

BOSNIA UPDATE

OKC BOMBING: PROOF OF PRIOR WARNING

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

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SPECIAL REPORT: GIs IN THE GULAG

NOVEMBER 1997 48493



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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE • NOVEMBER 1997



On the Cover

Do today's graduates of the U.S. Army Ranger Course still have what it takes to *lead the way*? In northern Georgia, *SOF* goes tactical in mountain-phase training near Camp Frank D. Merrill. (Cover photos by Kulik Photographic and Gary Kieffer and Leif Skoogfors of Zuma.) See story, page

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Prior Warning

Could The Feds Have Prevented The OKC Bombing?



Richard L. Sherron

In one of the most bizarre aspects of her case, ATF snitch Howe reported Dennis Mahon had bragged that "... he made [a] 500-pound ammonium nitrate bomb in Michigan about five years ago, put it under a truck and blew it up." Sound familiar? This transaxle part (above) from the Ryder truck blown up with ammonium nitrate in the OKC bombing was found blocks away from the Murrah building by SOF reporter and former EOD man Richard L. Sherron.

A retired Marine lieutenant colonel with infantry and intelligence specialties, Roger G. Charles has been a freelance journalist and investigator since 1990. He broke the stories on the coverup of the U.S.S. Vincennes' shootdown of an Iranian airliner, and of former Chief of Naval Operations Boorda wearing combat distinguishing devices not in fact awarded. He worked as assistant producer of ABC's 20-20, and as a defense investigator for attorney Stephen Jones on the OKC bombing trial in Denver. He is presently an investigator for Oklahoma State Representative Charles Key's committee formed to support the independent grand jury now probing the OKC bombing.

A petite, 5-foot, 1-inch blonde has humiliated the FBI in a case that threatens far more potential down-side consequences than the Bureau suffered after the Richard Jewell debacle.

Information released at the trial (28 July - 1 August 1997) of former ATF confidential informant Carol Howe in a Tulsa, Okla., federal courtroom places the FBI alone at the center of inquiries into the two pivotal, unresolved issues of the 19 April 1995 Oklahoma City bombing:

— Did federal law enforcement have prior knowledge/prior warning of the bombing and fail to prevent the attack?

— Did a wider conspiracy than just the convicted Timothy J. McVeigh and the indicted Terry L. Nichols plan, support and conduct the terrorist attack? (Who are the "others unknown" referred to in the federal grand jury indictment, and why are they still unidentified more than two years after the attack?)

by Roger G. Charles

The new evidence, combined with previous information, is approaching critical mass in proving that federal law enforcement had received warning of the threat to the Murrah Building, warning sufficient that any reasonable and prudent official should have taken steps to alert those who worked in, visited or had children in the day-care center of the ill-fated building.

With the exception of the ATF Special Agents (SA), no such alert was passed on to those at risk. Until Howe's trial, questions about prior warning focused mostly on the ATF while the FBI was central only to issues involving the wider conspiracy.

Not Guilty On All Counts

The FBI's involuntary appearance at center stage on both unanswered questions results from a criminal trial whose verdict was announced 1 August of this year in the federal courtroom of the Northern District of Oklahoma. At 10:25 p.m., the clerk began reading the unanimous verdict of 12 citizens: Carol Elizabeth Howe is not guilty of any of the three counts in her federal indictment.

Howe and her fiancé, James Dodson Vieffhaus, Jr., had been charged with: (1) conspiracy to make a telephone bomb threat and to possess a non-registered destructive device (a pipe bomb); (2) making a telephone bomb threat; and (3) possessing a non-registered destructive device. (The trials had been severed and Vieffhaus, relying on a public defender, had been found guilty of the three identical charges the preceding Friday in the same courtroom.)

Charges included possessing three components of a pipe bomb that Howe had collected from a target of her undercover work, Dennis Mahon. She had obtained these items under the guidance of her ATF handler, Special Agent Angela Finley: a can of Pyrodex gunpowder, a small section of 2-and 1/2-inch pipe (with end caps), and "hobby fuse."

