

TAPE: 236

[BARS: [236]01:00:06]

B-ROLL: [236]01:00:29

WIDE SHOT OF RIVER AND BRIDGE

[236]01:04:06

GENE WIRGES

Uh, my name is Gene Wirges and I live at Little Rock, Arkansas.

[236]01:04:10

INTERVIEWER

Can you spell your name for us, Gene?

[236]01:04:11

GENE WIRGES

Uh, that's Gene, G-E-N-E and the last name is Wirges, W-I-R-G-E-S. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:05:38

INTERVIEWER

Now, when your meeting took place, I guess, do you know the exact date in '94? Do you know the month?

[236]01:05:45

GENE WIRGES

[OVERLAPPING] Uh, probably, it may be in that story right there, but I don't, I don't recall off the top of my head. It was in November. In November. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE] [TECHNICAL]

[236]01:06:30

INTERVIEWER

Now, go ahead and tell us your story.

[236]01:06:33

GENE WIRGES

Well, I had met, uh, uh, Bill Mueller and his wife, Nancy, at a gun show at the, uh, at a mall at the edge of Little Rock. And, it was in the fall of '94. And, late fall of '94. And, at that time, he was aware, a friend introduced me to Bill and Nancy and Bill was very upset about some of the problems that he was having at the show. And he was aware that I did have, since I had a camera with me and was making pictures, he was aware that I did have a newspaper, and he asked me if I might could help him with his problem.

[236]01:07:07

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

He went on to describe that problem as being that he was being told by, uh, ATF officials who attend these shows that it was not acceptable for him to be selling anti-Clinton materials in his booth. He took the position that he could sell, that he paid for his booth and he could sell whatever he wanted to in that booth. At any rate, uh, he proceeded to ask if I would help him with this problem and he, then, later sent me a package of materials, including letters from the congressman and also from the, uh, director of the ATF, BATF, I think it is.

[236]01:07:53

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

And, at this time, uh, I was advised, within days of receiving this package of materials from the Muellers, I was advised by his partner that he had disappeared. Uh, I had no idea that he would wind up at a place like this. But, he did and it was months later when their bodies were

discovered. Uh, Bill and his wife Nancy and her daughter were all discovered in this [SOUNDS LIKE] bayou.

[236]01:08:20

INTERVIEWER

Okay. At the gun show, go ahead now and tell us the story about, that he was concerned about two particular individuals.

[236]01:08:28

GENE WIRGES

That is true. Not only the ATF had been there, but he asked me, and, and I asked him to kind of identify . . . [TECHNICAL]

[236]01:09:33

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Uh, it's true. Bill was very concerned, not only because the ATF officials had been to him complaining about what he was selling in his booth, but he had also been, uh, had two other people come to his booth and he was very concerned about them. And he asked me if I could help. I asked if he could identify them. He had a little notebook that he kept the names in and he gave them to me and they were Andy Strasmeyer [SP?] and, uh, [SOUNDS LIKE] Brascia, who turned out to be very much hooked up in the, uh, Oklahoma City Bombing investigation and all that sort of thing.

[236]01:10:08

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

His idea, his thought was, at the time, Bill's thought was that these people both worked with and for ATF. Now, whether that's true, I don't know. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:11:00

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Uh, it's also very true that Bill and Nancy were extremely concerned about their own safety because they considered both of these men, who had come to their booth and told them they were going to have to get these things out of the booth, that they could not sell that in his thing, [STAMMERS] he, they definitely feared for their safety. Which is why he sent me information. It's why he had contacted his congressman and why he had the letter from the BATF man. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:12:00

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Uh, I had met Bill at a gun show at the edge of Little Rock. And, it was late fall of 1994. A friend of mine, who has a gun shop, asked me to attend the show. And, when I did go to the show, he introduced me to Bill. It later turned out, I didn't know it at the time, but it turned out that Bill was a partner of him in these gun shows. Uh, that's when I began talking to Bill and I interviewed him. I probably made, in fact, I made his picture.

[236]01:12:30

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

I had a, uh, periodical, a, uh, small newspaper that I was publishing. And he knew that. And that's why he was asking me to help him. And that's why I interviewed him. I'm sure that that was the last interview and the last picture that was ever made of him.

[236]01:12:45

INTERVIEWER

Okay, now, if you could, describe that his, his business at gun shows was somewhat different than others. It, he didn't sell firearms.

