# Bio Terror Bible

## EXPOSING THE COMING BIO-TERROR PANDEMIC

**BIOTERRORBIBLE.COM:** The strange case of Thomas C. Butler and the missing bubonic plague vials is yet another great case study of why the government should always be the first suspect in any terror case, especially one involving bio-terrorism. Aside from having the means, the motive and the opportunity to conduct a major bio-terror attack, they have an unlimited supply of willing, able and blackmailable rouge scientists to choose from. In order to organize, plan, drill and execute a major bio-terror false-flag operation, millions if not hundreds of millions of dollars are needed to blackmail scientists, steal or develop the virus or agent, weaponize it, deliver it, and execute the operation without getting arrested or properly investigated. The sheer logistics, security, communication and cover-up needed before and after the bio-terror attack is so daunting, there is only one suspect (government) even capable of carrying it out.

**Title:** Professor Arrested In Missing Vials Case
**Date:** January 16, 2003
**Source:** UCLA

**Abstract:** When 30 vials of a deadly bacteria that causes bubonic plague were reported missing from Texas Tech University, anxiety here was palpable. Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge contacted the mayor, a terrorism alert was triggered and dozens of investigators from the FBI and other agencies converged.

But officials said Wednesday the bacteria wasn't missing after all. They alleged a Texas Tech professor had destroyed the vials before reporting their disappearance.

Dr. Thomas C. Butler was arrested Wednesday on a complaint of giving false information to the FBI. According to U.S. Attorney Dick Baker, Butler said Tuesday that vials containing bacteria obtained from tissue samples from East Africa were missing when "truth in fact, as he well knew, he had destroyed them prior to that."

Butler was booked into the Lubbock County Jail. He was scheduled to make his initial court appearance Thursday.

"We have accounted for all those missing vials and we have determined that there is no danger to public safety whatsoever," Lubbock FBI Lupe Gonzalez said.

The samples, among the 180 the school was using for research on the treatment of plague, were reported missing to campus police Tuesday night. Butler was the only person with authorized access to the bacteria, which is classified as a select agent that has to be registered with the International Biohazards Committee and with the federal government.

University spokeswoman Cindy Rugeley said Butler, the project's principal investigator, made the report.

Butler is chief of the infectious diseases division of the department of internal medicine at Texas Tech's medical school. The university said he has been involved in plague research for more than 25 years and is internationally recognized in the field. He has been at Texas Tech since 1987.

Dr. Richard Homan, Texas Tech School of Medicine dean, said the bacteria form of plague being used for research "was not weaponized in any way."

Authorities declined to elaborate on what happened to the missing vials. When pressed about what happened, officials repeatedly responded that the samples "have been accounted for."

Baker said FBI agents interviewed Butler on Tuesday. He said the complaint noted the false statement resulted in a huge investigation involving about 60 state, local and federal agents.

The public did not learn of the report of missing vials until early Wednesday. But hospitals and medical personnel were notified Tuesday, part of the city's post-Sept. 11 emergency plan.

Samples were kept in a locked area of Butler's lab, which is not in a high-traffic area. Butler kept logs on batches of samples, and one batch was reported missing, according to the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*.

The secure area does not have a surveillance camera but access is controlled, officials said.

"I don't know the precise number (of keys), but it's limited," said Texas Tech Chancellor David Smith. "Policy (for federal grants) was not violated. This is one where we're looking at the human element."

Plague — along with anthrax, smallpox and a few other deadly agents — is on a watch list distributed by the government, which wants to make sure doctors and hospitals recognize a biological attack quickly.

Health officials say 10 to 20 people in the United States contract plague each year, usually through infected fleas or rodents. The plague can be treated with antibiotics, but about one in seven U.S. cases is fatal.

Texas Tech said that officials thought it was "prudent" to get law enforcement involved because of current concerns about bioterrorism.

The report was taken seriously at the highest levels of national security.

Lubbock Mayor Marc McDougal said he received a telephone call Wednesday from Tom Ridge, head of the Department of Homeland Security, offering contact information and assistance from his Washington office.

The FBI sent agents to Lubbock, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention took part in the investigation. About 60 investigators from the FBI and other agencies converged on the medical school Tuesday night.

