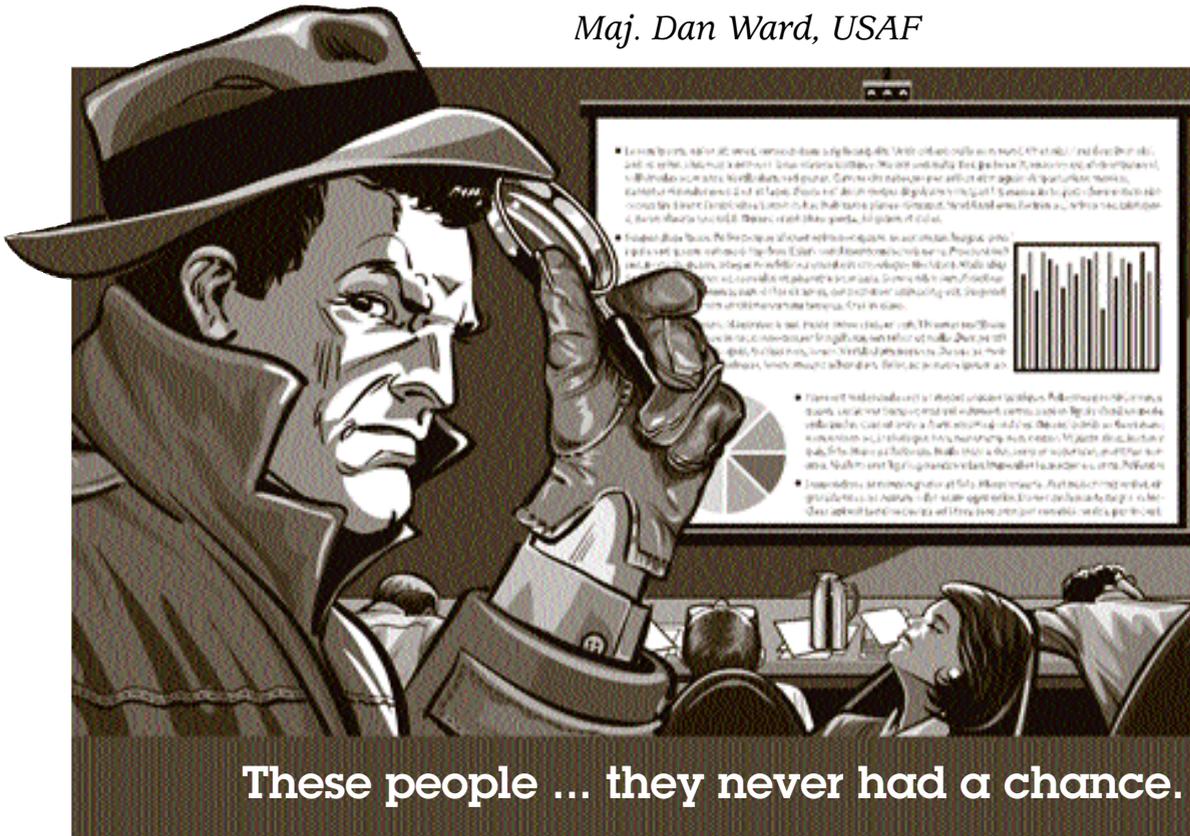


# Death by Bullets

Maj. Dan Ward, USAF



**These people ... they never had a chance.**

**T**he crime scene was nothing new. When you've done what I've done for as long as I've done it, you see this stuff a lot. I'd seen it 294 times before, in more places than I care to count.

The room was full of bodies, some slumped over in chairs, some slumped forward on tables. Most of 'em looked asleep, if I used my imagination. I tried never to use my imagination.

The place was hot and small, like a cup of coffee from an overpriced bistro on the Rue Noir in Paris, and just as bitter. No amount of artificial sweetener could possibly help. I removed my obligatory fedora and stepped past one stiff. He looked like a hefty bag of vegetable soup someone had thrown out of a 13th story window, and missed. Days like this made me wish I'd listened to my mother and become a geologist. I would have had to deal with less dirt.

"Jeepers, sir! How many bullets do you ..."

"Shut up, kid. I'm thinking," I growled.

I wasn't really thinking. I just hate it when the new guy says things like "jeepers" or asks stupid questions. Who cares how many bullets? Ten, 20, it's all the same. It's too much, always too much, and there's no point to it all.

There's never a point.

