

# **Washington had Oklahoma Bomb Tip-Off**

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By Ambrose Evans-Pritchard in Washington

An Oklahoma newspaper has convincing evidence that the US Government was warned about the bombing of the Oklahoma federal building in 1995, the most deadly act of terrorism in US history.

Next Tuesday the McCurtain Daily Gazette is scheduled to publish how an informant for the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms was paid \$120 a week to monitor a neo-Nazi compound in eastern Oklahoma, called Elohim City. The informant, Carol Howe, wrote monthly reports for her ATF case officer in Tulsa, warning that the group was planning to blow up a federal building, with a probable target date of April 19, 1995. She told the ATF that the terrorist cell, sometimes known as the Aryan Republican Army, had narrowed down the list of targets to three buildings: one in Oklahoma City and two in Tulsa.

The ATF has confirmed that Howe was a source. After repeating for two years that allegations of prior knowledge were a crazy "conspiracy theory", the US authorities now admit that they received warning, but insist the information was too vague to prompt action. Ms Howe said that the prime instigator of the conspiracy was Andreas Strassmeir, a former German army officer from a prominent political family in Berlin. Strassmeir told The Telegraph last year that he moved to the United States in 1989 to work as an undercover agent for the US Justice Department, but says that the job fell through. Instead, he went to live at Elohim City, where he took charge of paramilitary training.

Two days after the bombing, which killed 168 people, Ms Howe was taken to an underground command centre in downtown Oklahoma City for an extensive debriefing. In her official statement to investigators, she identified sketches of suspects "John Doe I" and "John Doe II" as two members of Elohim City's terrorist underground, both housemates of Andreas Strassmeir. According to the Gazette, one of them was called Michael Brescia, a member of the Aryan Republican Army underground.

Other witnesses also raised concerns about Brescia within days of the bombing, but there was no follow-up. The FBI did not question Brescia until his name started surfacing in the press last year. Two weeks ago the FBI arrested him in Philadelphia - for bank robberies carried out by the Aryan Army, not for questioning about the bombing.

Glenn and Cathy Wilburn, an Oklahoma couple who lost two grandchildren in the blast, have named Brescia and Strassmeir as co-conspirators in a civil lawsuit against the chief suspect, Tim McVeigh. Carol Howe has revealed that Tim

McVeigh used to visit Elohim City, using the alias of Tim Tuttle. He would frequent the house of Strassmeir, who had an extraordinary influence over him.

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