

Racist claims wrong building hit Blast termed part of large slaying plot

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DALLAS - A former officer in the neo-Nazi, white supremacist Aryan Nations claims that the Oklahoma City bombing was part of a complex, widespread plot to kill four judges with truck bombs.

But in carrying out the plot, Timothy McVeigh bombed the wrong building, Bobby Joe "Crank" Farrington told The Denver Post in his first newspaper interview about the bombing.

In a month when international conspiracy theories abound - including one raised this week by McVeigh's attorneys that involves Iraq and the Irish Republican Army - Farrington's recollections paint a picture of a home-grown plan hatched by white separatists and militias angry at the U.S. government. McVeigh's trial is scheduled to begin in U.S. District Court in Denver on Monday. He faces the death penalty if convicted of murder and conspiracy charges filed against him in connection with the bombing, which killed 168 people and injured about 500 more.

McVeigh's legal team would not comment on Farrington's allegations, citing a judge's gag order in the case.

Farrington, 47, said the bomb in Oklahoma City was intended to kill retired U.S. District Judge Fred Daugherty of Oklahoma City, who had an office in the federal courthouse across the street from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, which was destroyed in the blast.

Farrington, who said he met McVeigh in 1992 at the Aryan Nations headquarters in Hayden Lake, Idaho, called McVeigh an "idiot."

"I really can't say anything to prop up McVeigh," Farrington said during a recent prison interview. "He's pretty much just an idiot. He just went to the wrong place."

Farrington's knowledge of the plot comes from correspondences and conversations with others in the white supremacist movement, he said.

He is currently serving a 33-year sentence for stealing a truck he said was going to be used in a plot to kill a judge in the Northwest. Farrington's arrest and conviction record extends back 21 years.

Such a criminal history could call his credibility into question. But Texas state officials have told The Denver Post that Farrington's comments shortly after the bombing led to an FBI investigation that is still ongoing.

Larry Fitzgerald, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Corrections, cautioned, however, that "oftentimes an inmate will claim he has knowledge of something, and soon as we discover that, we go talk to the inmate. We try to determine if this is truthful, if this is not truthful. And then we act accordingly," Fitzgerald said.

A Montana judge, whom Farrington claims he warned about the plot against Daugherty before the Oklahoma City bombing, referred all questions to the FBI.

An FBI official said the agency could not comment on Farrington because of a gag order issued by U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch, who is presiding over the McVeigh trial. ***

At 9:02 a.m. - the moment of the explosion on April 19, 1995 - Judge Daugherty was in the Oklahoma City federal courthouse in his second-floor office. The windows of the office look directly across Fourth Street toward the front of the Murrah building. Daugherty was scheduled to preside over a 9:30 a.m. hearing.

The bomb exploded at the Murrah building's "back door" on Fifth Street.

Daugherty, who was sitting at his desk, was hit with glass fragments as his two north-facing windows exploded. The judge received cuts on his head and neck but was not seriously injured.

Farrington claimed that Dennis Mahon, former leader of the White Aryan Resistance (WAR) in Tulsa, Okla., and John Trochmann, founder of the Militia of Montana, were deeply involved in the bombing and broader plot.

Mahon and Trochmann, however, denied any involvement in the Oklahoma City bombing or the larger bombing conspiracy. They said they don't know Farrington.

Mahon's name has come up repeatedly in recent weeks, specifically from McVeigh's defense team, which claims in a motion filed earlier this week that a government informant said Mahon talked about bombing the "federal building" in Oklahoma City and traveled there at least three times in November and December 1994 and again in February 1995.

Farrington said the complex bomb plot stemmed from specific anger toward the four judges as well as a more generalized anger over the siege at Ruby Ridge, the then-pending execution of white supremacist Richard Snell in Arkansas and the death of the Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas.

He said Daugherty - a longtime Oklahoma judge, a millionaire and one-time commanding general of the 45th Infantry Division of the Oklahoma National Guard - had "stepped on everybody" in his courtroom, especially members of militias and people with Freemen-like philosophies.

But Daugherty, who retired last year at the age of 82, said he doesn't recollect handling any cases involving Freemen or members of a militia. He has handled tax protesters' cases but said that was some years ago. And he said he doesn't recall receiving any physical or verbal threats.

The three other judges allegedly targeted in the plot were U.S. District Judge Edward Lodge of Boise, Idaho; U.S. District Judge Walter Smith of Waco; and state Judge Roy Rodeghiero of Roundup, Mont.

Farrington said Lodge was targeted because he had presided over the proceedings against Randy Weaver and Kevin Harris, who were charged with murder, conspiracy and other counts after a shootout and 11-day standoff at Ruby Ridge in Idaho left three people dead - a federal marshal and Weaver's wife and son.

