

Ruling reveals CIA involvement in Oklahoma City bombing investigation

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SALT LAKE CITY — The CIA collaborated with the U.S. Justice Department in the prosecution of convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, according to a recent ruling by a federal judge in Utah.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Clark Waddoups was issued as part of litigation by Salt Lake City attorney Jesse Trentadue, who has been struggling for nearly 15 years to unearth more information about the August 1995 death of his brother. Trentadue believes his brother was tortured by FBI agents who were under pressure to find those responsible for the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, which claimed the lives of 168 people.

On Friday, Waddoups ruled that 12 documents that Trentadue has requested from the CIA, FBI and the FBI's field office in Oklahoma should remain classified — based on the government's assertion that the release of the documents in question would jeopardize national security.

Trentadue doesn't see the move as an obstacle in his case but a "good thing" because of what it reveals.

"The significance is that it discloses a number of things. ... This documents that the CIA was, in fact, involved," he said. "The CIA is a foreign intelligence agency. It's illegal for it to engage in intelligence activities in the U.S. That means there was some foreign involvement into the case."

In his ruling, Waddoups said, "It is clear that the CIA and DOJ were cooperating in the prosecution of Mr. McVeigh." The judge noted, however, that the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals has advised judges that "courts are ill-equipped to properly weigh national security interests."

The appellate court has instructed judges that if the documents being sought are clearly summarized by the government, there is no need for even a private judicial review of the information in question.

Trentadue believes the government's decision to assert a national security classification is an airtight way to prevent the release of the records he's seeking.

"It's the king's X, the ultimate protection," he said. "You can't get around it."

The documents Trentadue wants include various faxes, letters and cable transmissions, including one from May 10, 1995, that relayed "information provided by a foreign government about the possible identification of a suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing."

Two other documents contain information provided by a foreign contact in regards to the bombing and background on a source who provided details to the CIA about the attack.

Trentadue filed a Freedom of Information Act request for the 12 documents in question in December 2006. He received no reply from the government agencies, prompting him to file a lawsuit in October 2008.

Trentadue's brother, Kenneth Michael Trentadue, was found hanging in his cell while in federal custody, and his death was ruled a suicide. Kenneth Trentadue, a convicted bank robber, had been picked up in California after violating his parole and was transported to Oklahoma City for further proceedings. During this time, the FBI was investigating the bombing.

When Kenneth Trentadue's body was sent to his family, it was covered in blood and bruises, leading them to believe he was murdered, according to Jesse Trentadue. He believes his brother was killed by FBI agents who mistook him for a bombing suspect and subjected him to fatal interrogation.

Trentadue's family ultimately received close to a \$1 million judgment after a federal judge in Oklahoma found that the federal government intentionally inflicted emotional distress on family members by withholding information about Kenneth Trentadue's death.

Jesse Trentadue contends the reason the government has fought so hard to withhold the results of the death investigation is because it may contain a cover-up reaching to the top ranks of the DOJ.

Judges with the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals have noted there is evidence that there has been misconduct on the part of federal agents.

On Monday, Trentadue filed a motion to compel, in which he is requesting video footage taken of the Murrah Building on the morning of the April 19, 1995, bombing.

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