

We Will Not Forget *by William F. Jasper*

The McVeigh execution supposedly brings "closure" to those who survived or lost loved ones in the Oklahoma City bombing. But what those survivors and victims really want is justice.

The June 11th execution of Timothy McVeigh closed the book on the Oklahoma City bombing for many Americans. But for many others, including some of those most deeply affected by that terrible crime, the book is still very much open.

"People tell me that Timothy McVeigh's death should bring me 'closure,'" says Jannie Coverdale, whose young grandsons, Aaron, age five, and Elijah, age two, were among the 19 children murdered in the Alfred P. Murrah Building's daycare center by the bombing of April 19, 1995. "But I cannot have closure, I cannot have peace of mind and soul, when I know that there are others out there walking free who are just as guilty as McVeigh."

"I am still very angry and frustrated," she told *The New American*, "because I *know* that my government knows that he did not do this alone. Tim McVeigh lied when he said there was no one else, and the government is lying when they say they believe him. They told me to attend the [McVeigh] trial and all my questions would be answered. Well, I attended the trial, and I came away with even more questions, but no answers. The prosecutors assured us the truth would come out, but they covered up and smothered all facts, evidence, and witnesses that pointed to anyone else but McVeigh. Well, I know many of the witnesses and have talked with them about what they saw and who they saw, and I've studied the facts and evidence. I think anyone with common sense who does that will see that there is something terribly wrong here."

"Aaron and Elijah were in the government's opening statement, and they continued to use them, along with other victims, all the way through the trial," says Mrs. Coverdale. "The prosecution strategy was just to emotionally overwhelm the jury, the public, and us, the survivors, with the terrible stories of the victims, to draw attention away from the major problems with their position that McVeigh did this all by himself."

Mrs. Coverdale was among the nearly 250 survivors and victims' relatives who watched via closed-circuit television from Oklahoma City, as McVeigh was put to death by lethal injection at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana. Shortly after the execution, she shared these thoughts with *The New American*:

Timothy McVeigh deserved to die. He murdered 168 people in cold blood and never — over the last six years — ever showed the least remorse. He killed and hurt a lot of people, and then he continued to hurt us, so many times, with his cruel words, like referring to our children, whom he killed, as acceptable "collateral damage," and saying that he wished he had leveled the whole building. Imagine that, imagine how many more lives would have been taken!... He had the most defiant look on his face, on that huge screen. He died staring at us — just very defiant, like he was saying: "You haven't won; the score is 168 to 1." I didn't feel any hatred for him or pity, just an empty feeling, just — nothing. Now, his father, I did feel pity for him. He was another of Tim's victims.

Tim McVeigh did deserve to die, but if it had been within my power, I would have delayed his execution at least another month or two. Why was there such a rush to execute him when there hadn't been a federal execution for 38 years, and many other inmates had been on death row much longer? Why was there such a rush to execute him right when all those "lost" FBI files were being released and those FBI agents are coming forward with charges about mishandling and misbehavior by the top people in the investigation? I truly wish that he had lived long enough for his defense team to go through those 302s [FBI interview forms] and other materials. That was my hope; that before he died we would see more of the cover-up and lies exposed, more evidence released, and Tim McVeigh's accomplices brought to justice.

There sure are some dark secrets there that the Justice Department doesn't want to come out. We are supposed to believe that there is nothing significant in those 302s and in the other files and evidence still under seal. I don't believe that for a minute. I've been told too many lies already. Janet Reno lied and Louis Freeh lied, and many of their people who handled the case are still there now under [Attorney General] Ashcroft, continuing the same lies and cover-up. Executing Tim McVeigh did not bring Aaron and Elijah back. Convicting and executing his accomplices won't bring Aaron and Elijah back either. But I can't rest knowing that these murderers are still walking around scot-free, apparently protected by our government.

"Now that Tim McVeigh is dead, we're kind of left out on a limb, because no one is looking into all of those 302s," says Mrs. Coverdale. "I hope that the [Terry] Nichols defense team will be going after these files and forcing more of them out for the public to see." She is not, however, optimistic on that score. "I think Terry is protecting his brother James," she says. "I really think that James is guilty; all the evidence I've seen points strongly to his involvement [in the bombing] from day one. But I don't think Terry will do anything to turn him in or implicate others who might lead to James."

