

Police Officer Murdered to cover up OKC Bombing

Date: Fri Apr 25 13:24:03 1997
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This story is third of a series that ran in the Washington Weekly. It will be included in my forthcoming book, entitled, "The Oklahoma City Bombing and the Politics of Terror," to be published in the Fall on 1997 by Feral House. It should be in all the major bookstores, that is, unless the FBI steals the galleys.

Like Dr. Don Chumley, the media said Officer Terrance Yeakey "was wracked with guilt" over his inability to help more people that fateful morning.

And in a manner paralleling that of El Reno Prison guard Joey Gladden, the press claimed Yeakey led a "troubled family life," having been recently divorced from his wife Tonia, and separated from his two daughters, aged two and four, whom the Daily Oklahoman claimed he was not permitted to see due to a restraining order.

On May 8, 1996, only three days before Sergeant Yeakey was to receive the Oklahoma Police Department's Medal of Valor, he "committed suicide." The 30 year-old cop was found in a field near El Reno, not far from where Gladden "committed suicide." His wrists were slashed in numerous places, as was his neck and throat. Apparently not satisfied with this initial attempt to take his life, he got out of his car, walked a mile and-a-half over rough terrain, then pulled out his gun shot himself in the head.

Some accounts suggest that Yeakey was reluctant to receive the Medal of Valor due to his "guilt" over being injured in the Murrah Building. "He didn't like it," said his supervisor Lt. Jo Ann Randall. "There are some people that like to be heroes and some that don't. He was not one that wanted that."

"He had a lot of guilt because he got hurt," added fellow officer Jim Ramsey [1]

Apparently, there was much more behind Officer Terrance Yeakey's reluctance to be honored as a hero.

"He kept telling me it wasn't what I thought it was," said his ex-wife, Tonia Rivera, "that they were only choosing officers who were not even at the site, you know—who didn't see anything—to take public rewards, recognition, that sort of stuff.

"They started pressuring them into taking [the rewards]," added Rivera. "There came a time about mid-year, where they were forcing him into going to these award ceremonies. As in, 'Yes, you could not go, but we'll make your life hell...'

The story of the reluctant hero, she added, was nothing more than a "real thin veil of truth" which covered up a "mountain of deceit."

"[T]erry wanted no part of it." [2]

His sister, Vicki Jones, agreed. "Terry hated that stuff. 'I'm no hero,' he would say. 'Nobody that had anything to do with helping those people in that bombing are heroes.'"

Why would the Medal of Valor recipient make such a bizarre-sounding statement? In a letter he wrote to a bombing victim and friend, the officer tells the real reason for his reluctance to be honored as a hero:

Dear Ramona,

I hope that whatever you hear now and in the future will not change your opinions about myself or others with the Oklahoma City Police Department, although some of the things I am about to tell you about is [sic] very disturbing.

I don't know if you recall everything that happened that morning or not, so I am not sure if you know what I am referring to.

The man that you and I were talking about in the pictures I have made the mistake of asking too many questions as to his role in the bombing, and was told to back off.

I was told by several officers he was a ATF agent who was overseeing the bombing plot and at the time the photos were taken he was calling in his report of what had just went down!

I think my days as a police officer are numbered because of the way my supervisors are acting and there is [sic] a lot of secrets floating around now about my mental state of mind. I think they are going to write me up because of my ex-wife and a VPO.

I told you about talking to Chaplain Poe, well the bastard wrote up in a report stating I should be relieved of my duties! I made the mistake of thinking that a person's conversation with a chaplain was private, which by the way might have cost me my job as a police officer! A friend at headquarters told me that Poe sent out letters to everyone in the department! That BITCH (Jo Ann Randall) I told you about is up to something and I think it has something to do with Poe. If she gets her way, they will tar and feather me!

I was told that Jack Poe has written up a report on every single officer that has been in to see him, including Gordon Martin and John Avery.

Knowing what I know now, and understanding fully just what went down that morning, makes me ashamed to wear a badge from Oklahoma City's Police Department. I took an oath to uphold the Law and to enforce the Law to the best of my ability. This is something I cannot honestly do and hold my head up proud any longer if I keep my silence as I am ordered to do.

There are several others out there who was [sic] what we saw and even some who played a role in what happened that day.

[Two Pages Missing]

My guess is the more time an officer has to think about the screw up the more he is going to question what happened... Can you imagine what would be coming down now if that had been our officers' who had let this happen? Because it was the feds that did this and not the locals, is the reason it's okay. You were right all along and I am truly sorry I doubted you and your motives about recording history. You should know that it is going to one-hell-of-a-fight.