[236]01:12:56

GENE WIRGES

That's true. At, uh, his business at the gun shows was different than probably 99 percent of the other, uh, booth operators. And that they sold guns and, uh, uh, all sorts of weapons and ammunition and so on. Whereas, he sold mostly tapes and periodicals and, uh, books and things of that nature, uh, bumper stickers, things of that nature. And, so, he had, in fact, he had, at one time, sold guns, but he had gotten out of the gun business before I met him.

[236]01:13:28

INTERVIEWER

And, if you could, describe, uh, the, the general nature of the material that he was selling.

[236]01:13:36

GENE WIRGES

Um, it ranged from one end of the spectrum to the other. There was some [CAR NOISE] anti-Clinton things, as, as there were almost everywhere you could find anti-Clinton bumper stickers and things of that nature. It wasn't any worse than what you could find anywhere else, but they just didn't want him selling it at the gun shows. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:14:00

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Uh, Bill's booth was different than most booths at the show, where they have, uh, guns, uh, all sorts of weapons and, uh, equipment, uh, ammunition and things of that nature. Uh, he didn't. He had, uh, bumper stickers and periodicals and tapes, things of that nature. And, it's true that a good portion of them, I'd say maybe a third of what was at his booth was anti-Clinton, but the rest of it was just kind of average.

[236]01:14:32

INTERVIEWER

Okay. Now, could you tell us the, Michael Brascia [SP?]

[236]01:14:36

GENE WIRGES

Oh, yeah.

[236]01:14:37

INTERVIEWER

Andy Strasmeyer. Two men who concerned him.

[236]01:14:40

GENE WIRGES

Yeah. The two, these two men, he was particularly concerned about two men who were not, as far as he knew, connected with the ATF. And, yet, he believed they were working hand-in-glove with the ATF, perhaps, as agents for them. And that was Andy Brascia and Michael, I mean, Andy . . . [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE] [TECHNICAL]

[236]01:16:15

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

It's true, of course, that, uh, Bill's booth was different than almost all the other booths at the show. They sold guns and flack jackets and ammunition and all sorts of things that mostly, even some explosives. Uh, Bill's booth, on the other hand, was almost, uh, stand-out, by itself, where he sold, uh, periodicals, uh, bumper stickers, a few things like tapes, a few things like that. And, it's true, that about a third of his booth, I'd estimate about a third, was what I would call anti-Clinton material.

[236]01:16:53

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Uh, on the other hand, he felt that he had the right to sell that since he was paying for his booth space. Now, he was very concerned about two people who had come separate from the ATF agents. And these two people were Andy Strasmeyer and Michael Brascia. Now, when he first

told me about them, he just said, can you find out about these people? But, he hadn't given me their names. And I said, well, I might, if [STAMMERS] if you have taken down their names. It turned out, he did.

f x
[236]01:17:24

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Nancy went and got a small notebook and I copied the names out of their small notebook and it was [STAMMERS] Strasmeyer and Brascia. They were extremely concerned because Bill had already been robbed. His place had been robbed once. And he was extremely concerned and he considered these, both of these people very dangerous.

[236]01:17:44

INTERVIEWER

Now tell us how he had been confronted by them, earlier that year, recently or something. He, that's what led him to write down their names.

[236]01:17:53

GENE WIRGES

Yes, well, his, uh, yeah [STAMMERS] [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:18:10

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

His, his concern over Strasmeyer and Brascia was obviously related to the fact he had been robbed. And the fact that they came to him at his booth and presented basically the same reasons why he couldn't sell this anti-Clinton material as the ATF agents. That's why he connected them to the ATF. And that was his interest and that's what he wanted to know, were they connected with ATF?

[236]01:18:36

INTERVIEWER

Did he tell you that had been at a Fort Smith show? Do, do you remember in detail he, that this, where this happened or when? Okay. Um, now let's do. Start from the beginning and tell the story about, that you have a small periodical you publish and you went to a gun show, you met he and his wife and, uh, they allowed you to take a picture.

[236]01:19:03

GENE WIRGES

Okay. I, of course, at that particular time, was publishing a small periodical, a weekly paper. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:19:17

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Uh, in the fall of 1995, I was publishing a small, weekly paper and was doing a lot of investigating into things that I considered wrong in government. And a friend of mine, who had helped me on some of the stories had asked me to attend a gun show where he was, had a booth. He has a gun shop. I went to the show and he introduced me to what turned out to be his partner, Bill Mueller and Bill's wife, Nancy. And, after talking to them, I made their pictures and [STAMMERS] I also interviewed them.

