



## Terror, Lies & Memos

Several months after his brother's death, Jesse Trentadue received an anonymous telephone call. The caller claimed to work in the federal prison facility in Oklahoma City where Trentadue's brother, Kenny Trentadue, had died under very troubling circumstances. "The FBI killed your brother," said the voice on the other end of the line. "It was a case of mistaken identity. They thought he was one of the Midwest Bank Robbers."

Jesse Trentadue says he initially dismissed the call as a crank call. "I'd never heard of any Midwest Bank Robbers and couldn't see how that would have anything to do with Kenny's death anyway," he told *THE NEW AMERICAN*. "It just didn't make any sense."

Several months later, however, he read something that gave him a jolt and caused him to wonder if maybe that "crank" call had been legitimate. The jolt came in the form of an article in the *Los Angeles Times* about a federal inmate who was found hanging in his cell, much like his brother Kenny. What got his attention was the fact that the man was identified as a member of a group calling themselves the Aryan Republican Army (ARA). Following a spree of bank robberies, the ARA bandits had been dubbed by the media as the Midwest Bank Robbers. The ARA bank robber who had "committed suicide" was Richard Lee Guthrie.

Suddenly, the anonymous telephone call began to trouble Trentadue. While not necessarily buying the "mistaken identity" story, he had to admit that Guthrie was a very close match for his brother: age, size, weight, height, body build, facial characteristics, mustache, tattoo, former convict. Both men even drove similar-looking pickup trucks. But what did all of this add up to? He didn't know, but of this much he was certain, Kenny had not committed suicide, as prison officials claimed. He had been murdered, savagely beaten and strangled to death. And federal officials were going to great lengths to cover up or destroy all evidence that might finger who was responsible for his death.

### Hidden Bombshell Documents

It was not until this year, when Trentadue obtained copies of FBI memos concerning the April 19, 1995





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Oklahoma City bombing, that he had the clues he needed to begin putting the pieces of the puzzle together. An August 1996 memo from FBI Director Louis Freeh tied Richard Lee Guthrie and other ARA bank robbers to Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of carrying out the bombing and was executed in 2001. The memo noted that Guthrie and his fellow robbers frequented a rural Aryan redoubt in eastern Oklahoma known as Elohim City, which this magazine has covered extensively over the past decade. Freeh's memo specifically mentions "Timothy McVeigh" by name and mentions one of McVeigh's telephone calls to Elohim City. It also notes that at the time of the memo, Guthrie was in FBI custody and states that "much of the information provided by Guthrie has been corroborated" by "a source" inside Elohim City. (We will come back to that very interesting source later on.)

The FBI memo mentioned above continues with a sentence in which two words are blacked out, or "redacted," as the government puts it. The sentence reads:

GUTHRIE BOTH ADMITTED TO PAYING [word redacted] MONEY DERIVED FROM BANK ROBBERIES AND IDENTIFIED [word redacted] AS AN ACCOMPLICE IN CERTAIN BANK ROBBERIES.

Jesse Trentadue believes the redaction in each case conceals the word "MCVEIGH." This writer agrees with that assessment, based on my own knowledge of the case. McVeigh's name fits the size of the redacted space in the memo, but more importantly, it also fits as the most logical word for the context of the memo and the evidence in the case. FBI records show that Timothy McVeigh's sister, Jennifer McVeigh, told federal investigators that her brother was involved in bank robberies and that she had helped launder proceeds from one of those robberies. This and a superabundance of additional evidence redundantly tie McVeigh, the ARA, and Elohim City together.

The government could easily solve this mystery by simply releasing an unredacted copy of the August 1996 memo, along with any other related memos and documents. FBI and Department of Justice (DOJ) officials, of course, have refused to do this. Which is why Jesse Trentadue is suing to have these documents released, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

### **Elohim City Contact**

An earlier memo from the FBI's Louis Freeh, in January 1996, states:

PRIOR OKBOMB INVESTIGATION DETERMINED THAT MCVEIGH HAD PLACED A TELEPHONE CALL TO ELOHIM CITY ON 4/5/95, A DAY THAT HE WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO RECRUIT A SECOND CONSPIRATOR TO ASSIST IN THE OKBOMB ATTACK. THE OKBOMB COMMAND POST IS ATTEMPTING TO VERIFY THE VERSION OF EVENTS AS SET FORTH BY THE SOURCE AND TO DEVELOP FURTHER INFORMATION.