Everyone was behind you until you started asking questions as I did, as to how so many federal agents arrived at the scene at the same time.

Luke Franey (a BATF agent who claimed he was in the building) was not in the building at the time of the blast, I know this for a fact, I saw him! I also saw full riot gear worn with rifles in hand, why? Don't make the mistake as I did and ask the wrong people.

I worry about you and your young family because of some of the statements that have been made towards me, a police officer! Whatever you do don't confront McPhearson with the bomb squad about what I told you. His actions and defensiveness towards the bombing would make any normal person think he was defending himself as if he drove the damn truck up to the building himself. I am not worried for myself, but for you and your group. I would not be afraid to say at this time that you and your family could be harmed if you get any closer to the truth. At this time I think for your well being it is best for you to distance yourself and others from those of us who have stirred up to many questions about the altering and falsifying of the federal investigation's reports.

I truly believe there are other officers like me out there who would not settle for anything but the truth, it is just a matter of finding them. The only true problem as I see it is, who do we turn to then?

It is vital that people like you, Edye Smith, and others keep asking questions and demanding answers for the actions of our federal government and law enforcement agencies that knew beforehand and participated in the cover-up.

The sad truth of the matter is that they have so many police officers convinced that by covering up the truth about the operation gone wrong, that they are actually doing our citizens a favor. What I want to know is how many other operations have they had that blew up in their faces? Makes you stop and take another look at Waco.

I would consider it to be an insult to my profession as a police officer and to the citizens of Oklahoma for ANY of the City, State or Federal agents that stood by and let this happen to be recognized as any thing other than their part in participation in letting this happen. For those who ran from the scene to change their attire to hide the fact that they were there, should be judged as cowards.

If our history books and records are ever truly corrected about that day it will show this and maybe even some lame excuse as to why it happened, but I truly don't believe it will from what I now know to be the truth.

Even if I tried to explain it to you the way it was explained to me, and the ridiculous reason for having our own police departments falsify reports to their fellow officers, to the citizens of the city and to our country, you would understand why I feel the way I do about all of this.

I believe that a lot of the problems the officers are having right now are because some of them know what really happened and can't deal with it, and others like myself made the mistake of trusting the one person we were supposed to be able to turn to (Chaplain Poe) only to be stabbed in the back.

I am sad to say that I believe my days as a police officer are numbered because of all of this....

Shortly after the bombing, Yeakey appeared at his ex-wife's. "About two weeks before his death, he'd come into my home at strange times," said Rivera, "two-thirty in the morning, four in the morning, unannounced-trying to give me life insurance policies.... He kept telling me we needed to get remarried immediately, or me and the girls would not be taken care of.

"I mean, why would a guy tell you to take a life insurance policy, knowing damn well it wouldn't pay for a suicide? He obviously knew he was in danger."

Yet Officer Terrance Yeakey was not the type of person to easily show his feelings. He didn't want to tell his family anything that might get them hurt.

"He told me enough to let me know that it was not what they were making it out to be," said Rivera, "and that he was disgusted and didn't want any part of it, but he never went into detail.... It scared me." [3]

Yeakey also had a girlfriend who worked at El Reno Federal Prison, ironically, the same place that Joey Gladden worked before he "committed suicide." Speaking through a police officer friend, the woman said that Yeakey had been having nightmares, and was scared. "It was about a week after the bombing," said the intermediary, "that the large, strapping cop suddenly became frightened. In fact, according to his girlfriend, the Saturday after the bombing, Yeakey became scared-to-death, and had remained that way ever since.

Within days of the bombing, according to a sympathetic government source who has spoken to Rivera, Yeakey began receiving death threats. He was at his ex-wife's apartment when the calls came. Afraid for his family, he got up and left.

"When he came to my apartment two weeks prior, trying to give me these insurance policies," said Rivera, "he sat on my living room couch and cried and told me how he had a fight with [his supervisors] Lt. Randall and Maj. Upchurch. He did not tell me what that entailed, but he was scared-he was crying so badly he was shaking.

"He wouldn't totally voice whatever it was," recalled Rivera. "It was like he'd be just about to tell me-he'd want to spill his guts-and then he stopped, and he just cried. And that's when he kept insisting that I take the insurance policy."

Although Yeakey was concerned for his family, the marriage was not without abuse. Rivera had filed a VPO (Victim's Protective Order) against him slightly over two years ago. In a fit of temper, Yeakey had once threatened to take his life and those of his wife and children.

