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Pool Photo/Getty Images

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Soldiers from Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry battalion go to their positions, 15 March 2002, during a combat mission in the rugged Shah-i-Kot mountains, 25 km (15 miles) south-east of Gardez, Afghanistan. See story on page 40



Canadian Press/ by Stephen Thorne



Odin Crowe



Gary Paul Johnston

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UNDER REVIEW

PART 3

FBI's Countdown To Disaster: That Ticking Bomb Is OKC

BY J.D. CASH

Photos courtesy Premier Broadcasting & Publishing Company, Ltd.

The meltdown at the FBI, INS and CIA over 9/11 is long overdue. Thousands may have died because a few well-paid bureaucrats failed this country, miserably. To provide effective oversight of these agencies, Congress should also delve into the FBI's \$85-million investigation of the Oklahoma City bombing.

At no time in the government's presentation of evidence in the Timothy McVeigh or Terry Nichols trials were plausible explanations offered to refute the accounts provided by exceedingly credible eyewitnesses, who claimed — and remain steadfast — that others were involved.

During the Nichols' trial, we learned the FBI generated more than 1,000 latent prints, but never ran them in their computer to see who was with McVeigh in his cars and motel rooms and at the Ryder truck rental on 17 April 1995.

What reporters and others did learn in Denver only highlighted the weaknesses in the FBI's investigation.

Jury forewoman Niki Deutchman summoned her courage, though. After a "gag order" on jurors was removed, she walked to a nearby park filled with reporters and spoke honestly. "The government dropped the ball. ... I think there are other people out there, and decisions were made early on that Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols were who they were looking for; and the same sort of resources were not used to try to find out who else might be involved."

Months later, even Judge Matsch questioned the FBI investigation. During a sentencing hearing for Nichols, Matsch asked government prosecutor, Larry Mackey, to keep FBI agents on the case, because, "There are many unanswered questions surrounding all this."

Connecting The Dots

Last year, I filed a number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to various agencies of the federal government and Open Record Act requests to the state of Oklahoma to learn what hadn't been revealed about the Oklahoma City bombing case. I found plenty.

In an August 1996 memorandum obtained from the FBI marked "Director of the FBI to the Philadelphia office": The FBI admitted it had a videotape with statements referring to

a plot to commit a "massacre" at a federal building. The tape was made by terrorists — only weeks before the holocaust that visited Oklahoma City.

According to the FBI memo, the statements were made by a bank robbery gang called the Aryan Republican Army (ARA). ARA members received paramilitary training at Elohim City, an offbeat Christian Identity camp in Oklahoma, linked to McVeigh.

Two of the men in the tape are Peter Kevin Langan and Richard Lee Guthrie, Jr. (deceased) — leaders of a cell of revolutionaries that operated from a "safe house" in Pittsburg, Kansas, at the time of the bombing.

Langan had been pulled out of jail in Georgia by the Secret Service in 1993 and put to work to infiltrate the Aryan Nation and find old friend, Richard Guthrie. The SS possessed intelligence that Guthrie was plotting to assassinate top political figures. But Langan, the son of a Vietnam-era CIA officer, decided to double-cross the agency and "fall off the end of the earth."

Ditching his SS handler, Langan hooked-up with Guthrie — a Navy SEAL dropout with EOD training and penchants for genocide and race-based revolution. The two headed for Elohim City in search of recruits.

Referring to the smoking-gun admissions made in January of 1995, the memo advises: (Note: The FBI made all redactions before they released this material.)

"Langan pointed to a poster which contains the ARA 'Hit List' that included pictures of Attorney General Janet Reno, FBI Director Louis Freeh, President William Clinton and Senator Howard Metzenbaum and stated that those pictured have already had death sentences passed against them or have been banished by military tribunal. Langan makes reference in the video to his 'Serb Brothers' and their battle for ethnic cleansing. Later in the video, the other three ARA members, Guthrie, (additional names redacted) all wearing Halloween masks, can be seen in the background while Langan asks the viewers to work for revolution and to adhere to the program of Christian Identity. At another point in the video, Langan asks the other members if they are ready for the 'Courthouse Massacre.' One answers in the affirmative

and displays a semi-automatic handgun and says there will be many congressmen and judges there.”

A copy of the video confirms the FBI memo. Near the end of the videotape, Langan is with three men, all wearing disguises. Langan turns to his comrades and says: “Do you want to join ‘Unit 7’ at the courthouse massacre?”

Guthrie, wearing a Halloween mask, pulls out a pistol and hand grenade, then says, “Oh, yes! There’s going to be a big party down there, judges and congressmen. We’re trying to get a war started.”