While Lodge was sometimes tough on the defense - refusing to throw out the most serious charges against Weaver and Harris - he was equally tough on the government. In one instance, Lodge imposed a fine on the FBI for delays in producing reports and evidence. Harris was acquitted on all charges, and Weaver was convicted only of failure to appear on a previous weapons charge.

Farrington said Smith was on the list because in June 1994 Smith imposed extremely long sentences on surviving members of the Branch Davidian group, ravaged when fire swept through their complex on April 19, 1993. Smith sentenced five of the eight members to 40 years in prison for their roles in the deaths of four Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents. The three others received five years for conspiracy to manufacture and possess machine guns and 10 years for aiding and abetting Davidian leader David Koresh in the possession of machine guns.

Rodeghiero was targeted because he had been a thorn in the side of Freemen leader and Roundup resident Rodney Skurdal, Farrington said.

In 1994 the anti-government Freemen began a war of intimidation against public officials in eastern Montana, resorting to lien filings and allegedly threatening the lives of various office holders. In June 1996, they surrendered after a four-month standoff with the FBI near Jordan, Mont.

Farrington said he had saved Rodeghiero from an earlier plot in March 1995 when he told the FBI that Rodeghiero was going to be kidnapped, tried and hanged by the Freemen and the Militia of Montana.

Musselshell County Sheriff G. Paul Smith told The Denver Post that the FBI had tipped him to a possible kidnapping attempt.

On March 3, 1995, a number of heavily armed men were arrested in Roundup. They were found with assault rifles, thousands of rounds of ammunition, restraining devices, night goggles and body armor.

Smith, the sheriff, thinks the armed men may have been carrying out the plan to kidnap Rodeghiero.

It was shortly after he learned of the 1995 plot to kidnap Rodeghiero that Farrington said he heard about the more-widespread bombing plot, including the plot to assassinate Oklahoma City's Daugherty and a renewed attempt on Rodeghiero.

When he found out around April 1, 1995, that the movement was planning an Oklahoma City bombing, he decided to stop it, Farrington said. About April 10, he wrote to Rodeghiero to warn him of the planned bombing in Oklahoma City.

Farrington said he decided to write a letter to Rodeghiero rather than the FBI because he felt he'd have credibility with Rodeghiero. The 47-year-old former construction worker said he thought the judge would call Daugherty and that would be the end of the Oklahoma City bombing plot.

Rodeghiero would not talk about Farrington's claims. His staff referred calls to the FBI.

"He said you should check with the FBI on all this - they handled everything from day one, and he said that's whose in charge," said Rodeghiero's court clerk.

When Farrington realized his letter to Rodeghiero hadn't stopped the bombing, he said, he was devastated.

"I cried," he said. "It could have been stopped so easily.

"I don't think anybody (in the white supremacist movement) knew that the Murrah Building was the target. I think the Murrah Building was a mistake. The buildings are close together."

Farrington said his information about the Oklahoma City bombing plot came from two people in the white supremacist movement - Mahon and a man he identified as "J. Dan" - a Czechoslovak who he said provided security for the Aryan Nations headquarters in Hayden Lake, Idaho.

Farrington said both Mahon and Dan sent him detailed letters in early April 1995, spelling out plans for the Oklahoma City bombing.

Farrington said Mahon told him McVeigh and Terry Nichols were to build the truck bomb. Nichols also has been charged in the bombing and will be tried after McVeigh's trial ends.

Farrington said Mahon was to oversee the operation in Oklahoma City and two German nationals - Andreas Strassmeir and Bonard Sevenackkar - were to blow up the building.

"Mahon mentioned Strassmeir and Sevenackkar as the people who would bring the building down - Andy and Bonard - from inside to outside, and McVeigh and Nichols were supposed to make the truck up," Farrington said.

Mahon last week reiterated his denial of having any connection with the Oklahoma City bombing and said he doesn't know Farrington. Mahon said he was visiting his parents in Illinois at the time of the terrorist attack.

However, Mahon said he does know Dan, who he knows by his full name of Jaromir J. Dan, and has written to him. Mahon also said he knows a German neo-Nazi by the name of Bonard, although he thinks he had a name different than Sevenackkar. Mahon claimed that Dan "talked a lot about violence."

"He said we could go ahead and nuke the federal government, stuff like that," Mahon said. "He wanted to nuke America. I finally stopped writing him."

Mahon said the man called Bonard traveled to Oklahoma shortly before the ruins of the Murrah building were demolished and that the two of them traveled to Oklahoma City to see the building the day before it was torn down.

Trochmann this week also continued to deny involvement in the bombing, saying neither he nor the Militia of Montana would be involved in any scheme that would create chaos in the United States because chaos is what enemies of the country relish.

"It sounds crazy, it sounds made up, and it sounds like he is just trying to get in on the feeding frenzy of people that say they saw Elvis Presley, Andy Strassmeir and David Koresh together," Lyons said. He questioned why Daugherty would be targeted.

"He is a nobody. He hasn't done anything. He hasn't persecuted any right-wing, so-called patriots that I know of."

