



# The FBI Oral History Project

An initiative sponsored by  
The Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI  
and the Former Agents of the FBI Foundation  
[www.socxfbi.org](http://www.socxfbi.org)



## INTERVIEW OF

**Former Special Agent of the FBI**

**RONALD BUTKIEWICZ**  
**Years of FBI Service 1973 – 2001**

**Interviewed on March 23, 2009**

**By Brian R. Hollstein**

© Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, Inc. 2009

**Interview of Former Special Agent of the FBI  
Ronald Butkiewicz (1973 – 2001)  
Interviewed by Brian R. Hollstein  
On March 23, 2009**

*Edited for spelling, repetitions, etc. by Sandra Robinette on June 9, 2009. Final edit with Mr. Butkiewicz's corrections by Sandra Robinette on August 13, 2009.*

Hollstein

(H): Good we're on. I'll just put a little tag here on the front so we can identify who this is. Today's date is the twenty-third of March, 2009. My name is Brian R. Hollstein. I'm interviewing Ron Butkiewicz, and Ron you were on duty with the Bureau when?

Butkiewicz

(B): My day of entering was January the fifteenth of 1973 and I finished up on October 31, 2001.

H: 2001, so you were a fairly recent graduate as it were.

B: That's right.

H: Just a little ground rules before we get started. We want to avoid classified information. As I told you before we got started with the recording, the Bureau will be reviewing this; the pre-publications people, but there's no need hopefully to mention classified information. We also don't want the names of any informants even if they were surfaced at trial; it's just better to avoid it and no mention of any administrative designations for them. If you want, if you're talking about an informant just give them a name or talk about informant A or something like that and that will take care of it.

We'll start off with a quick overview of your career. Where were you born and where did you go to school?

B: Okay. I was born in Jersey City, New Jersey. We lived there until I was about four and then moved to Colonia, New Jersey which is part of Woodbridge Township, and it was an area that was just being developed. It was not what you would know as New Jersey. I would draw an analogy to a very, very rural area. Which sounds kind of difficult I suppose for most people these days to think of New Jersey as that way.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 2**

B: But to give you an example of the beginnings of where we lived. For just under a year; we lived in a one room, I think you'd have to call it a shack with no running water and no central heat. At the time my father was working full time and he also was building a house on the property we had and, within a year or so, we moved into the house that he built with relatives.

H: Well that's a little bit different story.

B: Yes, it is.

H: It wasn't a log cabin but close to it.

B: Not a log cabin, and eventually he turned it into, of all things, a chicken coop and became part of what was really a mini-farm. If you go there today and drive down the road, it's just another suburb.

H: Yeah, well Jersey's changed a lot. Well that was war time.

B: Yeah, it's just after the war; just a couple of years after the war.

H: So you went to school in the area then?

B: I went to grammar school in Woodbridge for kindergarten. Then for the actual grammar school years, I went to parochial school, a few years, in Metuchen at St. Francis grammar School and then to St. Cecelia's grammar School in Iselin, both relatively nearby, a bus ride but that was it. Then I attended high school in Elizabeth, New Jersey and Seton Hall University on a baseball scholarship.

H: And what did you study at Seton Hall?

B: At Seton Hall, my major was Social Studies. Towards the end of my years there I became interested in the FBI and decided to apply to law school which I did and went to Seton Hall's Law School in Newark.

H: Uh huh, graduating roughly, what?

B: I graduated, if I remember correctly, it was seventy-one. I went at night and it took five years so I think my graduation date was seventy-one.

H: What were you doing while you were studying?

B: I was teaching at a high school in Scotch Plains.

H: Well we've got something in common there. I had a girlfriend in Scotch Plains one time; don't even remember who she was. Oh well.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 3**

H: So then you graduated in seventy-one, seventy-three you went into the Bureau?

B: I did, yeah. After law school I had a judicial clerkship for a year and then worked for a short time at a law office in Flemington, New Jersey, and then went into the Bureau.

H: Now you mentioned having an interest in it before you even started into law school, how come?

B: Well, I can't even remember the name of the club. It was some club associated with Social Studies or that sort of thing and an agent from the Newark Office came to be a speaker at one of our meetings. I had some interest in the FBI prior to that, but from his presentation and some of the things he had to say, I started on a track to look at it as a career. Ironically now he's a good friend of mine and we still see each other even today after all these, literally, decades.

H: Yeah, how nice. A lot of bonds are formed that way though in the Bureau. It's an amazing operation that way.

So you started in January of seventy-three down in Quantico and had the new Academy opened up yet?

B: The new Academy had just been opened. I think my class was the third one through the Academy for the full duration of the time period we were in training. If it wasn't the third one, it was within a couple of numbers either way. I think the Academy had been opened in the spring of seventy-two or the summer of seventy-two; something like that, and I started in January of seventy-three.

H: Anything of particular note during training?