Who did McVeigh call at Elohim City? THE NEW AMERICAN was the first national media organization to obtain copies of the McVeigh/Nichols telephone records and to report (in 1996) on Timothy McVeigh's calls to Elohim City: to one Andreas Karl Strassmeir, a German soldier who trained the Elohim City residents in terror tactics and the use of firearms and explosives. The McVeigh calls have since been confirmed by Strassmeir himself, as well as by other Elohim City residents.

Louis Freeh's January 1996 memo also has strategic words redacted, and it appears the redactions were made specifically to obscure the name of Andreas "Andi" Strassmeir. The memo notes that the individual in question "allegedly has had a lengthy relationship with Timothy McVeigh," is living (at that time) in North Carolina, "and plans to leave the U.S. via Mexico, in the near future." At the time the memo was written, Strassmeir had fled Elohim City and was living with radical attorney Kirk Lyons in North Carolina. Lyons helped Strassmeir "leave the U.S. via Mexico" shortly thereafter.



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After fleeing back to Germany, Strassmeir admitted in several interviews – one with *THE NEW AMERICAN* – to having met McVeigh, but insisted his connection to McVeigh was simply a onetime, chance meeting at a Tulsa gun show. He also acknowledged that McVeigh had called for him at Elohim City before the OKC bombing, but claimed that he had not been around to receive the call. The FBI memo acknowledges what the phone records also show: McVeigh called Elohim City at least twice, on April 5 and April 17. The April 5 call was especially noteworthy in that McVeigh made the call only two minutes after having called Ryder Truck Rental for his initial inquiry about the vehicle he would use for the ammonium nitrate truck bomb. So, the very first person McVeigh calls immediately after initiating plans for the truck bomb is Strassmeir. Surely anyone who has been through “Police Detective 101” would recognize this as a clue and see Strassmeir as a prime suspect. But even though Louis Freeh notes in his memo Strassmeir’s location and his intention to flee the country, he dispatches no agents to arrest Strassmeir.

Even more telling, as reported by this magazine nine years ago, Strassmeir’s pal and attorney, Kirk Lyons, admitted that McVeigh had called his law office in Black Mountain, North Carolina, on April 17, 1995, *two days before the bombing, and had talked for 20 minutes!*

What was discussed? Incredibly, federal authorities pretended to be completely disinterested in learning the answer to that question. Mr. Lyons was notorious for representing violent and virulently racist organizations, from the Aryan Nations to the KKK. His law office received one of McVeigh’s last and most lengthy phone calls before the bombing, and he was representing and housing a foreign fugitive (i.e., Strassmeir) who was tied to McVeigh, the FBI’s lead suspect. Instead of swarming all over Lyons and his associates, Louis Freeh and Attorney General Janet Reno gave them a pass while sending hundreds of FBI agents on dead-end “leads” to produce mountains of paper, which would later be cited as evidence of a thorough investigation. Clinton, Reno, Freeh, and their faithful minions insisted there was nothing worthy of investigation at Elohim City.

However, a recently discovered FBI document dated February 24-25, 1997, proves there was *plenty* to investigate. The three-page document is a “302” (FBI report) on Kirk Lyons’ assistant, David Hollaway. In it, Hollaway confirms to an FBI source, whose name is redacted, what we had learned years ago from other sources: it was he — David Hollaway — with whom McVeigh had talked in the 20-minute mystery call less than 48 hours before the bombing.

The 302 notes that Hollaway spent eight years in the U.S. Army Special Forces and was a pilot for the CIA for two years. More ominously, it reports that Hollaway “was able to provide technical details concerning [McVeigh’s] truck bomb and ANFO (ammonium nitrate/fuel oil) ... with *an alarming degree of specificity.*” (Emphasis added.) The FBI source reported that Hollaway’s information and cagey demeanor “provided the indication that Hollaway was attempting to communicate an involvement on his part in that bombing without verbally acknowledging participation.” The FBI source in the 302 was clearly alarmed by Hollaway’s knowledge and behavior and believed him to be involved in the OKC bombing.