Smith said university policy was not violated, and no administrative action had been taken against faculty or staff as of Wednesday afternoon.

"We're in the process of an internal review," he said (UCLA, 2003).

**Title:** Tech Professor Flew With Live Plague Samples
**Date:** February 21, 2003
**Source:** UCLA

**Abstract:** Thomas Butler, the Texas Tech professor accused of lying to the FBI about missing plague specimens, carried live samples of plague aboard commercial airlines for research at Tech, *The Avalanche-Journal* has learned through documents and individuals close to the case.

Attorney Floyd Holder, who represents Butler, insisted that Butler's method of transporting specimens of the plague-causing organism *yersinia pestis*, or YP, was completely safe. He said Butler secured the samples in a plastic container in his luggage. The plague samples, he said, were taken from infected Tanzanians.

"He described it to me that it would be impossible to break it (the container) with a sledge hammer," Holder said. "It was absolutely safe to transport it the way he did."

Vickie Sutton, a lawyer, scientist and director of Tech's Center for Biodefense, Law and Public Policy, disagreed.

"If that were the case, then why do we have regulations for safe transfer of select agents?" she asked.

Three forms of plague are caused by YP. The disease progresses rapidly and the bacteria can invade the blood stream, producing a severe illness called plague septicemia.

Symptoms of another form, bubonic plague, include fever, headache and general illness, followed by the development of painful, swollen lymph nodes.

The most dangerous type of plague is pneumonic, a relatively rare airborne variety. It can be spread through aerosol droplets released through coughs and sneezes or through fluid contact. Although not as common as the bubonic strain, it is more deadly. Left untreated, its mortality rate is nearly 100 percent.

"The very reason that we have controls for these select agents is because there's a public health risk," Sutton said. Simply breaking a tube of YP could lead to outbreaks of pneumonic plague, she said.

Federal agencies such as the Federal Aviation Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others require permits and other documents for the transportation of biological material such as YP.

Butler is accused of lying to federal agents Jan. 14, 2003, when he reported that 30 vials of plague had been stolen from his lab at Tech's Health Sciences Center. The report triggered a massive investigation by local, state and federal authorities.

More than 60 investigators worked through the night of Jan. 14 to track down the missing vials. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge called Mayor Marc McDougal to offer assistance, and President Bush was briefed on the matter.

Butler is free on a $100,000 bond and strict conditions set by federal court. He must wear an electronic monitor, is forbidden from contacting potential witnesses from the Food and Drug Administration, the CDC office in Fort Collins, Colo., and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, Md. He also may not contact potential witnesses in Tanzania or London. He is barred from carrying biological agents on any aircraft.

Butler is on paid administrative leave from the university and is forbidden from being on campus.

Holder said he believes federal authorities likely will bring additional charges against Butler based on their assertion that he failed to go through proper channels in importing live plague samples.

"There may be some laws out there somewhere that somebody thinks he broke, but I don't think he did," Holder said. "There may have been some problem with whether he dotted every 'i' and crossed every 't.' Certainly he had no criminal intent to smuggle anything in."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Dick Baker, prosecutor in the case, said, "I cannot comment on the potential charges or evidence in this ongoing investigation."

Butler penned a statement in which he admitted to telling authorities the YP samples were missing or stolen when in fact Butler knew he had destroyed them, the government alleges in court documents.

Holder questioned the credibility of that statement.

"You've got to figure out how that statement got constructed and who helped write that statement. It's not his language," Holder said. "We told everybody he did not pull a hoax, he did not tell people something was gone when he knew it wasn't gone — that's the FBI's position."

Miles Burden, FBI supervisor of the Lubbock office, declined to comment on the case.

In a response to a Texas Public Information Act request submitted by *The A-J*, attorneys for the Tech Health Sciences Center said they could not furnish documents detailing Butler's inventory of plague, how it was stored or how it was transported to the lab.

"There are no records, to which TTUHSC has access at this time, that are federal shipping permits allowing Dr. Butler to send and receive human-derived samples of YP. Such documents may have been maintained by Dr. Butler and may be otherwise inaccessible due to the pending criminal investigation," lawyers for the Health Sciences Center told The A-J.