"I think it was said in the haste of, well, he's going to kill all of us kind of thing-cop under pressure," said Rivera. But that was over a year and-a-half ago. Yeakey had spent considerable time with his wife and children since then, taking them on family outings and so forth.

Nevertheless, the Oklahoma City Police Department (OCPD) attempted to use the incident to claim that Yeakey was suicidal. It was on the day of his death, around 1:30 p.m., that they called Rivera, trying to get her to file a VPO Violation based on the two-year-old report. "They wanted me to come down and make some statements against him," Rivera said.

On the same afternoon, in-between messages on his answering machine from his sister, Vicki Jones and his supervisor Lt. Jo Ann Randall, Yeakey had a message from Tonia. "The message was like at 5:30 in the afternoon," recalled Rivera. "I sound like I'm whispering, and I'm apologizing for waking him up-at 5:30 in the afternoon-on Wednesday."

It seems the intent behind this cleverly-crafted deception was to convince the family and potential investigators that Rivera was an "evil person," who was sleeping with him the night before, but "went down and filed a VPO the next day."

"That tape was planted," said Rivera. "I never called his house."

It seemed the OCPD was playing an elaborate game to sow confusion and mistrust, and create the appearance that Rivera was responsible for her ex-husband's death.

"So it comes out in paper after paper how he's having problems with his ex-wife, how he's not allowed to see his children.... "They're trying to play up the story of the bitch-ass wife whose trying to get him fired...."

Yet Rivera claimed she never filed a VPO violation. "The OCPD wanted to file one," said Rivera. "But I never signed it." Rivera claimed she had gone to the police station, but simply out of concern for her ex-husband, who had been acting strangely.

"Nobody ever said, 'Mrs. Yeakey, Terry's missing. Do you know anyplace he might have gone to? They never told me that they weren't able to locate him, that they were concerned, you know-nothing. I never knew he was missing."

Officer Terrance Yeakey's death was a tragedy, but if OCPD officials were concerned over their fellow officer's death, they didn't show it. Almar Jarrahi, Yeakey's natural mother, told me that no one from the Department ever called after his death. Even Yeakey's two best friends on the police force never called to offer their condolences, she claimed. Why? Were they guilty about their silence over their friend's death?

If Officer Yeakey's death was anything more than a suicide, the OCPD didn't go to any great lengths to find out. While his death occurred in El Reno, the OCPD took over the crime scene, squeezing the El Reno Police Department out of the picture. The OCPD's Media Relations officer, Cpt. Ted Carlton, explained, "It was our police officer who was killed. It's not uncommon [to take over the investigation] in the case of a smaller police agency." [4]

But Carlton could cite no official rule or statute for this decision. Was the OCPD attempting to keep El Reno from discovering something? Something they weren't supposed to know?

Although forensics are also standard procedure in the event of a violent or suspicious death, especially that of a police officer, Yeakey's car was

never dusted for prints. "And the next day, they gave us the damn car!" said Mrs. Jarrahi. "It was full of blood."

When Yeakey's Brother-in-Law, Glenn Jones, inspected the dead man's car, he discovered a bloody knife stashed underneath the glove compartment. Yet according to the responding officer, Yeakey had apparently used a razor blade. Where did the knife come from? Since no forensic investigation was conducted, this remains unclear.

No autopsy was ever conducted.

"There were common sense things that were wrong about the whole thing, that makes it so weird," added Mrs. Jarrahi. "It just doesn't seem right. Why would policemen and the authorities make such common mistakes that would leave questions? It's just really weird."

If Yeakey's death was a suicide, he left no note. Although he was upset over his divorce, according to the family, he was not suicidal. It is also unlikely that he abused drugs, as he was an instructor at DARE, a program designed to keep children off drugs.

Former Canadian County Sheriff Clint Boehler, who claims to have known Yeakey, doesn't concur with this analysis. Boehler said that Yeakey showed up at his house in El Reno on the afternoon of his death, his car stopped at an angle in the middle of the road. When Boehler and his girlfriend Kate Allen, a paramedic, ran outside, they found the police officer virtually passed out.

"He couldn't tell us his name initially," said Allen. "He was ill, and he was very anxious. His heart rate was rapid; he was sweaty.... He told us he had been having concentration problems, he hadn't slept. He had all the appearances, my first guess would be, of someone who was having emotional problems. And my second guess would be, of some kind of substance abuse problem. But that's a pure guess."

Boehler added that Yeakey said he hadn't eaten, and was "throwing up, taking medication, and incoherent. "He was taking medications for his back," said Boehler. "He had four or five medications in the car."

"We tried to get him to go to the hospital," said Allen. "We tried desperately to talk him into that. As I understand, the deputy took him to his sister's house because he refused to go to the hospital."

