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Transcript of Amerithrax Investigation Press Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C.

3:40 P.M. EDT

MR. TAYLOR: Good afternoon. I'm Jeff Taylor, the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia. I am joined here today by Joseph Persichini; Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office; Chief Postal Inspector Alexander Lazaroff; and Assistant U.S. Attorney Ken Kohl. As the Department indicated last week and has been widely reported, substantial progress has been made in the Amerithrax investigation in recent years. As you know, this investigation into the worst act of bioterrorism in U.S. history has been one of the largest and most complex ever conducted by the FBI. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service has also made an extraordinary contribution to this investigation. Over the past seven years, hundreds of thousands of agent-hours have been dedicated to solving this crime as well as I may add, many hours of prosecution time.

Ordinarily, we do not publicly disclose evidence against a suspect who has not been charged, in part because of the presumption of innocence. But because of the extraordinary and justified public interest in this investigation, as well as the significant public attention resulting from the death of Dr. Bruce Edwards Ivins last week, today we are compelled to take the extraordinary step of providing first, the victims and their families, as well as Congress, and the American public with an overview of some recent developments as well as some of our conclusions.

Earlier today, several search warrant affidavits were unsealed in federal court in the District of Columbia. Among other things, these search warrants confirm that the government was investigating Dr. Ivins in connection with the attacks, which killed five individuals and injured 17 others in 2001. Dr. Ivins was a resident of Frederick, Maryland, and a long-time anthrax researcher who worked at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases, known as USAMRIID.

Dr. Ivins died of an overdose on July 29, 2008, and, at the time of his death, was the sole suspect in the case. Our investigation had begun to shift to a particular laboratory at USAMRIID in 2005 and began to focus on Dr. Ivins as a suspect in 2007. In the weeks prior to his death, we had been in conversations with his attorneys regarding the direction of the investigation because we believed that based on the evidence we had collected, we could prove his guilt to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt. Based upon the totality of the evidence we had gathered against him, we are confident that Dr. Ivins was the only person responsible for these attacks.

We are now beginning the process of concluding this investigation. Once this process is complete, we will formally close the case. Had Dr. Ivins been indicted, he would have been presumed innocent until proven guilty as is the case of any other criminal defendant. We regret that we will not have the opportunity to present the evidence to a jury to determine whether the evidence establishes Dr. Ivins' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

We have provided you copies of the court documents, which give details about our evidence. I encourage you to read through them carefully.

I will summarize from these documents and then I'll turn the podium over to the FBI to go into greater detail. I will also note that, for a variety of reasons, there may be some questions and details we simply may not be able to discuss publicly today. I hope you respect these boundaries, given the extraordinary steps we're taking with this disclosure today.

Now, turning to the evidence.

First, we were able to identify in early 2005 the genetically-unique parent material of the anthrax spores used in the mailings. As the court documents allege, the parent material of the anthrax spores used in the attacks was a single flask of spores, known as "RMR-1029," that was created and solely maintained by Dr. Ivins at USAMRIID.

This means that the spores used in the attacks were taken from that specific flask, regrown, purified, dried and loaded into the letters. No one received material from that flask without going through Dr. Ivins. We thoroughly investigated every other person who could have had access to the flask and we were able to rule out all but Dr. Ivins.

Second, as a renowned expert in the production and purification of anthrax spores, Dr. Ivins was one of a handful of scientists with the capability to create spores of the concentration and purity used in the attacks. The affidavits allege that, not only did Dr. Ivins create and maintain the spore batch used in the mailings, but he also had access to and experience using a lyophilizer. A lyophilizer is a sophisticated machine that is used to dry pathogens, and can be used to dry anthrax. We know others in Dr. Ivins' lab consulted him when they needed to use this machine.

Third, in the days leading up to each of the mailings, the documents make clear that Dr. Ivins was working inordinate hours alone at night and on the weekend in the lab where the flask of spores and production equipment were stored. A review of his access records revealed that Dr. Ivins had not spent this many "off hours" in the lab at any time before or after this period. When questioned about why he was in the lab during those off hours prior to each of the mailings, Dr. Ivins was unable to offer any satisfactory explanation.

Fourth, the affidavits indicate Dr. Ivins had engaged in behavior and made a number of statements that suggest consciousness of guilt. For example, one night shortly after a search warrant was executed on his house, Dr. Ivins took highly unusual steps to discard a book and article on DNA coding while under 24/7 surveillance. In addition, he had submitted a questionable sample of anthrax from his flask of parent spores to the FBI, presumably to mislead investigators. He had also made far-reaching efforts to blame others and divert attention away from himself, and had made threatening e-mail statements to a friend regarding the case. Recently, he had detailed threats in his group therapy session to kill people who had wronged him, after learning he might be indicted.

