

With Crisis in Mind, Center Opens

Bunker Mentality Is Denied as City Unveils Emergency Unit

By JUDITH MILLER

Ridiculed only a year ago as an overpriced skybox "bunker" built to shield Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and his top aides from physical and perhaps verbal abuse, the city's \$13 million emergency crisis center officially opened yesterday with a blaze of activity simulating a biological attack on New York.

In a cavernous room with giant overhead television monitors and digitized aerial photos of the city's subway, sewage and water main systems, city officials stared at computer monitors and huddled in small groups, exchanging information and sorting rumor from fact about the hypothetical epidemic that had gripped New York.

The complex, which takes up 50,000 square feet on the 23d floor of one of the smaller buildings in the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan, has been mocked by some

City Council members and critics of the Giuliani administration as one more manifestation of the Mayor's preoccupation with order, and, perhaps, siege mentality. But the complex won high praise from many of the Federal and state officials taking part in a drill to test the city's response to a terrorist emergency.

"This is really state of the art — the best I've seen," said Col. Robert A. Fitton, the chief of the Pentagon unit that provides military support to civilian authorities in the event of emergencies.

Partly to counter past criticism, Jerome M. Hauer, the city's chief emergency manager, escorted a small group of reporters through the center yesterday, showing off its newly installed computers and information systems. "This," Mr. Hauer declared, "is not a bunker."

Bulletproofed, the center features some of the most advanced comput-

er and telecommunications equipment available and is hardened to withstand bombs, hurricanes, power failures and other crises. It was completed on time and under its \$16 million budget, with its cost less than half that of a center being built in Hawaii and less than a third that of a crisis center in earthquake-prone Tokyo.

The New York command center is intended to coordinate the city's response to emergencies ranging from blackouts and severe storms to terrorist attacks with conventional and unconventional weapons.

Built to withstand winds of more than 160 miles an hour, the center has three generators to insure continuous power in the event of a blackout, 11,000 gallons of stored drinkable water for emergency management workers, a 6,000-gallon ceiling-mounted fuel tank that guarantees 72 hours of operation, and a secure communications system. It can accommodate up to 94 city, state and Federal officials monitoring a citywide emergency.

Coincidentally, the city unveiled the center as it was staging a drill with Federal and state officials on how to respond to a biological attack. Several officials of the Defense Department and other agencies taking part in the drill said they were impressed by the center.

The crisis center still has its critics. Councilwoman Kathryn E. Freed, whose district houses the new center, reiterated earlier concerns about whether the investment was prudent, given the city's vast needs. She also challenged its location in a building not owned by the city and for which it will pay \$1.4 million a year in rent a year under its 20-year lease.

"It's an incredible amount of money to enhance somebody else's property," Ms. Freed said. "We had a state-of-the-art emergency center in Police Headquarters, and I still don't understand why we needed



New York City's new crisis center cost \$13 million, occupies 50,000 square feet on one floor at the World Trade Center and is equipped with aerial photos of the city's subway, sewage and water main systems.

A biological attack is simulated as a criticized complex makes its debut.

this one."

Some police officials apparently share her skepticism, particularly since the Police Department already has its own command and control center at Police Headquarters in lower Manhattan. Emergency management officials noted that the department resented the Office of Emergency Management's growing role in crisis management and said its concerns almost scuttled the project at one point.

Marilyn Mode, a Police Department spokeswoman, said the department would maintain its own command center at Police Headquarters. Asked whether the police resented giving up command of the

city during a non-law enforcement crisis to the new center, she replied: "We're not giving up anything. We have our own crisis center."

