

C-SPAN Public Affairs Roundtable with the FBI

Anne Nicholas, William Esposito & William H. Webster

May 8, 1996

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Transcript

C-SPAN Voice-Over: The nonprofit nonpartisan close up foundation of courage is responsible participation in the democratic process. Educational programs and publications in government and citizenship. Each year more than twenty five thousand students teachers and older Americans travel to Washington D.C. to visit getting close ups week long government studies activities around Asia. So liberating twenty five years of education for democracy.

Anne Nicholas: Hello and welcome to this week's close up Foundation program today we're going to be talking about the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the F.B.I. which is a federal agency under the Department of Justice that investigates violations of federal criminal laws. And we'll hear about how the agency works and the case that it pursues from our guest today. Let me introduce you to them William Esposito is assistant director of the Criminal Division of the F.B.I.. He's been with the agency for twenty six years. Mr Esposito was previously a special agent in charge of the San Diego division. Andistant special agent in charge of the Cleveland and Baltimore divisions of the F.B.I. welcome this arrest busy to. Thank you pleasure me. Also joining us today is William Webster. Former director of the. F.B.I. Opposed to what she was appointed in one nine hundred seventy eight. He moved on from there to serve as director of the Central Intelligence Agency or CIA from one thousand eighty seven to nine hundred ninety one. Judge Webster is currently with a law firm of Millbank tweet Hadley. And McCloy in Washington. Welcome Judge Webster. Thank you. And joining us in our audience today are high school students from around the country who are on the close up government studies program for the week they'll be meeting with members of Congress and other policymakers here in town. And they join us today from Michigan. New Jersey Alaska. Maine and North Carolina. And when we come to your questions we'd like to hear your name and where you're from. Let's begin with a discussion here about. Kind of where the F.B.I. fits in structurally within the government. And then what its responsibilities are. Mr Esposito.

William Esposito: Yes The F.B.I. is in the executive branch of government. It is a bureau of the Department of Justice which is our parent. The agency. And. Some people know this but when I when I had laws passed in this country unless it's a federal law. And less exposed difficultly addresses at the some other agency. If some comes out of the jurisdiction of the F.B.I. The F.B.I. head. Is the largest along. Federal law enforcement agency. In the federal government has to main investigative agency of the executive branch. So what types of cases. Does the F.B.I.. Personal. Well we have also. The broadest range of jurisdiction I think of all the federal law enforcement agencies. It ranges from. Violent crimes such as kidnapping its stores in the bank robberies. To other areas such as white collar crime such as Organized crime. We have jurisdiction over drug matters. Also several rights statutes. Just a myriad of crimes.

Anne: OK And Judge Webster could you talk about a little bit about how the F.B.I.. Works with other intelligence agencies.

William H. Webster: In the community in general. Surely that one of the top priorities of the F.B.I. is foreign counterintelligence at some time called national security. And that has been a major component of its responsibilities through the years. So that makes it a part of the overall intelligence community which consists of the CIA and the F.B.I.. Acting in this country and. The National Security Administration the defense intelligence agencies State Department security and a whole range of those two are concerned about. Intelligence gathering and intelligence detection. The role of the F.B.I. has been largely to detect the presence of hostile intelligence operatives. Acting in this country. Trying to steal secrets. Or to gather intelligence of a classified nature. And to take appropriate actions to prevent it.

Anne: Has the role of the F.B.I. or the intelligence community in general changed much since the end of the Cold War since we don't have a specific Communist threat that we're dealing with. Judge Webster?

Webster: Well my impression is that the world although we no longer have a bipolar. Structure of communism and democracy. We have a great many more countries fifteen. Republics that were formally in the Soviet Union creating a less stable kind of world in many respects. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Other things of this guy and that make. It's very important for us to stay on top of what's going on not only in the Republic of Russia but in all the other states that were formally. Opposed to us as. Totalitarian type countries.

Anne: William Esposito?

Esposito: Two differences I think that we're seeing in the in the recent years is number one. There's a sense. Since the change of the Cold War that what we're seeing is a lot of countries or are coming to the United States with the purpose of economic espionage . Trying to call it. Where a lot of money is spent on this kind in this country on developing products developing. Computer software for example. And we're seeing other countries. That would like to not spend that money and basically steal it. That's one change we've seen the second change is we're seeing a global Is it more

of a globalization of crime. Especially in the area of organized crime. We're seeing a proliferation of organized crime especially in eastern and central Europe.

Webster: If I could add to that I was in Russia last year. And why you see some very strange things where former enemies are taking you to see the K.G.B. museum at Lubyanka and other things that you would not have thought possible. We have a common problem and that is the part that Mr Esposito. Just spoke about and that is. Russian mafia operating not only in Russia but in other parts of the world on a growing basis. Including the United States where they have a significant beach head in New York and they're operating on the West Coast. So I've met with two. Legal Attache representatives of the F.B.I. in Moscow for the first time. Who are working with their Russian counterparts in an effort to combat this kind of crime not only there. But here. And it's been very effective. And has resulted in some significant arrests in this country.