Fifth, as reflected in the court documents, Dr. Ivins had a history of mental health problems and was facing a difficult time professionally in the summer and fall of 2001 because an anthrax vaccine he was working on was failing. The affidavits describe one e-mail to a co-worker in which Dr. Ivins stated that he had "incredible paranoid, delusional thoughts at times," and feared that he might not be able to control his behavior.

Sixth, throughout his adult life Dr. Ivins had frequently driven to other locations to send packages in the mail under assumed names to disguise his identity as the sender. He had also admitted to using false names and aliases in writings. In addition, he was a prolific writer to Congress and the media, the targeted victims in the anthrax attacks. Law enforcement recovered 68 letters to such entities from his house in a November 1, 2007 search.

I'll conclude with one more point. The envelopes used in the attacks were all pre-franked envelopes, sold only at U.S. Post Offices during a nine-month window in 2001. An analysis of the envelopes revealed several print defects in the ink on the pre-printed portions of the envelopes. Based on the analysis, we were able to conclude that the envelopes used in the mailings were very likely sold at a post office in Frederick, Maryland area in 2001. Dr. Ivins maintained a post office box at the Post Office in Frederick, from which these pre-franked envelopes with print defects were sold.

During the course of the seven-year investigation, Dr. Ivins was interviewed by federal authorities several times - three times in 2008 alone. His statements were inconsistent over time and failed to explain the evidence against him.

The points I have just gone over are only a summary of the court documents we have provided you. There are additional details in the documents, which again, we encourage you to read thoroughly. All the information contained in this statement is now public information. We are able to give you this information because the United States followed proper procedures and formally requested that a federal court unseal several search warrants in this investigation, and that court approved the request. In addition, we consulted and received express permission of the Justice Department to do so.

I'd now like to introduce Mr. Persichini to provide you with some greater detail on the evidence and how the investigation was conducted. Thank you.

MR. PERSICHINI: Thanks Jeff, Chief Inspector Lazaroff. Good afternoon.

As Assistant Director in charge of the Washington Field Office of the FBI, I was able to be with Director Mueller this morning as he met with the families of those who died, and many of the surviving victims of these attacks. I was able to once again offer my sincere and heartfelt condolences, and provide them some of the answers they have waited for with such patience and understanding for seven years.

As U.S. Attorney Taylor pointed out, over the past seven years, the members of the Amerithrax Task Force, comprised of FBI Agents and U.S. Postal Service Inspectors, put forth a herculean effort to identify the origin of the anthrax spores contained in the mailings. And, together with career prosecutors from the Department of Justice, prepared to bring the person responsible for these crimes to justice.

The Amerithrax Task Force members worked tirelessly on a case that quickly became a global investigation spanning six continents, and required that new scientific techniques be created. Postal inspectors, FBI agents, analysts and scientists worked this investigation 24/7, with unwavering dedication and perseverance.

For example, at the time of the anthrax attacks, the protocols for genetic tests to determine the DNA fingerprint of individual batches of anthrax had not been developed. The FBI sought out the best experts in the scientific community and, over time, four highly sensitive and specific tests were developed that were capable of detecting the unique qualities of the anthrax used in the 2001 attacks.

That is to say, this investigation took our agents and scientists to new territory. An extraordinary amount of research and testing needed to achieve these groundbreaking accomplishments required months and years of trial and error analysis and review.

We were then able to trace that to an individual lab, a single flask, and one individual who controlled it. Further, painstaking investigation lead us to the conclusion that Dr. Bruce E. Ivins was responsible for the death, sickness and fear brought to our country by the 2001 anthrax mailing, and that it appears, based on the evidence, that he was acting alone.

In closing, I sincerely hope that the documents we have released today provide an overview of our investigation of the 2001 anthrax mailings, our scientific accomplishments and the conclusion made regarding Dr. Ivins.

Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: We're happy to take some questions.

QUESTION: Can you explain, please, why you would tell a target or someone that you believed that he -- that there was a killer who had a weapon of mass destruction, and then allow that person continued access to a lab working with -- still having access to some of those substances?

MR. TAYLOR: With respect to the access he actually had, I'll refer to the Department of Defense. However, when the investigation began to focus on Dr. Ivins, the lab was notified of our concerns about him. With respect to what was done after that, I'll refer you to the Department of Defense.

