

Role in Bombing Denied

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An attorney for German national Andreas Strassmeir, a former Elohim City resident, claims his client is not a neo-Nazi and played no role in the Oklahoma City bombing.

North Carolina attorney Kirk D. Lyons said his client left Elohim City, a white separatist community near Muldrow, about five months after the bombing.

Lyons said the defense team of bombing defendant Timothy McVeigh was trying to make a right-wing or neo-Nazi connection to the bombing.

"They've done us a dirty turn. My client has been unfairly cast into this," he said.

An article from London's Sunday Times said McVeigh's defense is eyeing neo-Nazi ties to the bombing. The article mentioned that the FBI had interviewed white supremacist Dennis Mahon, a Tulsan and friend of Strassmeir's.

FBI spokesman Walt Lamar and Assistant U.S. Attorney Steve Mullins, a spokesman for the bombing investigation, would not comment Monday.

Mahon confirmed on Sunday that he had been interviewed, and he said he had nothing to do with the bombing. He said the FBI had claimed he and Strassmeir had a connection to the bombing.

"They said they'd heard I have a contract out to assassinate Strassmeir to keep him from spilling the beans," Mahon said.

"I don't have a contract out. I can't even afford a pizza."

Lyons claims that Strassmeir, a former first lieutenant in the German army, doesn't belong to any group.

"This is silly. Stephen Jones (McVeigh's chief attorney) is trying to divert attention from his client," Lyons said.

Jones bristled Monday at Lyons' remarks.

"Stephen Jones is not the only one investigating," he said. "One of the most prestigious newspapers in the world, the Sunday (London) Times, is investigating and so is the FBI." Jones said he interviewed Strassmeir last November at Lyons' offices.

Lyons said his client met McVeigh at a Tulsa gun show about a year and a half ago and that they may have "traded some things."

"But Andy couldn't positively identify McVeigh when shown a picture," he said. Strassmeir may have given McVeigh the compound's telephone number with the name "Andy" on it.

McVeigh reportedly called Elohim City shortly before the bombing and asked "for Andy," but Lyons said Strassmeir did not talk to McVeigh.

Lyons said Strassmeir would talk to the FBI in the next two weeks "so he can tell them his story and they can cross him off their list."

Lyons said Strassmeir came to the United States in 1989. At his attorney's advice he moved to Elohim City, a religious enclave, because Strassmeir "wanted to stay in the United States legally, he had a small income from Germany, this was a place in the country and he wanted to be near" Western history.

Strassmeir became a Christian while at Elohim City, but "he didn't adopt the belief structure there," Lyons said.

He said reports his client had neo-Nazi ties were false and had embarrassed Strassmeir and his family. Strassmeir's father is a retired general secretary of the Christian Democrat Party and was its representative to Berlin until shortly after the reunification of Germany.

"If Andy had any ties to neo-Nazis it would be a scandal there," Lyons said. "He doesn't belong to any group. He is a conservative. If Pat Buchanan were running for president in Germany, Andy would probably vote for him."

Lyons represents a number of white supremacists but claims that he defies stereotyping and does not belong to any white supremacist group.

He said he may have met McVeigh and given him a card at a first-anniversary memorial service at Mount Carmel near Waco, Texas, where more than 80 Branch Davidians died April 19, 1993, in a confrontation with federal authorities.

Lyons said McVeigh may have called his law offices about two weeks before the bombing but that he did not speak with him.

Lyons' firm, the Cause Foundation, handles litigation against the government in the Branch Davidian deaths.