After Canadian County deputies took Yeakey away, relatives came and drove his car home. "That night," according to Boehler, "he went out the window."

Boehler's account jives with what Yeakey's sister, Vicki, said. She told her mother that Terry seemed exhausted that evening. She had tried to give him some soup, but he had thrown it up. Late that night, after a nap, they found him in the kitchen looking for his keys. According to Mrs. Jarrahi, Terry told his brother-in-law, "Glenn, I need to go. I'm fine."

Vicki then called Mrs. Jarrahi and said, "Mom, I can't worry about Terry... there's nothing we can do," and went back to sleep. The next day Vicki called her mother up screaming. Terry had been found dead. [5]

"Basically they just let him go," said Boehler. "We told those people he needed help.... We knew he was suicidal. He had all the classic symptoms."

However, what Boehler and Allen didn't know was that Yeakey had Sickle-Cell Anemia—a blood-sugar-related condition that caused seizures. It was these seizures, Rivera explained, that would occasionally cause her ex-husband to act "out-of-sorts," or even to slip into unconsciousness.

In spite of his medical condition, Rivera insisted that Terrance Yeakey was a health fanatic. The prescriptions were for his condition, she said, but he used only the minimum amounts.

According to Canadian County Sheriff Deputy Mike Ramsey (no relation to OCPD Officer Jim Ramsey), who drove Yeakey home, Yeakey was not suicidal. "He didn't give me any indications that he was out to do harm to himself," said Ramsey. "He seemed more disoriented, tired..."[6]

There are many things about Officer Yeakey's death that remain a mystery. While Boehler described a man on drugs, the Medical Examiner claims they didn't bother to conduct a drug test because it "costs too much." [7]

The ME's field investigator, Jeffrey Legg, also reported that Yeakey "had been drinking heavily" the day before, based on statements made by OCPD Homicide Detectives Dicus and Mullinex. Yet Terrance Yeakey didn't drink, and their own report concluded that there was no alcohol in the body at the time of death. [8]

The OCPD also warned Mrs. Jarrahi not to come down to the crime scene; they would pick her up. "They said, 'Promise us you won't come. If you promise us you won't come, we'll send a car for you,'" recalled Mrs. Jarrahi.

But the police didn't arrive until one o'clock in the morning, seven hours after the body had been found. "I said, 'You didn't give anybody the opportunity to see the crime scene?!'" Mrs. Jarrahi exclaimed. "They said, 'Well, he's a police officer and we have that right.' I said, 'I brought him into the world, and no, you don't have that right.'"

Canadian County Sheriffs discovered the abandoned car, filled with blood, about two and-a-half miles from the old El Reno reformatory. The OCPD was notified, and Police Chief Sam Gonazles flew out by chopper. Using dogs, they followed a trail of blood, and found the body in a ditch, about a mile and-a-half from the car. (Legg reported the body was 1/2 mile south of the car, when in fact it was 1 1/2 miles north-east of the car.)

Apparently Yeakey had tried to cut himself in the wrists, neck, and throat, then, after losing approximately two pints of blood, got out of his car (contentiously remembering to lock the doors), walked a mile and-a-half over rough terrain, crawled under a barbed-wire fence, waded through a culvert, then lay down in a ditch and shot himself in the head.[9]

As is this weren't strange enough, Yeakey's diet-related condition would have made him too weak to walk the mile and-a-half from his car to where his body was found-especially after losing two to three pints of blood.

Nevertheless, the OCPD ruled it a suicide on the spot. Their investigation remained sealed. This reporter was unable to obtain it, and not even the family was allowed to see it.

"There were so many things that were weird," said Mrs. Jarrahi. "My daughter kept going back to the Police Department. She said, 'Well what about this... we knew he had a camcorder, we knew he had a briefcase...'

"These are things we never got back. The kid always carried camera and film. [He] never went anywhere without his camera and briefcase. He had all his important papers in there.... We got the camera back. We never got the film back. We never got the briefcase. They said they never saw it...."

In regards to Yeakey's videos, Detective Mullinex, who "investigated" the case for the OCPD, told Vicki Jones, "I really don't think you'll want to see those; they contain pornography." Jones didn't believe him and didn't care. "I want those tapes!" she demanded.

The Homicide detective finally told her she'd get them back after they had "examined the evidence."

"One minute the guy would say he had them," said Jones, "the next minute he'd say 'we don't have anything....'"

According to Jones, Mullinex then said, "Now, we all loved Terry. I hope you understand that, but I'm not going to let you see any pictures. And I don't know anything about a briefcase, but if there's anything back there, I'll give you a call, and you can come back and get them."

