

A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN MILITIA MOVEMENT:

America's Shooting Edge

By Nita M. Renfrew©2000

The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort to protect themselves against tyranny in government.

Thomas Jefferson

PART I: Broken Seal

Chapter 1

SECRET MILITIA

I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.

Nathan Hale

I knew already there was something mean amiss in America when a federal building was bombed in 1995, and soon after, news of Militias training for battle, quoting Thomas Jefferson, became commonplace. Until that time, I had investigated conflicts between peoples and governments far away, mainly in the Middle East and Central America. Now, sensing that the important story was moving to my own homeland, I turned my sights accordingly. What I found out about the Oklahoma bombing did not really surprise me.

What I found out about the Militias, however, would change my life forever.

It was in the spring of 1996 that I had my first Militia interview, with the bearded commander of an underground citizen Militia, at a remote place in the countryside. I shall call him Tom Church to protect his identity. We rendezvoused early one morning at a place in the state of New York which I cannot disclose. When I arrived, he was waiting for me, standing next to his van on a dirt road a few hundred feet from the highway. Tall and slender, in his late forties, he wore slacks and a t-shirt, not fatigues. His eyes were brown and gentle, his hands sensitive, with long fingers, and there was a fluid, transparent quality to him. Without the slightest affectation, and with a clear sense of purpose, almost as if he were a concerned parent reporting that he was a member of the local PTA, Tom said simply, "U.S. Militia, New York Regiment."

In the three years since the federal government's gun-control raid in Waco, Texas, on a church, as many Americans saw it -- gassing then burning eighty-some children, women and men -- outraged citizens had been enrolling spontaneously in Militia of their own creation in most every corner of the American Union. Aside from the horror of it all, rural America saw the raid and ensuing massacre as a Second Amendment matter. The feds had had no business being at the church commune at Waco, since there had been no unlawful firearms activity. The feds had had no business being there anyway, since the Constitution made no provision for federal police powers.

Indeed, it was the second time in the short history of the United States that citizen Militias had sprung up en masse spontaneously. The first had been two centuries earlier, after Lexington and Concord,

outside Boston, where, also in a weapons raid, and also at a church, one of the king's men had fired "the shot that rang out around the world." In 1775, the local pastor and his flock had been defending their Militia arsenal from the Redcoats on the village green in front of their church when they took eight fatal casualties. Immediately, with most patriots already enrolled at that time in some form of citizen Militia, they had begun furiously to prepare, from one end of the Colonies to the other, to fight for independence.

The day that Lexington happened was April 19—long known as "Patriots Day" to commemorate the start of America's Revolutionary War. It was also known as "John Parker Day," after the local minutemen commander, who had said presciently before the shooting began, "Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon; but if they mean to have a way, let it begin here."

Two centuries later, the government's heinous deed at Waco, curiously, would take place on that same day, April 19, in the spring of 1993. It was not lost on 20th-century patriots that, as at Lexington earlier, government troops at Waco also fired on members of a local church and their pastor, also with the intention of disarming them and confiscating their lawful weapons. And so, in the nineties, well-aware of Lexington's place in the nation's short history—even sometimes to the point almost of confusing the two incidents—mostly-rural Americans went about furiously enrolling for a second time in the Militia.

From the start of today's Militia movement, the historic date that marked the start of the Revolutionary War, April 19, had been manipulated by shadowy forces to no good end. But, the movement, as I was fast learning, had quickly managed nevertheless to rise above it all -- something that had gone unreported in the mainstream media -- in its best moments achieving an authentic, noble, grassroots expression of the people nationwide. It was as though the Revolutionary War and everything it had come to stand for, as embodied in the Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Bill of Rights -- like scripture—was in the end so sacred that anything to do with it was destined to a certain purity of spirit that could not be sullied, despite the many efforts to do so.

At the time of Waco in early 1993, throughout the nation, tensions ran high, with jobs being downsized out of existence or moved overseas in deference to the recently-declared "New World Order"—later changed to "global economy," or "globalization." Myself a Democrat at the time, I was horrified by what I saw at Waco, watching with the entire nation a Democratic administration slaughter people—many of them, such as the children, plainly innocent. (It was worse for me than if it had been Republicans, the so-called party of big business, as had been the case during the Persian Gulf War, when I had agonized over the killing of a half million-plus Iraqi civilians.) As if the slaughter of innocents weren't bad enough, my fellow Democrats had remained silent simply because it was a Democratic president, when in my mind, we were supposed to be the party against government abuses—the party of Thomas Jefferson, for individual rights and justice. The Democrats, I had thought, if anything, should be held to higher standards than others.

That was what I had been taught by my parents in the '50s when I was growing up. But clearly it was no longer the same party. When I thought about it, I realized that this was because slowly during the '60s and '70s it had become the party of special-interest, group-rights and collective solutions. No longer the defender of individual rights, that were what had made Americans different from other nations, that had been emphasized in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. In the aftermath of Waco, it was as if the shades fell from my eyes as I began painfully to realize that fellow Democrats had only beat the drums of Watergate and Iran-Contra because they were crimes of Republicans, not out of

some basic principle of decency, or rights, or justice. And there was no getting around the fact that Democrats had looked the other way during Waco simply because those under siege happened to be of a different political persuasion. Something had gone terribly wrong in the nation, and although I did not see it then the way "patriots" did, the immorality of it all, at the time, I found it no different from how the Nazis had started. I had immediately thought, "If they can do it to them, they can do it to me -- us."

In my search to try to understand how this could be in the United States of America, at first, I never imagined that my quest, in the last years of the millenium, would consume me. Slowly, though, I would come to understand—albeit with great difficulty—that Waco, whatever else it might have been, was the embodiment and result of a gun control policy that had started during the Depression, now tightening its vise, not on criminals, but on the general, law-abiding population—in full breach of the Bill of Rights—difficult as it was for many Americans to understand, and that if the Second Amendment did not survive, neither would our other rights. What we were living was the sundering of the very foundations of the nation—one paid for in full in the 18th century with the blood of Americans yearning to be free of a European order that had its roots in feudalism, where land often was not privately owned and there was little freedom for ordinary people (especially when there was peace—in wartime, ironically, there was often greater freedom in the chaos), and government police power was highly centralized. It was an order that at the time had sat badly in this vast new world, and it continued to do so.

For this was how it all looked to the newly-pledged Militiamen and women I encountered in my quest, who believed they could change things back to the way it was meant to be in the Constitution—through a purely educational process. In the beginning, so certain were these patriots that all that was needed to awaken their fellow Americans was to teach them their history and their rights, that many Militias were highly visible and held public meetings, going so far as to advertise in the local papers. For them, it seemed only natural to use the tools that were the legacy of the Founding Fathers—the First and Second Amendments in the Bill of Rights: the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and to keep and bear arms, for all to see, as a reminder of who held the power under the Constitution. These early Militia people fully expected that, combined with the right "to petition the Government for a redress of grievances," which came at the end of the First Amendment, this would enable them peaceably to turn the government around. And so it was that in the mid-1990s a flurry of angry petitions reminiscent of those that preceded the Revolutionary War went out from patriots and the Militias to the Congress.

Others of the Militias, however, though they were visible, already had begun to hold meetings by invitation only. Still others, as if cognizant of the far-harder times to come, were entirely secret from the start, or had quickly become secret. These invisible, underground Militias planned to make themselves known only when the time came for open war—if, indeed, it came to that, only after all other means were exhausted, as they said—against the new government tyranny. Such was the U.S. Militia, that reached across the nation from coast to shining coast, of which Tom Church was New York commander.

It was a chilly day, and Tom invited me into the front seat of his van. We sat looking out past a shed, over a wide-open field about to turn green, and it struck me that the earth was impatient after a long winter's wait. Tom told me he had never been interviewed in his capacity as a U.S. Militia commander. Nor had any other member of the U.S. Militia. He talked to me for four hours.

The first thing he did was recite for me the current federal law on the Militia -- Title 10 United States Code, Section 311 -- which every Militiaman knew by heart:

(a) The militia of the United States consists of all able-bodied males at least 17 years of age and, except as provided in section 13 of Title 32, under 45 years of age who are, or have made a declaration of intention to become, citizens of the United States...

(b) The classes of the militia are: 1) the organized militia, which consists of the National Guard and the Naval Militia; and 2) the unorganized militia, which consists of members of the militia who are not members of the National Guard or the Naval Militia.

In plain language, what this meant was that in the United States every able-bodied male between the ages of seventeen and forty-five who was not a member of the regular armed forces, was by federal law a member of the "unorganized" Militia, subject to call-up. Under the Constitution, in Article II, Section 2, the president was "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual service of the United States." Otherwise, the body of the Militia remained at large, autonomous, merely a potential fighting force that was nevertheless a living symbol of liberty and a check on government, as meant by the Founders.

State constitutions being more inclusive, most everybody not enrolled in the government armed forces was by law and by right a member of the state Militia at the place of residence. Tom pointed out to me that I also was a member of the New York Militia, albeit a non-enrolled member. Article XII of the New York constitution stated:

[Defense; militia,] The defense and protection of the state and of the United States is an obligation of all persons within the state.

The question of what the Militia was, and the distinctions within it, I was fast learning, had been blurred in the public perception during the years since the late 18th century, when the intention had been to form a citizen Militia along the lines of Switzerland—invincible to the outside world, a bulwark against tyranny. The Founding Fathers had meant for there never again to be a standing army on American soil, and accordingly, it had been made a requirement that any army that came into being, and any funding for it, be reauthorized every two years by Congress. Today this was done routinely, as a matter of course, as if it were the normal thing to have a paid, standing army in the land of John Adams, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson.

The Militia Act of 1792, immediately following the 1791 drafting of the first ten Articles of Amendment, better known as the Bill of Rights, had called for every able-bodied white male citizen between the ages of seventeen and forty-five to enroll in the Militia within six months and obtain a musket, bayonet and 24 rounds of ammunition. This had been federal law until (shortly before) 1903, when the Efficiency of the Militia Act had been passed, known as the Dick Act. It was this piece of legislation that had become the basis for a permanent standing army, appropriate to war overseas, interestingly, as the Militias liked to point out, just as World War I was approaching in Europe. There would, in the months and indeed years to come, be so many connections and information that I hadn't previously thought of, or known, that the Militias alerted me to in making their case that there was tyranny, that often I would find myself numbed by information overload.

Tom, after citing the federal law on the Militia, proceeded to quote the Second Article of Amendment—better known simply as the Second Amendment—in the Bill of Rights, the bedrock on

which the "unorganized" Militias rested their existence:

A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed.

There had come about a great deal of controversy over what these words were really intended to mean. Gun control advocates today argued that the first half of the sentence—"A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State"—was the "preamble," and therefore the dominant clause. They said this meant that the second part, having to do with "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms," did not mean an individual right at all, but fell, rather, within the context of the collective, states' right to Militia—characterized as the National Guard.

Rereading my American history, however, I found that James Madison, in an early draft, had placed the part about the "right of the people," now in the so-called preamble, before the right to "Militia" (something that gun controllers conveniently failed to mention), thereby invalidating the gun controllers' own argument. The original draft, that came to be the Second Amendment, had said:

The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed, a well-armed and well-regulated militia being the best security of a free country;

Madison had never intended to suppress the individual right. There was a great deal more evidence that, from the beginning, the founders had meant to affirm the individual as well as the collective right to "keep and bear arms." In fact, the Founding Fathers had all believed without question that the individual right "to keep and bear arms" was God-given, or "natural," as indeed they believed all rights were. In the opening paragraph, the Declaration of Independence made reference to the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," with the statement:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separation.

Staunch believers in "natural rights," it was important to bear in mind, had included the Antifederalists and Federalists alike -- both Founding factions -- including those Federalists who would later argue against a Bill of Rights on the grounds that the body of the Constitution was sufficient in and of itself. The Federalists (who favored a strong central government) argued, among other things, that since the people would always be armed, they would outnumber any army the government might have in the future, making tyranny impossible. (And if today's patriots and Militias were right, indeed, these Federalists had been proven wrong.)

I had always taken rights for granted, and it had never occurred to me to ask whence they came, or how rights were defined as such. But the Founding Fathers, it was clear, had had to ask these questions frequently as they framed the original documents. Rights, they said, were "natural" and antecedent to the Declaration of Independence, and they came from God or "the Creator"; the Constitution and Bill of Rights were meant, not as a granting agent but simply as an affirmation of the God-given, "natural" rights that already existed. Freedom of speech, of religion, the right to assembly, and to keep and bear arms, were all considered "natural" rights.

Early Americans, I learned, believed furthermore that the Second Amendment was the basis for all our freedoms and rights, stemming as it did from the very basic "right of self-defense," be it from a common criminal or a foreign invasion, or even from the government itself. The "right to keep and bear arms" could be traced in documented form back to seventh-century England at the time of the Saxon government, but it had existed, unwritten, long before among the Celts. This right had preceded by several centuries any recognized right to freedom of speech and assembly, and religion. Without the right to keep and bear arms spelled out in a Bill of Rights, many of the Founding Fathers had believed there could be no guarantee of any other right. On this, Samuel Adams, a founder of the Sons of Liberty in Boston, at the fore of the fight for independence, had written:

Among the natural rights of the colonists are these: first, a right to life, secondly to liberty, thirdly to property; together with the right to defend them in the best manner they can.

In the eighteenth century in the Colonies, the English philosopher John Locke was widely read, and it was he who best articulated this right to self-defense, taking it even farther, to include the "right to rebellion." Locke believed there was a natural morality in pre-social man, and that the best way to secure its benefits was by contracting into civil society, surrendering some personal power to magistrates and a ruler. But if the ruling body offended against this "natural law," the population retained the right to depose it. In 1776, it was thoughts of this right to rebellion that suffused Thomas Jefferson when he wrote in the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government...

Jefferson and Samuel Adams (along with his cousin John Adams, the second president) had differed on the matter of the right to property. John Locke, in his Second Treatise on Natural Government, had talked about the natural right to "life, liberty and property." Jefferson, however, had substituted for property, "the pursuit of happiness," for he believed property was a "civil" not a "natural" right, with the matter of slavery close at hand. But many in the property rights groups today subscribed to the natural-right-to-property tradition, and interpreted the pursuit of happiness as being that right. Land ownership, I was fast learning, along with the Second Amendment, was one of the main issues of contention in today's nascent rebellion. It was for this reason that, so long as there remained a belief in private land ownership, the citizen Militias would not easily go away.

My growing understanding of the concept of the right to rebellion, through my interviews with the Militias and their associates, and that it was the bedrock upon which my country was founded, was also bringing me to the realization that if, as a country, we continued along the present road, at the end there could be only armed confrontation. If you will, a second Revolutionary War, which many patriots already foresaw. An unarmed citizenry in the United States of America, as I was fast learning, in the eyes of the Founding Fathers would have been a contradiction in terms.

The question now was: Who were these Militiamen, preparing to take on the government by force of arms?

One of the first questions I asked Tom Church was why he had agreed to the interview with me when the U.S. Militia was a secret organization. His answer was, "I feel that I may be called upon soon to give my life for my country, and I want the historical record preserved." Also, he added, unlike some of his associates, he recognized that when the time came, they would need public support, and for that, the Militias would need media coverage.

The son of a decorated World War II veteran who had commanded a heavy-artillery battery at Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge, Tom told me he had been born in 1949 (this made him 46 or 47), growing up in upstate New York with a drawerful of his father's medals and decorations. In his youth he had been an athlete -- a football tackle and end, and a wrestler. He was also an award-winning classical musician; he played the cello, as well as the piano and the drums. Tom told me proudly that he had been "first chair" in the All-State Symphony. But he had had to abandon all hope of continuing on this path professionally when there was no money for college.

From a young age, Tom explained to me, his parents had exposed him to patriot-type Americans who were concerned about the U.S. going into the United Nations. "I have a perspective of thirty-five years of watching this thing develop, this New World Order. People were telling us thirty, thirty-five years ago that these things would come to pass. They were like a voice crying in the wilderness. I can see they were prophetic. I haven't seen them wrong on a single point. They knew the UN would become a vehicle, if not exactly, where one-world government would reside, that we would move into a cashless society, which we are doing right now. Squandering our resources and young people on foreign wars that have little to do with our Constitutional principles."

Tom had been far ahead even of many of his fellow patriots, for whom the subject of the New World Order had become a matter of concern only after President George Bush's speech at the United Nations. There, in the fall of 1990, Bush had gone about setting the stage for the Persian Gulf War under the rubric of "a New World Order"—a shocking term for those who had lived through World War II and Hitler's proclaiming of "Die Neue Ordnung" ("the New Order"). As it had turned out, Bush's talk about the New World Order had been the prelude to arriving at what was now being referred to inside the UN itself, no longer simply as the "United Nations," but rather, as the "United Nations System." This new UN, it was becoming evident, was to be empowered globally by a permanent peacemaking, peacekeeping force—be it official UN or loosely-affiliated NATO forces—which the UN attack on Iraq had been meant to establish. As events unfolded, it was becoming apparent that the UN's Peace Force (and soon NATO) was merely a euphemism for a supranational standing army with police powers, beholden to no electorate. It had not been long before the budget for the peacekeeping forces exceeded the entire rest of the UN budget, by 1994 absorbing a full two thirds of it.

The "UN System," it was not hard to figure out, simply meant the increasingly powerful combination, mainly of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, enforcing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington—later would come the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) (defeated, for the time being, in '98) and a slew of other new UN control agencies, such as the UN world court in Rome (with no jury trial or right to habeas corpus and other such guarantees), and the equivalent of a world central bank (proposed in 1998 by the same global robber barons that had just finished plundering a number of the world's economies, so they would have full control over what was left). The forces behind these organizations were working together to engineer a global economic society, with the capability to enforce decisions, to be followed eventually, of course, by a global political society

governed by one body. (A major think-tank economist I knew explained to me at the time that economists had realized that what had gone wrong in the former Soviet Union was that the political system had been changed prior to changing over the economic system. Having made that mistake in Russia, obviously, these players were not about to make it again in the global theater.)

A civilian UN staff member with the Peace Force, talking to me off the record that year, acknowledged that -- contrary to what the UN was saying publicly -- there were discussions underway where it was clearly being planned that the UN would be the seat of one-world government. He explained it thus: "It will be composed of committees in different parts of the world, so that decision-making is decentralized. The decisions will be enforced by the peacekeeping forces. I agree that it will be terrible, but there's no other way—with the overpopulation in the world and the dangers to the environment. China will accept it because they will have representatives on the committees." ("Overpopulation," as I was yet to learn, was the important code word here, and "decentralized" meant, decentralized only so far as the general populations were concerned.)

Militiamen and women believed that this was too much power for one "government" body. The way they saw it, today it was an American president making the big decisions, what to do with this military might—even though he did so at the behest, not of the American people, but of the same big business and banking interests that were directing and staffing the UN System's regulatory, trade and financial organs. But who would make the decisions tomorrow, when there were to be no more national armies, and individuals had all been disarmed? For this was the ultimate, shocking goal of the UN disarmament program, which the U.S., as was pointed out to me over and over by Militiamen, had officially subscribed to in the early '60s with President John F. Kennedy's three-stage Program for General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World. JFK had presented it to the UN, and shortly afterwards, it had been passed into U.S. law. Still, in the spring of '96, I had yet to read this "Program" or the U.S. law, and I remained skeptical of the many points being made by the Militias regarding the UN and its intended use.

"Korea was the first UN war," Tom explained. "It still hasn't been taken care of. The story I was told then was that the UN doesn't want wars to be ended, just stopped, so we have foreign war zones around the world, and that eventually foreign troops would come in here and begin to police us. It is almost here. The average person working doesn't have time to consume reports thousands of pages long. A lot of people fault the American people, but I don't. You have to give credit to every working person, working long and hard. It is masterful. The media have hidden the truth. So it is not easy to see these things. But it was possible for me, so it is possible for more people to do what I did. My neighbors, however, weren't at all interested. I can't understand. Lots of people today say they know what I'm talking about, but they don't want to hear. They don't know what they can do. It turns out, they have to keep their jobs like, with the municipal government or whatever. They are like a whipped puppy dog. There is a lot of pressure in the United States on political dissidents.

"There were guest speakers in Syracuse at the American Opinion Library, a bookstore—some of them war refugees from Eastern-Bloc, Communist countries. I heard people talk who had had to walk for miles and miles, eating rodents and frogs, to escape to the West. I met some of them. That left an impression. I understood the value of liberty."

Tom said he figured that if he pursued his music studies, he would end up being a public school teacher, which he didn't want to do. And so, since there was no money for college anyway, and there was a war and a draft on, Tom and his father decided that he should sign up with the National Guard.

"My father was aghast at what he saw in Korea," Tom said. "He got first-hand stories of how we were being held back, and the UN was instrumental in passing information to the Koreans through the Russians. There is always a Russian or Soviet Bloc commander of the UN military section at the UN, by agreement. When my father saw the Viet Nam war, he stated that it was not a war to protect this country, that it was a war to involve us. It was a UN war, through SEATO. Americans don't understand this." (The South-East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), indeed, like NATO, in its charter was bound to UN principles.)

"My father did not want me to go into active service and squander my life on Viet Nam. Yet, I was a patriot. I couldn't see myself being a coward. He understood that, and looked around and found a unit of the New York Air National Guard. In 1966, my junior year, I took the test and passed, and was on the waiting list. It was a vehicle for people who didn't want to go to Viet Nam. Within six days of graduation I was in basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. My duty station was New York. I was a technician, flight line equipment. There was the Pueblo incident, and many National Guard units were activated. Mine was not. I never feared going to Viet Nam, though, and would have gone if called. If I went, I was sure I would return. I fulfilled my six-year term, and reenlisted for an additional term, and received an honorable discharge."

A voracious reader from the time he was ten and eleven, Tom said he had begun spending his study periods in the library, reading the New York Times and local papers cover to cover, as well as history books. He also listened to radio and network news, and quickly found that not everything in the news accounts was the truth. "Today you see events unfold, and two days later, accounts in the paper scarcely resemble what you saw," he explained. He began to wonder if what they read in the history books was accurate, and this led him to "look into the layers beneath the facade."

One subject that Tom said he had looked into when he was still in school, surprised at first me since he was a Northerner, though I was soon to find that it was pertinent to the entire Militia movement. He had attended a "Union free school," he explained, "where we're told the War Between the States was to abolish slavery" (he used the Southerner name for the Civil War). "But slavery only came into the picture halfway through the war. I believe it was over control of resources and manpower. The bankers had a role in it. The war was over issues of states' rights. Even though we are told that slavery was abolished, I believe that one form of slavery was abolished and another instituted. After the War the blacks still lived on the same piece of land they had before, picking cotton. The owners of the property extracted a share of the crops so that the family was left with little to exist on. Today, we blacks and whites are having the same type of thing forced upon us. The government gets bigger, and needs more of our substance."

I was to learn in the coming months that many "patriots" and Militia members considered the "War Between the States," as they often referred to it, a major turning point in the consolidation of power into one centralized government, to make it easier for the big banks and big business in the North (now become the Eastern Establishment) to exert power over all Americans. One, the North had wanted control of the cotton exchange. First, they had instituted high tariffs to force the South to use the proceeds from sales of cotton in Europe to purchase goods made in the Northern factories. But when Southerners reduced their imports, Europe had retaliated, reducing purchases of the South's cotton. Big business and the banks, ever since, had gone back and forth between supporting protection and supporting free trade, depending on which of the two best served their interests of the moment. At that time it was protection; now that companies were "global," it was open borders, with managed trade -- the so-called "free trade."

The Justice Department—responsible for so many injustices today in the eyes of many—I learned, had been created during Reconstruction following the war, when the South was under military occupation, and it was this that had first made it possible to have a federal police force, leading eventually to the creation of the IRS, DEA, FBI, ATF and all the other federal police agencies still coming into existence. The Founding Fathers had meant to guard against this by keeping police powers within each individual state. Too much power in the federal government, they had believed, would corrupt it. In the same vein, today's patriots generally believed the country was too big and too diverse to be governed by one set of laws and one police. As they saw it, without a strong federal government, there would still be corruption and abuse of power in the smaller, localized and state governments, but not all under the control of one group. You could still, up and leave a place. But with only one, overarching world administration (government), in the future, no more would there be there any place to go.

The all-pervasive, still-growing federal power in the U.S., patriots believed, had furthermore become as corrupt as any local government ever was. (For example, as I read in a New York Times article, it was revealed in the secret documents of the tobacco companies that in the early '70s, when the matter of the warning label on cigarettes had come up, it had been clearly stated that they were certain to get a better deal from the U.S. Congress than from the numerous state legislatures, since they could "control Congress." Indeed, it was the individual states, not the federal government, in the late '90s, that exposed the big tobacco companies' practice of using additives such as ammonia to make cigarettes more addictive, and of targeting children with their ads.)

With Tom Church, I was being given one of my first glimpses into the "patriot mythology" -- that complex body of beliefs and information shared by the Militias and the various other "patriot" movements, on subjects—in addition to the United Nations, the New World Order, the Civil War and land ownership—as diverse as: the Federal Reserve System, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), and the important relationship between these three Treasury Department creatures (all of which, the Militias pointed out, had come into being directly or indirectly as a result of World War I); along with Social Security and individual sovereignty and citizenship; driver's licenses; and indeed, the entire judicial system.

They called themselves patriots, as I was learning, because they harked back to the beliefs and principles of the eighteenth-century American Revolutionaries who had thrown off British rule when taxes became oppressive, the legal system arbitrary and, most important, the Redcoats attempted to confiscate the Militias' weapons. The parallels with today's state of affairs could not be more obvious.

At the start of the Revolutionary War, the Militias were quick to point out, only some three to six percent of Colonists supported independence, and at the height of the war, this support was never greater than 30%; the remaining 60% were evenly divided between pro-British and neutrals. Clearly, if it had not been for the insistence on their "natural rights" by a handful of Colonial leaders backed by the Militias (preceding the Continental Army), Americans would have remained subjects beholden to the British crown—not citizens.

Within the larger patriot community, today's Militias, by and large, were considered to be the armed branch of the patriot movement. The Militias' early members, more often than not, already subscribed to patriot causes, seeing themselves as tax protesters, Common Law advocates, sovereign citizen and jury and land rights activists, and a wide variety of Constitutionlists. Some of them were religious "fundamentalists" and "religionists," of the sort found in religious Jewish and Moslem communities

that believed in a system of law based on religious scripture, in this case a Protestant Christian government. Most patriots, however, were not any one thing. But in their search for solutions to the growing sense of alienation from the government that they shared with many Americans, they had taken bits and pieces from here and there. And so, today's patriots were as disparate a movement as the eighteenth-century American Revolutionaries, ironically, playing out many of the same differences. Because the early history and founding documents of the nation had been required reading in the patriot movement already in the '80s, it was not surprising that the next step in the '90s was: arms and the Militias.

Thus, in '93, '94, there developed out of the patriot movement a full-fledged "citizen Militia movement" in its own right, with its own distinctive characteristics and differences of opinion. There was today a core, mainstream "Constitutional Citizens Militia Movement," with a common purpose that rested firmly on the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Militiamen believed the Constitution was being violated; indeed, many pointed to compelling evidence that the Constitution had been suspended altogether, without the knowledge of the general public. (This, I would learn, was not as farfetched as it sounded at first.) The stated, universal aim of this mainstream Militia was to defend against tyranny and restore the Constitution and Bill of Rights to their rightful place as checks and balances. Checks and balances on a government "by the People." Their principle means of so doing, the Constitutional Militias saw as being the exercising of their First and Second Amendments—freedom of speech and assembly, and to petition the government for redress of grievances, and backing this up, the right to bear arms and form Militia.

A deterrent to war.

When the patriots and Militias spoke of the Constitution, they generally understood it to include the Bill of Rights as the last word. As was pointed out to me by one Militia member, in the "Preamble" to the Bill of Rights itself, it said the "further declaratory and restrictive clauses" had been "added" to the Constitution expressly "to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers." (This, of course, meant that, should there be any difference of interpretation, the Bill of Rights ruled.)

Not to be confused with the Republican Party's so-called "conservatives" among the Washington elite—or with other, separatist and paramilitary groups that called themselves patriots and "militias" (such as the neo-Nazi and white supremacist armed groups like the Aryan Nations)—most Militia members considered themselves "conservatives" simply because they adhered to the country's traditional values, as espoused by the likes of: Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, George Mason, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson—all, Founding Fathers and Antifederalists. It was not surprising that the patriots and Militias gravitated to the Antifederalists, who had fought for the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution when those of a Federalist persuasion (such as, especially, Alexander Hamilton, but also John Adams, and even James Madison, who, ironically, was Jefferson's protégé—Jefferson was in Paris) had argued that a Bill of Rights was unnecessary. George Washington had been more a soldier than a thinker. (In a sense, however, he had also been a Federalist, assuming many of the monarchical trappings of government that Hamilton and Adams urged on him. But he had also made that grandest of "republican" gestures by stepping down from office, leaving his place in history unassailable.)

In modern times, "federalism" was often used to mean a decentralized system of government, but in the 18th century it had been the other way around, with the Federalists favoring a strong centralized

government, and the Antifederalists a weak federal government and strong states. In the 18th century, the principles of freedom, as embodied in the founding documents, had been radical and progressive, and still were today, judging by the efforts to vitiate them. It was undeniable to anyone who read their writings, that most of the Founders we consider great today fought for and envisioned a true separation of power in government, and an absolute regard for the Bill of Rights. Although today it had become fashionable in what passed for American mainstream culture, to justify breaching (though they didn't call it that) the Bill of Rights, along with the main body of the Constitution, while saying that times were different, the Militias, like the Founders, professed the Bill of Rights to be inviolable—or as Thomas Jefferson would have said, "inalienable." These principles of individual rights and liberties, while still "radical" today (in the sense of "going to the root"), with the passing of time, had also become "traditional" (in the sense of conserving past traditions), and, went the argument, were therefore "conservative" in the truest sense of the word.

Patriots considered themselves also populists and antiglobalists—to further differentiate themselves from the capital's elitist, "internationalist" conservatives (whom they saw simply as pro-big business, and its derivative, the global economy—not real conservatives at all). Although the Newt Gingriches might say many of the right things, they could never be "conservative" in the true American tradition so long as they embraced gun control and globalism. (Indeed, in the '98 elections, Gingrich and his policies would be overwhelmingly rejected by a multitude of the nation's true conservative voters.) Ronald Reagan had made many of the right noises, but as one disillusioned Militiaman who voted for him pointed out to me, it was under his presidency that many of the screws were tightened. Reagan's name, I found, though many of them clearly loved him, rarely came up at all among the Militias.

