

Militia group leader denies plotting bombing

DENVER (AP) — A White Aryan Resistance leader on Friday denied a government informant's claim that he had talked of bombing the Oklahoma City federal building in the months before the fatal attack.

Dennis Mahon, leader of the extremist group in Oklahoma, accused Carole Howe of lying to help the government convict Timothy McVeigh.

Howe reportedly told FBI agents two days after the April 19, 1995, bombing that Mahon and a German citizen named Andreas Strassmeir had discussed bombing federal installations in November or December 1994.

But federal officials have said they never received specific threats about the Alfred P. Murrah building before the bombing, which killed 168 people and injured 500 others.

In a telephone interview Friday, Mahon said he specifically rejected the idea of blowing up federal buildings when Howe, who was being paid by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, brought up the possibility.

"I told her it was probably going to happen in the future because people were fed up with the government, but I told her that I was an above-ground activist and I wasn't going to do anything 'illegal,'" Mahon said.

McVeigh and Terry Nichols could be sentenced to death if convicted of federal murder and con-



TIMOTHY McVEIGH
...on trial for bombing

spiracy charges in the bombing. McVeigh is being tried first.

The only apparent public link between McVeigh and Mahon's white-supremacist group is a telephone call made by someone using McVeigh's long-distance calling card two weeks before the bombing.

The call was to the Muldrow, Okla., camp of Elohim City, a white separatist religious commune where Strassmeir lived.

Elohim City leaders said the caller, believed to have been McVeigh, asked to speak to Strassmeir, but was told he was not there.

Strassmeir, who was investigated but dismissed as a suspect in the bombing, acknowledged meeting McVeigh at a gun show in Tulsa in 1993 but said he has not seen him since.

As for Howe, Mahon said he had warned others at Elohim City that she might be a government informant. And he said she's lying if she claims he talked about targeting the Oklahoma federal building.

"She is going to break McVeigh's trial wide open if she says Strassmeir and I talked about blowing up the building, because that's a big lie," Mahon told the Rocky Mountain News. Howe and her attorney could not be reached for comment.

According to documents obtained by station KTVT in Fort Worth, Texas, McVeigh "selected Oklahoma City for the fact that the agents and the orders that came out of that building were responsible for the tragedy at Waco, Texas," Michael Fortier, the government's star witness, told FBI agents.

But if McVeigh wanted to strike back at agents involved in the deadly raid on the Branch Davidian compound, he chose the wrong structure. ATF agents were present during the long siege at Waco, but none were involved in the deadly FBI raid two years before the bombing, said Les Martz, the Dallas-based special agent in charge of the agency's Oklahoma operation.