Langan responds: “And don’t forget your cake!”

Mr. Guthrie told the FBI that, in the fall of 1994, he drove to Pennsylvania and met with Mark Thomas, the head of the Aryan Nations — Eastern Command. The purpose of the Thomas meeting was to get permission from the Aryan Nation to form an additional cell. Presumably, this is the so-called “Unit 7.”

On 2 May 1995, the FBI obtained an affidavit from Jennifer McVeigh. Timothy McVeigh’s sister admitted her brother was involved in robbing banks and that she “laundered” some of the stolen cash.

Two years later, when ARA leader Mark Thomas was arrested for a role in the bank robbery scheme, he acknowledged at a press conference that a member of the ARA, Kevin McCarthy, assisted McVeigh in the bombing. Two weeks later, a prosecutor in Philadelphia said Thomas received a deal from the government and recanted that statement.

Later, Thomas’ girlfriend met with the FBI. In separate interviews, she warned that Mark Thomas told her in late 1994, that his gang would bomb a federal building as payback for Waco. She also said Thomas was at Elohim City the week



Dressed in TAC team gear, OHP Trooper Lieutenant Bill Hughes left crime scene only 11 minutes (at 9:13 AM) after blast. Hughes was OHP’s “top gun” and head of the firearm academy at this time. Cars on fire behind the trooper confirm the time on his watch is accurate. By 9:25 AM those fires were out. Hughes’ duty station is 20 minutes from scene. Documents received under State Open-Records Act confirm an OHP TAC team was brought to Oklahoma City for surveillance duty on Monday, before the blast. They may have seen too much. According to OHP Dispatch logs, all members of the OHP were placed under a “gag order” by the FBI on the afternoon of the blast.

before the bombing.

Referring to Richard Butler’s Aryan Nation organization, once headquartered at Hayden Lake, Idaho, the Director’s Memo states: “Cell members collectively committed 22 armed robberies from November 1992 to December 1995, netting approximately \$250,000. Investigation has determined that the proceeds of these robberies have provided funding for white extremists including the ARA, as well as, for (name redacted) and his supremacist organization. ... It is believed based on investigation conducted to date, that funds may have been passed to the Aryan Nations Church of Jesus Christ Christian, Hayden Lake, Idaho.”

Assessing the chilling evidence, the memo summarizes the Bureau’s plan: “The violent acts perpetrated by the ARA, as well as the rhetoric, comply with the four required circumstances described in the Attorney General’s guidelines for the initiation of a DS/T (Domestic Security/Terrorism) investigation. The four circumstances are as follows: 1) The magnitude of the threatened harm, i.e., political Assassination, Genocide, Bombings, Bank and Armored Car Robberies; 2) The likelihood it will occur, i.e., violent acts advocated by members of the ARA have occurred on a consistent basis over the past decade. This pattern, coupled with the comments and views of the group’s leadership, tend to assure a continuance of these types of actions to attain their political goals; 3) The immediacy of the threat, i.e., the Aryan Nations is an organization whose members have historically been involved in criminal activity aimed at the violent overthrow of the U.S. Government; 4) The danger to privacy and free expression, i.e., members of the ARA have prepared a video encouraging other white supremacists to join cells for the commission of assassinations and other criminal acts and have committed violent acts in furtherance of their desire to violently overthrow the U.S. Government. Based on their criminal patterns of activity, it is inherent upon the FBI to continue its investigation into their activities, funding and associations.”

Two of the young men in the ARA videotape were Scott Stedeford and Kevin McCarthy, young Philadelphia skin-heads recruited by Mark Thomas into the Aryan Nation and sent to Elohim City for terrorist training. Their roommate at Elohim City was paramilitary guru Andreas Carl Strassmeir aka “Andy the German.”

After making the video, ARA gang members drove to Arizona. The same week the ARA arrived at a campground near Flagstaff, McVeigh rented a motel in Kingman, then retrieved from a storage locker explosives that the government says were used to blow-up the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

Records from an ATF informant’s file reveal that in January 1995 the threat level at Elohim City reached a point that the Tulsa office opted for arrest warrants. Preparations for a raid commenced. On 7 February, an Oklahoma State trooper flying photo-recon over Elohim City for the ATF learned of the pending action. On 22 February, the trooper contacted the Tulsa office of the ATF and warned them they were stepping on an FBI operation. According to FBI records, that operation may have been the largest domestic undercover operation since “COINTELPRO.”

When civil libertarians discovered the abuses, COINTELPRO was officially shut down in 1971. The replacement: VAAPCON or Violence Against Abortion Providers Conspiracy, emerged much later.