Tom continued, "The Declaration of Independence spoke of hordes of British officers being sent out, eating of the substance of the people."

It was the second time that Tom had referred to the "substance" of the people when referring to present-day conditions, paraphrasing the language in the Declaration of Independence, which, I was finding, was something the Militias did often. Thomas Jefferson had put it thus:

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

"Taxation," said Tom, "at the point when 50% accrues in taxes, you are no longer the majority stock holder, and you are an indentured servant, or a slave or whatever. Taxes, if you add up all forms of taxes—some of them are called user fees—are in excess of 50%. For the purpose of this conversation, I will use the word 'income' as defined for legal purposes by the government, but normally I don't use it, in order not to give the IRS a leg up. Off the top of my head, for them, income is something of a profit that one gains. This is not the definition in Black's Law Dictionary. Wages are not income, but property."

Patriots often referred to Black's Law Dictionary and certain court judgments to support their arguments. Two court decisions concerning wages as property not income, which they cited, were:

[The IRS] taxes only income "derived" from many different sources; one does not "derive income" by rendering services and charging for them. (Edwards v. Keith, 231 Fed. Rep. 113)

and,

Income excludes wages, salaries, tips. (Graves v. People of N.Y. exrel O'Keefe 59 SCt (1939))

"Very early on," said Tom, "in the New York state constitution it stated that a person's labor shall never be considered a commodity. Every person has a certain number of days on the earth. While you're here, there are certain things you need—sustenance and shelter. You trade a day's worth of labor for a day's worth of sustenance. There is not a profit made here. I know of very few working people with banking accounts in the Federal Reserve or Switzerland. It is a trading process; your labor is your property. Your signature is your property. You sign your name to a book and it is your property."

Patriots believed that income taxes were unconstitutional, and that the IRS, in any event, was not a legitimate government agency, since, along with the FBI and certain other agencies, it had never been formally chartered. I would struggle mightily with this over the coming months. It was one of the most difficult subjects for me to understand.

Tom continued, "In my civilian life, I was married at the age of twenty to a local girl. We had three children, two girls and a boy. I have one grandson, two years old. I worked blue-collar jobs—truck-driving and mechanics, sales work in hardware. Once, I rose to a managerial position. I raised a family and continued to think about those things. My wife was not interested, and thought too much of my time was consumed by such matters. After twenty years we separated.

"With my truck-driving, I was out and around the country a lot, and was seeing that the news media was controlled as several units. News from one area would not get a hundred miles away unless it was approved. There were certain types of stories: for example, in one community a man had used a legally-owned gun to stop a rape in progress, and this story did not make it eighty miles. On the other hand, there would be a shooting over drugs, and it would make it all over. What was politically correct would make it down the road in either direction. What was not, was bottled up as a local interest story.

"I got to know a cross section of the country east of the Mississippi. I was talking to people. Even in Canada, people recognized the same symptoms, of a loss of liberty and a march toward a police-state-type of society where individual liberty was laid at the feet of the all-powerful state.

"One of the wakeup calls was the Gordon Kahl incident. He was a tax protester in one of the Dakotas. Federal agents staked him out on his way back home—he was with his wife and son, and a friend of the son—and they were ambushed by several marshals. The son was riddled with gunfire, and Gordon Kahl returned fire and killed more than one federal agent. He ran. They went into a manhunt. They caught up with him down in Arkansas a few months later and killed him along with a law enforcement officer named Sheriff Gene Mathews. Jack McLamb did an in-depth, multi-year, police-style investigation on Kahl's execution. His son is still in jail. A man named John DeCamp, who is a former Nebraska legislator, has also been investigating, and is close to getting them to reopen the case and bringing some indictments."

Gordon Kahl had been a sixty-three-year-old tax protest leader in North Dakota. A well-respected farmer and highly-decorated former Air Force officer in World War II, Kahl had begun speaking out in the mid-'70s at public meetings and on local television about the unconstitutionality of the Federal Reserve and IRS enforcement of the income tax. Taking a lead from the Internal Revenue Code, where the income tax was characterized as being "voluntary," Kahl advocated "non-compliance." (In

Webster's dictionary, as patriots liked to point out, "voluntary" was defined as: "done, given, or made in accordance with one's own free will or choice," never under coercion.) The "tax rebellion" had quickly spread, and in 1977 Kahl had been identified by the IRS as the prime leader, and targeted for prosecution as a means of shutting down the movement. Kahl was convicted, however, only of two misdemeanors, under the IRS rules and laws for "failure to file a tax return." He was nevertheless subjected to felony prison and probation terms—that fell outside the law, Tom pointed out.

After serving a year in prison, Kahl made an effort through the legal system to resolve his differences over the remaining illegal probation terms. Believing that he had done so successfully, during the bad times for farms in the early '80s, he had resumed speaking out publicly, traveling around the country. Farmers, seeing their livelihoods threatened by what they considered unjust conditions imposed by the government, increasingly, had begun to speak of themselves as twentieth-century "patriots," harking back to the Revolution, invoking the First and Second Amendments.

Rather than as a tax protester, Gordon Kahl was now generally portrayed in the mainstream media more often as having been a member of the "extremist" Posse Comitatus movement, to which many tax protesters in fact subscribed. The Posse Comitatus (meaning, "Power of the County") organization had emerged in the '70s and '80s in rural America during the various farm crises, in response to heavy-handed banking and government farm policies (toward small farms). Adherents believed that under the "Republic" of the Founders, it was the "county" that was meant to be the citizens' true "seat of government," deriving its authority directly from "The People."

The argument went that the states were not subdivisions of a central government (as they were often being treated), nor were the counties subdivisions of the states. On the contrary, the state derived its authority from the counties, and the federal government, in turn, derived its authority from the sovereign states. Therefore, the sheriff, who was the "first man of the county," elected to serve the people, and under oath to uphold, preserve and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, had the duty to protect citizens from unlawful acts, including by government agents. Permission to enter a county, they argued, especially by federal law enforcement, was required under the Constitution, from the sheriff.

Rural America being highly religious—no different from most of the world's rural societies—the Posse Comitatus movement, naturally, was heavily imbued with Christian fundamentalism. And it was on the most extreme of their religious beliefs—never the Constitutional issues—that the media regularly focused. Thus, Posse Comitatus adherents were made out to be a bunch of religious extremists, when there was much more to the movement. The movement peaked in the '80s, and its strong ideology of government power emanating from the grassroots greatly influenced patriots, and later, the early Militia movement.

On February 13, 1983, Kahl and his family had been ambushed by U.S. Marshals in plain clothes, using a road block, as recounted by several witnesses to the terrible deed. The marshals apparently did not know what Gordon Kahl looked like, and had only the description of what he had been wearing earlier that day. Prior to the ambush, however, at a tax-protest meeting that Kahl and his son and a friend had attended, Kahl had exchanged his jacket and hat with his son Yorie. At the road block, the group of officers, aiming their guns at the Kahl group, according to witnesses, yelled, "We're going to blow your goddam heads off," and, "You're going to die." Without any pretense of arrest, they proceeded to shoot son Yorie—thinking he was his father—in cold blood, four times with a .38 Special revolver and twice in the stomach with a shotgun.

Believing his son was dead, Gordon Kahl shot back, along with Yorie's friend, who had attempted to escape and been cut off with gunfire. After killing two marshals and wounding the others, Gordon Kahl and the friend took Yorie to a hospital. Then, the elder Kahl fled. Several months later in Arkansas, the authorities caught up and executed him, along with the local sheriff. The house was burned down. Although the officials said the two men had been killed in a gun battle, Officer Jack McLamb, a former policeman, now a patriot leader, in an independent investigation, had recently concluded that Kahl had been shot in the back of the head with a .41 Magnum revolver while sitting at the dinner table (watching television for news about Yorie's trial) [with his friend] Sheriff Gene Mathews. When Sheriff Mathews had tried to leave the house, he also had been killed, by friendly fire. (It seemed that he had disregarded warnings to call off an investigation of Iran-Contra-related drug trafficking at the Mena, Arkansas airport, which I would learn more about later.)

The owners of the house, who were hiding Kahl, meanwhile, had been lured outside earlier, by an FBI special agent and the sheriff, and handcuffed to a police car. They watched as the bloody events unfolded. After hearing the gunshots, they watched the FBI and U.S. marshals, assisted by the local and state police, burn their house by inserting fuel through the roof vents and lighting it with smoke grenades and tear gas canisters. Evidence of accelerants was later found in several places, including on Kahl's charred body. Gordon Kahl's plight while he was on the run, had become a rallying cry for rural Americans protesting the IRS and its methods, and the authorities had been determined to destroy him and his cause. But the opposite happened: Kahl became a martyr.

Son Yorie Kahl, meanwhile, in what attorney John DeCamp described as amounting cumulatively to a kangaroo court—presided over by the same judge who had presided over the now-discredited, Wounded Knee-Leonard Peltier trial—was convicted of second-degree murder and conspiracy. Both Yorie and his friend were sentenced to life in prison. As part of a request on April 16, 1996 for a new trial for Yorie Kahl, DeCamp included a "Statement of Facts" describing how the "first testimony" before the jury at the trial had been "from the grieving widows of the dead marshals presenting studio photos of their husbands and telling of their children." At the same time, he pointed out, much exculpatory evidence had been disallowed, including the shoulder-holstered pistol that Yorie had worn, where it could be seen that Yorie's gun had been hit by the first bullet fired, by law enforcement, while it was still in the holster.

Yorie Kahl, argued DeCamp, had been represented by an "inexperienced civil attorney" appointed by the magistrate, who wasn't even in town during most of the time he was supposed to be preparing for the trial. Moreover, a lawyer who had traveled there to offer his services to Yorie, after meeting with the family, had been denied access to the defendant, and along with his paralegal-investigator, had been "harrassed, intimidated and threatened by federal and local law enforcement officers." The two had left, fearing for their lives. After son Yorie's trial, it said in the Statement of Facts, the lead prosecutor had declared, "We did everything in our power to make sure that they did not wind up having tax protester lawyers."

Attorney John DeCamp was an interesting figure in his own right; he was acquiring a high profile in the patriot community as a defender of their rights. A Nebraska state senator from 1976 to '86, before that he had been an Army captain in Viet Nam, where he had served with the CORDS pacification program under John Paul Vann and CIA Station Chief Bill Colby (with whom he had remained a close friend). In 1975, he had initiated "Operation Baby Lift," evacuating 2,800 Vietnamese orphans, and had been decorated and honored at the White House for his outstanding service. DeCamp had come to the attention of the patriots with his book, *The Franklin Cover-Up*, which described the links

between the Franklin Credit Union, an Omaha bank that had collapsed in 1988 (during the savings-and-loan scandal), and drug-peddling, organized child abuse and satanic activity, involving prominent government and private-sector figures in Nebraska and Washington, D.C., along with the CIA. Colby had secretly helped with the investigation. I was to read this book later as part of my research, and would find it truly shocking.

Officer Jack McLamb (to whom Tom Church had also referred, as having conducted an independent investigation of the Kahl affair) had been one of the earliest supporters of the Militia movement. His own story as a patriot leader went back to the late '70s, early '80s, when he had been the most-highly-decorated police officer in Phoenix, Arizona. (He was forced into retirement in the mid-'80s due to injuries sustained during a drug bust.) McLamb today headed two national police associations: The American Citizens and Lawmen Association, and Police Against the New World Order. In the '90s, he had become a vocal opponent of the UN and the "New World Order." A charismatic Officer McLamb, looking something like a golden-haired, pink-skinned cherub in a policeman's uniform, exuding love and sounding like a New Testament Apostle, traveled around the country giving lectures to the police, calling for them to uphold their oaths of office to serve the Constitution. He regularly called for the police to support the People, not the system, which was corrupt.

McLamb raised his voice regularly in support of the Militia movement (indeed, many policemen secretly belonged to Militias). In 1995 McLamb had written an article in his newsletter, *Aid & Abet: Constitutional Issues for Lawmen and the Military*, bearing the title, "Now is the Time for the Militias." The former policeman had begun, stating flatly, "The militia's legal function is to stop tyranny in government." What the Founders had called "citizens militia," "general militia," and "a well-regulated militia," he explained to his mainly-law enforcement audience, confirming what every Militiaman knew, "was the PRIVATE non-government-controlled militia, sometimes referred to as the 'Unorganized Militia.'"

The "unorganized" Militia, codified as such after the passing of the Dick Act in 1903, in Title 10, 311 (which Tom had quoted to me), as I was learning, had in fact come about largely because the U.S. had failed to create the intended, Swiss-style Militia. Unlike Switzerland, U.S. borders were not threatened, and citizens had been loathe to make the commitment; there simply hadn't been the will. Before the turn of the 19th century, the country had been under the strong pressure of the greedy, post-Civil War corporate robber barons, stirred by thoughts of further economic imperialism (that went beyond defeating the South)—much the same as today—in stark contrast to the sentiment that had prevailed at the time of the Founders, for a defensive force only. The Spanish-American War, with the venture into Cuba by Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in 1898, and the occupation immediately afterwards of the Philippines, must have shown the fast-expanding new industrialists and financiers with roving eyes the limitations of a citizen Militia in any sustained, European-style foreign occupation. It would have been quite clear that a Swiss-style Militia could be viable only on the home front.

Just as important, while the requirement for all men between the ages of 17 and 45 to enroll and purchase weapons had been formally dropped under the Dick Act in 1903, it had also divided the Militia into today's "organized" and "unorganized" Militia. It was with the Dick Act that the National Guard had been created, defined as the "organized Militia," meant to be able to substitute for the regular army. Still, the National Guard was allowed to do so only on American soil; in 1912, just prior to World War I, the U.S. Attorney General ruled that the Constitution did not authorize foreign service by any of the Militia—"unorganized" or "organized." The predator barons would have to find

another way to create a standing army suitable to war in Europe, and eventually the entire globe. Predictably, in 1916, with World War I already underway, a way had been found to get around the limitation, with The National Defense Act, which gave the president the power to draft members of the "organized Militia," or National Guard, into the regular army in wartime.

At first, the National Guard was administered under the Constitution's "Militia clause"—Article I, Sec. 8—which conferred on Congress the power "To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia," rather than under the "army clause," which authorized the Congress "To raise and support Armies." Soon after President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in 1933, however, this power was transferred, with the National Guard Act, to the "army clause," which meant that, just as the forces for another world war were beginning to make themselves felt, there was at last a sizeable standing army that could be sent overseas at any time. It could, in fact, for the first time, be sent overseas even in time of peace.

Soon, World War II was fought, after which, U.S. military interventions over the next half century followed in: Korea, Viet Nam, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, and so on, none of which countries threatened America, along with numerous other, U.S.-made "low intensity" conflicts around the globe—all contributing to the creation of a parallel, U.S. national-security state that in the end served only global financial and corporate interests. (This, as I was learning, was the way the Militias saw it.)

Appropriately ambiguous, so as to satisfy the 1933 National Guard Act's opponents, House of Representatives Report No. 141, at the time, justified the transfer of the National Guard to the "army clause" in the Constitution, saying:

The primary purpose of this bill is to create the National Guard of the United States as a component of the Army of the United States, both in time of peace and of war, reserving to the States their right to control the National Guard or Organized Militia absolutely under the Militia clause of the Constitution in time of peace.

It was an oxymoron, of course, to say that the National Guard was both a component of the (regular) "Army" in time of peace, and at the same time, that the states retained the right to control it absolutely. In fact, today the National Guard could be federalized by the president at any time, taking it out of the control of the states, with or without their consent. (This was done in 1993 during the L.A. riots, patriots believed, to test public sentiment.) With the "organized" Militia now part and parcel of the regular Army, it was clear that only the "unorganized Militia" remained "the Militia" of citizens referred to in the Constitution and Second Amendment. It was clear from the Founding Fathers' writings, as well as the Dick Act, contrary to much of today's conventional wisdom coming from highly-regarded Constitutional scholars, that what the Militias were asserting was correct -- "unorganized" simply meant, "unorganized by the government."

Officer McLamb proceeded in his article on the Militias, to quote that most controversial of Thomas Jefferson's statements:

The tree of liberty must be watered from time to time with the blood of tyrants and patriots.

McLamb, however, asserted that "The formation of militias may prevent the necessity of their use." "Militias," he explained, "were part of the system of "checks and balances" within the United States. "And we as Officers of the Law have sworn to protect the Constitution and the People's rights. The

militia is one of those rights."

McLamb, in his Aid and Abet, noted also that the Militia was being demonized as "White Supremacists," "Anti-Semites," "Neo-Nazis," "Gun-Nuts," "Radicals" and "Right-wing Extremists," which, he explained, was an old tactic to "make believe" patriots were "criminals or EVIL." The powers-that-be, he explained, were worried because if law enforcement and soldiers "took the time to actually know these folks," they "would support most of them in their stand against the anti-American gangsters presently in control of our beloved Republic."

While it was indeed not true that the citizen Militias were neo-Nazis and anti-Semites and such (though there were surely some of these individuals among them), what made it easy to label them "right-wing extremists" was many of the patriots' strong fundamentalist Christian beliefs, which were the legacy of the Puritans and Calvinists who had come to America as settlers seeking freedom from oppression, but who, ironically, were themselves highly intolerant. Today, among modern-day revolutionaries, it was this, in its various guises, with the strong anti-abortion and prayer-in-schools bent, that often made its presence felt in the public eye; today's American patriots, moreover, could be as intolerant as their Colonial forbears. Like the Puritans earlier, today's "religionist" minority saw America through the lense of the Bible, as God's Promised Land after the Exodus from bondage in England—their "Egypt." And because these minority religious zealots were often the most vocal among the patriots, the media paid them greater heed, which only served to make them even more vocal.

The more reasonable voices among the patriots and Militias, however, as I was finding, were routinely given short shrift. Some of these other voices were nevertheless quick to point out that the religious groups in the eighteenth century had eventually given way, with the Constitution, to Thomas Jefferson's idea of a separation between state and religion, which he had considered his crowning achievement. Unlike some of the other Founding Fathers, Jefferson had believed that outside the broad, general terms, religion was a private matter and its practice had no place in the conduct of public office. (Prayer, however, was not something he had thought should be banned at public functions, and although today, prayer had been abolished in public schools, interestingly, no one -- publicly, at least—had yet advocated banning prayer at the opening of Congress.)

It would take me many months of intensive study to understand all this, with the many subtleties and nuances. Sometimes I thought that what I had before me in my quest to understand the Militias—submerged as their core beliefs often were in a sea of secondary issues—was more akin to an exotic cult to conspiracy, with no rhyme or reason, complete with its own dogma and articles of faith. It often seemed that logic played no part.

This was until I began researching these beliefs, and going far, far back, deep into the history of what was taking place. There, I found that many of the Militias' beliefs were not so farfetched after all. Slowly, as I sifted through the Militia charges of a concerted pattern of government misconduct, and the various theories of means for redress of grievances, a whole new world opened up that I had not known existed. The Militias, it became clear to me, through their educational efforts, were putting the entire system on trial. Clearly, if they continued, today's system, as it had evolved—or been engineered, as patriots would say—could not survive. It was either the system, or the Militias.

Once I knew what the Militias knew, I was a changed person. And I realized I could never go back.

Officer McLamb, in his article, called eloquently on the police to do their own checking before

following orders to "start shooting" or participate in any "dynamic entry." He ended with a warning to the "Globalists," saying:

Throughout our Constitutional history in America, no lawmen or soldier has feared good countrymen bearing arms, just the opposite. It is only when a government begins to enslave the people that the "leaders" rightly fear guns in the hands of citizens. 70,000,000 plus, GOOD AMERICANS (militia) own guns. And most, including, many of us in uniform... will see that those who would try to take them, DIE IN THE TRYING.

"Fire was used to conceal the crime," said Tom Church of the Kahl-Mathews execution. "The son was just a kid at the time. He survived the injuries and is maimed. He didn't do anything, but he's got a lifetime federal gig ahead of him in jail. He's a political prisoner. It is horrifying to see the types of things the government has done, mainly because of retribution. They had some of their hired guns killed, and there had to be retribution. They have to make the people fear them. When the federal guns come to your place, you'd better lay down. If you don't, they're gonna hunt you down like a dog and kill you. No trial. They're just gonna kill you. That was what was done to Gordon Kahl.

"Then, there was a situation in Philadelphia in 1985 with a group called MOVE. Fire was also used against MOVE. In so doing, the city, by bombing them from an aerial platform, started a fire, and blocks and blocks of the city of Philadelphia burned to the ground. This was a horrific event. Once again, it showed that the government, if you resist them, they will kill you. Flat out, no trial, they will beat you. If you don't get the learnin' from that, they will kill you. This was covered in the propaganda pushed out by the Establishment media. J.J. Johnson, in his newsletter, recently told the story."

J.J. Johnson was a black founder and leader of the Ohio Unorganized Citizens Militia, who, with his wife Helen, published a popular Militia newsletter by the name of E Pluribus Unum (in Latin, "From Many One" -- the motto on the U.S. coat of arms). MOVE had been a tenants' rights movement, whose followers had been African nationalists living in a vacant building they had fixed up in Philadelphia, where they were squatting. In 1985, when they refused to leave, the City had evacuated everyone on the block, and had proceeded to bomb the MOVE house from a helicopter. Eleven men, women and children were killed. Several blocks burned down, leaving a whole neighborhood homeless. (While it was generally described as a local government operation, as it turned out, there had been assistance from the FBI, which explained why the Justice Department had declined to launch an investigation. Interestingly, former FBI agent (who, earlier, had personally infiltrated the Weathermen, Black Panthers and Students for a Democratic Society, or SDS, during the FBI's COINTELPRO operation) Frank Keating—governor of Oklahoma at the time of the "Oklahoma bombing," where there was also more to the story than met the eye—was Assistant Attorney General at the time.)

Tom continued, "Then there was the Randy Weaver story."

In the opinion of many, the single most important historical event leading to the emergence of the Militias had been Ruby Ridge—as the 1992 action by the federal government against the Weaver family in Idaho was generally known. More than anything else, the Weaver saga had set the immediate stage for the Militia movement, followed by Waco a few months later.

At the time of Ruby Ridge, the tinder for a nationwide movement of armed American dissidents was just waiting to be ignited. All across the country, already, future Militiamen were outraged over the deceptive gun-control measures by the government, especially since Kahl's execution, which included

widespread efforts to entrap gun owners, with undercover ATF agents regularly inciting ordinary people to break the law on some minor point, to force them to become informants. Federal law enforcement was systematically developing a countrywide network of Americans informing on their friends and neighbors, and patriots liked to point out that this was the way it had been in the Soviet Union.

There was smoldering outrage also at the increasing militarization of law enforcement; in the '90s, the police were being given military equipment that included tanks and armored personnel carriers and helicopter gunships. With these new toys, the police were also being given training by the military in the methods of outright war. Patriots believed there were secret plans to use them against the general population whenever it got out of line with whatever happened to be politically correct at any given moment—politically correct, that is, for the authorities and their masters, those powerful globalists beginning to unmask as the end of the millenium approached.

Chapter 2

FEAR IN THE LAND:

RUBY RIDGE, WACO, OKLAHOMA

A free people ought not only to be armed and disciplined but they should have sufficient arms and ammunition to maintain a status of independence from any who might attempt to abuse them, which would include their own government.

George Washington

The way the story began, in the summer of 1992 a federal marshal was killed in a gun battle on the remote Idaho mountaintop of Ruby Ridge, in circumstances that were never fully accounted for. It happened during surveillance by a team of U.S. marshals on the property of a man named Randy Weaver, where he lived with his wife, son, three daughters, and a young friend he considered a son. The death of the U.S. marshal had resulted in an eleven-day siege by some 500 federal law enforcement officers. Randy Weaver, a former Green Beret who made his living as a logger, earlier, had attended meetings of the Aryan Nations—one of several heavily-armed, religious, white supremacist groups that had spread through the Midwest during the '80s farm crises and industry downsizing; many white working and middle-class people in that part of the country had lost their means of earning a living, or found it much reduced, which had fueled the movement. At the same time, an altogether other America, highly-publicized in the media—mostly already in the upper reaches of the economy—had been experiencing a boom for a decade.

As a woodcutter, Weaver's finances were never good even in the best of times, and so it was that he was chosen to be set up by an undercover government informant he had met at an Aryan Nations meeting. For several months in 1990, the informant had assiduously cultivated this close-knit-family man's friendship, visiting him frequently in his wilderness cabin, then offering to pay him to saw off two shotguns at a fraction of an inch below what was allowed by law. When Weaver came back with the first sawed-off shotgun at regulation length, the government agent badgered him into making it

shorter. Wanting sorely in his finances, the woodsman complied.

The federal agency behind this episode turned out to be the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, or ATF, whose prime reason for existing was now gun control (though it also presided over such things as liquor licenses and taxes, and arson). Although the ATF had since come to occupy a prominent position in the news, at the time of Ruby Ridge it was relatively unknown to the general public. Earlier in the century, during Prohibition, an earlier version of the ATF had been just as unpopular in rural America, raiding stills and confiscating moonshine. When Weaver was arrested, the ATF had quickly revealed its intentions, offering to drop the charges if, like the man who had set him up, he became a government informant. Weaver said he refused.

Feeling terribly wronged, he then failed to appear in court to respond to the gun charges, and for a period of 18 months, stayed holed up on his property with his family, his wife Vicki in the lead, vowing to fight to the death if the authorities came after him. At one point, an ambitious, local U.S. Attorney—wanting to emphasize a supposed threat from white supremacist groups, it was thought—in order to score some points with the media for his own political purposes, rather than go after one of these heavily-armed groups, gave the order to federal marshals instead, to do whatever it took to arrest Weaver. The marshals began prowling around the heavily-wooded property at Ruby Ridge in small groups dressed in camouflage, with stockings over their faces.

On August 21, 1992, Weaver's fourteen-year-old son Samuel and young-friend-like-a-son Kevin Harris heard Sammy's dog Striker barking furiously and ran outside. The Weavers often hunted for food, always carrying rifles outdoors, and they followed the barking Striker down a dirt road. Harris said later they had thought it was a large animal—a deer, or perhaps even a bear. As they closed in on the camouflaged marshals hiding in the woods, one of them shot Striker, and the bloodied dog, his back broken and yelping pitifully, dragged himself back along the ground toward Sammy. A gun battle ensued. Harris testified in court that the U.S. marshals had not identified themselves, and he and Sammy had not known it was the police. When the gun battle was over a few minutes later, both Sammy and one of the marshals lay dead.

The government claimed that the dead Marshal William Degan had shot Striker to keep the marshals' location from being revealed, and then Sammy had shot Degan. Harris and Randy Weaver had quickly joined in the shooting, went the marshals' story (although Randy was out of sight), and there had been an intense firefight, with the marshals simply defending themselves. But Sammy had been shot in the back.

Marshal Degan, also, as it turned out, had been shot in the back, which raised serious questions.

In the wee hours of the morning that followed, several hundred FBI and ATF agents surrounded the cabin. The FBI brought in its prestigious Hostage Rescue Team, or "HRT" (as yet untried), which had been trained as part of a new program, by Randy Weaver's very own Green Berets—the Army Special Forces. Under the deadly-force rules, normally, the police were allowed to shoot only if there was "imminent danger" to them or someone else. But on this occasion, the rules were modified at FBI headquarters in Washington, and the snipers in the field were issued a convoluted order that amounted to, "shoot on sight" any armed adult. While it was still dark and the Weavers lay asleep, on the pine-covered hill overlooking the rustic mountain cabin and shed, the HRT took up positions behind the tree trunks and bushes, and waited. As dawn came, Randy Weaver emerged with his oldest daughter Sara, who was sixteen, and young-friend Harris, all three carrying rifles.

While the friend and daughter disappeared behind some boulders in front of the house, Randy proceeded along the path at the side of the cabin to the shed where the body of his son lay, in direct view of the snipers. FBI senior sniper Lon Horiuchi, according to the official story, aimed with his rifle through the powerful telescope at Weaver; according to another argument, it was not Horiuchi at all, but his second in command. In any event, the woodsman, not being in a hurry, would have been moving slowly, allowing plenty of time for the sniper to aim, and whoever that member of the FBI's HRT was, when Weaver had his arms lifted to slide open a bolt on the door to the shed, that officer squeezed the trigger. In all versions of the story, Randy Weaver was shot through the back of the shoulder and he yelled. Weaver and the daughter and friend, from different directions, all ran towards the cabin as fast as they could. Randy's wife Vicki, their ten-month old daughter Elisheba in her arms, held open the front door, calling out to them to hurry.

Lon Horiuchi, it appeared, by this time was already aiming his rifle at the window in the cabin door; the window had red and white check curtains neatly tied back to let the daylight in. This recent graduate of West Point—for that was what Horiuchi was—with his highly-honed marksmanship skills that qualified him for sniper on the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team, for the first time, or again, proceeded to pull the trigger, blowing off half of Vicki's face, barely missing the 10-month-old baby. Randy had already made it inside, but Harris was wounded by the same bullet as Vicki. Sara, pushing up against him, barely missed being hit.

Only then did the FBI call over the loudspeaker for the Weavers to come out and surrender. Understandably, they refused. For eleven days the siege continued, with over 450 law enforcement personnel surrounding the area, and the FBI taunting the Weavers over the loudspeaker with such things as asking the dead Mrs. Weaver what she had had for breakfast. There was no phone in the cabin, and at one point the FBI sent a remote-controlled robot up the hill with a telephone. Weaver refused to come out and talk because, strapped to the robot also, was a high-powered rifle pointed at the door.

Meanwhile, the media were reporting that the U.S. Marshals had been deliberately ambushed by the Weavers, with the marshals claiming they had been pinned down by gunfire for nine hours. Ruby Ridge, the media described as being a well-fortified compound, probably with underground bunkers and sophisticated booby traps put there by Weaver using his Special Forces training. The Weavers were "white separatists," "white supremacists," "neo-Nazis," "anti-Semites," and clearly, "dangerous" to the public.