Anne: Could you differentiate a bit between the responsibilities of the F.B.I. and the CIA because traditionally we think of the CIA as a as working with foreign groups and the F.B.I. does have offices. Abroad as.

Webster: Well I think you have to understand the different mission. At putting aside counterintelligence the primary mission in the F.B.I. is to serve as an investigative agency to detect and provide the basis for an effective prosecution of crime. The primary purpose of the Central Intelligence Agency is to gather. Important information that will be useful to the policymakers of this country the president his Cabinet officers and so on in making wise decisions for us in the interests of the country including national security. There is some significant overlap because the CIA is responsible. Primarily for. Counterintelligence in this country. Has information and that activities which affect. Matters in they in. Abroad. And CIA has an interest in developing and recruiting assets. Who will someday go abroad. And we call this process of in a relationship coordination of all of the CIA activities in the United States must be coordinated with the F.B.I.. And with the F.B.I. as approval. Intelligence activities abroad must be coordinated with CIA.

Approval. If that they're engaged in by the F.B.I.. That's a very rough kind of approach to a fairly clear demarcation. It's less clear now because there are more significant as it gets be that Mr Bush you know said. There's more global crime and that means that the F.B.I. has to be. Have its finger on the pulse of activities outside the United States. Anything you'd like to add yes. I think a lot of people don't realize this but we have twenty three offices.

Overseas. There and they're called Legal Attash A's and. Their work is predominantly a criminal work. Where they work as liaise. Representatives. With the the host countries. Police Services and. They respond to leads generated from the United States and. They do quite a good job for us. And in ninety four we did open an office it was kind of historic in my scout. With we had two F.B.I. agents at that time their caseload was like twenty eight cases. Today the caseload is like three hundred cases. In Moscow and most of the cases involve the Russian Mafia. Got our first student question. How

there was Heather. Hamby from Leicester Side High School in Lewisville North Carolina. And I would like to know how the F.B.I. decides which cases. To investigate and how it manages to keep its work so secret.

I have to. I have to give you my understanding from a few years back and I don't think it's changed very much but I think they first of all is their jurisdiction. And secondly how does it fit into the priority of the F.B.I. for those. Those areas demanding it special expertise and capability. It's not as big an organization as you think I think the total number of employees is somewhere between twenty and twenty five thousand only half of whom are special agents. About one third the size of the police force of the city of New York. So they have to prioritize and historically. Their priorities have been organized crime and been very effective there. White collar crime which includes embezzlement and corrupt political corruption and. Terrorism which I made a priority. Fifteen years ago. And more recently. Certain kinds of violent crime. In an effort to help the cities and the and states. With their problems have been made a priority. So that's the selective process. The funds are not there to do the work of the local law enforcement and the F.B.I. has already always believed that it should supply support for local law enforcement the great F.B.I. laboratory the fingerprint identification the N.C.I.C. system the computer program for providing information how the behavioral science program which. As help law enforcement identify serial killers are all illustrations of.

What the F.B.I. can do for local law enforcement. And how does it go about how does the F.B.I. go about getting involved and I ask you to become involved or do they step in and Micheline when something is discovered how does that work. Well as a Judge Webster said We work very closely with the Department of Justice especially the attorney general United States. In setting up player Artes and have and different field offices. Were all the case work is done we have fifty six field offices around the country. What they get open cases a myriad of ways. One way is from people calling in and making complaints about violations of federal law. That's one way we were case public so less information is another way . Agents on their own initiative. Developing cases. Cases over. On fraud for example. Which they will open cases on that way. And the area of banking for example. The bank regulators or the bank bank the offices. Are mandated by law to when there's criminal violations and a back to submit criminal referrals to us and based on that we commit. We open investigation.

There's there's a lot of things that happen also that. On our own initiative. We will go out and that.

Stock cases. For example in that if we know there's a gang activity. A street gang activity in particular city. We will get together with the state and local offices and. Come up with some initiatives to see if we can get the people behind say the drug trafficking in that gang. Behind bars. Is the next question. My name is Natalie Boone who's from New Jersey. I like to know what was your involvement with the. nun In Guatemala that was severely tortured. Well from the speaker in the F.B.I.. Standpoint that. We have no one. At least in my division the criminal division. Where ever in the

paper. And that's pretty much what I know about the case from the standpoint of the intelligence agencies. There. There are from time to time instances where. Recruited assets that's. That's overseas language for informant or cooperating in an agent who is not an agent. In the way that a special agent is are not always the nicest people. And there were you worry you're in a foreign country you don't always have control over what they do. But you can be sure that the United States. Representatives are not going to be party to it or condone it. Or look the other way. What the ultimate facts will come out as far as this particular incident that you're talking about. Remains to be seen but they ate. They officers are under strict instructions. To conform entirely. To the laws of the United States and our Constitution. And that applies to human rights as well as next . Yes My name is showing daddy. I'm from north of New Jersey I go to between high school. I would like to thank F.B.I. director . Was there any involvement . Thank you the sixty's of the Black Panthers terminations group. On F.B.I. support. On the Black Panthers what the term a nation of the Black Panther group. With the death to have any participation in it.