The ATF even Xeroxed the can of gunpowder, evidently obli-

ous to the danger posed by sparking static electrical charges around copy machines. Showing more of the sloppiness which permeated nearly everything SA Finley and her ATF office seemed to do, no one recorded the items in the evidence property files as required by ATF directives. Fortunately for Howe, Finley referred to the fuse and gunpowder in her reports.

The government claimed Finley had ordered Howe to take back all three items and return them to Mahon since, as Finley testified, it was not a crime to possess the items. (Howe disputed that Finley told her to return the items to Mahon.)

The jury no doubt saw the flagrant contradiction that escaped the U.S. Attorney who brought the charges: It was not a crime for Mahon, the subject of a major ATF criminal investigation, to possess the identical items that Howe, a paid ATF operative, was later indicted for possessing!

Background

The 26-year old, debutante daughter of a very successful, upper-middle class family, Howe's personal history was unexceptional until February 1994 when Howe was the victim of a life-altering incident — she was "pushed off a building" in a Tulsa park "by three black men."

Courtesy J. D. Cash



Center of the storm over who in the federal government knew what and when about impending terrorist actions against the government is former BATF contract informant Carol Howe. Dropped as a government snitch, Howe was charged by the feds with possession of unregistered destructive device (which she had gotten from investigative target on instructions from her BATF handler). Howe, shown here draped in Nazi flag with Tec-9 pistol at Elohim City, was acquitted on all counts — but testimony at trial raised serious questions regarding government handling of events leading to OKC bombing, and the investigation afterward.

Understandably traumatized by this assault, she was vulnerable to the appeal of charlatans whom she had previously ignored. She contacted Dennis Mahon, the local spokesman for the White Aryan Resistance (W.A.R.), by calling his "racist hot line."

Shortly after this initial contact Howe connected with the neo-Nazi compound that now figures so prominently in her life and in the OKBOMB investigation — Elohim City. She's now of great interest to journalists and investigators trying to penetrate governmental stonewalling because of the "strategic" warning she had provided the ATF, months before the bombing. Howe also has potentially explosive first-hand knowledge about the wider conspiracy, which common sense dictates must have been involved, and which

impressive, mounting evidence shows *was* involved.

A 28 January 1996 article by J.D. Cash in the *Curtain County Gazette*, of Idabel, Oklahoma, made the first mention of an ATF confidential informant (CI). Cash did not identify Howe by name until an 11 February article that provided much more detail of Howe's ATF work.

The recent trial confirmed previous information and added significant new details to Howe's role as an ATF CI. Her defense attorney, Clark Brewster, entered as trial exhibits important documents from Howe's official CI file which attested to the credibility and detail of the information Howe had provided her case officer.

These records also expose the FBI's not-surprising victory in the turf fight over the investigation of a nest of radical, anti-government elements at Elohim City. Much of Howe's investigation centered on this several-hundred-acre compound near Muldrow in east-central Oklahoma. Headed by Robert Millar, a Canadian immigrant who claims apocalyptic visions, Elohim City served as both a permanent base to Millar and his "flock," and as a way station to other anti-government radicals/criminals in their cross-country treks.

Chronology

On 25 August 1994, Carol Howe accepted a recruiting pitch from Finley to begin undercover service as a paid CI, under Finley's direct supervision. Howe passed a thorough background check and polygraph before going operational. Her two-page CI contract stated that Howe agreed to "assist in an official investigation" by performing "undercover contacts, undercover telephone (sic), purchase of firearms and/or explosives."