Tech's Institutional Biohazards Committee must approve research involving "biologically or chemically hazardous material," according to university policy, which is based on federal guidelines governing biological research.

Although Butler had approval for research involving YP cultures, "There are no documents from the IBC specifically approving Dr. Butler's use of human-derived YP," HSC attorneys said.

Pat Campbell, general counsel for Tech, said he could not provide specific details of Butler's standing with the university's Institutional Review Board, which governs such research.

However, he said, "I think the university as a whole, the Health Sciences Center has questions about how aware was the university of what he was doing and how he was doing it."

Holder said Butler was conducting research on people in Tanzania without review board approval, but he questioned whether the board has authority in foreign countries.

Holder also contends that once the samples reached Tech, there was no longer an element of human participation in the studies.

Sutton said that's not the case.

"Any sample that's identifiable with a person at any time, that is traceable (to a person), that's still a human subject," Sutton said. "From the kind of work he's doing, if he's taking samples back, he has to track their symptoms. He has to know who's getting the antibiotics. That's a federal law."

Butler, Holder said, did not lie to or mislead university officials about his research.

"He told everybody he had it (live human plague samples), where he got it and how he got it in, including the CDC, who are the people who are in charge of all this stuff," Holder said.

Butler brought the samples from Tanzania to Tech in April 2001. The samples were preparatory work for a $700,000 grant he was seeking from the FDA to study medical treatments for plague, Holder said.

Butler cultured the Tanzanian plague samples in his lab at Tech before delivering samples to Army medical research in Maryland, Holder said. Butler then took samples to the CDC in Fort Collins.

"Now if there's something wrong, why didn't the CDC say, 'Tom, how did you get this stuff into the country?' " Holder said. "They know how he got it in, and they approved of it and ratified it."

Holder said Butler has imported plague about 60 times over the past 30 years. He maintains the charges against Butler are an over-reaction on the part of authorities.

Baker disagrees.

"Any allegations of stolen biological pathogens will be responded to with a measured and appropriate response to ensure public health, safety and welfare, as was done in this case," he said.

Sutton said any potential biological weapons threat requires a rapid and comprehensive response.

"When there is a concern of stolen biological agent that is on one of the top three biological agents that can be weaponized, we should be concerned about it as a nation," Sutton said.

"The important thing in a biological threat is immediate response — more so than nuclear or radiological because the threat will increase exponentially hour by hour and can't be contained to one site. Like no other threat, biological threats have to be dealt with immediately with full force" (UCLA, 2003).

**Title:** The Thomas Butler Case: Some Unreported Information And Reasons For The Department Of Justice's Prosecution
**Date:** October 23, 2003
**Source:** Sunshine Project

**Abstract:** Thomas Butler, the scientist who lost plague samples and prompted a national bioterrorism scare, goes to trial on November 3rd. Butler faces 69 federal counts and a possible penalty totaling $17 million in fines and more than 200 years in prison.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) doesn't publicly comment on the case; but news reports say that it is using Butler as an object lesson for scientists working with bioweapons agents. Purportedly, that lesson is "don't play loose with disease samples". Some scientists and scientific organizations are rallying to Butler's cause. They say that the charges are grossly disproportionate to mistakes committed. Some allege that the Butler prosecution will make the US vulnerable by scaring scientists away from biodefense research. The case has been characterized as one pitting scientific freedom and treatments for disease against an overzealous DOJ that simply does not understand the culture of life scientists.

But if life scientists are looking for a cause to symbolize their resentment of new oversight laws, the Butler case may not be one that wins them public sympathy. There is a 'crime' far more heinous than Butler's bumbling that underlies the prosecution: the gutting of openness in academic institutions by secretive biodefense research. A major reason behind DOJ's aggressive posture seems to have less to do with Dr. Butler personally than it does with the biodefense research program of his institution, Texas Tech University (TTU).

What has gone unreported in the Butler case is that Texas Tech's work with bioweapons is far from a little program at an ordinary state school in a flat and dusty corner of middle America. In fact, Butler worked in

the midst of a large and secretive biodefense program supported by the US Army, a program that even many life scientists may not be aware of.