It was only after retired Colonel James "Bo" Gritz, a fellow former Green Beret, living in Idaho also, arrived on the scene with Officer Jack McLamb, and they persuaded Randy Weaver that he and the friend would have a fair trial, that the Weaver family agreed to give themselves up. Bo Gritz, who was the most-highly decorated American soldier to come out of the Viet Nam war and had been the inspiration for the film Rambo, took the credit, but Weaver said later it was the gentler McLamb who had convinced him to come out. Gritz also was able to persuade the legendary Wyoming lawyer, Gerry Spence, who dressed in buckskins and cowboy hat and boots, to accept the Weaver case. And eventually, both Weaver and the friend were acquitted by a jury of all the charges relating to the firefight and death of the marshal. Randy Weaver was awarded \$100,000 in damages, and his three daughters a million each. He was, however, found guilty of the initial gun charges, even though it was clearly a case of entrapment by the ATF, and for having failed to appear in court, even though it was shown that he had deliberately been given the wrong date.

It was during the standoff at Ruby Ridge that the country as a whole had its first glimpse of the nascent Militia movement; most people did not know that was what it was. Crowds of angry neighbors, and people from many parts of the country and even Canada, congregated outside the police perimeter to protest the methods of the ATF and federal marshals, and government abuse of power in general. This was the other America, that had been left out of the much-touted boom in the '80s economy, carefully swept under the rug by the media. These angry citizens could be seen on the evening news during the siege, carrying signs and shouting insults at the authorities. Among them were a number of skinheads and other angry white supremacists, but many of them were farmers and such, struggling desperately to hold on to their family farms and way of life in the New World Order. When they were not in front of the cameras, some of these people had begun taking another look at the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and at the Declaration of Independence.

One was a man named John Trochmann, with his family, from nearby Noxon, Montana. The Trochmanns were stalwart members of the burgeoning patriot community, and friends of the Weavers. One of the boys dated Sara. It was the Trochmanns who were to launch the high-profile, public wing of the "Militia movement" soon, when they founded the Militia of Montana, or M.O.M. The Trochmanns, a year and a half later, in early 1994, would compile a manual on how to start a Militia, filling orders from all over the country, sending it out with a catalogue of Militia and survival-related publications, videotapes and cassettes, urging people to claim their Second Amendment rights—to arm themselves and form Militia units. The Trochmanns urged people to prepare for the day when, like the Weavers, they might have to defend themselves from government tyranny.

During televised Senate hearings later on Ruby Ridge, contrary to what the marshals said, the picture that emerged was of a fourteen-year-old Samuel Weaver being shot in the back when he turned to run—by which marshal, it could not be established conclusively (the bullets had disappeared). At one point, the marshals even advanced the theory that Randy Weaver had killed his son by mistake. The problem was, Randy had been on the other side of thick woods, half a mile away. Gerry Spence called it a case of another "magic bullet," recalling the single-bullet theory in the JFK assassination. It was nevertheless clear by now that although several shots had been fired from the dead marshal's rifle, Marshal Degan himself had been killed by a fellow marshal. An FBI forensic expert reported that the dead marshal had been hit in the back of the head with a bullet from a .9 mm handgun, which only the marshals carried. Sammy and Harris carried rifles. (Randy Weaver, with his .9 mm pistol, which he fired into the air, was a quarter of a mile away on the other side of thick woods.)

About the FBI killing of Vicki, the FBI said that sniper Horiuchi had not meant to shoot her, that the curtains had been drawn on the window in the door, and he couldn't see who was behind it. But all the inhabitants of the cabin stated that the curtains were always kept open, to let light into the dark interior where there was no electricity during the day. Also, there was no bullet hole in curtains. And it was clear that even if the curtains had been drawn, Horiuchi would have known that the only people inside the house were Vicki and two daughters, one of them an infant; so if it hadn't been Vicki holding open the door, it would have been the younger daughter Rachel, age ten. In the first drawing Horiuchi made of how the window looked when he aimed at it, he had drawn two heads. Later, he drew only one. It was established during the hearings that the ATF had considered Vicki the driving force behind Randy Weaver, and had believed that her presence made him more difficult to deal with. Although the FBI denied that it had known prior to the surrender that Vicki Weaver was dead, Bo Gritz said he had been told so by an FBI agent soon after he arrived on the scene.

"I swore to God," wrote Gritz in his newsletter, "and said under penalty of perjury, that Richard Rogers, Special Agent in charge of the Hostage Response Group, stated to me immediately upon my return from the 1st session with Randy Weaver: 'Bo, we targeted Vicki Weaver because the psychiatrist profiled her as the maternal head of the family who would kill her children before allowing her to surrender.'"

A sign in front of the FBI camp on the site, wrote Gritz, read "CAMP VICKI."

The FBI said Horiuchi (who took the Fifth Amendment, refusing to testify) had been aiming at Weaver and Harris, and that they had only come into sight as they reached the door. But it was proven that both men were clearly in this crack sniper's line of sight some yards before they arrived at the cabin. In any event, the question remained, why had Horiuchi shot at two men who were clearly running away? As for shooting Randy Weaver in the back at the shed, the FBI said Horiuchi had done so because Weaver was aiming his rifle at the police helicopter overhead. But the pilot testified that he had been on the other side of the ridge, out of sight.

As earlier, in the initial firefight, when Sammy and the marshal had both given up the ghost, the crucial bullets had disappeared. Bo Gritz, who examined Weaver's and Harris's wounds as well as Vicki's dead body before the surrender, said that in his opinion, the reason the missing bullets had never surfaced was:

The projectile that shot [U.S. Marshal] William Degan dead... was a 9 mm Parabellum. The marks confirm that it came from the barrel of a Colt submachine gun fitted with suppressors—fired by Lawrence Cooper, U.S. Marshal. There was never a question about Sammy. He was shot in the arm and back by a .224 caliber fired from an M-16 rifle with a 3-round burst control device. Arthur Roderick pulled that trigger. Vicki and Kevin were hit by Hor[iuchi]'s 7.62 mm bullet. Weaver was hit with a .223. Why haven't they recovered that round? It would prove that Horiuchi was aiming purposely at Vicki. Randy was shot by Horiuchi's #2 (observer, security, commo) firing an M-16... Too bad that all the dead were cremated (but convenient for the government).

During the Senate hearings, There was heated discussion of changing the rules of deadly force—or "rules of engagement," as they were beginning to be called by the FBI, using a military term. The Supreme Court had said that deadly force could be used by law enforcement only in the case of "imminent" danger; the changes being suggested, presumably, were meant to further tighten the rules, so this could never happen again. In fact, as Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) pointed out, the new wording offered by Louis Freeh (the FBI's new director) only served to broaden the definition of "imminent," to mean an unspecified time in the future. (The FBI argued that there had been imminent danger at the time that Horiuchi had shot at the fleeing Weavers, because once back inside the cabin, the Weavers would have been able to shoot at the FBI through the windows.) Interestingly, under Freeh's proposed changes, what had happened at Ruby Ridge would have become perfectly legal.

The marshals were all given medals for their "heroic" participation.

The same press, meanwhile, that had once shown a keen appetite for exposing police brutality when it was against the left (during the Viet Nam war and civil rights movement in the '60s and '70s), showed little interest now that it was the so-called right that was the target. It was as if when the police abuse was against what were perceived to be unsavory characters, somehow, it was not worthy of media attention. The entire matter soon died in the media.

Interestingly, FBI sniper Lon Horiuchi, being a graduate of West Point, had been trained, not as a policeman but as an Army officer (and a gentleman), with entirely different rules of deadly force. Soldiers, imminent danger or no, were trained simply to "kill" the enemy. Which only served to illustrate the militarization of the police that was gradually coming about, that the patriots were so angrily denouncing. Officer Jack McLamb said he thought Horiuchi ought to be in prison. (The state tried to bring charges against him, but they were disallowed by a federal judge, who remanded it instead to a federal court, where the charges were dismissed.) McLamb's good friend, Bo Gritz, was running for president that year, and began publicly calling for people to form civilian Militias.

As I sat with Tom Church, overlooking the serene farm valley far away, Tom continued, "I was aware of the fact that there were other Militias in the country, that this was an important movement to reestablish 'unorganized Militia.' When I was in the National Guard they told us we were part of the Militia, and they were right. The National Guard is the 'organized Militia.' We the People are the 'unorganized Militia.' So I started to organize people in central New York.

"As I had traveled, I had established friendships, and we had information flowing across state lines, ideas, developments. And then we came to Waco. Of course, Waco was a long ways away. Even for those of us in the Militia, the idea of coming to the aid of a—at least, the way the government presented him—a child molester, a child abuser, wasn't very palatable. We felt sure that we weren't getting all the truth, given what the media was doing, but still, in all, it seemed as though there was enough smoke to the fire on David Koresh, that we just didn't think this was anything that we wanted to rally around. It would give the Militia a bad name, you know.

"Then, I remember that day—I didn't see it right off when it happened, but when I saw the replays, they were on constantly all day, of the fire—as soon as the fire was on the screen before me, I knew what the deal was. It was like all the scales dropped from my eyes. This was the same enemy that I had seen use fire in the past to cover up their crimes—Gordon Kahl, MOVE. With Randy Weaver, as I understand it, there were plans to use fire, and they didn't get that far."

Ruby Ridge had been followed, after only nine months, by the even-more-terrible ordeal of citizens at the hand of the government—known simply as "Waco"—on the outskirts of the city by that name in Texas. Waco, like Ruby Ridge, also involved federal gun control by the ATF, and a lengthy standoff with the FBI that ended badly for all concerned. This time, the number of innocent people killed rose to over eighty. More than anything, it was due to Waco that the Militias emerged as a full-fledged, nationwide, grass-roots citizens movement, although they did not yet call themselves a movement.

The Waco story began when a hundred and some members of an offshoot of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, known as Branch Davidians, set up a religious commune they named Mount Carmel, on the outskirts of Waco. They followed a man named David Koresh, and lived there in a two-story wooden building, or church complex, that they built with their own hands. As it turned out, they had not done a very good job; it was a flimsy structure. During the seven-week standoff with the feds, following the unsuccessful initial ATF raid, the media nevertheless made such frequent reference to it (as they had earlier to the Weaver cabin) as a "well-fortified compound," that the word "compound" itself, in the minds of the general public, came to mean a heavily-manned fortress, by dangerous, anti-government radicals. But it was a plain wooden building with no military features whatsoever. The so-called, "reinforced concrete bunker" that the media continually trumpeted turned out to be simply a concrete basement storage room that was the foundation of the building. Moreover, it was commonplace in Texas for people to have guns, and buy and sell them at shows, and this was

one of the ways the Mount Carmel community supported itself; several of Koresh's followers living there had licenses to sell firearms.

It had all started in the days immediately after the badly-bungled operation at Ruby Ridge the previous fall. Inside the ATF there had been worries that the agency might be phased out and its police duties given to the Justice Department, and it was felt that the gun control agency needed a spectacular success to ensure its continuing existence. (If the ATF was successful at Waco, they would be seen as heroes rescuing children from child abusers and religious gun kooks.) The ATF began intense surveillance of the Branch Davidians outside Waco, renting a house across the way for undercover agents posing as students, who frequently visited Koresh and his followers and read the Bible with them. Religious communes with controversial religious practices and apocalyptic beliefs, the government well knew, could be easily demonized. The ATF's rationalization to the public for the operation was that David Koresh was "stockpiling weapons." In fact, the number of weapons in the complex—which the ATF said, for effect, was four hundred but turned out to be roughly three per adult—was half the average per capita in Texas.

Since, in itself, stockpiling weapons was not illegal, the ATF added that the group was converting semi-automatic weapons to automatic, and converting deactivated hand grenades sold as paper weights (which were popular at gun shows, and of which, indeed, there had been an order placed) to live ones. But there was never any evidence produced of this. Nevertheless, the ATF began planning a raid to arrest Koresh. They requested special assault training from the Army's Green Berets, as well as the use of three military helicopters, under the pretext that there was also a methamphetamine laboratory. This, they made up completely out of thin air: Under the guidelines for military participation or the use of military equipment in any domestic law enforcement operation, it was necessary for there to be drugs.

On February 25, 1993, some seventy-five to a hundred ATF agents arrived hidden in cattle cars at Mount Carmel, and even though they were alerted by one of the undercover agents living across the way that the Davidians had found out they were coming, the ATF went forward with what they claimed was meant to be a surprise assault. Koresh was standing outside the front door waiting, and tried to talk to them. As several ATF agents moved toward the front door, presumably to serve an arrest warrant on Koresh, a firefight broke out when shots were fired into the roof from an overhead, ATF-manned helicopter. The agents on the ground quickly retreated to regroup. Koresh himself was wounded in that initial firefight after he ran back inside, by a bullet that went through the door. During the several-hour standoff that followed, six (some said eight) of the Koresh people inside, including a nursing mother, were killed by bullets that went through the walls and the roof. Four ATF officers died. (Patriots claimed they had been able to trace their names, and they were all former Clinton bodyguards—presumably, ones who knew too much. Certainly, if this was true, they joined some twelve of the president's former bodyguards and associates who had died or would die in suspicious circumstances by mid-'98—most reported as suicides or plane crashes.)

As had happened earlier at Ruby Ridge after the death of another fed, immediately, the FBI was called in. Within hours, the same highly-trained Hostage Rescue Team that had shot Randy Weaver in the back and the young friend fleeing, and had killed Vicki Weaver carrying her baby, arrived at Waco. What followed was a 51-day standoff, where Koresh kept promising to come out—first, after certain requests were fulfilled, such as providing milk for the children, and later, after he finished a manuscript having to do with the seals in the Book of Revelation.

On the news, the media played over and over a video clip where Koresh could be heard saying, "I must be God," reinforcing the image in the public mind that he was crazy. His followers later claimed that when Koresh had said that, he had simply been replying to an accusation that he had impregnated a sixty-nine-year-old woman, and his complete sentence had been, "And if I did that, I must be God." Since nearly half the inhabitants of the complex were Hispanic or black, it was not possible for the media to describe Koresh as a white separatist or supremacist. There were instead charges of child abuse, that included his having sex with underage girls (whom the Branch-Davidian religion allowed Koresh to take in multiple marriage). Clinton's newly-appointed attorney general, Janet Reno, declared publicly that children were being beaten, which turned out not to be true. At night, the FBI flooded the house with bright spotlights and played loud music and the sound of dentist drills and rabbits being killed, purportedly, to make it so unpleasant for Koresh and the other adults that they would release the children and surrender. But the real effects must have been on those same children, who, when they did sleep, must have had terrible nightmares.

On April 19, in the fifth week of the siege, in the early hours, an FBI agent began to intone over a loudspeaker outside the complex again and again, "This is not an assault, this is not an assault," while at the same time, M-60 tanks, CEVs and Bradley fighting vehicles began rolling up to the big house and ramming it. The FBI-U.S. Army tanks punched large holes in the wooden structure, causing the walls to collapse in some places, including over the main staircase, making it almost impossible to get out. They inserted CS gas—a tear gas that was illegal for use by the military under the Geneva Conventions because it was known to be lethal, especially in closed areas; it was especially dangerous to sick and older people, and children, and was classified as a chemical weapon. (As the patriots saw it, the same U.S. government that was prepared to go to war with Iraq because of its chemical weapons, thought nothing of using such weapons of mass destruction against its own citizens.)

A fullscale firefight erupted between the Branch Davidians and law enforcement. Then, suddenly, fire burst out in several places as the building rocked. With the wind blowing at some thirty to forty miles an hour, the wooden structure quickly burned to the ground. Inside, by the Branch Davidians' count, were eighty-two charred souls, nineteen of them children, two yet unborn. Only a few adults made it out. The government charged that Koresh and his followers had set fire to the building to fulfill the prophecy in Revelation. But serious questions were raised about this when the people who managed to escape said the kerosene lamps inside had been knocked over by the tanks crashing into walls (the electricity was cut off), rocking the flimsy building from end to end. The wind, blowing through a hall that ran the length of the entire front of the building, they said, had caused the fire to spread quickly.

As it turned out also, CS gas was flammable. Although the FBI argued that it was impossible for CS gas to catch fire in these circumstances, in 1997 the San Diego Union Tribune reported that in a drug raid in San Diego, after law enforcement had used CS gas, the official report had stated that the CS had caught fire and caused the house to burn down. It was, moreover, known that when CS gas caught fire, it turned to cyanide gas. As the Militias often put it, the people at Waco died of cyanide gas poisoning, "like the Jews in the Holocaust."

The front and back doors, meanwhile, had been blocked in the damage done by the tanks, and the six men and three women who did make it out, apparently did so under heavy machinegun fire coming from the FBI armored vehicles. The government's FLIR (infrared) film footage, shown in late 1997 in the documentary, *Waco, Rules of Engagement*, which was nominated for an Academy Award,

showed this clearly. On camera, the inventor of infrared film stated that the FLIR footage showed unmistakable gunfire traveling from the location of the FBI troops toward the building's exits. Although the FBI said it had anticipated the possibility that Koresh would set fire to the complex (which the government claimed he and his inner circle had done), there were no firefighters on hand. The fire department was called only after the fire started.

There was a bus buried under the complex, where the FBI claimed in the Senate hearings, it had expected the children to take refuge, away from the gas. But during these same hearings, it was clearly established by one FBI agent that they had filled the bus with CS gas deliberately to keep people out. Furthermore, as it turned out, the entire quantity of gas, that the Justice Department said was meant to be pumped into the complex over a period of many hours, had been inserted during the first half hour. The reason for the "dynamic entry" (another military term that had crept into law enforcement jargon), rather than waiting the Branch Davidians out, the FBI claimed, was that the Hostage Rescue Team was tired and needed to be relieved, and there were no more of these highly-trained agents with "perishable skills" to take their place.

As Newsday columnist Jimmy Breslin put it the day after, "They were totally exhausted from doing absolutely nothing... people of such superior skills were required for the job of keeping a farm surrounded that the bureau simply had no way to replace those men out there in Waco." And after all that, added Breslin, "the case against Koresh was for simple gun possession."

The Koresh followers testified in court hearings and before the Senate that during the initial raid the ATF had fired first. Helicopters had fired through the roof while the agents at the front door fired at Koresh, who quickly ran inside. The ATF had continued firing at the closed door, which was how Koresh had been wounded. Wayne Martin, one of the leaders, had dialed 911 for help, and on an audiotape released later, with gunfire in the background, he could be heard pleading, "There's women and children in here. Tell them to stop!" In answer to a directive from a deputy sheriff to put down his gun, he could be heard replying with a pathetic wail, "I have a right to defend myself. They started firing fist!"

Dick DeGuerin, a highly-regarded Texas lawyer who had acted as Koresh's lawyer and a mediator during the standoff, testified at the Senate hearings that on one of his trips inside, he had inspected the roof and the front door, and the bullet holes had clearly been made from the outside. One of the front doors, made of metal, bore the evidence of this and had disappeared. DeGuerin called on the authorities to find it, which they never did.

The commanding ATF officer testified, moreover, that he had left the arrest warrant in his vehicle when they had gone to the front door, where Koresh was, which belied ATF claims that they had merely been trying to serve the warrant. As for the charges that Koresh was converting semi-automatic weapons to automatic, although the FBI said they found several such weapons in the rubble, this was never satisfactorily established, so far as Dick DeGuerin and other knowledgeable observers were concerned. There were other serious questions, relating to the autopsy reports, which said that some of the people had been shot in the head. While many thought the beleaguered people inside had simply shot themselves and their loved ones in order not to suffer a slower, more painful death from burning, it was a measure of how far trust in the government had eroded, that among patriots and the Militias, many of the reactions were, "The evidence was faked," or, "They were shot by infiltrators who were inside." (There were theories about this, which I would learn more about later.)

With tears in his eyes, the local sheriff said on television shortly after it had all ended in fire and gas that he was certain Koresh would have come to his office if he had phoned and asked. The ATF could have arrested him there. Also, neighbors said that Koresh went out jogging regularly, and they had seen him alone on the road a few days before the ATF raid.

No one in the FBI or ATF, even after the Senate hearings, when both agencies were clearly found at fault, received more than a reprimand or a suspension from work, with pay, which for ordinary mortals, patriots liked to point out, would simply mean a paid vacation. The same had been the case with Ruby Ridge. Some of the agents were later given medals. Larry Potts, who had presided over the decision to shoot on sight at Ruby Ridge, and was a supervisor at FBI headquarters during Waco, was actually promoted to Deputy Director. The promotion was rescinded, however, after a public outcry from the patriot community.

Meanwhile, on the day after the gassing and burning, and whatever else had happened at Waco, the Justice Department orchestrated a public relations blitz of television appearances by Attorney General Reno. The phone calls and faxes, that initially had been ten to one against her decision to order the insertion of CS gas by tanks, by the end of the day were eight to ten, in favor. This was followed by public commendations for Reno's decision, by several members of Congress.

Although the Clinton administration chose to portray this as public acceptance for its actions, in fact, what all too often happened with such PR campaigns, was the clear perception by critics of heavy-handed pressure to support a particular opinion—in this case, support for the government's decision to insert CS gas with tanks rather than wait out Koresh. Those who disagreed with the official version would be discouraged from expressing their real opinions, while the media reports would be of widespread public support (this happened regularly with controversial policy matters). In fact, it would only mean that the voice of dissent had been stifled. The feelings of being gagged and outrage would remain, ignored by the media, without an outlet for expression. These feelings would then fester beneath the surface of supposed public approval, inviting a backlash in the form of an angry action at some time in the future.

As with Ruby Ridge the year before, the media showed little appetite for taking the government to task for police brutality at Waco. They focused on some of the individual police transgressions, but not on the larger, policy picture, and the mainstream media reports, rather than inform, simply confused people and caused many of them to turn away from the story. And again, the disgust and outrage felt so strongly by a goodly sector of the public at seeing how the new gun control measures were being applied, was given no voice. Liberals, in general, chose to remain silent.

The Treasury Department's own investigation of the conduct of the ATF, with all its omissions concerning the actual raid, in fact, yielded some eye-opening items for anyone who chose to read it. As part of a brief history of the ATF in its Appendix G, Treasury admitted:

In a larger sense... the raid fit within an historic, well-established and well-defended government interest in prohibiting and breaking up all organized groups that sought to arm or fortify themselves... From its earliest formation, the federal government has actively suppressed any effort by disgruntled or rebellious citizens to coalesce into an armed group, however small the group, petty its complaint, or grandiose its ambition.

This confirmed what many in the Militia movement had been claiming all along: that the initial

assault on Waco hadn't been because of illegal weapons activity at all, but for political reasons. And so, for many of the seventy to eighty million gun owners in the country, both Ruby Ridge and Waco were the result of the government's agenda to do away with the Second Amendment and disarm the people—a question of civil liberties. Ironically, over a quarter century earlier, the Viet Nam war had roused another group of Americans—liberals then—to protest government tyranny and a loss of civil liberties. And although the protests had had to do with the draft forcing young Americans into a war overseas, on another important level, the protests had also been about the U.S. government denying the right to self-determination, in that case, to the North-Vietnamese. Similarly, the Militia movement today was the result of outrage at the government's denial of the right to self-determination and self-defense of a people—this time on home soil, concerning meat-and-potato Americans.

Granted, many Militiamen came from the ranks of those who had not protested the Viet Nam war, but had, rather, been proud to fight in it. Nevertheless, as a group veterans had come to understand the war's terrible injustices; they felt they had been duped into believing they were somehow fighting for democracy and they now believed the war had been wrong. But today, with the draft gone, it was a moot question. The military now were all volunteers—a professional army (some called it mercenary). And so, the silence of the former Viet Nam protesters in the face of today's widespread loss of rights, or liberties, on the home front, raised the question of whether their loud protests had not been simply because they didn't want to be drafted, or for their loved ones to be—not from any principle or for any larger issue, as they had claimed. That as long as it was professionals committing the atrocities abroad (even if they were Americans), and now at home also, many former Viet Nam protesters would be willing to look the other way.

Ever since the draft had been done away with in the 1980s, these same liberals, full of righteousness during the war, appeared to have lost interest altogether in defending individual civil liberties. And so, the same people who had earlier protested so vigorously in support of the foreigners' right to self-determination, were not willing to apply the same standard to fellow Americans. The body of former Viet Nam protesters was vehemently supporting gun control, along with whatever anti-democratic measures it took for it to be enforced. (Hadn't President Clinton himself been a protester, and a draft dodger?)

Tom continued, "By the time we got to Waco, I said, the only way that we as a people are going to survive, other than becoming the slave of the system, doing whatever it was that they wanted you to do, irrespective of your rights coming from your Creator, the only way was if you organized to defend yourself. And so it was that I organized people that I knew from my long life in central New York. Many of them thought the concept of the Militia was pretty radical. And so it wasn't for everyone. I was aware of the fact that the Militia was something we were entitled to. After all, I'd read the Second Amendment.

"So at that point, things began very much more in earnest. There was a groundswell of information coming from alternative sources, patriot-type publications. Some of it was true and some not, but you could not get it in the mainstream media. I suggest that the Militias were the result of this groundswell, because Americans knew they weren't being told the whole truth, and they saw the government killing small children in the name of protecting them. It was quite obvious to any thinking person. The patriot-Militia movement—both of the movements—took off.

"It was late '92, early '93, when we first formed the Militia, before Waco. We just called it a Militia and knew we had to form ourselves into tight-knit groups—all law-abiding people, no drug users. We

knew that if there was that problem we would be vulnerable. We knew each other. It was very grassroots. It was very self-defensive. When it started out, it was like, on a volunteer-fire-department basis. Very localized, not statewide. We agreed to a mutual self-defense pact. We believed we could be required to defend against gun confiscation—search warrants, the result of wiretaps on how we were preparing to protect ourselves. They might want to come in and seize our war materiel, equipment. We thought it might be on some type of security violations, or drugs. We recognized very well that if the government wants to get you, drugs are a very easy thing to plant. A hunter can drop a few seeds on your property, and next spring they fly over with a helicopter, trespassing on your air space, and the government finds it." Motioning to the long slope of broken and bent pale-yellow stalks on the mountain where we were, Tom said, "You know, this field will be three foot in another couple of months." In the valley below were sprawled storybook farmhouses and barns, glowing in the morning sunshine.

He paused for a moment and said, "We knew the capacity of the government to do these things, to abuse their power. Your family didn't even know what the stuff looked like. People who had property began to patrol it. The stuff also grows wild." After another pause, he continued, "As I traveled, truck-driving, a place I went to a lot was Michigan. I came to meet Mark Koernke, Linda Thompson."

Mark Koernke and Linda Thompson had been two of the Militia movement's earliest and most vocal leaders during and after Waco. Koernke presented himself as a former career Army intelligence analyst and counterintelligence coordinator, who had also taught methods of foreign warfare in the military. At present, he had a job as head of maintenance in a dormitory at the University of Michigan. He had his own Militia, the Michigan Militia at Large. On his daily, one-hour program on shortwave radio, the "Intelligence Report," with co-host John Stadtmiller, Koernke billed himself simply as, "Mark from Michigan." He preached the coming of the New World Order, or "NWO," as it was commonly referred to by patriots, urging people to prepare, and to resist.

Koernke had put out several videotapes that circulated widely among the Militias, the best-known of which was America In Peril, made in 1993 during the Waco siege. On this tape, Mark from Michigan had described the takeover of the country by UN troops as being imminent. It was being heralded, he explained, by waves of unmarked black helicopters and white vehicles with the UN symbol and Russian heavy-military equipment being sighted across the country, of which he showed footage. There were Russian and other foreign troops on American soil, on joint training missions with American troops and law enforcement. These foreigners were members of the new, secret federal police forces—the Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force (MJTF) and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FIN-CEN) police—being formed under UN authority. They wore black ski masks to keep their identities secret. So long as they didn't talk, no one would know who among them were foreigners. A large number of "concentration camps" were being built, and areas were being designated at the main airports for civilian collection and transshipment points. The patriots would be the first to be rounded up, with their families. Their guns would be confiscated, and they would be locked away and put to work as prison labor. The UN would become a world government—all this, in the manner of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four.

A wave of outrage and apprehension washed over patriots—prompting an explosion of gun and ammunition purchases, the likes of which had never been seen in modern times. To the general public, however, unaware of what was creeping up gradually across the nation, Koernke appeared to be an alarmist and a crackpot. While it was true that unmarked black helicopters were being spotted

across the country, they were not normally seen in waves so heavy that it was difficult to count them, as Koernke described one incident on the Canadian border. And it had never been established that they were doing anything wrong, or that they were in any way under UN authority. Likewise, while more and more raids on gun owners were being conducted by men in black fatigues and ski masks, they appeared, rather, to be Americans in the ATF and other federal, state and local police forces—often "multi-jurisdictional," but not under UN authority. (It did, however, surface in the Waco hearings that, secretly, there were British military present during the siege, from the anti-IRA task force; the U.S. government claimed they were merely observers. Later, it surfaced also that there had probably been Israelis actually taking part in the last assault. Twenty-four spent .223 cartridge casings with "I.M.I." (Israeli Military Industries) on them were found near the scene in an FBI safehouse.)

One aspect of the trend toward militarization by the police was their new attire in the 1990s. They often wore black helmets and body armor, commonly referred to as "ninja suits," and were beginning to arrive in military personnel carriers and tanks—or at least practiced in them—while at the same time, the military forces were themselves increasingly being used for law enforcement. It was true that the distinctions between the police and the military were being lost. And while it was true also that commercial factories were being built inside prisons—owned by the private sector as well as the government—and prisoners were being put to work for corporations such as Victoria's Secret, manufacturing women's lingerie, and TWA, making reservations, and even political campaigns, canvassing voters, again, there was no evidence that this was being done in accord with some secret UN agenda.

That was the way it struck me in 1996, when I first watched Koernke's tape. After my own initial disbelief, however, I began finding out that a lot of what he was saying about the overall picture, in essence, was true, and I concluded that it was possible that Koernke had done what many people did when they felt an urgency to make a difficult point, greatly exaggerating and jumping to conclusions. If indeed he had information that such a plan did exist, it seemed that he had also grossly exaggerated its imminence. And Koernke had oversimplified the supposed methods being used, thereby appearing to discredit in the general public's eyes what was perhaps true in the larger picture. After the Oklahoma bombing, Koernke's tapes and broadcasts were widely reported on by the mainstream media, and his claims of a UN takeover being in the works and "black helicopters," which most people had not yet seen, were seized upon to show how wacky and paranoid the Militias were.

In most people's minds at the time, the UN was a pathetic, do-good organization that simply advocated saving children and the environment, and world peace, but couldn't get its act together—not the instrument of powerful hidden forces bent on one world government, subject to New World Order rules. The American government, likewise, in most people's minds was made up of a bunch of inept agencies, where corruption, certainly, was to be deplored, but nevertheless was random, not part of some larger pattern or grand design to do away with the Constitution. Mark Koernke had jumped the gun. (It crossed my mind also that this was what agents provocateur often did, mixing in just enough untruth or exaggeration to discredit the overall message. And indeed, there were some in the movement, as I would learn, who thought this was what he was doing. I would ask him personally about this later.)

