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## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 11/09/2007

Juan C. Mendoza was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents and the purpose of the interview and provided the following information:

Mendoza has been employed by Blackwater, USA for three years. He is a Personnel Security Specialist (PSS), and has been a radio operator for the past six months. He was previously a member of Tactical Team 22. He has been in Iraq since March 2005. Mendoza signed a contract that allows him a 30-day R&R period after every 90 days of service.

Prior to joining Blackwater, Mendoza was enlisted in the U.S. Navy (USN) for twenty years. He served ten years of active duty and ten years of reserve duty, retiring with a rank of E-5. He also worked for the Phoenix Police Department for two years.

Mendoza was working as a radio operator on 09/16/2007 in the Tactical Operations Center (TOC). He reported for duty at 0620 hours. He was provided with a copy of the Raven Base Watch Log dated Sunday, September 16, 2007 which had previously been obtained from the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer (RSO). Mendoza reviewed the log and verified that it was the log he prepared on that date.

Mendoza advised that the tactical units and Protective Service Details (PSDs) usually contact the TOC at the following intervals: as they depart the International Zone (IZ); at certain checkpoints in the red zone; and when they re-enter the IZ. Mendoza usually makes log entries directly into the computer as the radio transmissions are made. However, if there is a large amount of radio traffic, Mendoza will make notes by hand and transfer them onto the computer log at a later time, either during or immediately after the shift.

On 09/16/07 at 1157 hours, Raven 4 reported an explosion. For approximately the next hour, a woman from the "intelligence operations bullpen" named Mieszka (later identified as Mieszka Laczek-Johnson) took notes of all the radio transmissions while Mendoza manned the radio. Her

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Investigation on 10/09/2007 at Baghdad, Iraq

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File # 70A-WF-237079-SUB 302-BW  
SA Ronald Ray Peterman, Jr.  
by SA Carolyn J. Murphy/cjmDate dictated 10/17/2007

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handwritten notes were later typed into the log and the notes were shredded.

The interviewing agents reviewed the log with Mendoza beginning with the entry at 1157 hours. Mendoza provided a translation and explanation of the abbreviated entries from that point as follows:

**1157** Raven 4 (R4) reports contact and an explosion at their venue.

At that time, Mendoza immediately switches the teams who are not in contact with the explosion onto another net (the DS net) to minimize the radio traffic. He also orders all other units to freeze. Tony takes over the air net. Mendoza begins monitoring only the radio with the units involved in the explosion, which include Raven 4, Raven 22 (primary response team staged at checkpoint 12), and Raven 23 (back-up team). The communications that take place with these units are with their shift leader or tactical leader.

**1159** R4 reports that the explosion is a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) located 25 meters in front of their venue.

Based upon that transmission, Mendoza dispatched tactical team R22 to assist R4 in locating a secure route back to the IZ.

**1200** R22 exits the IZ from checkpoint 12 in search of R4.

**1201** R22 reports that they are at Grey 87, which is the Nisur Square traffic circle.

**1203** R7 reports their position. According to Mendoza, the activity of R7 is unrelated to the VBIED.

**1204** The Blackwater air unit ("little bird" helicopters) are ordered to conduct a reconnaissance of potential routes for R4 to use to return to the IZ.

**1205** R4 reports that they have safely loaded their "principals". The principals are the diplomats that they are protecting.

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- 1207** Tactical team R22 has reached the venue where R4 is preparing to evacuate their principal.
- 1208** Administrative transmission: R1 calls in-unrelated to the VBIED incident.
- 1208** Administrative transmission involving R13.
- 1209** Administrative transmission involving R13.
- 1210** R4 and R22 depart the venue to return to the IZ.
- 1211** R23 reports that they are securing G87, the Nisur Square traffic circle.

Mendoza does not know why R23 did not report leaving the IZ. There have been problems with radio communications for weeks. He cannot recall whether he dispatched R23.

- 1212** R23 reports contact at G87. They advise that the contact is in the vicinity (IVO) of the northwest area of the traffic circle. They report small arms fire (SAF) by multiple insurgents at their position.
- 1213** Mendoza advises the air units that there is small arms fire reported at the G87 traffic circle. R23 also reports that Iraqi Police (IP) are shooting at them at the traffic circle.

At this point, the Red Detail leader tells Mendoza to advise R23 to get out of the area.

- 1214** R22 and the air unit are escorting R4 through the neighborhoods back to the IZ. R23 is told to break contact and return to the IZ at checkpoint 2. R24 is told to stage at checkpoint 12 as a back-up team. R22 and R4 report that they are at Grey 88, another checkpoint in the red zone.
- 1215** Administrative transmission involving R13.
- 1215** R23 reports that their lead vehicle is "down" and that there are no injuries. According to Mendoza, the lead vehicle is a Bearcat.

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- 1216** R23 reports that the command vehicle is "down" and they are attempting to tow the vehicle.
- 1218** R23 reports that they are towing the command vehicle out of the area, and that they are still being engaged by small arms fire.
- 1219** R22 is still at Grey 88 in heavy traffic. R26 (another tactical team) is staging at checkpoint 12.
- 1220** Mendoza is informed that checkpoint 12 is closed to civilian traffic. R22 and R23 are in radio contact. The fact that they are in contact with each other is relayed to the supporting air units.
- 1220** R23 is in traffic and advise that they are "still under sporadic small arms fire."
- 1221** R23 is asked to send a transmission to Blue Force Tracker (BFT) which would report their position. R22 is advised of the location of R23. Mendoza also reports to all units that the military bypass is open at checkpoint 12.
- 1222** R26 is staged at checkpoint 2.
- 1223** R22 reports a position west of Grey 73 and advises that they are receiving small arms fire.