You know which I had to the Bureau in one thousand nine hundred eighty nine so I don't really know I know there was some some where there was indications of violations of federal law. There were some cases what those cases amount to I don't know. So if that. Perhaps was the case with the term nation. How come the K.K.K.

group has not been terminated. To you so that they have violated some federal laws. We've had several cases over the years and maybe still do. On the Klux Klan and. I think we've been very successful as an organization and fighting the Ku Klux Klan. And I think we've put several. Klan people behind bars over the years. And I think they're not as strong I think today because of the. Of our efforts. OK. It's next to my name to recruits from. You said High School in Newark New Jersey and. This question is for Mr Webster. How did the oldest Chambers case. Affect they didn't see. How did it affect what. The agency the CIA. Well it had us. A very severe. Effect on the agency as far as morale is concerned because the agency came under a great deal of criticism for not having identified and located a mole spy operating inside the agency.

Most are are not known and the intelligence community. Almost every and Teligent gathering. Agency in the world has experienced this problem particularly in England for example. And even. The F.B.I. has not been in. You know in although I thankfully I think only one that I can remember . Man name Miller. Was seduced by a Russian spy and. Did no real damage but the fact was we had to live with that at the time. In Ames case it was because he . His information . Provided the occasion for us to the Soviets to identify. Recruited assets not American citizens but people who were helping us. Abroad. And they were ten of them were executed. And that of course a matter of great concern and regret. To two important assets of the F.B.I. were.

In that group. And so. It affected morale. For a time I think they're coming through that now. Once a mole is in place. And he was in place back in one thousand nine hundred eighty five. It's very difficult to know that you have a mole and very difficult to find them. Because they don't even have to make contact with their handlers they

have systems marking post. Marking mailboxes other types of trade craft. That keep you from. Suspecting them. But many people felt that his personal conduct was such that that the people if they had been more alert. Would have caught. Had reason to question him. And. It's a good lesson there are many lessons in that case and I'm sure they've been well learned.

You have the next question. Yes My name is dreams from Newark New Jersey. I would like to know whether or not does the F.B.I. have any involvement with the capture of America's Most Wanted. And if so how many have you captured. Of course the F.B.I. since I think going back to the one nine hundred fifty two. Started a program. There Jake Hoover was director of at time of the Americas. Ten Most Wanted. And since then we've been very successful. Using the media. To help us capture our most wanted fugitives and what we do. When somebody is part placed on the most wanted their posters are made up. They're distributed all over the country. Given a lot more published of A and that helps and I capture. I think it helps us when citizens are attentive and can call in leads to us. And that's helped us and. I think the number is close to five hundred fugitives we've caught. Since And since the program began. It's increased recently because there are several programs. Of various networks. That. Also promote.

America's Most Wanted. Can you talk a little bit about the relationship between. Intelligence agencies in general and the press. Because sometimes. Have there been cases where the press has found out about investigations and talked or. Written about that and that have kind of. Been a detriment to the investigation.

Well this is always a potential problem. Because the press. Is the press has a. As a responsibility to let the public know. Whatever it can find out. And there is. There are no laws that. That impinge upon they first amendment right of freedom of the press. On the other hand there are occasions when the press can act responsibly and assist. The law enforcement and intelligence communities to do their work. I found the most the most difficult. Day in dealing with problems. That involve long term investigations and this is the special expertise that the F.B.I. has nobody does it any better. And they purpose of that is to work your way through an organization starting with small fry and while it's still going on find your way to the top. So that you can knock off the heads of the leading organized crime members or those who are responsible for doing the damage. And that takes a while. If you remember it all historically the Abscam cases the investigation of political corruption in the Congress. There are a number of these cases going on and the press. Got wind of some of them. And then my. My approach to the press was if we're doing something wrong ever doing something illegal. Why.

Ring the bell on it. But if we're doing what it. The American people expect us to do and you have no reason to think we're not doing it lawfully. Why do you make it impossible for us to do it. You'll have an opportunity to write about it. When the investigation is completed in the arrests are made and. Most of the press were responsible. Or responsive to that although. The unwritten rule of the. Of the branches

will whole lot will hold our fire until we think somebody else has a story and then we'll go with it.

Anne: Mr Esposito more recently the Unabomber case was one in which the press was definitely involved can you talk about that and how the F.B.I.. Worked in conjunction with the press or how they worked with them at all.

