

# **More Evidence Suggests Prior Knowledge of OKC Bombing**

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First in a series

A growing body of evidence and testimony points inexorably to the conclusion that there were those who knew the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was a bombing target even before it was rocked by explosives on April 19, 1995.

It was the worst terrorist incident in the history of the U.S., killing 168 persons and injuring hundreds more.

Perhaps the entire devastating truth about the bombing of the federal building will never be fully known. It is doubtful that the conspirators themselves, or those who sought to foil their deadly scheme, will ever come forward with the complete story. Yet even in the face of obfuscation and the miasmatic odor of cover-up by federal agencies, enough compelling evidence has surfaced to strongly suggest there were those who had prior knowledge of the bombing.

## **A Family Crusade**

While other families grieved and waited passively for retribution, one Oklahoma City family began to ask the tough questions.

They were among the first to intuit that there were serious discrepancies in the story of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), which had been located on the ninth floor of the Murrah building but did not lose one employee — and whose agents, they were later to learn, did not even come to their offices on April 19, 1995.

Flame-haired Edye Smith, 23, a Treasury Department employee whose two young children were killed in the blast that destroyed the building's nursery, was among the first to publicly voice suspicions soon after the blast.

Where the hell was the ATF, I want to know?"

Her utterance, and a challenge to the ATF to "come clean" on May 23, 1995, stunned a CNN interviewer and signaled the family's crusade to unlock and expose the truth surrounding the callous murder of her children.

The driving force behind that investigation have been Edye Smith's parents, Glenn Wilburn, a CPA of quiet strength and relentless determination, and his wife/Kathy.

What they learned, and what was shared and furthered by certain reporters, has sparked revelations and, within the past month, a quickening investigation by national news media.

At this point, events suggest an incipient scandal that may threaten a president's re-election, send numerous high-ranking officials to prison, destroy a federal agency and expose the national treasury to billions of dollars in civil liability damages.

### The First Clue

About two weeks after burying his grandsons, Chase Smith, 3, and Colton Smith, 2, Glenn Wilburn had a visit from a close friend. He told the 45-year-old accountant of rumors that the ATF hadn't been in its offices on the day the bomb exploded.

After Edye Smith raised that questions publicly in her May 23, 1995 interview with CNN, federal officials scurried to quell the story.

Wilburn consented to a visit at his home by representatives from the Justice and Treasury departments. It was attended by U.S. Attorney Patrick Ryan, two agents from Treasury's ATF, and, curiously, a representative from the IRS Criminal Investigation Division.

What developed initially was a carefully crafted scenario pitched by ATF agent Luke Franey.

At that time, it was five weeks after the bombing.

Franey arrived at Wilburn's home with a heavily bandaged right arm and hand. The long-haired agent, who wore an earring in one ear, claimed he was in the building at the time of the blast. After recovering consciousness, Franey said, he worked his way out of the building and assisted in rescue efforts.

Unimpressed, Glenn Wilburn pried for real information. He went right to the heart of the matter.

"Didn't April 19 have any significance to your people? You know, Patriots Day...the Waco raid...Richard Snell's execution?"

"Weren't you concerned that there could be a risk that day?"

And then Wilburn figuratively went for the jugular:

"Was the ATF on some kind of special alert?"

Stunned silence fell. The two ATF agents mutely shook their heads. Finally, Luke Franey responded: "No, there was no alert or any concern on our part about the significance of that day."

Wilburn relentlessly pressed the point. "Where were your agents that morning?"

"Some were out on assignment," answered Franey with a straight face. "And some didn't come in because they were out of town..."

"— I thought they were at a golf tournament," broke in a surprised U.S. attorney.

"That's what I heard too," said Wilburn. "No..." stammered Franey. "Our agents were working in the field."

With that, the visitors stood, offered condolences and departed.

But just two hours later, Glenn Wilburn heard yet another ATF official say the complete opposite of what ATF agent Luke Franey had just told him.