Mendoza advised that this small arms fire directed against R22 was random and unrelated to the events that were taking place at the Nisur Square traffic circle (G87).

- 1223** R23 is still receiving small arms fire from south of their position. "Big Army" is en route, which refers to the regular U.S. Army (USA) components that patrol the area.

Mendoza advised that Staff Sergeant Houston is the U.S. Army coordinator for the TOC.

- 1224** The TOC advises R22/R4 that the military bypass is open. Mendoza also tells the little birds that R23 is still receiving fire.

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- 1224** R22 reports that they are at Grey 83
- 1226** Communication involving radio channels for the air unit.
- 1227** R23 verifies their location as being 500 meters northeast of G87 (Nisur Square traffic circle) with one vehicle in tow.  
R22 and the little birds report that they are en route to the location of R23.

Mendoza advised that this indicates that R22 has safely escorted R4 back into the IZ and is therefore available to assist R23.

- 1228** The little birds, R22 and R23 are in direct radio communications with each other.
- 1228** R26 is directed to depart the IZ to secure Grey 41, which is an intersection located near checkpoint 2, where R23 will be re-entering the IZ.
- 1229** R23 is advised that the Army quick reaction force (QRF) is en route to assist them. R22 reports that their team has arrived at G87.
- 1231** R23 is heading towards G70.
- 1232** R22 is stuck in traffic at G87. Mendoza advises them to back out of the area and return to base via Blue 6.
- 1233** Administrative communication involving a covert team in the vicinity of G87 for the next two hours.
- 1234** R22 reports that they have been prevented from moving by Iraqi Police officers who have them blocked in. They request assistance. R24 is told to stage at Blue 80.
- 1235** Air units report that they are en route to the location of R22. R22 advises that Iraqi Police are pointing weapons at them in the vicinity of G87. R26 is staged at checkpoint 12.

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- 1236** R23 is told to return to the IZ via checkpoint 2. They report that they have no injuries and their ammunition supply is good.
- 1236** R4 has returned safely and is ending communications with the TOC.
- 1236** The TOC advises R22 that the USA is en route to their location. Little bird air units also advise that the USA units are close to G87. R22 reports that they are being blocked in by Iraqi Police trucks.
- 1237** Iraqi Police and Iraqi National Guard personnel are taking photos and video of R22. R23 reports that they have arrived back to the IZ at checkpoint 2.
- 1238** R22 reports that the Iraqi Police are mounting dishkas, which are belt-fed machine guns. R23 is told to return to checkpoint 2 to stand-by after they have swapped out their lead vehicle.
- 1239** R22 is advised that the U.S. Army is at their location. R22 advises that they are in visual contact with the U.S. Army (USA).
- 1239** R4 advises that they are ending communications with the TOC.
- 1240** R23 advises that they have arrived back to the IZ at checkpoint 2.
- Mendoza is asked why R23 would have checked in from checkpoint 2 twice, at 1237 and 1240. He advised that this is probably due to a breakdown in radio communications.
- 1241** R22 reports that they are still being blocked at G87. They also report that the USA is behind them.
- 1243** R22 reports that USA personnel are talking to the Iraqi Police.
- 1244** The TOC advises R22 that they are in communication with the USA and request that R22 provide frequent updates to the TOC so they can relay the information to the USA.

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- 1245 Little bird air units report that 50-60 local personnel in uniforms are at the location of R22.
- 1246 R22 reports that the Iraqi Police are mounting additional belt-fed dishkas in the direction of R22. R26 reports that they are standing by at checkpoint 12.
- 1247 Little bird air units report that there is a large gathering at the rear of the third vehicle in the R22 convoy.
- 1248 Dismounted USA troops are in contact with R22.
- 1249 Air units report that 4 additional Iraqi Police vehicles are en route to the location of R22.
- 1249 Administrative transmission regarding the covert team that is at the location of G87.
- 1250 R23 reports that they are re-supplying.
- 1250 U.S. Army Apache helicopters are requested to provide assistance at G87. The TOC subsequently advises the little birds to move out of the way but to remain on the perimeter of G87.
- Mendoza advised that the Apaches were not in the vicinity prior to this request.
- 1251 Administrative transmission regarding R19.
- 1253 R22 advises that the USA will escort them from G87 back to the IZ.
- 1255 R23 reports that they are on stand-by at the Patriot motor pool.
- 1255 R22 advises that they have turned around and are en route back to checkpoint 12.
- 1256 R22 advised that they are inside the IZ at checkpoint 12.
- 1257 R22 has cleared checkpoint 12.

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Mendoza advised that radio communications have been the biggest problem during this and previous incidents. Units frequently have to repeat themselves because the communications are not received. For example, at 1250 hours, Mendoza recalls trying several times to communicate to R22 that the Army aviation assets were on the way to their location.

During the communications with R23, Mendoza was in contact with either the tactical team leader or shift leader. He does not know the name of the individual. However, he noted that the voice on the radio was raised but did not sound "panicky."

Mendoza could hear gunfire over the radio during the transmissions. He said it sounded like both incoming and outgoing fire. He described it as being "like a dueling piano."

Mendoza was asked if he receives daily intelligence briefings. He replied that he does not, but that the tactical teams receive an intelligence briefing every morning.

During the interview, Mendoza voluntarily provided the following biographical information:

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Spouse:	Brenda Mendoza

A copy of the Raven Base Watch Log has been placed in a 1A with the notes of the interview and made a part of the file.

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