Evidence Ignored



Glen and Kathy Wilburn (Right) lost two young grandsons in the bombing, three-year-old Chase and two-year-old Colton (left, with their mother Edye Smith). "The government would like us to forget that there were over 50 credible witnesses who saw McVeigh with other John Does," Kathy told *THE NEW AMERICAN*. Kathy, though, vows never to forget nor give up the fight. "I'm going to be beating this drum until the day I die, or until the truth finally comes out."

Like Jannie Coverdale, Kathy Wilburn also lost two little grandsons in the Murrah Building daycare center. Chase was three years old; Colton was two years old. Like Mrs. Coverdale, Wilburn refuses to accept the official verdict that Timothy McVeigh was a "lone bomber," with only minor help from his co-defendant Terry Nichols.

"The government would like us to forget that there were over 50 credible witnesses who saw McVeigh with other John Does," she told *The New American*. "They would like us to forget that at the Nichols trial FBI Agent Louis Hupp, the Bureau's fingerprint expert, admitted he'd been ordered — *ordered* — not to run checks on over 1,000 fingerprints and palm prints taken from McVeigh's car and motel room, where multiple witnesses had seen McVeigh with other suspects. They would like us to forget that there are at least 22 surveillance videos from the Murrah Building and the surrounding area that are still being withheld from us. They would like us to forget that the Justice Department's own Inspector General censured the FBI laboratories and the FBI's key forensic experts for serious misconduct and fraudulent practices in this case. They would like us to forget all the recent revelations showing that the FBI and Department of Justice have made it a standard practice to consort with Mafia killers, drug dealers and terrorists, and to protect these criminals when it suits their purposes. They would like us to forget that they intentionally allowed one of the top suspects in the bombing, Andreas Strassmeir [a German citizen who was associated with McVeigh], to wander around the country and then finally leave months after the bombing without even being interviewed by the FBI. They would like us to forget that the government's own undercover informant, Carol Howe, pointed to

Strassmeir as a key operative in the bombing conspiracy, and that she had warned the ATF and FBI *before* the bombing."

"I have questions that still demand answers," says Mrs. Wilburn. "I want to know: Why are the surveillance videos still under seal? Why are so many papers and files still under seal? Why are Strassmeir and other McVeigh associates from Elohim City and the Aryan Nations off limits? Why were Michael and Lori Fortier, who were deeply involved, let off so easily? Why is it that the fingerprints *still* have not been run on the FBI database? Tens of millions of dollars were spent on this case, for what? For an incredible, massive cover-up. I'm going to be beating this drum until the day I die, or until the truth finally comes out."

Kathy Wilburn's grandchildren were not the only members of her family killed by the bombing, she says. Her husband Glenn died prematurely, she believes, not only from the grief and heartache caused by the loss of their grandsons, but from the grief, frustration, and anger caused by the government's deception and obstruction in the case (see sidebar). "I owe it to Glenn, as well as to Chase and Colton, to make sure that all those responsible are brought to justice," Mrs. Wilburn told *The New American*. "If this is not done, I think that these same people may commit even more terrorist acts." (See [Unsung Hero: Glenn Wilburn](#))

She realizes that McVeigh's execution closed an important avenue of access to still-hidden government documents and removed the bombing from the front pages and the forefront of public consciousness. This will make her quest for the truth all the more difficult. On the other hand, she notes, it has also brought a marked change in the attitudes of many of the other survivors. "When I used to come around to events involving survivors and family members," says Mrs. Wilburn, "some of them were hostile. They would parrot what the media and the prosecutors were saying. They would say, 'You're going to get McVeigh off,' or suggest that I was 'anti-government.' But at the execution many family members came up to me and apologized for harsh words and gave me encouragement. They see that they were lied to. They were promised that *after* McVeigh was convicted, *then* the government would go after 'John Doe No. 2' and the 'others unknown.' Now the government is telling them that McVeigh's accomplices don't even exist. Of course, the government was also telling them that all these newly released FBI files didn't exist either. So a lot more people are putting two and two together and realizing that it really does add up to four, unlike what the government has been claiming."

Eyewitness

One Oklahoma City bombing survivor who hasn't had any trouble seeing through the 2+2=3 math of the Justice Department and FBI is Jane Graham. Mrs. Graham is a public housing specialist with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and, until recently, the president of the American

Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 3138. She knows she is fortunate to be alive. Many of her fellow HUD co-workers were killed in the blast. Does she think the McVeigh execution closes the bombing case? "Absolutely not!" she told *The New American*. "All it has done is tell me that all of the others who participated with him have gotten away with murder — for now. I believe that eventually we will identify at least some of them and, hopefully, see them captured and convicted."