The chain of command for the investigation was typically bureaucratic (events were to prove it was as ineffective as it was complex):



A 28 January 1996 article by J.D. Cash in the *Curtain County Gazette*, of Idabel, Oklahoma, made the first mention of an ATF confidential informant (CI). Cash did not identify Howe by name until an 11 February article that provided much more detail of Howe's ATF work. Cash, left, poses here with Dennis W. Mahon, prominent in racist and neo-Nazi circles in eastern Oklahoma — and target of Howe's undercover work for BATF. Court testimony indicated Mahon told Howe he had blown up a truck with ammonium nitrate; as succinctly noted by former ATF official Bob Sanders, the number of people in the United States that have blown up a 500-pound ammonium nitrate bomb (or, to be more precise, who have even *claimed* to have done so) is very small — yet Mahon was never interviewed regarding the OKC bombing.

- CI Carol Howe, to
- SA Angela Finley, Tulsa ATF Office, to
- Resident Agent in Charge (RAC), Tulsa, David E. Roberts, to
- Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Dallas Field Division, Lester D. Martz, to
- ATF headquarters, Washington.

Finley's 30 August report noted that the now-formal investigation was "SENSITIVE." This characterization meant copies of the reports automatically went to ATF

headquarters in Washington, as well as being routinely provided to Martz at the Dallas Field Office. (ATF headquarters monitors all "SENSITIVE" investigations and briefs senior officials on their status.)

The ATF titled the investigation "White Aryan Resistance, W.A.R." and assigned it to the project category "TERRORIST/EXTREMIST." Finley described W.A.R. in this first report (based on information provided by Howe) as "a white supremacist organization that is ... radical, paramilitary,



Andy The German

Andreas Carl Strassmeir — a German national with an expired visa, one of the most interesting characters in the rogue's gallery surrounding the OKC bombing — for some as-yet-unexplained reason, was allowed to stay in the United States and openly promote his plans. According to Howe's report following her 14-19 November 1994, visit to Elohim City, Strassmeir spoke forcefully of his desire "to forcibly act to destroy the United States' Government with direct actions and operations such as assassinations, bombings, and mass shootings." Strassmeir claimed "the biggest enemy to be the United States Government (ZOG) [Zionist Occupied Government]."

In a telephone interview with an ABC 20/20 news magazine producer on 29 January 1997, Howe said Strassmeir had forcibly exclaimed that it was time to quit talking and time to start blowing things up. Howe's BATF handler, Angela Finley (now using the last name Graham), at an 24 April 1997 pre-trial hearing, admitted to defense attorney Clark Brewster that Carol Howe had told Finley about Strassmeir's threats to blow up "Federal buildings ... before the Oklahoma City bombing."

Tracked down by *SOF*, Strassmeir gave reporter Richard L. Sherrow his only press interview — before he slipped out of the country. For months after the OKC bombing, Strassmeir stayed at Elohim City, but was never arrested.



Neo-nazi [sic], anti-government and violent." W.A.R. has national and international affiliates to include the KKK and a racist following in Germany.

W.A.R.-Lords

This report identified Dennis Mahon as the Tulsa area leader of W.A.R. and relayed from Howe (referred to in ATF reports by the abbreviated CI numbers, CI-183, or 183) that "Mahon has made numerous statements regarding the conversion of firearms into fully automatic weapons, the manufacture and use of silencers and the manufacture and use of explosive devices. Mahon has stated both the knowledge and ability to manufacture a range of explosive devices. Mahon intends to manufacture and use any or all of the above when he deems necessary. Mahon and his organization are preparing for a race war and war with the government in the near future and it is believed that they are rapidly stockpiling weapons."

This is proof, from the ATF's own files, that nine months before the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building, a radical, violence-prone, armed group, based in the state of Oklahoma, with ties to neo-Nazis in Germany, and more than 200 hundred members, was rapidly stockpiling weapons and preparing for war with our government. The most visible spokesman for this group had stated his intention, and boasted of the capability, to manufacture and employ "a range of explosive devices" (also known as bombs).