VAAPCON was passed in early 1994. The broadly worded statute added muscle to conspiracy laws regarding bombings and violence by fringe groups. Direction for the project came

from Attorney General Janet Reno.

Reno told senior members of the FBI she wanted evidence of a conspiracy between religious fundamentalists and militia groups. Ms. Reno was determined to prove there really was a "Vast Rightwing Conspiracy."

Larry Potts and Danny Coulson of the Criminal Division of the FBI were assigned roles in VAAPCON. In August of 1994, the FBI launched Major Case 111 (MC-111).

Also in August 1994, Carol E. Howe (aka "Freya") was signed to a confidential informant's contract in the Tulsa offices of the ATF. The former debutante was now CI-183. Immediately, the 5' tall, 99-pound beauty began filing voluminous reports about illegal activities taking place at Elohim City.

Elohim City was suspected of being the nerve center for widespread drug manufacture, as well as weapons and explosives violations. Howe's reports focused on persons who were preparing for an outright war with the government. And the worse thing that could happen *did*. In February of 1995, the state of Arkansas announced plans to execute Richard Wayne Snell.

Wayne Snell was an icon within the far-right, and members of his family lived at Elohim City. The date set for the martyr's execution: 19 April 1995 — Patriot's Day, and the second anniversary of Waco. Whoever was behind this decision obviously wanted to send a message. And those on the fringe got it.

The same week that Snell's execution date was announced, Tim McVeigh had a fake driver's license made. The name on the license was Robert Kling. The date of birth was listed as 19 April. The license would be presented in Junction City, where a truck used in the bombing was rented.

Snell's spiritual advisor, Pastor Robert Millar of Elohim City, called it an "In your face challenge!" He brought Andy Strassmeir and his ARA gang members before the congregation and told them they must act before the next anniversary of Waco.

Howe's reports reflect that men at Elohim City were making trips to Oklahoma City and Tulsa, "casing" federal buildings. Carol and her ATF handler checked into a motel in OKC to go over, step-by-step, everywhere she'd been with the Elomites.

In Arizona, during the first week in February, McVeigh registered at a budget motel in downtown Kingman. ARA members Pete Langan, Richard Guthrie, Scott Stedford and Kevin McCarthy set-up camp 90 miles away in a remote location on the Apache Indian reservation, called Camp Verde.

The manager of the Kingman motel where McVeigh stayed recalled a number of young men hanging around his room — drinking beer on the porch and playing loud music.

A few days later, a bomb rocked suburban Kingman. In the early hours of 21 February, a small ANFO device detonated near the back of a house on old Highway 66. The occupants were shaken, but survived.

The target of the blast, Rocky McPeak, told a federal grand jury that local dope dealers Clark Vollmer and Tim McVeigh were involved in payback, McPeak believed, for his failure to go through with a narcotics deal. Three hours after the McPeak bombing, the SAC of the Phoenix FBI office, Weldon Kennedy, made his way to the same area where the ARA was camped. Coincidence? If so, it's the beginning of the most amazing



Secret Service snitch-turned-radical revolutionary and bank bandit, "Commander Pedro" (Peter Langan) displays loot from bank heist in recruiting video seized by FBI. During taping, Langan brags about a "Court House Massacre" the gang is planning. Film was made days before ARA left Kansas for Arizona where explosives were stored that only weeks later were, according to prosecutors, used to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

series of coincidences to occur in this Byzantine affair.

Kennedy's travel records reflect a meeting with a Sedona FBI supervisor and the local police at Camp Verde. If they had the ARA and McVeigh under surveillance, it's not mentioned. On 23 February, SA Marty Weber, of the OKC FBI office, notified the ATF's Tulsa manager of a meeting with Bob Ricks about a proposed Elohim City raid and arrest of Strassmeir and others. Bob Ricks later confirmed that he stopped the ATF raid on Elohim City and those arrests. Days later, on 27 February, Ricks flew to Dallas and met with the DEA's new man assigned to run EPIC, Phil Jordan.

The El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) is staffed from 15 federal agencies including CIA, FBI, ATF, DEA, INS, Secret Service, Department of State and the Defense Intelligence Agency. EPIC is also the same organization federal law enforcement used at Waco in '93. Only through EPIC can law-enforcement gain the assistance of Joint Task Force 6 — also headquartered at Fort Bliss, Texas. Specialties include surveillance aircraft, transponders to track vehicles and listening devices for telephone conversations.

According to procedures, should the FBI wish to tap the resources of JTF-6, they must exhibit a "drug-nexus" to their investigation. And to operate in Oklahoma, the DOD would have to authorize the expansion of JTF-6 area of operations from its existing state border areas of New Mexico, Arizona, Texas and California.

