



## Never Forget: 25th Anniversary of the Oklahoma City Bombing

By Educator Barnes – April 19, 2020

On this day 25 years ago, I was a sixth-grader on the Planet Patrol team at Craig Middle School in Lawrence Township. It was the fourth quarter, and I was beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. The transition from elementary school at Mary Castle to middle school at Craig was hard. By the fourth quarter, I had finally adjusted and felt good about being a middle school student.

I knew there were bad people in the world who made poor choices and hurt people. At the beginning of the second semester, the O.J. Simpson trial began. There were fierce debates

about the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman, and if Simpson was guilty or not. We would not learn of Simpson's fate until the first semester of 7th grade.

It was bad enough there was a highly publicized murder trial, referred to as the trial of the century, occurring when another tragedy took place. I felt there was a sense of true evil in the world when I learned about the Oklahoma City bombing. It took place in the middle of the week, on Wednesday, which meant when we all returned to school the next day, teachers had to figure out how to address it, if at all. Classmates were whispering about the tragedy in the hallways and at lunch. Instead of ignoring what happening, teachers acknowledged the tragedy and said it was okay to feel sad.

My 6th-grade reading teacher, Mrs. Gresk, decided to do a little bit more. It was time for us to learn about poetry. Specifically, we learned how to write a ballad. She divided us into groups, and each group had to write a ballad. She compiled all the ballads from all of her reading classes and put them into a book. We each received a copy. I have my copy in my house today.

On the Table of Contents page, there are five ballads listed about the Oklahoma City bombing. My group did not write about the bombing; we wrote about not doing drugs instead. Having this poetry book allowed us to express our feelings and talk about what happened during that school year while learning the content.

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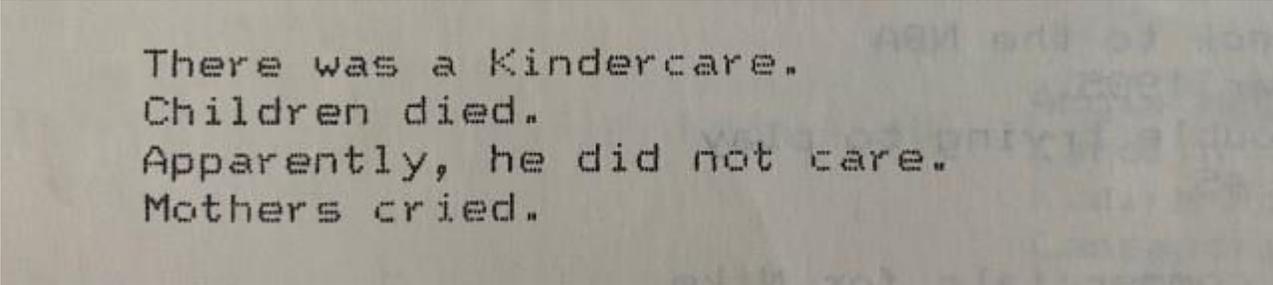
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The bombing ended the lives of 168 people, and 19 were children. Up until that point in my life, I had never imaged that I, a child, could walk into a building, and evil could end my life.

A photograph of a piece of paper with a typed message. The text is in a monospaced font and reads: "There was a Kindercare. Children died. Apparently, he did not care. Mothers cried." The background is a light, slightly textured surface.

There was a Kindercare.  
Children died.  
Apparently, he did not care.  
Mothers cried.

Excerpt from Planet Patrol Ballads by Mrs. Gresk's reading classes – Please note: the name of the daycare was actually America's Kids Daycare

Although Oklahoma was not close to Indiana, I felt that a tragedy like what happened there could happen anywhere. Some of my classmates had this same fear. Time eased those fears. I did not have that sense of uneasiness again until 10th grade, when the Columbine High School shooting occurred on April 20, 1999, and then again freshman year at Purdue University on September 11, 2011, when the terrorists attacks happened.

For those events, I can recall the day, what I saw on the news, and the conversations I had. Now, these tragedies seem to be more common. I can't remember them all, and it's a shame. Hopefully, while we are at home under stay at home orders, we can learn to work together to address issues to prevent tragedies like this from occurring in the future whether that is better mental health services or stricter gun control.

Although the coronavirus pandemic has caused the event for the 25th Oklahoma City bombing anniversary to be canceled, you can still learn about those who lost their lives at the [Oklahoma National Memorial Museum Website](#). Never forgotten.