

A Tale of Intrigue *by William F. Jasper*

Oklahoma bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh has been variously described in news accounts as "robotic," "weird," "brooding," "distant," "right-wing," "reclusive," "racist," and "fanatic." The first -- and last -- glimpse most of us got of the accused mass murderer occurred when the thin, stone-faced, 27-year-old suspect was escorted from the steps of Oklahoma's Noble County Courthouse to waiting federal authorities.

In the months since McVeigh's arrest, his attorney Stephen Jones has held press conferences and issued news releases aimed at presenting a more positive image of his client. The sole interview granted by McVeigh was conducted by Colonel David Hackworth and Peter Annin for Newsweek magazine. In that interview, McVeigh denied the many published reports that while in custody he had refused to state anything more than his name, rank, and serial number. And, he said, "I never, never called myself a prisoner of war."

Public Persona

According to Hackworth and Annin, McVeigh "appeared a little nervous, maybe, but good-humored and self-aware. Normal. Normalcy, of course, is the image that Timothy McVeigh wants to project." The Newsweek piece was accompanied by photos of a smiling McVeigh, displaying a much softer persona than he had previously shown. He said he "was horrified at the deaths of the children," which he described as "a very tragic thing." McVeigh also denied reports published by the New York Times that he had confessed to committing the crime. Asked if he had been a member of any militia group, he replied "No, and I was never to one of their meetings, either."

Timothy McVeigh enlisted in the Army in 1988. In many respects, he seems to have been an exemplary soldier, with entrance-test results consistently in the top ten percent and combat arms ratings in the top five percent. He won a Bronze Star during the Persian Gulf conflict as a gunner on a Bradley fighting vehicle, and scored a perfect 1,000 points in gunnery competition. In 1991 he failed the Green Beret qualification course at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. According to some accounts, McVeigh never recovered from that failure and drifted into the embittered fringes of "right-wing" politics.

The government's case against him is strong; the evidence that he was a key participant in the bombing is very damning. However, much important information about the man -- his past, personality, associations, travels, finances, etc. --

remains unknown. And a great deal of media misinformation clouds the search for the truth.

Terry Nichols, McVeigh's Army buddy and accused co-conspirator, has given no interviews. Much of what is publicly known about him has come from his ex-wife, Lana Padilla, mother of his 13-year-old son Joshua. Padilla, a Las Vegas real estate broker, and Nichols divorced in 1989, but, according to Padilla, they remained fairly good friends. However, because of potentially crucial evidence Nichols entrusted to her, Padilla says she was forced to become a reluctant witness against him before the federal grand jury.

Ominous Words

In her new book, *By Blood Betrayed: My Life With Terry Nichols and Timothy McVeigh*, Lana Padilla recounts an incident which occurred on November 22, 1994. Terry Nichols had just spent two weeks at her home in Las Vegas visiting Josh. Padilla explains that she had allowed him to stay there because she believed him to be broke. Besides, he was rarely underfoot since he and Josh were usually "doing 'guy' things ... like hunting, fishing, and occasionally going to Kingman [Arizona] to visit Tim [McVeigh] and other ex-Army buddies."

On that day, Padilla had driven Nichols to Las Vegas' McCarran Airport for a flight to Los Angeles and a final destination of Cebu City in the Philippines. Nichols gave her a folded brown paper bag and told her, "If I'm not back in sixty days, open it and follow the instructions." Those ominous words, together with Nichols' melancholic behavior and Josh's reaction as they drove away from the airport, were cause for alarm. "I'm never going to see my dad again," Josh sobbed.

Sure that Nichols must be contemplating suicide, she opened the package. It contained a sealed letter to Timothy McVeigh's sister Jennifer, Nichols' life insurance policy, a key chain with nearly a dozen keys, and two hand-written lists of things for Padilla to "Read and Do Immediately."

On the "Do" list were instructions to find a plastic bag that had been hidden behind a drawer in Padilla's kitchen. Following Nichols' directions, an astonished Padilla found a plastic bag stuffed with \$20,000 in twenties and hundreds. Nichols' list also referred to a storage unit rented under the alias of Ted Parker which would yield even more surprises: "... wigs, masks, panty hose, freeze-dried food, and various gold coins ... along with gold bars and silver bullion stacked neatly in boxes. There were also some small green stones that appeared to be jade. I estimated at least \$60,000 street value in precious metals!"

