

# **Federal Agents Probing New Links to OKC Bombing**

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By J.D. Cash

Federal authorities are gathering evidence that could establish a link between members of the Oklahoma City bombing conspiracy...radical members of the white separatist movement... a burglary...and the subsequent brutal murder of an Arkansas family who made their living selling anti-government literature at gun shows, the McCurtain Gazette has learned.

And in a new development, the Associated Press reported Wednesday that a military-style firearm belonging to murdered Arkansas gun show exhibitor William A. Mueller had been recovered from a Spokane, Wash., man arrested in South Dakota.

Arrested there and charges with possessing stolen property was Sean Michael Haines, whom the McCurtain Gazette has learned was a member of a neo-Nazi "skinhead" group operating in the Northwest U.S.

During Haines' arraignment in Sioux Falls, S.D., Deputy State's Attorney Mark Reedstrom said the admitted white supremacist had a firearm in his vehicle which records show belonged to the late Bill Mueller of Tilly, Ark.

Reedstrom said Haines carried forms of identification from three states and had white supremacist literature in his car when he was picked up at a rest stop on 1-90 near the Minnesota border.

## **Arkansas Gun Robberies**

Last year, when Terry L. Nichols and co-defendant Timothy J. McVeigh were indicted with "others unknown" for the April 19, 1995, Oklahoma City bombing of the Murrah federal building, the grand jury's report said the conspiracy was financed in part by the Nov. 5, 1994, robbery of an Arkansas gun dealer.

That theft involved 70 weapons and other property taken at gunpoint from a Royal, Ark, man.

Roger Moore, the 60-year-old victim, said he was alone at 9:15 a.m. when he stepped outside his house and was surprised by an intruder who wore "woodland" pattern camouflage fatigues and a black ski mask.

The suspect subdued Moore with a pistol-grip shotgun and then found him with flex cuff restraints and duct tape. As it turns out, Moore was once a friend of Tim McVeigh and says the two met at a gun show in Florida in 1993 and stayed in contact thereafter.

Moore told investigators that on one visit to his home, McVeigh was wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the words "White Power."

The McCurtain Gazette has also learned that McVeigh's associations include membership in the Ku Klux Klan.

Moreover, the Desert Storm veteran has boasted that his Klan membership was personally approved by Arkansas resident Thorn Rob, a Christian Identity minister and national chaplain for the KKK.

Initially, Moore fingered McVeigh as the prime suspect in the robbery — explaining that the young drifter had been a house guest and was one of very few people familiar with the large gun collection he maintained at his home. But Moore also told authorities the only person he got a look at on the day of the robbery was too short to be McVeigh. Indeed, subsequent eyewitness reports — supported by telephone and motel records — place McVeigh several hundred miles from the crime scene that weekend. As for co-defendant Terry Nichols' alleged role in the robbery, ex-Army buddy Mike Fortier told the FBI that McVeigh called him after the Royal, Ark., heist and said, "Nichols got Bob!"

Fortier told authorities that McVeigh always referred to Moore by his alias, Bob Miller.

Fortier has pleaded guilty to transporting some of Moore's firearms and later selling them at the direction of McVeigh.

After the bombing, when the ATF and FBI raided Terry Nichols' home in Kansas, they located 33 firearms and other items believed taken in the Roger Moore heist. Roger Moore said later that his insurance company would pay only a fraction of the value of his total loss. Investigation Broadens Because of reports and other evidence, authorities have expanded their investigation into yet another Arkansas robbery reported by a gun show exhibitor. And like the Moore robbery, the victim told people he might know who the mastermind was.

In September of this year, the trial judge scheduled to hear the McVeigh-Nichols case placed under seal a subpoena for sales tax records from the Missouri Department of Revenue related to a gun show held in Sedalia, Mo., on Feb. 10-11, 1995. Included in the subpoena were the names of McVeigh, Nichols and Michael Fortier and the two dozen aliases used by the men\*

The FBI believes Terry Nichols and possibly co-defendant Tim McVeigh could have attended a portion of that gun show. FBI officials have sought similar tax records from other states where they believe Fortier, McVeigh and Nichols may have liquidated stolen property, using the proceeds to finance the bombing conspiracy.

The McCurtain Gazette recently located two witnesses whose account of Terry Nichols' visit to Sedalia, Mo., has led criminal investigators into one of Arkansas' most grisly unsolved crimes.

## The Motel Memory

The owners of a Sedalia motel say that Terry Nichols checked into their 12-unit inn between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Feb. 10, 1995.

He was alone, they said, and records indicated he used the alia "Joe Rivers."

Phillip Shaw, owner of the Motel Memory, signed Nichols in that wintry night after negotiating a lower rate for the soft-spoken traveler.

