

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

FBI: Aryan Gang Armed By Kehoes Used Weapons In String Of 22 Midwest Bank Robberies

March 22nd, 1998

Bill Morlin, Staff writer

A terrorist gang responsible for 22 bank robberies obtained firearms from accused murderer Chevie Kehoe and his father, Kirby Kehoe.

Aryan Republican Army members used guns supplied by the Kehoes in some of the Midwest bank robberies, which netted \$250,000, the FBI confirms.

Agents aren't saying if the weapons were among those stolen from murdered Arkansas gun dealer William Mueller.

Firearms and military surplus supplies taken from Mueller were brought to Spokane by the Kehoes and stored at the Shadows Motel & RV Park, court records say.

At the same time, authorities say, the Aryan Republican Army used bank robbery money to record an anti-Semitic skinhead rock music CD.

Chevie Kehoe was a friend of the skinheads who recorded the CD, their associates claim. The CD was dedicated to Vicki and Sam Weaver, who were killed in the Ruby Ridge siege, and an Arkansas racist executed for murder.

The Kehoes met Aryan Republican Army members at Elohim City, a white supremacy-survivalist compound in eastern Oklahoma.

Chevie Kehoe and at least two members of the Aryan Republican Army - known as the ARA - also visited the Aryan Nations compound in North Idaho between 1993 and 1996.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Schwartz, who prosecuted ARA members for bank robberies staged between 1994 and 1996, said last week he just learned of the group's connection with the Kehoes.

"I can confirm that members of the Aryan Republican Army did get firearms from the Kehoes," said Schwartz, of Philadelphia.

Chevie Kehoe, Faron Lovelace and skinhead Danny Lee are accused in a federal racketeering indictment of forming their own group, the Aryan Peoples Republic, after meeting at Elohim City.

Both the Kehoe group and the ARA were caught with clothing and badges that would allow members to impersonate FBI agents or federal marshals. Both groups also possessed hand grenades and machine guns for their planned overthrow of the government, authorities say.

Chevie Kehoe, Lovelace and Lee await trial in Arkansas for robbing and murdering the Arkansas gun dealer and his family on Jan. 11, 1996, and transporting stolen firearms to Spokane.

Many of the stolen guns were traded or sold at gun shows throughout the United States.

The case is being investigated by agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms.

ATF investigators and other officials are prohibited by a judge's gag order from discussing the case or Kehoe connections with the Aryan Republican Army.

Kirby Kehoe's attorney, Mark Casey of Spokane, said he hasn't seen anything connecting his client to the ARA.

"I have never heard that group mentioned in connection with Kirby Kehoe, but I haven't asked him about it, either," Casey said. He also said he hadn't heard Elohim City mentioned.

Kirby Kehoe is charged with possessing a handgun stolen from the Arkansas gun dealer and with possessing an illegal machine gun.

Additional charges are expected next week when his case goes before a grand jury in Spokane.

Casey described Kirby Kehoe as a law-abiding man "who wants to lead a simple life and be left alone by authorities."

Chevie Kehoe's attorneys, John Wesley Hall and Mark Hampton, of Little Rock, Ark., did not return telephone calls.

Interest in Chevie Kehoe intensified last weekend when he was accused by his brother, Cheyne Kehoe, of bombing Spokane's City Hall in April 1996. Cheyne

Kehoe also claims his brother was involved in “the bombing of a federal building.”

Chevie Kehoe, in prison for shooting at Ohio police, says his brother is lying.

The link between the Aryan Republican Army’s six members and the Kehoe family wasn’t confirmed until a few weeks ago, as the ARA members awaited sentencing.

The lead came after a Spokane skinhead told The Spokesman-Review that Chevie Kehoe was a friend of ARA members who produced the skinhead music CD.

Produced by “White Terror Productions,” the CD is dedicated to Sam and Vicki Weaver, and Richard Wayne Snell.

