



The Second Wave

Return of the Militias

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THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER is a nonprofit organization that combats hate, intolerance and discrimination through education and litigation. Its Intelligence Project, which prepared this report and also produces the quarterly investigative magazine *Intelligence Report*, tracks the activities of hate groups and the nativist movement and monitors militia and other extremist anti-government activity. Its Teaching Tolerance project helps foster respect and understanding in the classroom. Its litigation arm files lawsuits against hate groups for the violent acts of their members.

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Introduction

BY MARK POTOK

The 1990s saw the rise and fall of the virulently antigovernment “Patriot” movement, made up of paramilitary militias, tax defiers and so-called “sovereign citizens.” Sparked by a combination of anger at the federal government and the deaths of political dissenters at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, and Waco, Texas, the movement took off in the middle of the decade and continued to grow even after 168 people were

left dead by the 1995 bombing of Oklahoma City’s federal building — an attack, the deadliest ever by domestic U.S. terrorists, carried out by men steeped in the rhetoric and conspiracy theories of the militias. In the years that followed, a truly remarkable number of criminal plots came out of the movement. But by early this century, the Patriots had largely faded, weakened by systematic prosecutions, aversion to growing violence, and a new, highly conservative president.

They’re back. Almost a decade after largely disappearing from public view, right-wing militias, ideologically driven tax defiers and sovereign citizens are appearing in large numbers around the country. “Paper terrorism” — the use of property liens and citizens’ “courts” to harass enemies — is on the rise. And once-popular militia conspiracy theories are making the rounds again, this time accompanied by nativist theories about secret Mexican plans to “reconquer” the American Southwest. One law enforcement agency has found 50 new militia training groups — one of them made up of present and former police officers and soldiers. Authorities around the country are reporting a worrying uptick in Patriot activities and propaganda. “This is the most significant growth we’ve seen in 10 to 12 years,” says one. “All it’s lacking is a spark. I think it’s only a matter of time before you see threats and violence.”

A key difference this time is that the federal government — the entity that almost the entire radical right views as its

primary enemy — is headed by a black man. That, coupled with high levels of non-white immigration and a decline in the percentage of whites overall in America, has helped to racialize the Patriot movement, which in the past was not primarily motivated by race hate. One result has been a remarkable rash of domestic terror incidents since the presidential campaign, most of them related to anger over the election of Barack Obama. At the same time, ostensibly mainstream politicians and media pundits have helped to spread Patriot and related propaganda, from conspiracy theories about a secret network of U.S. concentration camps to wholly unsubstantiated claims about the president’s country of birth.

Fifteen years ago, the Southern Poverty Law Center wrote then-Attorney General Janet Reno to warn about extremists in the militia movement, saying that the “mixture of armed groups and those who hate” was “a recipe for disaster.” Just six months later, Oklahoma City’s federal building was bombed. Today, the Patriot movement may not have the white-hot fury that it did in the 1990s. But the movement clearly is growing again, and Americans, in particular law enforcement officers, need to take the dangers it presents seriously. That is equally true for the politicians, pundits and preachers who, through pandering or ignorance, abet the growth of a movement marked by a proven predilection for violence.

The Second Wave

Around the country, evidence accumulates of a return of the militias and the larger antigovernment ‘Patriot’ movement

BY LARRY KELLER

In Pensacola, Fla., retired FBI agent Ted Gunderson tells a gathering of antigovernment “Patriots” that the federal government has set up 1,000 internment camps across the country and is storing 30,000 guillotines and a half-million caskets in Atlanta. They’re there for the day the government finally declares martial law and moves in to round up or kill

American dissenters, he says. “They’re going to keep track of all of us, folks,” Gunderson warns.

Outside Atlanta, a so-called “American Grand Jury” issues an “indictment” of Barack Obama for fraud and treason because, the panel concludes, he wasn’t born in the United States and is illegally occupying the office of president. Other sham “grand juries” around the country follow suit.

And on the site in Lexington, Mass., where the opening shots of the Revolutionary War were fired in 1775, members of Oath Keepers, a newly formed group of law enforcement officers, military men and veterans, “muster” on April 19 to reaffirm their pledge to defend the U.S. Constitution. “We’re in perilous times ... perhaps far more perilous than in 1775,” says the man administering the oath. April 19 is the anniversary not only of the battle of Lexington Green, but also of the 1993 conflagration at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and the lethal bombing two years later of the Oklahoma City federal building — seminal events in the lore of the extreme right, in particular the antigovernment Patriot movement.

Almost 10 years after it seemed to disappear from American life, there are unmistakable signs of a revival of what in the 1990s was commonly called the militia movement. From Idaho to New Jersey and Michigan to Florida, men in khaki and camouflage are back in the woods, gathering to practice the paramilitary skills they believe will be needed to fend off the socialistic troops of the “New World Order.”

One big difference from the militia movement of the 1990s is that the face of the federal government — the enemy that almost all parts of the extreme right see as the primary threat to freedom — is now black. And the fact that the president is an African American has injected a strong racial element into even those parts of the radical

right, like the militias, that in the past were not primarily motivated by race hate. Contributing to the racial animus have been fears on the far right about the consequences of Latino immigration.

Militia rhetoric is being heard widely once more, often from a second generation of ideologues, and conspiracy theories are being energetically revived or invented anew. “Paper terrorism” — the use of property liens, bogus legal documents and “citizens’ grand juries” to attack enemies and, sometimes, reap illegal fortunes — is again proliferating, to the point where the government has set up special efforts to rein in so-called “tax defiers” and to track threats against judges. What’s more, Patriot fears about the government are being amplified by a loud new group of ostensibly mainstream media commentators and politicians.

It’s not 1996 all over again, or 1997 or 1998. Although there has been a remarkable rash of domestic terrorist incidents since Obama’s election in November, it has not reached the level of criminal violence, attempted terrorist attacks and white-hot language that marked the militia movement at its peak. But militia training events, huge numbers of which are now viewable on YouTube videos, are spreading. One federal agency estimates that 50 new militia training groups have sprung up in less than two years. Sales of guns and ammunition have skyrocketed amid fears of new gun control laws, much as they did in the 1990s.

The situation has many authorities worried. Militiamen, white supremacists, anti-Semites, nationalists, tax protesters and a range of other activists of the radical right are cross-pollinating and may even be coalescing. In the words of a February report from law enforcement officials in Missouri, a variety of factors have combined recently to create “a lush environment for militia activity.”

“You’re seeing the bubbling [of antigovernment sentiment] right now,” says Bart McEntire, who has infiltrated racist hate groups and now is the supervisory special agent for the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Roanoke, Va. “You see people buying into what they’re saying. It’s primed to grow. The only thing you don’t have to set it on fire is a Waco or Ruby Ridge.”

Another federal law enforcement official knowledgeable about militia groups agrees. He asked not to be identified because he is not authorized to speak publicly about them. “They’re not at the level we saw in ’94-’95,” he says. “But this is the most significant growth we’ve seen in 10 to 12 years. All it’s lacking is a spark. I think it’s only a matter of time before you see threats and violence.”

Shots, Plots and ‘Sovereigns’

In fact, threats and violence from the radical right already are accelerating (see last section of this report, a list of 75 domestic terrorist plots and rampages since 1995). In recent months, men with antigovernment, racist, anti-Semitic or pro-militia views have allegedly committed a series of high-profile murders — including the killings of six law enforcement officers since April.

Most of these recent murders and plots seem to have been at least partially prompted by Obama’s election. One man “very upset” with the election of America’s first black president was building a radioactive “dirty bomb”; another, a Marine, was planning to assassinate Obama, as were two racist skinheads in Tennessee; still another angry at the election and said to be interested in joining a militia killed two sheriff’s deputies in Florida. A man in Pittsburgh who feared Jews and gun confiscations murdered three police officers. Near Boston, a white man angered by the alleged “genocide” of his race shot to death two African immigrants and intended to murder as many Jews as possible. An 88-year-old neo-Nazi killed a guard at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. And an abortion physician in Kansas was murdered by a man steeped in the ideology of the “sovereign citizens” movement.

So-called sovereign citizens are people who subscribe to an ideology, originated by the anti-Semitic Posse Comitatus of the 1980s, that claims that whites are a higher kind of citizen — subject only to “common law,” not the dictates of the government — while blacks are mere “14th Amendment citizens” who must obey their government masters. Although not all sovereigns subscribe to or even know about the theory’s racist basis, most contend that they do not have to pay taxes, are not subject to most laws, and are not citizens of the United States.

Authorities and anecdotal evidence suggest that sovereign citizens — who, along with tax protesters and militia members, form the larger Patriot movement — may make up the most dramatically reenergized sector of the radical

right. In February, the FBI launched a national operation targeting white supremacists and “militia/sovereign citizen extremist groups” after noting an upsurge in such organizations, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. The aim is to gather intelligence about “this emerging threat,” according to an FBI memo cited by the newspaper.

Increasingly, sovereign citizens are claiming they aren’t subject to income taxes — so much so that the Department of Justice last year kicked off a National Tax Defier Initiative to deal with the volume of cases. At the same time, more and more seem to be engaging in “paper terrorism,” even though more than 30 states passed or strengthened laws outlawing the filing of unjustified property liens and simulating legal process (by setting up pseudo-legal “common law courts” and “citizens’ grand juries”) in response to sovereign activity in the 1990s.

A Michigan man whose company allegedly doubled as the headquarters of a militia group, for example, was arrested in May on charges that he placed bogus liens on property owned by courthouse officials and police officers to harass them and ruin their credit. In March, authorities raided a Las Vegas printing firm where meetings of the “Sovereign People’s Court for the United States” were conducted in a mock courtroom. Seminars allegedly were taught there on how to use phony documents and other illegal means to pay off creditors. Four people were arrested on money-laundering, tax and weapons charges.

Due to a spike in “inappropriate communications,” including many from sovereign citizens, the U.S. Marshals Service has opened a clearinghouse in suburban Washington, D.C., for assessing risks to court personnel. The incidents include telephone and written threats against federal judges and prosecutors, as well as bomb threats and biochemical incidents. In fiscal 2008, there were 1,278 threats and harassing communications — more than double the number of six years earlier. The number of such incidents is on pace to increase again in fiscal 2009. Sovereign citizens account for a small percentage of the cases, but theirs are more complex and generally require more resources, says Michael Prout, assistant director of judicial security for the marshals. “They are resourceful groups,” he adds.

