

# Mystery Surrounds German's Link to Bombing

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From Staff and Wire Reports

Deepening mystery surrounds the link between a German national and the bombing last April of the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City and one of its purported bombers, Timothy McVeigh. It is a link that raises a number of intriguing questions.

Was he an "agent provocateur" working undercover for federal agencies in this country investigating extremist groups? Were those extremist groups somehow involved in the bombing?

Was he himself a neo-Nazi radical?

An intriguing vein of linkage suggests his role— whatever it was — simply cannot be ignored by federal investigators. And that it was, somehow, inextricably linked to the Oklahoma City bombing. If not, why did Timothy McVeigh make telephone calls to the German at Elohim City near Muldrow?

And why, the day before the bombing, did McVeigh call a lawyer in North Carolina where the German was also known to stay?

The German national's mysterious presence begs for answers — particularly in light of compelling evidence suggesting Timothy McVeigh did not act alone and was, in fact, aided by at least several other conspirators on the day of the bombing...including the mysterious "John Doe No. 2."

But McVeigh's only indicted coconspirator is Terry Nichols, who was indisputably hot present on the day of the April 19, 1995 bombing, which killed 169 people and injured several hundred others. Calls from McVeigh?

In the days just prior to the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Timothy McVeigh^ placed one — possibly even two — telephone calls to Elohim City, a religious community in eastern Oklahoma.

The caller asked to speak with a German national by the name of Andreas Karl Strassmeir.

And it is Strassmeir's unique military background and important family connections with the Helmut Kohl government in Bonn — plus his inexplicable associations with the neo-Nazi movement in this country — that has those familiar with the situation scratching their heads in puzzlement.

Equally puzzling is McVeigh's purported telephone call to a law firm which Andreas Strassmeir once frequented and which now serves as his legal, representative and spokesman in this country.

The 36-year-old Strassmeir was born in former West German to aristocratic parents and began visiting the U.S. in 1989, according to his attorney, Kirk Lyons of Black Mountain, NC.

That was shortly after the youthful Bundeswehr (German army) officer had received formal training from an elite military academy in Hanover, Germany. Joan Millar, daughter-in-law of Dr. Robert Millar, pastor and founder of Elohim City, confirmed that Strassmeir was a resident of the community at the time of the phone calls but was not available to take the calls on April 5 and April 17 from McVeigh. She said the telephone calls related to a planned visit by McVeigh.

The first telephone calls from McVeigh were believed to have been placed around April 5 — around the time, federal investigators alleged, McVeigh was staying at the Imperial Motel in Kingman, Arizona.

Sources who can verify the exact time of the call have thus far been unwilling to divulge specifics.

But recent interviews by Dr. Millar indicate that the founder of Elohim City believes there was certainly a call on April 17 — two days prior to the Oklahoma City bombing.

Did They Meet Earlier?

What can be confirmed is that the person McVeigh asked to speak to, Andreas Strassmeir, candidly admits he met McVeigh prior to the telephone calls — though Strassmeir's attorney said he had only negligible contact with the bombing defendant.

Referred to as "Andy the German" by his associates, Strassmeir also admits he had in his possession some of McVeigh's uniforms prior to the bombing in Oklahoma City. He says he tore the labels off and shredded them after the bombing. Strassmeir claims he met McVeigh at a gun show in Tulsa in 1993. And it was there, he said, that he gave McVeigh a card with Elohim City's telephone number. Strassmeir says it was at this same gun show in Tulsa that he traded a knife to McVeigh for his Desert Storm uniforms. And it is this brief and innocent meeting that Strassmeir says today is the only contact the two ever had.

Elohim City Connection?

What, if any role does Elohim City play in suggestions that McVeigh was somehow linked with white separatists? That, too, is not clear.

Elohim City, a 400-acre retreat near Muldrow, Okla., has from time to time drawn attention from the local and national press as well as the FBI and ATF. Widely reported by newspapers to be a white-separatist commune, this is a notion disputed by Dr. Millar, the founder. He says the 23-year-old institution and its 75 members practice a brand of fundamentalism known as Christian Identity. He says it has always remained non-violent and it certainly no threat to anyone.

Nonetheless, Elohim City has emerged in recent weeks as the focus of federal investigators, who allege that defendants Ray Lampley and his wife and two others intended to test a fuel oil and fertilizer bomb.

Federal investigators allege the defendants wanted to build more bombs and planned to target abortion clinics and homosexual and Jewish institutions. Millar conceded Lampley and his wife have visited Elohim City on a few occasions. But he disclaims any knowledge of their purported illegal enterprises and doesn't think any members of the community are at risk of being arrested. Still, Elohim City's link to the Oklahoma City bombing has been raised before.

Shortly after the arrest of McVeigh and Nichols last April, Newsweek magazine prepared an article stating, "A source reported that Elohim City is going to be raided in the near future because of links some members of the 'white supremacist' group may have had with the (Oklahoma City) bombing suspects," Reuters News agency reported on May 21 that Newsweek magazine had received information that authorities "pretty well knew who was involved in the April 19 blast, and that husbands and wives as well as children as young as 12, were going to be arrested at the compound."