The wigs, masks, cash, gold, silver, and gems would later form the basis for the prosecution's theory that McVeigh, Nichols, and others had perpetrated a string of robberies in the Midwest, including the robbery of gun dealer Roger Moore in

Royal, Arkansas. Moore, who reportedly was robbed of \$60,000 in guns, jewels, gold, and silver on November 5, 1994, knew McVeigh from the gun show circuit, had welcomed him into his home as a house guest, and later told authorities he believed McVeigh was connected to the robbery. Moore's bank safety deposit key was reportedly found by federal agents in Terry Nichols' home in Herington, Kansas. Firearms stolen from Moore were traced to friends of McVeigh in Kingman.

Inside the letter to Jennifer McVeigh was another sealed and stamped envelope addressed to Timothy McVeigh which contained two hand-printed notes. One read: "If you should receive this letter then clear everything out of CG 37 by 01 Feb 95 or pay to keep it longer, under Ted Parker Your [sic] on your own. Go for it!!" A postscript said, "Also liquidate 40," and, "This letter would be for purpose of my death."

The indictment against Nichols and McVeigh charges, "On or about November 7, 1994, Nichols rented storage unit No. 37 in Council Grove, Kansas in the name 'Ted Parker' and used the unit to conceal property stolen in the Arkansas robbery." The indictment also states that Nichols rented storage unit No. 40 in Council Grove under the name "Joe Kyle."

James Nichols, Terry's brother, told THE NEW AMERICAN that Padilla has "exaggerated and overdramatized" the November 1994 incident because "she's interested in only one thing -- money." All of the items found in the storage unit, he insists, are legitimate property, the fruit of Terry's hard work, thrift, and wise investment. Padilla readily admits that Terry is "the most frugal person I know," that he had been saving gold for many years, and that his investments and his profits from the sale of several of his properties could account for the assets which she found.

Terry's package and instructions, James says, far from constituting incriminating evidence, show that Terry was a responsible family man who was making provision for his dependents before traveling abroad to a potentially dangerous part of the world.

Mystery in the Philippines

Terry Nichols' trips to the Philippines raise a number of questions. His first visit to the islands was in November 1989 to find a Filipino wife. A year later he returned to marry his 17-year-old "mail order bride," Marife Torres. According to Padilla, over the past four years Nichols visited the Philippines about four times a year. Some of those visits occurred while Marife was in Kansas. What was the purpose of those visits? Where did Nichols, who appeared to be just "scraping by" with income from odd jobs, get the thousands of dollars for all that expensive travel? Why was Nichols so secretive, withdrawn, and fatalistic (according to Padilla)

before his last trip to the Philippines? Why did he seem to think he might not survive the visit?

Is it possible that further investigation of Terry Nichols' trips to the Philippines could reveal additional evidence of a Mideast terrorist connection? The Philippines has become an important nexus of global terrorist activity, with the Filipino Muslim terrorist group Abu Sayyaf assuming new international importance. Abdallah al-Hashayake, leader of the secret terrorist cell called the "Jordanian Afghans," charged with blowing up a Jordanian movie theater, was trained in the Philippines by Abu Sayyaf. The group has claimed responsibility for the bombing of a Filipino airliner bound for Japan last December. Filipino authorities claim that Ramzi Youssef, the accused mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing, placed the explosives in the airliner.

We have seen no evidence that Nichols had any contact with Abu Sayyaf or any other group in the Philippines. However, evidence linking Timothy McVeigh to Mideast accomplices in the Oklahoma City bombing continues to grow. Lana Padilla told THE NEW AMERICAN that she had never seen or heard of her ex-husband meeting or associating with any people of Mideastern or Muslim background. Other sources, though, inform us that McVeigh and Nichols did indeed meet with Mideastern individuals in Las Vegas.

Some Crucial Evidence the Major Media Didn't Bother to Tell You

No one contests the fact that the bombing of the Alfred C. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City was a heinous crime. That one vile act not only took 169 lives, but also left hundreds physically wounded and thousands of family members, friends, and neighbors emotionally scarred.

President Clinton and Attorney General Reno promised to throw the full investigative resources of the federal government into an all-out effort to track down the criminals responsible. The giants of the Establishment media deployed legions of investigative reporters, analysts, pundits, and commentators to Oklahoma, Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, Arkansas, and all points in between in breathless pursuit of even the most meager of leads that might reveal other accomplices.

So, eight months later, what have we to show for this unprecedented, massive criminal investigation? Three men have been indicted: Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, and Michael Fortier. Of these, only McVeigh is accused of actual involvement in the placing of the truck bomb in Oklahoma City on April 19th. Nichols, it appears, was hundreds of miles away in Herington, Kansas. Fortier was even further away in Kingman, Arizona.

