up in around Canada, and it was heading south, and they had no idea of what its intentions were or whatever, what its destination would be. And I remember walking down Market Street and hearing a jet overhead. I remember kind of looking up and I looked around and everybody else was doing the same thing. It's like all of a sudden, out of all of the noise and hubbub of downtown Philadelphia, we're aware of this one jet that's up in the sky.
- Robert Martin: So, the time after that was just kind of liaising with the Incident Command Team, touching base with them every day, starting to formulate some strategies for the parks. The icon parks were kind of established as being potential high-risk areas, particularly the Statue, Independence and Boston.
- Janet McDonnell: How was that determination made? Or had it previously been made, the determination as to which parks were considered icon parks?
- Robert Martin: We actually had—Fort McHenry was doing some additional security. Sandy Hook was doing some as well. Sandy Hook, because they're next to the Earle Weapons Station. And Minute Man was doing some additional security, because they're next to an Air Force base up there where there was a common boundary that did not have a fence with an agreement that the Park Service has with the Air Force that there's a trail system that goes right through there. So, they asked the Air Force not to put a fence up.



- Janet McDonnell: So there had been some thought previously as to which units might be more at risk than others?
- Robert Martin: No, I wouldn't want to say that. I think it was just kind of a, the days were kind of moving along and we started having direct contact with the different chief rangers and what not. There was some decision, and I can't tell you exactly when it happened, that there were certain hard identified icons from DOI's opinion. And in talking to Steve Calvery at a meeting on 9th of January this year, he said that that was based on a survey that had been done in the mid-90s where threat assessments were done on federal facilities and then all of these kind of rolled up into a big list, a big master list of what are really the number one priority for these at the Interior Department.
- Janet McDonnell: Who is Steve Calvery?
- Robert Martin: He's the director for law enforcement and security at Interior.
- Janet McDonnell: So, it was a combination of sort of established areas of concern and then the unfolding situation.
- Robert Martin: Yes.
- Janet McDonnell: Okay, great.
- Robert Martin: And I can't do a real breakdown day-by-day.
- Janet McDonnell: Oh, no, no, sure.
- Robert Martin: Just subsequent, but there's an awful lot of.
- Janet McDonnell: I imagine it is sort of a blur at one point.
- Robert Martin: There was an awful lot of concern over do we have the right kind of security, like in Boston we're hearing little bits and pieces of somebody looks like they're profiling the park of middle eastern descent. Another group of folks were arrested right outside of the park, who had connection with other folks who had been arrested by the FBI. And different little bits and pieces of Intel, and then working with the different parks to get, kind of get them support and clearly, they could only do so much with their existing staff. So, then we started to spend time on mobilizing resources from outside of the area in to help those areas.
- Janet McDonnell: Actually, I'd enjoy hearing about that process a little bit, the procedures for identifying needs and then shifting resources both within the region and bringing resources in from outside. Is there any set process for that?

Robert Martin: Initially, we were just making do with what we had. But then it became clear that we needed to really get - I mean people were starting to work really long shifts. They were starting to burn out. I'm talking like in a course of a week or two. We had been trying to have some interactions with the different teams that had been set up here in Washington, but there really wasn't a whole lot of really like, "follow me boys" kind of stuff. There wasn't a lot of leadership that came out of that group. And from what I understand, just to plop the Incident Command Team down in the middle of all of these different bureaucracies and different ways that people do business, some people are comfortable with incident command, other people aren't. Some understand. Some don't. There are phobias of control and stuff.

Robert Martin: From my perspective we never really had the true leadership out of Washington. And that's not to be damning on anybody. But I mean we were asking things like, okay, where's the intelligence data? What do we have to go by? What kind of things are we using to make our decisions on staffing and coverage? What are the threats that are out there? We never really got an awful lot of that. And so we ended up bringing in some agents from within our own region and we put them into this counter terrorism task force that had been set up in Philadelphia and Boston, one, to do our part to help with facilitating the information flow into these places. There were just hundreds of calls coming in constantly about different possible suspects, different things. Different, can you follow up on this or that, I think our neighbors, a lot of that kind of stuff. Plus we figured that by just having some agents there, if there was anything that came through intelligence-wise that could potentially affect one of our park units, that we thought the information would quickly to, hey, we've got a park unit over here. Let's get that.

END OF SIDE A

START OF SIDE B

Janet McDonnell: I did want to ask you about interaction with other agencies. I assume there was some coordination with say the FBI, local law enforcement, and that kind of thing. And you were just mentioning the special agents were well able to communicate then with their counterparts in those other agencies.

