

The Second Debut Of Carol Howe

Jurors Will Have To Decide Who the Real Woman Is

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Just who is Carol Howe?

Is she a diligent informant who got in trouble with the federal government for insinuating it could have stopped the Oklahoma City bombing? Or is she a dangerously unstable woman who is trying to use her brief tenure as an ineffective informant to excuse a bombing plan of her own?

There is one thing we know for sure. Beginning Monday, she will be the defendant in the highest profile federal trial in Tulsa in at least seven years. Not since Colombian drug kingpin Jose Abello was tried and convicted in 1990, has a federal criminal case in Tulsa caused such a stir.

Time Magazine, People Magazine, the Washington Post and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. Are just a few of the media outlets that have filed — or are in the process of putting together — stories about Howe.

The petite, 26-year-old blonde is accused of conspiracy, willfully making a bomb threat and possessing the elements of what prosecutors claim could have been crafted into a pipe bomb.

A former Tulsa debutante, Howe was charge in March along with Tulsan James Dodson Viefhaus, Jr. After a week-long trial, Viefhaus was convicted on all three counts late Friday after a jury deliberated for almost 12 hours.

Viefhaus and Howe got in trouble early last December after the Federal Bureau of Investigation was tipped to an answering machine message emanating from the home the two shared in east Tulsa.

Viefhaus said that a letter had been "written and received" from a high-ranking revolutionary commander stating that bombs would be activated in 15 U.S. cities unless action was taken by "white warriors" by Dec. 15, 1996.

Based on this message, which is the basis of the "bomb threat" charge, a search warrant was executed on the Viefhaus and Howe residence. Prosecutors claim that they found the pipe, end caps, powder and fuse necessary to make a pipe bomb. According to Howe's testimony last Thursday during the Viefhaus trial, Howe held no racist views until March 1994 when she claims she was pushed off a ledge at Chandler Park by "some black people" who she said were making sexually explicit suggestions to her. The incident led to her sustaining foot injuries that apparently continue to cause her pain.

Howe testified that she soon got a swastika tattoo. But Howe said she only genuinely

held racist beliefs for "about six weeks" in 1994. Howe testified that she met Tulsas' white separatist Dennis Mahon in May 1994 after calling his racist hotline. The two began to spend time together, though Howe insists it was not a romantic relationship.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent Angela Graham said Howe's filing a harassment complaint against Mahon — together with information from the Tulsa Police Department — led to Graham contacting Howe in August 1994. Graham said Howe's initial assignment was to keep any eye on Mahon and those who came in contact with him, which quickly led to her taking trips with and without Mahon to Elohim City, what Howe described as a "religious, racial community" in far eastern Oklahoma.

According to statements Howe's attorney, Clark O. Brewster, made to the court at t pretrial hearing July 16, Howe gave about 70 reports about what she saw. Brewster said Howe told her ATF superiors about "dangerous, apocalyptic statements" coming from Elohim City leader Robert Millar and others at the compound, warning of a "cataclysm" coming in the spring of 1995.

Brewster said Howe told the ATF that there was talk at Elohim City of bombing federal buildings in Oklahoma City or Texas, talk which eventually became the subject of "daily meetings: in anticipation of the return of James Ellison to Elohim City.

Ellison, former leader of an Arkansas extremist group known as the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord, allegedly had conspired along with a man named Richard Snell to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1983. Snell was executed for murder on April 19, 1995, the day of the Oklahoma City bombing, and is buried at Elohim City. Brewster said when the Murrah Building blew up, Howe felt like she needed to be more specific in her informant work.

Howe said Thursday the list that was found in Howe and Viefhaus' home last December of 18 possible' bombing sites in the Tulsa area (as well as pictures of buildings when Tulsa FBI and ATF offices are located) was part of Howe's information collected on behalf of the government.

Howe said she heard a "powerful murmur" in the fall of 1995 that Tulsa could be the target of a major bombing in the spring of 1996. Howe said Thursday she left messages in 1995 but that her calls weren't returned.

Brewster has claimed that Howe worked for both the ATF and the FBI for more than a year after the bombing. Graham has testified that Howe's name was accidentally leaked to the defense team of Timothy McVeigh in March 1996. Howe said Thursday that she feared for her safety. By this time, Howe said that she was already engaged to Viefhaus, who she says she met in early 1995 while on

an ATF assignment to infiltrate the local skinhead community. Howe said that she thinks Viefhaus viewed her as a "double agent" for the far-right wing and that he didn't realize the "degree" to which she was involved with the federal government.

Thinking she had no way out of her undercover duties, Howe said she set up the National Socialist Alliance of Oklahoma with Viefhaus. Their neo-Nazi literature, their

post office box and even the hotline where the message at issue in this case was playing were all set up, Howe said Thursday, to collect names, addresses and phone numbers of potentially dangerous people the government might want to investigate.

The defense claims that many, if not all, the items the government claims could have been made into a pipe bomb, were returned to Howe by the ATF after she had collected them from Mahon in 1994-95. In early 1997, Howe was free and charged with nothing while Viefhaus was indicted and in jail. Around this time, reports that Howe warned in late 1994 and early 1995 that federal buildings had been threatened began to surface.

Howe was named in a superseding indictment with Viefhaus on March 11 on the same facts in Viefhaus' original indictment. Brewster has said the indictment was a "retaliatory" move by the government meant to punish Howe for speaking out and frighten her into keeping her mouth shut in the future about the advance notice she had given about the Oklahoma City bombing. Brewster said the government did not count on Howe fighting back.

Brewster insists that the jury in Howe's case must be allowed to hear the evidence about Howe's Oklahoma City warnings because it is vital to a full understanding of the case.