Esposito: I really can't because that's an ongoing investigation. And we're precluded by policy not to discuss an ongoing investigation. What I can say however though is the echo of what Judge Webster said that we especially on the criminal side which is what I'm responsible for. We work. Sometimes very closely with the media and. They are very responsive to our requests if we tell them hey if you run a story. It's going to be detrimental to. One of our cases one of operations. Or could harm somey who's life. They usually will back off and go along with our wishes. So. You know what the problem does occur once in a while I think Judge Webster is absolutely right when you have a long term. Investigations where you know it's going to take. We know it's going to take us another six months to say to solve a case a certain person i Reporter for example gets wind of the story and tries to break it prematurely. That could hurt us and then we try to go to them and say Could you hold off. And they usually will unless somebody else will break the story.

Anne: Who's got the next question?

Christine: My name's Christine Cochrine from Maine. What's the most interesting and challenging cases you've ever worked on?

Esposito: Well, there are several of them. One of them was just mentioned. They're going to bomb a case was certainly a challenge. That's a case that this month will be eighteen years old the first incident was May twenty fifth one nine hundred seventy eight. Right there been I've been very fortunate my twenty six years. The F.B.I. I've worked. And been fortunate to work on several cases that were. I thought were challenging. And nineteen. A friend of. Judge Webster. Who we had took over at the CA with them. Bill Baker. Called upon me in nineteen that ninety. To go down to Panama. Because they were as to American citizens a murder down there. And to try to solve that case. I did go down there and. Within a very short period time. The three weeks or so. We solve that case and. I had fifteen people arrested. So it was a. That was a very challenging. Time working in another country.

So that was a very significant for me. I mean very difficult for me to pick out any won. Because I really had the privilege of working with some of the finest men and women in the world. Doing absolutely brilliant work and doing it very professionally. And you could take almost one any one of the numbers of areas where we really cracked the organized crime families in New York. I think about having closed circuit video as we watch Puerto Rican terrorists. In Chicago. Making ammuniton. Not knowing what they were doing or why and so we watched them. They spoke in code until we finally figured out what they were planning to do which was a rescue. Scape at Leavenworth and then we brought they. The operation down. I think in other situations. The one that I will always remember. In addition of the Abscam. Cases where Congress was

not entirely happy with what we were doing. At the same time I had authorized the investigation. Of the judiciary. In Cook County which is Chicago where they were not where for years it had been no on that they that the members of. Many members of the judiciary there were corrupt. And we had a judge who was carrying and working with us who kept the mike. No phone in the cowboy boot that he wore on the bench and. I knew that if anything went wrong with the Abscam. Cases. The graveyard cases it was called in Chicago would be. Be the last straw. As it turned out we won every case in the courts on the Abscam. Cases the Supreme Court turned down surgery that is refused to hear appeals on fourteen cases. And after that. They re Lloyd was taken as well the F.B.I. must know what it's doing so those are the kinds of cases that you think back if you remember because they carried some risk to the agency . But they serve the American people. Admirable in a my head during that period of time I was signed to F.B.I. headquarters and they are undercover unit which oversaw or of the criminal on the cover operations for the F.B.I. and. Judge Webster is absolutely right. I think one of the interesting things about the bureau a least that I've been challenged with. Over the my twenty six years as an F.B.I. agent. Is that when you know across a crime is being committed is a group of very talented people. Get together and they come up with a strategy for solving that crime and. Most of the time when you see the plan that's implemented.

And then solved. It's very reassuring. He talk a little bit about the priorities of the F.B.I. Now you've mentioned several things organized crime white collar crime and terrorism. As well as others can you talk a little bit about where the majority of resources are being committed to kind of give us a. One two three four list of what they are right now the. The three biggest programs at least on the criminal side is. White collar crime which is our largest program in the F.B.I. and that is our number one priority. Although it's hard to say which is one in which is two they're all pretty close together. Violent crime. There's been in the initiative by Janet Reno. To get the federal law enforcement. More involved in violence. And the various US cities and towns in this country. And that has been a real priority over the last two years and still is a priority. And I think. Based on the. Some of the crime statistics that you're seeing. Which is dropping. I think. We working with our partners in the state and local government is having an impact. The third would be organized crime and drugs. That is another priority. As you know the drug problem. Is been around for fifteen years and we're still working on that and organized crime as I mentioned earlier. Still a very high priority. Another program. That is hot. Depending on when the incident a car is a jumped up to priority real quick. Is a terrorism program. F.B.I. is the lead agency when it comes to. Rooting out terrorists that attack this country. I can make a little historical comment here. One of the things that. That. I feel most proud about the F.B.I. is that it has kept up with constitutional requirements. And as our society emerges as we become more civilized if you want to call that more requirements for respecting individual liberties and rights. Your privacy rights. Your right to be free under the Bill of Rights from unreasonable searches and seizures and so forth. Those

are a crime and should become stricter. And rather than duck around them. Rather than try to subvert them. And the answer has been largely in terms of increased. Professional competence. When Abraham Lincoln was assassinated not many people realize right here in this city. Two thousand people were arrested.