Oddly, SA Finley in a 24 April 1997 pre-trial hearing claimed, "that is the general militia rhetoric. Everyone out there is saying the same thing." First, the Elohim city crowd is not militia — they are about as far from militia as the militia is from Sarah Brady's Handgun Control, Inc. More importantly, "everyone" isn't saying they want to blow up federal buildings.

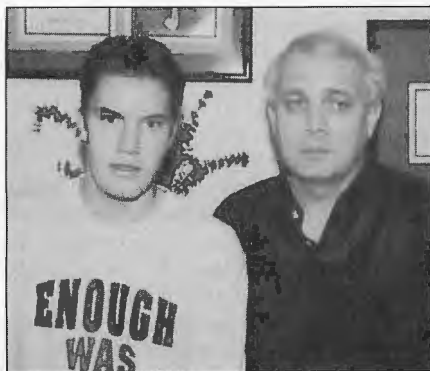
And everyone damn sure isn't saying they want to blow up federal buildings that do, in fact, get blown up! Finley ended her report by stating, "This will be an extensive investigation in order to identify the individuals involved in the manufacture, transfer and possession of unregistered T [Title]-II firearms and explosive devices."

Now, three years later, the irony of this statement is almost overpowering — a rookie special agent took on one of the most demanding cases in ATF history, and proved not up to the challenge.

But Bob Sanders, a retired Special Agent and former Assistant Director of the BATF for Law Enforcement, and an expert witness for Howe's defense who reviewed her CI file, asked in an interview after the trial, "What were her supervisors and managers doing?" The answer's all too clear — not enough.

Dennis Mahon: Why Not Interviewed?

Also in the fall of 1994, Howe reported to Finley that Mahon had on two occasions



Richard L. Sherrow

John Doe II, early sought in the OKC bombing, has never been publicly identified nor arrested. Oklahoma Citian Glenn Wilburn, who lost two grandchildren in the blast and whose independent search for facts appeared to have irritated the feds, was told by the FBI that his son Bart (left) might be John Doe II. Their house was routinely under surveillance. At the time of the bombing, Bart was 14.

detonated home-made grenades (non-registered, i.e., illegal destructive devices) in her presence. She had even retrieved metal fragments from both incidents and turned the pieces over to Finley.

And in one of the most bizarre aspects of this entire case, Howe reported Mahon bragged that "... he made [a] 500-pound ammonium nitrate bomb in Michigan about five years ago, put it under truck and blew it up."

Succinctly noted Sanders in an interview, the number of people in the United States that have blown up a 500-pound ammonium nitrate bomb (or, to be more precise, who have even claimed to have done so) is very small.

After the April 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City, one would have expected that at the very least, a known anti-govern-

ment radical like Mahon would have been at the top of the suspect list. Mahon's official files documented his extensive involvement with illegal destructive devices, his incendiary rhetoric promoting violence, his professions to be a bomb expert, and his proximity to Oklahoma City.

Mahon was an obvious choice to have been one of the first suspects invited to chat with the OKBOMB Task Force, but, to date, federal law enforcement has not interviewed Mahon about his possible involvement in the attack.