B: During training? I don't think anything of special note. I mean it was all new to me insofar as that goes it was certainly a new experience. But as for anything that really jumps out at me, no. I think my class was one of the first to have women in it. We had four gals and they all graduated and I kind of lost track with most, with three of them, but one of them became the first woman SAC in the FBI's history.

H: Oh, who was that?

B: Her name at the time was Burdina DeWard and I cannot remember her marriage name. The thing that impressed me is she was one of the few who shot a 'possible' during training school.

H: Oh, boy, that would set her up immediately then.

B: That's right and I had never handled a handgun prior to that, so although I didn't struggle, I was in the middle of the pack somewhere that did impress me. She was quite a gal.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 4**

H: Yeah well there were a lot of troubles I remember originally with women handling the full size weapons because of the hand strength and just because of the size of it.

B: There was. Yes, and she didn't seem like an exceptionally big woman to me. I mean she wasn't petite but she did one heck of a job.

H: Yeah. I sure certainly didn't shoot a possible, I'll tell you that.

B: I never did.

H: Well after training school, where did you head then?

B: My first office of assignment was Pittsburgh and I started there and I think it was April of seventy-three.

H: And did the usual?

B: Usual work. I was assigned to a squad that handled applicant cases and some general criminal work. I was assigned to applicant cases primarily for quite awhile, and then had a number of Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property cases assigned; mostly check type cases. I only stayed there about thirteen or fourteen months. The last few weeks I helped out in the Martinsburg Resident Agency in West Virginia which was a one man RA where I met quite a fellow, Ed Fleming, who has since passed away. But we worked together for a number of weeks and when I finished up there I went to New York City.

H: Oh, you didn't waste any time getting into New York then?

B: No, I didn't. I always enjoyed the coast and I enjoyed living near it and fishing and swimming and what-not so I actually saw it as a quick way to get back to the New York Metropolitan area and the Jersey shore. So I actually put in an office of preference request for New York City and, within, I can't tell you the exact amount of time, but it was very short....

H: Only seven seconds.

B: I was standing in Manhattan.

H: Okay.

B: I have to go back to this fellow Ed Fleming. You know it's kind of a human interest story. This is kind of a mundane story and maybe a yawner but one of the last days I was working with him there, I had some work on a fugitive case. Its classification was an 88 in the FBI. I can't remember the exact violation, but it was not a real violent crime. It may have been an assault or something like that. It was a young fellow who was about twenty years of age who left West Virginia, and went to Virginia or the Washington, D.C. area, something like that. I did some work on the case and through his mother actually, I arranged a surrender date at his mother's home and told Ed Fleming about it who was probably only a few years away from retirement.

On the appointed day, Ed and I went over to the mother's home and I got there and she looked kind of distraught. I thought to myself, oh boy, you know, he's not gonna show up or something bad happened. So she explained that he had been there but he's kind of scared and he left the house and he's down the street at a general store which had a soda fountain and served sandwiches or whatnot. So we thanked her for the help and went down there and walked in. I'm all set as a brand new agent to put the cuffs on this guy and put my hands on him. Ed just walks up to him and we explained who we were and that he's under arrest and he looked kind of forlorn and, out of the clear blue, Ed turns to him and says, "Hey, can I buy you a Coke?" (Laughing) and I was literally shocked. As a new agent I was shocked.

H: (Laughing). Yeah, sure.

B: In the end it was one of the best lessons I ever got. The kid sat down and talked to us for a few minutes; told us everything we were interested in about whatever he did that got him in trouble. We did put a pair of handcuffs on him, put him in the car, took him to the local magistrate, and finished up shaking his hand and wishing him well.

But the lesson I learned early, thankfully early in my career, was just even for people you're arresting is just treat them they way you want to be treated. It stuck with me during my entire career and often I've quoted that little story to new agents when I was much older myself.

H: Yeah, that's important because you know you spend so much time with Monk Monroe and George Zeiss and the rest of that crowd down there hearing about all the awful things that happen...

B: Right.

H: ...on arrests; which do. I mean it's not much news, but ninety-nine percent of the time, if you treat them decently, you'll have a lot less problems.

B: That's correct.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 6**

H: No question about it. So New York, we'll just skip over that quickly but what did you do in New York?

B: Well the first few months, I was in New York I was on a Domestic Intelligence Squad which, as a new agent, I was not too interested in and was searching around for ways to work other violations. After approximately five months or six months, a series of bombings started in New York by a Puerto Rican group and I volunteered for that. It turned out to be the FALN case which I subsequently wound up working on for the remainder of my years in New York City; another five years or six years or so.

H: Okay then, out of New York to New Jersey?

B: To Newark and I was in Newark from I think it was 1980, yes it was 1980. I stayed in Newark itself until ninety-one and then went to the Franklin Township Resident Agency in Middlesex County and finished up there, retiring in October of 2001.

H: Okay. All right, how's retirement?

B: Retirement is good. Actually it's better than I thought it was going to be.

H: (Laughing). What have you been doing with yourself?