"These people ... they never had a chance, kid. Of course, what did they expect, coming to a place like this?" I paused dramatically and imagined taking a long draw from a cigarette I didn't have. Then I remembered that cigarettes can kill ya, and decided it was time to start smoking.

"But still," I continued, "nobody deserves to be treated this way, even if 90 percent of the people in these chairs would have done the exact same thing if the situation had been reversed. But they don't know anything different, see. They don't know any other kind of life. They just get sucked in by the promises of power, of easy money—and then end up like this. Then again, they didn't have to go along with it, did they? It didn't have to go down like this."

I can always see both sides of a situation. It's my most charming quality.

The kid pointed to a wall at the front of the room, and squeaked like a little girl. I looked, then instantly regretted it, but it was too late, as usual. The image burned my retinas the way melted mozzarella on your first bite of a

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hot pizza sticks to the roof of your mouth and spoils the whole evening. Yeah, just like that.

“Looks like he used a nine...”

“Shut up, kid.”

I hate it when the kid finishes a sentence, mostly because he always starts a new one right after.

“It coulda been a 22 and the result woulda been the same,” I snarled. “These animals use whatever they can get their hands on, and the result—well, you can see the result for yourself.” I turned away, and a wave of nausea swept over me. I’ve gotta stop slamming my knee against the corners of tables.

The forensics team was combing the scene, taking measurements and counting whatever it is they count. The lead forensics guy ambled over to me, looking like a fish on roller skates, minus the funny part.

“It’s just like the other ones, sir,” he told me. I wasn’t surprised.

“It’s a 9-point font, more than 27 bullets per chart, and every diagram is completely incomprehensible. We’ve counted 3,721 charts so far, but there are probably more somewhere around here. They must have been in here all day.”

“I found the agenda!” Patrolperson Sally Suite-Hart called from across the room. “There’s not a single break in it. Not a single one!” Her bottom lip trembled, like the lower lip of a beautiful woman who found something that made her sad.

I put my hat back on and headed for the door. Suddenly everything went black. I really should get a hat that fits. I pushed the hat back out of my eyes and left that conference room behind me. I didn’t look back. The last time I looked back, I ended up walking off a curb and twisting my ankle, so I don’t do that any more.

Besides, there was a little gin joint down the street, calling my name, and my feet knew how to take me there, even if my hat kept falling over my eyes. I knew I’d have plenty more chances to see senseless acts of PowerPoint violence again tomorrow. Tonight, I had a date with a little glass and a big bottle.

I’d seen enough bullets for one day.

The author welcomes comments and questions, and presentation murder cases to solve. He can be contacted at [daniel.ward@us.af.mil](mailto:daniel.ward@us.af.mil).

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viding maintenance data directly to the JPO, enabling RDM to compute accurate forecasts.

Perhaps even more significant was a range of institutional challenges, such as the need to build the trust necessary to adopt a not-invented-here system. In general, the Air Force and Navy have many differences in their business practices. Fortunately, the JPO has operated successfully for several years, implementing a number of joint process improvements. This initiative was widely supported by Air Force managers as just another step forward along this continuum.

Another challenge arose because of the nature of CAD/PAD, which are both an aircraft spare and a munitions item. Accordingly, they tend to fall into a no-mans-land between these two worlds. As a result, the separate systems designed to manage aircraft spares and munitions do not handle CAD/PAD well. This is true of the legacy systems in both Services. Even a prospective Air Force system for managing aircraft spares will have many of the old shortcomings. For this reason, the cost-effective solution was deemed to be to adapt the Navy principles and concepts to Air Force use.

### **Results and Future Opportunities**

RDM was used successfully to determine Air Force requirements starting in fiscal year 2006, after a test run in fiscal 2005 in which RDM was run in parallel with the legacy method. Despite a lingering need to require field forecasts for a few part numbers (primarily life-support and survival-equipment items), JPO estimates a reduction in field workload of about 80 percent. The accuracy of out-year budget requirements has been significantly improved. And most important, RDM has greatly increased confidence that the right items are at the right places at the right time to support the warfighter.

As the Air Force gains experience with RDM, it expects to further streamline its acquisition and sustainment processes. Administrative workload will be reduced because of the improvement in the accuracy of requirements, the alignment of Navy and Air Force buying cycles, and the consolidation of procurements for similar items. On the sustainment side, the Air Force will begin to use VFS as a tool for ordering replacement CAD/PAD for its T-6 aircraft, a first step that may lead to much wider use for other aircraft in the future.

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