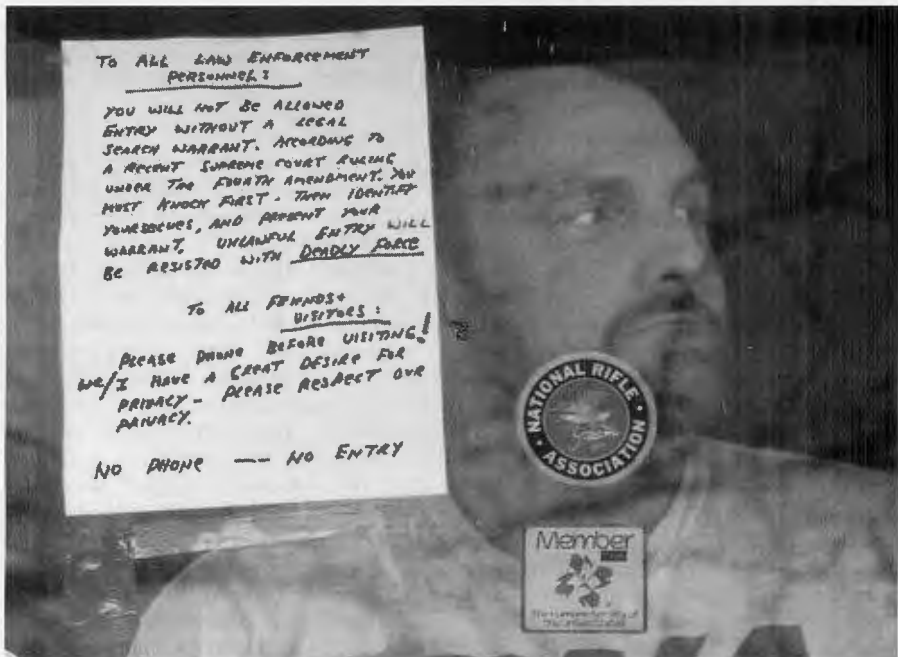
Andreas Carl Strassmeir, aka "Andy the German"

Less than a week after she went operational, Howe visited Elohim City and met "Andy LNU [last name unknown], a German male, who is head of security for Elohim City." Andy would be identified in mid-December as Andreas Carl Strassmeir, an illegal immigrant whose visa had expired on 2 August 1991.

Strassmeir is one of the most interesting characters in the entire rogue's gallery of the OKC bombing and, for some as-yet-unexplained reason, he was allowed to stay in the United States and openly promote his plans.

According to Howe's report following her 14-19 November 1994 visit to Elohim City, he spoke forcefully of his desire "to forcibly act to destroy the United States' Government with direct actions and operations such as assassinations, bombings, and mass shootings." Strassmeir claimed "the biggest enemy to be the United States Government (ZOG) [Zionist Occupied Government]."

In a telephone interview with an ABC 20/20 news magazine producer on 29 January 1997, partially monitored by this writer, Howe stated that Strassmeir had



AP Photo/J. Paul Carter

Avowed racist Dennis Mahon figured prominently in Howe's investigation as one who promoted war with the "Zionist Occupation Government" and bragged of building fertilizer bombs. Why was he not questioned?

during this same general period forcibly exclaimed that it was time to quit talking and time to start blowing things up. Angela Finley (now using the last name Graham), at an 24 April 1997 pre-trial hearing, admitted to defense attorney Clark Brewster that Carol Howe had told Finley about Strassmeir's threats to blow up "Federal buildings ... before the Oklahoma City bombing."

It's interesting to note that when the FBI queried "various federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies to determine if ANDREAS CARL STRASSMEIR was ever a cooperating witness or confidential source," only the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported that it held any records on him.

Oh, That Strassmeir ...

The CIA's Office of General Counsel reported an attorney from that office "has been in direct contact with Assistant United States Attorney Beth Wilkinson at the OKBOMB Task Force in Denver ..." The CIA attorney "advised she has provided the results to AUSA Wilkinson concerning her agency's records check ..." (The CIA attorney referred the author's query to the CIA press office, which declined to comment about Strassmeir.) The reason for refusing comment is that the pending trial of Terry Nichols precludes any response. Funny, the Department of Justice has consistently denied that Strassmeir has any relevance whatsoever to the OKBOMB investigation or cases connected to it. And, for what it's worth, the FBI and ATF have separately and consistently denied that Strassmeir was a CI for either agency.

CI-183 also reported that "Andy" had been in possession of various weapons and had fired them during target-practice sessions with Howe and others. On 14 September, Howe reported that in her visit to Elohim City from 12-14 September, "while shooting, he [Strassmeir] made 183 crawl on the ground under barbed wire while he fired his .45 at 183's feet."