B: Well, I'm a bit active in the Retired Agents Association. In addition I've always enjoyed bird hunting so I'm fairly active and volunteer with the New Jersey's Fish and Game Department in their hunter education program for youngsters who are interested in starting hunting and working with bird dogs and that sort of thing. That spends some of my time, and my wife retired several years ago and the two of us have developed an interest in fly fishing. So we have been doing that fairly often and take mini-vacations here and there and this summer we'll be going to Wyoming fly fishing.

H: Not bad.

B: (Laughing) So it's a long ways away from Bureau work but it's been a good time.

H: Terrific, a real change. We'll get back to New York here now and you're in Domestic Intelligence. What does that mean and where was that located; Sixty-Ninth Street?

B: I was at Sixty-Ninth Street. Actually the cases on our squad were cases such as the Socialist Workers Party. I think that was the name of it and, gee whiz, I can't even remember the name of the other ones. There were a couple of major ones, what I guess had been major cases prior to my arrival, but most of that work had been pretty much close to shut down and was clearly evolving away from what the Bureau was going to be doing or what they were going to be primarily interested in. And as a young agent, I wanted something with some real activity going on. So as I said a few minutes ago I was really searching in the New York Office to work on some other violations and....

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 7**

H: So, you, tell us a little about the background on this FALN, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional from Puerto Rico. They were an independence group....

B: Right.

H: ... and I remember this because I worked in Puerto Rico from the beginning I knew about these people. What had happened that got things started here?

B: Well, in the second half of '74 there were a couple of bombings in New York City. Now at the time I was still working on this Domestic Intelligence Squad so I was simply aware that these bombings had occurred. Letters claiming or proclamations claiming a responsibility for these couple of bombings by the FALN, proclaiming itself as a Puerto Rican Liberation Group, were associated with the bombing incidents themselves. One of the squads on the same floor that I was on, had some domestic intelligence work with Puerto Rican nationalist groups and was handling the bombing cases.

But then, I think it was in January of 1975, a bombing occurred at Fraunces Tavern, a historic site in lower Manhattan, which killed four people and injured about a dozen others, some extremely seriously. It became an office special and I volunteered for that.

H: Yeah, sure.

B: I volunteered for that and that's how I became involved in the FALN case.

H: At this time who was the squad supervisor in that, do you remember?

B: On the special I think it was Mike Donovan. I think that's who it was.

H: Okay, and so if I remember correctly, there was an awful lot of work that went on in that thing and I participated one night I remember, or two, surveilling all the banks in New York.

B: Right. There was a special; they had special surveillances going on on a couple of occasions in cooperation with the NYPD and we had huge numbers of potential bomb sites, bomb targets I should say, under surveillance.

H: Yeah I think we had a Chase Manhattan Bank. I think there were a lot of Chase Banks. So how big was the squad?

B: Well at its biggest I think we had forty or fifty people attached to us for a surveillance group, and the squad itself was probably another thirty or forty or so. So the grand total was the size of a small field division.

H: Yeah, it was a big deal.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 8**

B: Yeah it was really a big deal and it was a time when almost no positive information was being developed. It was a real struggle to try to get anything going. It was a lot of dead end leads.

H: Yeah, yeah. Well Rick Hahn was on the squad at the time I believe.

B: He was.

H: And then Bill Dyson was working out in Chicago and I guess they were part of what came together. Yeah I've interviewed both of them concerning the FALN. That's one of our projects, developing information on domestic terrorism from the agents that actually worked it. So why were there, why was it such a blind lead, what did you get out of the bombing, bomb sites themselves, anything at all?

B: Well, my work initially on the case was to work on physical evidence and so we were doing a lot of work on the containers that the bombs were in, timing mechanisms, the kind of watches, wires, propane tanks, luggage bags that contained the bomb devices all that sort of thing. And that pretty much just led to manufacturer's with large distributions and to dead ends. I mean it just became impossible to get beyond where the distribution of these various items went to and to make any real progress, to identify a purchaser, because there were just too many outlets for those various things that we were tracing.

H: So do I remember correctly, were they Zobo watches?

B: You know I cannot remember the....

H: I think they were Russian.

B: I can't remember.

H: Very cheap watches I think.

B: For some reason, I'm thinking of Timex but I'm not positive they were Timex. I can't remember now what the brand was for sure.

H: I remember we had one lead. A bunch of us went out on, a bomb had gone off and the shopkeeper swept everything up and threw it in the trash.

B: Oh gee.

H: We found the garbage truck that had picked up the trash on that route and we went out and combed through this damn truck. I mean awful stuff people throw away and found some little bitty parts of watches which I guess were used but it was a tremendous amount of work and it stank.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 9**

B: Yeah.

H: It was awful.

B: Well you know after a number of bombings, I also was assigned to work three brothers, the Rosado brothers who, it appeared, were really involved in some way with this organization in New York City, with the FALN in New York City. I wound up doing a lot of work with attempting to get them to testify before a Grand Jury and they wound up actually spending time in prison for Contempt of the Grand Jury because they refused to testify and refused to cooperate in any manner. That became a time consuming thing in and of itself.