The FBI 302 also reports that “Hollaway did admit to currently being in possession of an M-203 granade [sic] launcher ... and an extensive array of other weapons which he keeps in his home.” But, curiously, the top FBI and Department of Justice brass seemed indifferent. Imagine how many minutes it would take before the whole alphabet soup of federal SWAT teams landed on your or my roof if we happened to mention to a federal agent that we had a grenade launcher under the bed! But Hollaway, Lyons, Strassmeir, and the rest of the Elohim City gang led charmed lives.



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It gets worse. Mr. Hollaway was the one who transported Andreas Strassmeir to the Mexican border, smuggled him across into Mexico, and then accompanied him to Germany. Was he doing this on assignment for the CIA, the FBI, or a secret joint CIA/FBI operation? That is an obvious question that the lapdogs of the “mainstream” media seem to be incapable of asking.

Why won't they go there? After all, as we reported in 1996, Strassmeir admitted to first coming to the U.S. with the help of an old “family friend,” Vincent Petruskie, reportedly a “retired” CIA operative. Petruskie and Strassmeir were putting together deals to buy Boeing 747 jetliners. Mr. Petruskie admitted to *THE NEW AMERICAN* that Strassmeir had expressed the desire to work undercover in the U.S. and that he, Petruskie, had helped the Strassmeir make contact with federal agencies.

What's clear is that *Strassmeir and Hollaway were working together and that McVeigh called both of them on the same day — less than 48 hours before the bombing*. It's also clear that powers within the federal government have taken extreme measures to protect Strassmeir, Hollaway, Lyons, and many other individuals connected to the OKC bombing, keeping them from exposure.

This conspicuous aversion by top federal officials to follow the obvious leads pointing to OKC bombing suspects with ties to Elohim City has always been one of the most disturbing features of the official OKC “investigation.” Extensive investigation by *THE NEW AMERICAN*, which included exclusive interviews with eyewitnesses, federal law enforcement officers, and the critically important federal undercover informant, Carol Howe, pointed toward several Elohim City regulars as top suspects in the OKC bombing conspiracy. One of the most important suspects of that group was Andreas Strassmeir, aka “Andi the German,” who was in the U.S. illegally on an expired visa and was an inherent flight risk.

Defying rationality, the FBI sent agents all over the U.S. and around the world to arrest and/or question suspects, but refused to question the most obvious suspects in their own backyard. It was much like scenes from *Casablanca*, in which the police inspector played by actor Claude Rains tells his men to “round up the usual suspects,” to give the appearance of a rigorous investigation — while intentionally letting the guilty escape. For the past decade, the FBI and Department of Justice have insisted that there never was any connection between Strassmeir, the Elohim bank robbers, and McVeigh. However, the FBI memos show that the FBI definitely were aware of connections between McVeigh and Strassmeir and that they also were aware that Strassmeir was preparing to flee back to Germany. Yet, while *THE NEW AMERICAN* and other private investigators were zeroing in on Strassmeir, the FBI did nothing and allowed him to exit the country secretly through Mexico.

### **Odd Bedfellows**

Federal authorities are also protecting some other very interesting “assets.” Some of the most significant references in Louis Freeh's secret January 1996 FBI memo pertain to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which evidently had at least one informant inside Elohim City prior to the OKC bombing.

The SPLC, led by attorney Morris Dees, has raised millions of dollars with its high-profile attacks on “hate groups,” and admits to being closely intertwined with the FBI and the Department of Justice. The Freeh memo refers to the SPLC as one source for the information that McVeigh had called Elohim City seeking Strassmeir and that Strassmeir was planning to flee the United States.

Any reasonable reader of the FBI memo would deduce that the SPLC was smack-dab in the middle of the Elohim City rat nest around the time of the bombing. But for reasons about which we can only speculate, they have refused to discuss the matter, insisting that the SPLC had no connection



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whatsoever to Strassmeir or anyone else at Elohim City. In fact, for the past decade, Mr. Dees and the SPLC have steadfastly supported the official Louis Freeh/Janet Reno line that there was no Strassmeir/Elohim City connection to the OKC bombing.

If that is true, then these references in the aforementioned FBI memo do not make sense: "Information has also been received through the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)"; "Two days prior to the OKBOMB attack, when [name redacted] of the SPLC, was in the white supremacist compound."