Many in the Militias, however, believed that by exposing the government's plans, they had brought about an actual change in the New World Order plans, or at least slowed them down. In early 1996, the Militias believed they had bought time to continue to educate the public and exhaust all peaceful means of achieving a return of the government to the Constitution.

Linda Thompson, whom Tom Church had said he had also met early on, was a former American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawyer who lived in Indianapolis. Like Officer McLamb with the police, she had discovered, as she explained it, that lawyers in general didn't know much about what was Constitutional or not. She had formed one of the early Constitutional Militias, naming it, "The Unorganized Militia of the United States of America." Not without a sense of humor I thought, she had assigned herself the grand-sounding title of, "Acting Adjutant General."

Thompson had been at Waco during the standoff in the spring of 1993, wearing camouflage and waving a rifle (for which she had been briefly arrested), denouncing the actions of the ATF, and calling for the formation of an "unorganized Militia." After the Branch-Davidian complex went up in gas and flames, she made some videotapes on Waco. One was a half-hour tape that was widely circulated, titled, *The Big Lie*, which showed footage of a tank knocking down walls, with bright flashes coming from what many claimed was a flamethrower. During the Senate hearings, it was argued by the FBI that these bright flashes were simply sunlight glinting off metal.

In 1994, Thompson issued an ultimatum and a call for a national march on Washington that September by the Militias, carrying their weapons, to arrest the Congress for a failure to uphold their oaths of office "to uphold the Constitution," and for their many unconstitutional actions. Amid much debate by the Militias as to whether or not they should take part, including extensively on the Internet, Thompson suddenly called off the march. Later, in an interview, she replied to a question about this that, "Calling attention to the Militias was a way of getting people to focus attention on the law that is available to us, because the Militia is the law, and people need to be taught that." She added that she saw herself more as a Constitutionalist activist than a Militia leader.

Thompson explained that she had realized during Ruby Ridge and Waco that she had gone all the way through law school "and didn't know a thing about the Constitution." Since that was the experience of most lawyers, she thought this "was an abysmal commentary" on the legal system as a whole. She believed, furthermore, that there was a struggle going on between the various federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies and branches of the military, for control of the country. It was the FBI and the military, in her opinion, not the CIA, that stood to gain the most from the passing of President Clinton's Anti-terrorism bill.

Ultimately, it wouldn't work, she said, because there were too many good guys on the inside—guys the patriots and the Militias were talking to—and they weren't going to let it happen. Amid reports in late 1995 that Linda Thompson had cracked up and was behaving strangely, and claims by her that the federal government was harassing her, zapping her with electronic wave frequencies and conducting a character-assassination campaign, she disappeared from public view. She would reappear on the public scene, however, in the spring of '97, when she brought suit against the government, backed by a massive amount of documentation on their efforts to destroy her.

Tom continued, "I met Mark through an associate who was a member of his group, and I went to a meeting. They were secret, once a month. I brushed up against McVeigh there, never met him. It's a true story of his involvement with Mark of Michigan. It was in the media briefly. It was clear to me that McVeigh was part of some sort of inner circle. I point this out not as a criticism of Mark, but for the purpose of historical correctness. I myself did not go to the meetings all the time. When I saw the composite picture come out, I thought, 'That guy looks familiar.' He was just sitting there. He was one of the bodyguards. Why security? There were security problems with government agents surveilling. We could be stormed by government agents. I asked the question if he was part of the organization I

was part of and was told he never did belong. I was told he was talking about things that were more radical than us."

Timothy McVeigh, as the entire country knew, was the prime suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing, that had taken place on April 19, 1995. The whole front of the nine-story, Alfred P. Murrah federal building had been blown off, the government said, by a car bomb made of 4,800 pounds of ammonium nitrate, or fertilizer, and fuel oil (ANFO), killing 168 people, including nineteen children in a day care center on the second floor. More than four hundred people were wounded. There had never been an act of terrorism of this magnitude in the U.S. For months afterwards, at every chance, the media ran footage of the mutilated bodies lying in the rubble, or being carried away, with heart-rending, capsule biographies of the victims, especially the children and their families. People in the Militias often remarked that the media had never done as much for the victims at Waco, where the loss of innocent life, especially of the seventeen children (or nineteen, depending on whether you counted the two that were not yet born), had been just as much a tragedy.

The Oklahoma bombing had taken place, as everyone knew by now, on the second anniversary of Waco, causing a finger to be pointed at the Militias. The top floor of the Murrah building was headquarters to many of the ATF agents who had taken part at Waco. Many of the FBI at Waco were also headquartered in Oklahoma City, though not in the Alfred P. Murrah building. It had been widely reported that April 19, the anniversary of the battle in 1775 at Lexington which had set off the American Revolutionary War—dubbed "Patriots Day"—was therefore also "Militia Day"—in order to reinforce the idea of Militia links to the bombing. But it also happened to be the anniversary of the burning of the Warsaw ghetto in 1945, as Jews in the patriot community noted. Although at first, there had been heavy speculation in the media that it was Arab terrorists, after a few days the authorities had pointed a finger at the Militias, announcing that the prime suspect was Timothy McVeigh, describing him as a "right-wing," "anti-government," "extremist," "Militia member."

As it had turned out, McVeigh was a decorated Gulf War veteran who had received a number of commendations for outstanding service in the military, and even the Bronze Star. He had been a gunner on one of the Bradley fighting vehicles that the Army had used to mow down thousands of Iraqi soldiers in trenches, trying to surrender. Tanks had driven along the middle, their treads straddling both sides, while other vehicles had driven along the sides with mechanical shovels, burying the Iraqis alive. The gunners in the Bradleys had shot into the earth as it covered the Iraqis waving their arms. This had been reported on at length by Newsday a few months after the war. (I had shuddered at the time to think what the experience of killing men trying to surrender would have done to our own soldiers.)

McVeigh was arrested an hour and a half after the bombing, driving on a highway without a rear license plate. A traffic violation would not have been sufficient for an arrest, but he was carrying a concealed handgun, which he meekly handed over (an unusual action, noted patriots, for someone who knew he had just blown up a building, killing and maiming hundreds). Interestingly, there were reports that the arresting officer had stated that a brown vehicle pulled over in front of McVeigh's car and waited until the arrest was complete, though later the officer said he couldn't remember.

McVeigh, it was said, was a member of the Michigan Militia, he was a close associate of Mark Koernke. He was wearing a t-shirt with, on the front, a picture of Abraham Lincoln, and on the back, Thomas Jefferson's words in 1787:

The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.

The longer quote, from one of Jefferson's letters in late 1787, was:

God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented, in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty... And what country can preserve its liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time, that this people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to the facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

Patriots often wore t-shirts with quotes of the Founding Fathers, and while the selection of this particular quote was played up in the media as proof that McVeigh was a Militiaman and an example of right-wing extremism, no one bothered to mention that only days before, on C-Span, former Democratic governor of California and presidential candidate Jerry Brown—who was considered far to the left—had ended a speech about the dire straits the country was in, with that same quote by Thomas Jefferson.

The following year, former high UN official Conor Cruise O'Brien would publish a book on Thomas Jefferson that questioned the suitability of Jefferson's revolutionary beliefs in today's world. In interviews, O'Brien repeatedly likened Jefferson to Pol Pot, saying that the bloodthirsty Cambodian guerrilla general would likely be the person that Jefferson would most admire if he were alive today, and that Jefferson's heirs were the "far-right" Militias (he noted that Timothy McVeigh's t-shirt when he was arrested bore a Jefferson quotation). This way, even those who didn't read the book were sure to get the message.

One Militiaman, James Murray, after noting in an article in *Race Traitor* that O'Brien had "recommended that the writing of Thomas Jefferson be "removed from the American Canon," because he was "a racist" and "his writing tended to encourage rebellious elements to use violence to affect political change," wrote:

O'Brien complains that Jefferson accepted no limits on the holy cause of freedom—neither geographic boundaries nor conventional ideas of morality and compassion. O'Brien must believe that geographic boundaries can be placed on freedom (a system that has worked so well in his native Ireland)... Wild-eyed peasants in Chiapas and hicksville farmers in Montana still believe the "holy cause of freedom" is worth fighting (and killing) for. They possess a moral authority that O'Brien and his owners are not capable of comprehending.

O'Brien had said (concerning Jefferson's "tree of liberty" quote), "That is something very much like a Jeffersonian charter for the most militant segment of modern American militias, is it not?" And Murray had answered, "Yes, Mr. O'Brien, it is, and the charter cannot be revoked by foreign nationals..."

Recriminations of Jefferson's ideas on revolution were soon being echoed loudly throughout academia; in one book, even, Jefferson's role as the author of the Declaration of Independence was minimized, as if somehow he were unworthy of this place in American history. Indeed, one New York City highschool student told me that in his American history class they had been taught about

Jefferson only that he was a "loose cannon" and "not well educated," when Jefferson was one of the most educated people of his time. A Militiaman said to me about all this, "They need to destroy our heritage, so Americans will submit to one-world government under the UN."

Stories in the press at first claimed that McVeigh had immediately invoked his right to be treated as a prisoner of war, giving only his name and rank, presumably in the Militia. But later the story was dropped. McVeigh, everyone who knew him said, had been obsessed with Waco, and on the first anniversary had returned to the burned-out site. He had known that the ATF team that had stormed the Davidians at Waco was headquartered in the Murrah building; he had done it—the Militias had done it—was being said, as retribution for Waco.

Immediately, however, the Michigan Militia, along with all the other "Constitutional Militias," as the "unorganized" Militias were calling themselves, had publicly condemned the bombing, as well as all acts of terrorism, stating that that was not what the Militias were about. Anyone could attend a Militia meeting, they pointed out, and indeed, already, the feds were infiltrating the Militias. Often they were agents provocateur, and there was speculation among the Militias that McVeigh had been such a one. The word among patriots was that the Michigan Militia had said that McVeigh had attended several meetings, as Tom had said, but had been asked to leave because his views were too extreme, and he had never been a member.

Two members of the Michigan Militia's Oakland County 6th Brigade claimed that McVeigh had attended one of their meetings at a truckstop near Detroit, on January 25, 1995, where Koernke was present, and again three days later at a smaller meeting on a farm. A member of the St. Lucia County, Florida Militia recalled that at a March 1994 meeting, a man who looked like McVeigh, wearing camouflage, who was upset about Waco, had been acting as Koernke's bodyguard. Both McVeigh and Koernke had denied this, and McVeigh insisted that he had never been to any of these meetings.

The outright charges of Militia involvement in the bombing, in any event, ceased, and indeed, it would be determined in the McVeigh trial that none of the suspects had ever belonged to a Militia. But in the minds of the public, the damage was done. Doubts about the Militias would persist, especially since, in the media, the Militias were being routinely lumped together with the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groups, despite Militia protests to the contrary. The vehement condemnations by the Militias of the bombing were lost in the noise.

Already the summer before the bombing, there had begun a relentless campaign against the Militias, with reports circulated to the media, government and opinion leaders, primarily by two special interest groups—the Anti-Defamation League of the B'Nai B'rith, or ADL, and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). After Oklahoma, these reports became more expensive and slick. They called loudly for something to be done about the Militias. Both these well-funded groups had long kept watch on the Ku Klux Klan and other anti-Semitic groups, and should have known better. The argument went that even if McVeigh wasn't formally a member of the Michigan Militia, he "mirrored" these "extremist," "right-wing," "anti-government" Militia people. McVeigh's was a "militia mentality." Even if the Militia hadn't done it, it was the sort of thing they "would" do. In the media, the ADL and SPLC reports were hyped at every chance; these reports multiplied and they kept coming. Soon, Oklahoma and the Militias were inextricably linked in the minds of the public. As a result, many people came to believe that even if the Militias had not been directly involved, with their strident denunciations of government corruption and abuse, they were inciting, or at least laying the ground for, such actions by society's malcontents, and were therefore responsible.

Clinton's iron-fisted Anti-terrorism bill, "The Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996," which had failed miserably to gain support in Congress that spring, because of serious concerns that it cut deeply into normal civil liberties with its provisions for drastically-increased surveillance without probable cause, and secret courts and such, meanwhile, was introduced immediately after the bombing, and passed. Many in the Militias saw a nefarious connection.

Tom continued, "This organization of mine, the U.S. Militia, is undercover. Within Michigan I'm aware of five Militias. There may be more. In the open is the Michigan Militia, with Norman Olson, Ken Adams out front, like Jerry Loper in Chemung."

Norman Olson was the outspoken Baptist preacher and gun store owner, who lived in Alanson, Michigan, and had started the Michigan Militia in the early days of the movement. The Michigan Militia had quickly grown to between seven and ten thousand members. Ken Adams was his Communications Officer. Jerry Loper was the gregarious, public-minded commander of the Chemung Citizens Militia in upstate New York, where I attended my first Militia meeting.

"Members of the public Militias are in the tens of thousands, in my estimate," said Tom. "But this is only the tip of the iceberg. Then, underground, you have succeeding layers with different levels of covertness, that usually correspond to the degree of seriousness of the group.

"Mark from Michigan does have a Militia—quite large, with significant military capability, helicopters, armored vehicles, communications, medical facilities. They have done wargames against the ATF. Mark occupies a very public role—public speaker, tapes. What did I feel about the Oklahoma bombing? I don't believe anything the government tells us, with its lapdog press. If the government told me it's snowing, I would have to look outside. I do not believe anything that the enemy tells me. They are my enemy.

"So, while I thought the bombing was a horrible tragedy, the day care center and all, as the story unfolded, the whole thing became increasingly preposterous. So I said to my flock, 'Reserve judgment until we have a chance to sift and sort all the information. This may take time.' Those of us in the Militia movement know what the movement is all about, and a bombing seemed an unlikely event—at least, as far as 'unorganized' Militia are concerned. I believed at the time that the federal government or wayward elements of the federal government were involved in the implementation of that terrorist act.

"We know now that the building did not fall as a result of the truck bomb parked at the kerb, no matter what size they tell us that bomb was. Let's say that instead of 4,000 pounds it was 40,000 pounds of fertilizer material, such as they tell us was used. Looking at how the Murrah building was constructed, you have a skeleton of heavy, steel-reinforced concrete columns that are massive—three foot in diameter, maybe four, with one-inch size reinforcing steel bars woven into a matrix inside. For those things to be sheared off at a certain height—it is conceivable that the bomb in the truck could have completely denuded all of the attaching windows, doors, partitions, sheet rock, etc., from one side of the building to the other, front to back, without it doing what it did to those columns. That was a dead giveaway to anyone who has ever been involved in controlled demolition of buildings, which I have, in urban centers, where they had to be taken down very carefully, by a controlled explosion.

"I know what it takes, drilling holes in these columns and placing charges in them, to do the type of

thing that was done there. I knew what it would take with those columns. And who am I? Yet, there were other people who came forward with similar views, independent of me. People like the former special agent in charge of the L.A. branch of the FBI, Ted Gunderson, retired Air Force General Partin, and others, all with the same voice, said it didn't happen. The federal government changed the story numerous times. Frankly, I didn't pay a whole lot of attention, knowing that it was all just propaganda for the generally-dumb public, to incite them against Militias and patriots in general."

Brigadier General Benton K. Partin (USAF, Retired) had been the most vocal critic of the government's actions following the Oklahoma bombing. For this, he was eminently qualified. During his career in the Air Force, General Partin had commanded the Armament Technology Laboratory and was chairman of the joint services committee responsible for harmonizing air munitions requirements for the four services. He managed weapons testing of all types of explosives, engaging in extensive research and design, and was a Command Pilot and a Command Missileman. General Partin also had been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, and the Legion of Merit three times. When it was decided by the government only a few weeks after the bombing to undertake the total demolition of the Oklahoma building, General Partin had written to fifty-one members of Congress, asking them to delay it until there had been an independent examination of the site.

In the letter he explained that it was technically impossible to have this pattern of damage unless supplementary demolition charges had been used at some of the reinforced concrete column bases. This could be easily determined, he said, upon inspection by an independent team of experts, which he proposed to lead.

Nevertheless, on May 23, little more than a month after the bombing, the entire building was brought down by the government, with explosives placed there openly this time. The rubble was hurriedly carted away to a landfill, where it was buried and put under guard, and not allowed to be examined. General Partin proceeded to declare that it was "a classic cover-up of immense proportions," and wrote a report based on a study of the test photographs of the site. He said the photographs indeed "proved" demolition charges had been placed on the columns, and that it was these, not the truck bomb, that had caused the extensive structural damage.

I had determined from the start of my research to use the same, mostly-alternative news and information sources the Militias based their opinions on, so I could see the world through their eyes and convey this to the general public. I felt that in this way I would be giving a clear sense of what these sources were, and how the information was presented. I wanted to maintain the integrity of the Militia view. The official view, which everyone knew already, I would pretty much leave to the mainstream media.

And so, the best account of the physical evidence surrounding the bombing of the Murrah building was contained in an issue of the weekly magazine, *The New American*. It was a special issue on Oklahoma, in the summer of 1995. Copies were given to me at various times by Militia people. In it were a summary and excerpts of General Partin's 23-page report: *Bomb Damage Analysis of Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*. Included were several color photographs and a floor diagram.

The floor diagram of the rectangular building showed that its nine floors were supported by three rows of reinforced concrete columns rising from the ground to the roof. These three rows of columns ran parallel and lengthwise, across the front, middle and back of the building. On the left, in front of

the building in the drawing was a large red dot to mark where the truck carrying the bomb had sat, fourteen feet from the kerb. Around it were concentric circles indicating the blast waves. The diagram showed that seven columns had collapsed in the front, and only one in the center row: seen from above, the building appeared to have had two bites taken out of it, one larger than the other, on the far left, penetrating almost all the way to the back of the building. This was where the damage was deepest; in the photographs it appeared as an empty, gaping space from ground to roof.

It could be seen here that four of the front columns that had collapsed were on the right of the blast's epicenter, and three on the left. As Partin explained, this raised the question: Why didn't they collapse symmetrically? In the center row also, the two columns that were closest to the epicenter had remained intact, while one farther away had collapsed. According to the laws of physics, General Partin explained, this would have been impossible if there had been only the truck bomb.

The columns in the front row were not all the same size, with the base of every other column rising from a reinforced concrete beam header on the third floor. And moreover, the columns that rose from the ground level had been double the thickness of the others, to carry the additional weight. Two columns that had collapsed on the right were actually farther away from the blast epicenter than the columns in the center row that had survived. In addition, one was a larger one, double the thickness of the others, which made further suspect any notion of only a truck bomb.

General Partin's report said this all meant that there had to have been demolition charges attached to several of the columns. One telltale sign next to the center-row column that had collapsed, he noted, was that much of the sheetrock covering the adjacent columns was intact, while the columns "were not even chipped or scratched." There had to have been three other charges as well in the front row, said Partin.

The thick, reinforced header beam on the third floor—some three by five feet—had broken into three forty-foot sections that tended to be smooth and rounded at the junctures, which Partin said would indicate "a high-energy explosive in contact with that structural member," directly on the base of the columns. This, he said, showed that the charges had actually been placed on the third floor, which raised another question: "You don't just walk in off the street through security with explosives like this."

Furthermore, he added, 4,800 pounds of ammonium nitrate would have produced a blast wave with a mere 25 to 38 pounds of pressure per square inch on the farthest columns, when the yield strength of the concrete was around 3,500 pounds per square inch. In his opinion, the blast wave from the truck bomb could not have brought down the column in the center row, much less the seventh and eighth columns in the front row, especially the one that was double the thickness. Furthermore, all the columns that collapsed, explained Partin, rather than being "blown into the building," "went straight down," which was "consistent with demolition charges."

The New American pointed out that although two explosives experts who were queried for the article had said they were in complete agreement with General Partin's analysis, another two, one of whom was a consultant to the government at the Oklahoma bombing site, had disagreed. One (an Army Special Forces officer) gave as an example the Marine barracks in Lebanon, to which General Partin responded, "In the Lebanon barracks bombing, the truck was driven directly under the building, so that the explosion had maximum effectiveness against much lower and much smaller columns." Demolitionists, he pointed out, rarely dealt with the size of explosive charge used in the Oklahoma

truck bomb, and didn't know about the effects. They usually used a couple of hundred pounds of explosive in dozens of small charges placed directly on the structure. Just a few feet of air, General Partin explained, would cause the blast wave to drop precipitously and have very little effect on reinforced concrete.

Indeed, he pointed out, this was the reason that precision-guided munitions were so much more effective than ordinary bombs on hardened structures. Much of Partin's work in the Air Force had been running field tests using large-yield bombs, developing such weapons. He had worked on the "smart bombs" that were used in the Persian Gulf War, that burrowed their way inside buildings before exploding, to great effect on the newscasts.

The former Air Force general illustrated his point, explaining that "the entire building remains in Oklahoma City were collapsed with 100-plus relatively small charges inserted into drilled holes in the columns. The total weight of all charges was on the order of 200 pounds." To further support his argument, he pointed out that in the World Trade Center bombing, which was also done with a truck bomb, "the column in the middle of the bombed-out cavity was relatively untouched, although reinforced concrete floors were completely stripped away on several floors above and below the point of the bomb's detonation." This was why in Oklahoma, in the so-called "pit" area behind the two columns closest to the explosion in the center row, the first and second floors were blown out, but not the columns.

Partin also recalled how, in a local Oklahoma City news broadcast on the day of the bombing, an official had said that two other bombs had been found in the building and were in the process of being defused. Later, the government had said these were ATF "training aids," but, noted Partin, if this were so, they would have been clearly marked. Many wondered why live bombs would be stored at all by the ATF in an office building. Questions about ATF behavior continued when it became known that the ATF had been told not to go to work that day. No children of federal agents had been in the day care center. (Although the FBI offices were in another building, some of their children attended this day care center, but they had been told to keep them away that day, according to a woman who knew some of the wives.) At first, the ATF claimed that some of their own had been wounded in the blast, but this had been quickly disproven.

There were more questions as to why there was a day care center in the first place in a government building that housed police agencies, especially this building. Already in 1984, there had been a plot to blow it up, supposedly in retaliation for Gordon Kahl's death. One of the plotters, Richard Wayne Snell, had gone to jail. Interestingly, he was scheduled to be executed in Arkansas on the same day as the Oklahoma bombing. Snell, it was said, had breathed his last breath in the execution chamber shortly after watching the first reports of the bombing on television. For some reason, however, any speculation that there might have been a connection between the bombing and this execution was played down in the media, if it was mentioned at all, while unsubstantiated reports of "Militia ties" continued to be pumped up for all they were worth.

One, most-curious story that appeared soon after the bombing was that then-governor of Oklahoma Frank Keating's brother, Martin Keating, had written a proposal for a book the year before, that involved a group that was planning to blow up that same Alfred P. Murrah building, and there was a character named "Tom McVey." Governor Keating happened to be a former FBI agent and senior Treasury and Justice Department official (who had supervised the Secret Service, Customs and the ATF), and it was said that he had introduced his writer brother to some of his former colleagues in

Washington, and they had helped with suggestions for the book. Two other suggestions, it was said, had been removed from the manuscript after they had come true: One was the New York World Trade Center bombing. The book was eventually published in 1996 under the title, *The Final Jihad*, by an obscure California publisher. It received almost no attention.

Echoing General Partin's efforts to stop the Murrah building from being torn down, Nebraska lawyer John DeCamp and a group of families of victims and survivors, at the same time, had been getting ready to file a motion for an injunction to prevent the demolition, to preserve the evidence—something normally done after a crime. McVeigh's counsel, Stephen Jones, however, had requested that he be allowed to take over this action, and DeCamp had turned over the paperwork to him. To his horror, McVeigh's court-appointed lawyer, after making a perfunctory inspection of the building himself over the weekend, told the government to go ahead with the demolition. They proceeded to begin preparations on Sunday, May 21, before the weekend was over, and before DeCamp could file an injunction on Monday, for the demolition on Tuesday—barely a month after the enormous crime.

Ordinarily, the fact that a lawyer was court-appointed would not have been an issue, but in the case of a high-profile political matter—such as an act of terrorism on this order of magnitude—who that court-appointed lawyer was could make a big difference. When I learned about Jones' transgression concerning the building's demolition, I couldn't help recalling a television interview I had seen immediately after he was appointed, where he had said something to the effect that national security could be a concern with him in the defense of a client. That, coupled with the fact that he had once worked for Richard Nixon's law firm (meaning that he had close ties to Washington and the Establishment), had caused me to think when I heard him at the time that I would not want him representing me in a case where Washington had a political stake in the outcome.

But General Partin's report was not the only damning finger pointed at the government's official account of the Oklahoma bombing. Immediately after the bombing, there had also been considerable confusion over the seismographic data collected at the University of Oklahoma by the Oklahoma Geological Survey (OGS), which appeared to show two separate explosions, ten seconds apart. To try to clear up this mystery, explained *The New American*, during the final demolition of the Murrah building, six seismometers had been placed at different distances, to determine whether separate air or ground waves traveling at different speeds could have caused the illusion of two blasts. In a press release put out after the test by the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, California, on June 1, 1995, titled, "Seismic Records Support One-Blast Theory in Oklahoma City Bombing," federal authorities had stated just that—that there had been the illusion of two blasts. With this press release and subsequent statements, the distant federal agency had caused considerable confusion over what the experts really believed.

Although it was made to appear in this press release that the Oklahoma agency that had made the original seismographs was in agreement with the federal agency, in fact, Dr. Charles Mankin, Director of the OGS, along with the lead scientist he had appointed to investigate the data, Dr. Raymon[d] Brown, said they continued to believe there had been two separate explosions. In an interview, Dr. Brown explained that they were considering five main scenarios for a final report at some unspecified time in the future.

The first three scenarios considered the possibility that there were two shock waves from the same blast traveling at different speeds, which appeared on the seismometer as two events. In the first of these, there would have been waves of different frequencies, which Brown said he didn't see as a

possibility. The second scenario envisioned the possibility that the first event was a ground wave and the second an air wave, which Brown said was impossible because it would have had to travel at a supersonic speed to go the distance to their seismometer in ten seconds. The third model considered a phenomenon known as a Rayleigh wave, and the possibility that there was a second Rayleigh wave pushed by an air wave. Brown thought this was implausible because the air wave was felt mostly to the north of the blast, when the OGS seismic station was to the south.

In the two remaining scenarios, the view was taken that the seismic signals, indeed, had registered two separate events. In the first of these, the second event would be due to shock waves coming from the actual collapsing of the building, which, Brown said, was also unlikely. It would mean that the building only began to collapse ten seconds after the explosion. Also, the second signal was shorter, which would mean that the building had taken less time to collapse than the duration of the blast, an impossibility. This left only one scenario, which Brown said he believed was the simplest explanation—two explosions.

During the months that followed, as Timothy McVeigh's trial came and went, I would learn through the Militias and patriot literature, of many more inconsistencies in the government's version of the worst terrorist act ever to take place in the United States. (If General Partin and the University of Oklahoma scientists were correct, Timothy McVeigh's trial, even if he had been involved in the bombing, was a horrible travesty.)

"To get back to the people in Michigan," said Tom, "I met people in the U.S. Militia, Michigan Regiment. It was probably late 1993. I looked at the paperwork and talked to them, and they seemed to be on the same wavelength with what I was doing, and I brought that back and we formed what is now known as the New York Regiment."

Chapter 3

OF U.S. MILITIA, LAWYERS,

VOTE FRAUD AND FREEMEN

The Constitution is a written instrument. As such its meaning does not alter.

South Carolina v. United States

265 Ct. 110, 111 (1905)

"The U.S. Militia was a very grass-rootsish organization," said Tom, "that believed in covertness, which all our members in New York did. It was late '93. We were all required to take an oath to do whatever was necessary to preserve the Constitution, without limitations and qualifications. It was a serious organization. We understood well that to do whatever may be required, you have to have all the tools necessary to do the job. We need to be undercover because our members believe that it is their right, if not their duty, to have all the military accoutrements and supplies that the military have, and of course, our government at this time will not trust our citizenry with those kinds of things.

"Of course, the people in our organization are no more a threat to the American public than an infant child would be. No one will ever be harmed by one of our unregistered handguns, unless they happen to be wearing black hoods, ski masks, with 'ATF' displayed on their back. Those fellows, they have a problem, because they're there to violate what we know to be our rights. Irrespective of what the Supreme Court says, irrespective of what the police think, we can read those documents. And we know what the word 'infringe' means.

"So, when we became U.S. Militia, we were then in a pipeline of information that comes via a grapevine. We became part of this chain of command. One passes to another, to another, and what I mean is, another and another units. These are small cells. So, wherever Unit A is, or 'One,' somewheres down the line there is Unit 492. 492 Unit probably, not necessarily, but may not know Unit 489. I could put information out and track it. It would be back in two hours, to the West Coast and back. In the event that we were to have the lights turned out by the government—I mean communication lines—Paul Revere still needs to ride. So this person here might have to ride a bicycle two miles to get the message to the next one, who jumps in his airplane that he has on his private strip, flies to pre-designated places, honks an air horn and drops off a bottle with orders. This is the resistance of today. This is within our U.S. Militia New York Regiment. We'll get the word through. Paul Revere will ride again."

The start of the Revolutionary War, as every American school used to learn in the "good old days," had been heralded by Paul Revere's ride from Boston on the night of April 18, 1775, to alert the Militiamen in Lexington and Concord that the British were coming to confiscate weapons and ammunition. There had been growing unrest in the Colonies starting in the 1760s, especially in the Boston area, over the increasing taxes, arbitrary court rulings and curtailment of jury trials by the British. Actions in 1775 to confiscate the Militias' weapons were the last straw (the importation of firearms to the Colonies had been halted by royal decree a few months earlier). Because they were warned ahead of time by Revere and the night riders, the Militias were able to repulse the Redcoats. The Militia at Lexington lost eight men in the firefight, which led to the grinding battle of Bunker Hill a few days later in Boston Harbor, and the eight-year Revolutionary War. The result was American independence.

I was trying to get a sense of the extent of Militia networking with groups that had existed prior to the current Militia movement, and I asked Tom whether they had any relationship with the Minutemen, an underground group that I knew had formed in the 1950s in the South, that espoused some of the same ideas about Revolutionary War principles, and was known to be heavily armed. (This group, I learned later, was believed by some to have been taken over at the top levels by government infiltrators, early on. Also, I learned that there were several underground groups across the nation that called themselves Minutemen.)