But in conjunction with tracing the bomb components, right around when I was making this transition or adding to my work with the Rosado brothers investigation, a bomb container was recovered, which was a small shaving kit type of container, which we learned had a very, very limited distribution in New York City. As I recall there's only three outlets for this particular type of laundry kit or shaving kit. One was on Fordham Road in the Bronx. Gee whiz what is his name, a fella who blew his hands off in Queens?

H: Oh.

B: Do you know his name, Brian?

H: He later escapes.

B: He later escapes; off the top of my head I can't remember his name right now.

H: Ortega, Orsorio?

B: Anyway, his name surfaced somehow and we knew that he lived up in the area of Fordham Road. So we focused on that Fordham Road location and went into an elaborate effort to try to identify who may come in again and buy more containers to identify the purchaser in a future bombing. So all likely containers for bombs in this shop of a size that could be used in our experience for bombs, were marked on a piece of metal that was part of the container itself. Whether it was a little thing that the luggage would stand on or what, or clasp or whatever was marked in an inconspicuous way but with a bit of a code that we had developed. And a camera was set up to show who this person was with a clock in the background for the time and the date was logged in and all that. And when the person would leave, a nearby surveillance team was alerted and they would follow the person to hopefully where they resided and then we would do a work-up on them and identify who that person was hoping that at a future bombing one of these devices, one of these containers, would have parts found that would have the code on it and we would therefore know who bought it.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 10**

B: Well, right around that time I think it was the Bicentennial. This project went on for many, many months with nothing occurring. Nothing further happened and we broke off from the work and focused on the Bicentennial. Would you believe it but the guy who made the original purchase came in and made another purchase while we were gone and we learned that from the fellow who operated the shop.

H: (Laughing) Oh!

B: Frustration!

H: Everything was so slow.

B: Yeah. It was like it was glacial. It was absolutely glacial. And it turned out that it was this fellow, I cannot remember, doggone, his name. Although I have some old clippings here that should have his....

H: Well as soon as we think of somebody else, something else, it'll come.

B: Anyway that was pretty much most of my work in the FALN case. It went on for a long time with the three Rosado brothers with the Grand Jury work. Eventually the squad also picked up a number of criminal violations. The large size of the squad with the FALN work was reduced and....

H: Well Paul Brana and a bunch of Spanish speakers showed up.

B: Right Paul Brana; in fact Brana was the supervisor when this project went on, on Fordham Road that I had referred to. But eventually it didn't work out because of just the dumb luck occurrence where the squad had a lot of responsibility on this bicentennial project. At least that's what I recall it was. So we missed this guy and the first big break occurred when an explosion occurred in Queens at an FALN bomb factory and we learned that this guy blew his hands off. He was captured and wound up being tried and convicted in both state and federal court in New York.

H: How about Filiberto Ojeda Rios?

B: Nah, nah that was not him. I know who that was but it was not Ojeda Rios. Gee whiz.

H: We're reaching back much too far.

B: We've gone too far.

H: (Laughing) Okay.

B: Okay, it's William Morales.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 11**

H: Oh.

B: It was William Morales.

H: I wouldn't have guessed that.

B: Yeah, William Morales. I guess he and Carlos Torres had rented an apartment in Queens and stored a substantial amount of dynamite in it; blasting caps and other paraphernalia for making bombs. He was in the process of making a pipe bomb and it exploded in his hands and seriously injured him. Of course that attracted much attention and the police were called and he was captured. I spent a lot of time working and then following leads from that capture.

H: Well in Chicago they had another incident too which helped to link everything, I guess, together.

B: Right.

H: Eventually.

B: Right, yeah and again, it's kind of funny how things occur. My recollection is in Chicago the big break occurred when a burglar burgled an FALN bomb factory.

H: Right.

B: Serendipity. You had to have some luck in addition to good work. But if you did the good work once that luck came through it was like breaking through the barrier and you could really make some great progress.

H: Yeah. Well I had a boss that said, you know the harder I worked the luckier I'd get.

B: Right.

H: And I think that's part of it.

B: It is part of it.

H: Yeah, getting in there and shaking things up and really going after it, usually something breaks and you get some, get a break. But I mean, with the Unabomber out west, there too you know, he'd bomb once every couple of years and the bombs were never hooked together.