As possible suspects. The entire cast of my American cousin. Play that was being shown at Ford Theatre were placed under arrest. We could not do that today. Instead we have to be more specific based upon probable cause. And based upon the evidence we can produce. When I. Think of the. The mysterious killings of the children in Atlanta some years ago. And how that case was put together using fiber optic fiber evidence. And dog hairs and other scientific things and now when I think today. With the almost the miracle of D.N.A. as a capability. It means that we have a much better chance of bringing. Criminals to justice. Without impairing the constitutional rights of our citizens that we all value it. In this country.

He's got The next question. I am Christina what is not clear Michigan. And I was wondering does the U.S. government keep secrets from its people and if so why. Can hear the question. As the U.S. government keeps saying it's from the people in the IF so why the United States government. There are many parts of the government that have to app. Act in secrecy. And that is because if the secret. Became known. The the damage would be significant to our national security. And it would have to do with what kind of armament we have. What kind of capabilities we have and what kind of vulnerabilities we have to an outside enemy seeking to undermine our or destroy our country. So for that reason the secrecy is not an evil word. The question it really is one of accountability. And for a number of years including all the time that twenty years that I wish. Have been involved in this work. It's the. The answer has been has been in a stablsh ing. The congress. And special committees of the Congress to act as surrogates for the American people. Those committees they they haue set permanent committee on intelligence in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence sometimes called a hip see in the S.S. C.I..

Are entitled to know anything that they wish to know. And are we are required to brief. Those committees. Regularly on what we are doing and what's going on. And if there is any question about the propriety of what we're doing they have that responsibility and must report it to the Congress. And there are other agencies of government. On the executive side to do the sand.

So the answer really is to protect important secrets. The Atomic the atomic bomb is a good example one of the best kept secrets. During World War two and it made the difference in the outcome of the timing of the outcome of the war. But if they but you can take confidence in knowing that your congressional committees. Have been specially designated in very secure around maybe some of you have visited the Capitol Hill where rooms that are that are guarded again. It all types of electronic and other types of.

Where they sit and hear about the secret. And satisfy themselves that they are consistent with our form of government and with our government's objectives. And

reason I think. You know the government was formed on a system of checks and balances and. The F.B.I. has. For example has several oversight committees. Up on. By the Congress. That we must go to. And every pork. Why would doing what we're doing. How we're spending our money and just as Mike just last week I was with the director of the F.B.I. on. Two such committees and. I think Congress does a good job in that role in overseeing. And that.

And doing that check and balances that's needed to go. A couple of our questions today have gotten to kind of the underlying premise of that the organizations kind of work in secrecy or are not fully disclosing what they're working on at any given time. So the public has perceptions that might be wrong or might be guesswork. Can you talk a little bit about that if you think that. Generally the American people know what the F.B.I. does and how the CIA works and. Or if we have perceptions based on the X. files and the untouchables and other pop culture. Mediums. I think that as far as the F.B.I. is concerned I think there is a certain mystique. Based on a lot of these shows and publicity over the years. I think the F.B.I. as done. Starting with the Judge Webster when he was the director and. Carry through today. That I think the F.B.I. is trying to get out more and talk to various people in the community . To let them know what we do and why we do it that to take someone of the mystique about. Out of the F.B.I.

. And I think because we're proud of what we do and we also need. The people as citizens of this country and other people in this country's help and in helping us do our job. And they. To this very well. And the CIA is trying to do this what it's doing it with some difficulty because they. In the end it's case its excesses are never trumpeted because their techniques can be used again in other parts of the world only their failures and so they have to live with that. Nevertheless it's it's it's important for you to know that there are that they the stories that you read in the buy novels are not always true. My good friend Tom Clancy likes to write about. People giving good being given the F.B.I. CIA being given a blank ticket to do things their no blank tickets for the CIA or any other agency of law enforcement or intelligence in the country. They are accountable. That is this. The secret of our democracy is they are accountable to the American people and they are not outside the law. They are not given a blank ticket. To disobey our laws. They can't always obey the law and in some other country where they're operating because espionage is against the law of every country. But. That is their mission. And as long as they are accountable and they the laws of our country. They're doing their job is next. Hello my name is Jose Sosa from you said I School in Newark New Jersey. And this question is directed towards Mr Esposito. What is the F.B.I. doing differently in the handling of the Freeman. Standoff in Montana. Considering the previous experience at the bureau had at the Branch Davidian complex in Waco Texas. Well again. Let me just say two things one. It's an ongoing investigation as you know so I can't discuss it. But also going to. It's pretty obvious by. What you're seeing reported in the media that we're doing things quite a bit differently. In Montana as compared to the two other examples you gave. Last

summer of the director and myself testified before Congress on the Waco hearings. And I think the director Louis Freeh. Made some changes in the bureau. That were very positive. As far as handling crisis. And I can just tell you a few of them. Real quick. We had the hostage rescue team which is an elite group that has been set up. I think on the judge which is a relief group that would handle the. Rescuing of hostages and hostage taking situation. We've also had a group of Quantico. That specialize in behavioral science of the mind set of criminals. So to speak. We also have a group of people that are experts in the hostage in the goshi ations. These were separate entities. On their way free last summer. Combined all these resources together and.

