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## SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2002 ✕ VOL. 27 NO. 8

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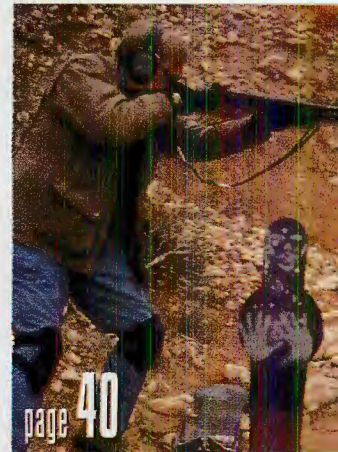
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Gary Paul Johnston



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# UNDER REVIEW

## PART II

### America's Darkest Counter-Terrorism Disaster?

BY J.D. CASH

Photos courtesy Premier Broadcasting & Publishing Company, Ltd.

Looking over my shoulder, the scenes are still vivid: Terrorist camps, whacked-out skinheads with machineguns, bloody bodies, broken lives, and the lies — the unceasing lies. That's this reporter's notebook on the Oklahoma City bombing and the events that followed.

Years of digging have brought forward a dimension that few realize exists. Where undulating whirlpools of intrigue flow through massive intelligence agencies assigned to monitor and carry out covert domestic and foreign operations against targets the "other world" will never know about. A place where collateral damage has consequences far beyond the body count. Where political and military careers hang in the balance. A spectrum where discovery of a failed operation can change the course of history. And cost you your life.

For most Americans the idea that Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols pulled together the bloodiest murder in America's 20th-century is ludicrous. Polls suggest 75% of American's dismiss the government's theory of the case.

Articles I've co-written for *SOF* on this subject, like those of fellow contributor, Roger Charles, provide support for a theory of the crime that continues to refine itself as additional evidence becomes available. (See: "Exposed: Clinton's OKC Cover-up," by Roger Charles, June 2001; "OKC's Unanswered Questions," by Roger Charles, July 2001; "Company Boy," by J.D. Cash and Roger Charles, September 2001; "OKC: From Bank Robbers to Bombers," by J.D. Cash and Roger Charles, October 2001.)

That theory is: The springboard for the operation was a Christian Identity compound in eastern Oklahoma called Elohim City. The date and target were chosen as payback for the execution in Arkansas of patriot martyr, Richard "Wayne" Snell. The men who pulled it off were members of a gang of bandits, calling itself the Aryan Republican Army (ARA). And the government tried to stop them, but failed. Enter the cover-up team.

This article continues that research and presents startling new evidence of a failed counter-terrorist operation. An oper-

ation that very likely contributed to the deaths of 168 persons. And the blood-trail leads directly to Janet Reno.

#### A Trip Down Memory Lane

Since the bombing, a number of neo-Nazis connected to the ARA and Elohim City, have gone to prison for crimes such as murder, bank robbery and conspiracy to overthrow the government. Most pled guilty. At the center of the drama: Andreas Carl Strassmeir — a man never charged, nor seriously questioned, by authorities, either for the bank robberies or the bombing.

Strassmeir remains the great enigma. His story is found in such excellent books as: *The Secret Life of Bill Clinton*, by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard; *Others Unknown*, by Stephen Jones; and *In Bad Company*, by Mark Hamm.

The "Forrest Gump" of the White Power Movement, Andreas is the son of Günter Strassmeir, once a potent political confidante of former-Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The elder-Strassmeir's resume includes State Secretary to Berlin at the time of the reunification of Germany.

In the Fatherland, Lieutenant Strassmeir of the Panzer Grenadiers was a hardened officer who received advanced training at a military academy in Hamburg. In the States, he was *Andy the German*, a bitter young man who provided paramilitary instruction to American neo-Nazis who made regular pilgrimages to Elohim City. That is, until a telephone call from Timothy McVeigh to Elohim City was leaked to the media. And, when that connection was alleged, suddenly Andy was "hot." Fellow travelers in the movement shunned him. Inexplicably, so did federal investigators.