Robert Martin: Right because they're trained investigators. They just have a natural ability to get into and understand and talk the language. They're kind of a good match for these counter-terrorism task forces that are really a mish mash of all of the different federal agencies that are placed in some of the larger cities across the country. And then they basically filter through incoming

calls, develop intelligence, develop leads, go out and investigate particular issues. Try to confirm if in fact this person merits additional—

Janet McDonnell: Who would they feed that back to, the parks as well, the parks that maybe had initially reported an incident or suspicious situation or something like that?

Robert Martin: That was part of their charge, was to bring information in. There wasn't an awful lot that was generated from parks because things had been quiet, thank goodness, for post 9/11. But, yes, that was part of that, to put things into the system and then to help out with information and to be there should information need to come out so that we could put it out in a timely manner.

Janet McDonnell: Was there, we were talking this whole area of shifting resources and in your case, I guess, primarily ranger resources to meet their requirements within the region. And I was wondering if you encountered some reluctance on the part of parks or park superintendents to release those resources because, I suppose primarily because the situation was so uncertain, and they wouldn't necessarily know whether there might be future threats against their own parks. Or did you find park superintendents really willing to say, yes, take what you need?

Robert Martin: I think, initially, most of the parks already had established relationships with other parks in their vicinity. So, Boston, obviously, had a direct relationship with Minute Man, with Cape Cod, with Springfield, the parks that are in their surrounding areas. Similarly, Independence already had a relationship with Valley Forge, and Gettysburg, and Assateague. So, I think the initial response was simply professional chief rangers just sending resources to help out. And I don't recall much grouching on the part of superintendents. I think they all were aware that this is just trying times and we can be in this boat needing these kinds of things as well.

Robert Martin: A bit later on, things changed a bit as SET teams were going out on their third or fourth rotation and they were kind of being overused, and there was concern about their health and well-being. And some superintendents definitely started holding back from that. So just their overall coordination aspects, we were making do there for some time and then we realized that we needed to get a larger pool of people to help out. And Shenandoah served as the central hub to do what they have done for years in the fire program, to get bodies to where they need to be in order to accomplish the mission. So, they did a really good job of helping us. The parks would keep in touch with Shenandoah, what the needs were, when the rotations would be, and so we were kind of running with it on a local basis, a regional basis.

- Robert Martin: And then it kind of quickly got to the point where there were a lot of resources across the country that were starting to have needs, and elsewhere outside of our region there were really large programs that were developing namely at the BOR dam sites, some of the major dams. And their needs were large, I mean like 15 and 20 rangers. Here at the BOR Main Interior Building, there were a large number of things that were needed.
- Robert Martin: So, the regional chief rangers got to talking and I had been asked by them to come in and work with Rick Gale, who was putting together the initial strategic assessments of the National Park Service. And it was interesting because, actually, there are several other things to talk about, but anyhow, working with Rick over the Columbus Day weekend, holiday weekend, and we developed this strategic assessment of where we were, how we could affectively allocate resources on a very large scale. Interior was trying to do things where they were just directly calling parks, trying to do the best they could with the system that they had in place, but it was kind of fumbling and it wasn't very efficient. And so, to Rick Gale's credit, they brought a group of people together and said, "Let's try to come up with a better way of doing business."
- Janet McDonnell: Is this some multi-region coordinating group?
- Robert Martin: Yes, right. That was the result. So, a bunch of us went out to Denver, had meetings, training, and then the following week we actually started working on allocation of resources. We started spending time getting familiar with everybody's site, what the issues were, and we developed a priority criteria so that we could deal with effectively based on threats and risks, potential for loss of property and life, and assimilate all of that into a fashion. Then we could make really informed decisions as to what with limited resources are truly the highest priorities for these sites that we were assigned to look at.
- Robert Martin: And since then it's just been a really cool situation. We've brought in the national fire dispatching community and they do that all of the time for fire. And they have individual coordination centers that are set up across the country that our rangers and our chief rangers are very used to dealing with, because that's how they feed rangers into the firefighting system. So here they're just using the same system to feed protection rangers into the homeland security system.
- Robert Martin: So, things have been working out well. We at first had conferences calls every day. We're down to a one-hour conference call on Mondays and Thursdays. We're focusing a lot of our energies now on trying to get all of these sites some type of permanent staffing situation so that then we can get out of having details going into the different sites.

