

# Kehoe takes plea deal

BY LISA DONOVAN  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

WILMINGTON — The least of Chevie Kehoe's legal problems were resolved on Friday when he pleaded guilty to state charges stemming from a shootout with police here last year.

The plea agreement has been in the works since January, when his brother, Cheyne, was on trial on charges related to this case. It clears the way for Chevie Kehoe, 25, of Colville, Wash., to face federal murder and racketeering charges in Arkansas.

He also is suspected of having ties to white separatist groups and the deadly 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building. He addressed some of those questions posed by reporters after a hearing Friday afternoon to seal the deal on the plea agreement.

When asked about Cheyne's allegations that he was somehow involved with the bombing of an unnamed federal building, Chevie said the charge is "totally untrue."

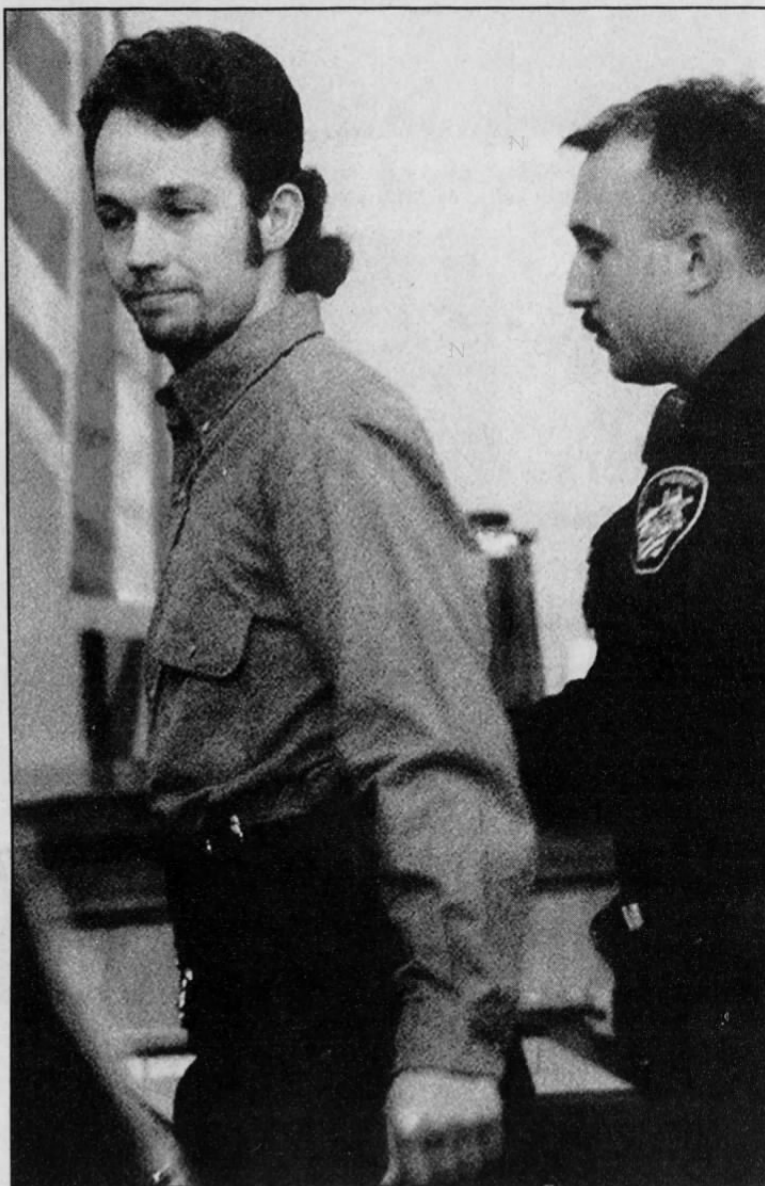
Chevie Kehoe did not talk about their relationship, but said he cared about his younger brother, 21.

"I love my brother greatly and I forgive him," the older Kehoe said. "But it's sad when a family has to be torn apart by lies."

An air of mystery has surrounded Chevie Kehoe since his arrest last June. Though he has said little publicly, a letter written last year to "Karina" — presumably his wife, Karina Gumm — is filled with anti-establishment views and with references to the shootout with police. "I would rather die on my feet than live on my knees," he wrote.

Last month, Cheyne Kehoe was found guilty of at-

(Please see KEHOE, Page B9)



The Cincinnati Enquirer/Ernest Coleman

Chevie Kehoe, 25, after pleading guilty Friday to a shooting in Clinton County. He'll be turned over to Arkansas, where he faces federal charges.

