

OKC Legacy of Lies Lives On

by William F. Jasper

The New American has been charging cover-up in the Oklahoma City bombing case for six years. Now some FBI agents close to that investigation are making similar charges.

Attorney General John Ashcroft has received near-universal acclaim from commentators and politicians for his May 11th decision to delay Timothy McVeigh's execution and conduct a comprehensive probe of the FBI's "lost-and-found" Oklahoma City bombing files. But to those familiar with the massive cover-up carried out by the Clinton administration concerning this deadliest terrorist act on American soil, Ashcroft's performance has been profoundly troubling. In fact, it almost completely explodes the hopes of many that the replacement of Clinton-Reno by Bush-Ashcroft would signal a major reversal of the policies of deception and obstruction at the Justice Department.

Typical of the media's coverage was *Time* magazine's OKC/FBI May 21st cover story, which declared that Ashcroft's action "proved that his commitment to evenhandedness is strong." In a "viewpoint" column accompanying the same *Time* cover story, CNN legal analyst Greta Van Susteren stated: "I am proud of federal law enforcement for coming clean about the lost documents." The "lost" documents include more than 4,000 pages of FBI files that were supposed to have been turned over to McVeigh's defense attorneys before his trial. McVeigh, who has stated that he carried out the bombing which killed 168 and injured hundreds more, had previously stated he would not attempt to delay his execution date with appeals. He changed his mind, however, following release of the documents, and filed for a stay of execution so he could appeal for a new trial.

Van Susteren said in her *Time* piece that she was "impressed by how quickly John Ashcroft jumped in and postponed the execution." "What matters," she averred, "is that our Justice Department proved its commitment to justice, no matter what the price."

Still more media kudos followed Mr. Ashcroft's dramatic and much-anticipated May 24th press conference, where he announced that, following a review of the newly-found FBI files, he was pushing for a resumption of the McVeigh execution. The attorney general said:

Thirteen days ago, I directed the Bureau of Prisons to delay the scheduled execution of convicted mass murderer Timothy McVeigh until June 11.... On Friday May 11, the same day ... I directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation to

issue a world-wide alert to all their offices. This world-wide alert ordered every FBI office to identify and produce any and all documents required under the broad discovery agreement in the McVeigh case.

"Today, the Department of Justice completed a report," Ashcroft continued, "documenting the FBI's comprehensive efforts over the last 13 days to identify any remaining documents."

"As this report explains, the American people can have confidence that all documents now have been identified and produced, and that nothing in any of the documents undermines McVeigh's admission of the murder of 168 of his fellow American citizens, or nothing in these documents undermines the justice of his sentence."

While very few people question McVeigh's guilt in the bombing, the fact is that the American people can have no confidence whatsoever that very important Oklahoma bombing files and evidence, let alone *all* documents, "now have been identified and produced." The reasons why they can have no confidence begin on the cover of the very report Ashcroft released on May 24th.

The real author of the report, the cover informs us, is "Sean Connelly, Special Attorney to the U.S. Attorney General." And it is Connelly who signs the conclusion of the report on page 12. Also listed on the report's cover, under "Of Counsel" are U.S. Attorneys Joseph H. Hartzler, James Q. Orenstein, Aitan Goelman, Paul J. Johns, and Bruce Delaplaine. While we can say nothing at this time about Messrs. Orenstein, Johns, and Delaplaine, the other three attorneys were all key players on Janet Reno's OKC cover-up team.

Ashcroft straight-facedly announced his confidence in the report because "FBI Director Louis Freeh has certified to me that the FBI has completed its search and produced every relevant document in its possession." Sure enough, there on page 13 of the report is Freeh's signed statement of certification. Moreover, said Ashcroft, at his request, "every Special Agent in Charge of every FBI office has certified that all documents pertaining to the McVeigh case have been produced by that Special Agent's office."

Yet this is the same Louis Freeh who reportedly ordered all these same field offices *four times previously* to turn over all evidence. The result of those four orders we now know: Fully 46 of 56 FBI field offices failed to turn over evidence. *Time* refers to this as "the FBI's latest screw-up." Van Susteren calls it a "slip-up."