- Robert Martin: One of the things I wanted to mention was we set up a meeting, I think it was Friday after 9/11, with some of the New York Harbor. They were having a general superintendent meeting up there and a number of us drove. As we were getting ready to leave downtown Philly, we had gotten a request from Paul Anderson, who's the deputy regional director up in Alaska. And, apparently, Paul's daughter, I want to say Sarah, I'm not certain of the name. I think it was Sarah. She was actually in the tower, training. And she was stuck in downtown New York, in that all of the bridges and everything were closed. And Paul asked if there was some way, we might be able to get her out to another airport so that she could get home.
- Robert Martin: And so, we coordinated with the Park Police. And the Park Police sent a couple of officers up, picked her up, threw her on a boat, drove her across the harbor, and we brought her out. She has a very interesting story. I don't know if you've heard it, but she was on the sixty something floor of the second tower and she made it out. A friend of hers was not so lucky. And so, there's an interesting family story there. I called Paul that evening, whenever I made it home, and said, "You've got a good one here. She seems like she's doing well with it." Paul was very appreciative of what the Park Police and we had done.
- Janet McDonnell: Can you tell me some ways that rangers provided support to Park Police? I guess the reason I'm asking is that when we talked to Einar Olsen, he said that usually it's the other way around. The situation is reversed. But in this event, at least in the National Capital Region, that the rangers in terms of helping protect the monuments and such, the rangers really filled in behind the Park Police. And I wondered how that might have been in your region as well.
- Robert Martin: The only thing that comes to mind for us was that the Fire Island National Seashore sent over rangers in a patrol boat to help with the effective closures in the New York Harbor. And they interfaced with the Park Police patrol operations, and basically provided security all around the Statue, Ellis Island, and helped with the closure the whole bay there. So, they were literally right there at Ground Zero. There's a lot of really amazing pictures that were taken during those tours with the Park Police, Park Ranger boats, and with the backdrop of the former towers smoldering.
- Janet McDonnell: Did you see any new roles, unique roles for Park Rangers in the aftermath of this event?
- Robert Martin: Well, I think that we've definitely rallied to the need for homeland security. With the Bureau of Reclamation not really having a law enforcement program, except the only site I think they have is Hoover,

Hoover Dam, with the police department. We've definitely been working closely with them on those most significant, high threat, high risk dams, six of them right now where we're providing a lot of rangers and resources to them, too.

Robert Martin: I think, and it's interesting I had a conversation with Marie [Rust] about this when she came back from her tour in New York. And people look differently at their protection staffs now. She felt that. She definitely felt it when she met with the ranger that was up in Federal Hall. The rangers, the multi-skilled folks that they are, you know, they're the medics, the fire fighters, the search and rescue people, and law enforcement officers. And I think that we went through a time there when everybody was not very secure in their personal being, their workplace. And I think just the presence of a protection ranger, knowing that they're there probably made people more conscious and aware of rangers than ever before. All of them had been given instructions to maintain a high profile, to be out there and looking. This isn't the time to be working on reports. We need to really be in a high profile. And so, I've heard that from a number of folks that they definitely feel differently about protection rangers.

Janet McDonnell: That they inspired a new sense of security?

Robert Martin: Well, that they are there and that is part of their mission. And many parks participated in additional training for their people. Some of the directions we put out to the parks, this is the good time to dust off your continuity of operations plan, update your emergency operations plan, your bomb plan, and more importantly to make sure all of your employees are aware of what they're to do as their part and role in these various op plans and emergencies.

Janet McDonnell: It's actually a renewed emphasis on the law enforcement aspect, the security and the protection aspect of the general ranger mission. Is that part of it?

Robert Martin: Yes, that's part of it.

Janet McDonnell: Interesting. What are the unique uses of park properties as a result of this then?

Robert Martin: I know there was debris taken to some of the, there was a field up there they were using to take a lot of debris to. There was actually quite a bit of discussion about, I think it was Ellis, could they possibly use it as a temporary morgue. I don't think that it ever was, but there was quite a bit of press interest in that. And then the unfortunate incident of that plane that lost its tail and crashed right there near Jamaica Bay and park

employees were some of the first on scene at that. They found the tail in Jamaica Bay, within the park.