He heard it over CNN from ATF Director John Magaw:

"I was very concerned about that day and issued memos to all of our field offices... They were put on alert." The CPA knew then he'd been lied to. Immediately, he made the obvious inductive conclusion: There was some kind of cover-up by the ATF.

Only later was he to have any inkling why.

### First Warning

No story about prior knowledge of the Oklahoma City bombing is complete without a mysterious letter of immunity issued by the Denver, Col., office of the U.S. Attorney to Cary James Gagen.

That immunity agreement was dated Sept. 14, 1994 — seven months before the bombing of the Murrah building — on the basis of Gagen's assertions that he had uncovered a plot to blow up a federal building somewhere in the federal 10th Circuit, which includes Oklahoma City. The impetus for the immunity decision revolved around individuals Gagen said he was hauling dope for from Kingman, Ariz., to Denver.

After finding that one particular envelope contained C-4 explosives rather than his usual drug deliveries, Gagen got cold feet and contacted federal authorities. During interviews with prosecutors, Gagen swore he had attended meetings where the participants discussed the future bombing of a federal building. He said the persons involved were Caucasians but that they used Mideastern ^ and Hispanic names.

Apparently believing they had a reliable informant, federal authorities executed the immunity agreement.

But in early April 1995, a letter to the FBI from Gagen — warning of a federal building bombing within the next two weeks — was apparently ignored\* Gagen's letter not only

had a note of urgency but a virtual guarantee that he would stake his reputation on it: "I would NOT ignore the specific request for you personally to contact me immediately regarding a plot to blow-up a federal building. If the information is false, request Mr. Allison to charge me accordingly. And if they ignore this message, I will never again contact any law enforcement agency, federal or state, regarding those matters in the letter of immunity.'

#### A Select Few Knew

In the first hours after the bombing; media coverage included several references to bomb threats being received prior to the destruction of the Murrah building. But in the face of denials by law enforcement officers, those references evaporated in any references from news stories.

Even so, one law enforcement officer felt so badly over the cover-up that he talked privately to Glenn Wilburn to expiate his guilt. The officer insisted on anonymity, fearing for his career and possibly even his life if he went public. Here's what the source learned from a high-ranking federal official and what he told Wilburn:

"You are correct about what you believe. We knew the building was at risk that day and we took precautions to meet that threat."

Wilburn asked if the law enforcement officer was involved in preparations for a "bust?"

"No..I was only told to not go into the building that day. There was none of the usual security present at the building that morning..."

Also absent that day was U.S. District Judge Wayne Alley, who was originally assigned the case but who was later removed after it was revealed he was not at work on April 19, 1995.

Alley told his hometown newspaper in Portland, Oregon, that it was just a coincidence that he didn't go to work that day.

But he did admit to the Portland Oregonian on April 19, 1995, that "within the past two or three weeks, information has been disseminated...that indicated concerns on the part of people who ought to know that we ought to take extra precautions." Asked by the reporter if that was just a periodic security reminder, Alley said: "My subjective impression was there was a reason for a dissemination of these concerns."

But his taking a day off to do legal work at home, he told the newspaper, was nothing less than "...absolutely an amazing coincidence."

When that interview came to light later, one of the defense attorneys for bombing defendants Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols successfully got Alley removed from the case.

**Another Amazing Coincidence** There was another amazing coincidence on the day the Alfred P. Murrah was destroyed — the presence of the Oklahoma County bomb squad near the building before it exploded from the blasts. And then there was the tip from another law enforcement officer that the Oklahoma City Fire Department had been placed on alert for possible terrorist activity five days before the bomb blast.

In yet another strange coincidence suggesting prior knowledge of the bombing, a backfire from a steam generating plant in downtown Oklahoma City just four days before the bombing brought a gaggle of Oklahoma City police to Tri-Gen Corp.

A worker on duty told police it was just a backfire. He was startled when one of the policeman present said he'd already called the bomb squad.

These and other startling evidence of prior knowledge of the bombing will be detailed when this story continues Tuesday.