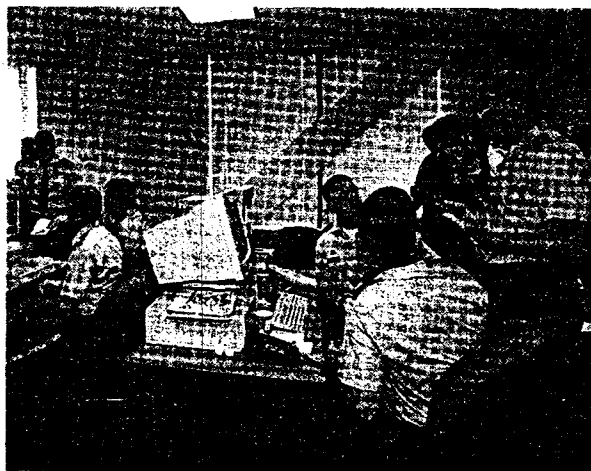
But a 1994 memorandum from the commander of the Police Department's operations division questioned the ability of Police Headquarters to withstand an emergency. In the event of an earthquake, hurricane, terrorist act or other crisis, the memo stated that One Police Plaza "would likely be unable to sustain operations" because of "loss of power, water, communications or structural integrity." This, in turn, could have a "devastating impact on our ability to restore order."

Asked about the center's location in the World Trade Center, in a building across the street from the site of the 1993 terrorist bombing that killed six people, Mr. Hauer, who is director of the city's Office of Emergency Management, said the location was chosen after a study of some 50 alternative sites. The complex now has tight security and is

close to the Mayor's office, the Police and Fire Departments and the headquarters of other high city officials, he said, adding that in the event of an emergency, personnel would want to reach the center on foot.

The command center occupies about half the space of the complex. Engineers had urged that the center not be built in a basement or converted bomb shelter — as Los Angeles has done — because of Manhattan's 100-year-old water mains. An earthquake or bombing would risk turning an underground center into "a \$13 million swimming pool," Mr. Hauer said.

One of several elevators to the 23d floor, he said, has its own power supply to assure continued access during a blackout. He called security at the center excellent, with no trucks permitted to enter the building complex without being searched. The 47-story building, 7 World Trade Center, also rents space on its 9th and 10th floors to the Secret Service, another Government agency that values security.



Officials from several agencies joined at the city's emergency crisis center as it was opened yesterday with a simulated biological attack.

porter's Notebook

High-Profile Police Trial Shifts to Mundane Waiting

By JOSEPH P. FRIED

Whether it is a trial that has received no public notice, or one where the public spotlight has been brilliant, the final stretch is usually the same — an agony of suspense in which the defendants sweat it out while 12 strangers decide whether the result will be acquittal and freedom.

So it was yesterday on the sixth floor of Federal District Court in Brooklyn, in a hallway outside the courtroom that has been the scene of one of the most closely watched trials in New York City in years.

"It's not easy — the waiting's the worst," Thomas Bruder, a 33-year-old police officer, said quietly as he sat on a bench with relatives and awaited the verdict in the Abner Louima case.

Officer Bruder and Officer Thomas Wiese, 35, are charged with beating Mr. Louima in a police car as he was arrested and was being driven to the 70th Precinct station house in Brooklyn, where prosecutors say Mr. Louima was tortured on the morning of Aug. 9, 1997. If convicted, the two officers could each be sentenced to as much as 10 years in prison.

Officer Wiese echoed Officer Bruder's statements outside the courtroom yesterday. "This is the toughest time, the waiting," he said.

Another of the four officers waiting in the hallway yesterday was Charles Schwarz, 33, for whom the stakes are vastly higher. He is accused not only of taking part in the reported beating in the police car, but also of participating in the attack in a bathroom at the station house in which Justin A. Volpe jammed a stick into Mr. Louima's rectum, inflicting major internal injuries.

Officer Schwarz is charged with holding Mr. Louima down during the attack by Mr. Volpe, who pleaded guilty in mid-trial, and conviction on that charge could bring a sentence of as much as life in prison.

"We're doing as well as we can," Officer Schwarz said while the jury, out of sight in a room behind the nearby courtroom, worked its way through a month's worth of testimony by more than 50 witnesses. The jury concluded its second day of deliberations yesterday without reaching a verdict.

The officer's wife, Andra, standing at his side, had a more direct assessment of the couple's agony of waiting. As a silver-handed clock on the marble wall ticked off the long hours, she said, "It's torture."