"We interface with the Minutemen," he answered. "Membership with them is by inheritance. They are a layer deeper than us. It is a grass-root connection. We coordinate. They don't come to our meetings, are not sure we are covert enough. A lot of them are descendants of the original American Revolution. I am not sure they would let me in. It doesn't mean we don't plan on being one thing at a certain time. We brief each other regularly. I have an idea that they are an insignificant number in this state.

"In general parameters, we are a renaissance of the Militia movement that existed in some states until well into this century. The last one was an armored unit in the unorganized Militia, in Massachusetts

or Pennsylvania. They had armored units. In about '56 or thereabouts it was scaled back. I believe the state funding dried up. The cost of keeping tanks, etc., became too high.

"The U.S. Militia does not have headquarters per se. It is a grapevine. We're trained to operate at the grass roots. If any of us is taken to prison tomorrow, it wouldn't affect us operationally. If I was taken out, it wouldn't affect New York at all.

"We all, nationwide, understand the same principles. The Constitution is, or was, the supreme law of the land. We know that the current government has enacted what we call a state of 'mixed war' against the people."

The legal term, "mixed war," was often used by patriots to describe the current situation. The definition in Black's Law Dictionary, widely used by lawyers as well as patriots, of "mixed war" was: one which is made on one side by public authority, and on the other by mere private persons.

That guiding light of the new Republic of the United States of America and inspiration for the Declaration of Independence, John Locke, had once said about such a "state of War":

The people cannot delegate to government the power to do anything which would be unlawful for them to do themselves... Whenever the Legislators endeavor to take away, and destroy the Property of the People, or to reduce them to Slavery under Arbitrary Power, they put themselves into a state of War with the People, who are thereupon absolved from any further Obedience and are left to the common Refuge, which God has provided for all Men, against Force and Violence. Whosoever therefore the Legislative shall transgress this fundamental Rule of Society, and either by Ambition, Fear, Folly or Corruption, endeavor to grasp over the Lives, Liberties, and Estates of the People; by this breach of Trust they forfeit the power the People had put into their hands, for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the People, who have a Right to resume their original Liberty.

"They're not a legitimate government," said Tom. "The nationwide movement, we share common beliefs. The three branches of government were supposed to be independent of each other. Today that is not the way it is. Over the years, some of the things our Founding Fathers feared most, happened. They feared the federal judiciary. It has been a very big problem.

"What we have is a bridge between the three branches—the American Bar Association. Lawyers control the legislature. Naturally, the judiciary is the sole province of lawyers. We have a monopoly in the form of a lawyers union. The Supreme Court Justices are lawyers. And you have, increasingly, the executive branch occupied by a lawyer. Clinton and his wife are lawyers. To reestablish a government that is legitimate, we have to take the Founding Fathers' documents—the Constitution, Bill of Rights—and we have to reestablish them as Gospel.

"All these other rules and enactments—incidentally, there are two types of law: substantive, Constitutional; and administrative, procedural, which is what we have. Lawyer-instituted law. We need to reestablish the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. The Thirteenth Amendment, as people know it, has to do with emancipation. But at the time of the Civil War there was another Thirteenth Amendment that has been unearthed. It refers to something called 'titles of nobility.' It says that anyone who accepts a title of nobility loses their citizenship, and any acts they create of a governmental nature are null and void. Precious documents were removed from Washington in the Civil War, and the Thirteenth Amendment was lost. A fellow from Maine uncovered it in the

archives."

I found to my surprise that indeed there had been another, earlier Thirteenth Amendment. Although the Constitution, in Article I Section 9, said, "No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States, and no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State," the latter affecting only people who worked for the government, the first Thirteenth Amendment had expanded this to include all citizens. It said:

If any Citizen of the United States shall accept, claim, receive, or retain any title of nobility or honor, or shall, without the consent of congress, accept and retain any present, pension, office or emolument of any kind whatever, from any emperor, king, prince, or foreign power, such person shall cease to be a Citizen of the United States, and shall be incapable of holding any office of trust or profit under them, or either of them.

It would seem that, at the time, there had already been problems of abuse of power on these counts. While, in the body of the Constitution, it said that the United States would not grant any "Title of Nobility" and that no U.S. officials (or government employees) might receive anything from a "foreign State" without "the Consent of the Congress," in the lost Thirteenth Amendment it said, from "any foreign power" (which was broader than just, "any foreign state," and could be taken to mean also the early transnationals, like the British East India Company, which had its own army, and some of the international banking institutions). The lost Amendment said that "any Citizen" who accepted any thing, or "any title of nobility or honor" from anywhere "without the consent of congress," would lose his citizenship. This, however, explained patriots, was meant as a reference only to "national" citizenship, which, as I was learning, was distinct from "state" citizenship, the more important of the two until after the Civil War. Patriots believed, among other things, that this Amendment had been a move to keep lawyers, who were already becoming too powerful, out of the federal government.

Although Congress and the history books claimed that this first Thirteenth Amendment had never been fully ratified, others argued that it had, by the required thirteen states: Maryland, Kentucky, Ohio, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Vermont, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Virginia. In *The Sovereign American's Handbook*, by Johnny Liberty, which was widely read among patriots, it explained that the first twelve states had ratified the amendment between 1810 and 1812, at which time the "War of 1812" had broken out with England, interrupting the process. In 1819, however, the ratification process had recommenced, with Virginia signing on as the thirteenth state; the lost Thirteenth Amendment had gone into effect the following year. Although all traces of it had at one time been mysteriously removed from Washington, probably during the Civil War, it had nevertheless survived in official copies of the Constitution in several states.

"So, when we look at this problem of lawyers," Tom continued, "what they have done is they have made themselves a monopoly, and they have caused a diminution of our rights to contract with each other. Under the Constitution, we have the right to counsel of choice. You and I have a right to contract with each other and should be entitled to do so. The Founding Fathers had no Bar Association. Lawyers were apprenticed. Today you are not entitled to have someone else speak for you, like if you stutter.

"A Common Law court does not allow titled people there. 'Esquire' is a title of nobility. Kings, lords,

dukes and duchesses, pages, and esquire are all titles of nobility. In the Senate we have pages. We brought this hideous thing—there is a higher class of controllers, which was hideous to the Founding Fathers—to the country. And it is woven into the fabric of the land in this time."

In an article I came across in the *AntiShyster* (a monthly, citizens' law magazine, published in Texas), that was widely read by patriots, the authority of the American Bar Association (ABA) to license attorneys was questioned. It was pointed out that in Texas, both state and local authorities had responded to letters of inquiry from the magazine that the ABA, indeed, was a private organization, which, of course, brought into question whether its licensing authority was aboveboard, since lawyers were also considered officers of the court, and therefore, public servants. The same authorities had been unable to explain how this was so.

Liberty explained that under the Bar Association Act of 1913, it was necessary to be licensed by the American Bar Association to practice law. In order to be licensed, it was required that a member be issued a "certificate" by the State Bar, signed by the State Supreme Court clerk. But, argued Liberty, this certificate under our Constitution would merely indicate membership in a fraternal, private organization. And besides, a state clerk had no power anyway to issue a license.

Although most lawyers had probably never thought of it this way, from the viewpoint of ordinary citizens, they had special privileges simply by virtue of being members of the ABA—if nothing else, because it had a monopoly of the legal business. These privileges, signified by the suffix, "Esq.," that only lawyers used after their names in the U.S., included being officers of the court, even though they were private citizens. If a "title of nobility" conferred special status or privilege, then the question arose: Was the designation "Esquire" the American equivalent of a title of nobility?

The first three articles of the Constitution governed the three branches of government, respectively: Article I, the Legislative branch; II, the Executive; and III, the Judiciary. What Tom had said about the two types of law—"substantive, Constitutional," and "administrative, procedural"—was something the public at large mostly never considered, but was common knowledge among patriots. Articles I and III in the Constitution dealt with the courts. Article I governed "all legislative Powers" and had a provision for "Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court" (governed by statutes rather than Common Law); therefore, Article I governed what patriots referred to as the "legislative tribunals," or "legislative courts." It was Article III, however, patriots liked to point out, that governed the true Judiciary; it provided that:

The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish... The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution...

The "Law" referred to in Article III, patriots argued, was meant to be understood as the "Common Law," which was the legal system at the time of the Constitution and well into this century. (In fact, however, the term "law" in the English system, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, included common and statute law; "equity," it said, was a separate system of law based on general principles of "natural" justice, to "correct or supplement the provisions of the law," superseding common and statute law in the event of a conflict between the two.) The Judiciary referred to in the Constitution, and indeed, the American legal system, patriots were quick to point out, had been founded upon the English Common Law, where precedent and interpretation of the law governed.

The current system in the U.S., the argument went, was governed by statutory, administrative law that

derived its authority from Article I, governing the Legislative branch, under the provision for "Tribunals" in Section 8, which stated:

The Congress shall have the Power... To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

Today, much of this law came under the Uniform Commercial Code, or UCC, patriots noted, which also derived its power, not from the Judiciary of Article III but, from the Legislative branch's Article I, Section 8—from the clause granting Congress the power:

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes;

The UCC, patriots believed, was the result, eventually, of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's efforts in the 1930s to greatly enlarge the scope of federal law. Written following World War II, in the UCC, the definition of commercial transactions had been twisted to include almost every activity—even when in the true sense of the word there was no "commerce" involved. Technically, the UCC applied whenever state lines were crossed, including by mail or telephone. In practice, today, this was often pushed to the point where an activity was considered "commerce" when state lines "could" have been crossed. The Framers had never meant for such a broad interpretation of "commerce," argued patriots, or for it to replace the legitimate function of the Judiciary, as provided for in Article III. Today, federal cases, and even most non-federal cases, were normally heard, as the patriot groups and the Militias liked to explain, in the legislative tribunals that derived their authority from statutes, not in true judicial courts, which Americans had a right to under the Constitution. And so, unknown to the general public, the true judicial court system had been largely set aside.

There were a number of Militia newsletters, one of which was the New Jersey Militia Newsletter (started that same spring). In one issue was an article with yet another (shocking to me) explanation for why the Constitution no longer had any authority in the courts, and why there was in fact no more separation of powers between the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches. Over the years, explained the New Jersey Militia, lawyers had instituted the little-known (to the public) English "Doctrine of Judicial Supremacy." This doctrine, in the United States, it was explained, had been put forth first in 1905 in the book, *The American Judiciary*, by Judge Simeon E. Baldwin—a professor of Constitutional law at Yale, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Connecticut, and one-time governor of that state. In an excerpt of the book the judge argued that there needed to be "some permanent human force, invested with acknowledged and supreme authority," always "in a position to exercise it" in case of the unexpected and emergencies. "The Judiciary," Baldwin had stated, "holds this position in the United States." (The New Jersey Militia's comment was that this was why there was a "growing Patriot and Militia Movement.")

A more comprehensive book on the subject, that had appeared in 1911, said the Newsletter, was *The American Doctrine of Judicial Supremacy* by law professor Charles G. Haines. In it, the professor had explained that under this doctrine, Congress was subordinate to the judges, not a co-equal branch of the government under the separation of powers as guaranteed by the Constitution. He wrote:

In the United States supreme power is exercised for most purposes through a judicial system in contradistinction to those governments in which the legislature is supreme and the courts subordinate...

With the few exceptions noted, the United States stands alone among the great countries of the world

according the judiciary the function of guarding the fundamental law and in establishing thereby judicial supremacy...

This principal of law and political practice which places the guardianship of written constitutions primarily in courts of justice, combined with the Anglo-Saxon idea of the dominance of judge-made law, constitute the basis of what may appropriately be termed the American doctrine of judicial supremacy.

(The Newsletter comment was that Judicial Supremacy was certainly not an American doctrine, nor was it Constitutional, but was, rather, "a judicial doctrine created by judges, intoxicated with power.")

The arguments by patriots that, on the one hand, there were no more true judicial courts but only legislative tribunals, and on the other, that there was judicial supremacy (in the legal system), might have appeared contradictory, but as patriots explained it, it simply meant that, in practice, the laws made by legislators, whatever the original intent might have been, once they arrived in the statutory and administrative courts, meant whatever a judge said they meant, period.

Louis B. Boudin, who had been an opponent of this doctrine, reported the Newsletter, in 1932 had published the definitive work on the Doctrine of Judicial Supremacy, Government by Judiciary, refuting the legitimacy of the system of Judicial Supremacy being practiced by the judges, on the grounds that it did away with a separation of powers:

Not only is the Judicial Power here described an entirely different governmental institution from the Judicial Power envisaged by [Supreme Court Justices] James Wilson and John Marshall, but it rests upon an entirely different governmental theory. The Judicial Power as understood by Wilson and Marshall was based on the theory of the separation of powers—the distribution of the powers of government among three co-equal departments; while the modern Judicial Power as expounded by Baldwin and Haines, and as actually exercised by our Judiciary, is based on the theory of the centralization of the powers of government in the Judiciary, which is thereby made the supreme political power in the nation.

And the theory of the separation of powers is not the only one abandoned by the modern supporters of the Judicial Power. There is a tendency also to abandon the written basis of the power and to substitute for a sort of Judicial Prerogative, claimed to be inherent in the office itself, independent of any written constitution either as a source or measure of the power. According to this theory, the judiciary is the repository of a higher law, of which the conscience of the judge is the only evidence and sole measure, which requires and enables him to declare "unconstitutional," and therefore null and void, any law which conflicts with that higher law as understood by him...

Boudin went on to explain that, "This new development in our constitutional law is based upon two historical theories," one English, the other American. "English judges claimed, and for a long time possessed the power to declare a law null and void for 'unreasonableness,' or because it did not square with the dictates of equity and justice as understood by the judges." This doctrine's chief sponsor (in the early 17th century) had been Lord Edward Coke. It had been incorporated into American Constitutional law (in the early 20th century) and supplemented by what Boudin described as, "a rather novel, not to say startling, theory of the American Revolution." Boudin described this theory, saying, "It is nothing less than the assertion that the American Revolution was but a lawyer's revolution, designed to revive and perpetuate in America Lord Coke's doctrine of Judicial Power." (The editor of the Newsletter quipped, "That's right, fellow patriots, according to the mind-set of our

judiciary, the real reason we fought the Revolutionary War was to free ourselves from the monarchy of King George and replace it with a Judicial Monarchy!!!")

In fact, explained Boudin, Judicial Supremacy in the United States "first took definite form in the report of a special committee appointed by the New York Bar Association," meeting between 1915 and 1917. In the final report, they said just that, stating:

In short the American Revolution was a lawyer's revolution to enforce Lord Coke's theory of the invalidity of Acts of Parliament in derogation of common right and the rights of Englishmen.

Boudin argued that, contrary to what the New York Bar Association had declared, Lord Coke's theory was not applicable in the United States because, unlike in England, in the United States there was a written Constitution superior to both Congress and the judges. Boudin wrote:

The thing to be remembered is that in Lord Coke's theory—whatever it was—neither the source of the judicial power nor its measure was based on any written constitution. The power was inherent in the office, and in its nature superior to the legislature. The overriding of the will of the legislature was not done *ex necessitate*, because of the compelling force of a written constitution superior to both legislature and judge, but by the requirements of right and justice as dictated to the judge by his conscience.

(Interestingly, Britain, still today, did not have a written constitution.)

At the beginning of the NJM article was a quote by Thomas Jefferson, who, although a lawyer himself, or perhaps because of it, had been deeply concerned about judges' and the Supreme Court's power. The author of the Declaration of Independence had written:

I do not charge Judges with willful and ill-intentioned error; but honest error must be arrested, where its toleration leads to public ruin. As, for the safety of society, we commit honest maniacs to Bedlam, so judges should be withdrawn from their bench, whose erroneous biases are leading us to dissolution. It may, indeed, injure them in fame or in fortune; but it saves the Republic, which is the first and supreme law.

At the recommendation of the editor of the New Jersey Militia Newsletter, I contacted the Erwin Rommel School of Law, which specialized in seminars and publications on how to represent yourself in court, and was popular with patriots. As part of an information packet, they sent me a present-day article from a mainstream publication, the American Spectator, titled, "Judges For Sale," which showed that questions about the legal system and judges were not confined to patriots. "Judges are indeed different from other officials," noted the article. "They are indeed exempt from ordinary forms of accountability." This, it said, allowed judges to behave in ways "that would not be tolerated in other officials." Listed were a number of current instances of judges' extravagance with taxpayers' money, as well as blatant conflicts of interest, including the acceptance of lavish gifts from interested parties, and the failure to adhere to ordinary norms of ethics, all the way from local judges to Supreme Court justices.

There was one school of thought among patriots that went so far as to reject the provisions for the Judiciary in the Constitution altogether, on the basis that the delegates to the Philadelphia Convention had been authorized only to revise the Articles of Confederation, not draft a Constitution. This movement within the movement deferred to the Articles of Confederation, which, they pointed out,

had never been formally repealed. (Johnny Liberty, for example, considered the Constitution an addendum to the Articles of Confederation, meant only to "make a more perfect Union," not disband the Union of states as it existed already, under the Articles of Confederation.)

Because of the treachery of lawyers and Federalists at that time, went the argument, the Constitution had been deliberately left faulty concerning the Judiciary, having no provision for bringing into being the Supreme Court. (Patriots argued that, in any case, the current manifestation of the Supreme Court was not the Supreme Court the Founding Fathers had had in mind. The Founders had never envisioned that the Supreme Court would have the power to rule on how the Constitution was to be interpreted, thereby making policy; the Supreme Court, until after the Civil War, had been, rather, the highest court of appeals for cases under the Common Law.)

Ralph Boryszewski, a retired police officer and patriot in Rochester, New York, had put out a pamphlet titled, "The Unconstitutional Judiciary Act of 1789," that came into my hands early on (he had also written a book on the subject, which I read later, expanding on the same argument), where he explained that immediately after the Constitution was ratified, some of those same lawyers in the First Congress had formed a Senate committee to organize the United States Judiciary. For eleven months they had worked on a bill that was twice as long as the Constitution itself, explained Boryszewski, which really amounted to a series of Constitutional amendments—without going through the prescribed process. The bill had been passed by both houses, which, he noted, were controlled by lawyers.

This bill had established the Supreme Court and a system of federal courts with powers that far exceeded what had been intended in the Constitution, explained the former police officer, creating the offices of Attorney General and U.S. Attorneys. Also, the bill had established a system of adversarial proceedings such as to ensure that people would have to hire lawyers, and had adopted the English Common Law, under which the Colonists had been repeatedly abused. (Here was a patriot who refuted even the Common Law.)

Worst of all, Boryszewski pointed out, Section 17 of this Judiciary Act had granted judges the authority to override a jury's decision (declaring a mistrial) and hold a new trial. The act had also conceded to judges the power "to punish by fine or imprisonment, at the discretion of said courts, all contempts of authority in any cause of hearing before the same." (Federal judges were thereby allowed to make uncontestable decisions canceling jury verdicts, and about what constituted "contempt of court." The latter, explained patriots, amounted to bills of attainder, or punishment without due process, which were forbidden in the Constitution.)

The people earlier had opposed the establishment of lower (federal) courts, said Boryszewski, because they had regarded them as a "dangerous link to the Supreme Court for maintaining federal supremacy." Ironically, he pointed out, since there was no "Supreme Court" sitting at the time, this bill could not be challenged. The Supreme Court should have been seated prior to the passing of any act by Congress, but the Constitution had not provided for the enabling of the Court, leaving the number of justices open, and no oath of office for them.

Thomas Jefferson had made known his feeling about the judiciary having too much power when he had said:

To consider the judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions is a very dangerous

doctrine indeed, and one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy.

Tom continued, "To reestablish the Constitution, we would have to have free and fair elections. We do not have free or fair elections. We have not had for a long time. Vote fraud has been with us as a part of our society for years and years and years. I remember back in the '50s, it was acknowledged in the Congressional record that voting machines could be tampered with, and today it has been tuned by a fine ear. Today, electronic balloting leaves no track record of paper ballots to count."

I would learn from material afforded me by the Militias that the computer software for counting votes was considered proprietary, and therefore not open to public scrutiny. So there was good reason to doubt that elections were always fair. The patriots and Militias pointed out that the mainstream media, when it reported at all on vote fraud, mostly stuck to issues of multiple voting or votes cast by unqualified persons. But reporters almost always stayed away from the far more serious matter of electronic vote fraud. Indeed, after the fall elections that year, startling new evidence that there were two-way modems inside many of the computers, capable of being reprogrammed at a distance (like telephone answering machines) would be brought to light in the patriot community. The information would come into my hands later that year.

Tom continued, "Money should not be used as the criteria to hold a person away from running. New York State requirements to get on the ballot, even for someone like Pat Buchanan, are impossible. Forbes got the access, with his money. Buchanan, even so, did not get on all the ballots in the state, there are so many hoops to jump through to be a candidate. Rulemaking today is so complex that almost no one can say he lives not violating the law. Mowing the grass, you may be killing an endangered species, if someone took the time to prove it.

"Buchanan was ignored by the media. Alan Keyes was also a substantial candidate, and he could hardly get out of shadowy obscurity. The press made sure of this. Who is the press to decide on this? Only certain candidates are allowed to participate in the debates. Perot had enough money to buy his way in last election. But others are not shown at all."

That spring, in the Republican primaries, conservative talk-show host Pat Buchanan was running against Steve Forbes (owner of Forbes Magazine), black candidate Alan Keyes, and Senator Bob Dole. Already, Buchanan had won the critical primary in New Hampshire and done well in Iowa. Ignored at first, Buchanan's minimally-funded campaign had nevertheless taken off, and he was being given prime time in the news every day. It had quickly become obvious that he was playing to the patriot community and their concerns, as well as the Militias. His message was populist, pressing for the de-globalization of the economy. He called for abolishing NAFTA and getting the U.S. out of GATT to protect small American businesses and jobs. He also advocated doing away with affirmative action and gay rights laws as well as banning abortion (the ultimate rankling points for liberals). He stood steadfast in favor of gun rights and the Second Amendment.

"Lock and load," he would say, his eyes twinkling, a tacit reference to rifle target practice—and the American Revolutionary War. He also made frequent reference to "peasants with pitchforks," alluding to the disenfranchised American farmers (recalling the French Revolution, where a king and his courtiers, who lived off the impoverished peasants tilling the land, had been toppled). Reform the IRS, get rid of socialism, stop the invasion by illegal immigrants undercutting Americans in the job market, defeat the New World Order and Globalism! America first! Buchanan supported the badly-neglected Tenth Amendment and states' rights, and called for doing away with foreign aid. Israel was

the largest recipient of U.S. aid, and already in the past, Buchanan had been taken to task and labeled "anti-Semitic" for suggesting that the Israeli lobby exercised too much power in Washington. The "Amen corner," he had called it.

During these spring primaries, at around the same time, a major scandal erupted when CNN reported that one of Buchanan's top advisers, Larry Pratt—executive director of Gun Owners of America, a Washington, D.C., gun rights group—had ties to the Militias, with the media portraying them as white supremacists and neo-Nazis, and again, as being somehow tied to the Oklahoma bombing. Pratt was forced to step down as the campaign's co-chairman, and Buchanan's campaign took a serious dive, from which it never recovered.

I asked Tom who the overall commander of the U.S. Militia was. He replied that he didn't know, explaining, "We operate on the basis of a need to know." So I asked if it hadn't occurred to him that maybe it was being run by the government, or even someone like George Bush, in order to know what the Militias were planning, to gain control of them, as part and parcel of the plan for the New World Order.

His reply was, "I'm not afraid the enemy is controlling us. We have the commonality of the Constitution. We see things from the Constitutional perspective. There is the same perspective all over the country. We may not agree on the UN, or abortion, or whatever; there are gradations in terms of what it is the Militia is about. You see, what's happening in Montana is a good example. We knew about the Freemen. We have the tapes and all—Leroy Schweitzer is the godfather of this information—and we're doing some of the same things they are doing, but they started it. But why should we go from New York unless they need us? They have a Militia in Montana, grass roots."

Tom was referring to the very tense standoff in Montana that had started on February 25, between a group being called the "Montana Freemen" and the government. Of the group of thirty-some Freemen and their friends who had taken refuge at a ranch outside Jordan, Montana, twelve of them had been charged with filing "phony liens," writing "bad checks" and "threatening judges," as the media reported it. Like most people in that part of the country, the group had weapons, and the Freemen were being described by the media as "heavily armed," and an "anti-government Militia."

The story, however, was far more complex. It was true that most of the Militias had openly taken the side of the Freemen. The Freemen, however, were not a Militia, and the Militias said they had taken the Freemen's side because they feared another Waco. The Freemen, like the people at Ruby Ridge and Waco, held religious beliefs that were outside the mainstream, and they vocally subscribed to the Second Amendment right to self-defense, in the political sense (as a check against tyranny). They were holding out against arrest on the Clark ranch—which had been in the family of owner Ralph Clark for several generations—where they had begun to sequester themselves in the fall the year before, after a fellow Freemen was arrested.

Earlier, the Freemen had established a "township" on the Clark ranch, that they named Justus—the old-English spelling for "justice," and a pun on "just us." Invoking the Constitution, they had set up their own Common Law court and appointed a Justice of the Peace. They had proceeded also to invoke the power to carry out the death penalty under the Common Law, as it had once stood, for such things as murder and treason. This went to the very heart of the matter concerning the all-out government siege. The Freemen, in their newly-formed court, had tried several judges, in absentia, for breaking their oaths of office to uphold the Constitution, which in the Freemen's view constituted

treason. These Freeman had then raised their voices, threatening to carry out the executions, while at the same time acknowledging that their jurisdiction was limited to Justus Township. The judges, however, feared something the government itself on occasion resorted to—being kidnapped and taken to Justus for trial.

The Freeman had tried a number of other public officials also for breaking their oaths of office, and they had all been found guilty by default when none of them had showed up for trial. With these judgments, the Freeman had obtained liens against their property in the regular county clerk's office, and had begun issuing credit drafts, of the sort normally used by farmers (where liens could be used as the credit), to pay off debts and make purchases. At the same time, the Freeman were conducting seminars for people around the country—given by two of their members, Leroy Schweitzer and Dan Peterson—to teach other patriots how to do the same. The ideas of this particular Freeman movement (there had been others earlier, linked to Posse Comitatus), which had started in the beginning 1990s, at the same time the patriot groups and the Militia movement were heating up, had spread widely throughout all these groups.

Ralph Clark, the owner of the ranch, went the story, at one point in the late 1980s had failed to pay his mortgage, crying foul, and the bank had recently auctioned the ranch off. A relative had bought it, but Clark refused to move. When the local authorities had failed to remove him, the relative had moved to get the FBI involved: he wanted to sell the stores of wheat and begin spring planting. The Militias were appalled when the first thing the FBI had done was kidnap Schweitzer and Peterson on March 25 (just like the officials judged guilty of treason feared would be done to them), with undercover officers posing as satellite dish installers. At a far place on the ranch, Peterson had been subdued with a stun gun and Schweitzer had been hit over the head. The following day, the FBI announced that they had arrested the two Freeman at the Post Office. The arrest warrant, however, appeared only several weeks later in the court docket.

Schweitzer's daughter had been to the prison to see her father a few days after the arrest, and had published an affidavit on the Internet, dated April 11 (which circulated widely among the Militias), describing his circumstances. She wrote:

He described in detail how the federal marshals put shackles around his ankles and wrists so tightly that he bled. He said they strapped him in a chair and kicked him in the legs, hit him in the face, grabbed him by his hair and yanked his head around, pushed in on his ears with their fingers until he almost passed out, and pressed on the backs of his fingernails. They turned down the heat in his cell, took his blanket and his mattress and left him in only his t-shirt and pants.

The following day, said daughter Brandie Schweitzer, they had moved her father to a medical center without notifying the family, and it was only after repeated calls during the next four days that she had been able to locate him. At the medical center, she and her brother had gone to see him again, and had found him with a tube in his nose for force-feeding, which he said was very painful; he had vowed not to eat until he was given a "grand jury trial." Every time they inserted a tube, he said, he was x-rayed against his will, and they had told him that if he pulled the tube out they would put a bigger one in, that would hurt more. He said they had also threatened to start breaking his bones, and a doctor had told him that if he managed to get released, they would "shoot him up with cancer first." There were bruises on the insides of his elbows, and on his hand where they had inserted an I.V., and he said he could smell drugs put in him through the nose tube. Considering that the crimes he was charged with were white-collar—no different from, say, Michael Milken, who had run a junk bond

scam on Wall Street—patriots liked to point out that this treatment was highly unusual.

At present, the Clark ranch was surrounded by a collection of law-enforcement agencies, including some 600 FBI agents, with the people inside with their families and friends, charging that the FBI and the federal government had no jurisdiction over them, and vowing to fight to the death rather than surrender. The FBI, the Freemen did not recognize because the United States government system, the argument went, was one of "delegated powers," and in the Constitution the People had granted no "police powers" to the federal government. Therefore, the FBI was unconstitutional.

I was sent a copy of a letter dated June 17, 1986, from a Marlene C. McGuire at the Library of Congress, which indeed said:

Our research shows that while most entities within the federal government are officially established and defined by charter, the FBI is not. The Attorney General created the FBI in 1908 (The United States Government Manual 347-8 (1904)). The bureau's activities have since been outlined by various statutory authority.

She went on to say that a "formal charter" had been proposed at one time, but was not approved by Congress.

The Freemen were agreeing to be tried in court, but only in a Common Law court under Article III of the Constitution, not an Article I court. They also, however, demanded to be tried under an 1802 law that stipulated that a jury for a Freeman (defined at that time in some places as a white, male landowner), needed to be made up of other Freemen. (As was pointed out, however, by other patriots, this law had long been defunct. The Freemen's reply to this was that all the laws that came after the Civil War were null and void, on the grounds that there was no longer a legitimate, Constitutional government.)

The national media were camped out a mile from the ranch, playing up the standoff every day on the news. They regularly described the Freemen as "white supremacists" and "anti-Semites," and there was beginning to be talk (as there had been at Ruby Ridge and at Waco to justify a government assault) of this being a "fortified compound" and that the family members and friends inside were "hostages" and the children were being mistreated and needed to be "rescued." Patriots and Militia members were increasingly worried that there could be a replay of Waco.