Some sovereign citizen attempts to skirt the law have been farcical. An Arkansas jury needed only seven minutes in April to convict Richard Bauer, 70, of robbing a bank. Bauer had argued that the government took his money several times, leaving him with almost nothing. “I’m a constitutionalist,” he insisted, adding that “every single act was justifiable.” A month earlier, a Pennsylvania man charged with drunken driving told court officials that they lacked jurisdiction over him because he was a “sovereign man.” Then he changed his mind and pleaded guilty. In Nevada, a sovereign citizen — perhaps a Dr.

Seuss fan —used the peculiar punctuation of names that is favored by the movement; his name, he declared, was “I am: Sam.”

But few of the cases are that amusing. In February, a New York man who once declared himself a “sovereign citizen” of the “Republic of New York” and said that he enjoyed studying “the organic Constitution and the Bill of Rights” allegedly shot and killed four people. His murder case was pending at press time.

Swearing at the Government

Oath Keepers, the military and police organization that was formed earlier this year and held its April muster on Lexington Green, may be a particularly worrisome example of the Patriot revival. Members vow to fulfill the oaths to the Constitution that they swore while in the military or law enforcement. “Our oath is to the Constitution, not to the politicians, and we will not obey unconstitutional (and thus illegal) and immoral orders,” the group says. Oath Keepers lists 10 orders its members won’t obey, including two that reference U.S. concentration camps.

That same pugnacious attitude was on display after conservatives attacked an April report from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that suggested a resurgence of radical right-wing activity was under way. “We will not fear our government; they will fear us,” one man, who appeared to be on active duty in the Army, said in an angry video sent to the Oath Keepers blog. In another video at the site, a man who said he was a former Army paratrooper in Afghanistan and Iraq described President Obama as “an enemy of the state,” adding, “I would rather die than be a slave to my government.” The Oath Keepers site soon began hawking T-shirts with slogans like “I’m a Right Wing Extremist and Damn Proud of It!”

In April, Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes — a Yale Law School graduate and former aide to U.S. Rep. Ron Paul (a Texas Republican and hard-line libertarian) — worried about a coming dictatorship. “We know that if the day should come where a full-blown dictatorship would come, or tyranny ... it can only happen if those men, our brothers in arms, go along and comply with unconstitutional, unlawful orders,” Rhodes told conspiracy-minded radio host Alex Jones. “Imagine if we focus on the police and military. Game over for the New World Order.”

He’s not the first to think so. In the 1990s, retired Phoenix cop and conspiracy enthusiast Jack McLamb created an outfit called Police Against the New World Order and produced a 75-page document entitled *Operation Vampire Killer 2000: American Police Action Plan for Stopping World Government Rule*.

It’s not known how large Oath Keepers is. But there is some evidence beyond the group’s mere existence to suggest that today’s Patriots are again making inroads into law enforcement — the leak of the DHS report, along with those of a couple of similar law enforcement reports, was likely the work of a sworn officer. Rhodes claims to know a federal officer leaked the DHS report, and says Oath Keepers is “hearing from more and more federal officers *all the time*.”

The group does seem to be on the radar of federal law enforcement officers. In May, a member complained on the group’s website of a visit to his farm by FBI agents who asked him, he said, about training he provides in firearms, survival skills and the like.

One Oath Keeper is longtime militia hero Richard Mack, a former sheriff of a rural Arizona county who collaborated with white supremacist Randy Weaver on a book and who, along with others, won a U.S. Supreme

“This is the most significant growth we’ve seen in 10 to 12 years. All it’s lacking is a spark. I think it’s only a matter of time before you see threats and violence.”

Court decision that weakened the Brady Bill gun control law in the 1990s. “The greatest threat we face today is not terrorists; it is our federal government,” Mack says on his website. “One of the best and easiest solutions is to depend on local officials, especially the sheriff, to stand against federal intervention and federal criminality.”

Mack’s views echo those of the Posse Comitatus, which believed that sheriffs are the highest law enforcement authorities in America. “I pray for the day that a sheriff in this country will arrest an IRS agent for trespassing or attempting to victimize citizens in that particular sheriff’s county,” Mack said in a video he made for Oath Keepers.

Why the Return?

Why are militias and the larger Patriot movement making a comeback?

The original militia movement took off in the mid-1990s, with the first large militias appearing in 1994 and growth continuing over the next several years. The movement reflected widespread anger over what was seen as the meddling of a relatively liberal administration in Washington — from gun control to environmental laws to a variety of other federal mandates. But what really ignited the movement was the bloodshed in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, and Waco, Texas. In 1992, during a stand-off between white supremacist Randy Weaver’s family in Idaho and federal agents — a confrontation that began

with Weaver's sale of an illegal weapon — Weaver's son and wife were killed, along with a U.S. marshal. The following year, some 80 members of the gun-loving Branch Davidian cult died in a fire that ended a 52-day standoff with federal agents in Texas. Thousands of Americans saw these events as proof that the federal government was prepared to murder its own citizens in order to enforce a kind of liberal orthodoxy — a so-called “New World Order” (NWO) that reflected the economic and political globalization that militia backers felt was robbing their country of its independence and unique culture.

The movement was animated by a welter of conspiracy theories, the bulk of them decrying NWO plots that were said to be aimed at imposing socialism on the United States, sending patriotic Americans to prison camps, destroying farmers with secret weather machines, and so on. Most militia enthusiasts also blamed the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing on the government — it was a “false flag” operation carried out by the Clinton Administration, they contended, and designed to soften up the American public to accept draconian anti-terrorism legislation.

But the movement of the '90s ultimately wound down, almost petering out after the turn of the millennium. That was for a variety of reasons, including the arrests of many militia backers in terrorist plots, the jailing of hundreds of others on weapons violations, and the violence the movement continued to produce even after 168 people, including 19 children, were murdered in Oklahoma City by men steeped in the ideology of both militias and racist hate groups. The failure of any of the many dire Patriot predictions or conspiracy theories to come true also hurt the movement, as did the 2000 election of a conservative president, which had the effect of defusing militia backers' anger. Apocalyptic warnings from militia leaders about an expected “Y2K” collapse on Jan. 1, 2000, also turned out to be entirely without merit, becoming a kind of final nail in the coffin of the movement.

Now, it seems, they are back. Every month, there are militia trainings announced around the country — and untold numbers that are not publicized. The Internet teems with training videos, information about meetings and rallies, far-fetched rumors and conspiracy theories. Joining 1990s militia stalwarts like Gunderson and Mack is a new generation of activists, as exemplified in the case of Edward Koernke. Koernke's father, Mark Koernke, was a prominent '90s militia propagandist known as “Mark from Michigan.” The elder Koernke served nearly six years in prison on charges that included assaulting police. Today, his son hosts an Internet radio show devoted to all things militia.

The current resurgence has several apparent causes. In the largest sense, it is again a response to real societal

stresses and strains, from the seemingly inevitable rise of multiculturalism to the faltering economy to another liberal administration, this one headed by a black man. Similar factors have driven the number of race-based hate groups, as distinct from Patriot groups, from 602 in 2000 to 926 in 2008, according to research by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

“This frequently happens when elections favor the political left and the society is seen as moving toward greater social equality or away from traditional societal hierarchies,” Chip Berlet, a long-time analyst of the radical right at Political Research Associates, said in a June newsletter. “In this scenario, it is easier for right-wing demagogues to successfully demonize liberals,” immigrants and others.

In fact, the anti-immigration movement is both fueling and helping to racialize the antigovernment Patriot resurgence. More and more, members of nativist groups like the Minutemen are adopting core militia ideas and fears (see next section of this report). And they have contributed their own conspiracy theories — about the secret Mexican “Plan de Aztlan” to reconquer the American Southwest, and another involving the secretly arranged merger of the United States, Mexico and Canada into a “North American Union” — to the long list of nefarious plots already identified by the Patriot movement.

Far-right fears of conspiracies have come from other quarters, as well, most notably from the so-called “birthers” who have filed a series of lawsuits making the claim that Obama is not a U.S. citizen. These spurious claims first gained traction when prominent extremists like writer Jerome Corsi, politician Alan Keyes and Watergate felon and radio show host G. Gordon Liddy questioned the validity of the president's birth certificate. Many Patriots have also adopted conspiracy theories about secret government involvement in events like the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the crash of TWA Flight 800 in 1996.

“The current political environment is awash with seemingly absurd but nonetheless influential conspiracy theories, hyperbolic claims and demonized targets,” Berlet concluded. “And this creates a milieu where violence is a likely outcome.”

Going Mainstream

A remarkable aspect of the current antigovernment movement is the extent to which it has gained support from elected officials and mainstream media outlets. Lawmakers complaining about the intrusiveness of the federal government have introduced 10th Amendment resolutions (reasserting that those powers not granted to the federal government remain with the states) in about three dozen states. In Texas, Gov. Rick Perry raised the prospect of secession several months after

Obama's inauguration — a notion first brought up there in the '90s by the militia-like Republic of Texas. U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) said she feared that the president was planning “reeducation camps for young people,” while U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-Ala.), evoking memories of the discredited communist-hunter Sen. Joseph McCarthy, warned of 17 “socialists” in Congress. Fox News host Glenn Beck, who has called Obama a fascist, a Nazi and a Marxist, even re-floated militia conspiracy theories of the 1990s alleging a secret network of government-run concentration camps.

“The current political environment is awash with seemingly absurd but nonetheless influential conspiracy theories, hyperbolic claims and demonized targets, and this creates a milieu where violence is a likely outcome.”

The original movement also had its mainstream backers, but they were largely confined to talk radio; today, Beck is just one of the well-known cable TV news personalities to air fictitious conspiracies and other unlikely Patriot ideas. CNN's Lou Dobbs has treated the so-called Aztlan conspiracy as a bona fide concern and questioned the validity of Obama's birth certificate despite his own network's definitive debunking of that claim. On MSNBC, commentator Pat Buchanan suggested recently that white Americans are now suffering “exactly what was done to black folks.” On FOX News, regular contributor Dick Morris said, “Those crazies in Montana who say, ‘We're going to kill ATF agents because the U.N.'s going to take over’ — well, they're beginning to have a case.”

