

Snell 'Cased' Murrah Building

Sunday, March 24, 1996 - McCurtain Sunday Gazette

By J.D. Cash with Jeff Holladay

Like pieces coming together in a jigsaw puzzle, Timothy McVeigh's contacts in the weeks and days before last April's Oklahoma City bombing paint a portrait of a young man immersed in one of the most radical and subversive underground political movements in America.

Just weeks before the bombing of the Murrah building, McVeigh told ex-Army buddy Michael Fortier that he was going to Colorado to join the "Order," a source reported to the Gazette.

The "Order" is the most elite echelon of the radical white supremacist secret society, the "Silent Brotherhood." Fortier told the FBI, according to the source, that McVeigh was deeply involved in the subversive white supremacist movement and wanted Fortier to join — which Fortier said he declined.

Fortier, who has already entered a plea bargain agreement with the Justice Department for his role in the bombing of the Murrah building, is expected to testify in the Denver trial against McVeigh and co-defendant Terry Nichols.

Inspired by Snell?

The source also said Fortier told the FBI that McVeigh spoke often about the scheduled execution of former southeastern Oklahoma resident Richard Wayne Snell — carried out, coincidentally, by Arkansas officials on the same day as the April 19, 1995 bombing.

Snell, a Muse, Okla., survivalist who became a hero in the white supremacist movement, was arrested in a June 20, 1984, shootout with Broken Bow, Okla., police just 40 minutes after he was accused of killing a black Arkansas state trooper who had stopped him at DeQueen, Ark., 25 miles away.

Snell was also linked to the killing of a Texarkana pawnshop owner, whom he mistakenly thought he was Jewish.

Perhaps more significantly, though, Snell had been associated earlier with a plot to bomb the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City.

Most Violent of Radicals?

The Center for Democratic Renewal in Atlanta, Ga., and other organizations that track extremist groups, say the Bruders Schweigen or "Silent Brotherhood," was a nearly forgotten band of white underground terrorists before its apparent resurgence during the past two decades.

Now they consider it one of the most violent, subversive and terroristic of all extreme right-wing groups. Moreover, to members of the organization, April 19 — the date of the Oklahoma City bombing — is also "Patriot*s Day" and a rallying date for its membership.

The "Order" was birthed in the neo-Nazi cult's bible, "The Turner Diaries." It is a novel about a band of mythical white supremacists bent on the violent overthrow of the U.S. government through every conceivable means of terrorism — including the bombing of federal buildings. Written in 1978 by William Pierce, chairman of the National Alliance, "The Turner Diaries" became the guiding light for a group of real-life home-grown terrorists headed by Robert Jay Mathews. Mathews, later gunned down in a shootout with the FBI in 1984, has assumed legendary and martyred status among the most violent of the white supremacists today.

Timothy McVeigh was an ardent salesman for "The Turner Diaries" and always had a copy on his table at gun shows.

He was also, apparently, an equally devoted member of the movement.

More Radical Links

The Gazette has earlier reported McVeigh's leaving messages for German national Andreas Carl Strassmeir at Elohim City, a white separatist compound near Muldrow, Okla. One was just 14 days prior to the Oklahoma City bombing; another two days before the bombing.

McVeigh also had a lengthy telephone conversation April 18 with a close friend of Strassmeir's, David Holloway, at the North Carolina-based C.A.U.S.E. Foundation.

C.A.U.S.E. is headed by Kirk Lyons, widely reported to be the lawyer for many of this country's best-known Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nations leaders.

Recently, Gazette investigative reporter J.D. Cash also learned that McVeigh made several telephone calls prior to the bombing to the National Alliance's western headquarters in Fort Mohave, Ariz. Richard L. Coffman, president of the neo-Nazi group, claimed that he didn't know McVeigh and said the FBI told him about the telephone calls after the bombing.

Coffman, asked if he knew anything about the "Order" and its current members, replied, "No, there is no such group anymore."

But James Ellison, an Elohim City resident and a former leader of the terrorist underground movement, disagreed.

He said, "the 'Order' is certainly still a functioning group in this country." "the only man who knows who all the members are, is William Pierce of the National Alliance," said

Ellison, who was released from a prison halfway house only two days after the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building.

Ellison was present in 1983 at the Aryan National Conference attended by many of the country's leading right-wing extremists, including Robert Jay Mathews and several others who shortly thereafter formed the "Order."

OKC Bomb Plot Origins

There are those who believe the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building was mere chance.

But students of the history of radical extremist groups in the U.S. suggest that the selection of the Oklahoma City federal building was no mere coincidence.

In fact, first mention of bombing the Oklahoma City federal building goes back more than a decade.

James Ellison, mentioned above, turned state's evidence against 14 members of the white supremacist underground during the 1988 Fort Smith, Ark., sedition trials.

It was during interviews with U.S. Attorney Snyder at the time that first mention of the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building was mentioned.

The U.S. Attorney said Snyder told him that he and Richard Wayne Snell "cased" the Oklahoma City federal building in 1983.

But Ellison denied he and Snell intended to bomb the building. Ironically, the 64 -year-old Snell was executed in Arkansas last year on the same day that the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed, killing 168 persons and injuring hundreds of others. Not only did the bombing-happen on the same day as Snell's execution but it happened to fall on "Patriot's Day" observed by "The Silent Brotherhood."

The Oklahoma City bombing has been called the worst incident of domestic terrorism in America.