

## **Ex-Informant Gets to Tell Her Story – Witness Barred From First Trial Says She Saw McVeigh at Supremacist Compound in July 1994**

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A former federal informant barred from testifying at Timothy McVeigh's Oklahoma City bombing trial told her story Wednesday at Terry Nichols' trial.

Carol Howe said publicly for the first time that she saw McVeigh at a white supremacist compound in Oklahoma in July 1994.

Her testimony contradicts information about McVeigh's whereabouts at that time - but jurors don't know that.

Howe had never made the claim in many previous public statements about her work as an informant for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms at the racist compound known as Elohim City.

Howe was another in a parade of defense witnesses suggesting that McVeigh had many potential accomplices in the bombing besides Nichols.

Howe said that McVeigh was with two men who were investigated early on and ruled out by authorities as suspects in the bombing - German national Andreas Strassmeir and Elohim City resident Pete Ward.

McVeigh's attorneys attempted to call Howe as a defense witness earlier this year in Denver federal court. But U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch, in a ruling never made public, rejected the request, saying Howe's testimony was irrelevant.

It wasn't immediately clear Wednesday why he allowed Howe to testify on behalf of Nichols.

Matsch did, however, prevent her from telling the jury that she was an undercover federal informant.

Howe's reports to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms before the bombing alleged that Tulsa racist leader Dennis Mahon and certain Elohim City residents, including Strassmeir, had talked openly about their desire to take violent action against the government - including bombing federal installations.

However, her new claim about seeing McVeigh conflicts with information about McVeigh's whereabouts in July 1994.

At the time, McVeigh was living in Kingman, Ariz. He is known to have left for two days early that month to visit an ill grandfather in New York state.

But he returned in time to attend a child's birthday party on July 9 and was best man at the wedding of Michael and Lori Fortier in Las Vegas on July 25.

He house-sat in Kingman for the Fortiers afterward while they honeymooned. It wasn't until mid- to late August that McVeigh left Kingman and may have passed through Oklahoma on his way to Florida to visit a sister.

On Sept. 13, 1994, on his way to visit Nichols in Kansas, McVeigh spent the night in the El Siesta Motel in Vian, Okla., one of the towns closest to the secluded 480-acre Elohim City community. This is the date the government says the bombing conspiracy began.

Howe's new information also is at odds with statements by her attorney that Howe had never met McVeigh at Elohim City.

Stephen Jones, McVeigh's former attorney, also said he had never been informed that Howe claimed to have seen his client.

In reports published earlier this year by some journalists exploring conspiracy theories in the bombing, Howe was quoted as saying she'd seen McVeigh and Fortier at Elohim City in December 1994.

Prosecutor Beth Wilkinson asked why Howe didn't tell federal investigators that when she was first questioned in the week after the bombing.

Howe said she told the FBI she had only recognized McVeigh as resembling a man she saw in a photo of a Ku Klux Klan rally.

Mahon, whose White Aryan Resistance group was a target of the BATF investigation on which Howe worked, said Wednesday that Howe ``is really getting desperate. Now she's making up these statements."

``I have said hundreds of times that we need to attack the federal government, yes, but with propaganda and lawsuits."

Jones, who wanted Howe's testimony to show that McVeigh might have been a pawn in a larger conspiracy, was puzzled.

``It's not irrelevant that she was at Elohim City as a paid informant because that's what gave her the opportunity to observe what she saw," Jones said.

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Caption: Photo

Defense witness Carol Howe takes a break near the U.S. Courthouse Wednesday.  
By Essdras M Suarez / Rocky Mountain News. FILE: TRANSMITTED - SEE  
PHOTO DEPARTMENT  
Memo: THE NICHOLS TRIAL