"Furthermore," the story added, "the major players, already targeted by the FBI, were talking to investigators to get lighter sentences."

Prominently mentioned in this article was information concerning an informant the FBI had inside religious community, and who had provided important information about the other members and their links to the bombing of the Murrah federal building.

That Newsweek article was profiled last May 21 on Boston station WUSA but was suspended before widely disseminated. On May 29, however, the magazine published a more limited story — this time omitting information about the FBI informant but stating that McVeigh called the compound on April 5...a charge, at the time, the Millar family denied.

Nothing has ever come of the magazine's report that federal authorities intended to raid the compound. Nor, to date, have any arrests been made of Elohim City residents. Neither has the FBI informant, mentioned in the Newsweek story, ever been revealed or confirmed to exist.

### Strassmeir Scrutiny

The movements and associations of Andreas Strassmeir have only recently come under scrutiny, despite some evidence of his presence in the U.S; for several years.

Though widely believed to have entered the U.S. around 1990 or 1991, a source for the Immigration and Naturalization Service could not locate an exact date for his entries.

Curiously, the INS official said, "We have no file on the subject...no record of entry or exit exists" ..

A source at INTERPOL says, however, that May 1991 is a likely date for entry, but Kirk Lyons, his North Carolina attorney, says Strassmeir may have visited the U.S. on several occasions prior to that time.

Lyons recalls, for example, Strassmeir moving to Houston, Texas, around 1990, helping Lyons in his law office there at the time. He said Strassmeir came to this country on a tourist visa and has, from time to time, left the U.S. — only to return a short time later.

Lyons is known for his defense of the Ku Klux Klan. He is also representing some of the survivors and families of the victims of the Branch Davidian fiasco at Waco, Texas, whose destruction occurred exactly two years earlier than the Oklahoma City bombing.

Lyons said that after Strassmeir's stay with him in the Houston area, he later established a residence in Elohim City. Once at Elohim City, Strassmeir set out to organize a well-disciplined militia. "I served in Vietnam," said one resident, "but I never saw anyone so caught up in the military thing. I mean, he lived and breathed the military. We were impressed with his knowledge and enthusiasm...so Andy was put in charge of the overall security at Elohim City."

Some skepticism emerged after Strassmeir purchased semi-automatic weapons for the militia, then "began trying to get us to do illegal things...violent sort of stuff," one militia member said. "We always were having to explain to Andy that we were 'defensive,' not 'offensive,'" the source said. "We are a group who will not tolerate violence against others. ..unless we are attacked."

It looks like he was trying to set us up," the militia member added. After establishing himself at Elohim City, Strassmeir soon became closely acquainted with the former Imperial Dragon of Oklahoma's Ku Klux Klan, Dennis Mahon of Tulsa.

Mahon today is reported to be the No. 3 official in an organization called White Aryan Resistance (WAR) — an organization assigned a high priority for investigation by federal agencies because of their reported association with some of this country's — and Europe's — leading right-wing extremist groups.

Probe of 'Skinheads'

During the late 1980s the rise of neo-Nazi and "skinhead" extremist groups began to worry German authorities — especially since groups from the U.S. appeared to have a role, "The American Ku Klux Klan has established groups in Germany, which recently has seen a dramatic rise in racist violence and neo-Nazi activity."

By the early 1990s, it was abundantly clear to German officials that hate groups in the U.S. were actively supporting the burgeoning growth of extremist movements all across Western Europe.

But it was 1993 before top officials in Germany and the U.S. publicly agreed that there was a need for a joint intelligence operation — involving the surveillance of American citizens.

Thus it was that in December 1993, FBI Director Louis Freeh announced that the federal agency was gathering information about suspected links between extremist groups in the U.S. and Germany.

Interestingly, the project was placed in the hands of Larry Potts — the FBI's then assistant director for criminal investigations.

By the time of the Oklahoma City bombing in April 1995, Potts was the No. 2 man at the FBI — only to be demoted and suspended months later for his suspected role in the coverup of events in the Ruby Ridge, Idaho, incident.

### Oklahoman Targeted

After announcing the new cooperative agreement between the U.S. and Germany, two American Midwesterners were targeted for surveillance.

One is Nebraskan Gary Lex Lauck, often referred to as the "Farm Belt Fuhrer."

Lauck, whose dress and speech is modeled after the late Adolf Hitler, once enjoyed a prolific network of customers for his neo-Nazi propaganda, both here in the U.S. and abroad.

Barely one month after the Oklahoma City bombing, Lauck was arrested in Copenhagen on an international warrant, charged with spreading race hate and belonging to a criminal organization. He has been extradited to Germany and is awaiting trial.

German authorities attributed intelligence provided by the FBI with aiding in the apprehension of Lauck. The FBI, however, never publicly acknowledged any role.

Also reliably reported to be targeted for the joint U.S.-German surveillance project was Dennis Mahon of Tulsa, the 45-year-old former Imperial Dragon of the Oklahoma Chapter of the KKK whom Andreas Strassmeir became acquainted with after his stay at Elohim City. Mahon is now reportedly active in a much more violent group, White Aryan Resistance, widely identified as a far-flung but interconnected network of violent revolutionaries advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government.