Tom continued, "Aside from the Freemen situation in Montana, it could be any one of many ongoing situations around the country, even one in New York, to set things off. For example, in the summer of 1995 we had an action in New York, and forty states checked on us. It was over a zoning dispute in the town of Perry. It was in the Rochester press. Jim Dacey of the Chemung Militia received a court order that said he had to move his mobile home off his property. We went to the sheriff and told him that this man was attempting to avail himself of the court processes. We told him we would not allow Gestapo-like action, and to leave him alone until he exhausted the court processes, however long that took. We got the sheriff to understand this. We would have put thousands of people there."

Jim Dacey's plight, I would learn later, had been described in a series of press releases during the summer of 1995, by fax and over the Internet, put out by Norman Olson, Commander of the Northern Michigan Regional Militia (he was the Baptist preacher and gun store owner who had founded the Michigan Militia, whom Tom had mentioned). Dacey's case, it seemed, was typical of certain injustices over property rights, that were happening with increasing frequency all around the country,

fueling the Militia movement.

Olson's first release was titled: "New York Patriot Stands Alone Against the State: New York Militiaman Vows to Defend Property With His Life, if Necessary." Dated, "Perry, NY, July 27," it began, "A 4-year legal battle between local officials and a militia member may be nearing a fatal conclusion in this small town between Buffalo and Rochester. In a 'David v. Goliath'-like struggle, James P. Dacey, 41, father of six, of Perry, stands alone against a zoning board intent on removing his manufactured house from property the board claims is unsuitable for 'trailers.'" The press release explained that Dacey's home was not a trailer, but rather, "a manufactured home sitting on a block foundations and cannot be moved," complying fully with the federal guidelines in the "National Mobile Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974." Notwithstanding compliance with the law, however, the Zoning Board order had been upheld by the New York Supreme Court.

In the several releases, it was explained that in 1992 Dacey had requested a variance for his manufactured home and had been turned down, and although the town judge subsequently had ruled in his favor, saying that the zoning laws were outdated and not in compliance with the federal standards for manufactured housing, and even though Dacey's five-and-a-half-acre lot was back in the woods, off a dirt road, and there were half a dozen mobile homes in the same zone, nevertheless, the (state) Supreme Court had upheld the order to remove the home. The Zoning Board's attorney had demanded that Dacey be handcuffed and physically dragged off his property along with his trailer, but the Supreme Court, instead, had imposed a \$50-a-day fine for every day that Dacey stayed on.

"I have not had my day in court," was Dacey's response. "They have violated my rights. I am not asking for preferential treatment, only justice. I want to plead my case in a court of law. Until then I will stand," it said in the release. The Supreme Court, it was explained, in fact, had never overturned the lower court's decision that had been favorable to Dacey, but merely ignored it. The local judge who had ruled in Dacey's favor, said the Zoning Board's actions reminded him of the corruption of a "Good Old Boys' Club," with variances and favors granted to residents who were in favor with the town government. Among several other irregularities that were noted in the various releases, the zoning inspector, in violation of New York laws, it said, owned a contracting firm. In Dacey's behalf, Militia Commander Norman Olson declared:

The Dacey matter is prime evidence of government corruption and the resulting abuse of citizens. This harassment must not be tolerated. Jim's father left school after the 8th grade to work the local coal mines and later worked in the steel mills. Jim is a father of six children who are learning very vividly what the tyrants are doing to their father. Jim Dacey needs the people of New York to support him before he is shot down like a dog. I am calling on people everywhere to support James Dacey to help him get his day in court and to plead his case before a jury. I pray that it does not happen, but if it comes to Jim defending his property against armed jackbooted Gestapo thugs, the citizen militia will most likely be there. We don't want war, but if corrupt government gangsters want the war to start in Perry, NY, we may not be able to avoid it. It's their choice now.

If, at first, Olson's reference to Dacey being "shot down like a dog" had sounded to me like a gross overreaction to what was merely a zoning dispute, my thoughts on this would change over the coming months. Over and over, I heard about instances around the country where people had been subjected to injustices by government authorities, that had ended in police brutality—often, over land disputes in rural areas. Indeed, I was told on a number of occasions about such cases, where people ended up being shot dead by law enforcement. The police invariably claimed that they had simply

been defending themselves, or that the person had committed suicide, and there was rarely an investigation. All too often, however, those close to the situation said the person in question had been shot in the back. These cases were never reported in the national media.

Indeed, in one such incident later that year, a fellow member of Jim Dacey's Chemung Citizens Militia, who was also involved in a property dispute, was shot by the police in his home, not far from where I interviewed Tom Church. (Although neither Dacey nor the other man lived in Chemung County, they belonged to the Chemung Citizens Militia, perhaps because it was the most visible Militia in the area.) Unlike Dacey, however, this other Militiaman did not request the presence of the Militia, and he was at home alone when the police came to remove him from the property

Chapter 4

OF COMMON LAW, JURY RIGHTS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADING

WITH THE ENEMY

If in the opinion of the people the distribution or modification of the Constitutional be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed.

George Washington

"When we get our back up as a nation, believe me, the federal government does not have enough force to inflict their will upon us," said Tom. "New York is relatively weak compared to other places. It is a very liberal state. I find myself to be a liberal in some respects.

"The sheriff sent a command-center vehicle to remove Dacey and his home, with a couple of National Guard armored vehicles, one of which was carrying an ATV military vehicle. We knew they were coming across the county. They were going to make the town of Perry's highway garage a command center. So the phone rang there, and the sheriff's personnel were told to leave the area immediately with the command-center and National Guard vehicles. We told them that if they were not gone in five minutes, to radio, not for backup, but for bodybags. The vehicles turned around in a matter of minutes, and they headed back over to Warsaw, to the sheriff's compound. And they never came back again.

"The National Guard unit in Buffalo had 200 men on standby," he said, a touch of humor entering his voice when he added after a pause, "which would have been a jolt." As Tom paused to consider what this "jolt" would have been, the corners of his bearded mouth curled up slightly. "Fortunately," he continued, "Sheriff Kaplow decided to remain dormant. He's not really a Constitutionalist at heart, but he decided against bloodshed. The National Guard unit only stood down from the alert in December. This is still an ongoing situation.

"There is another situation in the Adirondacks near the Raquette River. A five-generation Adirondacker has been prohibited from building a cabin on his own land. In that case, the Militia

showed up and shots rang out, and the state police vacated the area in a hurry, never to return. He has since beaten back the initial court actions taken against him by the Adirondack Park Agency. It has cost him time and money, but he's fighting it through the legal process, which is all that we would ask—to allow him to follow the legal process, as is happening. The Adirondack Park Agency is like a super zoning board that covers the whole area of the Adirondack Park—what they call the Blue Line. Even though some of the land is privately held, it's still within the Blue Line. This Park Agency, which is not elected officials, has dictatorial control of the land.

"Somewheres across the U.S., there will be someone under duress of heavy-handed government, and everywhere there are Militias. If Jerry ever needs us, we're there, and vice versa." (Jerry Loper of the Chemung Militia.) "There's a situation bubbling up right now in the Albany area. A man has a farm there in a very rural area, and his home burns. He moves into a trailer, and the elected public servants, instead of helping, set upon him, and they have him arrested. Mobile homes, they say, are not allowed. The audacity of providing for his family before he gives homage to the government! A mobile home, he is told, will be allowed for three months, with a three-month extension, while he is building a new home. But he hasn't been able to get the insurance money. He was in jail for eighteen days, and is in contempt of court now. But he has joined the Militia, and isn't going to leave his house this time to go to jail. He's going to fight the government, with aid at his side if the government comes again.

"If we start the process, where shooting occurs, we aren't stopping just by driving them off the property to the county highway. After the scale tips that way, we're not stopping until we clean this whole sorry affair out. There's gonna be people like you see with that Justus Township out in Montana, who have a town symbol of a noose. We're going to hold court and we're going to deal with these traitors. Many of them have already been put on constructive notice, just on a local basis, along with many of our public officials that are already subject to liens.

"Down in that area of the state, there's a county where you've got a family-court hearing examiner liened, a family-court judge liened, a State Supreme Court judge in the county liened, the sheriff liened, the county court clerk liened. They're all in a conspiracy to violate the people's rights. These people are without an excuse, but they'll be given a trial. I can guarantee you that the appeal process won't last more than the time that they'll be giving the appeal to their Maker, for his mercies, upon entering into the eternal life that they may have. They'll be given a trial, but the facts are very clear.

"The case will be made against them that they've taken an oath, and if it is shown that they violated this oath, and they're traitors to their oath, they're gonna be executed. With this oath goes serious responsibility. This is why our country today is where it is, because these people have been engaging in this condition of which I spoke earlier, of 'mixed war.' They've stopped all the proper means of redress. The courts are closed off to the People. The courts are a futile exercise for the people who know and have experienced what they do to you in court.

"The liens that we're doing are not done through the judicial process. They're done through non-judicial process, the UCC, which the government itself uses, because then the judges cannot be involved in covering the tracks for their fellow attorneys, who are also public servants—quote, unquote. They'll be given trials, but they're not going to have the benefit of the judges who've allowed them to do what they've done with impunity. They will be tried before The People.

"I hope you'll put somewhere in your book, where it is the power of the 'supreme Court' emanates

from. And I'm not talking about the one in Washington. I'm talking about the one that Leroy Schweitzer and other people have in various states out and around the territories. We're talking about the Constitutional Common Law court, Article III of the Constitution, where the 'supreme Court'... Leroy Schweitzer talks about it, and about the other courts devised by the legislatures—Article I courts.

"Today, what we see are 'legislative courts.' They're Article I courts. The Common Law court is becoming an anachronism. Its little vestiges left of it that you can see. If you pull up a McKinney's book of law, you'll see all the statutes refer to the Common Law, but its all been concealed from the minds and eyes of the current generation of inhabitants on the land. They don't understand about the legality of the Common Law Constitutional court. Where does it emanate from? Where do we get the idea that we can do this? Article III of the Constitution. Even lawyers don't understand this.

"The Supreme Court in Washington, with its black-robed men and women—John Jay, a New Yorker, was the first Supreme Court Justice. If you read some of John Jay's cases—now, where is the jury that was there then? We don't have a jury in Washington any longer, do we? Something has changed. The Common Law, Constitutional, Article III court has been bypassed and deemphasized in the legislative tribunals that we see in Washington and other places like state capitals. These Article I courts have come into prominence, all brought on by the American Bar Association and by lawyers because the Common Law courts allowed others than lawyers to practice before it. They couldn't have that.

"My philosophy, and of the U.S. Militia—all our members believe the same thing—is, we need to do everything possible today of a peaceful nature to bring the government back into line. The U.S. Militia requires its members to vote. You have to vote. But I must tell you, I know that there's vote fraud. I don't believe my vote is adequately or accurately portrayed in the results. Even in their government courts—not a Peoples' court, its a legislative tribunal—there's no neutrality on the part of the judges that sit there. But we should do what we can with lobbying our legislators, all those things that are tools our Founding Fathers gave us.

"But when all these things fail, and they have failed—we have been doing this for thirty, forty, fifty years, and yet here we are today with less liberty than ever before—it has been said that our Founding Fathers gave us a few boxes to preserve our liberty. The ballot box was one. The jury box was another, but now the juries have been whittled down, so they can't consider the law as well as the facts. That's the way judges charge the juries now. The judge tells them that he will determine the law, that they determine the facts. The Fully Informed Jury Association is trying to get out a different message to jurors nationwide. They're one of the other parts of the patriot community."

Often the Militias passed out fliers on jury rights, produced by the Fully Informed Jury Association, or FIJA, which had been started in Montana, inspired by a man named Red Beckman. FIJA activists regularly passed the fliers out in front of courthouses around the country. Folded in three, under the title, "FACTUAL INFORMATION about JURY SERVICE...", the flier began with a warning:

The judge will try to intimidate and control jurors and can throw them off the jury if he finds out how knowledgeable they are before the jury begins to deliberate. Judges have gained a certain illegitimate power over the jury, but they must understand both their power and the judge's tactics. The jurors must have the courage to stand up to a bluffing, bullying judge and vote their conscience. Judges are jealous of their power and want it for their own. Judges are extremely afraid of the presence of well-informed jurors in "their" courtroom.

Inside, it was explained that most judges told people erroneously that they were allowed to consider only the facts, not whether the law was fair or not, or the motives of the defendant, and that conscience should not affect their decision. FIJA explained that, in fact, it was the juror's right to judge the law itself. (This practice was commonly called "jury nullification.") "In a trial by jury," said FIJA, "the judge's job was to referee the trial and provide neutral legal advice to the jury" (as intended by the Founders). How could a person get a fair trial if jurors were not allowed to use their conscience? Noted was the opinion that if only the facts needed to be judged, that could best be done with a computer. FIJA advocated:

When its your turn to serve, remember:

- 1) you may—and should—vote your conscience;
- 2) you cannot be forced to obey a "juror's oath";
- 3) it is your responsibility to "hang" the jury with your vote if you disagree with the other jurors!

FIJA's purpose, the flier explained, was to educate jurors and promote laws requiring judges to inform juries of all their rights, or at least allow lawyers to do so, as had been the practice in the time of the Founding Fathers and for most of the nineteenth century. The Founders, said FIJA, "understood that trials by juries of ordinary citizens, fully informed of their powers, would confine the government to its proper role as the servant, not the master, of the people." John Adams, the second American president, was quoted as saying about the role of a juror:

It is not only his right, but his duty... to find the verdict according to his own best understanding, judgment, and conscience, though in direct opposition to the direction of the court.

Thomas Jefferson, who was of the opinion that the Constitution did not sufficiently guarantee individual rights in the Judiciary branch, and warned that if the Judiciary was given too much power it might ruin the republic, was quoted saying:

I consider trial by jury as the only anchor yet imagined by man by which a government can be held to the principles of its constitution.

Even before the Revolutionary War (in 1735), FIJA noted, in New York "a jury had established freedom of the press in the colonies by finding John Peter Zenger not guilty of seditious libel," for printing in his newspaper critical news stories about the governor. The court earlier had instructed the jury that "Truth is no defense." Zenger's attorney, Andrew Hamilton, however, had informed the jury of its rights to judge the law, giving as an example William Penn's trial in England before he came to America and founded Pennsylvania. Penn had been charged with preaching the Quaker religion when the Church of England was the only legal church. The law was against him. The jury was held four days in prison without water or food, but refused to find him guilty.

As a result, in 1670, England's highest court had been forced to acknowledge the right of the jury to reject both the law and the facts, and to vote according to conscience. This had greatly influenced how government was to be conducted from then on; it was this that had led, within the decade, to a recognition of individual rights—freedom of speech, and freedom of religion and assembly. England's efforts to restrict trial by jury later in the Colonies was an important factor in the American Revolution. In the Constitution and Bill of Rights, reference to the right to a trial by jury appeared no

less than three times.

An effort was made (in the U.S.) again in the late nineteenth century to limit jury rights through a series of court decisions, and although this had failed, explained FIJA, since then it had been "held that jurors need not be told about these rights." Attorneys, furthermore, could now be cited for contempt of court for informing a jury of its right to vote its conscience. Notwithstanding this serious setback, however, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals had held as recently as 1972 (in 473 F. 2d 1113) that a jury had the

unreviewable and irreversible power... to acquit in disregard of the instruction on the law given by the trial judge. The pages of history shine upon instances of the jury's exercise of its prerogative to disregard instructions of the judge; for example, acquittals under the fugitive slave law.

(In the years leading up to the Civil War, time and time again, when a runaway slave was brought to trial, juries had voted to acquit, no matter that running away was illegal; today, black-dominated local juries around the country routinely voted to acquit other blacks of crimes, such as for drugs, thought to be unfair or unfairly applied—at the public urging of prominent black lawyers.)

FIJA argued that it was the role of a juror to protect citizens from "bad law," and advocated passing laws that would require the jury to be informed of its powers, so that respect for the law could be restored. Legislators, the argument went, would be less likely to pass bad laws knowing that they would be disregarded by juries. There were thousands of people in prison who had harmed no one, there due to jurors' ignorance of their full rights, said FIJA. It advised jurors to consider the following four questions before voting:

Is this a good law?

If so, is the law being justly applied?

Was the Bill of Rights honored in the arrest?

Will the punishment fit the crime?

If a juror answered no to any one of these questions, FIJA advocated voting "not guilty."

FIJA's efforts at education of the public were bearing fruit, and not long after this interview, in an attempt to shut down the jury rights movement, activists began to be arrested for distributing FIJA fliers outside courthouses. Guidelines were drawn up by a judge for dealing with jurors who were knowledgeable about their rights, and shocking measures began to be taken against jurors voting their conscience, including jail, for the first time ever in the United States. I would learn about this later.

Tom's reference to the "jury box" had to do with the saying among the Militias that:

The Founding Fathers gave us five boxes—the soap box, the ballot box, the witness box, the jury box and the cartridge box.

"And so, they gave us the courts and the jury," remarked Tom, "but today they tell us that the judge decides what they can decide on. The one remaining box that I see that we have left is the cartridge box."

I asked him to expand on this. Gazing intently at the wide expanse of wintry spring ground that lay

before us beginning to stir, he reflected, "I believe that just like you have a fertile piece of land to grow a garden or you have a dry piece of brush that's fertile for fire to spread, this land, the oppression of government at all levels, has created a fertile environment for violence to spring forth in this country. And it could be over the likes of the Jim Dacey situation. It could be the likes of the Montana situation. It could be a situation like the John Laiken situation in Ohio, where an average citizen was just home with his wife and his kid, and he was killed, or the retired minister who was set upon by the ATF, and he had a heart attack and died."

The retired minister Tom was referring to had been a black man in Boston whose apartment had been "dynamically entered" in 1995 by the ATF wearing black combat fatigues and masks. In this widely-publicized incident, they had kicked in the door and literally frightened the retired black minister to death. Afterwards, the ATF had simply said they had gone to the wrong apartment, with no public apology. (In New York, meanwhile, I heard on the news that a token-booth attendant had died of a heart attack during a robbery where—like the Boston ATF agents—four boys had worn frightening masks. The boys, however, unlike the ATF agents, were charged with murder.)

Tom continued, "Somewheres in this land we are going to be called to come to the defense of a fellow citizen, and when we do, if the federal or the state government won't back off, and there's bloodshed at the outset, this tinderbox of United States today is going to explode in a horror of violence aimed at the government. And we're going to throw this tyranny off!

"We are going to be victorious because what we are fighting for is liberty. Liberty takes many forms to many people. Liberty lovers come in all labels. You yourself are a writer. You love the liberty of the First Amendment. I would hope that you recognize that this right is being eroded, one decision after another, of our courts. In some cases, preemptive approval is required by the government, for certain authors on certain topics. And so, your right to be a writer is only as strong as my right to be a Militiaman—an armed, equipped Militiaman.

"Our Founding Fathers knew it well, and wrote about it, talked about it. The Constitution was to chain down the government as best they could. Even so, after having devised this thing, I think it was Jefferson who said a revolution every twenty years or so would be a good thing. Well, I don't think quite the same in that respect as Mr. Jefferson, although I understand his sentiments.

Thomas Jefferson had indeed said in a letter dated November 13, 1787:

... God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented, in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty.

... And what country can preserve its liberties, if it's rulers are not warned from time to time, that this people preserve the spirit of resistance?

Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to the facts, pardon and pacify them.

What signify a few lives lost in a century or two?

The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

"We've been allowing our rights to be usurped by the government. When I look at my grandson and other little children, I get a lump in my throat. I think about how, no matter everything that I've done, lobbying my legislators, writing letters to the editor, trying to stand up for people's rights in court as an advocate, all my efforts aside, I look at that little child and I can't say that he has the same rights I had as a kid. The documents that we had when I was a little kid have been eroded. We're leaving them a life of little more than an indentured servant. While we pay in excess of 50% taxes, those little children are going to pay 80 or 90%. It can't go on. It has to change. All it lacks is people with the intestinal fortitude to deal with their mortality and say, 'I'm never gonna live forever. No one gets off this planet alive.' And to ask, 'Will I leave this a better place for my fellow man and my offspring? Or will I leave it a worse place, by virtue of my apathy or my nothing view?'"

"And so it is that many people have made a hard choice. No matter what it costs us, we must restore liberty. We have Militiamen with young children, with children in the womb. They live on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps something will happen, literally, next week, that will require us to come to service in defense of someone's unalienable rights. That Militiaman with a wife with child, he doesn't know how his wife will exist if he dies. He is her sole source of support. But he knows that he cannot look his son in the face, or his young daughter, if he allows liberty to slip away on his watch.

"These are the kind of people that belong to the New York Regiment. I love them all dearly, and I suffer under the weight of the responsibility I feel to these people, like the pregnant woman, this burden of, people look to me for these decisions. There could be life-and-death decisions, and I have to have my head straight. Even if there was a George Bush-type figure out there in the U.S. Militia somewheres in the country, at a given scene on a given moment, what do you suppose the chances are of us getting communications through to the guy to ask, 'What do we do now?'"

"We have to do these things at the time. We have to know what we're doing. Its a grievous responsibility, which I can handle. I've handled it. But I sense it all the time, every time I go to something and I see a family of one of our members, I look at the family, and I take a very serious responsibility to know what we're doing and that we do the right thing."

Tom looked pensive, and said, "There's something else I wanted to tell you about our organization. We're not any kind of a racial organization. I can tell you that at times someone was thinking about joining, and they were talking racist language and so forth, in more than one locale in the state, and members reported back to me that they'd told the person they better not hear that language again, and no literature of that nature. We are not racists. We are for Americans, be they of whatever color. Are there racists in society? Yeah, we know that. I would be naive to think there are no white supremacist views. But we do not allow any dissemination or talk of that sort. The person would be put out of the organization. This is well understood in New York.

"Like J. J. Johnson, he stayed at my house." J.J. Johnson was a well-known black Militia leader I would encounter later. Tom continued, "I have been to his house. But there are very few blacks in the organization, not for lack of effort. I had a rally for J.J., with a letter I devised that reached out to black ministers, every predominantly-black church I could find in the vicinity, with complimentary tickets. Not one was used. I personally met with a minister afterward, and he was hospitable and said he would look into it, and I never heard from him.

"There's another thing that I want to tell you, because I want the historical record preserved. It pertains to another minority group. But this has to be even more vague than some of the things I told

you about the U.S. Militia. What it involves is Native Americans. There are Native Americans in the Militia. There are Native Americans in the New York Regiment. The Indians understand the New World Order from some of the old teachings.

"Indian groups in New York state, as tribes, have to be very careful about the legalities of Militia involvement because they are signatories to treaties. The most important single thing for an Indian is the preservation of their bloodline, that they not be rubbed out from the face of the earth. If the Indian nations in New York state—and this is the Iroquois Confederacy, and I can't be any more exact—were to become openly associated, the federal government could claim they have violated the treaty, and take everything they have. They have to protect their bloodline perpetuity. But they understand very well from the ancient teachings where it is we are going right now.

"I had a meeting with the chiefs about matters of mutuality. We were concerned about minorities. We reached out to the Native Americans. I get goose bumps. The Indian chiefs told me they knew there would be a day when somebody like me would come to them. I didn't know six months before it happened. They knew the federal government in these times would ask them for their help, and that they as nations couldn't help either side. They couldn't help me. And they couldn't possibly help the federal government, because its a monstrosity. Their teachings told them they would not help this government. Beyond that, if it ever becomes relevant historically, and I am not around, you might be able to find some of these people and ask what they meant, what it is the teachings are. All I can tell you is, we remain extremely close to the Native Americans in New York state.

"We became aware of a plan under Governor Cuomo," he continued, "to invade an Indian reservation with the New York State National Guard—basically, divest them of their territory and their sovereignty. It was in '94, I believe. It was through our intelligence collection that we became aware of Operation, I can't remember the name. We told them about it at the time, and they found it hard to believe. They checked it out. We're white men. They were skeptical. They've been screwed by Anglo white men for hundreds of years, and we couldn't blame them. Our intelligence checked out, and then the relationship was meaningful. In 1995, Governor Pataki took office and acknowledged that there had been this plan under Governor Cuomo, and he disbanded it. It was in the Albany papers. The Indians demanded a meeting with Governor Pataki. They had been going to take over lands with military forces, over a sales-tax issue.

"The way the contact started, in 1992 the state blockaded the Cattaraugus Indian reservation west of Buffalo with a military-like display of state police, with armored vehicles and so forth. The state police used the throughway maintenance area at Exit 58 as a staging point. They had tents set up with all kinds of state police, and they had the command-center vehicles there and helicopters. And they had ambulance facilities. They blockaded the Indian nation. You couldn't go on or off unless you were an Indian. What they did is they shut the businesses down. Only Indians could go to the store or the bingo place.

"What happened then was the Cattaraugus Indians said, 'You're going to blockade us, we're going to shut down the throughway'—the throughway runs through their land. The Indians went up on the two bridges where their roads cross over the throughway, at one-half-mile distance, and they proceeded to dump everything imaginable, including burning tires, off the bridges onto the throughway. They had fires roaring twenty, thirty foot in the air. The fires were so intense that it scalped the paint right off the steel bridgework. The throughway was shut down for two days. We were just fledglings, but we heard about this and we went there. We never had talked to Indians before. Four people went—an

intelligence collection party, including me. After the intense standoff, the State police were made to withdraw the blockade.

"In '95, there was intertribal fighting, with some deaths. Those who wanted a white-man's form of government fought with those who wanted a traditionalist form of government. We in the Militia didn't believe we should interfere. They are sovereign, and if they want to use the force of arms to decide, they have the right to do so. If the state decided to intervene militarily, we would only do something to help if the Indians requested it. There are no formal links. They do believe in their right to protect against any kind of invasion. Indians will die for that."

The Iroquois Confederacy had been an important influence on the Framers of the Constitution, as was explained in a book that another New York Militiaman gave me to read—*Indian Givers*, by Jack Weatherford. The Iroquois Confederacy, it explained, was a union of sovereign nations with a limited central governing council elected by the tribal councils, and it had been the model for the federal system of government. The Iroquois Confederacy's practice of admitting new "members" into the Confederacy had been adopted by the Framers. Rather than creating "colonies" or annexing territories, as was the practice in Europe, new "states" would enter the Union as full members.

Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, both, were students of the Indian methods of governing. Franklin, who was considerably older than Jefferson, had been Pennsylvania's Indian commissioner in the 1750s, and following the Revolutionary War, pressed hard for Indian traditions to be adopted by the government. "Impeachment" (which was also English) and "caucuses" were among those traditions that were incorporated. One very important practice that was adopted was a separation between civil public officials and the military. Unlike in England, in order to hold public office in the United States, an officer was required to resign from the military, following Native American practice. The Militias also adopted the Indian practice whereby military officers were elected by the men serving under them. The unorganized Militia, today, continued this practice. Commanders were normally elected by members.

In 1974, the American Indian Movement (A.I.M.), formed to protect American Indians' civil rights, had been officially labeled a "terrorist organization" by the federal government, in order to justify greater police power. This was followed a year later by a shootout between A.I.M. members and unidentified FBI agents who came onto the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, showing their weapons, at what came to be known as "Wounded Knee." One American Indian and two FBI agents died, and three Indians were tried for first-degree murder. Two of them were acquitted by a jury who said they were acting in self-defense. The third, Leonard Peltier, who was tried separately because he had fled to Canada, received a life sentence on two counts of murder. One of the two who were acquitted, Bob Robideau, in a 1995 interview, said about the Militias:

The FBI, the ATF and other internal national law enforcement agencies have been well-trained, well-sensitized to using subversive tactics against their own population. Their training ground was with the black people. Not only were they trained in how to do a better job, but they also sensitized the general population into accepting this type of activity for its own protection. And that's the most important part, that ultimately they sensitize the general population to accept these types of tactics. Just like I'm sure in Germany many Jews were accepting of the tactics that were being used against them. Are we, too, going to go to the gas chambers without a fight? Probably, if this is allowed to continue without a struggle... The main thing is that the government and those that control this country, the multinational corporations, have been able to manipulate the minds of this country to the

degree where they can focus those minds where they want to.

Now they have focused on militia groups, when we should be focused instead on what the government is actually doing and preparing to do.

Nodding his head slowly, Tom said, "I see us on an inextricable path to the New World Order, save for armed intervention. I believe in participating in rallies and such, but we don't believe this is going to work. Many of our members would like to do something right now. They say, 'How many more first shots do we have to hear?' They say, 'How many more violations of our Constitution do we have to endure? When will we act? Will it be never?' These are questions that are put to me. They want to act now.

"I tell them we have to stay a certain course, that if we are forced to arms by a defensive action, to help a fellow citizen, it may be possible for some of the generally-dumb public, as I call them, to understand that we've taken on the government's public policy. If we were to do something like the bomb at Oklahoma City, which isn't even in our vernacular, but if we were to do something like go and snatch some particularly tyrannical judge, or a traitorous senator, or some such act, we would not succeed, with the onslaught of the press and what they would do to us. We need to have public support, even by the generally-dumb public, cause we're doing this for them, even if they don't know it. They don't have any idea what's going on, what's being done to their rights."

He paused, and added, "It is a much harder challenge to put Humpty Dumpty back together again than knocking him off the wall. We have a course. Its a defensive one, and we're going to stay that course. So when the time comes, and we are pressed into service, and forced to arms to protect a person's unalienable rights, we will do so. Once blood is spilled, we will do whatever is required to be victorious.

"We don't use the phone or mail for business. It is all hand-carried, or by electronic communications which are encoded for operational convenience. Encoded with PGP—an encryption device brought out at the time of the government Clipper chip. This gifted individual, he put it on the Internet and gave it away to defeat the Clipper chip. By the way, he was arrested when he did this, and charged with violating the export act, even though he was not selling it."

If I had been surprised to hear of the close links to Native Americans, now I was even more surprised when Tom began telling me about the U.S. Militia's contact with another group—the Chiapas rebels in Mexico. I had thought of Native American rights and the Chiapas rebels as being the sole province of the left. I thought how this just went to show that if the old paradigm of "left-right" continued to exist among the elites, it no longer did so at the grassroots. Today, it was the "Haves," with their internationalist institutions, and the "Have-nots," or populists, who, in the case of the Militias, were being labeled "nationalists" and condemned for it, as if nationalism in and of itself were evil. The Militias liked to point out that during World War II it was the nationalism of the Free French and other resistance groups—as well as the nationalism of the Russians, British and Americans—that had caused them to fight against and eventually defeat Germany. Otherwise, Europe might have submitted to German rule. (Ironically, it was happening now with the European Union, economically, with the EU's central bank in Frankfort.) Americans in World War II had been told they were also fighting to preserve their own freedom.