Robert Martin: But I'm not familiar with, whenever I started to really get active on this national level with the multi-regional coordination group, the assessment with Dale and what not, Dale kind of assumed the role of really being the leader as it related to the Statue operations and the greater New York Harbor operations, because this national thing was just getting to the point where it was just a major in your face all day long, kind of an endeavor. You had to rally the resources and figure out the systems to ensure that we were communicating and facilitating things. So I kind of focused on the national and then him, being in Boston, Dale really spent time, and appropriately so, especially with the Secretary of the Interior really wanting to get the lady back up and open and that was definitely a priority.

Janet McDonnell: Is there a sense that ranger resources have been stretched too thin?

Robert Martin: Well, yes, we've had a number of studies that told we were woefully inadequately staffed before 9/11. And it just exacerbated the situation clearly whenever we have events and start pulling resources out of parks to meet this national need. I had conversations with Marie when she returned back from her New York trip and briefed her on a number of things. And she asked me to attend an NLC [National Leadership Council] conference call later that day. I just thought I would be sitting there, you know, listening and maybe giving her a little advice or something. And she asked me to brief the director on what it was that we had to say, and it was basically that that we have inadequate numbers of rangers. We really don't have a real understanding of what the National Park Service wants from us, as far as what is the National Park Service's posture in this period of war on terrorism. As the attorney general is declaring law enforcement is on the highest state of alert. We have countless terrorists still in country. We really weren't sure of what was wanted of us as to help with that whole national law enforcement emergency. And that we really needed to give some attention to and develop a plan for our response.

Robert Martin: And so out of that came National Emergency Response Plan that the regional chiefs authored. And it's a spinoff of, and I actually plagiarized quite a bit of, the strategic assessment that I was working here with that group with Dale. And out of that, we have the five levels of emergency response. It has an appendix that relates to the terrorism incident, but its written in a general fashion so that the director can declare levels of response based on what's happening throughout the system or the nation, and then we can start making conscious decisions on what impact this will have on our parks. And a spinoff of that then was the draw down plan that

each park was asked to figure out what they could do without in order to meet the greater, for the service to the nation.

Janet McDonnell: Did you ever have any information, even anecdotal information, that either natural or cultural resources in the parks in the region were at risk at all as a result of this shortage of ranger resources?

Robert Martin: Resource protection has always been an issue for me as a professional all of my career. We've always had to focus so much time and energy on the public safety operations because of visitation growing the way it was, the units growing the way it was, and with that demands for taking care of the public. Resource protection was always something we did as a side bar or something when we, catch as catch can. And I've always had problems with that if we're the premier resource protection agency, if you will. When you look at our mandate, and our mission, it's like nothing else in federal government. And so, I've always had a concern that we've never really done what is needed to adequately protect resources. Even to the point that I did a little rabble rousing in my earlier days of trying to get the agency to take more seriously.

Robert Martin: Part of that comes with money. It comes with staffing, and it comes with a real attempt to take care of the resources because what we have is extremely valuable, not just the cultural resources and if their lost and their gone forever which is traumatic enough, but there's a market value for just about every natural resource that we have in the system. And so, yes, apparently, we have real concern with the resource protection that wasn't going on, the things that we weren't doing.

Robert Martin: And park chiefs were calling me saying, gee, you know, if I meet this draw-down plan, I'm not going to be able to have anybody out during the midnight shift to try to catch the poachers or, you know, we've got archaeological resources that really need to have adequate protection. So we've been very concerned actually to the point where we're going to get our public affairs-type person work with the multi-regional coordination group and actually start, to try to develop the stories of what is it that aren't getting done as we're meeting this homeland security mission.

END OF TAPE ONE

START OF TAPE TWO

Janet McDonnell: Just to talk a little bit more about the impact of having to draw these rangers more into security issues and the dilemma in protecting the resources as well.