Jim.

QUESTION: A question for Mr. Persichini. You build -- this is obviously, at this point, a circumstantial case. You build a strong circumstantial case. What direct evidence do you have? For instance, do you have any tape that was used on the envelope that was recovered from his home? Do you have any other -- any other evidence that clearly would link him? For instance, in the affidavit, it mentions that people of this sort often keep souvenirs. Did you find anything like that at his home?

MR. PERSICHINI: Well first, I would refer back to the documents, because that's the purpose of our press conference today, to provide you the documents and the information pertained in the documents. As it relates to admitting evidence into it, I'm going to refer back to Jeff. But again, we're looking at the document itself and the purpose of our release and providing this information to the families. That's first and foremost for us. So I won't discuss the actuality of evidence, then.
MR. TAYLOR: Let me talk for a minute about the circumstantial evidence notion directives. As I've just laid out, there's plenty of evidence in this case of all types. We have a flask that's effectively the murder weapon, from which those spores were taken, that was controlled by Dr. Ivins. The anthrax in that flask was created by Dr. Ivins. We have the suspicious behavior that he had undertaken over the years. We have, in addition, the mail envelopes with the tool stamp defects I had mentioned.

But again, back to circumstantial evidence -- thousands of prosecutors in thousands of courthouses prove cases beyond a reasonable doubt using circumstantial evidence. In fact, the standard jury instruction given by judges across the country is that a jury can consider circumstantial evidence and direct evidence, and they both can be given equal weight depending on the jury's view. So, again, circumstantial evidence? Sure, some of it is. But it's compelling evidence and our view is we are confident it would have helped us prove this case against Dr. Ivins beyond a reasonable doubt.

Yes.

QUESTION: When did you guys get back around to him? Reading the documents, it said June 17, 2004, the FBI discovered that the strains matched the flask. And then they got back to him about nine months later and told him that, and he lied and said than an FBI agent had told him that later. So clearly, by then, it sounds like he was actually trying to lead to guys astray. He had already given you false specimens, those kinds of things. When did you get back around to him from March 31 of 2005, as a suspect?

MR. TAYLOR: You've got to remember how complex, complicated this investigation was. At the onset, we had identified the universe of the persons and labs that might have access to this type of anthrax, once we identified what type of anthrax it was. And then over the years, there were efforts to shrink the size of that pool. One of the key steps was the science that the FBI was able to develop that, over time, allowed them to show that that flask, RMR 1029, was the parent flask for the spores used in those envelopes. That further shrunk the pool, if you will, and created additional interest in Dr. Ivins. But even at that point, the investigation still had a long way to go, because there's still a universe of people who might have access to that flask, or people with whom Dr. Ivins may have shared some portion of that anthrax.

The initial science breakthrough, if you will, came in early 2005, in terms of having validated science that could be used to show the flask was the parent; science that could be used at trial, that could lead to admissible evidence. Then in 2007, as we conducted additional investigative steps, we were able to narrow the focus even further, exclude individuals, and that left us looking at Dr. Ivins.

QUESTION: So there was at least a two-year delay between the forensic evidence leading to Fort Dietrich, and really focusing on Dr. Ivins. How big a factor was Dr. Hatfield in that, and how did the FBI get so off-track in focusing on him, apparently as the sole and primary suspect?

MR. TAYLOR: Let me refer back to what I said: It was an extensive investigation. In an investigation of this scope and complexity, the task is to follow the evidence where it leads. The science breakthrough in '05 leads you to flask RMR1029. At that point, as I said, there is a tremendous amount of additional investigation that needs to take place to identify the universe of individuals who had access to that flask, what they did with it, checking lab books, doing interviews, things of that nature. And only through taking those extensive, time-consuming steps, involving a lot of agents, were they able to exclude individuals and include others; in particular, Dr. Ivins.

QUESTION: Was Dr. Hatfield under investigation at this time? **MR. TAYLOR:** Again, the evidence -- the followed where it lead. That's all I'm prepared to say at this point.

QUESTION: Dr. Hatfield was never established to have access in the Detrick division or possession, obviously, of anthrax. Yet his residence was searched in June of 2002. Further searches of his property were conducted throughout that year and beyond. Yet it took until, if I'm reading your documents correctly, late 2007 before you ever sought to search Bruce Ivins' vehicles or his residence. Can you just speak to that gap? And did you determine whether Dr. Ivins ever had his vehicle cleaned or bleached in the intervening six years?

