

Canadians Air Club Film

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The Canadian Broadcasting Company on Tuesday night began airing what major news networks in this country have so far declined to — witness reports that Oklahoma City suspect Timothy McVeigh was sighted just days before the nation's worst terrorist bombing at a Tulsa topless bar.

On a program called "The Fifth Estate," the Canadian counterpart to this country's "60 Minutes," reporters recapped much of what this newspaper has been reporting for more than 18 months, including portions of a security film from the Tulsa topless bar obtained by Gazette reporter John Gash and an NBC reporter.

Focus of the Canadian report were possible connections to a former Canadian resident, Robert Millar, who is spiritual leader of the Christian Identity compound called Elohim City, which is located on the Oklahoma-Arkansas border near Fort Smith, Ark.

Contained in the CBC report was the videotape taken in the dressing room of Lady Godiva's on the night of April 8, 1995. One of the dancers there makes references to a customer she had been sitting with that night, who was bragging that she would never forget him after April 19, 1995. ,

The McCurtain Gazette's exclusive story on this topic, published on Sept. 25, didn't reveal the identities of the other men with that braggart, pending review by state and federal agents.

Today it can be revealed that from photographs, witnesses at the club identified the man doing the bragging as Timothy McVeigh, and those seated with him as Michael Brescia, 24, and his former Elohim City roommate, Andreas Strassmeir, 37.

The witnesses from the topless club agreed to appear on that Canadian TV segment, identifying the photos. The FBI has reviewed a copy of the video from the club and has also interviewed the same witnesses featured in the CBC program, but the Justice Department has made no official comment on what they intend to do with the evidence.

Also this week, government prosecutors filed papers in the Denver court asking the judge in the Oklahoma City bombing case to block efforts by McVeigh's defense team in seeking government files on Strassmeir and his activities. Hearings are scheduled on the matter for Nov. 14-15.

Strassmeir is a former German military officer whom residents of Elohim City say McVeigh called on April 5, 1995, when phone records indicate such a call was placed from McVeigh's motel room in Kingman, Ariz., to Elohim City. That call was made only seconds after a Ryder Truck rental establishment in Arizona had been contacted using a prepaid phone card linked to Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols.

While Strassmeir's attorney, Kirk Lyons of Black Mountain, N.C., admits his client may have met McVeigh at a Tulsa gun show in 1993, he says Strassmeir had no contact with McVeigh since then. Lyons said his client came to the United States in 1989 as a tourist and "just hung around" because he liked the girls and the American customs.

For his part, Michael Brescia has never commented on the bombing matter publicly and has refused interview requests. Brescia left Elohim City in the fall of 1995 and returned to his native Philadelphia where he started a rock band called Cyanide with two other former Elohim City residents, Scott A. Stedford, 27 and Kevin W. McCarthy, 19.

In May of this year, McCarthy and Stedford were arrested for their alleged roles in what has become known as the Midwest bank robberies.

In all, authorities believe, there were some 19 banks robbed in seven states by members of the gang. Over \$200,000 was reported stolen, and none of it has been recovered.

After the Oklahoma City bombing, the New York Times quoted FBI sources as saying that McVeigh and Nichols could be linked to those bank robberies. However, they have never been charged with those crimes.

FBI sources say they do not consider Brescia a suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing.