

Morris Dees had informant at Elohim City before OKC Bombing

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The McCurtain Daily Gazette has obtained an unclassified copy of a memorandum marked From the Director of the FBI containing several new facts that could impact the upcoming state murder trial of Terry Nichols, scheduled to begin March 1 in McAlester.

The electronic message was sent to the OKBOMB investigation task force and a select group of FBI offices around the nation some eight months after the 1995 federal building bombing in Oklahoma City left 168 dead.

The potentially explosive contents of the teletype, among other things, exposes an informant operation being conducted by nationally known civil rights lawyer Morris Dees through his organization the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC).

Exposed for the first time, the FBI acknowledged the SPLC was engaged in an undercover role where they monitored subjects for the FBI believed to be linked to executed bomber Timothy McVeigh, the white supremacist compound at Elohim City and the mysterious German national Andreas Carl Strassmeir.

Dated Jan. 4, 1996, the four-page cable was drafted and issued under the authority of FBI director Louis Freeh and is heavily redacted (portions blacked out).

Despite these redactions, the document clearly describes individuals the FBI believed were associated with the OKBOMB and BOMBROB cases – two high profile domestic terrorism cases the FBI was investigating as possibly connected.

Many of the details in this potentially explosive document have never been made public before.

The OKBOMB case focused several hundred FBI agents on the truck bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995.

The FBI's BOMBROB investigation was much smaller. It involved a wide-ranging search for a group of neo-Nazi bank robbers in the mid-1990s whose stated goal was the overthrow of the U.S. government through violence.

Only days after the Jan. 4, 1996, cable was sent, the first two arrests were made in the BOMBROB case. Within 13 months of the electronic message, four more persons were jailed in connection with 22 bank robberies the radical rightwing group participated in across seven Midwestern states.

Each of the six individuals arrested in the BOMBROB case had ties to Elohim City, a Christian Identity paramilitary training camp near Muldrow.

Only two persons have ever been charged in the Oklahoma City bombing – the 20th Century's most brutal act of domestic terrorism that left 149 adults and 19 children dead.

In 1997, McVeigh was found guilty and executed in 2001 for his role in the crime.

Nichols, McVeigh's co-conspirator, is serving a life sentence handed down by a federal judge in 1998.

It is widely believed that when Nichols goes on trial in McAlester – facing an additional 161-counts of first-degree murder – his lawyers will point the finger at other conspirators who they believe can be linked to McVeigh and the bombing in Oklahoma City conspiracy.

Director warns of plan for Strassmeir's escape In the Jan. 4, 1996, document from the director, sketchy details of a plan are provided regarding an escape by a key subject wanted for questioning in the OKBOMB case. Facts would later emerge that this key individual also roomed with several members of the bank robbery gang rounded-up during the BOMBROB investigation.

Although his name was redacted, the key subject in the electronic message was Andreas Carl Strassmeir. He was a person the FBI officially listed as "possibly armed and may be dangerous" and who the director expected to cross the Mexican border "in the near future."

Inexplicably, none of the offices that received this memo were in the state of Texas where Strassmeir had just arrived and was expected to make his escape across the Mexican border.

Other documents obtained by this newspaper indicate Strassmeir entered Mexico within a very short time of the director's statements predicting the move. Strassmeir made his way to Germany and the safety of his politically connected family in Berlin.

Equally difficult to understand, FBI agents apparently did not go to a residence in North Carolina noted in the electronic message where Strassmeir had been staying with a friend prior to his escape from the U.S.

This newspaper first reported that Strassmeir had been singled out for arrest by the ATF in early 1995, but those plans were thwarted by the Oklahoma City FBI office.

The Tulsa ATF office sought an arrest warrant in early 1995 for Strassmeir after an informant, Carol E. Howe, told them about a plot at Elohim City to bomb federal installations, commit mass shootings and kill large numbers of Americans.

Ms. Howe identified Strassmeir as one of the ringleaders in the plot.

Tulsa ATF officials were able to determine that the heavily armed German national was an illegal overstay on his travel visa, therefore subject to arrest on a host of charges.

However, last minute efforts by then-FBI special agent in charge of the Oklahoma City field office, Bob Ricks, scrubbed plans for Strassmeir's arrest when the FBI agent contacted U.S. Attorney Steve Lewis in Tulsa and complained about the ATF plan to raid Elohim City.

When this newspaper discovered documents confirming the FBI interdiction, Ricks sought to explain his actions by saying he successfully lobbied against Strassmeir's arrest in late February of 1995 because he wanted to avoid another Waco-style disaster by the ATF.

Months after the Oklahoma bombing, Strassmeir fled Elohim City and began hiding in Black Mountain, North Carolina. after this newspaper discovered and reported on a phone call to Elohim City from McVeigh was linked to him.

Nichols not a conspirator? Also contained in the four-page document is a remarkable statement that raises doubts about the FBI's belief that Nichols was a conspirator in the OKBOMB case.

Regarding this revelation, the memo again describes the telephone call widely believed to have been made by McVeigh to Elohim City where Strassmeir and several members of a bank robbery gang were living on April 5, 1995.

The FBI director makes the following observation:

“Prior OKBOMB investigation determined that (name redacted) had placed a telephone call to (name redacted) on 4/5/95 a day that he was believed to have been attempting to recruit a second conspirator to assist in the OKBOMB attack.”(Emphasis added)

Thus, a plain reading of the Jan. 4, 1996, memo suggests the FBI director did not believe a second conspirator in the bombing existed on April 5, 1995 – an embarrassing admission, indeed, considering that during two trials in 1997, federal prosecutors argued that Nichols was deeply involved in the bomb plot dating back to Sept. of 1994.

Morris Dees’ informant? Also disclosed for the first time are references by the FBI director to an informant working for the Birmingham, Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), headed by civil right’s attorney Morris Dees and who was present at Elohim City in the critical hours leading up to the bombing in Oklahoma City.

Referring to a telephone call on April 17, 1995 (alleged to have been from McVeigh), the memo states: “(Name redacted) telephone call from (name redacted) on or about 4/17/95, two days prior to the OKBOMB attack, when (name redacted) of the SPLC, was in the white supremacist compound at (redacted), Oklahoma, notes the director. (Emphasis added)

References to an informant working for the SPLC at Elohim City on the eve of the Oklahoma City bombing raises serious questions as to what the SPLC might know about McVeigh’s activities during the final hours before the fuse was lit in Oklahoma City – but which the SPLC has failed to disclose publicly.

Questioned during a press conference at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant recently, Dees confirmed someone from his organization was inside the white supremacist compound at Elohim City on April 17, 1995.

“If I told you what we were doing there, I would have to kill you,” Dees replied when pressed to explain what this person was doing at a terrorist training camp.

Dees did acknowledge that his information network long ago established that McVeigh had been to Elohim City before the bombing.

“But we didn’t have him on our radar screen until he was arrested,” Dees said.

Dees has written a number of books and articles about the militia movement in this country.

Many have criticized Dees’ attacks on right-wing militias and gun owners in the U.S. as inaccurate, exploitive and designed to get donations to his tax-exempt foundation, which receives substantial contributions each year.

The director’s electronic message also alludes to a person at the Oklahoma white supremacist compound described by the FBI head as a subject with an allegedly, “.... lengthy relationship with one of the two indicted OKBOMB conspirators (emphasis added).”

John Millar, a church elder at Elohim City, told the McCurtain Daily Gazette, “I don’t know who was out here back then. It doesn’t surprise me that a bunch of Jews that work for Dees and that Southern Poverty (SPLC) bunch would be spying on us. They don’t understand our message or anything about us. Why don’t you ever write about the fact that no one has ever found a link to McVeigh here?”

Until this memo surfaced, spokespersons for the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice steadfastly denied they had any reliable information concerning any relationship between either McVeigh or Nichols and subjects living at or who had frequented the Elohim City compound before the bombing.

Attorney Stephen Jones, who represented McVeigh at trial in Denver, Colo., said he was not provided this information from the government despite repeated motions filed with the court.

“We filed motions with the judge specifically asking for details of surveillance activities at Elohim City and other places. We were told by prosecutors that they had no records. Now you have some of them,” Jones explained.

“Also, as you know the FBI kept saying they had no information linking McVeigh to Elohim City beyond the one phone call on April 5. Well, as you can see, there’s much more than that here.”

Attorneys representing Nichols are bound by a gag order and unable to comment on the contents of this new information or whether they had copies of the material this newspaper had received.

A spokesman for the FBI office in Oklahoma City, Gary Johnson, said, “The FBI still stands by the results of the most expensive and thorough investigation in history.

“We arrested everyone in this crime and these conspiracy stories just waste our time.”

Andy the German to flee As noted earlier, one of the principal subjects referred to in the memo from the director of the FBI is Andreas Strassmeir, a foreign national with extensive military training the FBI identified as the person responsible for providing terrorist training to a number of neo-Nazi skinheads at Elohim City in the early and mid-90s.

Despite obvious links to bombing conspirator McVeigh at such a crucial time in the plot – and the fact that several of the German’s neo-Nazi roommates and trainees later went to prison for criminal activities including murder, bank robbery, bombings, weapons violations and a conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government – the DOJ has said that Strassmeir was never officially questioned by the FBI while living for over seven years in the U.S. – much of that time after his visa had expired.

Days after the director’s memo was sent to the OKBOMB command post and five FBI field offices, Strassmeir crossed the Mexican border with the assistance of a former member of the U.S. Special Forces, David Holloway.

Strassmeir’s flamboyant attorney, Kirk Lyons of Black Mountain, N.C., issued a bizarre statement after his client fled the U.S., admitting the C.A.U.S.E. Foundation (a non-profit organization established to help the victims of the Waco massacre) provided the money for Strassmeir’s escape.

Lyons, the managing director of the C.A.U.S.E. Foundation, quickly confirmed that Strassmeir received help in the escape with one of the foundation’s associates, Holloway, with additional assistance provided by an elite corps of German counter-terrorism troops after the pair exited the U.S.

Although Strassmeir was wanted for questioning in the OKBOMB case at the time of his escape... was illegally in the U.S. at the time of his escape and those facts were known to his attorney...has subsequently been listed by the U.S.

State Department as a terrorist...and was considered “armed and dangerous” by the FBI when he crossed the Mexican border with a member of the C.A.U.S.E. Foundation, Lyons has never been charged with harboring a fugitive, obstructing justice or disciplined by the North Carolina Bar Association for his admitted role in assisting a client elude federal authorities.

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