At the same time, players like the National Rifle Association, which in the 1990s publicly attacked federal law enforcement agents as “jackbooted thugs,” are back at it. Two months before the election last fall, firearms manufacturers joined forces to promote NRA membership in a national campaign ominously dubbed “Prepare for the Storm in 2008.”

Gun shows, too, are back as major venues for militia-like ideology. In a video produced in April by Max Blumenthal, senior writer at the online news site The Daily Beast, one man interviewed at a show said, “If Obama tries to get rid of our guns, it's just a step away from trying to take away everything else.” Another said show attendees were “preparing for the worst.”

Patriot ideology also has crept into the anti-tax “tea parties” that were staged by conservatives around the country in April and July. In addition to protesting gov-

ernment spending and taxation, some demonstrators called for the sovereignty of the states, abolition of the Federal Reserve (a long-time bogeyman of the radical right), and an end to “socialism” in Washington. At the Jacksonville, Fla., July tea party, some protesters carried signs that compared President Obama to Adolf Hitler.

Once again, fearful Patriots are scurrying to prepare for what they see as the coming societal meltdown, stockpiling not only weaponry but food and an array of other items. Newsletter publisher Lee Bellinger, for instance, peddles *Social Chaos Survival Guide: Smart, Savvy Precautions to Make You Self-Reliant in These Dangerous Times* and warns of “impending national social chaos.” The book, he says, is “for people who want to stand their ground without attracting a whole lot of attention — either from the authorities” or “mobs of desperate fellow citizens.”

The recent Department of Homeland Security report also pointed to the role of the Internet in the current movement: “Unlike the earlier period, the advent of the Internet and other information-age technologies since the 1990s has given domestic extremists greater access to information related to bomb-making, weapons training and tactics, as well as targeting of individuals, organizations and facilities, potentially making ... the consequences of their violence more severe.”

Whither the Militia Movement?

Evidence that angry Americans are arming themselves for action is growing. In March, for instance, a Spokane, Wash., man pleaded guilty to illegally possessing two grenade launchers, 54 grenades, 37 machine guns, eight silencers and a variety of explosives in a storage unit. The man had an “End the Fed” bumper sticker on his vehicle. In May, another Washington resident was charged with keeping an illegal cache of weapons that included an M-16 machine gun, four silencers, and two guns made by a local gunsmith and inscribed with “Christian warrior” and “NObama.”

In Nebraska, a jury convicted Allison Klanecky for possession of unregistered grenade components. Prosecutors said that a search of Klanecky's barn and an underground bunker turned up dozens of containers of explosive powder, fuses and other components that could be used to make up to 93 grenades, plus an unregistered 12-gauge military shotgun called a “Streetsweeper.” Klanecky was involved in an end-times group called The Prophecy Club that sells conspiracy books and DVDs on everything from the New World Order to globalism and the 9/11 attacks.

A good illustration of antigovernment Patriot movement paranoia was the reaction to a National Guard exercise planned for April in the little town of Arcadia, Iowa. The guardsmen had intended to conduct a four-day mock search for an arms dealer that would include patrolling the town's streets, distributing photos of the fictional bad guy and knocking on doors of residents who agreed to participate in the drill.

Alex Jones, the radio host and conspiracy theorist, got wind of the plans and interviewed a National Guard official, setting off an avalanche of angry calls and visits to his website from people who feared the exercise was really about imposing a dictatorship or martial law on the country. "Tell them that ANY violation of your rights will result in a 'Live Fire Exercise,'" one such per-

son wrote on Jones' Infowars.com website. "If they come, come loaded for war!"

That incident showed how quickly militia enthusiasts now mobilize, thanks to the Internet. The National Guard rapidly scaled back its planned exercise, although it denied that the deluge of complaints had anything to do with its decision.

The sounds of violence are growing louder. The Idaho Citizens Constitutional Militia recently posted an opening for a "field sniper." Around the same time, an Ohio Militia member, face hidden by a bandana and voice distorted electronically, posted a video to YouTube. "People need to wake up and start buying some of these," he said as he displayed a semi-automatic rifle. "Things are real bad, and they're going to get a lot worse."

Nativists to ‘Patriots’

As evidence of a militia resurgence mounts, nativist vigilantes are increasingly adopting the ideas of the ‘Patriot’ movement

BY DAVID HOLTHOUSE

CAMP VIGILANCE, Calif. — A call to arms from ResistNet blares through this makeshift camp near the small community of Boulevard: “We all know what happens when you back an animal into a corner — it fights back. The way I see it, that’s exactly the direction this country is heading. They’re backing us into a corner. It’s getting to be time to fight back.”

Located two-and-a-half miles north of Mexico in the high, rugged desert of unincorporated eastern San Diego County, Camp Vigilance, known colloquially as “Camp V” is a sizable Minuteman border vigilante compound situated amidst 170 privately owned acres.

Adjacent to active human and narcotics smuggling corridors, Camp V consists of roughly 100 tent camping sites, a half dozen or so full RV docking bays, a bunkhouse, a radio communications center, a mess hall and meeting grounds, all within a gated and well-guarded security perimeter.

On this night in late May, a dozen or so Minutemen are checking their weapons, testing batteries in their night-vision goggles and thermal-vision scopes, donning body armor and making other preparations for sundown-to-sunup reconnaissance patrols. A public address system plugged into a massive RV amplifies ResistNet, an Internet radio program broadcast by the Patriot Network, which promotes conspiracy theories and right-wing anti-government militancy. Since the beginning of this year, ResistNet and other Patriot Network programs have become quite popular at Camp V, as well as other remote Minuteman outposts in southern California and Arizona.

The broadcast continues: “I can see the true American patriots are being backed into a corner. They’re getting ready to strike back at their captors, the greedy, evil vipers in the high offices of this land.”

Such exhortations have little to do with border security or undocumented immigration, the issues that launched the original Minuteman Project in 2005 and inspired its many spin-offs, imitators and splinter factions. Instead, the antigovernment screed ringing through Camp V represents a significant, ongoing shift in the nativist vigilante subculture, as major elements of various Minuteman organizations appear to be morphing into a new paramilitary wing of the resurgent antigovernment “Patriot” movement.

Increasingly, Minutemen are giving credence to the sort of fringe conspiracy theories that have long typified militia and other so-called Patriot groups. Although the Minuteman movement from its inception has been permeated with the Aztlan or “reconquista” conspiracy theory — which holds that the Mexican government is driving illegal immigration into the U.S. as part of a covert effort to “reconquer” the American Southwest — the conspiracy theories that are now taking root in the movement have little or nothing to do with border security or immigration. They include the belief that a massive cover-up has been conducted regarding Barack Obama’s birth certificate, which supposedly shows that he was born in Africa and is therefore ineligible to serve as president of the United States.

At several eastern San Diego County vigilante camps in mid-May, there were serious discussions about the global banking system being controlled by an ancient secret society called the Illuminati. Another theory floated involved a cult devoted to the Egyptian god of the afterlife, Osiris, operating within the NASA space agency and perhaps arranging with extraterrestrials for a hostile takeover of Earth.

Further indicating the nativist-to-Patriot drift of the Minutemen is the fact that in recent months a number of Minuteman factions have begun promoting the ideology of so-called “sovereign citizens,” a bizarre pseudo-legal philosophy whose adherents claim they’re not U.S. citizens and are not subject to federal or state laws, only to “common law courts” — a sort of people’s tribunal with no judges or lawyers. The most notorious advocates of sovereign citizens ideology include Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols and members of the now defunct Montana Freeman, a violent militia outfit. The larger Patriot movement is made up of tax protesters, militia members and sovereign citizens.

Accompanying the rise of conspiracy theories and sovereign citizen ideology within the Minuteman movement

has been a spike in online and campfire chatter about the potential need for armed insurrection in the near future. This trend toward contemplated violence was most graphically illustrated by the May 30 home invasion murders of a Latino man and his 9-year-old daughter in Arivaca, Ariz., that were allegedly orchestrated by the leader of Minutemen American Defense to fund her group's vigilante activities.

All of these disturbing nativist-to-Patriot trends have taken shape during a period in which, by all indications, the number of Latino immigrants attempting to cross the U.S. border has dropped to record lows, due in large part to the country's faltering economy. According to a June report by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the number of U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions fell to 724,000 last year. That marked the lowest level since 1973 and a decline of more than 50% from 2000, when apprehensions peaked at 1.67 million.

Despite this marked drop in undocumented border crossings, however, the number of Minuteman border operations, paramilitary training exercises and rallies continues to increase, and new Minuteman groups continue to form. What's changed is that instead of focusing exclusively on undocumented immigration, growing numbers of Minutemen and their fellow travelers now perceive immigration as merely a glaring symptom of a much broader problem. The larger problem, they believe, involves shadowy conspiracies threatening American sovereignty, unwelcome demographic changes polluting American culture, and a potentially totalitarian government, driven by an illegitimate president, bent on seizing all firearms, trampling the Constitution and imposing a fascist-socialist system on a pathetically docile citizenry.

"We're still concerned about the border intruders, but since this all started we've become aware of the fact that border intruders are just pawns in the big game," says "Jawbone," a member of the Campo Minutemen, a particularly hard-core faction based a few miles east of Camp V. "Stopping the border intruders isn't going to keep the shit from hitting the fan. If and when it does, we'll be ready. All this [Minuteman border operations] is just a dress rehearsal for the big dance."

One of the leaders of the Campo Minutemen, Britt "Kingfish" Craig, recently appeared on "Patriot's Pipeline Radio Show" along with co-guest Lloyd Marcus, the singer-songwriter responsible for "Tea Party Anthem," a protest ditty written for the "tea party" tax protests that took place across the country April 15.

"Tea Party Anthem" has become the Campo Minutemen fight song. Most of its members know at least the first verse by heart: "Mr. President! Your stimulus is sure to bust./It's just a socialist scheme./The only thing it will do/Is kill the American Dream."

As part of their campaign to stop President Obama from killing the American Dream, various Minuteman groups, including the Campo Minutemen, are distributing

a sovereign citizen "criminal complaint petition" demanding that Obama appear before an "American Grand Jury" to answer charges of treason.