"He was very polite and mentioned that he was here for a gun show," Shaw said.

"He asked me if I would give him a discount on the room if he paid for two nights in advance... I agreed to take less."

Early the next morning, Shaw's wife Betty, noticed an odd assortment of items in the GMC pickup belonging to their guest in Room No. 2.

"His truck had a camper shell," Mrs. Shaw recalled. "I looked in the right side window of the camper and could see that the truck was crammed full of stuff — including large boxes marked 'Ammunition.'

"Then I remembered he told my husband that he was here for a gun show." Later that morning, "I saw that the truck was gone, so I went to clean his room," Mrs. Shaw said.

"When I opened the door, I couldn't believe it! The floors and bed were covered with all these crates of ammunition. I couldn't clean the room because of all the heavy boxes and tarps he had moved in there."

## Robbery Link?

Shortly after Mrs. Shaw's startling discovery, 150 miles down Highway 65, an Arkansas family reported their home had been robbed of a large quantity of ammunition and other valuables.

According to official reports, gun show dealer William Mueller told Searcy County sheriffs investigators that sometime after 3 p.m. on Feb. 10, 1995, his secluded home north of Tilly was broken into — and some \$40,000 worth of property taken.

Missing items listed in the burglary report were silver coins, gun parts, survivalist gear — and 30 cases of ammunition containing more than 17,000 rounds of various calibers.

The Muellers filed their report the evening of Feb. 12, 1995, only a couple of hours after returning from a weekend away from home.

## Puzzled by Nichols' Visit

Investigators say they are puzzled about many facets of Nichols' visit to Sedalia. First, evidence indicates that on Feb. 10, 1995, Nichols was traveling through Manhattan, Kan., at 1:30 p.m. and, thus, very likely missed most, if not all, of the first day of the two-day gun show.

McVeigh's whereabouts are less certain until he makes a telephone call late on the evening of Feb. 12, 1995, from a motel in Arizona.

Then there is Betty Shaw's account of Nichols hauling thousands of rounds of ammunition from someplace, then leaving the merchandise in his room during the second and final day of the gun show.

And finally, legitimate gun show merchants say there is such a small margin of profit in legally purchased factory ammunition that typically only persons involved in selling reloaded ammo or hard-to-get specialty calibers ever bother to deal at all in ammo.

Equally baffling are the strange connections to characters and events surrounding the Mueller family themselves.

## Paranoia?

For many years, Bill Mueller 53, and his wife, Nancy, 28, were regulars at gun shows.

Instead of selling firearms, though, the Mueller's wares were primarily politically charged books, bumper stickers and video tapes.

The majority of the material was highly critical of the federal government — a product line which the couple later believed caused them to come under the scrutiny of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms of the U.S. Treasury Department (ATF).

Confirming this was reported Gene Worgis, who says he met the Muellers at a show at Little Rock in November 1995. By the time Worgis spoke with the Muellers, more than eight months had passed since the couple had reported the burglary and still their property had not been recovered. Nor had the insurance company paid the claim.

Writing for a newsletter, Worgis reported that the Muellers told him gun show promoters were placing pressure on him to stop selling "anti-government materials."

Friends reported that Bill Mueller believed the ATF had coerced gun show promoters into barring exhibitors who displayed such materials.

Indeed, when Worgis published his story, included in it was a letter from ATF head John Magaw admitting the agency had encouraged promoters to "self-police" themselves and improve their overall image by discouraging exhibitors from selling items not related to hunting and other shooting sports.

Possibly significant, Worgis wrote that Bill Mueller said there were two men who approached him at a gun show in Fort Smith, Ark., earlier in the year — and that he was greatly concerned about them. "It's been one strange thing after another," Worgis quoted Mueller. "First, the ATF tells me things in my booth have to be removed. Then I'm introduced to another strange fellow, Andy Strassmeir, who seemed to parrot the same ATF line.

"And he introduced me to a real far out guy named Mike Brescia..."

Mueller then told Worgis that he remembered the two because he believed they might be connected with his home's burglary — or even the ATF.

Worgis also reported that Mueller showed him a spiral notebook where the exhibitor had gone so far — so great was his concern — as to write down the two men's names.

### Tangled Web of Characters

Links between Strassmeir, Brescia and McVeigh were first reported in the *McCurtain Gazette*, including the information that Strassmeir and Brescia were once roommates at a white separatist compound near Fort Smith, Ark., called Elohim City.

Residents of the small Oklahoma compound, near Muldrow, told the *Gazette* that it was their former chief of staff, Andreas Strassmeir, that Timothy McVeigh had called for via telephone on April 5, 1995.