The same month Ricks met with the new chief of EPIC, an authorization expanding JTF-6 to all 50 states was signed at the DOD. Memoranda surrounding this authorization are "Classified."

FBI travel records reveal that on 20 March, Bob Ricks and Phoenix SAC Weldon Kennedy arrived at Quantico, Virginia. For two days, both were involved in training and discussions with the Critical Incident Response Group" (CIRG) — a sophisticated cadre of specialists.

CIRG's mission is to provide back-up for FBI commanders involved in a counter-terrorist operation. The team brings to the table all the FBI's crisis units, including HRT, FBI SWAT personnel, behavioral scientists and hostage negotiators.

Whether ex-Deputy Director Potts or then-Deputy Assistant Director Danny Coulson attended the 20-22 March 1995 CIRG meeting is not known. The FBI admits both Potts and Coulson's travel records are "missing" for the period of 1 March thru 18 April 1995. A spokesman for the FBI confirmed that the travel records listing the locations and purpose of official travel for the two have been "mysteriously" removed.

What can be confirmed is Danny Coulson, the founding commander of the HRT, contacted a reformed right-wing terrorist and had him flown to Quantico to meet with CIRG. On 28 March, Kerry Noble arrived at the FBI training facility and met with members of crisis unit.

There, Mr. Noble suggested techniques to negotiate with a cult group under barricade conditions. He should know. Ten years earlier, Coulson arrested Noble, after the FBI surrounded a Christian Identity compound where Noble and others lived.

Known as the Covenant, Sword and Arm of the Lord (CSA), the Arkansas paramilitary camp was surrounded by the FBI on 19 April 1985. Agents had information on various plots the group was involved in, and that fugitives from Robert Mathew's "Order" were hiding there.

Kerry Noble later admitted that in 1983, he was present when Wayne Snell and others at the CSA put together a plan to bomb the Murrah Federal Building. Noble said the bomb plot was only shelved when the bomb-builder injured himself in an explosion.

On 21 March 1995, a 16-hour course called "Mass Casualties" was convened in Woodward, Oklahoma. Organized by the Department of Civil Emergency Management, county emergency reps from the western half of the state attended a three-day seminar. The course work focused on a "fictional accident" involving an explosion that destroys a school, killing many of the 300 persons in attendance.

FBI travel records for the Phoenix office show that on 29 March, SAC Weldon Kennedy parked his car somewhere, obtained a parking receipt, and then disappeared from his office until 13 April.

No destination is listed other than a \$15.00 charge for something he calls, "FBI spring training." But on 30 March, a separate set of travel and expense vouchers show that Kennedy had boarded a commercial plane and flown to El Paso for a meeting at the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC).

After briefly returning to Phoenix, Kennedy traveled to Mexico City and checked into the Sheraton Maria Isabel Hotel for a meeting at the U.S. Embassy — again with members of the EPIC team. Three days later, Kennedy departed Mexico and returned to Phoenix.

On 14 April, OKC Fire Department dispatchers received a warning from law enforcement that they should go on-alert for an act of terrorism expected the following week. After the bombing, most of the department's dispatch records for the 19th were destroyed.

Now, only 72 hours before the blast, Oklahoma officials appeared to be making additional preparations linked to a counterterrorist operation.

On 17 April, troopers belonging to the Western Division of Oklahoma Highway Patrol "Tact Team" arrived in Oklahoma City for "surveillance exercises." The team included a bomb squad and was among the first on the scene when the bomb went off at the federal building.

18 April: Agents of the Oklahoma Bureau of Investigation began arriving in Oklahoma City. Pay records list criminal investigation project #115 as the reason. Project 115 later becomes criminal case CR95-623 — the OSBI's number assigned to the bomb investigation.

With the assault in OKC fewer than



This is not how the FBI and OHP dress for a crime-scene investigation! Captured only minutes after the blast, these heavily armed members of the FBI SWAT and OHP TAC team are ditching the tell-tale clothing in back of an OHP cruiser. This area was cordoned off from the press corps at the time. Evidence of clip was only recently discovered by author.

19 April: During pre-dawn hours, witnesses reported activity around the Murrah Building involving members of a bomb squad with dogs.

19 April: Sometime before 9:00 AM, members of Oklahoma's Department of Civil Emergency Management gathered at the National Guard Military Academy. In attendance were representatives from every law enforcement, military, and other state and federal agencies that respond to disasters in Oklahoma. All records of communications between the team at the National Guard facility and the command center bunker later disappear. Officials claim the records were destroyed during a computer software upgrade.