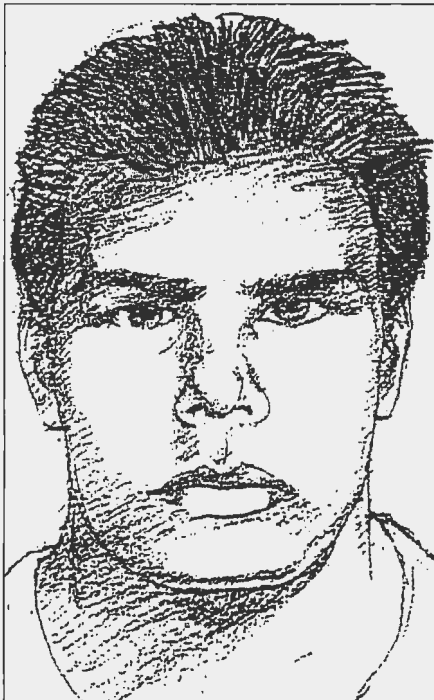
By mid-December 1994, Howe's information on Strassmeir had accumulated to the point where the ATF had decided to move against this illegal alien who spoke of acting forcibly against what he believed to be "the biggest enemy ... the United States Government (ZOG)." And it was about time: It's bad enough that we have home-grown crazies promoting such garbage. One cannot help but wonder why federal law enforcement allowed an illegal alien — who openly carried a variety of weapons — an additional illegal act, to provoke a den of domestic rattlesnakes that were already abuzz.

The first documentation of ATF interest in Strassmeir as a target of possible criminal interest was on an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) computer printout (dated 13 December 1994) of Strassmeir data with the handwritten annotation: "Need certification of non-existence of legal permanent residence. Sensitive

Investigation by ATF — SA Angela Finley."

An undated, but most-likely, December 1994 INS memorandum provided more information on the ATF's new-found interest in Strassmeir and noted that the ATF planned to arrest him:

SA Angela Finley, ATF, from Tulsa called regarding the attached individual. They have an on-going case on him that she described as "sensitive" for an unknown reason. He's buying guns but that's all she said. I found the non-immigrant record on him but no LP [lawful permanent residence] status. She said he lives out in the boonies in Eastern Oklahoma. They plan to charge him with 922(g) [illegal alien in possession of a weapon] but needed evidence that he is here



Early in the investigation, before fate, expired plates and an alert Oklahoma state trooper handed the Feds Timothy McVeigh, this wanted poster of John Doe II was being circulated.

illegally. I have ordered a certificate of non-existence of lawful permanent residence from HQ which will take 6-8 weeks. I had it sent to Dallas and I'll forward it to you when I get it. Angela also wanted to know if an INS agent could go with them when they arrest him. I told her to contact you.

Special Agent Finley confirmed in a report dated 1 January 1995, the more complete identification of the previously mysterious "Andy LNU": "Andy" who is said to be the head of security at Elohim City. He is actually Andreas Karl (sic) Strassmeir, a West German, DOB: May 17, 1959 ... Strassmeir had questionable weapons connections.

She went on to relay Howe's information that: *During the Sabbath meeting, Millar gave a sermon soliciting violence against the United States Government. He brought forth his soldiers and instructed them to take whatever actions necessary against the*

United States Government ... He [Millar] explicitly told 183 that they were preparing to fight a war against the government ...

The Non-Arrest Of Andreas Strassmeir

By early January 1995, Howe's information resulted in INS referring explicitly for the first time to Strassmeir as being of interest in a criminal investigation and the subject of a pending arrest:

Investigation pending — no arrest or warrant as of yet — Northeastern Oklahoma — request [INS] participation. Raid — next month.