## Key developments in Cheyne and Chevie Kehoe cases

► **Feb. 15, 1997:** Police are involved in separate shootouts with the Kehoes after a traffic stop on Ohio 73 in Wilmington. Both flee on foot. A bystander sustains a minor wound. Shootouts are caught on video cameras mounted in police cruisers. Local authorities search for the Kehoe brothers, of Washington state and Montana. A nationwide manhunt ensues.

► **June 16, 1997:** Cheyne Kehoe surrenders to authorities in Colville, Wash., and tells police where Chevie is hiding.

► **June 17, 1997:** Police arrest Chevie Kehoe, 24, in Utah.

► **Dec. 12, 1997:** A federal grand jury in Little Rock, Ark.,

indicts Chevie Kehoe on murder and racketeering charges in another case.

► **Jan. 7:** Cheyne's trial for the videotaped shootouts begins in the Clinton County courtroom of Judge William McCracken.

► **Jan. 13:** Jurors find Cheyne Kehoe, 21, guilty of two counts of felonious assault, one count of attempted murder for shooting at Deputy Robert Gates, and one count of carrying a concealed weapon. The jury acquits him of a second attempted-murder charge in connection with Trooper J. Harold Harker.

► **Jan. 20:** Judge McCracken sentences Cheyne to 24

years. Afterward, Cheyne tells reporters he knew his older brother was involved in the bombing of a federal building, but refuses to elaborate.

► **Feb. 12:** Chevie's attorney asks Judge McCracken to move Chevie's trial out of Clinton County or to delay it because of massive publicity.

► **Feb. 13:** Judge McCracken rules Chevie's case would remain in Clinton County. A Feb. 23 trial date is set.

► **Feb. 20:** Chevie Kehoe pleads guilty to felonious assault, attempted murder and carrying a concealed weapon. Sentencing is deferred.

— Christine Wolff

# Kehoe: Pleads guilty to shooting at police

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1

tempted murder and felonious assault on charges he, too, shot at police in Wilmington; he was sentenced to 24 years in prison.

The government offered the younger Kehoe a deal similar to Chevie's, but Cheyne rejected it.

By entering a plea agreement, the older Kehoe may have sliced his sentence in half. County Prosecutor William Peelle said he'll recommend Mr. Kehoe serve only 20 years — half of what he might have served had the case gone to trial and a jury found him guilty on all 11 charges.

The terms call for Chevie to plead guilty to the attempted murder of Wilmington Police Officer Rick Wood, a charge that includes gun specifications; felonious assault of a passerby slightly injured in the gunbattle; and carrying a concealed weapon. In exchange, the government dropped the remaining eight charges.

When Judge William McCracken asked him to state his plea to one of the charges, Mr. Kehoe replied: "Guilty, to avoid the possible consequences of a trial by jury."

Mr. Kehoe agreed to the deal because, in part, he was concerned about receiving a fair trial in Wilmington, citing the media attention to the case.

Kort Gatterdam, an assistant public defender representing Mr. Kehoe, unsuccessfully argued to get the trial moved to another jurisdiction, or at least delayed because of the publicity.

It all began with what appeared to be a simple traffic stop on the outskirts of Wilmington on Feb. 15, 1997. An Ohio State Highway Patrol trooper pulled the Kehoes over be-

cause the tags on their 1977 blue Chevrolet Suburban had expired.

With the video camera rolling inside the trooper's cruiser, the routine stop became confrontational. Younger brother Cheyne hopped out of the Suburban, began firing at the trooper and a Clinton County sheriff's deputy. Cheyne took off on foot and Chevie, who didn't draw a weapon, drove off.

Minutes later and a few miles away, shots rang out. Chevie Kehoe was firing at Wilmington police. Again, a video camera was rolling from inside the police car, but authorities say when Mr. Kehoe shot at them the bullet shattered the window and blocked the view.

After the brothers were able to elude arrest, a nationwide manhunt was launched, and for months the videotape of the wild shootout aired nationwide on television.

Eventually Cheyne turned himself in and told authorities where they could find his brother, who also was wanted for questioning in the 1996 slayings of Arkansas gun dealer William Mueller and two family members.

Within weeks, Mr. Kehoe will be turned over to authorities in Little Rock, Ark., to await trial on federal charges stemming from the slayings of the Mueller family.

Once the Arkansas case concludes, which some officials say could take up to a year, Chevie Kehoe will be returned to Ohio for sentencing on charges here. Mr. Kehoe could face the death penalty if convicted in Arkansas, but if sentenced to a prison term in Arkansas he would serve the time concurrently with the Ohio sentence.