B: Right.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 12**

- H: And then finally somebody put it together and then they started working at it. But here again it was only because the guy's brother had turned him in....
- B: Yup.
- H: Because he recognized the type of writing by the way he expressed himself.
- B: On the other hand someone in the FBI had to make a decision to publish all that hoping that that kind of a thing might happen.
- H: Yeah.
- B: So you know even though you didn't do something directly that captured this fellow or identified him; somebody made a decision that was wise.
- H: Yeah.
- B: And it prompted someone else to make a move that was a great break.
- H: Yeah we've had more than one of those, I'll tell you.
- B: Yeah and you're talking about, you're referring to the Unabomber. We had a fellow here in New Jersey who was killed in one of those Unabomber incidents and I was involved in the crime scene. He had opened the device, which was a pipe bomb. When I got there, his body was on the floor in the kitchen.....
- H: Oh my.
- B: ... where he was killed. The end of the pipe had hit him right in the forehead. It looked like a fifty caliber slug went through his head.
- H: Ouch.
- B: He also had a major stomach wound but I think the stomach wound would have been survivable even though it looked gruesome. But his head, literally looked like a fifty caliber slug went right through his forehead.
- H: Wow. Well there were quite a few people that actually survived the bombs going off.
- B: Right.
- H: I don't know how many deaths there were actually in that whole case but it wasn't that many but it was bad times and.....
- B: Right.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 13**

H: ... just because of the unpredictability of it and the long times; most of the time between the bombings, it made it extremely difficult to do anything with it.

B: Right, right.

H: So what happened to you now? You got involved with the Top Ten, was that while you were in New York?

B: That kind of crossed over. I mentioned earlier that, as the years went by on the FALN case and the need for less agent manpower became apparent, the squad also picked up other criminal violations and we also picked up the fugitive program on my squad.

So while I was in New York we had a substantial number of leads on this Top Ten. Ronald Williams was his name. I did not have the case assigned to me but I think Jim Lyons, who was one of the fellows on the squad, was the Agent who did have it. In the middle of all that I was transferred to Newark and it turned out that the Ronald Williams Top Ten case had a number of leads in Newark also. My squad in Newark had the Fugitive Program and when I got there the leads were being handled by another agent, Dan McLaughlin. I did a lot of work with him on these leads and eventually it led to the confrontation with Williams.

Williams was kind of a character. He was from West Virginia, a relatively rural area, had killed at least two West Virginia police officers and was imprisoned for their murders and then escaped with a number of other prisoners from the State Prison at Moundsville. I think it was in West Virginia. And during the escape, just by the vagaries of fate, ran into an off-duty West Virginia State Trooper who was driving by with his family outside the prison during the escape. These guys stopped his car to use it as a getaway vehicle and wound up killing him at the scene.

H: Oh boy.

B: Yeah, so this was the third police officer or law enforcement person that Williams was responsible for killing. [He] disappeared, and then surfaced piece-meal and leads led to New York City and to Newark, northern New Jersey area, and that's how I became involved in that particular case.

It was kind of interesting even though he was a criminal, I would have to call this fellow a sociopath, I mean he would just shoot people for no apparent reason when there was no need to, they weren't blocking his escape or anything. He would shoot without provocation.

Even during home burglaries he would routinely break into homes, kick the door in. If somebody was home he would shoot them and ransack the place, and fence the goods in New York City. And in addition he had an IQ of genius and competed in chess tournaments in New York.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 14**

H: Oh my goodness. Go figure.

B: An odd-ball kind of thing. But ironically the chess angle led to his capture. It was really an odd-ball thing.

He also had a weakness for hookers and, Brian, you mentioned you had talked to Jock Garcia on some other matters but Jock was a new agent on our squad. Dan McLaughlin, as I said, was the case agent and had developed some information that Williams was going to see a hooker on, someplace on Forty Second Street I think it was. We had a block, but no address.

So Danny McLaughlin was getting more and more impatient with making the case move so he decided one night he's going to go over to New York City himself and with Jock try to make something happen. Danny, talk about imagination and resourcefulness, I think this is where the average agent would always shine; imagination and resourcefulness. He went over there and saw a doorman that was at a hotel or apartment on this particular block and said, "Hey I'm in from out of town, where can I have a good time with a couple of gals?" He said, "Ah" and points out a spot down the street. Dan sent Jock Garcia in there asking for the girl. They even had the first name of this gal who Williams would be seeing occasionally. Jock goes in there, asks for her. Sure enough there's a gal with that name. One thing led to another, that was the hooker he was seeing in New York City.

H: Amazing.

B: Amazing and the whole thing took maybe twenty minutes. That gal let us know that Williams had been staying at the George Washington Hotel in Manhattan; but he was gone from there by then. But it was only very recently that he had been at the George Washington Hotel. So of course the George Washington Hotel was one of the leads.

We went over there and found out that yes, in fact Williams had been staying there, left only a week or so earlier and we also learned that he was expecting a shipment of books on chess and the last known address that the company that was going to be shipping the books out to was the George Washington Hotel. Even though Williams was gone from there by this time, the books were going to come to the George Washington.

So we set up an arrangement where, if Williams makes an inquiry with the folks at the George Washington Hotel, we would tell him that the books are there and try to make an appointment to have him pick them up. Which is what we did and that's exactly what happened. He called and the folks told him that his books were there and he showed up to pick them up and agents were posted all around the lobby area and, outside, posing as hotel employees and confronted him. He drew a couple of pistols and wound up in a shootout.

So he was quite a character.

H: He died there?