Hundreds of Minutemen signed the petition at a large Minuteman "muster," or rally, in Cochise County, Ariz., in late May. More than a dozen Minuteman organizations were represented at the rally, along with members of the Arizona Citizens Militia, a traditional Patriot militia that regularly conducts armed survivalist training exercises in the mountains and woods of northern Arizona. During one recent exercise, members were "waterboarded" by a "professional interrogator."

Also present at the Cochise County muster were members of Minuteman American Defense (MAD), the Everett, Wash.-based group led by Shawna Forde, who was arrested less than a month later in the May 30 double murder in Arivaca, Ariz. Also arrested were MAD Operations Director Jason Bush and a third MAD member. According to law enforcement authorities, the three believed the man they killed was a narcotics trafficker who kept large sums of money in his trailer.

Forde's half-brother, Merrill Metzger, told the *Arizona Daily Star* that shortly before the murders Forde started talking about forming an "underground militia" that would be funded by robbing drug dealers. "She was talking about starting a revolution against the United States government," he said.

Following her arrest, Forde was denounced by key Minuteman leaders including Jeff Schwilk, head of the San Diego Minutemen, a hard-line group with a well-deserved reputation for confrontational tactics. The fact that a hothead like Schwilk has become a de facto spokesman for the Minuteman movement indicates how radicalized the movement has become since its early days of media-friendly publicity stunts involving retirees sitting in lawn chairs armed only with binoculars.

In a mid-April mass E-mail to followers, Schwilk linked his group's resistance to "the invasion from Mexico" with the greater cause of thwarting the "socialist takeover" of America. In the same E-mail, Schwilk announced the formation of the Patriot Coalition, made up of 23 organizations including Minuteman factions, tax-protest groups, pro-gun rights groups and two anti-immigration outfits listed as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center. A subsequent press release described the common cause of the groups under the motto, "Secure Borders, Constitution and Rule of Law." It stated that "Patriotic and Constitutional American grassroots groups" had come together to "fight the growing threats to our region and to the taxpaying American citizens."

It used to be that Minutemen declared their vigilance against foreign invaders. Now they're taking a stand against perceived enemies both foreign and domestic. "Revolution is brewing!" Schwilk declared.

Terror From The Right

75 plots, conspiracies and racist rampages
since Oklahoma City

At 9:02 a.m. on April 19, 1995, a 7,000-pound truck bomb, constructed of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and nitromethane racing fuel and packed into 13 plastic barrels, ripped through the heart of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The explosion wrecked much of downtown Oklahoma City and killed 168 people, including 19 children in a day-care center. Another 500 were injured. Although many Americans initially suspected an attack by Middle Eastern radicals, it quickly became clear that the mass murder had actually been carried out by domestic, right-wing terrorists.

The slaughter engineered by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, men steeped in the conspiracy theories and white-hot fury of the American radical right, marked the opening shot in a new kind of domestic political extremism — a revolutionary ideology whose practitioners do not hesitate to carry out attacks directed at entirely innocent victims, people selected essentially at random to make a political point. After Oklahoma, it was no longer sufficient for many American right-wing terrorists to strike at a target of political significance — instead, they reached for higher and higher body counts, reasoning that they had to eclipse McVeigh’s attack to win attention.

What follows is a detailed listing of major terrorist plots and racist rampages that have emerged from the American radical right in the years since Oklahoma City. These have included plans to bomb government buildings, banks, refineries, utilities, clinics, synagogues, mosques, memorials and bridges; to assassinate police officers, judges, politicians, civil rights figures and others; to rob banks, armored cars and other criminals; and to amass illegal machine guns, missiles, explosives and biological and chemical weapons. Each of these plots aimed to make changes in America through the use of political violence. Most contemplated the deaths of large numbers of people — in one case, as many as 30,000, or 10 times the number murdered on Sept. 11, 2001.

Here are the stories of plots, conspiracies and racist rampages since 1995 — plots and violence waged against a democratic America.

July 28, 1995

Antigovernment extremist Charles Ray Polk is arrested after trying to purchase a machine gun from an undercover police officer, and is later indicted by federal grand jury for plotting to blow up the Internal Revenue Service building in Austin, Texas. At the time of his arrest, Polk is trying to purchase plastic explosives to add to the already huge arsenal he’s amassed. Polk is sentenced to almost 21 years in federal prison.

October 9, 1995

Saboteurs derail an Amtrak passenger train near Hyder, Ariz., killing one person and injuring about 70 others. Several antigovernment messages, signed by the “Sons of Gestapo,” are left behind. The perpetrators remain at large.

November 9, 1995

Oklahoma Constitutional Militia leader Willie Ray Lampley, his wife Cecilia and another man, John Dare Baird, are arrested as they prepare explosives to bomb numerous targets, including the Southern Poverty Law Center, gay bars and abortion clinics. The three, along with another suspect arrested later, are sentenced to terms of up to 11 years in 1996. Cecilia Lampley is released in 2000, while Baird and Willie Lampley — who wrote letters from prison urging others to violence — are freed in 2004 and 2006, respectively.

December 18, 1995

An Internal Revenue Service (IRS) employee discovers a plastic drum packed with ammonium nitrate and fuel oil in a parking lot behind the IRS building in Reno, Nev. The device failed to explode a day earlier when a three-foot fuse went out prematurely. Ten days later, tax protester Joseph Martin Bailie is arrested. Bailie is eventually sentenced to 36 years in federal prison, with a release date of 2027. An accomplice, Ellis Edward Hurst, is released in 2004.

January 18, 1996

Peter Kevin Langan, the pseudonymous “Commander Pedro” who leads the underground Aryan Republican Army, is arrested after a shootout with the FBI in Ohio. Along with six other suspects arrested around the same time, Langan is charged in connection with a string of 22 bank robberies in seven Midwestern states between 1994 and 1996. After pleading guilty and agreeing to testify, co-conspirator Richard Guthrie commits suicide in his cell. Two others, Kevin McCarthy and Scott Stedeford, enter plea bargains and do testify against their co-conspirators. Eventually, Mark Thomas, a leading neo-Nazi in Pennsylvania, pleads guilty for his role in helping organize the robberies and agrees to testify against Langan and other gang members. Shawn Kenny, another suspect, becomes a federal informant. Langan is sentenced to a life term in one case, plus 55 years in another. McCarthy is released from prison in 2007, while Stedeford’s release date is set in 2022. Thomas receives eight years and is released in early 2004.

April 11, 1996

Antigovernment activist and self-described “survivalist” Ray Hamblin is charged with illegal possession of explosives after authorities find 460 pounds of the high explosive Tovex, 746 pounds of ANFO blasting agent

and 15 homemade hand grenades on his property in Hood River, Ore. Hamblin is sentenced to almost four years in federal prison, and is released in March 2000.

April 12, 1996

Apparently inspired by his reading of a neo-Nazi tract, Larry Wayne Shoemake kills one black man and wounds seven other people, including a reporter, during a racist shooting spree in a black neighborhood in Jackson, Miss. As police close in on the abandoned restaurant he is shooting from, Shoemake, who is white, sets the restaurant on fire and kills himself. A search of his home finds references to “Separation or Annihilation,” an essay on race relations by neo-Nazi National Alliance leader William Pierce, along with an arsenal of weapons that includes 17 long guns, 20,000 rounds of ammunition, and countless military manuals.

April 26, 1996

Two leaders of the Militia-at-Large of the Republic of Georgia, Robert Edward Starr III and William James McCranie Jr., are charged with manufacturing shrapnel-packed pipe bombs for distribution to militia members. Later in the year, they are sentenced to terms of up to eight years. Another Militia-at-Large member, Troy Allen Kayser (alias Troy Spain), is arrested two weeks later and accused of training a team to assassinate politicians. Starr is released from prison in 2003, while McCranie gets out in 2001. Kayser, convicted of conspiracy, is released in early 2002.

July 1, 1996

Twelve members of an Arizona militia group called the Viper Team are arrested on federal conspiracy, weapons and explosive charges after allegedly surveilling and videotaping government buildings as potential targets. All 12 plead guilty or are convicted of various charges,

drawing sentences of up to nine years in prison. The plot participants are all released in subsequent years. Gary Curds Baer, who drew the heaviest sentence after being found with 400 pounds of ammonium nitrate, a bomb component, is freed in May 2004.

July 27, 1996

A nail-packed bomb goes off at the Atlanta Olympics, which are seen by many extremists as part of a Satanic “New World Order,” killing one person and injuring more than 100 others. Investigators will later conclude the attack is linked to 1997-1998 bombings of an Atlanta-area abortion clinic, an Atlanta gay bar and a Birmingham, Ala., abortion facility. Suspect Eric Robert Rudolph — a reclusive North Carolina man tied to the anti-Semitic Christian Identity theology — flees into the woods of his native state after he is identified in early 1998 as a suspect in the Birmingham attack, and is only captured five years later. Eventually, he pleads guilty to all of the attacks attributed to him in exchange for life without parole.

July 29, 1996

Washington State Militia leader John Pitner and seven others are arrested on weapons and explosives charges in connection with a plot to build pipe bombs to resist a feared invasion by the United Nations. Pitner and four others are convicted on weapons charges, while conspiracy charges against all eight end in a mistrial. Pitner is later retried on that charge, convicted and sentenced to four years in prison. He is released in 2001.

October 8, 1996

Three “Phineas Priests” — racist and anti-Semitic Christian Identity terrorists who feel they’ve been called by God to undertake violent attacks — are charged in connection with two bank robberies and bombings at the two banks, a Spokane newspaper and a Planned Parenthood office. Charles

Barbee, Robert Berry and Jay Merrell are eventually convicted and sentenced to life terms. Brian Ratigan, a fourth member of the group arrested separately, draws a 55-year term; he is scheduled for release in 2045.

October 11, 1996

Seven members of the Mountaineer Militia are arrested in a plot to blow up the FBI's national fingerprint records center, where 1,000 people work, in West Virginia. In 1998, leader Floyd "Ray" Looker is sentenced to 18 years in prison, with a release date of 2012. Two other defendants are sentenced on explosives charges and a third draws a year in prison for providing blueprints of the FBI facility to Looker, who then sold them to a government informant who was posing as a terrorist.