Events were accelerating and on 10 January 1995, a junior agent in the Oklahoma City INS office informed her supervisors: *Per your note, I talked to Angela Finley, ATF. It may be awhile before the subject is contacted or arrested, but we will probably be called to assist.* INS clearly expected ATF to raid Elohim City to arrest Strassmeir once certification was received from INS headquarters that Strassmeir had no legal basis for being in this country. And it's clear from reading the INS records that this raid and arrest would occur sometime after mid February 1995.

On 17 February 1995, INS headquarters telefaxed to the Oklahoma City field office a notarized "certification" which stated that, regarding Strassmeir, "after diligent search ... there is no evidence of any lawful admission to the United States as an immigrant ..." In February (probably after the 16th), Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Ken Stafford issued a "Be On the Look Out for" (BOLO) regarding Strassmeir: *BOLO for Security Chief at Elohim City Compound ... — carries a .45 auto pistol at all times...*

— He is an illegal alien, ATF wants to be notified if he is stopped and has the gun on him. They will file the charges ... Contact: Agent Angela Finley ATF ...

The most explosive revelation of the trial came not in courtroom testimony, but was released in Finley's monthly report, dated 28 February 1995. It explained the heretofore mysterious failure of the ATF to carry through on its stated intentions to raid Elohim City and arrest the illegal alien, Strassmeir, for possession of firearms:

On 22 February 1995, this agent met with OHP Trooper Ken Stafford to exchange certain information regarding this investigation. Trooper Stafford indicated that the FBI also had an ongoing investigation regarding Elohim City.

Finley was no doubt shocked: The ATF's imminent raid of Elohim City to arrest "Andy the German" would interfere with an on-going FBI undercover investigation at Millar's neo-Nazi compound.

Catastrophic Commingling

On the same day, Finley's boss, Resident Agent in Charge (RAC) David E. Roberts, in a highly unusual exception to bureaucratic protocol, met with the U.S. Attorney for

Continued on page 72

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Prior Warning

Continued from page 64

the Northern District of Oklahoma, to discuss the newly identified threat of an “intra-mural fire fight” between FBI and ATF agents in what was now recognized as a commingled investigation.

Why was special treatment afforded nominal “leading suspects?”

The government's protection of Mahon and Strassmeir becomes even more unfathomable when you factor in Howe's claims to have told Finley contemporaneously of three trips made by Mahon and Strassmeir to case “the federal building” in Oklahoma City. (The trips were allegedly made in November and December 1994, and February 1995.) Howe repeated this claim at her trial. The government took strong exception, contending there was no written record to substantiate that Howe told Finley of such reconnaissance trips. While there will probably be no definitive resolution of these directly contradictory accounts, the jury's finding of “not guilty” may be the best evaluation of whom the jury saw as more credible — Carol Howe or federal law enforcement.

According to a knowledgeable source, the only plausible explanation for Mahon's special dispensation is that he, too, is an informant for federal law enforcement.

This experienced official also concluded that the Reverend Robert Millar, patriarch of the racist Elohim City compound, was an FBI informant. His opinion was confirmed at a 30 June 1997 pre-trial hearing when Tulsa FBI SA Peter Rickel, under close questioning by Howe's attorney, admitted that Millar “was an FBI source of information.”

Cutting Its “Losses”

Less than a month later, the ATF moved to inactivate Carol Howe, dropping her from their roles as an active CI. The pretext given by Finley was that “CI-183 was no longer loyal nor competent to operate as an informant for ATF.” The official date of removal was 27 March, three weeks before the bombing of the Murrah building and the death of 168 citizens.

But within hours of the Oklahoma City bombing on 19 April, Angela Finley called Carol Howe to request her assistance in the investigation of the worst act of domestic terrorism in the history of these United States.

Next month the author will audit the botched investigation of Elohim City, and leads not followed; he will raise more unanswered questions about what federal snitches at Elohim City had reported prior to the OKC bombing; he will reveal more about the special protection afforded obvious suspects, including a State Department connection; disclose startling information on some of the federal law enforcement officers involved — and shed light on the identity of OKC bombing suspect John Doe II. ☒

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