Snell was convicted of two racial murders before being executed in Arkansas on April 19, 1995, the same day Timothy McVeigh bombed the federal building in Oklahoma, claiming 168 lives.

Some people, including a few federal investigators, believe Snell’s execution triggered the conspiracy to blow up the federal building.

Snell, viewed as a martyr for the white supremacy movement, is buried at Elohim City.

An FBI agent familiar with the ARA case was asked by a reporter in January about the source of weapons used by the Aryan Republican Army.

ARA members who cooperated with the FBI subsequently confirmed the connection, federal sources said.

“We seized an awful lot of guns from these people and we’re still not certain where they all came from,” U.S. Attorney Schwartz said.

Kevin McCarthy got a Glock .45-caliber handgun from Kirby Kehoe, and the weapon was used in the bank robberies, he said.

Another Justice Department source said the gun was used in 1995 bank robberies by the ARA in Bridgetown, Mo., Madison, Wis., and Sylvania, Ohio.

A second .45-caliber pistol once owned by Kirby Kehoe also was traded to McCarthy, who later traded it to Mark Thomas, the East Coast leader for Aryan Nations.

Michael Brescia, another Aryan Republican Army member, also got firearms from the Kehoes, the Justice Department source said.

Kirby and Chevie Kehoe and their families lived in Colville, Spokane and Yaak, Mont., but they also traveled frequently to Oklahoma and Arkansas and often stayed at Elohim City.

“They armed a whole lot of people down there at Elohim City,” said a federal agent.

The half-dozen members of the Aryan Republican Army wanted to trigger a race war and overthrow the government.

They paid for their revolution with the bank robberies, beginning in January 1994, and quickly rose to the top of the FBI’s domestic terrorism list.

ARA members robbed 22 banks in nine states before being arrested in 1996.

Federal investigators now say both the Aryan Republican Army and the Aryan Peoples Republic were following a model established more than a decade ago by Robert J. Mathews.

Mathews, of Metaline Falls, Wash., attended the Aryan Nations, then moved on to form a band of neo-Nazi revolutionaries he called The Order.

The group robbed armored cars, printed counterfeit money, committed murders and carried out bombings in the mid-1980s, before Mathews was killed in a shootout with the FBI. The Order followed a story line in the novel “Turner Dairies.”

Authorities say McVeigh followed the same book in planning the Oklahoma City bombing.

But The Order’s large size eventually contributed to its undoing.

That taught successor groups like the Aryan Republican Army to remain smaller, with usually no more than a half-dozen members. That makes law enforcement infiltration more difficult.

“All this stuff comes back to Bob Mathews and The Order,” Schwartz said.

, DataTimes ILLUSTRATION: 8 Photos (2 Color)

MEMO: This sidebar appeared with the story:

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Peter K. Langan, 39, Columbus, Ohio, faces 55 years in prison for bank robberies and assaulting federal offices. Langan was one of the group's founders.

Richard L. Guthrie, 38, who also lived in Columbus, pleaded guilty to 19 of the bank robberies and cooperated with the FBI before committing suicide in his jail cell in July 1996. Guthrie, who spent time at the Aryan Nations compound, also was one of the group's founders.

Mark W. Thomas, 47, of Berks County, Pa., was the Pennsylvania state leader for the Aryan Nations. He recruited Scott Stedeford, Michael Brescia and Kevin McCarthy to join the Aryan Republican Army. Thomas was sentenced Thursday to eight years in prison.

Scott A. Stedeford, 29, of Ardmore, Pa., was recruited for the ARA by Thomas. After robbing banks, Stedeford recorded an anti-Semitic skinhead music CD. He will serve 30 years in prison for bank robberies.

Michael W. Brescia, 25, of Andorra, Pa., also was recruited for the ARA by Thomas. He lived at Elohim City, where he and other ARA members met the Kehoes. He was sentenced to 57 months in prison.

Kevin W. McCarthy, 20, of Bustleton, Pa., also was recruited for the ARA by Thomas and went to Elohim City. He was sentenced last week to five years in prison.

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