The main problem with the Oklahoma City bombing investigation and prosecution was not screw-ups and slip-ups but multiple, conscious *cover-ups* by the DOJ and FBI. And Attorney General Ashcroft is asking the American people to place

confidence in a report prepared by the very same people responsible for those cover-ups and criminal obstruction of justice.

FBI Agents Slam OKC Obstruction

This magazine has been charging and documenting the reality of obstruction and cover-up by federal officials in the Oklahoma bombing case for six years. Now some of the FBI agents closest to that investigation are making similar charges. On May 29th, five days after Ashcroft's press conference, CBS' *60 Minutes- II* presented interviews with four ex-FBI Special Agents who challenged his rosy assessment of things at the DOJ and FBI.

The four veteran agents — Rick Ojeda, Dan Vogel, Scott Jenkins, and Jim Volz — all worked the case known at the FBI as "OKBOMB." Although the agents said they could not discuss specifics regarding the case because of a court gag order, they all expressed grave concerns about the handling of the "lost-and-found" FBI files. Dan Vogel said that he had taken an oath at the FBI "to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. And as I have been reflecting over my past bureau career, I had come to the conclusion that there was a serious problem in the FBI." According to ex-Agent Vogel, the so-called foul-up with the missing files was very serious business involving "possibly criminal conduct" that may need "to be presented to a federal grand jury as a criminal case."

Former Agent Rick Ojeda, who received a commendation from Louis Freeh for his efforts in the bombing case, may have some of the most damaging information to reveal. In his CBS interview, Ojeda stated that he became concerned when reports and leads he had turned in seemed to disappear. The day after the CBS broadcast, U.S. Attorney Sean Connelly released an FBI report by Ojeda to McVeigh's attorneys that had *still* not been included in the DOJ/FBI "comprehensive" file release. What is in the Ojeda report? According to Connelly's letter accompanying the report, Ojeda's material was not related to "OKBOMB," an assertion that Ojeda disputes. In a May 31st Associated Press story, Ojeda was quoted as saying, "my opinion is that it does pertain to the Oklahoma City bombing case."

There is good reason to disbelieve Connelly and believe Ojeda. According to John D. Cash, a reporter for the *McCurtain Gazette*, in Oklahoma, he and *Gazette* publisher Bruce Willingham met at the newspaper's offices on April 14, 1997 with Special Agent Ojeda and Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Chris Dill to present evidence the *Gazette* had developed pointing to involvement in the bombing by members of the Aryan Republican Army (ARA) and residents of an Aryan-linked rural community known as Elohim City. Cash and Willingham say that the FBI and OBI investigators said the *Gazette's* ARA-Elohim information was new to them.

Readers of The New American know that much solid evidence and important eyewitness and federal informant testimony linked Timothy McVeigh to suspects at Elohim City with long histories of radical and criminal involvement. Some of those suspects included: Dennis Mahon, a former leader of the Ku Klux Klan and former No. 2 honcho in the White Aryan Resistance; Andreas Strassmeir, a German national, weapons expert, and head of security at Elohim City; Richard Guthrie, Peter Langan, Kevin McCarthy, and Scott Stedeford, all members of the ARA "Midwest Bank Robber" team; and William Millar, the "spiritual leader" and founder of Elohim City. (Interestingly, on May 31st, the day after the Ojeda report was released, Millar died, reportedly of a heart attack.)

Disturbing Pattern

At his May 24th press conference, Ashcroft dismissed the significance of the "lost-and-found" files as ranging from the irrelevant to the truly bizarre. Reading from the Connelly report, he noted, for example, "a lengthy collection of newspaper and magazine clippings, including photos from a swimsuit calendar, was received from a person under psychiatric care." Another example involved someone "offering unspecified information in return ... for a trip to Europe to meet with royalty." Still others involved "information about non-physical beings and offers by psychics to contact the dead victims."

In other words, the national hullabaloo about the missing files amounted to a lot of wasted angst over the scribblings of opportunists and nut cases. This is vintage Clinton-Reno *modus operandi*. Perhaps the DOJ/FBI have been able to fill more than 4,000 pages with this sort of nonsense. But how many files dealing with substantive information, such as Agent Ojeda claims to have submitted, have been suppressed because Connelly and his fellow Clintonites at Justice have designated them as "unrelated" to the bombing?