In spite of this, or maybe *because* of the FBI's "see no evil attitude," Strassmeir became a national story. What took two additional years to become a national story was the existence of an ATF file alleging Strassmeir's deep involvement in a violent plot against the United States; allegations that triggered plans by the Tulsa ATF to arrest Strassmeir on the eve of the OKC bombing — a plan the FBI used its considerable muscle to block.





A year after the bombing, three of Strassmeir's roommates — all admitted members of the Aryan Republican Army — were under lock and key on bank robbery, conspiracy and explosives charges. But Strassmeir had been safely extracted — smuggled across the Mexican border and returned to Berlin. His lawyer, Kirk Lyons, of Black Mountain, North Carolina, wrote that Strassmeir managed this with the help of Special Forces alum David Hollaway and a team from Germany's GSG-9.

Enjoying the protection of his politically powerful father, Andy the German only consented to brief interviews with the United States government. Negotiated by lawyer Lyons, two five-minute phone calls from a federal prosecutor took place. The obvious question was dutifully asked: "Andreas, did you bomb the federal building?"

"Nein!"

"Thanks for your cooperation. Goodbye ... Oh, by the way, are you sure?"

"Ja."

"Have a nice day."

And then there was Dennis Mahon — Tom Metzger's man in Oklahoma for the White Aryan Resistance (W.A.R.). Mahon's ties to Elohim City and inmate Wayne Snell — the patriot martyr executed the same day as the bombing in OKC — made the W.A.R. leader an obvious target for investigators. After all, Mahon was barred from the UK, Germany and Canada. But local FBI agents couldn't get an interview. And when hundreds of other phone records were subpoenaed in the OKBOMB case, Mahon's were ignored.

Even the Oklahoma grand jury was stymied when Mahon became the only witness to plead the 5th — and walk away.

Perplexed, in February of 1996, McVeigh's attorney made clear his suspicions that the FBI had files on Strassmeir and

*Minutes after the blast, OKC SAC, Bob Ricks, (circled, in blue crime scene jacket) is at the Murrah Federal Building. Later, he told the media he was with several other FBI agents playing golf in a charity golf tournament in Shawnee, Oklahoma — almost an hour's drive away, when he received news of the bombing. The FBI now says it can't find a record of any OKC FBI agents playing in a golf tournament that day.*

Mahon which were not being shared with defense investigators. Stephen Jones told Judge Matsch there were too many "neat little coincidences" for the FBI to ignore them as suspects in the bombing. "The government must be hiding something," Jones insisted.

Prosecutors chided Mr. Jones, "Conspiracy mongering," they assured Matsch and reporters, present. Special Prosecutor Beth Wilkinson said the government was not withholding any evidence of Mahon's or Strassmeir's links to the crime. "Mere wisps in the wind," she described the subjects.

Matsch agreed with prosecutors and held Jones at bay.

It would be another year before McVeigh's attorney would hear the name Carol Howe. Afterward, he would be back in chambers with Matsch and Wilkinson, this time with proof the government had been lying about what the FBI really knew of a conspiracy at Elohim City.

The facts were: In September 1994, the Tulsa ATF opened a full-blown investigation into Mahon and his group, W.A.R. A complete range of tools was authorized, including consensual wiretaps for their confidential informant (CI) and body wires. Also, an apartment was rigged for video and audio recording, transmitters for vehicles were approved by the U.S. Attorney, and components for the manufacture of explosive devices were authorized for purchase.



In report after report, CI-183 (Carol Howe) provided evidence of an unfolding plot at Elohim City to launch terrorist actions against the government. Her file was a smoldering-hot tool for prosecutors to use for indictments. But just six weeks before the bombing, they were stopped dead in their tracks. The ATF had stepped on something big.