"And I just sat there and looked at him, and said to myself, 'You're doing a great performance, but it's not working....' Then he got really uptight and said, 'Well, some of us hated Terry.' [Then] he kind of grabbed his face and said 'oh shit.'"

For his part, Mullinex had "no comment either way." He then told me, "I don't remember what I said to the lady, but I certainly was not rude to her.... This comes as a big shock to me, because he was a police officer and a friend of mine. It was a hard thing and hurt me to have to work it."

Cpt. Carlton likewise feigned shock at Jones' rebuffs, and said he would have to know who the officer was who made those statements. He then asked me to have the family contact the OCPD directly (as though they hadn't already done so numerous times), and he would meet with them and discuss the case, but that Cpt. Danny Cockran, Chief of the Homicide Squad, would have to make the decision about whether or not to let the family see the files.

Yet Carlton's statements fly in the face of the experiences of not only Yeakey's mother and sister, but those of his ex-wife. In a letter to Police Chief Sam Gonzales dated September 4, 1996, Rivera writes:

Needless to say, I have many questions regarding the investigation. What type of weapon was used to inflict the gunshot wound to his head? Who located the body? How could the cause of death be determined with such confidence with the multitude of injuries to his body and how did he walk the distance indicated in People magazine with the great loss of blood from razor cuts not only to both wrists, but both his forearms as well as two razor cuts to his neck? Not only did he walk this distance, but he struggled with bobwire fencing to reach his chosen destination to die then inflicted the gunshot wound to himself? I request that a copy of the investigative report of his death be made available to me.

Gonzales didn't respond.

Police officials eventually responded to Vicki Jones' complaints by telling her she needed to see a psychiatrist. "They said, 'We're just trying to protect you.'"

Exactly what were they trying to protect her from? When I called Mrs. Jarrahi, the telltale signs of a tapped phone were clearly present. If Terrance Yeakey's death was a simple suicide, why would law-enforcement agencies be tapping the family's phones?

The OCPD soon began conducting surveillance on the dead man's family.

"There was always an officer out there in front of our apartment," said Jones. Anywhere we went, we had an officer or someone in a marked car following us around. It started right after I started going to the Police Department quite a bit."

They also tailed Rivera. When she confronted the officers, they ignored her, hid their faces, or sped off. Cars were parked outside her childrens' school. When she spoke to school officials about the surveillance one afternoon, she went to work startled to find the conversation on her office answering machine! Rivera had spoken to the school principal in person. How did the conversation wind up on her answering machine? [10]

The harassment against Officer Yeakey's family wasn't limited to mere surveillance. After Rivera met with State Representative Charles Key, her car was broken into. Her house was broken into twice.

She finally moved to Enid when the heat became too hot. "I lived in an apartment on the third floor with a security alarm in it," said Rivera. "I'd come home and the alarm would be off. I'd notice things out of place. There'd be cabinets open that I'd have no reason to have opened."

About two weeks after Terry's death, Rivera went downstairs around 6:30 one morning to do some laundry, "and there was a man downstairs with huge headphones on, at 6:30 in the morning, right behind my apartment...."

The individual, who was wearing a jogging suit-wasn't jogging, and was not doing laundry. "He looked startled when I came around the corner," said Rivera. "I came back down at 8:30 and the guy was still there."

It appears that what Rivera was describing was an audio technician with a "Shotgun Mic," a portable surveillance tool designed to pick up

conversations through windows and across fields. They are commonly used by private detectives and law-enforcement agencies.

One day Rivera came home to find her front door open and off its hinges. When the frightened single mother walked into her bedroom, she found a balloon tied to her door. It read: "Get well soon. This will keep you busy until you do." [11]

It seems the OCPD and the FBI thought that Officer Yeakey had passed off some incriminating documents concerning the bombing cover-up to his ex-wife, and were intent on obtaining the documents.

The surveillance, break-ins, and thinly-veiled threats soon escalated into more serious incidents. Right before Yeakey's murder, the couple's Ford Explorer began getting mysterious flats. "And when I'd roll it into a shop," said Rivera, "they'd pull out like six or seven nails." This occurred between eight and ten times, she claims.

Rivera explained that once during a quarrel, Terry had removed some fuses from her car to keep her from leaving. The police knew about the incident, said Rivera, who thought the subsequent events were created by the OCPD to sow mistrust and provide a convenient trail of evidence to prove that Yeakey led a troubled family life. Yet while Yeakey admitted to removing the fuses, he repeatedly and adamantly denied that he had damaged the car—a car that was registered in his name and carried his cherished children to and from school.

