

# **Weeks Before Bombing, ATF Had Out 'Wanted' Posters**

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By J.D. Cash with Jeff Holladay

Was the mysterious German visitor Andreas Strassmeir part of a carefully crafted and top-secret government operation?

Or did high-level federal law enforcement officials simply bungle opportunities to arrest and question the same man described in a "wanted" poster as a heavily-armed "illegal alien" traveling around the U.S. and purportedly providing paramilitary training to suspected terrorist groups?

The questions take on pointed urgency and ominous implications with fresh documents obtained by the McCurtain Gazette from the FBI.

Those documents show that Strassmeir was the subject of a "BOLO" bulletin (Be On The Lookout) by the ATF, seeking his arrest weeks before the bombing of the Murrah building in Oklahoma City.

Even more incredibly, the Gazette has obtained FBI documents that indicate the former German military officer, whose links to bombing defendant Timothy McVeigh have been detailed by this newspaper, was once considered a suspect in the attack on the Murrah building. But he was never, for some unexplained reason, detained or questioned by the FBI during the eight months he remained in the U.S. after the bombing.

(Only after pointed queries about his links to the bombing suspects from this newspaper did Strassmeir flee the country. He remains in seclusion in his parents' Berlin home under heavy security.)

In light of claims by the U.S. Justice Department to have conducted more than 21,000 interviews globally in an attempt to identify those who may have been involved in the worst terrorist bombing in the nation's history, the "oversight" of federal agencies in questioning Strassmeir is singularly curious.

Was Strassmeir, then, an undercover agent for a federal agency?

As reported recently by the Gazette, a high-level official at the FBI said the classified computer records of the ATF contain evidence that Strassmeir was indeed a key component in the agency's espionage operation at Elohim City near Muldrow, Okla., and several far-flung neo-Nazi groups around the country.

Why 'Wanted' Notice?

The ATF, however, has refused to confirm or deny the reports to members of the national news media. It has consistently refused to comment or make any official statements regarding this newspaper's story.

But if Strassmeir were a paid ATF informant, why did the Tulsa office of the ATF issue a BOLO for him just weeks before the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building?

Was it a case of the left hand of the agency not knowing what the right hand was doing?

Or was it designed to be a credible "extraction" for an undercover agent?

The ATF is not saying. The only link is the high-level FBI official's remarks made unofficially.

What is known is that weeks before the bombing in Oklahoma City, the Tulsa ATF provided the Oklahoma Highway Patrol a BOLO for what it described as the security chief at the Elohim City compound. Here's what the BOLO said:

Andreas Strassmeir W/M 5-17-59, heavy

German Accent

Black Hair/Blue Eyes

- 1" scar on chin, wears cammo fatigues

- Possible Tennessee drivers license

- Came to USA in 5/91, passport was good until 8/91. He never left the country. INS says he does not have an extension of his VISA

- Possibly in blue Chevy, late model tag BXH 346 (not on file), usually has someone driving him

- Carries a .45 auto pistol at all times

- He is an illegal alien, ATF wants to be notified if he is stopped and has the gun on him.

They will file the charges

Contact: Agent Angela Finley ATF Office: 918-581-7731 (or) Pager: 918- 672-2755

State Help on German

Within 36 hours of the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, senior officials at the ATF and FBI were provided intelligence on Strassmeir from Oklahoma law enforcement members, this newspaper has learned.

In mid-May 1995, a written report from the FBI detailed those suspicions from Oklahoma terrorism experts concerning Strassmeir.

That classified document indicated: That Strassmeir was a German citizen and his father a powerful, former member of the German parliament...that he was in the German military...that he was the principal militia trainer at Elohim City, a redoubt of the Christian Identity Movement.

Federal officials were also advised that the Immigration and Naturalization Service had an outstanding warrant for Strassmeir's arrest for failing to leave the U.S. when his visa expired.

Additional facts were also broached in the documents sent to federal authorities. They should be considered within the context of former Elohim City resident Richard Wayne Snell, whose death sentence in an Arkansas prison was carried out just hours after the Oklahoma City bombing — and may have inspired it, some knowledgeable observers contend.

Snell told Arkansas prison officials just four days before his scheduled execution that there would be a bombing on the day of his death. He didn't say where, but Snell and another well-known radical, James Ellison, had cased the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City back in the early 1980s.

The report to the FBI from state intelligence observers noted that Strassmeir was alleged to train platoon-sized groups consisting of 30 to 40 individual militia members from throughout the U.S. every three months at Elohim City...that Strassmeir was observed at Elohim City as recently as two weeks prior to that...that Strassmeir had in the past attempted to purchase a 747 aircraft from Lufthansa Airlines...that in 1992, some 960 yards of concrete were transported to Elohim City via 122 concrete trucks, presumably for bunkers and weapons storage facilities...that the compound was believed to be generating income through the sale of illegal drugs produced on the 400-acre compounds...and that a confidential source advised that another resident of Elohim City bore a striking resemblance to "John Doe No. 2," then being sought by federal authorities.

Strassmeir, Brescia There

Thus, a month after the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, Strassmeir was still a resident of the compound, according to the report.

Now, the Gazette has obtained film footage made on May 24, 1995, by an Oklahoma news service that clearly shows Strassmeir walking around in the Elohim City compound, armed with a pistol in a leg holster.

Also captured on another news clip made days earlier was Michael Brescia — the young man eyewitnesses in Kansas have described to this newspaper as "John Doe No. 2," wanted for questioning in connection with the Oklahoma City bombing.

Brescia coincidentally, was Strassmeir's roommate at Elohim City.

The uncovering of such facts is proving frustrating to some Oklahoma lawmen, who are puzzled and angry that Strassmeir and others have apparently never been questioned in a timely manner by federal authorities.

Here's what one law enforcement officer said:

"We found the axle from the truck that led to Junction City and McVeigh. Our Highway Patrolman arrested McVeigh. And that arrest led to Terry Nichols and Mike Fortier..."

"Since then, nothing in this investigation has accomplished anything. But we're told by the Bureau that Strassmeir and his buddies are not important.

"Bull—!"