19 April, 9:02 AM: A blast decimated a substantial part of downtown OKC.

19 April, 10:35 AM: OKC police dispatch records record that DOD personnel from as far away as 142 miles, were *already* at the scene. It states: "Ft. Sill Dog Teams on-scene; 2 Vance AFB (teams) on scene — dogs standing by; 2 Shepherd AFB Bomb Dog (teams) on-scene."



While author was interviewing witnesses who were present when McVeigh and others were at Lady Godiva's topless bar in Tulsa, the nude body of Shawn Tea Farrens (right) was found in her apartment. Caught on the club's dressing room security videotape 11 days before the blast, Tara (left) asked Shawn Tea if she was interested in a "date" later that night with the men bragging about what they were going to do on 19 April 1995. After describing the money the young men were flashing, Farrens was overheard saying, "I'll find a way to scam them, somehow." An FBI agent later told the author he believed the woman was murdered. Local police wrote it up as a suicide/drug overdose.

24 hours away, Weldon Kennedy returned to El Paso. In a memo, he wrote that the DOD had reserved a block of hotel rooms. The motel reservations were made by JTF-6. In a post-bombing memo of 8 May 1995, Kennedy records that he was, "Ordered to go to El Paso by Headquarters, FBI."

19 April: Dallas SAC Danny Coulson's records for this day, somehow, survived. Obtained through a FOIA request: A computer-generated receipt [which is in the author's files] reveals Coulson checked into the Oklahoma City Embassy Suites Hotel at 12:20 AM. This is 8 hours and 42 minutes before the bomb goes off. Coulson lists the purpose of his trip to Oklahoma City as: MC-111. This is VAAPCON!

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21 April: ATF records reflect Carol Howe's handler completed a "lead sheet" for the FBI. The agent noted: "E/C's (Elohim City) leader, Robert Millar, was contacted by McVeigh on 5 April 1995 after he [McVeigh] had contacted a Ryder Rental that day."

Months later, defense lawyers received copies of calls McVeigh and Nichols made using a calling card. The details of the two calls the Tulsa ATF agent refers to are exactly right. The first is from a motel in Kingman to a Ryder truck rental in Arizona. Then, 20-seconds later, McVeigh called Elohim City and is reported to have told a woman, "Tell Andy I'll be there, soon."

How could Carol's ATF "handler" know anything about calls on 21 April, made with a calling card that was not even discovered until the following day, 22 April, when the FBI and ATF raided Terry Nichols' home in Herington, Kansas and found the pin #?

Continued on page 81

Epilogue

When the bomb went off, Weldon Kennedy left the JTF-6 Command Center and returned to Phoenix. Later, he flew to Oklahoma City. Kennedy was appointed by FBI Director Louis Freeh to head the OKBOMB investigation. In that position Kennedy answered directly to Larry Potts. Kennedy's immediate subordinates were Bob Ricks and Danny Coulson. With the exception of Freeh, each man's tenure was to be short.

Kennedy lasted a month as head of the OKBOMB investigation. A few weeks later, Bob Ricks announced his retirement. That summer, Coulson and Potts took paid leaves from the FBI — both were under criminal investigation for the cover-up at Ruby Ridge. Two years later, they were cleared and allowed to retire with full benefits.

In August 1997, Carol Howe was charged with weapons violations. It turns out the government's evidence was a section of pipe and some cannon fuse ATF records reveal she was told to obtain as part of their investigation at Elohim City. Equally bizarre — the jury learned it was Howe's ATF "handler's" husband — an FBI agent — who participated in the raid on the home where the questionable evidence was seized. Ms. Howe was acquitted and now lives in seclusion, with a new identity.

The man who headed the OKBOMB investigation, Danny Defenbaugh, resigned recently, in disgrace, after a report critical of his performance was released by the DOJ's Office of Inspector General.

In 1996, Andreas Strassmeir crossed the Mexican border and fled to Europe with the aid of former Special Forces operator David Hollaway. Next, Strassmeir surfaced in Dublin, where he shared an apartment with young men associated with *Sinn Fein*. Strassmeir later returned to Germany.

Elohim City leader, Robert Millar, suffered a heart attack and died on 28 May 2001. On 11 June 2001, McVeigh was executed in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Terry Nichols faces a similar fate in Oklahoma. Charges are pending on 160 first-degree murder counts.

Two members of Langan's ARA bank robbery cell — both implicated in the bombing by eyewitnesses — were recently released from prison. Their leader, Mark Thomas, is scheduled to be back on the streets on 19 January 2004. ✂

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