On April 24, two weeks before he was found murdered, the Explorer began acting strangely. When Rivera pulled it into the local Aamco Transmission Center, she found that it had been tampered with. "Somebody who knew what they were doing pulled hoses from your car," said Todd Taylor, the chief mechanic. "I'm sorry to tell this ma'am, but this is not just something you can pull randomly..." Taylor also said he thought Rivera's brakes had been tampered with. [12]

About two weeks before this story went to press, the Ford's brakes went out suddenly while Rivera was traveling at 40 mph. "I went to brake," said Rivera, "and guess what? No brakes!" The large 4 X 4 slammed into the back of a smaller car, damaging it badly. "The message is 'we can get to you if we want to,'" she concluded.

Officer [Jim] Ramsey also began making his presence felt. "All of the sudden, when we moved to Oklahoma City [from El Reno]," said Jones, "there was Ramsey. When we joined a new church, Ramsey was there. Ramsey was everywhere. You turn the corner, there was Ramsey... Everything we did, he was like the helpful old guy. This went on for two months."

"He was keeping tabs on everyone," added Rivera. "He was showing up in a lot of places... just casually, in fact, places where he knew that people knew me just as well as they knew Terry, and weren't buying into the 'it's Tonia's fault' routine."

"[Ramsey] tried to claim it was his ex-wife and love for his children he couldn't see that made him commit suicide," she added. He would talk to her friends. "'How's she taking it? What does she think, blah, blah, blah.'"

Both Rivera and Jones feel the OCPD officer was sent to "baby-sit" them—to maintain an ever-present watchful eye. "[When he showed up]," Jones said, "I looked at him and said, that is not a friend of Terry's. He was never at the house. I never met him before."

Ramsey, who told People magazine that Yeakey was his "dear friend," also told the press that he was Terry's partner.

"That was a lie," declared Jones.

Rivera concurred. The ex-wife said that not only was Ramsey never Yeakey's partner, but that the two men didn't even get along. "Terry hated Jim Ramsey," said Rivera. "He put on a real good performance," she added. "He's hiding something, I believe.... It burns me up." [13]

For his performance, Ramsey was promoted to Detective, and made "Officer of

the Year."

If Terrance Yeakey did have many friends in the Police Department, they were among the beat patrolmen, not the upper echelon. While Detective Mullinex said everybody "loved Terry," according to Rivera, the brass "hated his guts." "Him and [Maj.] Upchurch had a hate-hate relationship," she said.

For his part, Mullinex claims he was "totally unaware" of any problems Yeakey was having in regards to what he knew about the bombing. "It is my opinion as a fourteen-year homicide veteran that it was a suicide," said Mullinex.... If we thought it was anything [other than a suicide] we would have pursued it to the ends of the earth. We're not hiding anything." [14]

Really?

According to Rivera, three government sources, including a U.S. Attorney and a U.S. Marshal, hold a slightly different view. As relayed by Rivera, the events on the morning of Officer Yeakey's death transpired as follows:

At 9:00 a.m., Officer Yeakey was seen exiting his Oklahoma City apartment with nine boxes of videos and files. He then drove to the police station where he had a fight with his supervisors.

He was told to "drop it" or he'd "wind up dead."

Yeakey was also due for a meeting with the heads of several federal agencies that morning. He apparently decided to skip the meetings, instead, driving straight to a storage locker he maintained in Kingfisher.

What he didn't realize was that the FBI had him under surveillance, and began pursuit. The six-year OCPD veteran and former Sheriff's Deputy easily eluded his pursuers. Once at his storage facility, he secured his files.

What were in the files? According to one of Rivera's sources, incriminating photos and videos of the bombed-out building. Perhaps more.

On the way back, the feds caught up with him just outside of El Reno. "He had nothing on him," at that point, said Rivera, "just copies of copies."

While it is not known exactly what transpired next, Rivera's confidential source "described in intimate detail," the state of the dead man's car. The seats had been completely unbolted, the floor-boards ripped up, and the side panels removed, all in an apparent effort to find the incriminating documents.

There were also burn marks on the floor. Apparently, the killers had used Yeakey's car to destroy what little evidence they had discovered. Exactly what happened after Yeakey was stopped, and in what order, only his murderers know for sure. [15]

At approximately 6:00 p.m. that evening, Canadian County Deputy Sheriff Mike Ramsey was cruising the area near the old El Reno reformatory when he noticed an abandoned vehicle in a field. "Immediately [the] hair stood up on the back of my neck," said the deputy. Ramsey came upon the empty car which he immediately recognized as Yeakey's. There was blood on both seats, and a razor blade lying on the dash. Yeakey was nowhere to be found.