[236]01:19:56

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

This was probably the last pictures, picture and interview that Bill and Nancy were ever involved in because very shortly after that they wound up, you know, victims here at Illinois Bayou. So, uh, that's basically how I came to meet them at the show and that's how I, I got into the discussion with them about their problems.

[236]01:20:19

INTERVIEWER

As you think about it now, um, how, how did you, tell us now about how you heard about their disappearance and then later how the fisherman finds them, so that we can maybe fold that into the story and why we're here.

[236]01:20:32

GENE WIRGES

[OVERLAPPING] Yes. Uh, Bill's partner, the one who asked me to come to the gun show, the one who introduced me to Bill, called me. Uh, he stayed in fairly close touch with me and he called me, oh, within several weeks after that first meeting and asked me if I could help him, that Bill had disappeared. And I asked him, what did he mean, he disappeared? You know, it didn't make sense to me until he said, I don't know, but they're, they was, he, he was supposed to go to a show and they never showed up at the show and he and I worked together, I've talked to the people at the show.

[236]01:21:09

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

So, uh, he's just simply disappeared and I was hoping maybe you could help me. Well, I did work with him and, uh, um, for [STAMMERS] for whatever good it did. We didn't find him. Later, of course, Bill and his wife and her daughter were found here in, dumped in the river and dead. [NON-

INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:22:02

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Uh, Bill was particularly concerned about two people . . . [TECHNICAL]

[236]01:22:29

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Bill was particularly concerned about two people who had come to his booth. This was after the ATF had come and told him to get that anti-Clinton stuff out of there. He was particularly concerned. These two men, he asked me to help him in connection with these two men as well as with his general problem. I asked him if he could identify him and he said, I wrote their names down. He had Nancy go find his little pad, writing pad, and sure enough, he did have them written down. Their names were Andy Strasmeyer and Michael Brascia.

[236]01:23:03

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

He was particularly concerned because he had, he had already been robbed, he was paranoid about, just about general safety. And he figured, he, he'd figured that these people could do him harm and his family and he was worried to death about it. Uh, that's why he did proceed, talked to his congressman. He finally got a letter back from ATF. And he [STAMMERS] he sent me a package of a, a pretty good group of this, these things that he was working on. And, about, within days of receiving the package from the Muellers, they disappeared.

[236]01:23:43

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Incidentally, that was four years ago today that they had disappeared. And, of course, it was, uh, no reason, at that time, to believe that they were going to wind up here in the Illinois Bayou.

[236]01:23:53

INTERVIEWER

Okay. Tell us how you heard about it. Those, a few days, uh, shortly after that, uh, some weeks later, after the gun show meeting, you got a call from his partner.

[236]01:24:04**GENE WIRGES**

Oh, yeah. Well, you mean about him being missing? Yeah. How I learned, I learned that he was missing from his partner. The same one who had asked me to attend the show and the same one who had introduced me to Bill. And, within weeks, three or four weeks after that first show, uh, he called me and asked me would I help him find Bill because Bill was missing. And he went on to point out that Bill was supposed to attend a show, one gun show while he attended one in South Arkansas. And Bill never showed up at that show. So, that was the period in which Bill turned up missing.

[236]01:24:42**INTERVIEWER**

And then, how did you hear about him winding up here?

[236]01:24:46**GENE WIRGES**

I, I think I heard from, about this in the media. I don't think, I was not directly connected, I had talked with the Sheriff's office up here. Uh, I had talked to the, um, uh, the state police, everybody who was anywhere close to the subject at all. And, uh, I believe that I heard as, my recollection is I heard that in the media, that their bodies had been found.

[236]01:25:07**INTERVIEWER**

Okay, why don't you kind of pretend like you're the news man here and tell us what you think happened, that, that a vehicle pulled up and some men threw their bodies off this bridge.

[236]01:25:17**GENE WIRGES**

Yes. I think, there's a bridge directly behind me here. You know, I think that's what happened. Possibly in the night hours when it was dark and they could get away with it. I think they had the bodies secured in the truck, in the, in the, uh, vehicle and they pulled up, threw the bodies off and took off. And, of course, they had large rocks attached to them and all that sort of thing.