"The Chiapas contact began in '94," said Tom, "in the fall of the first year that they became publicly known. We understand very well the corruption of the Mexican government and the role our

government plays in the enslavement of the Mexican people. The NAFTA agreement was part of it."

The North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, was a trade pact that had been signed by Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, for the stated purpose of opening the borders to trade. The reason given, both by the Bush and Clinton Administrations, was that foreign trade would increase, and this would automatically raise wages in the U.S. and bring more jobs. But just the opposite had happened. Immediately after the argument had gone into effect in 1994, factories had begun moving to Mexico, where there were few environmental controls and factory wages were often lower than 50 cents an hour.

Critics such as Jerry Brown had pointed out before it passed, that NAFTA was modeled on the UN's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—an agreement to lift all trade protections globally, scheduled to go into effect the following year—and that, in sum, these trade agreements would "allow unelected officials to resolve conflicts." Already, Brown noted, a secret dispute panel in Geneva had ruled that GATT would override federal and state laws in the U.S. Americans, he warned, would be subjected to "a supergovernment of unelected trade bureaucrats working for NAFTA and GATT."

Jerry Brown had also warned that there were an estimated 800,000 Mexican farming families that would be "driven off their communal lands because of low-cost U.S. competition, inducing another 700,000 illegal immigrants to seek work in the U.S., depressing wages on both sides of the border." And so it was, on January 1, 1994—the day that NAFTA went into effect—that corn-growing peasants in the state of Chiapas began an armed uprising, just as he had predicted. The rebels called themselves "Zapatistas," after a turn-of-the-century, peasant Mexican Revolutionary hero who had championed the peasants' property rights, by the name of Emiliano Zapata.

"We are sympathetic to the Zapatista movement," said Tom. "We have rendered them aid, which I won't go into. We have people who have gone down there and participated in their day-to-day life. The corruption of the Mexican government, former President Salinas—who was the shoo-in candidate for president of the World Trade Organization—that was to be his payoff for selling Mexicans into bondage in NAFTA. Of course, he couldn't be reelected, so he had to have another beautiful perch to aggrandize himself. Today he's a fugitive. There are warrants out for his arrest, related to drugs."

The World Trade Organization, or WTO, was a brand-new UN agency headquartered in Geneva, there to administer GATT and the global open borders. President Carlos Salinas had been Wall Street's and the Clinton Administration's golden boy, and the U.S. had nominated him for first head of the WTO. When, at the last minute, some U.S. Congressmen had shown a reluctance to ratify NAFTA, the Clinton Administration had warned that a failure to ratify would hurt President Salinas and his designated successor's chances of winning the elections that fall, which could result in civil unrest in Mexico and a devaluation of the peso. In fact, all these things soon happened—because of NAFTA.

Soon after it was signed, Salinas and his family were hit with a drug-trafficking and corruption scandal of major proportions, and Salinas's name had had to be withdrawn. His chosen candidate for president was assassinated while campaigning. On the day that NAFTA went into effect, the armed rebellion in Chiapas started, spreading to other parts of Mexico, and soon the peso was devalued by half (bringing economic desperation and a rise in crime never before seen, that would last for years.)

Clinton proceeded to bail out Mexico with a loan of \$40 billion, bypassing Congress. Although he

said it was to help with the pain and suffering of the Mexican people, as it turned out, the money never left the U.S.; it went to the Wall Street banks that were owed money by Mexico. Clinton had promised that American taxpayers would not be stuck with an uncollectible debt, and so, in a special White House ceremony the following year, Mexico handed over a check, and American taxpayers sighed with relief. As it turned out later, however, what had really happened was, the IMF (as the Militias would say, a part of the rapidly-consolidating "UN System") had advanced an extra \$26 billion to the Mexican government—so Mexico could pay the U.S. that amount—with a promise by Clinton to raise the U.S. contribution by that amount the following year (in the end, a great deal more had to be loaned to Mexico, costing Americans far more than the initial \$40 billion). So in fact, without knowing it, the American taxpayers were stuck with the bad debt after all (even though the monies to the IMF, technically, were a loan). Only the Wall Street banks, such as Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin's firm, Goldman Sachs, were paid back.

This had been the case in the late 1980s also, inside the U.S., with the savings-and-loans banking crisis, where the taxpayers had been coerced into a bailout of the banks for between \$300 and \$500 billion (no one knew exactly). This was accomplished with warnings that, otherwise, the whole economy would collapse. The savings-and-loans, however, had gotten themselves into the mess in the first place by engaging in corrupt and bad business practices. And, while risk, in this system, was normally expected to be assumed by the owners of a business, it became clear that in the case of the banks—if they were big enough—the risk was underwritten by unwitting taxpayers. This meant that there was no risk for those making the decisions. However, when there were profits, they always went to the banks, not the taxpayers.

"Looking at the international scene," said Tom, "one of the things that has been so totally repugnant is what we see our government doing with respect to the Chechens. Its not known by very many people, but the United States has sent advisers over there to help the Russian military in how to subjugate these freedom-loving Chechens, fighting for self-determination and all those things that our country used to stand for. Spetsnaz has been brought to this country for training. They are the KGB of today, terrorizing the Chechens, destroying their women and children, irrespective of whether they're guerrillas or not. Search and destroy, scorched-earth strategy to displace the Chechens to an area where we have better control over the population."

After a short silence, Tom said, "About the Zapatistas, I don't know about it appearing in a book. I don't know what the feds would do with this information. I guess, say the Militias are involved in international terrorism. And we have no faith in the American press. We have a Militia member who is an accredited journalist—who has access to the White House and Air Force One, and is right there with Clinton. And we know how it works from the inside—the government handlers, and how inside his organization they marshal him."

I said I thought it should be included because it would show people a side of the Militias that people did not suspect, and destroy the perception that the Militias were isolationist rednecks who had no thought or understanding of the world.

I asked Tom what made the Militias different from gangs or other armed or paramilitary organizations. He replied, "It is a matter of international law, what distinguishes a Militia member from a common criminal. The people in Georgia will be tried as criminals."

This was a reference to the arrest during those days by the ATF of three members of the Georgia

Militia, on charges of conspiracy to make pipe bombs to use against the government. Much had been made in the media of reports that sections of pipe had been found on Militia commander Robert Starr's property—who happened, however, to be a plumber—and the fact that they had also found fertilizer there. Headlines around the country had cried that there had been plans by the Georgia Militia to set off bombs at the Olympics in Atlanta that summer. But, as it turned out, like Randy Weaver—and many others around the country—these Militia members had been set up and entrapped by the ATF. This was to be revealed during the court hearings later. Outright entrapment was becoming a regular federal police activity, especially by the ATF.

Tom continued, "There is international law that deals with Militias—what constitutes a Militia, what distinguishes a Militia person from a common criminal. What do we have to do to comply with the international rules of land warfare, so that if we have to act, we will be doing so as a recognized Militia, as opposed to a criminal gang? The literature says that you have to be distinguished from a civilian in appearance, and it speaks about an arm patch and military-type headgear. And it talks about several criteria, one of which is, you have to be part of an organization with a chain of command. You have to have some kind of identification."

Tom had shown me his U.S. Militia ID card, roughly 4" by 5", and his armpatch, embroidered in bright colors—the official New York seal, with the female figure of Justice on the right, blindfolded, balancing her scales. "What you saw fully complies with all the laws," he said, now showing me the oath that U.S. Militia members were required to take, which he allowed me to copy by hand. It said:

I swear to support and defend the UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION and BILL OF RIGHTS from all enemies, foreign or domestic, with all means at my disposal.

I further swear to maintain complete silence with respect to all U.S. MILITIA information that I may learn, and insure that such information is not divulged to any persons who are not sworn members of any U.S. MILITIA chain of command, so help me God.

Tom also allowed me to read the typewritten pages that he used for recruiting, where I learned that the penalty for violating the oath was death. He assured me, however, that he had not violated his oath, talking to me. He added that no member had yet had occasion to use this official identification with law enforcement. However, he said, "Should anyone be arrested, we have the groundwork covered. If caught, he would immediately claim he's a POW. We are in a state of war.

"What you saw fully complies with all the requirements. If any of our people were to be arrested, we're not going to be like those couple of bubbas down in Georgia. We're gonna have the ground under the person's feet, so they can say, 'You cannot charge me as a criminal.' For instance, if the authorities caught one of our members with a machinegun without a permit, that person would immediately claim that he was a prisoner of war. The state of war is in existence—mixed war. Its already been declared by the government against the People. You know, the 'War Powers' act. So we're in a state of war. Most civilians don't know anything about the War Powers act, that the People are the enemy of the government, but we do."

Tom was referring to, "The Act to Define, Regulate and Punish Trading with the Enemy," better known as the "Trading with the Enemy Act," for short, often referred to by patriots simply as the "War Powers act" (not to be confused with the War Powers Resolution passed in the early 1970s during the Viet Nam war); it had been passed in 1917 during World War I, when the Congress had granted the president full "War Powers," making it possible for President Woodrow Wilson to have

control over the assets of foreign nationals from enemy countries—meaning the Germans and their allies. The law had been forgotten about after the war, along with all the other war measures that became defunct when the war ended. But in 1933, in a little-noticed action by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, it had been dusted off and amended to include the American people in the definition of "enemy." Unknown to most Americans, it was this amended statute that had allowed Roosevelt's government to formally declare a state of emergency and seize all the gold in the country.

Unknown to the general public also, this now-amended Trading with the Enemy Act remained in full force, and was the basis for many government actions, including the thousands of "executive orders" and "presidential decision directives" issued since by the various presidents (which would otherwise have no basis in law). During his first term, President Clinton, already, had issued some two hundred of these directives and executive orders, roughly one a week (at almost the same rate as Roosevelt during the Great Depression). Some were classified, where the public was not even allowed to know what the law so decreed was.

The Sovereign American Handbook, like Tom, said about this:

Our government formally declared war on us in 1933 by amending the Trading with the Enemies Act (1917) to include all American sovereign Citizens and suspending the Constitution through the Emergency and War Powers Acts.

Indeed, in light of the use to which the Trading with the Enemy Act was being put, unbelievable though this was to me at first, it was hard to argue with the assertion that the federal government was at war with the American people—the "mixed war" that Tom had referred to. It was a subject that I was to learn a great deal more about over the coming months, for, along with the Second Amendment, it was at the heart of the Militia movement.

Tom continued, "And we're going to get an attorney, who's gonna present the case that this person, as a member of the Militia, has the right to own military accoutrements, be they whatever they are. I wonder how that'll fly with the average tyrannical judge. He'll say that's frivolous. He'll put the person in jail without bail. We'll file a habeas corpus request, and they'll deny you. You're a terrorist. So we don't think this is going to help our members, but we'll do it anyway because this is the right way. This is the facts of the matter. What it all comes down to is, when they eliminate all other forms of reasonable means to address grievances, you have two choices. Either you be subservient and say nothing, or you fight for your beliefs.

"This thing is being foisted upon us. I can tell you, I do not aspire to a war in this country, but I can also tell you that if things go over the line, where blood is shed, where they're after us in earnest, we are gonna be some nasty, mean, vicious hombres. We are fighting for everything that's dear to us. All the Gestapos in the federal government—the alphabet soup agencies—they're out for a pension, for a paycheck."

Pointing toward the ochre valley edged with a stubble of darkish green below us, Tom added, "Those people in those houses don't know the government is the enemy and that we're at war." I looked out over the wide-open field, with the tiny farmhouses nestled in straw fields, and could see that in the space of a few hours the spring light had gotten colder, harder. His earlier intensity spent, a bleak note entered Tom's voice as he changed cadence, repeating what he had just said—more slowly, almost in a whisper. "Its the right way when we eliminate all other forms of reasonable means of addressing grievances. You either be subservient or fight for your beliefs. I do not aspire to a war in

this country. We're fighting for everything that is dear to us. All those alphabet soup agencies, out for a pension, are mercenaries. Can a war be won by mercenaries, as opposed to people fighting for their life, backed into a corner?"

Tom was silent for a long while, then added solemnly, "You know, I've been thinking about your book. I hope everyone reads it, but I'm not optimistic. But even if no one reads it, except for the government gumshoes, it is there as history. You are in possession of history, and I hope you'll be a careful guardian of that."

In order to understand fully how the Militia movement had caught fire everywhere in months, it was necessary to look at the public Militias, namely the Militia of Montana, a foundation stone in the movement, which saw its role as something very different from the underground U.S. Militia.

PART II

Falling Star

Whenever a people entrust the defense of their country to a regular, standing army, the power of the country will remain under the direction of the most wealthy citizens..., your liberties will be safe as long as you support a well-regulated militia.

Independent Gazetteer, Pennsylvania 1791

Chapter 5

M.O.M.

mi-li-tia n. 1 a) orig., any military force b) later, any army composed of citizens rather than professional soldiers, called up in time of emergency

2 in the U.S., all able-bodied male citizens between 18 and 45 years old who are not already members of the regular armed services: Members of the National Guard and of the Reserves (of the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps) constitute the organized militia; all others, the unorganized militia

Webster's New World Dictionary (1991)

In history, it was likely that the Militia of Montana would go down as the grandfather of the present-day Constitutional Militia movement. For among these citizen groups, it was the most visible. The Militia of Montana, or M.O.M., as it liked to call itself, had made, not military preparedness, but a strong educational mission, its primary function, taking the lead in the Militia movement to educate Americans about what had gone wrong in the Founders' Republic, and what their citizen rights were.

During the summer following the Oklahoma bombing in 1995, there were Senate hearings on the Militias in the Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Government Information; they were broadcast on C-SPAN. Like most people, this was my first direct look at Militia members. On the Militia panel were John Trochmann, who, with his brother David and nephew Randy, had

founded M.O.M. and was its acknowledged leader. Although he was wearing a gray flannel suit, what struck me about the fifty-year-old Trochmann was that, with his broad, high forehead and dark, piercing eyes, salt-and-pepper hair and full silvery beard and mustache, he seemed to be from another era. It was as though there were another, superimposed reality (something like a double image), where he wore, not a suit, but overalls and held a pitchfork. Trochmann, I would learn much later, indeed, had grown up on a Midwest farm.

He had long been a member of the patriot community before setting out to form the Militia of Montana, and had brought with him to the Militia movement many of his former friends and beliefs. Through M.O.M.'s publications and Trochmann's lectures around the country, he had, in great part, set the tone for the emerging Militia movement. It had been the already-existing patriot community, with its many overlapping beliefs and constituencies, that had been the most receptive at first to John Trochmann's Militia message.

Little did I imagine at the time that one day I would meet with him. Again, one of the first things that struck me about Trochmann when I finally did, at a "Preparedness Expo," was that it didn't matter that he was wearing a gray suit, I could see only a plaid flannel shirt and suspenders. His hands were like rough, dry Idaho potatoes. John was nothing if not an American Gothic character out of a Grant Wood painting, stern and righteous. That day in Pennsylvania, some time later, he seemed never to be at ease as he told me his life story leading up to the Senate hearings. He started, telling me how he had come to live in Montana:

"It was a childhood dream of mine to be in the Rocky Mountains. When I was in the 2nd or 3rd grade, I came upon an encyclopedia. I looked up the letter 'M,' and found 'mountains' and 'Montana.' I grew up as a farm boy in the northwest corner of Flatland, Minnesota. I was not happy with flat land, and I wanted to go to the mountains. Everybody has to have a dream. If they don't, they don't accomplish much in life. Dreams are gold. I don't see much difference.

"My curiosity was first tweaked by my dad. He was a farmer, carpenter and preacher. He bailed out of the Lutheran Church in the early '50s because they joined the National Council of Churches. He joined the Evangelical Churches of America, and when they joined the World Churches of America, he said, 'That's enough organized religion for us, Johnny.' He called me Johnny.

"At the age of 17, in 1960, I joined the U.S. Navy. I went to Cuba during the Missile Crisis as part of a bomb squadron out of Norfolk, Virginia—for submarine warfare. Part of our job was to take pictures of the Soviet ships leaving with the missiles on the decks. In fact, we discovered it was not missiles but just decoys covered by tarps. We brought this to our superiors and they just told us to shut our mouths. So that tweaked my interest a whole bunch.

"Beyond that point, back in Norfolk, I watched on a military television as our President Kennedy was shot in the face by our own people. It was shown in Life magazine. They printed a few thousand copies and then tried to recall them. They changed the article midstream. They actually showed the footage of the Zapruder tape. I realized something was wrong with this picture. The more we discussed it, the more we realized, something's gone radically wrong here in America. That did it for me. I pretty much questioned people in public service positions ever since.

"So, ever since then, I've really been in the pursuit to find truth, exposing the corrupters to the American people. But I guess the big push came in the mid-'70s when I started getting involved in trying to educate our fellow Americans. We were distributing information to our customers,

reduplicating what we came across. People were very receptive. My two brothers and I had two businesses—A&T Motors, which did automobile repairs and built racing engines, and Trochs Enterprise Inc. which dealt with parts for snowmobiles, under the trade label, 'Snowstoffs.' We had 5500 wholesale accounts. As a part of the military, I had attended the U.S. Armed Forces Institute in Norfolk—business law and business administration. I never set out to finish. I just wanted to get an education.

"I built myself a Bentwood dome home—thirty-foot domes spaced twenty feet apart. It had about 6,600-and-some square feet, three stories high, a third of it built into the ground, quite self-sufficient. That took a lot of time. I was into self-sufficiency. My electricity was wind powered. The interest in self-sufficiency was something that I acquired by watching our country and observing how those in high places were trying to control the populace based on energy and food. And I wanted to be independent, not 'interdependent.'

"Eventually, I sold my home. It was valued at \$360,000 but I had to sell it for \$60,000. Minnesota had become a rearview state where, as far as I could see, most Minnesotans didn't care what happened. Montana has always been a more free-thinking state, based on the way of life. People are few and far between. The economy is much tighter there. The unemployment rate is much higher. In our little community, its about 50% unemployment, and the global grabbers are making sure it continues to grow, by shutting down the sawmills and the mines. And then, the UN Biosphere grabbers, land grabbers, are making sure that the land grazers have no place to run their cattle. Besides, a lot of people who have woke up across the country and are realizing the cities are not a good place to live are moving to Montana.

"I moved to Noxon, Montana in '87. I married a lady from there. My brother David had located there earlier. He took my dream and left with it before I had the opportunity, because I was in the process of building a house at the time. I moved to Montana and occasionally did an engine job for someone, or a transmission job. I'm semi-retired.

"In Montana, we home-schooled our children—with our children from former marriages, they totaled six. In early 1990, part of the home-schooling was to do a story on the Aryan Nations church, so we sent our children to Aryan Nations in Idaho with some trusted friends, and when we went to pick them up the next day, we found that, being teenagers—of course they didn't ever lie to their parents, ha, ha, ha—we found that they had gotten little or no sleep the night before and had been on alcoholic beverages. And we had trusted our friends and had trusted the church over there, that they would take care of our children properly. While I was there, I was invited to come back and speak in July of that year at the Aryan Nations World Congress, and I did. I spoke about immorality—'their' immorality.

"From that point on, I was branded an Aryan Nations Neo-Nazi. Mainstream media, from that point on, has been slandering me. Never, ever, ever, did I belong to Aryan Nations. Never paid any dues, never signed anything, never received anything in the mail. What does it take to be a member?

"OK, I only brought that up because you needed to see how I connected with the Randy Weaver family. That's how we met them. We pretty much lost touch with them after that, but our children were writing letters back and forth to their children, because our children became friends. In early 1991 Randy Weaver was arrested, as far as I'm concerned, for not cooperating with federal agents to set the Trochmanns up.

"He was arrested because he wouldn't participate in a federal sting operation. The Aryan Nations was

part of it, but he came to the Noxon, Montana area that year with the specific purpose of infiltrating the Trochmann family. It came out in the trial in 1993. He went over there to case it out. Apparently, at the time, he had agreed to it. Something changed his mind. Anyhow, he was arrested in '91, and when he got out of jail on bail, he went up into his mountain retreat—what they, the government, called a 'compound.' We call it a clapboard cabin. It was made out of mill ends. It was a little cabin that would sway in the breeze when it blew.

"Why did the government want to set us up? We were outspoken against tyranny in government. Our reach was all over the country, because of our former customers. We were still sending them things. We sent out one book called *Billions for the Bankers, Debts for the People*, showing the three different methods of takeovers, and the one that we were concentrating on was the financial takeover. I don't even remember who wrote it, but we must have sent out, phew, thirty, forty thousand of them, free." (This 30-page booklet, of which I was given a copy by a patriot during my research, published in 1984, was basically an expose of the Federal Reserve System, a subject dear to the heart of all Militia people, about which I was beginning to learn in the spring of 1996.)

"The snowmobile parts was a very good business, and that's why we have this business, because we took that money and we sunk it into this. But it would be nice to break even some day. The IRS thinks we're making so damn much money, the bastards.

"In '91, when Randy Weaver retreated to his mountain cabin, we brought them food for, probably, sixteen months. At the time I didn't know he had gone there to set me up. And then, on April 19—that date always comes up—of 1992, my nephew Randy Trochmann and I went to visit the Randy Weaver family because we just felt in our spirit that we had a problem someplace with one of our friends—that they were being put in jeopardy of some sort—and the Randy Weaver family is the only ones that we could not call and find out. They didn't have a telephone.

"So we drove up to the Randy Weavers' and we found Vicki Weaver sitting on the rock overlooking the gate with her rifle on her lap, with little Samuel standing to her left side with a rifle—Sara and Rachel were to her right side—looking down at us. I said, 'Good morning Vicki, good morning children,' and all I got for a response was, 'John, what are you doing here?' And I thought, 'How strange. Why should she talk to me like that?' I thought to myself, 'What do I usually do up here? I come up here to visit you.' And she says, 'I don't know who to believe anymore. John, turn around and look.' So I turned around and saw a whole row of federal agents behind us, at least a dozen, and I realized that they were under siege. I didn't know we drove into the middle of a siege and just kinda screwed it up for everybody. And she said, 'John, go home.'

"Now, Randy Weaver was nowhere in sight. Neither was their brand new baby. So, instead of going home, we went down to a pay phone in Naples, Idaho, which we knew was bugged, and called my brother's phone, which we knew was bugged, and made this statement: 'I don't know what these agents are up to, trying to harass the Weaver family, because Randy Weaver was killed two weeks ago when he fell off the cliff.' I mean, if they're masters of deception, why can't we join in? So, from there we went to visit a newspaper man we knew was former CIA and probably still with them, and we gave him still another story. As we sat in the restaurant talking with him, we looked out at the Weaver home, and there was a huge, thick, black cloud that sat right over the home and rained like crazy. And that was the end of the siege at the time. The marshals abandoned their program, apparently." (This incident, interestingly, had taken place a year before Waco, also on the anniversary of Lexington. The question the Militias were asking was, had this date already been selected by the

feds for some action?)

"From that point on, we just didn't have anything more to do with the Weaver family, seeing they had just told us to go home. And then, in August we realized that the Weaver family was under siege again. We didn't know at the time that a marshal had been shot—Marshal Degan—and that Samuel Weaver had been shot and killed. Friends of ours heard about the siege on the news. There were hundreds of people by the time we got there, from all over the countryside—Montana, Washington, Oregon, Idaho. I'm sure there were a few Canadian citizens too. Its close to the border.

"So, from that time on, the Trochmanns—my brother David, my nephew Randy, and myself—maintained a twenty-four-hour vigil, and one of us was awake at all times for the eleven-day siege that followed. At which time we discovered that little Samuel Weaver had been shot in the back by federal agents, coerced into a mortal gunfight, that Marshal Degan had been shot two hours before the Weaver family knew he was there—shot by his own agents. We've got eye witnesses to prove it. Gerry Spence didn't believe it until the trial was well underway, and by that time the witness had had a threat and disappeared.

"Prior to that, however, we had a Los Angeles police chief take an affidavit from the man, which we still hold a copy of, that he actually saw Marshal Degan being shot in the back by his own men. The sheriff up there wants to know how come there's never been an investigation, with seven bullet holes in Mr. Degan's backpack, which was on his back, and no inquest. The man who saw this was in the process of purchasing land in the area, and the marshals apparently didn't know that he was walking the land right below them.

"Marshal Degan was a good marshal, but he was part of a drug bust operation on the East coast, in the Boston area, that netted a \$6 million catch and sent a number of federal agents to the pen. And for that, he had to die. So the rogue agents within the agency found a way to sacrifice him, and vilify the Weaver family to boot. You gotta ask yourself, how many point men does a six-man team need? This six-man team already had a point man. Why did they need Degan? If Degan was in front of the rest of them, why?

"At the siege, the three of us tried to keep the peace down below at the barricade, to make sure that the federal agents would have no excuse to remove the public from the area. We felt once the public was hauled away, they could butcher the family very easily, which they tried to do. They tried to burn the house down twice. The first time they tried to do it, the rains came and washed all the diesel fuel off the building, that the choppers had dumped on it. The second time the Huey military choppers did that, we had moved the media into the area, and got them to start taking pictures of what was going on. They swarmed against us, arresting some of the media that didn't hide quick enough, and they never did burn the place, because of our observation and scrutiny of them all the time.

"Bo Gritz got involved, and eventually talked Randy Weaver out, and what was left of the family, after they killed his son, shot his wife in the face, with her infant in her arms. A sick bunch of beasts. But they were just obeying their orders, right? Who would do such a dumb thing as that?"

John was silent for a moment, then said, "It reminds me of a poem I've been taught by an elderly gentleman. It goes like this:

Captain, what do you think, I asked, of the part your soldiers play?

The Captain answered, I do not think, I do not think, I obey!

Do you think you should shoot a patriot down and help a tyrant slay?

The Captain answered, I do not think, I do not think, I obey!

Do you think your conscience was meant to die and your brains to rot away?

The Captain answered, I do not think, I do not think, I obey!

Then if this is your soldiers code, I cried, you're a mean unmanly crew, and for all of your feathers and guilt and braid, I'm more of a man than you.

For whatever my lot on earth may be and whether I swim or sink, I can say with pride, I do not obey, I do not obey, I think.

"That's what our agents need to do."

The Paul Bunyan-with-a-blue-ox character stopped talking, and looked at his watch as if he had more important things to do in the wilderness of America than talk to a reporter. Looking back at me warily, after a bit, he continued, "After this happened, we were part of an organization called 'Citizens for Justice.' It was an investigation team that held meetings every week or so. We helped set it up. There were hundreds involved in it. We were investigating and uncovering evidence, and turning it over to Gerry Spence. That was the fall of '92.

"Then, in April of 1993 came the burning of the Branch Davidians in Waco, including women and children." Trochmann began to sound irritated, saying, "If they wanted David Koresh, why didn't they arrest him while he was jogging? Why didn't they arrest him when he went into town? No, they didn't want it that way. They had a much bigger picture to work on. Why was the military involved, and why did they do the shooting as they did? Why did they kill four agents which were Clinton bodyguards? We have evidence of that—like Marshal Degan. I mean, questions, questions, questions and no answers, still today. And still, all that happened, including the Randy Weaver siege and Waco, and it didn't seem like America was waking up.

"It seemed like they just went on about their lethargic life. So we decided in June of 1993 that Montana was not as remote as we'd like it to be, and we were just going to walk away from our fellow Americans, let'em wallow in their own mire. And we went to Alaska to look for a more remote area. We spent the 4th of July in Wrangell, Alaska. We had found jobs and were all set to move up there, and we came back down and packed a forty-foot high cube, semi-trailer.

"Just before we left, we took a tour around the country and realized, America really is starting to wake up. We can't abandon her now. So we gave up our plans to leave, and decided to start organizing to educate our fellow Americans on an even larger scale than we had before. So, in early 1994, about February—this was after the Brady Bill—we started the Militia of Montana, and all these people are starting to get involved, including little old ladies and doctors and nurses, and everybody in between."

A light came into John Trochmann's stern, black eyes beneath the thin gray eyebrows, and he explained, "We organized the Militia of Montana under the First Article of the Bill of Rights—freedom of speech—and that's what we're doing today, exercising the First Article of the Bill of

Rights, to educate our fellow Americans. We started a Militia because we had tried all those other names for many, many years and it didn't seem to get anywhere; Wildwood Fellowship was one of them, and United Citizens for Justice. But the one that seemed to make the most sense was one that would point in the direction of the foundation of our nation, which was the word, 'Militia.' I don't know if anyone thought of it. It was just laying there waiting to be used. It was my nephew Randy that came up with the name, 'Militia of Montana,' based on the acronym that he'd come up with—'M.O.M.'" John savored his words, saying, "What a nurturing name!"

M.O.M. had put out a manual on how to form a Militia, which quickly became a blueprint for Militia units around the country, although variations emerged. It could be said that this manual, in a way, had been the cornerstone of the most-recent incarnation of the Militias as a 1990s movement. M.O.M. also put out a monthly publication, *Taking Aim: The Militiaman's Newsletter*, that was widely-read among the Militias, and a catalogue of related tapes and books, with subjects that ranged from how to survive in the wilderness and U.S. military manuals, to government conspiracies having to do with such things as an imminent New World Order takeover under the UN and Bill Clinton's connection, as governor of Arkansas, through the Mena airport, to Iran-Contra and drug trafficking, that I began learning about also in the spring of 1996. Although there had been groups that called themselves Militias before Ruby Ridge and Waco (in places like Texas and the Midwest), the Militia of Montana was the first to publicly advocate that ordinary citizens organize and network nationwide.

The Militia of Montana Information & Networking Manual, as M.O.M.'s 27-page instruction manual on how to form a Militia was titled, was published in early 1994 when the Trochmanns formed M.O.M. (he couldn't remember what month exactly, but others said it was February). On the cover, in all four corners, was the eagle from the United States coat of arms, wings spread, holding an olive branch in one claw and a sheaf of arrows in the other, and a ribbon in the beak that said, "E PLURIBUS UNUM." The Manual had been written mostly by Randy Trochmann (John's nephew), who also edited the newsletter. The Trochmann family approached writing like a country store that offered the bare essentials along with a few luxury items, everything neatly displayed on rough-hewn shelves and in well-ordered cardboard boxes. Randy Trochmann's writing was the cardboard boxes and rough shelves that held all the necessary Militia accoutrements for survival and for the defense of property and family, as well as a good bit of no-holds-barred advice.

On the first page was the Second Amendment, followed by some world history on the role of "militias," beginning with Britain in 54 B.C. It was noted that Caesar and his Roman army of 23,000 had been routed by the militia, made up of the local landowners. In modern times, after World War II, Finland, it said, due to the militia, had kept free from Russian occupation, and in Afghanistan, the local militias had held Russian troops at bay for eleven years.