### Damage Control

When the bomb went off, Carol was immediately taken to the FBI command center. The CI's initial FBI 302 reflects she gave the feds an "I told you so" speech. For three days Carol was debriefed about the plot at Elohim City. The Department of Justice had motive, opportunity, and means for the crime — the "mother's milk" of any successful investigation. Ms. Howe was ordered by the ATF to return to Elohim City for more. After doubling her rates, she reluctantly agreed.

In the meantime, Carol's FBI file was doctored. All the proper names, including Elohim City, were misspelled. No computer name search would be able to find any record of that debriefing. Only some nosy reporters and a dedicated lawyer would uncover it. And the shenanigans didn't stop there.

Shortly after Howe was returned to the Elohim City investigation, she was quickly removed. Notes in her file reveal the FBI wanted the ATF completely out of Elohim City, and the Treasury's investigation into W.A.R. dissolved.

CI-183's handlers told the 24-year-old her cover had been blown. Howe was ordered to blend and keep quiet. Her life was on the line. A memo from the Tulsa ATF to the Dallas SAC is revealing: "This informant is involved with the OKC bomb case which is pending prosecution in Denver and was the key in identifying individuals at Elohim City, which is tied to the OKC bomb case ... Individuals who pose immediate danger to CI 183 are: Dennis Mahon, members of Elohim City, any sympathizer to McVeigh, i.e., militias."

It would take nearly two years to unearth the 5' tall, 99-pound former debutante with the Nazi tattoo on her arm. Before I could, other bits of evidence formed a disturbing pattern.

On my first trip to OKC after the bombing, I was stunned to discover the remarkable difference between what the natives were saying and what was in print.

At an elevator repair facility, men told me they were across the street in the federal courthouse when the truck-bomb detonated. A fourth was sitting in his pickup truck a mere 200 feet due east of the Murrah Building.

The three men from the courthouse decided to clear the Murrah elevators first. That was their training. Cops and paramedics arriving could tend to those trapped in the rubble.

But after running a thorough check, the repairmen were surprised to find no one was trapped on the elevators.

An interesting story, but so what?



*This unmarked crime scene vehicle is identical to those the ATF uses at bombing investigations. Question is: Why is it parked outside the Murrah Federal Building only an hour after the blast? No agency seems to know its origin. The closest ATF and FBI response vehicles of this kind were supposedly stationed in cities several hours away. The ATF now says it cannot locate any of the travel records concerning three National Response Team vehicles of this type, which they admit were used in the Oklahoma City bombing investigation. Oklahoma Highway Patrol dispatch records reflect that they escorted the first known NRT vehicle to OKC from Texas, late in the afternoon of 19 April 1995.*

By the time I arrived for the interview, the \$64,000 question in Oklahoma City was: "Where the hell was the ATF that day?"

An unusual statistic piqued the public's interest. No one from the ATF had been killed. None of their field agents had been reported hospitalized. Yet the ATF offices were totaled and two men involved in clerical work for the ATF were badly injured. So, where were the eight or so field agents and their manager that morning? The speculation was turning mean.

The *Daily Oklahoman* and the AP came to the rescue. They reported that one of the ATF agents had been trapped on the ninth floor, knocked unconscious by collapsing materials. Then (so the story went), after coming to, the agent said he made his escape along a concrete windowsill with a 45-degree angle, 100-

feet above the ground.

And the Resident Agent in Charge of the local office?

From the AP and *Daily Oklahoman*, we learn he was in an elevator that dropped from the 8th to the 3rd floor.

And the rest of the ATF's field agents?

Well, they were still home in bed, or on assignment elsewhere when the bomb erupted.

It was all crap!

Hordes of photographers surrounding the building somehow missed the remarkable feat of the window-walking ATF agent. Instead, photos show him in a spotless, bright-blue raid jacket — holding a fireproof box out the window of his ninth-floor office. Subsequent court testimony left many with the impression this agent raced to the building *after* the blast, to recover the mysterious box from the ATF's evidence locker.