B: He did not die. He was critically wounded and survived, and actually went to trial eventually in Arizona for a homicide and in West Virginia for a homicide. I testified in both of those cases. He's serving either two or three life sentences for the killings in Arizona and in West Virginia and the trooper killing also in West Virginia

H: Plenty of time to play chess then.

B: Yeah, plenty of time to play chess.

H: Were you there for the shootout itself?

B: I was the one who shot him. He realized immediately when he came to the desk, that something was wrong. There was still a regular hotel employee at the desk and an Agent. You may know, Dave Martinez. Do you know Dave Martinez? Name ring a bell?

H: No, not right away.

B: Well, Dave Martinez was staying behind the desk with an employee just in case Williams did show up. When Williams did appear and the hotel employee was contacted by him, the poor fellow was so frightened that Williams immediately realized something was up.

H: Yeah.

B: And he drew a pistol immediately. Martinez tried to confront him and Williams sought cover at the corner of a wall. The wall kind of turned the corner; Williams stood there and Martinez wound up out in the hallway behind a vertical air-conditioning unit probably no more than ten or fifteen feet from Williams. Myself and another agent were across the lobby from where this was starting to occur. Myself and the other agent in the original arrest plan were supposed to be the ones to come up on Williams when he was identified and just grab him and throw him to the ground but it never got that far. I mean as soon as I heard on our radio from Martinez that he's here, I looked up and I could see across the lobby that Williams already had a gun out and was pointing it at Martinez. So there was nothing else to do. I just pulled out my gun and took up a position and started shooting at him. And he was hit several times. But he survived. As I said, he later went to trial. But he had two pistols on him.

H: Well all hell breaks loose under those circumstances. How did you feel about this?

B: Very happy that no one except Williams was shot. It happened so quickly. It was remarkable.

H: Yeah.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 16**

B: It just, in a matter of literally, seconds it was over.

H: Did you have much chance to think?

B: No, you know, you really don't. A number of people have asked me over the years and you really go into automatic, relying on your training. That's all it was. We had trained so often, different positions and circumstances and whatnot and you just relied completely in an instant on your training. And it was training all over again. You just knew literally in a split second what had to happen. There was no way anything else could occur. I thought any second he's going to start shooting at Martinez. There were several other agents who were also approaching him from a stairwell nearby but they had to retreat because they saw that he already had his pistol out and they had no cover. So I was the only one really in a position to stop him at that point. Seconds, that was it.

But you know it's interesting how odd ball things happen. On the day prior to the actual shooting incident, McLaughlin and I were in New York City. It was a Sunday and the shooting occurred on Monday, the next day. McLaughlin and I were canvassing all the mid-range hotels in Manhattan that we could in one day, showing Williams' photo to desk personnel hopefully finding where Williams was currently staying.

We spent the entire day and at the very last place we went to - there were two hotels not too far apart from each other in upper Manhattan, west of Central Park somewhere. I can't remember the address but in that general area. I finished at mine and it was negative and I was waiting quite a while.

Finally McLaughlin came back to the car and said, "You know I think this guy is here," and I said, "Why what are you talking about?" He said, "Well the desk clerk is quite sure that he recognized the photo and he's staying there currently." So I said to him, "You have a room and everything?" and he said, "Yeah." So I said, "Why don't we go see?" But due to McLaughlin's good judgment he said, "Nah, I don't think so. Let's let it sit." The next day we were going to be setting up our surveillance at the George Washington and we were going to give that at least one week, all day, every day, waiting for Williams.

And it's our luck it happened the first day. About two weeks later after this was all over, a person from the hotel that McLaughlin had contacted on the upper west side of New York City, called and said he had this fellow who had been in a room and hadn't been around for two weeks. So they entered the room and they found some guns and a lot of money and some handcuffs and disguises and some other items that they felt were really suspicious and maybe we would want them. So of course we did. It turns out that was the exact room that Ronald Williams was using and just by the grace of God, you know, McLaughlin had the good judgment to put a limit on my little, little over-aggressive attitude, otherwise the two of us may have been, you know, gonzo.

H: Yeah, yeah because it's...

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 17**

B: Because if Williams was in the room and we knocked on the door he would have known who we were and we would not know who he was for sure and he would have had a great advantage.

H: Sure the shooting would have started right away.

B: It would have been right there.

H: Did he look like his photo?

B: He did. Yeah, you could make him out, you know not exactly but you could make out that it was him. Another interesting twist, a pair of sneakers that he had at that room turned out to match identically with a shoe-print that was on a door in the Arizona incident where he killed a fellow down there breaking into his house. He kicked the door in and left the shoe-print mark on the door. That was the pair of sneakers that was recovered in that room up in upper New York City.

H: Boy.

B: Yeah.

H: Talk about a coincidence. That's a long distance and a long time, I'm sure.

B: Yes, it was.

H: What happened to you after all of this? Immediately after, how did you feel about that?

B: I had none of the concern that I read about occasionally or hear about occasionally of agents who were involved in shootings. But that probably is because Williams clearly was a sociopathic individual and it was clear to me under the circumstances that you had no options.

H: No.