- Robert Martin: Well, the rangers are traditionally the eyes and ears of the park, I think even to the point resource managers a lot of times will depend on rangers who are out there observing, seeing change, detecting things like these plants or this tree being cut, or these blood stains, obviously, a deer had been taken or whatever. And so it just goes without saying that if you already are short and then you take and you split that even by more and take more of those folks out into this national security situation that you just are that much less aware of anything that is going on. I think everybody has the gut feeling that we definitely have lost natural resources over the period. I mean it received a lot of press, a lot of airtime.
- Robert Martin: And we did have a report of a particular art thief that was casing one of the sites up in the northeast about the same time that all of this press about rangers are going out, are out elsewhere, which we found very interesting. We found a way to increase the security for that site. Nonetheless it was a concern.
- Janet McDonnell: So, it's all part of the cost, whatever that total cost is of the response?
- Robert Martin: Well, during that NLC [National Leadership Council] conference call, I remember Marie, she just leaned into the phone after—we were talking about well, why don't we try to get addressed to the staffing issue now? We have report after report that says it. And I remember somebody in the background here in Washington on that conference call says, "Well, if you feel that strongly about it, you can go ahead and reprogram your 03 money or your 02 money." And Marie leaned right into the phone and said, "We're going to look at different ways of getting things done up here. And if it takes that, then we'll do it." And being a new guy to the region, I was pretty impressed with Marie to take that position and feel strongly about it.
- Janet McDonnell: Which brings me to the issue of funding. As I understood it, there is no emergency authorization, no pot of money that the Park Service could go to, to fund some of these things. How did the region, or at least ranger activities, how did you do this?
- Robert Martin: Well, we just did it, initially. I mean we just figured that if nothing else we could get emergency law and order account or some other way. And at some point, you just have to not worry about that in order to do the job. And then we can always go back and figure out a way to pay for it. There was a definite move within two weeks of the 9/11 event. A lot of activity trying to figure out, okay, what kind of money should we be requesting, going in for a supplemental request from Congress? And so, we were feeling good about it. If these things fly, then this is how we'll pay for them.

- Robert Martin: And so, we instructed all of the parks in our region to set up a holding account, basically, and just start charging as if you had it. Just betting on the come that this is unlike anything else that we faced in the country, in the history of the country as far as a foreign attack goes, you know, of this kind of a dimension. And so, we just figured the money would be found to do it. So we really encouraged the parks to really state what they need, really get what they need, because if you try to run these kinds of programs on a shoestring budget, it ends up being run on the backs of the employees, because there isn't enough of them. They're not getting adequate relief, breaks, lunch breaks, or they're not being able to adequately really cover the site. So, either we do it right or we do it half, and half really isn't acceptable for national icons.
- Robert Martin: And then lo and behold, the money did arrive. We're still kind of running on a wing and a prayer as it relates to the BOR sites, but we're in the process of developing general agreements. They're getting funding for their operations from Congress so we should have those things whole as well down the road.
- Janet McDonnell: Do you think that there might be a greater awareness in Congress of the Park Service's law enforcement mission, national security mission, as a result of all of this? Maybe that might equate to additional funding. Are you optimistic about that at all?
- Robert Martin: I'm very optimistic. I guess as far as Interior goes, the National Park Service is the only agency that has a definitive public safety mission written right into its legislation, as well as a definitive resource protection mission, and to serve the public. So, as I understand it, the Department of Interior has briefed the Homeland Security Agency on what it is that we're doing, our efforts in a number of ways. And all indications are from a meeting that the regional chiefs had with a number of the directors was that they're very pleased with what we've done, and what we continue to do, and the way we're going about doing it. That we should be hopefully looking good. It's an opportunity to share the message that we've had a number of outside reports done on the Park Service now, and specifically on the law enforcement program. And if it's ever going to get fixed, I can't think of a better backdrop then to fix it than now.
- Janet McDonnell: Well, just to get to the end here. What are some of the lessons do you think you've learned from this event, from your perspective on the regional level and your involvement in this agency-wide planning?
- Robert Martin: I guess at the department level we really need to have them fully utilize the incident command system. It's just a way on an interagency basis to manage an incident and free the managers up from the day-to-day stuff so that they can effectively manage and do their programs and deal with the

things that really need to be done and let the incident commanders with their delegation of authority run the incidents.

Robert Martin: I constantly see a tear in the hall for the law enforcement security folks where they're dealing with these day-to-day things that they really could focus more on their budget and developing the new program, and kind of positioning the Interior Department to meet its role in homeland security much better if they didn't have to deal with a lot of the nitty gritty day-to-day operations.

Janet McDonnell: Is that what the Type 2 Team did for you? I mean did they take care of that, the daily reporting business, information sharing business?

Robert Martin: Yes. They briefed, they handled questions, and they fielded things. They would get things. They would do an awful lot of even decision making, right up to where something might be a policy issue, not sure if we can go there, kind of a thing and then they would just run it by us. But yes, I felt and saw the benefits of having that very thing. It sounds like for whatever reason that didn't work here [in Washington] really well, but I think it might be time to give that a new try. I think the just willingness of the regional chiefs to just belly up and just figure out how can we make this, how can we make something out of all of this madness and chaos, and I think we have. I think we've done good stuff. The great unknown is, what's next?