Farrington said he thinks McVeigh - much to the consternation of others in the bombing conspiracy - disobeyed orders on who was to deliver the bomb and ended up driving the bomb truck to Oklahoma City on his own.

"He worshiped these people (the leaders of the movement)," Farrington said. "He wanted to be somebody, and he wasn't happy with who he was."

After the bombing, Farrington said, he kept hearing from "everybody" that they were upset that McVeigh took that truck to Oklahoma City.

"I think McVeigh ended up in that truck in Oklahoma City (because) he stayed up all night while everybody went to sleep and got up early in the morning before everybody woke up and jumped in the truck and ran down there," Farrington said.

Prosecutors claim that the truck bomb was built solely by McVeigh and Nichols at a state park near Junction City, Kan., then driven to Oklahoma City by McVeigh, who was able to escape in a car he had parked near the Murrah Building earlier.

Farrington claims to have met McVeigh on several occasions - primarily at Hayden Lake, but also once at Elohim City, a Christian Identity settlement in northeastern Oklahoma that has been tied to the bombing. McVeigh allegedly called Elohim City several weeks before the blast.

Farrington doesn't like the former Army sergeant.

"He (McVeigh) tries to act like Rambo," Farrington said. "He's got that ego. He was always making statements that you 'gotta make statements.'"

"The thing was, he was just so enthused," Farrington added. "He was talking about what he could contribute - that if anything was given to him, he would make sure it went down. It takes very little to get him wired up and he starts ranting and raving."

*** Within several days of the Oklahoma City bombing, Farrington came to the attention of the FBI.

Farrington said the FBI descended on the prison unit where he was being held, hooked him up to a polygraph for 14 hours and talked about the four-judge bomb plot. He said agents from California, Washington, D.C., Montana and at least one other state were involved in his interrogation.

Sitting in prison, Farrington is watching as the McVeigh case proceeds to trial. He said he knows McVeigh's defense won't call him because he has evidence incriminating McVeigh.

Yet he said he doesn't believe the government will call him because the Justice Department knows he tried to alert authorities to the planned bombing.

Farrington claims that the movement or resistance has become much more violent since he joined in 1979.

"At the time, there wasn't all this craziness, it was just ... being down for your race," he said. "There wasn't all this crazy (stuff) that is going on now." FARRINGTON Bobby Joe "Crank" Farrington, the former Aryan Nations officer who claims the Oklahoma City bombing was part of a broad white supremacist plot against four judges, has an extensive criminal record. His convictions include:

*Jan. 9, 1976: felony check passing, Fort Worth, Texas.

*Dec. 21, 1976: felony theft, Fort Worth.

*June 1, 1984: unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, Fort Worth.

*March 11, 1988: felony credit card abuse, Dallas.

*Aug. 18, 1991: unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, Rockwall, Texas.

*May 14, 1993: theft of a truck. He was given an enhanced sentence of 33 years because of his prior criminal felony record.

Officials say Farrington has been arrested twice for alcohol-related driving offenses and once for possession of marijuana. In 1987, a Texas grand jury refused to indict Farrington on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Farrington is also known as Calvin Lee Walker. He says he joined the Aryan Nations in 1979. KEY PLAYERS A broad plot to kill four federal judges with bombs is said to have led to the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building. Some of the players in that scenario include: *Bobby Joe "Crank" Farrington - A Texas prison inmate who claims that he tried to alert a Montana judge that there would be a bombing in Oklahoma City. Farrington claims that the Oklahoma City bombing was intended to kill U.S. District Judge Fred Daugherty but that Timothy McVeigh drove the truck bomb to the wrong federal building. *Dennis Mahon - Outspoken white separatist leader who once headed the White Aryan Resistance in Tulsa, Okla. Farrington claims that he got particulars of the Oklahoma City bombing plot in letters from Mahon and that Mahon was to have been an integral part of the bombing. Mahon said he has never heard of Farrington. *John Trochmann - Founder of the Militia of Montana, who Farrington says was involved in the four-judge bombing plot. Trochmann denies the allegation and says he doesn't know Farrington. *Timothy McVeigh - Goes to trial Monday on murder and conspiracy charges related to the bombing. He is one of two men the government claims acted alone in the bombing. Farrington said that McVeigh was known as "Sergeant Mac" and was a

"wannabe' in the movement who was driven to prove himself. *Jaromir J. Dan - Farrington said that Dan, whom he describes as a European Nazi who came to the United States about 10 years ago, was a reliable source about the plot Oklahoma City plot. Trochmann denies knowing Dan. Mahon says he knows Dan and wrote to him, predicting violence in the United States

Caption: PHOTO: The Denver Post/Dave Buresh Representatives from the world's media line up Friday for credentials to cover the Oklahoma City bombing trial. GRAPHICS: The Denver Post White separatists conspiracy? (map) Site of bombing (map)