January 16, 1997

Two anti-personnel bombs — the second clearly designed to kill arriving law enforcement and rescue workers — explode outside an abortion clinic in Sandy Springs, Ga., a suburb of Atlanta. Seven people are injured. Letters signed by the "Army of God" claim responsibility for this attack and another, a month later, at an Atlanta gay bar. Authorities later learn that these attacks, the 1998 bombing of a Birmingham, Ala., abortion clinic and the 1996 Atlanta Olympics bombing, were all carried out by Eric Robert Rudolph, who is captured in 2003 after five years on the run. Rudolph avoids the death penalty by pleading guilty in exchange for a life sentence, but simultaneously releases a defiant statement defending his attacks.

January 22, 1997

Authorities raid the Martinton, Ill., home of former Marine Ricky Salyers, an alleged Ku Klux Klan member, discovering 35,000 rounds of heavy ammunition, armor piercing shells, smoke and tear gas

grenades, live shells for grenade launchers, artillery shells and other military gear. Salyers was discharged earlier from the Marines, where he taught demolitions and sniping, after tossing a live grenade (with the pin still in) at state police officers serving him with a search warrant in 1995. Following the 1997 raid, Salyers, an alleged member of the underground Black Dawn group of extremists in the military, is sentenced to serve three years for weapons violations. He is released from prison in 2000.

March 26, 1997

Militia activist Brendon Blaszczyk is arrested in Kalamazoo, Mich., and charged with making pipe bombs and other illegal explosives. Prosecutors say Blaszczyk plotted to bomb the federal building in Battle Creek, the IRS building in Portage, a Kalamazoo television station and federal armories. But they recommend leniency on his explosives conviction after Blaszczyk, a member of the Michigan Militia Corps Wolverines, renounces his antigovernment beliefs and cooperates with them. He is sentenced to more than three years in federal prison and released in late 1999.

April 22, 1997

Three Ku Klux Klan members are arrested in a plot to blow up a natural gas refinery outside Fort Worth, Texas, after local Klan leader Robert Spence gets cold feet and goes to the FBI. The three, along with a fourth arrested later, expected to kill a huge number of people with the blast — authorities later say as many as 30,000 might have died — which was to serve, incredibly, as a diversion for a simultaneous armored car robbery. Among the victims would have been children at a nearby school. All four plead guilty to conspiracy charges and are sentenced to terms of up to 20 years. Spence enters the Witness Protection Program. Carl Jay Waskom Jr. is released in 2004,

while Shawn and Catherine Adams, a couple, are freed in 2006. Edward Taylor Jr. is released in early 2007.

April 23, 1997

Florida police arrest Todd Vanbiber, a member of the neo-Nazi National Alliance's Tampa unit and the shadowy League of the Silent Soldier, after he accidentally sets off pipe bombs he was building, blasting shrapnel into his own face. He is accused of plotting to use the bombs on the approach to Disney World to divert attention from a planned string of bank robberies. Vanbiber pleads guilty to weapons and explosives charges and is sentenced to more than six years in federal prison. He is released in 2002. Within two years, Vanbiber is posting messages on neo-Nazi Internet sites boasting that he has built over 300 bombs successfully and only made one error, and describing mass murderer Timothy McVeigh as a hero.

April 27, 1997

After a cache of explosives stored in a tree blows up near Yuba City, Calif., police arrest Montana Freeman supporter William Robert Goehler. Investigators looking into the blast arrest two Goehler associates, one of them a militia leader, after finding 500 pounds of explosives — enough to level three city blocks — in a motor home parked outside their residence. Six others are arrested on related charges. Goehler, with previous convictions for rape, burglary and assault, is sentenced to 25 years to life in prison. He is later accused of stabbing his attorney with a shank and charged with attacking prison psychologists.

May 3, 1997

Antigovernment extremists set fire to the IRS office in Colorado Springs, Colo., causing \$2.5 million in damage and injuring a firefighter. Federal agents later arrest five men in connection with the arson, which is

conceived as a protest against the tax system. Ringleader James Cleaver, former national director of the anti-government Sons of Liberty group, is accused of threatening a witness and eventually sentenced to 33 years in prison, with a release date of 2030. Accomplice Jack Dowell receives 30 years and is scheduled to be freed in 2027. Both are ordered to pay \$2.2 million in restitution. Dowell's cousin is acquitted of all charges, while two other suspects, Ronald Sherman and Thomas Shafer, plead guilty to perjury charges in connection with the case.

July 4, 1997

Militiaman Bradley Playford Glover and another heavily armed antigovernment activist are arrested before dawn near Fort Hood, in central Texas, just hours before they planned to invade the Army base and slaughter foreign troops they mistakenly believed were housed there. In the next few days, five other people are arrested in several states for their alleged roles in the plot to invade a series of military bases where the group believes United Nations forces are massing for an assault on Americans. All seven are part of a splinter group from the Third Continental Congress, a kind of militia government-in-waiting. In the end, Glover is sentenced to two years on Kansas weapons charges, to be followed by a five-year federal term in connection with the Fort Hood plot. The others draw lesser terms. Glover is released in 2003, the last of the seven to get out.

December 12, 1997

A federal grand jury in Arkansas indicts three men on racketeering charges for plotting to overthrow the government and create a whites-only Aryan People's Republic, which they intend to grow through polygamy. Chevie Kehoe, Daniel Lee and Faron Lovelace are accused of crimes in six states, including murder, kid-

napping, robbery and conspiracy. Kehoe and Lee will also face state charges of murdering an Arkansas family, including an 8-year-old girl, in 1996. Kehoe ultimately receives a life sentence on that charge, while Lee is sentenced to death. Lovelace is sentenced to death for the murder of a suspected informant, but because of court rulings is later resentenced to life without parole. Kehoe's brother, Cheyne, is convicted of attempted murder during a 1997 Ohio shootout with police and sentenced to 24 years in prison, despite his helping authorities track down his fugitive brother in Utah after the shootout. Cheyne went to the authorities after Chevie began talking about murdering their parents and showing sexual interest in Cheyne's wife.

January 29, 1998

An off-duty police officer is killed and a nurse terribly maimed when a nail-packed, remote-control bomb explodes outside a Birmingham, Ala., abortion facility, the New Woman All Women clinic. Letters to media outlets and officials claim responsibility in the name of the "Army of God," the same entity that took credit for the bombings of a clinic and a gay bar in the Atlanta area. The attack also will be linked to the fatal 1996 bombing of the Atlanta Olympics. Eric Robert Rudolph, a loner from North Carolina, is first identified as a suspect when witnesses spot his pickup truck fleeing the Birmingham bombing. But he is not caught until 2003. He ultimately pleads guilty to all four attacks in exchange for a life sentence.

February 23, 1998

Three men with links to a Ku Klux Klan group are arrested near East St. Louis, Ill., on weapons charges. The three, along with three other men arrested later, formed a group called The New Order, patterned on a 1980s terror group called The Order (a.k.a. the Silent Brotherhood) that carried out assassinations and

armored car heists. New Order members plotted to assassinate a federal judge and civil rights lawyer Morris Dees, blow up the Southern Poverty Law Center that Dees co-founded and other buildings, poison water supplies and rob banks. Wallace Weicherding, one of the men, came to a 1997 Dees speech with a concealed gun but turned back rather than pass through a metal detector. In the end, all six plead guilty or are convicted of weapons charges, drawing terms of up to seven years in federal prison. New Order leader Dennis McGiffen is released in 2004, the last of the six to regain his freedom.

March 18, 1998

Three members of the North American Militia of Southwestern Michigan are arrested on firearms and other charges. Prosecutors say the men conspired to bomb federal buildings, a Kalamazoo television station and an interstate highway interchange, kill federal agents, assassinate politicians and attack aircraft at a National Guard base — attacks that were all to be funded by marijuana sales. The group's leader, Ken Carter, is a self-described member of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations. Carter pleads guilty, testifies against his former comrades, and is sentenced to five years in prison. The others, Randy Graham and Bradford Metcalf, go to trial and are ultimately handed sentences of 40 and 55 years, respectively. Carter is released from prison in 2002.

May 29, 1998

A day after stealing a water truck, three men shoot and kill a Cortez, Colo., police officer and wound two other officers as they try to stop the suspects during a road chase. After the gun battle, the three — Alan Monty Pilon, Robert Mason and Jason McVean — disappear into the canyons of the high desert. Mason is found a week later, dead of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot. The

skeletal remains of Pilon are found in 1999 and show that he, too, died of a gunshot to the head, another apparent suicide. McVean is not found, but most authorities assume he died in the desert. Many officials believe the three men intended to use the water truck in some kind of terrorist attack, but the nature of their suspected plans is never learned.

July 1, 1998

Three men are charged with conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction after threatening President Clinton and other federal officials with biological weapons. Officials say the men planned to use a cactus thorn coated with a toxin like anthrax and fired by a modified butane lighter to carry out the murders. One man is acquitted of the charges, but Jack Abbot Grebe Jr., and Johnnie Wise — a 72-year-old man who attended meetings of the separatist Republic of Texas group — are sentenced to more than 24 years in prison. The men are set for release in 2019.

July 30, 1998

South Carolina militia member Paul T. Chastain is charged with weapons, explosives and drug violations after allegedly trying to trade drugs for a machine gun and enough C-4 plastic explosive to demolish a five-room house. The next year, Chastain pleads guilty to an array of charges, including threatening to kill Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI Director Louis Freeh. He is sentenced to 15 years in federal prison, with release scheduled in 2011.

October 23, 1998

Dr. Barnett Slepian is assassinated by a sniper as he talks with his wife and children in the kitchen of their Amherst, N.Y., home. Identified as a suspect shortly after the murder, James Charles Kopp flees to Mexico, driven and disguised by friend Jennifer Rock, and goes on

to hide out in Ireland and France. Two fellow anti-abortion extremists, Loretta Marra and Dennis Malvasi, make plans to help Kopp secretly return. Kopp, also suspected in the earlier sniper woundings of four physicians in Canada and upstate New York, is arrested in France as he picks up money wired by Marra and Malvasi. He eventually admits the shooting to a newspaper reporter — claiming that he only intended to wound Slepian — and is sentenced to life in prison plus 10 years. In 2003, Marra and Malvasi are sentenced to time served after pleading guilty to federal charges related to harboring a fugitive.

June 10, 1999

Officials arrest Alabama plumber Chris Scott Gilliam, a member of the neo-Nazi National Alliance, after he attempts to purchase 10 hand grenades from an undercover federal agent. Gilliam, who months earlier paraded in an extremist T-shirt in front of the Southern Poverty Law Center's offices in Montgomery, tells agents he planned to send mail bombs to targets in Washington, D.C. Agents searching his home find bomb-making manuals, white supremacist literature and an assault rifle. Gilliam pleads guilty to federal firearms charges and is sentenced to 10 years in prison. He is released in early 2008.

July 1, 1999

A gay couple, Gary Matson and Winfield Mowder, are shot to death in bed at their home near Redding, Calif. Days later, after tracking purchases made on Mowder's stolen credit card, police arrest brothers Benjamin Matthew Williams and James Tyler Williams. At least one of the pair, Matthew Williams (both use their middle names), is an adherent of the anti-Semitic Christian Identity theology. Police soon learn that the brothers two weeks earlier carried out arson attacks against three synagogues and an abortion

clinic in Sacramento. Both brothers, whose mother at one point refers in a conversation to her sons' victims as "two homos," eventually admit their guilt — in Matthew's case, in a newspaper interview. Matthew, who at one point badly injures a guard in a surprise attack, commits suicide in 2002. Tyler, who pleads guilty to an array of charges in the case, and is given two sentences amounting to 50 years to be served consecutively.

July 2, 1999

Infuriated that neo-Nazi leader Matt Hale has just been denied his law license by Illinois officials, follower Benjamin Nathaniel Smith begins a three-day murder spree across Illinois and Indiana, shooting to death a popular black former college basketball coach and a Korean doctoral student and wounding nine other minorities. Smith kills himself as police close in during a car chase. Hale, the "Pontifex Maximus," or leader, of the World Church of the Creator, at first claims to barely know Smith. But it quickly emerges that Hale has recently given Smith his group's top award and, in fact, spent some 16 hours on the phone with him in the two weeks before Smith's rampage. Conveniently, Hale receives a registered letter from Smith just days after his suicide, informing Hale that Smith is quitting the group because he now sees violence as the only answer.

August 10, 1999

Buford Furrow, a former member of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations who has been living with the widow of slain terrorist leader Bob Mathews, strides into a Jewish community center near Los Angeles and fires more than 70 bullets, wounding three boys, a teenage girl and a woman. He then drives into the San Fernando Valley and murders Filipino-American mailman Joseph Iletto. The next day, Furrow turns himself in, saying he intended to send "a wake-up call to America to kill Jews." Furrow, who has a history

of mental illness, eventually pleads guilty and is sentenced to two life terms without parole, plus 110 years in prison.

November 5, 1999

FBI agents arrest James Kenneth Gluck in Tampa, Fla., after he wrote a 10-page letter to judges in Jefferson County, Colo., threatening to “wage biological warfare” on a county justice center. While searching his home, police find the materials needed to make ricin, one of the deadliest poisons known. Gluck later threatens a judge, claiming that he could kill 10,000 people with the chemical. After serving time in federal prison, Gluck is released in early 2001.

December 5, 1999

Two California men, both members of the San Joaquin Militia, are charged with conspiracy in connection with a plot to blow up two 12-million-gallon propane tanks, a television tower and an electrical substation in hopes of provoking an insurrection. In 2001, the former militia leader, Donald Rudolph, pleads guilty to plotting to kill a federal judge and blow up the propane tanks, and testifies against his former comrades. Kevin Ray Patterson and Charles Dennis Kiles are ultimately convicted of several charges in connection with the conspiracy. They are expected to be released from federal prison in 2021 and 2018, respectively.

December 8, 1999

Donald Beaugard, head of a militia coalition known as the Southeastern States Alliance, is charged with conspiracy, providing materials for a terrorist act and gun violations in a plot to bomb energy facilities and cause power outages in Florida and Georgia. After pleading guilty to several charges, Beaugard, who once claimed to have discovered a secret map detailing a planned UN takeover mistakenly printed on a box of

Trix cereal, is sentenced to five years in federal prison. He is released in 2004, a year after accomplice James Troy Diver is freed following a similar conviction.

March 9, 2000

Federal agents arrest Mark Wayne McCool, the one-time leader of the Texas Militia and Combined Action Program, as he allegedly makes plans to attack the Houston federal building. McCool, who was arrested after buying powerful C-4 plastic explosives and an automatic weapon from an undercover FBI agent, earlier plotted to attack the federal building with a member of his own group and a member of the antigovernment Republic of Texas, but those two men eventually abandoned the plot. McCool, however, remained convinced the UN had stored a cache of military materiel in the building. In the end, he pleads guilty to federal charges that bring him just six months in jail.

April 28, 2000

Immigration attorney Richard Baumhammers, himself the son of Latvian immigrants, goes on a rampage in the Pittsburgh area against non-whites, killing five people and critically wounding a sixth. Baumhammers had recently started a tiny white supremacist group, the Free Market Party, that demanded an end to non-white immigration into the United States. In the end, the unemployed attorney, who is living with parents at the time of his murder spree, is sentenced to death.

March 1, 2001

As part of an ongoing probe into a white supremacist group, federal and local law enforcement agents raid the Corbett, Ore., home of Fritz Springmeier, seizing equipment to grow marijuana and weapons and racist literature. They also find a binder notebook entitled “Army

of God, Yahweh’s Warriors” that contains what officials call a list of targets, including a local federal building and the FBI’s Oregon offices. Springmeier, an associate of the anti-Semitic Christian Patriots Association, is eventually charged with setting off a diversionary bomb at an adult video store in Damascus, Ore., in 1997 as part of a bank robbery carried out by accomplice Forrest Bateman Jr. Another 2001 raid finds small amounts of bomb materials and marijuana in Bateman’s home. Eventually, Bateman pleads guilty to bank robbery and Springmeier is convicted of the same charges. Both are sentenced to nine years, and have release dates in 2011.

April 19, 2001

White supremacists Leo Felton and girlfriend Erica Chase are arrested following a foot chase that began when a police officer spotted them trying to pass counterfeit bills at a Boston donut shop. Investigators quickly learn Felton heads up a tiny group called Aryan Unit One, and that the couple, who had already obtained a timing device, planned to blow up black and Jewish landmarks and possibly assassinate black and Jewish leaders. They also learn another amazing fact: Felton, a self-described Aryan, is secretly biracial. Felton and Chase are eventually convicted of conspiracy, weapons violations and obstruction, and Felton is also convicted of bank robbery and other charges. Felton, who previously served 11 years for assaulting a black taxi driver, is sentenced to serve more than 21 years in federal prison, while his one-time sweetheart draws a lesser sentence and is released in 2007.

October 14, 2001

A North Carolina sheriff’s deputy pulls over Steve Anderson, a former “colonel” in the Kentucky Militia, on a routine traffic stop as

he heads home to Kentucky from a white supremacist gathering in North Carolina. Anderson, who is an adherent of racist Christian Identity theology and has issued violent threats against officials for months via an illegal pirate radio station, pulls out a semi-automatic weapon and peppers the deputy's car with bullets before driving his truck into the woods and disappearing for 13 months. Officials later find six pipe bombs in Anderson's abandoned truck and 27 bombs and destructive devices in his home. In the end, Anderson apologizes for his actions and pleads guilty. He is sentenced on a variety of firearms charges to 15 years in federal prison.

December 5, 2001

Anti-abortion extremist Clayton Lee Wagner, who nine months earlier escaped from an Illinois jail while awaiting sentencing on weapons and carjacking charges, is arrested in Cincinnati, Ohio. Wagner's odyssey began in September 1999, when he was stopped driving a stolen camper in Illinois and told police he was headed to Seattle to murder an abortion provider. He escaped in February 2001 and, while on the lam, mailed more than 550 hoax anthrax letters to abortion clinics and posted an Internet threat warning abortion clinic workers that "if you work for the murderous abortionist, I'm going to kill you." Wagner is eventually sentenced to 30 years on the Illinois charges. In Ohio, he is sentenced to almost 20 years more, to be served consecutively, on various weapons and car theft charges related to his time on the run. In late 2003, he also is found guilty of 51 federal terrorism charges. He is scheduled to be released in 2046.

December 11, 2001

Jewish Defense League chairman Irving David Rubin and a follower, Earl Leslie Krugel, are arrested in California and charged with con-

spiring to bomb the offices of U.S. Rep. Darrel Issa (R-Calif.) and the King Fahd Mosque in Culver City. Authorities say a confidential informant taped meetings with the two in which the bombings were discussed and Krugel said the JDL needed "to do something to one of their filthy mosques." Rubin later commits suicide in prison, officials say, just before he is to go on trial in 2002. Krugel pleads guilty to conspiracy in both plots, and testifies that Rubin conspired with him. Krugel dies in prison in 2005.

January 4, 2002

Neo-Nazi National Alliance member Michael Edward Smith is arrested after a car chase in Nashville, Tenn., that began when he was spotted sitting in a car with a semi-automatic rifle pointed at Sherith Israel Pre-School, run by a local synagogue. In Smith's car, home and storage unit, officials find an arsenal that includes a .50-caliber rifle, 10 hand grenades, 13 pipe bombs, binary explosives, semi-automatic pistols, ammunition and an array of military manuals. They also find teenage porn on Smith's computer and evidence that he carried out computer searches for Jewish schools and synagogues. In one of his E-mails, Smith wrote that Jews "perhaps" should be "stuffed head first into an oven." Smith is sentenced to more than 10 years in prison, with an expected release date in 2011.

February 8, 2002

The leader of a militia-like group known as Project 7 and his girlfriend are arrested after an informant tells police the group is plotting to kill judges and law enforcement officers in order to kick off a revolution. David Burgert, who has a record for burglary and is already wanted for assaulting police officers, is found in the house of girlfriend Tracy Brockway along with an arsenal that includes pipe bombs and 25,000

rounds of ammunition. Also found are "intel sheets" with personal information about law enforcement officers, their spouses and children. Although officials are convinced the Project 7 plot was real, Burgert ultimately is convicted only of weapons charges and draws a seven-year sentence; he is to be released in 2010. Six others are also convicted of or plead guilty to weapons charges. Brockway gets a suspended sentence for harboring a fugitive, but is sent to prison for violating its terms. She is released in early 2008.

July 19, 2002

Acting on a tip, federal and local law enforcement agents arrest North Carolina Klan leader Charles Robert Barefoot Jr. for his role in an alleged plot to blow up the Johnson County Sheriff's Office, the sheriff himself and the county jail. Officers find more than two dozen weapons in Barefoot's home. They also find bombs and bomb components in the home of Barefoot's son, Daniel Barefoot, who is charged that same day with the arson of a school bus and an empty barn. The elder Barefoot — who broke away from the National Knights of the KKK several months earlier to form his own harder-line group, the Nation's Knights of the KKK — is charged with weapons violations and later sentenced to more than two years. In 2003, Barefoot's wife and three men, including Barefoot Sr., are charged with the murder of a former Klan member. In 2007, a judge rules Barefoot Sr. mentally incompetent to stand trial for murder and commits him indefinitely to a mental hospital. Sharon Barefoot was released from prison in July 2009.

August 22, 2002

Tampa area podiatrist Robert J. Goldstein is arrested after police, called by Goldstein's wife after he allegedly threatened to kill her, find more than 15 explosive devices in

their home, along with materials to make at least 30 more. Also found are homemade C-4 plastic explosives, grenades and mines, a .50-caliber rifle, semi-automatic weapons, and a list of 50 Islamic worship centers in the area. The most significant discovery is a three-page plan detailing plans to “kill all ‘rags’” at the Islamic Society of Pinellas County. Eventually, two other local men are also charged in connection with the plot, and Goldstein’s wife is arrested for possessing illegal destructive devices. Goldstein pleads guilty to plotting to blow up the Islamic Society and is sentenced to more than 12 years in federal prison, with a release date in 2013. His wife was released in 2006.

October 3, 2002

Officials close in on long-time anti-government extremist Larry Raugust at a rest stop in Idaho, arrest him and charge him with 16 counts of making and possessing destructive devices, including pipe bombs and pressure-detonated booby traps. He is accused of giving one explosive device to an undercover agent, and is also named as an unindicted co-conspirator in a plot with colleagues in the Idaho Mountain Boys militia to murder a federal judge and a police officer, and to break a friend out of jail. A dead-beat dad, Raugust is also accused of helping plant land mines on property belonging to a friend whose land was seized by authorities over unpaid taxes. He eventually pleads guilty to 15 counts of making bombs and is sentenced to federal prison. Raugust was released in early 2008.

January 8, 2003

Federal agents arrest Matt Hale, the national leader of the neo-Nazi World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), as he reports to a Chicago courthouse in an ongoing copyright case over the name of his group. Hale is charged with soliciting the murder of the federal judge

in the case, Joan Humphrey Lefkow, who he has publicly vilified as someone bent on the destruction of his group. (Although Lefkow originally ruled in WCOTC’s favor, an appeals court found that the complaint brought by an identically named church in Oregon was legally justified, and Lefkow reversed herself accordingly.) In guarded language captured on tape recordings, Hale is heard agreeing that his security chief, an FBI informant, should kill Lefkow. Hale is found guilty and sentenced to serve 40 years in federal prison; he is not expected to be released until 2037.

January 18, 2003

James D. Brailey, a convicted felon who once was selected as “governor” of the state of Washington by the antigovernment Washington Jural Society, is arrested after a raid on his home turns up a machine gun, an assault rifle and several handguns. One informant tells the FBI that Brailey was plotting to assassinate Gov. Gary Locke, both because Locke was the state’s real governor and because he was Chinese-American. A second informant says that Brailey actually went on a “dry run” to Olympia, carrying several guns into the state Capitol building to test security. Eventually, Brailey pleads guilty to weapons charges and is sentenced to serve 15 months in prison. He is released in 2004.

February 13, 2003

Federal agents in Pennsylvania arrest David Wayne Hull, imperial wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and an adherent of the anti-Semitic Christian Identity theology, alleging that Hull arranged to buy hand grenades to blow up abortion clinics. The FBI says Hull also illegally instructed followers on how to build pipe bombs. Hull, who published a newsletter in which he urged readers to write Oklahoma bomber Tim McVeigh “to tell this great man goodbye,” is found

guilty of weapons violations and sentenced to 12 years in federal prison. He is to be released in 2012.

April 3, 2003

Federal agents arrest antigovernment extremist David Roland Hinkson in Idaho and charge him with trying to hire an assassin on two occasions in 2002 and 2003 to murder a federal judge, a prosecutor and an IRS agent involved in a tax case against him. Hinkson, a businessman who earned millions of dollars from his Water Oz dietary supplement company but refused to pay almost \$1 million in federal taxes, is convicted in 2004 of 26 counts related to the tax case. In early 2005, a federal jury finds him guilty in the assassination plot as well. He is not expected to be released until 2040.

April 10, 2003

The FBI raids the Noonday, Texas, home of William Krar and storage facilities that Krar rented in the area, discovering an arsenal that includes more than 500,000 rounds of ammunition, 65 pipe bombs and remote-control briefcase bombs, and almost two pounds of deadly sodium cyanide. Also found are components to convert the cyanide into a bomb capable of killing thousands, along with white supremacist and anti-government material. Investigators soon learn Krar was stopped earlier in 2003 by police in Tennessee, who found several weapons and coded documents in his car that seemed to detail a plot. But Krar refuses to cooperate, and details of that alleged plan are never learned. He pleads guilty to possession of a chemical weapon and is sentenced to more than 11 years in prison, where he dies.

June 4, 2003

Federal agents in California announce that former accountant John Noster, in prison since November 2002 for car theft, is under investigation for plotting a

major terrorist attack. Noster was first arrested as part of a car theft ring investigation, but officials who found incendiary devices in his stolen camper continued to probe his activities. Eventually, they find in various storage facilities three pipe bombs, six barrels of jet fuel, five assault weapons, cannon fuse, a large amount of ammunition and \$188,000 in cash. Law enforcement officials, who describe Noster as an “antigovernment extremist,” allege at a press conference that he “was definitely planning” on an attack but do not elaborate. In addition to prison time in that case, Noster draws another five years in 2009, after pleading guilty to two weapons charges.

October 10, 2003

Police arrest Norman Somerville after finding a huge weapons cache on his property in northern Michigan that includes six machine guns, a powerful anti-aircraft gun, thousands of rounds of ammunition, hundreds of pounds of gunpowder, and an underground bunker. They also find two vehicles Somerville calls his “war wagons,” and on which prosecutors later say he planned to mount machine guns as part of a plan to stage an auto accident and then massacre arriving police. Officials describe Somerville as an antigovernment extremist enraged over the death of Scott Woodring, a Michigan Militia member killed by police a week after Woodring shot and killed a state trooper during a standoff. Somerville eventually pleads guilty to weapons charges and is sentenced to six years in prison. He is scheduled to be released in late 2009.

April 1, 2004

Neo-Nazi Skinhead Sean Gillespie videotapes himself as he firebombs Temple B’nai Israel, an Oklahoma City synagogue, as part of a film he is preparing to inspire other racists to violent revolution. In it, Gillespie

boasts that instead of merely pronouncing the white-supremacist “14 Words” slogan (“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children”), he will carry out 14 violent attacks. A former member of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations, Gillespie is found guilty of the attack and later sentenced to 39 years in federal prison, with an expected release date of 2038.

May 24, 2004

During the attempted robbery of a Tulsa bank by Wade and Christopher Lay, a father-and-son pair of political extremists, security guard Kenneth Anderson is shot to death. Both robbers are wounded, and are arrested a short time after fleeing the bank. At trial, Wade Lay testifies that he and his son acted “for the good of the American people” and in an effort to “preserve liberty.” Other evidence shows the pair hoped to get money to pay for weapons that they intended to use to kill Texas officials who they believed were responsible for the deadly 1993 standoff between the authorities and religious cultists in Waco. In the end, Wade Lay is sentenced to death for first-degree murder, while his son gets 25 years for armed robbery.

October 13, 2004

Ivan Duane Braden, a former National Guardsman discharged from an Iraq-bound unit after superiors noted signs of instability, is arrested after checking into a mental health facility and telling counselors about plans to blow up a synagogue and a National Guard armory in Tennessee. The FBI reports that Braden told agents that he planned to go to a synagogue wearing a trench coat stuffed with explosives and get himself “as close to children and the rabbi as possible,” a plan Braden also outlined in notes found in his home. In addition, he intended to take and kill hostages at the Lenoir City Armory, before blowing the armory

up. Eventually, Braden, who also possessed neo-Nazi literature and reportedly hated blacks and Jews from an early age, pleads guilty to conspiring to blow up the armory. He is sentenced to prison, where his release is expected in 2017.

October 25, 2004

FBI agents in Tennessee arrest farmhand Demetrius “Van” Crocker after he tried to purchase ingredients for deadly sarin nerve gas and C-4 plastic explosives from an undercover agent. The FBI reports that Crocker, who local officials say was involved in a white supremacist group in the 1980s, tells the agent that he admires Hitler and hates Jews and the government. He also says “it would be a good thing if somebody could detonate some sort of weapon of mass destruction on Washington, D.C.” Crocker is convicted of trying to get explosives to destroy a building and imprisoned until an expected release in 2030.

May 20, 2005

Officials in New Jersey arrest two men they say asked a police informant to build them a bomb. Craig Orlor, who has a history of burglary arrests, and Gabriel Carafa, said to be a leader of the neo-Nazi World Church of the Creator and a member of a racist Skinhead group called The Hated, are charged with illegally selling 11 guns to police informants. Carafa gave one informant 60 pounds of urea to use in building him a bomb, but never said what the bomb was for. Police say they moved in before the alleged bombing plot developed further because they were concerned about the pair’s activities. They taped Orlor saying in a phone call that he was seeking people in Europe to help him go underground. Orlor is sentenced to more than 10 years in prison, while Carafa draws seven.

June 10, 2005

Daniel J. Schertz, a former member of the North Georgia White Knights

of the Ku Klux Klan, is indicted in Chattanooga, Tenn., on federal weapons charges for allegedly making seven pipe bombs and selling them to an undercover informant with the idea that they would be used to murder Mexican and Haitian immigrant workers. The informant says Schertz demonstrated how to attach the pipe bombs to cars, then sold him bombs that Schertz expected to be used against a group of Haitians and, separately, Mexican workers on a bus headed to work in Florida. Schertz eventually pleads guilty to six charges — including teaching how to make an explosive device; making, possessing and transferring destructive devices; and possessing a pistol with armor-piercing bullets — and is sentenced to 14 years in prison. He is to be released in 2017.

March 19, 2006

U.S. Treasury agents in Utah arrest David J. D'Addabbo for allegedly threatening Internal Revenue Service employees with “death by firing squad” if they continued to try to collect taxes from him and his wife. D'Addabbo, who was reportedly carrying a Glock pistol, 40 rounds of ammunition and a switchblade knife when he was seized leaving a church service, allegedly wrote to the U.S. Tax Court that anyone attempting to collect taxes would be tried by a “jury of common people. You then could be found guilty of treason and immediately taken to a firing squad.” In August D'Addabbo pleads guilty to one charge of threatening a government agent in exchange for the dismissal of three other charges of threatening IRS agents. He is sentenced to time served and released the same year as his arrest.

April 26, 2007

Five members of the Alabama Free Militia are arrested in north Alabama in a raid by federal and state law enforcement officers that uncovers a cache of 130 homemade hand

grenades, an improvised grenade launcher, a Sten Mark submachine gun, a silencer, 2,500 rounds of ammunition and almost 100 marijuana plants. Raymond Kirk Dillard, the founder and “commander” of the group, pleads guilty to criminal conspiracy, illegally making and possessing destructive devices and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Other members of the group — Bonnell “Buster” Hughes, James Ray McElroy, Adam Lynn Cunningham and Randall Garrett — also plead guilty to related charges. Although Dillard, who complained about the collapse of the American economy, terrorist attacks and Mexicans taking over the country, reportedly told his troops to open fire on federal agents if ever confronted, no shots are fired during the April raid, and the “commander” even points out booby-trap tripwires on his property to investigators. Dillard and Garrett draw the harshest sentences, with releases scheduled for 2012 and 2018, respectively.

June 8, 2008

Six people, most of them tied to the militia movement, are arrested in rural north-central Pennsylvania after officials find stockpiles of assault rifles, improvised explosives and homemade weapons, at least some of them apparently intended for terrorist attacks on U.S. officials. Agents find 16 homemade bombs during a search of the residence of Pennsylvania Citizens Militia recruiter Bradley T. Kahle, who allegedly tells authorities that he intended to shoot black people from a rooftop in Pittsburgh and also predicts civil war if Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton are elected president. A raid on the property of Morgan Jones results in the seizure of 73 weapons, including a homemade flame thrower, a machine that supposedly shot bolts of electricity, and an improvised cannon. Also arrested and charged with weapons violations are Marvin E. Hall, his girlfriend Melissa Huet and

Perry Landis. Landis, who is to be sentenced in late 2009, allegedly tells undercover agents he wanted to kill Gov. Ed Rendell. Hall is sentenced to more than two years.

August 24, 2008

White supremacists Shawn Robert Adolf, Tharin Robert Gartrell and Nathan D. Johnson are arrested in Denver during the Democratic National Convention on weapons charges and for possession of amphetamines. Although police say they talked about assassinating presidential candidate Barack Obama, they are not charged in connection with that threat because officials see their talk as drug-fueled boasting. Police report the three had high-powered, scoped rifles, wigs, camouflage clothing and a bulletproof vest, along with the crystal methamphetamine. Gartrell was released from prison in June 2009, while Johnson was to be freed in 2010. Adolf, who was already wanted on other charges, drew a longer sentence.

October 24, 2008

Two white supremacists, Daniel Cowart and Paul Schlesselman, are arrested in Tennessee for allegedly plotting to assassinate Barack Obama and murder more than 100 black people. Officials say Schlesselman and Cowart, a probationary member of the racist skinhead group Supreme White Alliance, planned to kill 88 people, then behead another 14. (Both numbers are significant in white supremacist circles. H is the eighth letter of the alphabet, so double 8s stand for HH, or “Heil Hitler.” The number 14 represents the “14 Words,” a popular racist saying.) The pair are indicted on charges that include threatening a presidential candidate, possessing a sawed-off shotgun, taking firearms across state lines to commit crimes, planning to rob a licensed gun dealer, damaging religious property, and using a firearm during the commission of a crime.

December 9, 2008

Police responding to a shooting at a home in Belfast, Maine, find James G. Cummings dead, allegedly killed by his wife after years of domestic abuse. They also find a cache of radioactive materials, which Cummings was apparently using to try to build a radioactive “dirty bomb,” along with literature on how to build such a deadly explosive. Police also discover a membership application filled out by Cummings for the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement. Friends say that Cummings had a collection of Nazi memorabilia. The authorities say Cummings was reportedly “very upset” by the election of Barack Obama.

December 16, 2008

Kody Ray Brittingham, a lance corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, is arrested with four others on attempted robbery charges. A search of his barracks room at Camp Lejeune, N.C., allegedly turns up white supremacist materials and a journal written by Brittingham containing plans to kill Barack Obama. Brittingham is indicted for threatening the president-elect of the United States, a crime that carries a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

January 21, 2009

On the day after Barack Obama is inaugurated as the nation’s first black president, Keith Luke of Brockton, Mass., is arrested after allegedly shooting three black immigrants from Cape Verde, killing two of them, as part of a racially motivated killing spree. The two murders are apparently only part of Luke’s plan to kill black, Latino and Jewish people. After being captured by police, he reportedly says he planned to go to an Orthodox synagogue near his home that night and “kill as many Jews as possible.” Police say Luke, a white man who apparently had no

contact with white supremacists but spent the previous six months reading racist websites, told them he was “fighting for a dying race.” Luke also says he formed his racist views in large part after watching videos on Podblanc, a racist video-sharing website run by longtime white supremacist Craig Cobb. When he later appears in court for a hearing, Luke, charged with murder, kidnapping and aggravated rape, has etched a swastika into his own forehead, apparently using a jail razor.

April 4, 2009

Three Pittsburgh police officers — Paul Sciuлло III, Stephen Mayhle and Eric Kelly — are fatally shot and a fourth, Timothy McManaway, is wounded after responding to a domestic dispute at the home of Richard Andrew Poplawski, who had posted his racist and anti-Semitic views on white supremacist websites. In one post, Poplawski talks about wanting a white supremacist tattoo. He also reportedly tells a friend that America is controlled by a cabal of Jews, that U.S. troops may soon be used against American citizens, and that he fears a ban on guns is coming. Poplawski later allegedly tells investigators that he fired extra bullets into the bodies of two of the officers “just to make sure they were dead” and says he “thought I got that one, too” when told that the fourth officer survived. More law enforcement officers are killed during the incident than in any other single act of violence by a domestic political extremist since the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

April 25, 2009

Joshua Cartwright, a Florida National Guardsman, allegedly shoots to death two Okaloosa County, Fla., sheriff’s deputies — Burt Lopez and Warren “Skip” York — at a gun range as the officers attempt to arrest Cartwright on domestic violence charges. After fleeing the scene, Cartwright is

fatally shot during a gun battle with pursuing officers. Cartwright’s wife later tells investigators that her husband was “severely disturbed” that Barack Obama has been elected president. He also reportedly believed the U.S. government was conspiring against him. The sheriff tells reporters that Cartwright had been interested in joining a militia group.

May 31, 2009

Scott Roeder, an anti-abortion extremist who was involved with the antigovernment “freemen” movement in the 1990s, allegedly shoots to death Kansas late-term abortion provider George Tiller as the doctor is serving as an usher in his Wichita church. Adherents of “freemen” ideology claim they are “sovereign citizens” not subject to federal and other laws, and often form their own “common law” courts and issue their own license plates. It was one of those homemade plates that led Topeka police to stop Roeder in April 1996, when a search of his trunk revealed a pound of gunpowder, a 9-volt battery wired to a switch, blasting caps and ammunition. A prosecutor in that case called Roeder a “substantial threat to public safety,” citing Roeder’s refusal to acknowledge the court’s authority. But his conviction in the 1996 case is ultimately overturned. In the more recent case, Roeder is charged with murder and could face up to life in prison if convicted.

June 10, 2009

Eighty-eight-year-old James von Brunn, a longtime neo-Nazi, walks up to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and allegedly shoots to death security guard Stephen Johns before he is himself shot and critically wounded by other officers. Von Brunn, who earlier served six years in connection with his 1981 attempt to kidnap the members of the Federal Reserve Board at the point of a sawed-off shotgun, has been active

in the white supremacist movement for more than four decades. As early as the early 1970s, he worked at the Holocaust-denying Noontide Press, and in subsequent decades, he comes to know many of the key leaders of the radical right. A search of von Brunn’s car after the museum attack turns up a list of other apparent targets, including the White House, the Capitol, the National Cathedral and *The Washington Post*. A note allegedly left by von Brunn in his car reads: “You want my weapons; this is how you’ll get them ... the Holocaust is a lie ... Obama was created by Jews. Obama does what his Jew owners tell him to do. Jews captured America’s money. Jews control the mass media.” He is charged with murder.

June 12, 2009

Shawna Forde — the executive director of Minutemen American Defense

(MAD), an anti-immigrant vigilante group that conducts “citizen patrols” on the Arizona-Mexico border — is charged with two counts of first-degree murder for her alleged role in the slayings of a Latino man and his 9-year-old daughter in Arivaca, Ariz. Forde allegedly orchestrated the May 30 home invasion because she believed the man was a narcotics trafficker and wanted to steal drugs and cash to fund her group. Authorities say the murders, including the killing of the child, were part of the plan. Also arrested and charged with murder are the alleged triggerman, MAD Operations Director Jason Eugene “Gunny” Bush, and Albert Robert Gaxiola, 42, a local member of MAD. Authorities say that Bush had ties to the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations in Idaho, and that Forde has spoken of recruiting its members.

June 25, 2009

Longtime white supremacist Dennis Mahon and his brother Daniel are indicted in Arizona in connection with a mail bomb sent in 2004 to a diversity office in Scottsdale that injured three people. Mahon, formerly tied to the neo-Nazi White Aryan Resistance (WAR) group, allegedly left a phone message at the office saying that “the White Aryan Resistance is growing in Scottsdale. There’s a few white people who are standing up.” In a related raid, agents search the Indiana home of Tom Metzger, founder of WAR, but he is not arrested. On the same day, white supremacist Robert Joos is arrested in rural Missouri, apparently because phone records show that Dennis Mahon’s first call after the mail bombing was to Joos’ cell phone. Joos is charged with being a felon in possession of firearms.