Mrs. Graham is one of several federal employees who saw McVeigh in the Murrah Building prior to the bombing, apparently on one of several missions during which McVeigh and his accomplices "cased" the building. According to Graham, she rode an elevator with McVeigh. "He was coming down, from the 9th floor, I think. I got on at the 7th floor and rode down with him," she recalls. Mrs. Graham also witnessed two suspicious incidents that she believes are related to the bombing and that have been totally ignored by federal authorities. The first incident involved three men whom she saw in the parking garage of the Murrah Building the week before the bombing. They had what appeared to be plans of the building and wiring and tools. At the time, she thought they might be with the telephone or utility company. But later, after the bombing, she remembered troubling details that pointed to them as possible suspects. In the second incident, she saw two men on the morning of the bombing in what appeared to be blue GSA (General Service Administration) uniforms coming from a stairwell as she was entering the building.

Mrs. Graham repeatedly tried to get the FBI to investigate these incidents. She was interviewed by the FBI, but soon saw that there was no interest in pursuing any leads that didn't fit the government's "lone bomber" scenario. In November 1996, she wrote a letter which she sent to many government officials, expressing her concern over the direction of the investigation. She wanted to know, she wrote, "why no one asked questions about the week before the bombing and if anyone saw anything suspicious. Apparently the FBI was not interested in any other time than the Monday or Tuesday the week of the bombing!!!! And only if the responses pointed directly to McVeigh.... It appears that the FBI had an agenda which was to *only* target McVeigh and Nichols. The FBI conveniently dropped John Doe 2."

"Tim McVeigh did not act alone," Mrs. Graham told *The New American*. "Others helped him kill my friends and co-workers, and almost kill me. I am not 'anti-government' obviously; I *work* for the federal government. But I want the government officials who had prior knowledge and who have covered up evidence and who have engaged in improper and illegal actions to obstruct justice in this case to be held accountable. I know what I saw, and I know what my co-workers told me they saw. I know from my own experience about the way the 'investigation' was handled, and it wasn't handled as an investigation; it was handled as a cover-up."

"I won't give up," says Graham. "I quit my union president position so I could devote more of my time to this effort. I see the new revelations and charges by FBI agents who were involved in the bombing investigation to be a significant new breakthrough in the case, and should help us get to more of the truth."

Obstructing Justice

The FBI revelations Mrs. Graham referred to were brought to national attention in a May 29, 2001 *60 Minutes II* program, five days after Attorney General John Ashcroft held a major press conference announcing that *all* FBI files related to the Oklahoma City bombing had been released. Ashcroft offered a written certification from FBI Director Louis Freeh to this effect. In the CBS program, however, three former FBI special agents and one current agent unleashed a devastating fusillade of criticism against the Bureau, including charges that go directly to the heart of the Oklahoma City bombing cover-up.

One of the agents, Rick Ojeda, a decorated FBI veteran, explained that he had become aware that important leads he had developed on the bombing concerning possible suspects had apparently disappeared from the bombing files. The four agents said they were operating under a gag order that did not allow them to discuss particulars. After the broadcast, the Department of Justice released a copy of Agent Ojeda's file to the McVeigh defense team, but claimed that it was not related to the bombing. Rick Ojeda vigorously disputes that. It has since been revealed that the Ojeda file deals specifically with suspects associated with McVeigh at the rural Oklahoma enclave known as Elohim City, a settlement long associated with the violent Aryan Nations, and with individuals who had plotted to blow up the Murrah Building in the 1980s.

Agent Ojeda told *The New American* he does not remember in fine detail the contents of the report, which he wrote in 1997, but he recalls that it was about 10 pages filled with much information about the activities and inhabitants of Elohim City. How does he characterize the Justice Department's description of the report as being "not related" to the Oklahoma City bombing? "That is an absolute falsehood," he said. "I had filed it as a bombing lead with an OKC file number on it, and it was obvious to anyone who looked at it that it was 'related.' A reporter who somehow got a copy of it asked me: 'I count McVeigh's name in there seven times. How can DOJ say it's 'not related?' Exactly. They can't and still tell the truth."

"What we are seeing now with the Ojeda file and the other FBI files is just a continuation of what he have seen over the last six years," says Kathy Wilburn. "But I hope and pray that truth has a way of overcoming all of the lies and corruption. I have to believe that truth ultimately will triumph."