The deputy immediately called for a homicide investigator, and taped off the scene. It wasn't until several hours later that police dogs finally located Yeakey's body in a ditch, a mile and-a-half away. [16]

While it was a macabre scene, the Oklahoma City Medical Examiner's report was even more gruesome. The report released from the Medical Examiner described numerous "superficial" lacerations on the wrists, arms, throat, and neck, and a single bullet wound to the right temple.

The report also showed another curious thing. The bullet had entered just above and in front of the right ear, and had exited towards the bottom of the left ear. Apparently, whoever held the gun held it at a downward angle. A person shooting themselves would tend to hold the gun at an upward angle, or at the most, level. It would rather difficult for a large, muscle-bound

man like Yeakey to hold a heavy service revolver or other large caliber weapon at a downward angle to their head.

While it is true that a slug can alter its trajectory once inside the skull, a pathologist in the San Francisco Medical Examiner's office told me that a 9mm or other large caliber weapon—the type commonly used by police officers—usually tends to travel in a straight line.

But perhaps the most revealing evidence was that the wound did not have a "Stellat," the tell-tale star shape caused by the dissipating gases from the gun's muzzle. At the close range of a suicide weapon, such markings would clearly be present, unless of course... the shooter used a silencer. [17]

While Dr. Larry Balding, Oklahoma City's Chief Medical Examiner, quickly ruled the death a "suicide," another Medical Examiner's report would, according to Rivera, surface like an eerie, prescient message from the grave. This other report, quickly redacted and hidden from public view, showed a face that was bruised and swollen; blood on the body and clothes that was not the dead man's blood type; and multiple deep lacerations filled with grass and dirt, as though the body had been dragged a distance.

Yet according to Rivera, Maj. Upchurch denied that Yeakey's throat was slashed at all. She was later told by a sympathetic police dispatcher that his throat was indeed slashed—deeply.

Dr. Larry Balding, who signed off on the Yeakey report, is adamant. "I can tell you unequivocally and without a doubt that there was no other ME report."

Yet while attending a social function, Rivera claims her sister had a chance encounter with the mortician who worked on Yeakey's body. She was discussing the strange inconsistencies of his death with someone at the party, when the mortician, not knowing the woman was Rivera's sister, spoke up. "That sounds just like a police officer we worked on in Oklahoma City," he said. When asked if that man happened to be Terrance Yeakey, the mortician "freaked."

When pressed, he told the shocked relative that the dead man's wrists contained rope burns and handcuff marks. A former FBI agent and police officer, the mortician said that Yeakey's lacerations were already sewn up when the body arrived from the Medical Examiner's office. Dr. Balding's response to this was that the marks were merely "skin slippage," resulting from the natural decomposition of the body.

Yet stranger still, the body was not supposed to go to this particular funeral home at all, but to one in Watonga. While the OCPD was supposed to pay the expenses of the funeral, no funds were ever allocated, according to Rivera. "Vicki had to pay off the burial to Russ Worm [Funeral Home]. So I wonder if we paid somebody off to do the job." [18]

Was that job to clean up Yeakey so that his manner of death wouldn't appear suspicious?

This incident is similar to the murder of President Kennedy, whose body was taken to Bethesda Naval Hospital instead of being examined by the Dallas Medical Examiner as is standard procedure. Once there, military pathologists and those controlling them were able to skew their findings to the satisfaction of the murderers. The chief pathologist burned his notes, and years later, when researchers went to examine Kennedy's brain, it was found missing from the National Archives.

Apparently, Terrance Yeakey's murderers and those covering up his death had not counted on this particular mortician's testimony.

Was Terrance Yeakey tortured? Was he murdered, then made to look like a suicide? Did he know something he wasn't supposed to know, or was he simply despondent over life's circumstances?

Said friend Kimberly Cruz, "I don't believe he would have done something like that. He was always happy and joking a lot."

If the officer was bent on taking his life, it would appear strange, since

he had spent most of the previous month taking entrance exams for the FBI. Yeakey and best friend Barry McCrary were looking forward to becoming FBI agents. Perhaps if he had known the role that the FBI played in the bombing, perhaps even in his own death, he would have changed careers.

Like Dr. Don Chumley, Terrance Yeakey was one of the first rescuers in the Murrah Building on April 19. Had he seen something he wasn't supposed to see? Had he heard something he wasn't supposed to hear?

One afternoon, while the family was at Police Headquarters, an officer who Rivera described as Yeakey's "only true friend," pulled them off to the side, and whispered "They killed him." [19]

Perhaps the events on the morning of May 8 provide a clue as to who "they" are.

Yet Rivera's sources have warned away her from pursuing an independent investigation. They said, "two U.S. Senators would go down" if she pursued it. One of them reportedly told Rivera he wouldn't pursue it "even if his own mother was in the ground."

Yet Tonia Rivera, a gutsy and intelligent woman, isn't easily frightened. The rest of the family is. And all believe he was murdered. Several police officers I spoke with believe the same thing. Said a relative of a just-retired FBI agent who is familiar with the case, "I had a gut feeling he was murdered." [20]

Oklahoma's Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Fred Jordan, doesn't agree. "People tend to weave some intriguing tales regarding suicides," said Jordan. "You'd be amazed at some of the tales people come up with."

Others, like Clint Boehler, take a slightly different tact. "[Yeakey] was always trying to be tough and macho," said Boehler, "but he was really the other way. He was supposed to always do the manly thing, but it really wasn't what he wanted to do.... He was really a gentle type person." [21]

"He was a sensitive person," said Rivera. "He got into [police work] because he really cared... about people. He couldn't have turned his head to this."

Maybe Officer Terrance Yeakey was too gentle and caring for his own good. Maybe still, Officer Terrance Yeakey was murdered.

Notes:

[1] Paul Queary "Oklahoma Hero Commits Suicide," Associated Press, 5/13/96.

[2] According to Rivera, the recalcitrant police officer was forced into making a public service announcement with Governor Keating. "He was told he'd make that or he was fired," said Rivera. The officer they sent to Washington to accept an award on behalf of the OCPD, he told Rivera, wasn't even at the site!

[3] Yeakey was also angry because he couldn't get access to his own report about the bombing (which numbered between 9-10 pages). "He was in a full-fledged rampage over the report," said Rivera, whom he wouldn't even show it to.

[4] Cpt. Ted Carlton, interview with author.

[5] Almar Jarrahi, interview with author.

[6] Interestingly, Yeakey's superiors, Major Upchurch and Lt. Randall, according to Rivera, were claiming Yeakey was "delusional" from the back injury he sustained during his fall in the Murrah Building on April 19.

[7] Oklahoma City Medical Examiner's Report, copy in author's possession; Dr. Larry Balding and Dr. Fred Jordan, interview with author. They said the drug test costs between \$400 and \$500 dollars.

[8] Report of ME investigator Jeffrey A. Legg, CME-1 Report, copy in author's possession.

[9] Several Medical Examiners explained that it is not uncommon for an individual to attempt suicide by one method, then continue to take additional measures until they are dead. San Francisco's ME told me about a man who, upon discovering he had AIDS, tried to hang himself, then threw himself off the balcony. Perhaps Terrance Yeakey was not satisfied with his alleged attempts to slash himself. As Dr. Fred Jordan, Oklahoma's Chief

Medical Examiner explained, "It hurts, and nothing much is happening."
[10] This was verified by school officials.
[11] The harassment and surveillance on Rivera and the rest of the family was confirmed by Vicki Jones, and her husband, Reverend Glenn Jones. Reverend Jones told me that Rivera had come to them several times "frantic" that she was being tailed and harassed. Vicki saw evidence of the break-ins at Rivera's apartment.
[12] Taylor recalled the incident for this author. "There's only a few times in my life that I remember that somebody had done something weird like that, and that's why I wrote it down."
[13] Tonia-Rivera Yeakey, interview with author. They had at one time been friends, she explained, but had a falling-out in 1992, and had remained apart ever since. Rivera attempted to hire an attorney to bring a Slander suit against Jim Ramsey, based on the false allegations of his death. No local attorney would accept it.
[14] OKPD Detective Mullinex, interview with author.
[15] Regarding Rivera's source, she claimed he knew things about her that no one could possibly have known. "He sat there and told me about stuff I hadn't told anybody," which included break-ins at her apartment.
[16] Officer Mike Ramsey, interview with author.
[17] This finding is based on the testimony of a former police officer and Marine sniper.
[18] This funeral home, curiously enough, has been mixed up in some rather strange incidents.
[19] The author knows the name of this individual, but cannot release it at this time.
[20] Terry's best friend Barry McCrary attended the funeral, sat with the family for several minutes without saying a word, then took off for Texas. He has not been seen or heard from since, according to Rivera.
[21] Interestingly, Boehler also backed the "accident" version of Dr. Don Chumley's death, which came up in our conversation.

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