Keeping a Life Going

A fourth defendant in the trial, Sgt.



Still awaiting the jury's verdict, Officer Charles Schwarz emerged from the door of Federal District Court in Brooklyn for lunch yesterday. Sgt. Michael Bellomo, right photo, said he is trying to keep his life normal.

Michael Bellomo, is accused of trying to cover up the reported beating of Mr. Louima in the police car as well as Officer Volpe's beating of a second man, Patrick Antoine. Sergeant Bellomo is not accused of taking part in any of the assaults.

Sergeant Bellomo, who if convicted could face up to 10 years in prison, said he had tried over the weekend not to let his concerns about his future life at his Staten Island home.

"I separate the trial from my home life," said Sergeant Bellomo, a 12-year veteran of the police force who said he hoped to serve with the department for 20 years, then become a schoolteacher.

"I have two teen-age children with teen-age problems, and I had to deal with that. This weekend I opened my pool. I cleaned my cars. All the things I neglected to do during the trial. Life has to go on at my house."

Notes Are Poor Clues

As yesterday's session ended, it was clear that the jurors were focusing on the charges against Sergeant Bellomo. They sent out a note saying they wanted testimony read to them about F.B.I. agents' questioning of the sergeant at a session nearly three months after Mr. Louima and Mr. Antoine had been attacked.

The prosecutors, from the United



Sgt. Michael Bellomo, right photo, said he is trying to keep his life normal.

States Attorney's office in Brooklyn, told the jury that the sergeant lied to the agents about the arrests of Mr. Louima and Mr. Antoine. Sergeant Bellomo's lawyer, John Patten, told the panel that his client had believed that what he had told the agents about the chaotic street melee was true.

The jury's note sparked the kind of speculation among reporters and others in the courtroom's gallery that often accompany jury notes at trials. Did it mean that the jurors had resolved all the charges against Officer Schwarz, after earlier asking for a reading of testimony relating to him? Did it mean they could not decide the charges against Officer

Schwarz and decided to put them aside temporarily and deal with Sergeant Bellomo?

Did the fact that the jury's notes have not involved Officers Wiese and Bruder mean the panel had quickly decided on those two men, or did it mean the jurors had not even begun to deal with them?

"What do you think?" Officer Bruder's lawyer, Stuart London, countered when asked.

Officer Wiese's lawyer, Joseph Taccopina, said he had "no clue." Referring to his past trials, he said: "I've so failed in my previous attempts to figure out what a jury is doing, I've given up trying. That's why it's utter torture to me."

Departing United States Attorney Makes an Imprint on His Office, if Not a Name for Himself

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property taxes as discriminatory, and his concern about police brutality. In addition to the Louima case, the office is investigating whether incidents of excessive force by officers are a product of systemic failures in New York City Police Department procedures.

Even in the area of street crime, a domain that Federal prosecutors often cede to their state counterparts, Mr. Carter's dismantling of crack gangs had the effect of curbing criminal activity that disproportionately victimized the poor. Mr. Carter said that as proud as he is of his office's organized-crime prosecutions, like the conviction of the Mafia boss Vincent Gigante, he feels they meant "zich" to people living in impoverished neighborhoods.

"The people who were diminishing the quality of their lives," he said, "particularly in the early to mid-90's, were anonymous crack gangs whose names no one knew."

Many find it fitting that Mr. Carter chose to leave just after the Louima case. "In my opinion, that case was

more important to him than any other," said Valerie Caproni, who was the chief of the Criminal Division until last year. Mr. Carter took over the case from the state because Federal convictions often carry stiffer penalties. He attended the trial nearly every day, watching from the third row as his most seasoned prosecutors presented evidence.

Mr. Carter will not designate one case as paramount, but he does not dispute the magnitude of the Louima incident, one so brutal, he said, that it initially stunned him. "This case obviously reveals a level of misconduct and abuse beyond what anyone has ever reported," he said.