MR. PERSICHINI: I've talked already about the extensive investigation that took place from 2005 to 2007. Again, we're talking about a large number of individuals, over 100, who potentially had access to this substance. We had to go through this laborious process to ferret out or exclude those who were not involved. With respect to the other individual you mentioned, we were able to determine that at no time could that individual be put in the presence of that flask from which these spores came.

QUESTION: Jeff, did you find any handwriting samples or hair samples that would have matched Dr. Ivins to the envelopes where the hair samples were found in the mailbox?

MR. TAYLOR: We did not find any handwriting analysis or hair samples in the mailbox. So there were no facts and circumstances of that part.

QUESTION: You didn't take handwriting samples from Dr. Ivins? **MR. TAYLOR:** We examined handwriting samples but then there was no comparison made or a specific identification of the handwriting. It appears that when the analysts would look at it, that there was an attempt to disguise the handwriting. So it was unable to make a comparison.

With respect to handwriting samples, we did have indications from individuals with whom we spoke that there appeared to be some similarities in handwriting that were apparent. That said, we did not have a scientifically valid conclusion that we thought would lead us to be able to admit that in evidence.

QUESTION: Could you speak a little bit about what he said in an e-mail a couple of days before the letters went out regarding al-Qaeda having some kind of biological weapons or sarin gas or anthrax to this quality? There was some mention in the affidavits about it, and then it's compared to the letters.

MR. TAYLOR: That's correct. There was an e-mail at the time that mentioned that factor, and we put it in to suggest, among other things, some possible connection between what he was describing about death to Israel, death to America, and what was found in the letters that had been mailed in the attacks. **QUESTION:** Is that a strong connection, do you think? **MR. TAYLOR:** It's circumstantial evidence.

Yes?

QUESTION: Do you think there's a connection between Ivins and what was known at the time of the Quantico letter? There was a letter sent in September of 2001 identifying an Arab-American scientist at Fort Detrick as a bioterrorist. The letter also threatened a bioterror attack and also death to Israel. Were you ever satisfied that you were able to run down that letter and the author of that letter?

MR. TAYLOR: I'm not aware of any connection. To my knowledge, there's no evidence linking the two.

Joe?

QUESTION: In your affidavits, there's a footnote that indicates you searched -- you had probable cause to search other "individuals," more than one. Can you talk about the scope or the number of people you searched that you believe you had probable cause on?

MR. TAYLOR: I'm not going to get into the details of other investigative techniques that were handled that we used in this case for the other individuals. I'm here today based on all that investigation, we stand here today firmly convinced that we have the person who committed those attacks, and we are confident that had this gone to trial, we would have proved him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Mark?

QUESTION: Can you elaborate a little bit on what you think is the motive behind this? Because of him being -- in terms of like other than mental deficiency or imbalance. And also, the evidence in the document seems to suggest that maybe he was already in a frame of mind to do this and was acting strangely before 9/11. So is there a connection with 9/11? Did 9/11 accelerate this somewhat? And finally, you'd mentioned in your statements earlier something about contacting his lawyers recently and talking with them, proving reasonable doubt. Have you got a target letter that -- had you informed him that he was being investigated?

MR. TAYLOR: I'm going to take those in reverse order and hope I can remember all three. There had been scheduled last week a meeting with his lawyer, what we call a reverse proffer, where we were going to sit down with him and lay our cards on the table: Here's what we have. Here's where this investigation is going. Based on the evidence that's in the affidavits and other investigation, it seems clear that Dr. Ivins was aware that the government was proceeding in that direction toward bringing charges.

Help me with number two, Mark.

QUESTION: The question was before 9/11, some of the evidence in your chain of evidence about his increasing the feverish activity suggests that it starts in August or whatever, before --

MR. TAYLOR: The other question you have, Dr. Ivins is a troubled individual, particularly so at that time. He's very concerned, according to the evidence, that this vaccination program he's been working on may come to an end. He's also very concerned that some have been criticizing and blaming that vaccination program in connection with illnesses suffered by soldiers from, I think, the first Gulf War. So that was going on, according to the evidence, in his mind at that particular time.

With respect to motive, I'll point again to -- with respect to the motive, the troubled nature of Dr. Ivins. And a possible motive is his concern about the end of the vaccination program. And the concerns had been raised, and one theory is that by launching these attacks, he creates a situation, a scenario, where people all of a sudden realize the need to have this vaccine.

QUESTION: In the context of 9/11? In other words, do you think 9/11 precipitated this?

MR. TAYLOR: I don't want to speculate on that. I don't know.

In the back.

QUESTION: Just to follow, any thoughts as to why Senator Leahy, Senator Daschle, and the publication in Florida and the publication in New York?

MR. TAYLOR: Well, I refer you to the documents. In the affidavits, there's some speculation concerning -- or some indications, some evidence, ideas, concerning Senator Leahy and Senator Daschle. Also there's an e-mail in one of the documents talking about the National Enquirer, and the site in Florida was the publication of the National Enquirer.

QUESTION: Could you address the reports today that the family had been confronted at a mall in Frederick, Maryland at one point by investigators?

MR. TAYLOR: That's categorically false. The notion that somehow these people were coerced or abused by the agents or the lawyers is categorically false. These agents handled themselves professionally, responsibly, and with great respect for Mr. Ivins and for his family. And I'd say the same thing about the prosecutors in this case. They are pros, and they handled themselves the right way.

Joe, do you want to say anything about that?

QUESTION: Can you tell us Dr. Ivins was able to get the anthrax out of the lab and how he did not get sick himself? Also, were you able to place him at the mailboxes in Princeton?

MR. TAYLOR: With respect to your first question about getting the anthrax out of the site, Dr. Ivins -- and correct me if I'm wrong, Ken -- had vaccinated himself against anthrax.

With respect to the mailbox, as I laid out before, there is ample evidence in this case pointing to Dr. Ivins as the individual who drove to Princeton to mail those letters. He had the hours in the hot seat during the relevant times. We looked at the records when he was at work and when he would have had time to drive to Princeton, New Jersey. And it's clear from those records that he had time on the relevant occasions to drive to Princeton, mail the envelopes, and come back. There's also evidence I'll refer you to in the affidavits concerning where that mailbox was located in Princeton, New Jersey in relation to some obsessive conduct on his part with regard to a sorority. Again, it's a chain. It's a chain of evidentiary items that, assembled together, leads to one reasonable conclusion, and that is Dr. Ivins mailed that anthrax in those envelopes from that mailbox in Princeton.

Yes?

QUESTION: Is there evidence like a gas receipt that shows that he was there, I mean, that actually proves that he was in that area?

MR. TAYLOR: We don't have that piece of direct evidence you mentioned.

Yes?

QUESTION: Sir, two questions. Is there any evidence at all that Dr. Ivins, based on his knowledge of his coworker, somehow framed or set up Dr. Hatfield? And secondly, given the fact that this guy had mental problems going back to 2000, you allege, how is it possible that a guy of his state of mind could have tricked the FBI for so long into thinking it was somebody else, or at least not him? The first question is about Dr. --

MR. TAYLOR: There's no evidence to indicate anything like that. With respect to the second question, no. As I said, the evidence was followed by the FBI. They conducted an exhaustive investigation, narrowing the universe. Eventually, as I said, the key breakthrough was the science that then focused their attention laser-like onto that flask and the person who had control of that flask and the person who made the spores in that flask. And then furthermore, as the investigation continues, we learn -- we can exclude others. We learn about the lyophilizer and his expertise in using that and how that could have been used to dry those spores.

QUESTION: You make the case that he was coming unhinged. How could a guy in his fragile state, as you describe it in these papers, for years -- you know, alcoholism, mental problems, paranoid, delusional, things you described -- how could he get away with this for so long? **MR. TAYLOR:** Well, I'm not going to speculate on how. I can't get into his mind. I think what you're asking, sir, answers the question itself. He had been this way for a number of years, going back for quite a number of years, and still able to carry on his professional life at USAMRIID.

Yes?

QUESTION: Sir, Mickey McCarter from Homeland Security Today. The scientific breakthroughs that we're discussing here, what would they need for future investigations into a sort of similar situation with anthrax or bioterrorism?

MR. TAYLOR: Joe?

MR. PERSICHINI: Well, I think first as we displayed in this case, the ability to use DNA to track this spore or the anthrax that was used is significant. Now, we do have yet -- the FBI lab has to come out with publications. We were prepared to use this analysis if we went to trial. So this is a major development. It's a significant development, and we talk about the timeframe that has taken to develop that DNA. But when you think about the universe of samples and the testing and the procedures and the verification that was done, this is -- this is a huge development not just for the FBI but all of us in law enforcement. Again, we faced a weapon which we had never, ever faced before in our life, an inability to trace that evidence such we do with either DNA or firearms or fingerprints. This is a, I think, a significant development and kudos to the lab folks that have helped.

