

Separatist Gets No Immunity for Testimony on Bombing

Diana Baldwin, Judy Kuhlman | The Oklahoman | March 13th, 1998

An Oklahoma County judge who presides over the county grand jury refused to grant immunity to a White Aryan Resistance leader for his testimony Thursday.

Dennis Mahon, 47, of Tulsa made his second appearance before the grand jury investigating conspiracy theories in the Oklahoma City bombing.

Two earlier grand jury witnesses, Carol Howe and David Snider, said they believe Mahon was involved in the April 19, 1995, truck bomb explosion that resulted in 168 deaths.

Mahon has denied any involvement in the bombing. Howe, a former federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms informant, has said she heard Mahon and Andreas Strassmeir, a German national, talking about blowing up federal buildings.

The three knew each other from Elohim City, a white separatist community in eastern Oklahoma where Strassmeir stayed at one time. Mahon associated with Elohim City residents.

Snider, 37, a Bricktown warehouse worker, said he saw convicted bomber Timothy McVeigh and a man he identified as Mahon in a Ryder truck in Bricktown 30 minutes before the bombing.

Rep. Charles Key, R-Oklahoma City, and the late Glenn Wilburn, who lost two grandchildren in the bombing, spearheaded the petition drive to call the grand jury.

McVeigh, 29, was sentenced to die last summer. His co-conspirator, Terry Nichols, 42, is awaiting sentencing.

Key wants the grand jury to indict Mahon, a former Ku Klux Klan leader and operator of Dial-a-Racist hot line. Federal prosecutors have insisted no one other than McVeigh and Nichols were involved in the bombing.

The government has said agents could not act on Howe's information because it was not specific enough.

Mahon was a Republican candidate for Tulsa mayor who lost in the February primary election.

He called his second grand jury subpoena retaliation.

"Everyone is saying this is punishment, man, two days after the election. Everybody knows this is retaliation," Mahon told The Oklahoman in an interview.

On July 16, Mahon said he took the Fifth Amendment when he was questioned by the grand jury. He said he asked the prosecutors about being granted immunity from both state and federal prosecution.

Mahon said he was again going to evoke the Fifth Amendment when he returned to testify Thursday.

"I am not going to tell them diddly-squat unless they give me immunity," Mahon said.

District Judge Bill Burkett left his court chambers at 321 Park Ave. and went to the Oklahoma County jail at 201 N Shartel, where the grand jury has been meeting since June 30.

The judge held a 45-minute hearing behind closed doors with jurors, prosecutors advising the grand jury, Mahon and his attorney, Mack Braly of Broken Arrow.

After the immunity hearing, Mahon spent 30 minutes with jurors.

First Assistant District Attorney Pat Morgan said he was not granted immunity. Morgan refused to say if Mahon answered the grand jurors' questions.

"That happened in the grand jury room," Morgan said. "I can't comment on that."

Mahon and his attorney refused to answer reporters' questions as they left the jail.

Other witnesses testifying Thursday were Tamara Winkler, a Southwestern Bell Telephone manager, and Larry Dellinger, the district attorney's investigator assigned to the grand jury.

Winkler, manager of corporate securities, said she brought telephone records for the grand jury to examine.

Key gave the grand jury what he believes is a copy of records showing calls made to Michael Fortier's home in Kingman, Ariz., from a former resident of the Regency Tower apartments.

The Regency Tower is a block west of the bombing site. Fortier admitted he failed to notify the government about the bombing and then lied to investigators about it.

Fortier became a government witness after pleading guilty to firearms violations and testified in the trials of McVeigh and Nichols.

Dellinger spent about 30 minutes with the grand jury. He has testified at least five times.

The grand jury will reconvene at 9 a.m. today. BIOG: NAME: UPD:

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