B: It really didn't make any difference whether it was me or any other agent plugged into the position where I was. It was just by fate that I was there; that's all. And so you know, no innocent people were injured, no agents were injured. So I never had a problem with it ever. Not at all.

H: Does it, at that point was the Bureau offering any services after something like that, you know?

B: No, nope. I went home that evening and showed up the next day for work and got a couple of new cases (laughing). That was it.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 18**

H: (Laughing) That was it.

B: And somebody said "Thanks!" (Laughing).

H: (Laughing). Well, that's something. Hopefully you got a letter from the Director.

B: Yeah, I think everybody there got a Letter of Commendation. Actually someone was kind enough to, when the Bureau started the medals program many years later after it was started, they started to cover some incidents retroactively, so I was recommended for the Bureau's Medal of Valor, and wound up under Louis Freeh getting it presented.

H: Wonderful.

B: So I was happy to get that.

H: Yeah it's a nice thing to get some recognition.

B: It was.

H: You know you talk about it as a matter of fact thing but it could have gone another way very easily.

B: It easily could have gone a different way or you know the incident that I described the day before could have occurred. McLaughlin and I could both be listed on a wall down at Quantico.

H: Yeah, yeah. I was talking to another fellow who, I don't think it was the Top Ten, but he had a shootout. He was affected because it was a long, fairly long term shoot out and his, the police officer he was with was wounded. He emptied his weapon and the bad guy did too. There was a race to reload and he managed to reload faster and get the guy. But it, he was saying, well everybody said, "That was good and that's over with" and everybody went home. He said, "I felt terrible."

B: Yeah.

H: And really, just like well we finished our day's work we do this every day and so he was saying it had a long term affect on him. But I think it varies a lot with the individual.

B: I think it does vary with the individual. But I also think that the circumstances as they unfold are important too. Because many years later, after the Bureau did institute programs associated with shootings, I was invited to attend one of these sessions. I guess there were about a dozen agents who had been involved in shootings over the years. And it was run by a psychologist who the Bureau had, I guess, hired under a contract basis; a gal.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 19**

B: She did a good job, I thought. But I was impressed at how much help some of the agents there needed. Some of the shootings had been bad, really tough situations where other people were injured, people had been killed. You know young, the shooter who we would call the subject, was very young and may have been just in their teens and the agent killed what turned out maybe to be a teenager, and had a hard time living with that.

So you know I was able to see these incidents you're talking about where there is difficulty and it takes some time to get through it.

H: Oh yeah.

B: And I consider myself fortunate that the circumstances were as, I guess as the Bureau would call it, a clean situation. There was nothing of an unusual twist associated with it and, as I said before, it had no affect on me whatsoever.

H: We had an incident. We were both in New York at the time. There was an agent, I forget if it was Brooklyn or Queens.

B: You know I think I know where you're going. He killed a robber and a clerk.

H: Right.

B: Right.

H: Yeah the clerk had gotten the gun, it was a shotgun or something.....

B: It was.

H: He had gotten it away from the bad guy and was holding it when the agent came in.

B: That's right and he was on our squad at the time. He was part of the FALN Squad.

H: Oh really.

B: He was one of the Agents during the time period of the FALN investigation and he was out there with someone else in Brooklyn. Just went into this bodega or something to buy a sandwich or snack or something or a soda and interrupted a robbery.

H: Yeah.

B: Yeah, and wound up killing two people; one of whom was a complete innocent bystander. Well you know, not a bystander but the victim.

H: Yeah.

**Ronald Butkiewicz**

**March 23, 2009**

**Page 20**

B: So that's, you know, if I had done that, there's no telling what ramifications it would have on you psychologically.

H: Oh sure, sure. But these, I guess eventually you can work it out but it, I'm sure it leaves a real scar.....

B: Yeah.

H: for quite a long time.

B: Sure.

H: Well, after all of this, you went back to Newark.

B: Yes.

H: And what were you doing over there then, still with the same general type of work?

B: I had violent crime work, probably eighty-five percent of my case load was bank robbery work. Some fugitive, interstate fugitive cases and then an occasional extortion of some sort, just general criminal work. And that went on for about ten, eleven years. In the course of that time the vast majority of the bank robbery cases were the standard drug addict needs money, he goes in the bank; either has a weapon or doesn't, feigns having one, etc., etc., etc. It winds up pretty much being the same thing only the names and the faces change.

But there was one series of robberies by some guys who were called the 'parkway bandits'. I would have to call them professional bank robbers. I don't think I would call them well-educated but they were high school grads. It was kind of like a family affair. It was a guy, his two sisters, and one of the sisters' boyfriend and a couple of other pals who got involved in this. They would case the banks, pick their target. A couple of their pals were car thieves and they would steal cars to be used as switch cars and getaway cars. This went on probably for altogether a year or so. They stole somewhere in the vicinity of three hundred thousand dollars and did nine or ten jobs and fired a few shots in the banks. Fortunately it didn't hit anybody. Eventually we started getting a couple of little pieces of information here and there and some breaks and identified them and eventually everyone was arrested. But it was a long drawn out investigation.