We now have a mandatory that anybody that's on the hostage rescue team also receives. Instruction in hostage negotiation. The idea being. Let's get the people out safely. And they. Practical or.

Will be the last resort is next. I love my name is that station time from weekly kind of school you know in Jersey. I was wondering. OK You stated earlier correct me if I'm wrong that you need to incarcerated several members of the K.K.K. I was wondering. And you have personal pain.

Why do you think dating set him down. Like they did the Black Panther Party. Well I think in the end. The majority of states in the country we did shut him down and. Quite significantly. I know they've been wiped out entirely and certain states which had a long influence and I think the difference here is that the K.K.K. was an organization as I recall that's over it was over one hundred years old. And it's just like us fighting the luck Cosa Nostra of the American Mafia. That was institutionalized for about fifty years before the F.B.I. started getting involved. And look and doing investigations we still have not wiped out the mafia in this country. But we've made great strides I think the same can be said for the cloke Klux Klan. Doesn't make any difference whether your ideas come from the far left or the far right. You have a right to hold them. It's when you begin to act on those ideas and infringe on the rights of other American citizens. By engaging in criminal activity. That the F.B.I. has a responsibility to act. It's not whether we don't like what you we're hearing. But whether or not. What. What is taking place is in violation of the law. And that applies equally to the Klan or to any of the Black Panthers or any other organization.

They have a responsibility to obey the law.

Anne: Who's next?

Josh: Hello my name's Josh was going in for my class high school. And I was wondering do you feel. The Fast and Furious investigation such as the Unabomber case. Is the best way to handle. Catching a terrorist.

Esposito: Well I think you know I think when we have terrorist acts it's important for law enforcement. Whether it's the F.B.I. state local police other federal agencies. I think it is incumbent upon us to act as sdily as possible. It was very important for the federal government I feel for this country. That in the World Trade Center bombing. And also the Oklahoma bombing. That. And the rest was made very quickly. Because what we're trying to do is send a signal to other terrorists around the world. That if

you commit a crime in this country. You're going to be. We're going to put as much manpower on this problem as possible. And you're going to get apprehended.

Anne: Who's next?

Hi My name is James King from Berrien Springs Michigan. And my question was what specific actions has the F.B.I. taken so that. Another city right. Another incident like Ruby Ridge doesn't happen. Well I think as I stated earlier we've got a Director Freeh. Current director working with myself and others in the F.B.I. have made several policy changes. As far as handling of a crisis. We've made changes in our crisis incident response group.

Not fact the crisis in zero response group at Quantico. Which is our Cademy and training facility. Has been formed. And in there we have several components. We've also working very closely with other federal agencies. We have. Of the direct There is also the head of the is also the director of the in agency policy group. Which we call dat. In that we have that changed our deadly force policy which is now. A policy that's consistent within the Department of Justice and the Treasury agencies and law enforcement. So I think there's a number of things we have done. Hopefully to to improve things. I could add to that I think the F.B.I. has as a lead all law enforcement agencies in this country. In the enlightened use of deadly force. Rules that have been generally applicable throughout the agency and all of the cities where it serves. Have protected us citizens from excessive use of force random use of force or has to be some danger to the officer there has to be some danger to the public. Person has to be a. known Fell on. One of those things has to be in place before a deadly force is used. And in consequence. Most of the local law enforcement agencies around the country the police forces. Have followed suit. But it was a. F.B.I. that.

That led the way and I'm very proud of that. exact But it was Michael also the to know about high school and Alaska. And I was wondering how many people are involved in solving each case. Do you think. Yeah .

Well I think it depends on the complexity of the case. We have some agents for example that have several cases assigned to them because they're there they're not that complicated. When agents come out of our academy at Quantico. They're usuallyigned to a senior agent for one of two years to receive continue with the training. But usually our newer agents areigned less complicated cases. Some of these cases can we can be resolved within just a very. Within thirty days or two months whatever. We have other cases that that. Take longer. We have some. And some offices. If it's a major organized crime group for example. Might be a whole squad of agents meaning about twelve fifteen agents working just one case. A case that involves a court ordered electronic surveillance and very manpower intensive. So I just the. Hands on the complexity of the case. Some cases like that Bob undercover operations. For example if you're you have an undercover operation looking at stolen automobiles. You might have three or four different agencies might have one agent who is not a cover agent. And I deny agent was a contact agent. And you have a case agent. You have somebody else that's. That handles evidence. So it just depends on the comp. The complexity the case. You

know John. Early ninety's we work. Over seven hundred. Failed savings and loan. Cases where this was the banking scandal. In this country. And usually on those bank failures. We had teams of agents who had financial backgrounds. Working in those cases. And the average case. Lasted about eighteen months. You've both mentioned terrorism as as a priority for the F.B.I. and Judge Webster as something that you really worked on when you were there. Can you talk about how safe.