Investigators believe the timing of the call is significant. That's because it occurred only seconds after telephone records indicate McVeigh, or someone using his credit card, phoned a Ryder truck rental establishment in Arizona.

It was a Ryder truck rented in Junction City, Kan., a few days later that was used to transport the bomb which destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

### Mole Role Confirmed

An FBI intelligence source confirmed that Strassmeir — a former German military officer — was the ATF's intelligence "mole" inside Elohim City.

This past spring, after a court-appointed investigator for Timothy McVeigh interviewed Strassmeir, the German national's attorney Kirk Lyons of Black Mountain, N.C., sent out a newsletter saying his client had returned to Berlin, Germany, because of death threats — and to avoid arrest.

Responding to allegations that Strassmeir was an undercover intelligence officer for the federal government, Lyons told the *Gazette* that his client did nothing more than fill out

some job applications requesting employment from the DEA (Drug Enforcement) or INS (immigration).

Meanwhile, the ATF has refused to comment on whether Strassmeir worked for them. But the presiding judge at the bombing trial in Denver recently ordered the government to turn over any such records to the Nichols and McVeigh legal defense teams.

### Muellers Feared for Lives?

Whoever the perpetrators of the burglary of the Mueller residence in Arkansas, those who knew Bill and Nancy Mueller said they were scared because they might know who did it — and feared they'd come back to kill them.

A man claiming to be a friend of the family, George Eaton, told the Gazette that he believed the Muellers had information concerning the missing property and maybe some "other things."

Eaton would not elaborate on what he meant by "other things." But he did acknowledge being present when his friend, Andy Strassmeir, quarreled with Bill Mueller at the Fort Smith gun show. Until recently, Eaton lived near Elohim City and publishes the "Patriot Report" that Timothy McVeigh subscribed to at his sister's address in New York prior to the Oklahoma City bombing.

Eaton told this newspaper he doesn't know McVeigh and can't recall why his sister's name was on his subscriber list. As for Brescia, Strassmeir's former sidekick, Eaton acknowledges the subject lived at his home in the fall of 1995.

Another Elohim City regular and close associate of Strassmeir and Brescia, Tulsan Dennis Mahon of the White Aryan Resistance (W.A.R.), told reporters he knew Bill Mueller because they attended militia meetings in Mountainsburg, Ark., together.

And, according to published reports, the Mueller's house in Tilly, Ark., was acquired sometime after a friend of the family, Timothy Coombs, abandoned the property and later went into hiding for his alleged participation in the shooting of a highway patrolman in Missouri.

### Insurance Never Paid

Searcy County investigators say the Muellers filed a detailed list of property reported stolen in the February 1995 incident but that no check was ever issued by the insurance company.

A spokesman at the Searcy County sheriffs department would only say Mueller failed to show up at his office on three separate occasions for meetings with an investigator hired by the insurance company to look into the purported burglary.

## Death Fears Realized

In early January of this year, a business partner of Bill Mueller stopped by the family's remote mountain home and found it vacant.

Although there was no blood inside the house, or signs of a struggle\* the door to the house was kicked in and farm animals were starving.

Authorities began an investigation after getting the report. • And several days later, Mueller's Jeep Cherokee was located some 17 miles from their Tilly residence.

Some Mueller friends told investigators the couple may have just decided to take off for some reason. Others said they might have gone into hiding because of fears Mueller had that he was targeted for assassination.

Finally, it was a fisherman's horrifying catch that moved the case to the front pages of Arkansas newspapers. The Arkansas Gazette reported that Mueller, his wife and her 8-year-old daughter, Sarah Powell, were recovered by divers on June 28-29 from the Illinois Bayou in north-central Arkansas after a fisherman reported snagging a portion of a human leg.

Subsequent stories quoted witnesses at the scene who said the victims had been handcuffed together at the hands and feet — with plastic bags wrapped over their heads and fastened with duct tape. All three members of the family were located in 20 feet of water — tied to a heavy rock.

## Feds Join Investigation

The Gazette has learned that the FBI and ATF have joined local and state authorities in Arkansas to sort through the suspicious nature of the Mueller burglary in hopes of finding clues that might explain the execution-style murders. Sources also note that a few of the Muellers belongings have been recovered, though the vast majority of the property remains unaccounted for.

Also unaccounted for is some \$50,000 the Arkansas Gazette reported the Muellers were believed to have received from an inheritance only days before they disappeared.

As for the thousands of rounds of ammunition listed as missing from Mueller's residence, sources say they have located "lot numbers" from receipts Mueller had.

They are checking those against property seized from several locations — including the James and Terry Nichols' homes raided after the Oklahoma City bombing.