QUESTION: When will your research be published?

MR. PERSICHINI: I'm not going to comment on -- on when the publications and the process will come out, but the FBI lab will do that accordingly.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, could you talk a little more about the meeting with the families today, just a little more about the meeting with the families? **MR. TAYLOR:** Let me add something on the science. It's important that the science was developed, but also that it's been validated, that it's something that's scientifically approved that can be used going forward in investigations to bring cases. And while the breakthrough came in 2005, there was an additional piece of validation regarding another assay that didn't take place until 2007.

Now, yes, sir?

QUESTION: Yeah, if you could just talk a little more about the meeting with the families. I think this was the first time that they all came from across the country and was invited by the FBI. Could you just talk a little bit more about that the meeting went over two hours. Did they seem satisfied with the explanation and what's the follow-up because some of them are saying they still have more questions and they're not quite knowing that this one person could do all these things and all these mailings? So what assurance did you have for some of the families who could not come to Washington today?

MR. PERSICHINI: Well, I think as we -- we started this conference today, the primary mission for us was to sit with the families, and FBI Director Mueller personally provided them the briefing, was there for about two hours. I think it was an outstanding opportunity for us to put forth the documents, to have the ability to show them what we believe to be the evidence. And as I said earlier, it has been a long time, seven years, and because of our rules, because of the investigative steps, we could not disclose them that evidence.

So I'm not going to characterize how it was received or -- or the mood of -- of these individuals. I think it was important for all of us, and the investigative team was all there present. I think I'd clarify it as a moving day for all of us, very important in this investigation to bring closure.

QUESTION: Yes, I have a two-part question.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, in the back.

QUESTION: One, with the issue with us not knowing if that was his handwriting and also not knowing that he put these letters in the mailbox. How -- how are you so sure that there wasn't another person involved?

MR. TAYLOR: The evidence I described in my statement and that I've described throughout this question-and-answer period, as I said, led us to conclude that Dr. Ivins is the person who committed this crime. We are confident based on the evidence we have that we could prove this case beyond a reasonable doubt.

QUESTION: Also, I'd like to ask the Postal Inspector -- I don't know which one. When are you -- are you planning to brief or speak with the postal workers who were affected or is that the end of it?

MR. LAZAROFF: We, today, this morning sent out a letter from the Postmaster General to all of our postal employees to talk a little bit about the investigation. And the answer to your question is yes. We are planning to -- to speak with our employees further and we do have our employee support folks onsite in the -- in the facilities that were impacted to provide further assistance to any employee that's in need.

QUESTION: You're speaking about EAT. I'm speaking about having a briefing with the employees because I am also one of the affected employees. So I would like to know are you-all planning to do anything to meet with us so that we can get a briefing and also ask our questions.

MR. LAZAROFF: Yeah, I think that -- I think, as I said, we sent general information out today, and I think we had folks onsite in some of the critical facilities. And the plans are to provide briefings to the employees in the -- in the facilities that were impacted. And, of course, we'll answer the questions as the questions come into the postal service. But remember, we have 700,000 employees across the country, and we're focusing on the employees that -- that are in those critical facilities and we're going to provide general information but very specific information to the folks closest to where the incidents took place.

QUESTION: Mr. Persichini, when did you find out that Dr. Ivins might be suicidal and if you found that out, I guess the answer is yes, did it occur to you to take some kind of measures to keep from him the fact that you were about to close in on him so that you were able to keep him alive, try to arrest him all at once?

MR. TAYLOR: Our job in law enforcement is to pursue our criminal investigation. With respect to what was troubling Dr. Ivins, the agents involved in the case had been keeping tabs on Dr. Ivins for quite some time as part of the investigation. We came -- became aware through law enforcement authorities in Frederick, Maryland some new, more serious concerns and that he had been picked up by those authorities and taken to a facility in Maryland. We also learned when he was released, and from that time just a few days before he took his life, FBI agents were conducting 24/7 surveillance. We were able to prevent him from harming anyone else. Unfortunately, we were unable to prevent him from harming himself.

QUESTION: Did you ever feel that he was going to commit another act like this one? Was that a possibility?

MR. TAYLOR: I don't want to speculate about possibilities. What we know is that the attacks took place when they did and there have been nothing similar since then.

QUESTION: Can you speak a little broadly about some of the skepticism that people have?

[Amerithrax Court Documents](#)

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