City. American citizens are how secure they can feel and I turn I think I think we're relatively free from terrorism but there have been significant incidents so I go Oklahoma and and. Trade Center which carried political overtones and implications and they show that. You know that it is possible now for the four of them are more or less the average person. To develop very high explosives and cause significant amount of damage. It's the job of the F.B.I. and other agencies to try to get wind of. Anything that's happening and to keep those things from happening. Back when I started in one nine hundred seventy eight we had about one hundred incidents a year. And we decided to build up our intelligence on a result when I left in one thousand nine hundred seventy we were down to a bare handful five or six terrorist incidents. As long as as there is good intelligence you can get there before the bomb goes off. If there is if the bomb goes off then it becomes purely a matter of trying to find those that are responsible and convicting them but how much better. If we can keep it from happening in the first place and I think that the. Special scales of the F.B.I. are directed at preventing.

As well as and as. Investigating. When something does happen. Is next to my name is Trina Quander name from new tack and I ask you know is running. About how many crimes are being investigated you know year. Well currently. I'm ahead of the Criminal Division in my division. Connelly we have about sixty some thousand cases. Ongoing. And any given day during the year. Some places. Cases will be closed up because prosecutions convictions and other cases will open will be average on the criminal side. About sixty and sixty five thousand cases a year. He's got The next question. My name is Judy Harris stem from Burlington Maine. And I was wondering. That with all the books in. Well he's out about that involve the F.B.I. Are you worried that the public's view of the F.B.I. is being corrupted or out of these books and movies fairly accurate. Well I think it depends on the book and moving some books portray it in a favorable light. Some books and movies. Do not. But basically I think the reputation of the bureau. Is made by the men and women of the F.B.I. who carry their credentials. And badge and and. Do the very best they can to up hold the Constitution. And the laws of this nation. They're. One we have of measuring performance and respect to the treatment of American citizens is to ask how many times. A suit has resulted in a finding of a violation of a constitutional toward another where somebody's civil rights were violated by the F.B.I.. In my nine years there were not. And I think that that's pretty generally the they. The record today. You make some mistakes from time to time but it's the. Training at the F.B.I. academy at Quantico and the ongoing training. About dealing. Doing it professionally and doing it with due regard for the rights of citizens.

Pays off for the American people. Can you think of any movies or books or.

Television shows that you think have been fairly accurately portrayed. The F.B.I. or the intelligence agent.

Season general of the way. The Silence Of The Lambs movie was a very favorable to the F.B.I.. It was taken a little out of context in that we usually don't take a new agent trainees and put a monster. Significant cases like that. But I think it was a very favorable movie. I might add that. My wife who is a special agent of the F.B.I. also thought it would portray do. Women in the bureau very well also. And that was a serial killer and. That is something I saw that the F.B.I. gets involved in investigations with how big is the group of people that works on those and. How does that. How do those investigations work. Well we have a unit at Quantico. Called Via but it's called If I kept you know violence. Assessment Program crime assessment program. And what they do is they. These are people who specialize. And behavioral science. They also study crimes. These. Determine certain trends. That might occur. For example when they first started the unit. Two individuals one around and. Interviewed several. Serial Killers. To find out. Either Is there any connection between what each one of them did the upbringing. There. There's social makeup there's these kind of things. And that. This has been almost been a science and they provide. People with a similar training to police departments and also into each of our field offices. So that if a police officer. Has a crime that he wants then he has an unknown individuals committed the crime. And call into this unit Quantico. And try to get some type of feeling a lot of profile on what. That type of person would look like who's got the next question.

My name is James and I attend a multifocal in the Alaska. And I was wondering specifically what type of education meet. You need to have to become an F.B.I. agent. All F.B.I. agents. Have to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree from accredited university. The majority of the personnel in the F.B.I. have advanced degrees. We have about. For example we have fifteen hundred accounts in the F.B.I. five hundred of them my C.P.A. is we have another thousand agents. That have advanced degrees in finance business these kind of things. We also have about a third of our employees are attorneys who have been a law school and. Most of the members of the very sparse. Does the F.B.I. recruit people or. Do people apply to them. How does that work both ways.