Timothy McVeigh was arrested by an Oklahoma highway patrolman for speeding

in a car without a license plate. Terry Nichols turned himself in to the local Kansas police. Michael Fortier turned state's evidence against Army buddies (and possible criminal co-conspirators) McVeigh and Nichols after U.S. attorneys threatened him with prison time for his wife and unborn child. And what of the infamous "John Doe No. 2," subject of the most massive global dragnet in human history? Well, the Justice Department and FBI have pretty much confused that issue by releasing ridiculous statements implying that there probably never was such an accomplice, that the sketch of the elusive suspect was probably the result of mis-association of an innocent Army private, who had also rented a Ryder truck, with McVeigh.

However, no one at all familiar with the case could believe that McVeigh alone and without assistance committed the evil deed. Too many credible witnesses have attested to seeing him in the company of others on the morning of April 19th: in the Ryder truck in route to the intended bomb site, beside the truck at the Murrah Building, and fleeing the scene moments before the blast. Several of these witnesses have identified one or more men of apparent Middle Eastern extraction as accomplices of McVeigh. Thus far, however, federal investigators have shown little interest in these important witnesses and the compelling evidence they have presented.

And the media "watchdogs"? Like the Administration's lackeys involved in the "investigation," the vaunted paladins of the press have lavished their immense resources on a pathetic parade of "news" features and "special reports" pretending to find evidence of a "right-wing" connection linking the militias, talk radio, Republicans, and everyone to the starboard of Hillary Rodham with this terrorist act.

If you're looking for real breakthroughs on this critically important case, you're sure not going to get them from CBS, PBS, CNN, ABC, NBC, the Washington Post, the New York Times, or any of their sycophantic imitators. However, some very important and compelling evidence that has received little or no coverage from the "mainstream" media is now available in a new video documentary. Oklahoma City: What Really Happened? is a 90-minute program produced and directed by Chuck Allen, a businessman who hosts a weekly interview and commentary show on Oklahoma City's cable access television channel. Together with Oklahoma State Representative Charles Key, Allen has assembled a series of interviews with rescuers, eyewitnesses, investigators, and survivors which reveals far more than all the hours of Rather blather, Brokaw baloney, and Jennings gestations on the subject that have blighted our television screens and obscured vital facts in the case over the past few months.

Besides comments from Charles Key, whose district includes much of Oklahoma City and who has led a grassroots campaign for a state oversight role in the federal investigation, the video features interviews with: Glenn Wilburn, whose two grandchildren were killed in the bombing; registered nurse Toni Garrett, one

of the earliest rescue workers on the scene, who had the gruesome and heartrending task of "tagging" the bodies (or body parts) of 120 of the victims; J.D. Cash, an investigative reporter who has probably interviewed more witnesses and people directly affected by the blast and turned up more important leads than any other journalist; Mike Moroz, the tire store employee who gave directions to the Murrah Building to an apparently disoriented McVeigh (and an accomplice) minutes before the explosion; Pat Briley, an Oklahoma City investigator who has uncovered much important evidence; and Professor Raymon Brown, a leading expert on the seismic data associated with the blast. The program also includes press conference footage of testimony by explosives expert Brigadier General Benton Partin (USAF, Ret.).

Although *Oklahoma City: What Really Happened?* does not boast the high-tech production qualities one is used to getting from regular network programming, it more than makes up for this deficiency with solid, credible information that the mavens of the media cartel have failed to present to their audiences.

Were ATF employees warned not to come to work at the Murrah Building on April 19th? Did other federal agencies have forewarning of the attack? Were other live explosives -- not merely dummy "training devices" -- found at the Murrah Building? Is there reliable evidence of a Middle East connection to the bombing? Was there a "John Doe No. 2" matching the FBI sketch reliably identified with McVeigh and the explosion? Does the seismic data indicate that there were more than one explosion on April 19th? Does forensic analysis of the bomb site support the proposition that explosives other than the truck bomb may have been involved in the deadly blast?

Oklahoma City: What Really Happened? provides affirmative answers to each of these questions with evidence and testimony that, while not absolutely conclusive, should not be summarily dismissed. Unfortunately, that is precisely what the Establishment arbiters of "newsworthiness" have done. In the video, Charles Key explains that the purpose of the program is to "offer you eyewitnesses and experts and let you draw your own conclusions about what really took place in Oklahoma City on April 19th." What could be wrong with that? Those who view this program clearly will be in a far better position to draw intelligent, responsible conclusions than those who don't. Charles Key, Chuck Allen, and their associates in this production are to be commended for a job well done under difficult restraints and circumstances. This is an important contribution that will undoubtedly do more to help solve this horrible crime than all of the disinformation and contrived blatherings that pass for investigative journalism and news in the "prestige" press.

Oklahoma City: What Really Happened? is available for \$24.95 from American Opinion Book Services, P.O. Box 8040, Appleton, WI 54913. Add \$2.00 for shipping and handling.