B: I kind of gave a real quick rush through this thing but it kind of ended in an interesting way when it finished. The final chapter in the case was kind of an interesting thing. The main fellow was a fellow named Demetrio Riccardone, Italian fellow and he was captured. About a year or so prior to that, his major accomplice, a fellow named Jim Casciano was captured. Riccardone was the last one. Riccardone was an Identification Order fugitive, an IO in parlance of the FBI, who was eventually captured by our agents from Newark in Staten Island after a long surveillance. Both of his sisters would aide him. They had done a lot of work for him in getting hideouts and what-not. Our surveillance teams would try to follow these gals and some of the stories about the surveillances were wild. They would be pretty challenging folks to follow. But eventually we captured him.

The whole case was finished, all over, and I requested from the defense attorney to see if Riccardone would be interested in a de-briefing session. At the time he was being held at Otisville Federal Prison in New York State not too far from northern New Jersey. Word came back to me that he wouldn't mind. So the trials were done, the guys who went to trial were finished, the gals pled out to some accessory charges. Riccardone pled. He was waiting for transfer to a different prison because Otisville was a temporary holding facility.

I drove up to see him and the two of us spent about three hours at Otisville going over the entire case. From the beginning of the first robbery to this day that we were doing this was probably just under three years. I had learned so much about him and his sisters that I almost felt like they were some kind of distant relatives who I really knew well.

H: (Laughing).

B: And part of that was because for a long time I had a trash cover on the sisters and found many, many torn up letters in the trash that I pieced together and read and learned that they had been abused kids. Their parents abused them, broken homes, broken families. The three of them were really closely knit together, and even though they turned into criminals, there really was a tight bond among the three and they pulled into their group some of their other friends.

B: So it was really an interesting story and my thoughts went back to this fellow in West Virginia, Ed Fleming who was the guy who bought the Coca Cola for the.....

H: Right.

B: ... young kid, you know who we arrested. Only that was twenty years earlier in my career. So here I am sitting with Riccardone and it was like I was talking to the black sheep of my family. He told me a lot of things that I hadn't learned previously about in the case but wouldn't say anything bad about his sisters. He really didn't tell me too much I didn't know already about his sisters but told me a lot about everybody else and a lot of things they did. And [I] left shaking hands with the guy. He was going to be looking at going to jail now for fourteen years I think it was he got, or fifteen years, and I was going back to work. It was an interesting way to wrap the whole thing up.

H: Yeah. The whole thing came around in a circle. Well, that's great. Shall we wrap it up there?

B: Yeah, yeah, that would be fine.

**INDEX**  
**Ronald Butkiewicz**  
**Interviewed on**  
**March 23, 2009**

**A**

**B**

Bombings,  
    By FALN, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13;  
    Fraunces Tavern, 7  
    By Unabomber, 11, 12, 13  
Brana, Paul, 10

***Butkiewicz, Ronald,***

Assignments,  
    Newark NJ, 6, 13, 20, 21, 22;  
    Franklin County RA, 6  
    New York NY, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,  
    11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20  
    Pittsburgh PA, 4; Martinsburg WV  
    RA, 4  
Early life & education, 1, 2, 3  
Entered FBI, 2  
FBI Training, 3  
Letter of Commendation (re: Williams  
    capture), 18  
Medal of Valor (re: Williams capture), 18  
Retirement, 6

**C**

Casciano, Jim, 21

**D**

Donovan, Mike, 7  
Dyson, Bill, 8

**E**

**F**

Fleming, Ed, 4, 5, 21, 22  
Freeh, Louis, Director of the FBI, 18  
Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional  
    (FALN), 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13

**G**

Garcia, Jock, 14

**H**

Hahn, Rick, 8  
Hollstein, Brian R., interviewer, 1

**I**

Identification Order (IO), 21  
Informants, 1  
Intelligence, Domestic, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,  
    13

**J**

**K**

**L**

Lyons, Jim, 13

**M**

Martinez, Dave, 15  
McLaughlin, Don, 13, 14, 16, 18  
Morales, William, 9, 10, 11

**N**

New York Police Department (NYPD),  
    cooperation on FALN bombings, 7

**O**

**P**

“Parkway Bandits,” 20, 21  
Pasenelli, Burden DeWard, 3  
‘possible’, perfect shooting score, 3, 4

**Q**

## **R**

Riccardone, Demetrio, 21, 22

Rosado brothers, 9, 10

## **S**

Shooting, reaction to, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

Socialist Workers Party, 6

Surveillances, 7, 9, 16, 21

## **T**

Top Ten fugitive case, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

Torres, Carlos, 11

## **U**

Unabomber case, 11, 12, 13

## **V**

## **W**

Williams, Ronald, Top Ten fugitive case,  
13, 14, 15, 16, 17; capture and shoot-out,  
15, 16, 17

Women in FBI, 3

## **X**

## **Y**

## **Z**