The TTU - US Army program is one that is not primarily oriented toward treating disease, rather, it engages in other kinds of research on bioweapons agents and toxins. This includes types of work that have drawn international criticism of the US because they push the envelope of acceptability under the Biological Weapons Convention.

TTU's biodefense patron is the US Army Soldier Biological Chemical Command (SBCCOM). The conduit for this money into TTU is its Institute for Environmental and Human Health (TIEHH), which is located off-campus at the former Reese Air Force Base. While TIEHH's website emphasizes its research on environmental contaminants and studies to save reptiles; pollution and wildlife aren't the main course on TIEHH's dinner table.

Behind its somewhat misleading public image, TIEHH is an Army biodefense research center. And its faculty and funding are intricately tied up with infectious disease research at Butler's direct employer - the TTU Health Sciences Center. How much of TIEHH's work is Army biodefense? SBCCOM provides a whopping 75% of TIEHH's research contracts. With additional money from the Air Force, four out of five external research dollars coming into the inappropriately-named Institute for Environmental and Human Health are for Pentagon biodefense studies. Some of the SBCCOM grants are passed through TIEHH to the TTU Health Sciences Center, including Army-funded research on Dr. Butler's specialty - plague.

As of August 31st, 2003, TTU financial documents list 22 active biodefense contracts between TIEHH and the Department of Defense, totaling more than $7.5 million in cash in TTU accounts. Twenty one of these contracts are with SBCCOM. Apart from some projects on protective clothing whose purpose is relatively clear, what exactly TTU is doing for the Pentagon is poorly publicly documented.

Some research, however, appears to be of the type that is earning the US biodefense program international mistrust. SBCCOM-funded projects at TIEHH include threat assessment programs to make toxin concoctions by mixing different bioweapons agents together, a program that does not appear to respond to any documented threat. Another project is on chem/bio decontamination of large objects, such as military equipment. The latter projects can be accomplished using simulants – not live agents - but it is unclear which approach TTU is using. It could involve large scale weaponization of disease agents and toxins. TIEHH has also been extensively remodeling its Reese Air Force Base site to create "state of the art" facilities for its research. A complete description of these facilities are has not been made available to the public.

The Butler case has never been simply about an absent-minded professor at an average state university. The story broke as the FBI increasingly focused on the US biodefense program in its investigation of the anthrax letters of 2001. For the government, the lost plague raised more embarrassing questions about the security of Pentagon biodefense research. The case is also about the government enforcing the quid pro quo that it and life sciences institutions have developed: various federal agencies provide enormous money for a tightly-proscribed research agenda on bioweapons. Research institutions get this support if they kowtow to the government's priorities, including secrecy, and if they don't have embarrassing screw ups.

Up against DOJ and his employer, Butler will need all the help he can get – not because his plague error caused any demonstrated harm; but because the reasons for his prosecution include the government's need to protect sensitive research from the public eye. The case is not simply about reassurances that sloppy handling of disease will not be tolerated – the publicity surrounding the lost vials highlights the vulnerability of sensitive research to accidents. A leak at a sensitive biodefense project isn't just a potential health or terrorism threat. An accident could be an international political liability if it reveals the "wrong" research, and Butler was certainly close to projects that appear to fit that description. It is thus not

surprising that Justice wants him in jail and TTU wants him fired. In this sense, the prosecution of Butler serves to make clear the restrictive terms of the government's biodefense largesse.

Supporters of intellectual and scientific freedom who are aligning themselves to Butler's cause would be more likely to earn admiration by challenging the biodefense agenda that is compromising institutions like Texas Tech and that has led to Butler's aggressive indictment. But the defendant's defenders haven't done this. So far, their arguments relate more to the narrower interests of protecting their own.

There's no question that the Department of Justice is making an example of Thomas Butler, and probably unfairly so. But standing up for Dr. Butler isn't a very noble cause if it is done for the self-interested purpose of absolving biodefense scientists from serious prosecution, rather than protecting public science from the Pentagon's biodefense invasion.

If there can be a positive outcome of Butler's trial, it will be a thorough public exploration of TTU's research and of how biodefense is compromising the integrity of institutions like Texas Tech (Sunshine Project, 2003).