

# DEAD MEN DON'T TALK

## *"What Secrets Did Richard Guthrie Take With him to His Grave?"*

**The Village Voice**

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Washington, D.C.-- Richard Lee Guthrie, Jr., a key figure in the government's ongoing inquiries into the white power underground was found dead last Friday morning in a Covington, Kentucky, jail cell. The U.S. Marshal's office had placed him there to await sentencing for his role in a string of Midwest bank robberies that netted some \$250,000. Guthrie had just cut a deal to testify for the government against his former gang members.

According to the U.S. Marshals' office, Guthrie "apparently hanged himself with a bedsheet he tied to a ceiling air vent." He had left two notes, one to his attorney, the other to his brother. The contents were not divulged. W. Kelly Johnson, an assistant federal public defender, who talked to Guthrie last Monday, said the defendant was not on a suicide watch, because "no one noticed anything that indicated he was having any problems." The Marshals' office says its "continuing to investigate the circumstances surrounding Guthrie's death."

Guthrie was of special interest to the government because of what he said he did with the money from the bank robberies. Guthrie had pleaded guilty to 19 holdups in seven states, and, in at least one interview, claimed to have given the stolen money to white power groups. There has long been speculation that the Oklahoma City bombing was funded through a series of far right robberies. Federal investigators have looked into connections between the bomb plot and the 1994 robbery of an Arkansas gun dealer. Guthrie's assertion of funding far right groups raises the possibility of a link between the Midwest bank robberies and the Oklahoma bombing, though it is impossible to say for certain whether any of the stolen money-- none of which has been found--- was used to set up the attack.

In a sealed plea bargain agreement, Guthrie promised to provide the government with information about organizations "whose goal is the overthrow of the U.S. government or engage in domestic terrorism." Guthrie told the Los Angeles Times in a phone call last Thursday that he was planning to write a book that goes "a lot more deeper" than the robberies expounding about his life and the white supremacist movement.

Prosecutors had recommended that Guthrie serve no more than 30 years in prison for the 1994 and 1995 robberies if he agreed to testify against three other men awaiting trial for some of the same crimes.

Two accomplices of Guthrie, Scott Stedeford and Kevin McCarthy, are also acquaintances of Pennsylvania Aryan Nations' leader Mark Thomas, a longtime figure in the white power movement. Before he died, Guthrie said he met McCarthy at Thomas' home outside Allentown, Pennsylvania. Guthrie also visited the Aryan Nations' headquarters in Hayden Lake, Idaho in 1991, according to former Nations' spokesman Floyd Cochran. Dennis Mahon, a Tulsa, Oklahoma Klan leader who says he is a friend of both Thomas and McCarthy, says Guthrie lived with Thomas for over a month. Stedeford, McCarthy, and Thomas has all been visitors to Elohim City, a Christian Identity compound in eastern Oklahoma that has been visited by many leaders of the movement. Accused Oklahoma city bomber Timothy McVeigh made a phone call to Elohim City just days before the blast. Thomas, when contacted by the Voice, declined to comment.

Among far right devotees, the discussion is all about why Guthrie would choose to kill himself having just plea bargained with the government. In various Internet bulletins, the general belief is that Guthrie was killed before he could tell all.

It is a theory that Mahon also adheres to. "He was helped," Mahon chuckled. "let me tell you something. Even some of these prison guards are on our side. I'm glad he got it, because he was a snitch." With Guthrie dead, the government loses a key witness in tracing possible criminal funding to white power groups.