

COMMENTARY & OPINION ON HISTORY & POLITICS



Hugh's News

“Justice” Department?

by Hugh Turley

For 15 years, Jesse Trentadue, a Salt Lake City attorney, has pursued the truth about his brother Kenneth, who he maintains was tortured to death in federal custody. Trentadue is like a dog with his teeth in Uncle Sam's trousers, and he won't let go.

Federal authorities allege Kenneth Trentadue committed suicide by hanging at the Oklahoma City Federal Transfer Center, where he was being held for a parole violation. When staff from the Oklahoma Medical Examiner's office arrived on August 21, 1995, they found his scalp split to the skull, his throat slashed, and his body covered in blood, bruises and burns.

Trentadue wanted to find out who killed his brother, and every lead takes him back to the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. Shortly before Timothy McVeigh's execution for his role in the bombing, Trentadue says, he received a message from McVeigh theorizing that the FBI probably killed his brother because they thought he was John Doe No. 2.

Trentadue says the anonymous plotter was Richard Lee Guthrie, who resembled Kenneth down to the dragon tattoo on the left arm. Guthrie also allegedly committed suicide by hanging in prison, as did inmate Alden Gillis Baker – who, in 1999, gave the lawyer a written deposition describing witnessing Kenneth's murder.

In March, U.S. District Judge Clark Waddoups rejected Trentadue's Freedom of Information Act request for CIA documents. But the ruling wasn't a complete setback for him; it revealed that the CIA assisted in the prosecution of McVeigh and Terry Nichols, who was also found guilty. In addition, it mentioned contacts with foreign informants and foreign witnesses.

In a declaration Trentadue filed in court, he said that when he visited Nichols in prison, Nichols told him that other conspirators were involved in the Oklahoma bombing: “One was acting as a government provocateur” and “the other was a high-ranking federal official,” according to court records.

Last June, Trentadue's FOIA request for 26 CIA documents was rejected. A letter from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, which reviewed the documents, said their release “could cause grave damage to our national security.” One wonders how. Were NGA spy satellites monitoring persons in Oklahoma before the bombing?

Trentadue's trail goes higher still. From Justice Department e-mail messages he has obtained, he has concluded that attorney general Eric Holder, who was deputy attorney general in the Clinton administration, “was the one in charge of covering up my brother's murder.” If he is correct, the public faces a question Plato raised in *The Republic*: “Who will protect us from our protectors?”