Robert Martin: Right now, in the off season, we're meeting the demands that the Park Service has, what's been put on us, to help coordinate these different details. We have an additional 110 folks at the Olympics this month. So that's 110 resources we don't have. Many of them are Special Event team members, rangers that are skilled in specialty law enforcement skills that are there at the Olympics so they're not here as an available resource to send out. And so, there's a real concern that luckily, if there is such a thing as lucky with a terrorism event, that it happened in the off season for us so we could put additional rangers. The parks would definitely feel the impact, as will the communities when they lose a person who may have run on their ambulance squad. A person who may be a volunteer fire fighter, folks who go out and back up the local police departments on incidents, which is all of the things that we do.

Robert Martin: But if this continues on, we're definitely going to have to figure a way to get out of these assignments because summer is coming, spring fire season is right around the corner, and heaven forbid another incident, because I'm really just amazed that we haven't had a little continuum of little terrorism events, because that would really rock the United States. I mean not to say that the horrendous events that happened weren't enough, but I just can't imagine the country with a lot of little—

Janet McDonnell: There may have been a lot of events that were precluded, that we managed to stave off.

Robert Martin: And the other thing is just the sheer intelligence and interface with the intelligence community. I still to this day, one eye blind, whenever it comes to, we're not getting the information and then with that, the folks on the ground aren't getting the information. And so, we hear things in newscasts that relate directly to sites that we're protecting, but we don't have any knowledge of what's really known about those sites.

Janet McDonnell: Where should that link occur? How, in the best of all possible worlds, how should that have come to you?

Robert Martin: I think we either need to get some dedicated resources in the intelligence community and do like we did with the task forces on a local basis. And I've had conversations since I've been here on this detail with the Interior folks of just saying, to have every bureau try to get into this main FBI center is probably not the best way to go about it, but there definitely should be a link so that information that comes out, it can be packaged in terms of declassified, non-specifics of source, but nonetheless to give heads up to folks at dam sites, like the incident commanders at dam sites. If there are things that are known out there, we should be able to get them the stuff. They dang sure should hear it from us before they hear it from the press. It's just - these folks are putting their personal lives aside to facilitate security for these places. It's something that we really need to fix.

Janet McDonnell: Is there anything you would have done differently? I mean it sounds like there were certain things you had no control over that you might have wished were different. But—

Robert Martin: There are days I wished I was back at Redwood National [and] State Parks because little did I know that it was going to be so much so fast. And there are so many programs that I'm not giving any attention to whatsoever, because we're still dedicated to these things. But they're vital things and I think we, as an agency, are continuing to serve these multi-faceted roles far beyond the mission of the National Park Service.

Robert Martin: So, I'm actually proud to have had an opportunity. My folks are like really amazed that, heck, I'm even down here in Washington. I never believed that I would be doing these kinds of things. I think that everybody out there is totally dedicated. They're working hard. And they're doing all they can to pull it off for the agency, for the folks that we're cooperating with, and for the homeland.

Robert Martin: No, I can't think of anything that I would have changed. It would have been nice to have been able, like I said, to push a button and just radio rangers and give them broadcasts in an instantaneous manner from the command and then gotten reports back instantaneously about things that were going on. That was probably one of the greatest frustrations. Just because you hit send on an email, it doesn't mean that they've received what it is, the message you're trying to deliver. You can't reach people by phone a lot of times.

Janet McDonnell: So, it's not just a need for more resources. It's a need for information and particularly certain types of information.

Robert Martin: Yes, the support that it takes to run a professional protection program. And that's telecommunications, and it's, use the gadgets of space age that we're in.

Janet McDonnell: Is there anything that you're particularly proud of, again, either in the region or at the national level that you'd like to add before we stop?

Robert Martin: I guess I'm proud of rangers. I mean they have just met the need. They do it without belly aching. They're out there 24-hours a day, working in some of these details that aren't extremely exciting, but their mission, and their purpose, and their cause sure is. And folks do it without grumbling, without causing headaches or whatever. So, I'm proud of that.

Robert Martin: And I'm proud of my fellow chiefs. I mean we, as a group, have only been together since May of last year when the remaining two regions that did not have regional chiefs filled those positions. So, we had a first meeting in May in Denver. And then since then, we've just taken on so many issues and have really gelled as a group, you know, to the point where we had one of the associate directors say, "You all are a force to be reckoned with." And that's a pretty high compliment for the folks that hadn't even worked together for more than three months before all heck broke loose.

Janet McDonnell: Seems like an appropriate place to stop.

END OF TAPE