We do recruiting and we also let people apply for every F.B.I. agent today's hiring right now. And for every agent that applies I think we have four thousand applicants. They were coming in about a thousand a month. And there are there was a time. Jeff you years ago when there was a freeze on hiring because of budgetary restrictions Congress has now voted a real vote of confidence to the F.B.I. on their hiring as in significant numbers now. If any of you have friends or are yourselves interested in a career in the F.B.I. you. You want to be sure at some time. Probably in your college experience to get in touch with the local office where they'd be glad to talk to you about the things that make you. Best Qualified better help you understand the F.B.I. and what it. And what it does. And of course I don't suppose it needs to be said that you

have. Life is full of choices and then. And some things in terms of personal habits drugs and other things. You make a decision early in your life not to get in tangled with that so that you don't have to have those things following you. When your qualifications are being judged for something that's really sensitive any important to the country. And it's well worth the decision and the right. Direction. Whatsoever my head the entry. Interesting thing about working in the F.B.I. especially of various field offices is the quality of the people that you're working with and their varied backgrounds you have people who are linguists. Know several languages which we're looking for. You have people who have. Former military when a police officer is a former prosecutor is former teachers and comes from all different. Very balanced diversity of people and it's quite rewarding. And I think they should know that the F.B.I. has worked very hard in the last fifteen years to improve its diversity. There are significantly more women who are special agents African-Americans Hispanic Asian Americans. They're all welcome.

And they are needed. I want to answer size they're not doing it just for show. From the field each year. COM is a request for various types of people various skills and various ethnic backgrounds because it's important that special agents. Be Rich representative of the community and when they ring a doorbell to ask for information that they be welcome. That not fear is next time.

Hi My name is Amanda Saurez. And I missed unity said High School in Newark New Jersey. And Mr Esposito in reserve. In reference to see were killers and the F.B.I. serial crime unit. I'd like to know if there's still an ongoing investigation into the Green River murders and if so has any progress been made since the mid eighty's.

I'm not completely. They completely familiar with the case but I know there is a unit down a quiet go. Has provided a a substantial amount of time to that case. Guy. Hello my name is ticket and I'm booked in Alaska. And my question is how does the CIA and F.B.I. work together.

How does the US. So I mean to your question. How does the CIA and F.B.I. work together. How do they work together. Oh. Good question. Sometimes better than other times. Sometimes not as good as we'd like to see. And that's because the different mission. Being a mission of intelligence is to gather information the mission of the. Of the F.B.I. is to detect. Wrongdoing and act to prosecute it. And sometimes there are differences as to how you should proceed. And also whether or not the information can be used in the future. Because they have sources and methods. Of the intelligence community are very carefully guarded. But on the whole I'd say that they that the relationship is a good one. There are times when there are. They're both strong organizations and sometimes they up against each other but they do share. They do share information. In the Ames case which. None of us are proud of they shared information from day one. I can think of some others where they didn't. But this is an important area of coordination I think by the director of central intelligence and director of the F.B.I. working together and from them on down through the. Organizations we can reduce the friction. And improve the effectiveness of mutual cooperation. They each have their responsibilities.

Oh and they have to then that has to be worked out. We're working closer. Today than we probably have ever have ever been just this week as a matter of fact I was at a luncheon with the director of the CIA and the director of the F.B.I. and they're key staff members. At talking about some of the initiatives they have working together. Exchange of personnel. Between both agencies to make. Make sure that. All the agencies all working together in those areas of drawing interest. We just talked about ninety seconds left but if you could talk a little bit about there are been some proposals or ideas. Of consolidating agencies on the Drug Enforcement Agency that you're about to haul Tobacco and Firearms the F.B.I. and having maybe one super agency that oversees that does everything. Any thoughts on how that would work or if it would work. That's a big question I want to know that the whole intelligence community is going through a process of reevaluation and that there may be some changes. There probably to strengthen the role of the director of central intelligence in order that he could make things happen instead of trying to coax who could join in they could. In the intelligence community. I think. There are strong arguments for combining that. The work of the D.N.A. and the F.B.I. They do have certain reporting requirements at the present time. I also there are strong political arguments why this is it may not take place in the near future. The same could be said of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms. The key question really is. Would any of these moves. Improve the professional performance of our federal law enforcement agencies. And to the extent that it would. I'm in favor of it. It is just for pure big debts we might just have another big bureaucracy on our hands. But. But it must not be the lowest common denominator it must be a change which. Which lifts agencies or lift. Employees and what we're a Agency is now consolidated. To the level of performance of the very best that we have to offer. For our country. Mr Esposito and. Final thoughts. Well I think that's a policy decision that's going to have to be made at a higher level than I am. But I would like to give a plug. To Janet Reno. Was attorney general United States. She is first of all she's a very sharp. Person. And you know in no uncertain terms that the law enforcement agencies today. Will work together. And it demands it because the American people demand it. And we and we are. Well thank you so much mistrust visit on Mr Webster.

Thanks for joining us. And thanks to you for your questions and comments. Join us again Monday at five o'clock when are we going to be talking about. U.S. immigration policy. Thanks for watching this program was produced by the Globe's about EDITION. Celebrating twenty five years of education for democracy.

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May 8, 1996

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