And Super-Agent, the guy who claimed to have survived



*Author's investigation led in many directions. From left: Timothy McVeigh's lead investigator, Richard Reyna, author J.D. Cash, Terry Reed of Mena/Iran-Contra fame and Randy Weaver.*



a 50-foot freefall ... and walked away? His boss issued a press release claiming that: After surviving the harrowing freefall, the ATF office manager was able to tear the doors off the elevator and lead a number of the wounded to safety.

Of course, none of that happened.

The elevator repairmen assured me they later checked the entire system and photographed every cable. They even checked for telltale signs of over-speeding. The experts' prognosis: No elevators free-fell. The scenario was so ludicrous, eventually the ATF and the FBI admitted it never happened.

And the mass-exodus of the building by the remainder of the field agents?

Photographs from the crime scene show ATF agents swarming the area only moments after the blast. In fact, before the smoke cleared, one of the field agents was on the phone to the Dallas regional office, reporting that an ANFO bomb had just blown-up the federal building.

Damned good police work for a guy calling-in from home. All of which supported the next important clue.



Pat Center, introduced at McVeigh Trial

*This ATF agent testified that he was knocked-out by the blast when the ceiling and walls collapsed on him. See if you can find any dust on this guy's clothing. He later told the court in the McVeigh trial that he escaped from the building by scaling this ledge for some 30-feet. Uh huh .... Later, "Luke Skywalker" told the media that the fireproof safe he's showing to agents at ground-level here, had \$250 of his kid's savings bonds inside. With 168 dead bodies around, that was setting priorities.*

It came from the elevator employee who experienced the blast while sitting in his pickup — parked less than a football field from the epicenter of the explosion.

The witness recalled that when the dust settled, he saw the streets spilling over with federal agents

and cops. Some in SWAT gear. "I was in the service in Vietnam, Mr. Cash. I know how things happen," the witness explained. "These men were too well prepared. They had to have been there on a stakeout."

That led to more.

Lots of folks said they saw men in bomb squad outfits near the Murrah that morning, before 0902. Many also reported seeing the Oklahoma County Bomb Squad truck parked nearby — 90 minutes *before* the blast.

And then there was the matter of security for the building. There was none that day. At least the men regularly assigned were not present. The story was: The head of the Federal Protective Service had taken the day off to help his mother-in-law move some furniture. The only other security officer assigned to the structure told me he stayed across the street all morning at the federal courthouse.

And the federal judges? Nearly all have since been quoted as saying they were at home — or running errands. One even gave an interview to a reporter from his hometown newspaper and said he'd received a security tip and decided to work at home the morning of the attack.

Then there were the fire department dispatchers. Turns out they, too, received a tip. The call came from law-enforcement on the Friday before the bombing, warning them to be on alert for terrorists.

The totality of this tremendous amount of evidence suspiciously pointed to a busted counter-terrorist operation. Somehow the bad guys had pulled this off — in spite of advance warning. I decided to ask McVeigh about the possibility his gang had been infiltrated.

During a 90-minute interview with the "boy next door," I explained what I'd been running into. As I did, his eyes grew round. After it was all laid out, I leaned to within inches of his face: "Timmy, do me a favor. Before they pull the plug on you, tell me ... write me ... call me ... whatever. Just tell me how you outfoxed the foxes."

Tim smiled, but never called.

*In next month's conclusion, we take a probing look at stunning new evidence of the government's failed sting operation in Oklahoma City.*

*J. D. Cash continues his search for McVeigh's accomplices, i.e. "others unknown." ✕*



courtesy U.S. Government

*This might be the first time this photo has been published. McVeigh at Tinker AFB after being choppered in by FBI agents on 21 April. He told author: "I was waiting for the bullet. I knew how Oswald felt." It takes a patsy to know one.*