Mr. Trentadue says that when he filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the FBI seeking all documents relating to Morris Dees, the SPLC, and Elohim City, he was informed by the FBI that they could not release such information unless he first obtained a privacy waiver from Mr. Dees. This, says Trentadue, is a specious claim, since Dees and the SPLC are not exempt under any privacy provisions of the law. Nevertheless, he says he has repeatedly sought such a waiver from Dees, but the SPLC leader has refused to grant one.

Trentadue has provided *THE NEW AMERICAN* with copies of e-mail correspondence on the matter with the SPLC's intelligence director, Mark Potok, that confirm SPLC's unwillingness to grant a privacy waiver. In a January 4, 2005 e-mail response, SPLC's Mark Potok told Mr. Trentadue that comments made by Morris Dees in 2003 at Southeastern Oklahoma University are not "an admission or boast that we had informants at Elohim City, or that Strassmeir worked for us. Because, one more time, we didn't, and he didn't." Concerning Elohim City, he insists "our involvement is and was nil." Trentadue has challenged the FBI's privacy waiver claim and hopes to soon have a court decision that will force the government to turn over the documents he is requesting.

The FBI's responses to Trentadue's requests do little to inspire confidence in its institutional veracity. Trentadue had requested documents referencing Morris Dees and/or SPLC to Timothy McVeigh, Richard Guthrie, Andreas Strassmeir, and a number of other names associated with Elohim City. The FBI responded that their search failed to disclose any "records responsive to the Plaintiff's request." However, the FBI was caught flatfooted when Trentadue produced the redacted version of the August 1996 memo, proving that FBI "records responsive to the Plaintiff's request" *obviously* existed.

How did the FBI defendants respond to this embarrassing revelation? FBI officials said they had never claimed that the documents don't exist, only that their "search" failed to disclose them. How had they searched? According to FBI official David Hardy, the agency had conducted a computer search of the "record indices" of its Automated Case Support (ACS) system; there had been no actual search of the physical files. It was a "search" designed to fail, since the FBI intentionally holds files outside of its ACS, does not enter certain names into its record indices, or - as past cases have shown - sometimes intentionally misspells names so that a computer search will come up empty.

### **Coverup and Murder**

For the past 10 years, the FBI and Department of Justice have been insisting that Timothy McVeigh, except for some assistance from Terry Nichols, acted alone, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary; that there is/was no John Doe No. 2, even though multiple credible witnesses saw McVeigh with several John Does on the day of the bombing and in the days immediately before the bombing; and that there is no connection whatsoever between Timothy McVeigh and Andreas Strassmeir, Elohim City, or the Midwest Bank Robbers.

All of those assertions were shown to be not only false but *ridiculously* false years ago by the weight of overwhelming evidence. Now, thanks to the perseverance of the Trentadue family, the government's



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own hidden documents are providing further evidence and exposing the criminality and conspiracy that have shielded those who aided the terrorists and/or covered up for them after the fact.

A sober assessment of the available evidence makes it very difficult to avoid this very disturbing conclusion: high officials of the Clinton Justice Department and FBI committed murder (possibly several murders) to hide details of the OKC bombing from the American public. They also committed perjury, falsified and hid documents, and kept the guilty from being punished. How safe is anyone in America if the guilty aren't held accountable for these heinous crimes? The succeeding Bush administration has not only continued the Clinton coverup but has *promoted* many of the guilty.

Unquestionably, the Department of Justice and FBI include many thousands of dedicated professionals completely committed to their oaths to defend the Constitution and our system of justice. They, like the rest of the American people, are being betrayed by those in positions of power who are using their offices to commit crimes, obstruct justice, and undermine the rule of law.

Resolving the Oklahoma City bombing is vitally important not only in order to obtain justice for the victims of that decade-old terrorist attack, but to safeguard our national security in the war on terror. As we have noted in previous articles, the three major terrorist attacks on U.S. soil — the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1995 OKC bombing, and the 2001 9/11 attacks — are all directly connected, both in terms of the terrorist perpetrators involved and the government officials who have “fumbled” intelligence and informants alerting them to the attacks beforehand. And in each case they have allowed perpetrators to escape and have covered up evidence of government duplicity and/or complicity.



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