[236]01:25:40**INTERVIEWER**

And then how did they, how were the bodies later discovered?

[236]01:25:44**GENE WIRGES**

Uh, a woman and her husband, as I understand it, were fishing. And they were in a boat, and they were fishing. And she hooked something and it turned out it was a foot. And so that's, that led to a great deal more, uh, uh, discovery on their part. They brought divers out and brought up what they could. [TECHNICAL]

[236]01:26:15**INTERVIEWER**

Do you know of any connection made between Oklahoma City and the Muellers? In other words, do you know whether the Muellers started talking about other players that, that were involved in the bombing at Oklahoma City or anything like that?

[236]01:26:31**GENE WIRGES**

Well, the Muellers knew a lot of the people, for example, that went to [SOUNDS LIKE] Elohem City [SP?] in Oklahoma. Uh, they were very familiar, attended a lot of meetings, where a lot of these, uh, I guess you'd call them radicals, uh, were. And, uh, certainly that's one of the descriptions. And, so he was, he was certainly familiar with them. I, I would not, I would hesitate to say he was connected with them. But, I think he'd met a lot of them at the [STAMMERS] these people hang out at the gun shows a lot. So.

[236]01:27:03

INTERVIEWER

And, and why was he particularly concerned about Andy Strasmeyer and Michael Brascia, do you think?

[236]01:27:08

GENE WIRGES

Uh, they'd been pretty rough with him about telling, you know, you're going to get that out of here is, uh, more or less, get it out or else. And he was very concerned about what that or else might be. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE] [TECHNICAL]

[236]01:27:59

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

One of the rumors that floated around was that Bill, who did, who was familiar with a lot of these people [STAMMERS] players or people who were believed to be players in the Oklahoma City Bombing. And that, uh, Bill knew a lot more than people realized he did and may have opened his mouth maybe once too many times. That's just a possibility. But, that certainly was one of the rumors and, uh, them being killed certainly makes it a little more likely.

[236]01:28:30

INTERVIEWER

The gruesome nature of the killing, if you could get into that, it was, uh, more of an, it was much an assassination as anything.

[236]01:28:37

GENE WIRGES

Oh, I would, yes. [STAMMERS] The murders of the Muellers were not just simply murders. They, they came in, in the head, or under the category of an assassination type thing, they were killed very brutally. They had this, uh, these sacks put over their heads, uh, they were brought out here and dumped in the river. It was a, it's a pretty brutal situation and, and, uh, certainly could fit under the word assassination. [TECHNICAL]

[236]01:29:24

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

Some of the characters he knew, of course, did included one who has been connected to the Oklahoma City Bombing and, and some other very desperate type situations. And that's Dennis Mayhon [SP?] Mayhon was connected to the, uh, Robert Joce [SP?] compound up in Missouri, [SOUNDS LIKE] Macdonald County, Missouri. Uh, he, he's just known for being involved just in some very, very tough situations. And, of course, Bill knew Mayhon. But, now, that doesn't mean that he was a hand-in-glove partner with him.

[236]01:30:09

INTERVIEWER

If you can, from your own personal knowledge, or of what you've read, mention that his wife had grown up in a Christian Identity environment, compound, whatever.

[236]01:30:30

GENE WIRGES

Bill's wife, Nancy, did, herself, grow up in a Christian Identity environment. And, consequently, there was no trouble for her to go along in, with the idea that the government might be giving them troubles. Because that's one of the things that the Christian Identity people believe. That, uh, you know, if there's a problem it, it, generally you can trace it to the government. [NON-INTERVIEW DIALOGUE]

[236]01:31:14

GENE WIRGES

Uh, Bill, who had expressed concern over being told he was no longer going to be able to sell these materials at the shows by the ATF, uh, also expressed very serious concern about two other

individuals who had come to the, to his booth and basically told him the very same thing the ATF people told him. Uh, he also, he asked me if I could help him in that sense and I said, well, not unless you've got their names and I, I don't know whether I can help you, but I got to have some names to have a starting place.

[236]01:31:48

GENE WIRGES (CONTINUED)

He had his wife, Nancy, go get a small, uh, tablet that he kept and he had written down their names. And the names Andy Strasmeyer and Michael Brascia. And, of course, they both had been connected to the Oklahoma City Bombing and many other things.

[END OF TAPE: [236]01:32:06]