In his other major civil rights prosecution, Mr. Carter's office secured the convictions of two men involved in the stabbing death of Yankel Rosenbaum during the 1991 disturbance in Crown Heights. More recently, Mr. Carter's office began investigating allegations of brutality by guards at the Nassau County Jail.

Mr. Carter's setbacks include the 1998 acquittals of Assemblyman Dov Hikind, whom prosecutors had accused of taking illegal payoffs, and Peter Gatien, a prominent nightclub

owner who had been indicted on drug charges. Mr. Gatien's lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, said he respected Mr. Carter but had concerns about how his office handled some cases.

"He is a sincere, honest man who took his job very seriously," Mr. Brafman said. "I question, however, some of the judgments made in rather significant prosecutions that he authorized. The cases were completely unsupported by the facts or based on tortured legal theories."

Other natural antagonists, like local prosecutors, had a more benign view of Mr. Carter. The Brooklyn District Attorney, Charles J. Hynes, said Mr. Carter had helped forge an unusually cooperative relationship between their two offices. The Queens District Attorney, Richard Brown, said Mr. Carter's diplomacy extended to the way he stole talent, which he did repeatedly from Mr. Brown, but always after asking permission. "He works and plays nicely with others," Mr. Brown said.

Several prosecutors who work for Mr. Carter said they found him generous to a fault when dealing with the Southern District, the office's Manhattan rival, which they contended

too often poached cases. Mr. Carter disputed that view, saying he was tightfisted when it made sense to hold on to a case. The United States Attorney for the Southern District, Mary Jo White, said she saw nothing of the wallflower in Mr. Carter.

"He is quiet but not shy," she said, "and quite tenacious in overseeing the cases that he brings."

Friends and associates describe Mr. Carter as a serious man, sometimes prone to bits of self-righteousness but seldom to bouts of self-importance. Several prosecutors said he occasionally joined office parties at a nearby bar for a beer (one) and lovingly recounted tales of his 6-year-old daughter, Chandler, or told of his misfortunes on the golf course. (People who have played with Mr. Carter said he shoots in the mid-80's, which is uncommon, and does not cheat, which is even rarer.) His wife, Rosalind, is a vice president for human resources at A&E, the cable television network.

Mr. Carter was a Federal magistrate in 1993 when he was appointed to the Eastern District post on the recommendation of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He had worked as

a lawyer in the office a decade earlier, leaving in 1981 for stints as an executive assistant district attorney in Brooklyn and later as a New York City Criminal Court judge. Mr. Carter's interim successor will be chosen by the Justice Department, and his ultimate replacement will be appointed by the President.

Mr. Carter's social consciousness is apparent upon entering his 15th-floor office in Brooklyn. One wall carries a poster of Norman Rockwell's painting "The Problem We All Live With," which depicts a black girl being escorted to school by Federal marshals. Mr. Carter traces his own activism to that of his parents, who ran the civic association in their Washington neighborhood for decades, among other things.

As a child in the District of Columbia public schools, Mr. Carter said, the piano and the violin were his constant companions. But in high school, his interest in public service began to bud, and he was the president of Washington's Junior Federation of Civic Associations.

When he was 19, Mr. Carter joined other students, some of them armed, in taking over a Cornell University

building after a cross burning on campus. For years, the incident has appeared in every profile of Mr. Carter, the law enforcement official with a radical past. And Mr. Carter, unapologetic, resolutely describes the incident, however risky, as a positive, formative experience.

"I am grateful," he said, "for having had, at that age, an opportunity to make a sacrifice and develop a commitment on an issue that was larger than myself." Mr. Carter said he ultimately chose the law because that was an effective route to a public service career.

Public service will take a back seat now for Mr. Carter, who is trading in his \$118,000-a-year Government job for one that will bring him considerably more. "I would like to create a situation for myself and my family so that we are financially secure enough so that years from now, if I want to make a contribution to public service, I could do so comfortably," he said.

How soon might he return to the public payroll? Mr. Carter smiled. "It depends," he said, "on when I have enough money put away to pay my daughter's tuition."