Mahon, whose close friendship with Strassmeir developed after the two met at Elohim City in 1993, is considered to be one of the most important figures in the so-called "Aryan movement," which encompasses a wide group of organizations.

As early as November 1991, Mahon's activities were attracting the attention of authorities here and abroad.

According to a New York Times story, Mahon secretly traveled to Germany in 1991, where he organized a cross-burning in a forest just outside of Berlin. A German television reporter told his audience that, "German kids look to Mahon as a guru. They want his advice on how to get rid of foreigners in Germany."

Noting the rise of violence sweeping Germany, the story noted that, "Although Mr. Mahon's visit was the first known contact between German and foreign white supremacists since the current wave of violence began, the Klan appears to have been active here for at least several months."

That same spring, Mahon told a reporter for the Los Angeles Times that, "We're the most violent Klan in America. We are trained in counterinsurgency."

While attempting to enter Canada, Mahon was detained and subsequently arrested in January 1993 — with news accounts saying Canadian officials were tipped off by an informant that the Klansman was covertly trying to enter their country.

Mahon spent a few weeks in jail in Canada and was then returned to the U.S. But his resolve to organize and bring in more followers was not tempered by the incident, though it appears that he is being more careful.

In a recent interview with the McCurtain Gazette, Mahon said smaller and better trained "cells" (of three to five persons each) was preferable to the larger Klans he used to organize.

"The necessity for smaller, revolutionary cells," Mahon explained, "is for security from government infiltration. If one cell goes down, then our losses are limited."

Provocateur or Neo-Nazi?

The linkage between Andreas Karl Strassmeir and elements in this country, identified by inter-national law enforcement officials as dangerous extremists\* raises two possibilities — that he was either a neo-Nazi or an undercover agent in cooperative investigation of Washington and Bonn.

Among many observers, though, his background has created the strong suspicion that he came to this country with the express purpose of infiltrating extremist neo-Nazi groups.

Certainly, the FBI has for decades used paid informants and its own agents to gather intelligence on j^KK members. At one point, in fact, former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover said the FBI had more agents at Klan rallies than there were legitimate Klansmen.

There are questions, though, whether using foreign agents to conduct surveillance on Americans living here will pass constitutional muster, one legal analyst who contributed to this story said.

High Connections

After conducting an investigation into the German national's background, the Gazette has learned that Strassmeir admitted to only a few close associates that he had received training in intelligence work while at military school.

Strassmeir's family also has close ties to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, with Andreas Strassmeir's father being a veteran parliamentarian and former Secretary of State in Berlin.

Gunter Strassmeir has been called by Der Spiegel magazine the "architect of German reunification."

But several associates of the younger Strassmeir portrayed him as fed up with the regimented system in German and his life as a young army officer. Kirk Lyons, his attorney, said Strassmeir simply wanted to come to the U.S. to meet an American girl and settle down here.

And Dennis Mahon, the Tulsa Klansman, said he didn't like his life in Germany. He also said that Strassmeir never held a job in the U.S. , But friends at Elohim City said Strassmeir apparently had plenty of money. "Andy bought a house here, a couple of cars and whenever he wanted something, like a \$450 leather jacket, he just bought it. "He said he had income from somewhere else."

Lyons, however, told a different story. Because he was on a tourist visa, Strassmeir was not allowed to work. And while he made a down payment on a house at Elohim City, and bought a couple of old cars, "he was not a big spender."

### Bombing Connection?

And where was the mysterious Strassmeir after the bombing in Oklahoma City? Shortly after the bombing, he began disappearing from Elohim City for days at a time, said Dr. Robert Millar, the founder.

"At one point, the residents became concerned about his presence here and so we boxes up his belongings and moved him out," Millar said.

Neither Millar nor others could verify Strassmeir's alibi for the morning of the bombing in Oklahoma City on April 19. They said he might have been in the compound ... they couldn't remember for sure.

But what they do remember was that on April 16, the day prosecutor's contend McVeigh came to Oklahoma City to leave his car, a helicopter hovered near Strassmeir's home.

"The thing (helicopter) arrived at dawn and hovered at tree-top level very briefly, just 75 feet or so from Andy's place, then disappeared," Millar said. "For the rest of the day, fixed-wing aircraft circled the area, off and on."

Could anyone but a federal agency have had such access to such aircraft? It is possible. But to those who suspect Strassmeir of being an undercover agent, it is one more piece of the puzzle that seems to suggest he was very possibly an undercover agent.

But Lyons reported that Andreas Strassmeir moved to Black Mountain, N.C., after the residents of Elohim City "kicked him out." He lived in the area for several months, then went to south Texas and then on back to Germany, the lawyer said.

Lyons said that Strassmeir lived for several months with Dave Holloway, an employee of the C.A.U.S.E. Foundation set up by Lyons- and the day before the bombing in Oklahoma City, on April 18, 1995, Timothy McVeigh called the organization and talked to Holloway, who is also reported to be in Germany now.