

## **Ex-debutante tells of secret agent life/One-time white supremacist, - neo-Nazi also did undercover work for the ATF**

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TULSA, Okla. - When a 26-year-old former debutante, Carol Howe, was indicted here last March on charges that she threatened to blow up buildings in 15 cities, a shudder went through corporate Tulsa.

Top business leaders knew her father, Robert Howe, as the retired president of MAPCO, a Fortune 500 energy company, and her mother, Aubyn Howe, as a tireless fund-raiser for charity.

Using the name "Freya," Carol Howe had been part of a crowd of skinheads and neo-Nazis, and the co-founder of the National Socialist Alliance of Oklahoma. But as it turned out, her story was even more complicated than that, and a shock of a different kind for her associates in the violent right.

She was also an undercover agent for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. The ATF knew her as "CI-183."

When they realized that she had gathered information on anti-government groups just before the Oklahoma City bombing, lawyers for Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted and sentenced to die in that case, wanted Howe to testify at his trial. They hoped she could raise the possibility that others were involved in the bombing, but Judge Richard Matsch of federal district court in Denver refused to allow the testimony.

Howe finally told her story this week in Tulsa at her own trial before Judge Michael Burrage of federal district court and a jury of seven men and five women, which began deliberations Friday afternoon.

Prosecutors said that Howe and her fiance, James Dodson Viefhaus Jr., who was convicted last week on identical charges, were the co-founders and possibly the only members of the National Socialist Alliance of Oklahoma, which set up a telephone line to play racist messages. One of them suggested that a black teenager would make good material for target practice.

On Dec. 8, 1996, a message read by Viefhaus called for racial war, saying, "A letter from a high-ranking revolutionary commander has been written and received demanding that action be taken against the government by all white warriors by Dec. 15, 1996, and if this action is not taken, bombs will be activated in 15 pre-selected cities."

Alarmed, agents from the FBI raided their house. Among the items they found was a sealed box containing materials that the Assistant U.S. Attorney Neal Kirkpatrick of Tulsa said could be turned into a pipe bomb "in a New York minute."

Viefhaus was arrested at once, and charged with making a bomb threat and possessing an unregistered destructive device. Howe was indicted three months later, just after she learned that she might be called as a defense witness in the McVeigh trial, which was about to begin.

Howe's lawyer, Clark Brewster, told the jury that she had only a fleeting career as a white supremacist, the spring of 1994, when she called Dial-A-Racist, a telephone line operated by Dennis Mahon, who lives in Tulsa and is a leader in the White Aryan Resistance, a California-based white separatist group. After that, he said, she was merely trying to protect herself and help the government.

Mahon has said in interviews that he and Howe became romantically involved, but Howe, testifying Friday, said he assaulted her sexually and threatened to "neutralize" her when she tried to leave his group.

Angela Graham, an ATF agent, learned of Howe's troubles from the police and asked her if she wanted to help the agency investigate Mahon and his organization. On Aug. 31, 1994, giving her primary reason as "personal vendetta," Howe signed a contract to work undercover. For the next six months, Howe taped her conversations with Mahon, took notes when he told her how to make napalm or grenades, and even let the ATF put video cameras into her home.

She also went with Mahon to Elohim City, a white separatist community in eastern Oklahoma on the Arkansas border, where she took notes on the people she met and the weapons and license plates she saw.

But as time passed, Mahon became suspicious of Howe, and she became frightened and depressed, Brewster said. On Feb. 8, 1995, she testified Friday, she called Tulsa police because she felt suicidal. The ATF dropped her as an informant a month later.

Howe called the ATF after the Oklahoma City bombing to say that she thought she could identify John Doe No. 2, a suspect who, if he exists, has never been found. The ATF reactivated her as an informant, vouched for her mental stability, and asked her to look for him at Elohim City, Graham reported, but did no further work for the ATF.

Then, in January 1996, Howe's first name and other details were given to lawyers for McVeigh. Graham found out on March, 29, 1996, and called Howe to warn her and offer any help she could.

Instead, Howe told the jury Friday, "I dug myself down deeper in the movement and cloaked myself in it to look that much more authentic."

Prosecutors, on the other hand, contended that Howe got more involved in neo-Nazi activities because she started to believe in them again.