

# Third Aryan robber pleads guilty

■ His defense dismisses as preposterous rumors he will be implicated in the Oklahoma City bombing.

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Of The Morning Call

PHILADELPHIA — A year ago, Michael Brescia pledged to "have it out with the feds" if they tried to arrest him.

On Tuesday, he was pledging to help them.

Brescia, a 25-year-old student-turned-Aryan robber, made the promise after pleading guilty to robbery and conspiracy.

In return, prosecutors agreed not to pursue other charges against him — a deal that, under federal sentencing guidelines, could free him in less than five years.

**Brescia's plea before U.S. Judge Ronald Buckwalter follows plea bargains by Mark Thomas of Longswamp Township and Kevin McCarthy of Philadelphia, two of his counterparts in the Aryan Re-**

publican Army. Two other defendants, Peter Langan and Scott Stedeford, await trial.

Brescia was linked to just one of the 22 Midwestern bank robberies that netted the white supremacist gang about \$250,000. But rumors about connections to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing elevated his profile.

On Aug. 30, 1995, prosecutors said, he toted a 9 mm semiautomatic pistol and donned a bulletproof vest as he and two counterparts entered the Bank One Madison in Madison, Wis.

Brescia also carried a bucket with a bottle filled with gun powder and wrapped with nails, Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Schwartz said during the hearing.

When the robbers left, Brescia tossed into the bucket a smoke grenade that investigators said could

have ignited the nail bomb.

**He later received \$1,000 of the more than \$9,000 stolen in the heist.**

Prosecutors said that in May 1996, after the arrest of his counterparts, Brescia told a friend, "I'm just going to have it out with the feds if they come after me."

Brescia, wearing an orange sweat shirt and tan pants, said little at the hearing Tuesday. He told the judge he attended La Salle High School and was months from graduating La Salle University when he was arrested.

Michael McGovern, his third attorney since his January indictment, said Brescia will have more to say when he is sentenced.

Absent were his family, wife and friends who attended earlier proceedings.

**Outside the courtroom, McGovern called Brescia "a fine young man who made a mistake."**

He said that by agreeing to provide testimony and information to investigators, Brescia had cast aside his Aryan and anti-government beliefs.

Brescia lived for a time at the Oklahoma separatist compound called Elohim City, that Oklahoma City bombing defendant Timothy McVeigh telephoned weeks before the April 1995 blast.

Relatives of the bombing victim later named the brown-haired Brescia in a still-pending lawsuit and in Internet postings as the elusive "John Doe No. 2," an accomplice in the blast.

McGovern acknowledged rumors that McVeigh's defense team might subpoena Brescia. He said he knew of no concrete plans, and said he had not been contacted by McVeigh's defense team.

He also dismissed as preposterous, as federal prosecutors have, rumors that Brescia played a role in the bombing.