The popular saying, "A man's home is his castle," M.O.M. explained, could be traced to England, to the Magna Carta, which King John had been forced to sign in 1215, guaranteeing Englishmen the right to keep and bear arms. It had been understood, said the Manual, that this "meant castles with moats, ramparts, draw bridges, etc, and all of the other paraphernalia of a castle and needs to secure it... meaning that a man had the right to fortify his home against any who may assault it, and likewise, have the right to defend it in like manner."

The Founding Fathers, many of them fluent in Greek and Latin, the Trochmanns explained, had been well schooled in the historical role of the militias, and "There was much discussion during the constitutional convention as to how the states would secure their sovereignty and liberties from a

national government." They had been afraid the government would turn into a monarchy, and for that reason, had established three branches of government, with a clear separation of powers, and "protected the right of the Militia of the several states to keep and bear arms through the Second Amendment."

Although many Americans today believed the primary reason for the Second Amendment was to defend against criminals and for hunting, the Manual explained, the Founding Fathers had written this amendment so that the people could, as Thomas Jefferson had put it, "protect themselves against tyranny in government." Jefferson, M.O.M. noted, had understood that in order to take away their liberty it would be necessary to disarm Americans. In 1775 Jefferson had anticipated the arguments of the anti-gun advocates, that taking guns away from people would lower the crime rate, when he had copied into his Commonplace Book, Italian philosopher Cesare Beccaria's words:

False is the idea of utility... that would take fire from men because it burns, and water because one may drown in it; that has no remedy for evils except destruction (of liberty). The laws that forbid the carrying of arms are laws of such nature. They disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes, such laws serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man.

Most of the Founding Fathers had served in the Militia at one time or another, explained the Manual, and understood that it was the source of protection for the people's rights. They had also understood that the Constitution, in the future, would need to be interpreted with an understanding of the original intent. Indeed, its primary author, James Madison, had warned:

[D]o not separate text from historical background. If you do, you will have perverted and subverted the Constitution, which can only end in a distorted, bastardized form of illegitimate government.

In earlier times, explained M.O.M., Greece, Rome and Israel had all had militias, and when they had been replaced by standing armies under the complete control of a king or emperor, these nations had "all passed into oblivion." It explained how the National Guard had only been created in 1903 with the Dick Act, and was therefore not the Militia referred to in the state and federal Constitutions. A report by the Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on the Constitution was quoted, that concurred as recently as in 1982:

That the National Guard is not the "militia" referred to in the Second Amendment is even clearer today. Congress had organized the National Guard under its power to "raise and support armies" and not its power to "Provide for organizing, arming and disciplining the militia." The modern National Guard was specifically intended to avoid status as the constitutional militia, a distinction recognized by 10 U.S.C. 311(a).

In 1916, during World War I, recalled the M.O.M. Manual, when Teddy Roosevelt had offered to raise a Militia and lead it into battle in Europe, as he had done in Cuba, President Wilson had proceeded to alter the definition of the Militia and who controlled it. The National Guard had been put under the full control of the president, making him its commanding officer, not as president but as senior military officer—an important distinction. In effect, said M.O.M., Wilson had made the National Guard "a private army of the president." And so, Title 32 USC stated:

[T]he President shall prescribe regulations, and issue orders necessary to organize, discipline, and govern the National Guard.

States had soon been forced to comply under threat of loss of federal funding, explained the Manual, and the National Guard units, now federally funded, had been made subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and put under the direct command of the Secretary of the Army (which started under FDR). Massachusetts had been the last state to capitulate, in the 1950s. Montana, however, like many states, M.O.M. explained, in its definition of "Militia" in the state constitution, had retained the distinction between "organized" and "unorganized." It was stated in the legislation that insofar as the National Guard and the Montana Home Guard were concerned, federal regulations governed. But, said M.O.M., the "unorganized" Militia in Montana had remained that of the Second Amendment, with Montana reserving to itself that portion of the Militia provided for in Title 10-1-103, which stated:

[T]he unorganized militia... consists of the members of the militia who are not members of the organized militia.

M.O.M. pointed out that in instances around the world where a "militia" had played an important role in overthrowing a tyrannical government, as in the case of East Timor, or in the ousting of a foreign nation, such as Poland under Nazi Germany, when subsequently that militia had been disbanded and its weapons collected, this had resulted, in East Timor, in annexation by Indonesia, and in Poland, by the Soviet Union. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia, where the militias had also been strong and were disbanded at the close of the Second World War, likewise, had been absorbed by the Soviet Union. Although it had remained legal in the Soviet Union to own a shotgun or a hunting rifle, the ability to organize and bear arms had been eliminated, along with the leadership and organizations that would have allowed for training and preparation of militias.

M.O.M. explained that taking the "lead in the legislation of the disarming of America" was the organization Handgun Inc., and its founder Sarah Brady, who, the Militias believed, had showed her true intentions when she once stated:

Our task of creating a Socialist America can only succeed when those who would resist us have been totally disarmed.

It was Sarah Brady, readers of the Manual in early 1994 would have known, who was responsible for the Brady Bill, named after her husband, James Brady, the White House Press Secretary who had been wounded in 1981 in an assassination attempt against President Reagan, and left a paraplegic. The Brady Bill, passed in late 1993 (which had precipitated the forming of the Militia of Montana early the following year), required a five-day waiting period to buy a handgun, during which time a background check was to be performed, leaving a computer trail of information, that many already believed was the first step towards a national firearms registry.

The Manual went on to explain that Militias were not out of date, as some would argue, and this could be seen in places like the Kurdish territories, Croatia and Bosnia, where minority groups had recently been able to protect themselves with militias from majority oppression. In plain-carboard-box language, M.O.M. put it thus:

The militia, under the second amendment, is to be able to bare [sic] arms, meaning to use them in a military confrontation... The security of a free state is not found in the citizen having guns in the closet. It is found in the citizenry being trained, prepared, organized, equipped and led properly, so that if the government uses its force against the citizens, the people can respond with a superior

amount of arms, and appropriately defend their rights.

The framers had learned that the regular Army would not protect the rights of the people under the bureaucracy or [if] a tyrant went mad with power. It was not the army, or the bureaucratic officials, members of parliament or Governors who made up the Revolutionary militia, Continental Congress, or committees of Correspondence that started the war to protect the rights of man. It was John Q. Public—the common man... Our government by passing these Crime Bills and the Brady Bill have shown us that they are attempting to disarm the militias of the several states... It is not enough to have a gun, it takes knowing how to use it, when, and who you can trust and rely upon.

The lessons of history... If the army has control of the militia, then the militias will be obedient to the command of the army, which is in the command of the government. If the militia is independent and viable, then only laws which are right and just will come forth from the government, keeping the populace supportive and loyal to the government. To balance the military power of the nation, with the might of the militia, will put at odds any scheme by government officials to use the force of the government against the people. Therefore, when the codes and statutes are unjust for the majority of the people, the people will rightly revolt, and the government will have to acquiesce without a shot being fired.

Following this in the Manual was a modern-day "Declaration" by the Militia of Montana, modeled on the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for the Citizen's of this State, to exercise their right to protect and defend their lives, families, property and the right of this State to be free and independent, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to exercise their 2nd Amendment rights, which are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution of the United States of America.

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (property). That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. The history of the present federal government is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of absolute power and control over the citizen's of the State of Montana, and likewise, the rest of the several states of the union. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Following this were enumerated the current "Train of Abuses" that M.O.M. charged the government with, which began, "The present federal government has bribed the several states and their local governments into obeying their rules and regulations," which is "contrary to" the federal and state constitutions, through threats to "withhold... grants and/or funds." It continued with a long list: "federal intervention, manipulation and control" of trade; deprivation of trial by jury (tax foreclosures) and deprivation of the disadvantaged of a proper defense; "quartering large bodies of armed foreign troops among us and protecting them, by mock trials, from punishment for any murders which they have committed on the innocent inhabitants (Weaver, Waco, etc.)"; for erecting "a multitude of new offices," and sending "hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance, often these officers being under foreign control and finance"; giving its consent to agencies that "have unconstitutionally plundered our homes, ravaged our property, burned our homes, and destroyed the lives of our people as well as murdering innocent citizen's"; "altering

fundamentally our forms of government, which our Founding Fathers bled and died for, without the consent of the governed"; and rendering the states defenseless "by taking away their organized militia..." and "disarming the unorganized militia by laws which are unconstitutional." (The reference to "foreign troops," as I was learning, meant "federal," as opposed to state or local law enforcement, a qualification that at first had sounded totally off the wall to me, but was indeed backed by a cogent argument.)

The M.O.M. Declaration, continuing its imitation of the Declaration of Independence, concluded:

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; to the judiciary, the legislative and the executive branches of this present government; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.

Nor have we remained silent to our fellow citizen's. We have warned them from time to time of the usurpations and travesties that this present government has done to them and continues to do to them; Some have listened; Some have not;

This present federal government has, by it's actions, declared war upon it's citizen's;

As our fellow citizen's have not consented to altering or abolishing the form of government guaranteed to us through the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Montana, we, therefore, the able-bodied citizen's of the State of Montana, do, by and through the authority of the citizen's of the State of Montana and the citizen's of the several States united, have the right to protect and defend our lives, families, property and the right of the State of Montana to be a free and independent State, in the form our Founding Fathers enacted for our use.

This was followed by a section of quotes from The Federalist Papers, a collection of essays by the Founding Fathers that illustrated, among other things, their thinking on the Militia. These writings had appeared in the various newspapers after the Constitution was drafted, when the Antifederalists were arguing against ratification unless a Bill of Rights was included to protect the newly-won freedoms. The Federalists, arguing that these freedoms were already sufficiently protected because the body of the people constituted an armed Militia, against which no government tyranny could prevail, had included Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, and left no doubt as to their intention that there be a self-regulating citizens Militia. In Number 28 Hamilton had argued:

The militia is a voluntary force not associated or under the control of the state except when called out; a permanent or long-standing force would be entirely different in make-up and call.

In Number 69 he had said also:

The president, and government, will only control the militia when a part of them is in the actual service of the federal government, else, they are independent and not under the command of the president or the government. The states would control the militia, only when called out into the service of the state, and then the governor would be the commander in chief where enumerated in the respective state constitution.

Madison had written on this, in Number 46:

The highest number to which a standing army can be carried in any country does not exceed one hundredth part of the number of the souls, or one twenty-fifth part of the number able to bear arms.

This proportion would not yield, in the United States, an army of more than twenty-five or thirty thousand men. To these would be opposed a militia amounting to near half a million of citizens with arms in their hands, officered by men chosen from among themselves, fighting for their common liberties and united and conducted by governments possessing their affections and confidence. It may well be doubted whether a militia thus circumstanced could ever be conquered by such a proportion of regular troops. Besides the advantage of being armed, [a militia] forms a barrier against the enterprises of ambition, more insurmountable than any which a simple government of any form can admit of. The governments of Europe are afraid to trust the people with arms. If they did, the people would certainly shake off the yoke of tyranny, as America did. Let us not insult the free and gallant citizens of America with the suspicion that they would be less able to defend the rights of which they would be in actual possession than the debased subjects of arbitrary power would be to rescue theirs from the hands of their oppressors.

Next, in the Militia of Montana Manual was a section that cited the passages in the U.S. and Montana constitutions authorizing the Militia. Aside from the Second Amendment, the "Constitution of the United States of America," it noted, made three references to the Militia—two under the powers granted Congress, and one under the executive powers. Together they read:

To provide for calling out the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrection and repel Invasions;

(Article I, Section 8, #15)

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

(Article I, Section 8, #16)

The President shall be the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual service of the United States.

(Article II, Section 2, #1)

M.O.M. noted that among the articles pertaining to the Militia in the "Constitution of the State of Montana," Article VI, Section 13 stated:

The militia forces shall consist of all able-bodied citizens of the state except those exempted by law.

This meant, as in most states, that almost everyone not in the armed forces was a member of the Montana Militia. Quoted also were, Daniel Webster, Winston Churchill, John Salter, Edmund Burke, and Thomas Jefferson, who had once stated:

When governments fear the people there is liberty. When the people fear the government there is tyranny.

Following was the Militia of Montana's statement of "Intent" (still in mock-Colonial), which stated:

We, the able-bodied Citizen's of Montana, hold these truths to be self-evident, that when the

government is instituted among men for the purpose of protecting their rights and liberties, it is the DUTY of man to put on the cloak of liberty for the sake of protecting man-kind from government that is out of control and that has transformed itself into a Tyrant. Just as our Founding Fathers of this Country shook off their shackles of bondage, so must we.

THEREFORE, we, hereby solemnly publish and declare that as free, able-bodied Citizen's of the State of Montana [we] do hereby pledge to exercise our right to protect and defend our lives, families and properties, by and through the authority of the free people of this state and of this nation, and to further this protection, we hereby form as members of the unorganized militia of the State of Montana, a volunteer organization to be known as the "Militia of Montana, _____ County, Unit _____"

This had been the model for statements by Militias around the country. It was followed by the section, "Rules and Regulations," with the chapters: "Rank and Structure," "Taking Up Arms," "Officers and Members," "Funding and Property," "Association," "Law and Justice," and "General Provisions." Each unit commander, it explained, was to be chosen by the unanimous vote of the members for a two-year term. Officers were to be chosen by the commander, supported by a members vote of two thirds. The uniform would consist of bluejeans and a gray shirt. Dissatisfied members were encouraged to break off and form new units.

The rank and structure, it said, should mirror that of the "organized" state Militia (the National Guard), without violating the military code. When engaged in the active service of the state, the unit was to be organized according to that branch it was in service with.

All able-bodied state citizens over twenty, in no case under eighteen, were eligible for membership. A new member was to have the Declaration read to him by an officer, and be voted in by a three quarters vote. Then, the new member would "be enlisted" by reading "the covenant of service":

I (state name) shall faithfully execute the Constitutional laws of the Union and the United States of America and the State of Montana, to the best of my ability; to protect, defend and uphold the Constitution of the United States of America and the State of Montana against all enemies foreign and domestic.

The M.O.M. Manual called for every unit to send a representative to the sheriff and county commissioners "with a letter of greetings and notice of the ability to serve." However, the Militia could only be called into service with a unanimous vote during roll call, and could not be used against unarmed citizens, "nor," Most importantly, "against armed Citizen's" defending "the constitutions of the State of Montana and of the United States of America" (meaning Constitutional Militias. A unit could only be called into service by the governor, the county commissioners, the sheriff, or the unit commander (of a Constitutional Militia). It could be called up to exercise the right of defense, only for the protection of lives and property of state citizens and the state and U.S. constitutions, "against all enemies foreign and domestic."

The Militia unit could not be used against the police or governmental authority within the state, "except by call out by the representative authority of the government, with the sustaining vote of the Unit," and only when there existed "crimes of violation of their oath of office." It was to be used outside the state only in times of invasion and with the unanimous approval of all the members, as well as permission from the governor and a majority vote of the county commissioners. ("Invasion,"

as I was learning, for the Militias, could consist of federal troops entering any state of the Union.)

No member received pay, and all were responsible for their own uniforms and equipment. It advised collecting dues, with a suggested \$20 application fee and \$5 a month, and stipulated that donations could be accepted only without any strings attached. Funding was not to be accepted from any political entity except in times of a general call-out. Interference by the federal government would not be tolerated.

Disobedience of the lawful orders of a superior and the commission of a crime were grounds for dismissal. A member could also be dismissed by a two-thirds vote. But members were guaranteed a fair hearing in all cases.

Members were to support all laws not in contravention of the "Constitution of the United States of America" as well as the state constitution. The Manual referred to the (federal) Constitution's Article VI, paragraph 2, which said:

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States, which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; ...shall be the supreme Law of the Land, and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Members were to be subject to the highest moral standards. They would at all times be respectful of civil authorities and the rights of citizens, and were to suppress insurrections against laws "held to be Constitutional." Units, however, could be called into service for use against any armed force not authorized to assemble in the state by the federal and state constitutions. (Those familiar with Militia thinking would know that this could be interpreted to include the ATF, FBI and other federal police forces, as well as the regular army, on the grounds that there were no federal police powers in the Constitution—which was why the government was seeing red regarding the Militias.) Units could also be called into service to assist in time of natural or manmade disasters.

In the Manual was a grammatical diagram of the Second Amendment:

A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of the state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

The diagram, prepared by a woman named Bernadine Smith (of the Second Amendment Committee in Hanford, California), showed that the words, "shall not be infringed," constituted the "predicate" in the sentence, therefore meant to be a "restrictive" clause. These same four words, showed the diagram, contained as they were in the "declaratory," latter part of the sentence, applied equally to both subjects, the "militia" in the first clause, and the "right" (of the people) in the second clause—meaning, to the Militia "collectively" and to (the right of) the people "individually." Accordingly, Smith explained, there was another grammatically-correct way to phrase the Second Amendment (without changing the meaning), which was:

Because a well-regulated Militia is necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

Next to the diagram was quoted a man by the name of A.C. Brocki, who was described as a "teacher of Advanced English, a foremost expert in grammar, former Senior Editor for Houghton Mifflin," who concurred, saying that in the Second Amendment, what was meant was "that the people have the

right that is mentioned"—to "keep and bear arms."

On the subject of grammar, in fact, one of the foremost experts on the English language, Roy Copperud, author of *American Usage and Style: The Consensus*, a member of the usage panel of the American Heritage Dictionary and expert frequently cited in Merriam Webster's Usage Dictionary, had the following to say in response to written questions regarding the true meaning of the Second Amendment:

The sentence does not restrict the right to keep and bear arms, nor does it state or imply possession of the right elsewhere or by others than the people; it simply makes a positive statement with respect to the right of the people... [which] right is not granted by the amendment; its existence is assumed. The thrust of the sentence is that the right shall be preserved inviolate for the sake of ensuring a militia... The right to keep and bear arms is deemed unconditional by the entire sentence...

To the best of my knowledge, there has been no change in the meaning of the words or in usage that would affect the meaning of the amendment. If it were written today, it might be put: "Since a well-regulated militia is necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be abridged."

Underneath Smith's Second Amendment sentence diagram in the M.O.M. Manual was the Preamble to the Bill of Rights, which stated, as I now knew, that the ten Articles were "further declaratory and restrictive clauses" added "in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of [the Constitution's] powers."

On the back cover of the Manual was an essay by Smith, titled, "Interpreting the Meaning & Purpose of the Second Amendment." Contrary to much contemporary opinion, she explained, the reason the Framers had put the Militia first in the sentence, "A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of the State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed," had been in order to stress both the importance of "the collective use of the right to arms," and that the individual right had "equal status."

Smith recalled that when the Constitution had been submitted to Virginia in 1787 for ratification, for three weeks, Patrick Henry (who had made the "give me liberty or give me death" speech) had railed against it every day, warning that it had been written "as if only good men will take office!" The main reason for objecting to the Constitution, he had argued, was that "it does not leave us the means for defending our rights or waging war against tyrants." Already, he warned that the federal government was being given too much money and power and that it would end up converting the states "into one solid empire."

Another area that Patrick Henry had believed needed greater limitations, noted Smith, was treaty power. He had argued for another Constitutional Convention, but had agreed to settle for a Bill of Rights. Over the protestations, the secretary of the Constitutional Convention, future-President James Madison, argued that a Bill of Rights was not necessary because the government would exercise only those powers delegated it, with Patrick Henry replying, "Let Mr. Madison tell me, when did liberty ever exist when the sword and the purse were given up from the people?" It was only after Madison was blocked from the first Senate, and he promised to draft a Bill of Rights, that he was able to secure a seat in the House of Representatives. On December 15, 1791, related Smith, man's natural rights, thus, were memorialized in the Bill of Rights, becoming the "unrevokable and superior part of

the Constitution."

She ended, quoting Patrick Henry once again:

Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel! Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force, and whenever you give up that force, you are inevitably ruined!

Toward the back of the M.O.M. Manual were diagrams for setting up "Militia Support Groups," as well as Militia "cells." The support groups, it was explained, were to be structured so they could be easily transformed into Militias with a military chain of command. There were sample worksheets for keeping track of the command network and members (these were soon to be discontinued, when it became clear that the authorities were anxious to get their hands on them).

At the back of the Manual, in good country-store manner, was a list of "Materials to Assist You in Your Preparation"—video and audiotapes and publications, available for purchase from M.O.M.—which included a number of government military manuals on subjects such as survival, guerrilla warfare, special forces, unconventional warfare, map reading, booby traps, hand to hand fighting, small arms defense, how to escape from confinement, clothing and equipment, caching, training, and medical care. Highly recommended was the selection, *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu, who was quoted:

To win without fighting is best.

John Trochmann grimaced as he continued, explaining to me in the interview, "Then came the problems with infiltrators. By the summer, there were snakes everywhere you turned. We'd come out with this networking program to put people in touch with people. What started the program was a radio show in Detroit, Michigan—the Mark Scott show. He had read part of one of our newsletters on his talk show, and there was such an uproar, with people from Michigan calling Montana for more information, we realized that these people needed a way to get in touch with each other. There were all these people that don't even know the other person exists, so we started a system of putting people in touch with people in Michigan. That was the beginning of our network program. And one of the main people involved in helping us get going on this was a beautiful woman, and I'm not going to give you her name, that still is part of the Detroit Police Department. She's a police officer, and she felt she wanted to find ways to get in touch with people too, and she begged us to get involved in this. She was very concerned about her country.

"When we started putting people together, the provocateurs decided to jump on board. There were many instances of people calling and saying, 'Why are you circulating this person's name and giving our name to him? We know that he has been convicted of a felony and works for a federal agency to keep himself out of the pen.' And we kept getting these reports all over the country as we were networking. These were people who had authorized us to network their name with others; we didn't do any of it without authorization first. But then we began to realize that this is a dangerous program because of all the infiltrators and the inability of our fellow Americans to recognize what could be there. There were a tremendous amount of naive people out there who were too doggone trusting. We, the Trochmanns, had gone through the pits of Hell as it were, and were not very trusting. That's when we came up with the checklist of who to allow into your cell structure system."

An insert had been added to the Manual in the summer of 1994, with the heading, "Tips on Networking," with recommendations on how to recognize government infiltrators. It advised that

Militia members should "Beware of all strangers," noting that successful resistance groups, historically, had been small groups or cells where members knew and trusted one other from long experience. Someone who said all the right things and supplied money, warned M.O.M., should not be trusted. Nor should someone whose background and interests were different. It advised doing a little investigation of new people, bearing in mind the ruthlessness of tyrants, and that a government that would "mass-murder innocent families" (as at Ruby Ridge and Waco) was "not going to play 'fair.'"

"Be double aware of a stranger who proposes illegal activities," it warned. "You will find him testifying against you in federal court." It advised against handling someone else's weapon, or "you may find your fingerprints showing up at a crime scene." People who received paychecks from the enemy, it warned, could have divided loyalties. And it called for recognizing media tactics and not reacting to buzzwords such as: "religious separatists," "white supremacists," "Nazis," etc.

"We must be committed to spreading the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," it emphasized, to informing the masses and getting them to be sympathetic. "There is an enormous amount of moral high ground which has been abandoned by our foes. Claim it and use it."

At the bottom of the page, it said in tiny italics, "we are everywhere."

Trochmann continued, "We got on talk shows all over the country. We ended up on the Phil Donohue show, I think, in November of 1994. The staff asked me to recommend other people to be on the panel of Militia people, along with myself and my cohort Bob Fletcher, so I did. And when they found out that the one person I had recommended was a black man, they tried to cancel him out—J.J. Johnson. And I said, 'If you cancel him, you'll cancel all of us. That's the way it is.' The reason, we discovered, was that they had members of the ADL [Anti-Defamation League of the B'Nai B'Rith] on that panel also, and they were going to use this stupid racist thing against us, but it wouldn't work very well if J.J. Johnson was sitting there. Now, would it?"

"They tried to get us to sign a contract that would cause us never to do another show until theirs aired, but we said, 'No, this is not going to work this way. We're gonna give you thirty days to either air it or we're gonna go do other shows.' And they said OK and decided not to air it. So we put out bulletins all over the country to call this number to get our show aired. And NBC had to hire extra people to handle the phone lines, and they finally aired the show, incorrectly. I mean, they did a bad job of it. They showed firearms in front of the screen and made bad statements about us, and across the screen during the breaks they showed the Second Amendment minus the words, 'right of the people.' They took that out of the Second Amendment."

Trochmann's eyes never ceased sizing me up as he spoke, like some Scandinavian villager in an Ingmar Bergman film, always on guard before strangers. He clasped his rough, dry hands together on the table with solemnity, holding tight, as he laid out his life story to a stranger. All the time, I could see him questioning in his mind whether to continue.

"Early '95, a couple of things happened. March second, I kissed my wife goodbye at 6 o'clock in the morning and headed east to rally with a number of other people, to visit the Freemen in eastern Montana, in Roundup. My purpose for going there was to get a mission statement from them. Find out first hand what they were all about. They were not yet under siege; this was a year earlier. They were teaching Common Law trusts, about the Federal Reserve, how corrupt it was. We wanted to put

out a mission statement about them in our newsletter, based on what they had to say, themselves.

"So I met up with other people on the way to eastern Montana. Roundup was eleven hours away from us, so its not like a hop, skip and a jump. When we got to the Freeman's, I had a severe headache because I had followed a diesel truck all the way there. The next day, we sat down and they were to give me this mission statement, which ended up being a three-foot stack of paper, with a fist on top of it that said, 'If you want to know our mission, read this. This is our mission statement.'

"I said, 'I have 24 hours to get home. I want your mission statement. I'm a slow reader. That's a year's worth of reading there.' They broke their promise to me right off the bat by not having this mission statement ready. Later that day, we found out that some of the people had gotten arrested. Dale Jacoby and Frank Delano were the first two people to be arrested, in the afternoon of March 3. Supposedly, they were trying to file Freeman papers in the courthouse, which the judge had allegedly passed orders against allowing them to do.

"I was in the ranch house several miles out of town. The Freeman didn't move to the Clark ranch, which is way east of there in Jordan, until the fall. So we're headed home, and we went into town to find out what was going on with these guys. We couldn't get the sheriff's department to admit to having seized these people, yet some of our people saw them being arrested. So we had our Militia of Montana office make an official call to them.

"As one of my passengers went in to confront the sheriff's department and see what was going on, and to retrieve his radio, that the sheriff's department had confiscated from the other two people that were arrested, the next thing I know, two deputies came roaring out, headed in my direction. I wondered, 'What in the world is going on?' And I looked behind my shoulder to see who they were after, and by the time I turned around, there was a twelve-gauge shotgun in my face. And the guy had his eyes rolled back like a mad cow. You couldn't even see his pupils, and he was kicking the fender in the door and he blew the window out, and I ended up being arrested. And I thought this mad person was going to kill me on the spot. So I was incarcerated for thirteen days.

"One of the things they charged me with was criminal syndicalism. Its been declared unconstitutional, but its still on the books in Montana. I was looking at 52 years in prison for sitting in my car waiting for my passenger. We got Senator John DeCamp from Nebraska involved as our attorney, and all the charges were eventually dropped without any adjudication. In the case right now, we are bringing suit against them for what they've done to us. Then, in April, a few weeks later, the bombs went off in Oklahoma City, on the 19th—there's that date again."

John DeCamp had explained in a second edition of his book, *The Franklin Coverup*, that the Trochmanns had decided to contact him because they had read his book. In the section on his defense of John Trochmann in early 1995, along with six Freeman, DeCamp described the experience as, "one of the strangest cases in which I had ever been involved." The "Montana Seven," as he called them, he related, were put under bail requirements of hundreds of thousands of dollars, after being "charged with the crime of sedition with mandatory 10- and 20-year prison terms," when "their 'crime' was that they had met with individuals like themselves—not for any actual violation of the law." The arrests, stated DeCamp, had been "unconstitutional," and he had become convinced, irrespective of what he thought of their beliefs, that "these individuals had done nothing wrong, but were classic victims of improper government arrest, harassment, and abuse... under color of law."

In a written ultimatum to the Montana Attorney General, included in the book, where he requested

the dismissal of all the charges and threatened to make it into a "civil rights case," DeCamp had described the arrest and what followed:

A couple of defendants go into the sheriff's office to seek return of the Lopez radio and the others wait in their car properly parked in front of the sheriff's office. None of the Montana Seven defendants does anything improper or illegal. All are polite.

But suddenly, with lightning speed and led by Deputy Jones, the officials assault these individuals. They believe, apparently driven by paranoia, they have a right to capture. Again, led by Deputy Jones, the Montana Seven are trussed up like hogs; handcuffed with their hands behind their backs; forced to lie for six hours in pain on concrete trussed up and handcuffed. They abuse them in a variety of other ways, threaten them with loaded shotguns in their backs and chests, break out car windows, question them in violation of all legal and proper police standards; charge them with felonies of every ilk and description and fabricate allegations to support their charges and their actions. The officials lie to the relatives and friends calling into the sheriff's office and repeatedly deny that the Montana Seven are even in jail or have been arrested.

And these things recited here are the nicest things the local officials do.

An example of the leaks to the press by the authorities, DeCamp related, was a pending charge of "counterfeiting," which turned out to be based on possession of a \$3 bill bought in a novelty store. There was so much media hype, he wrote, with the press repeating the officials' "leaks" in "one sordid wild tale after another," and politicians jumping on the bandwagon, "proclaiming the evils of terrorists and how the state must not be a victim of such terrorists," that "the families and businesses of the Montana Seven are horribly damaged." DeCamp, eventually, was able to get all the charges dismissed. (In a subsequent federal lawsuit against the sheriff's department brought by John Trochmann, the judge ruled that Trochmann's civil rights had not been violated, but nevertheless awarded him his legal expenses plus \$200 for damage to his pistol, which a deputy sheriff had confiscated and inscribed with his initials.)

DeCamp explained that at the same time as the lawsuit, he was dealing assiduously with the offices of the Montana governor and attorney general, and officials in Washington, as well as the national press, "trying to prevent an outbreak of violence spawned by either the militias or by the government." From the time of Trochmann's arrest in early February, DeCamp said, and all through March and early April, the April 19 date was a hot issue among the patriots. He wrote:

[R]umors were flying through the entire Militia and Patriot community on almost an hourly basis, warning of imminent raids by federal officials against militia compounds. Nationwide, militias were circulating reports in all their fax, press and phone networks that these raids were coming, and that militia members had better be prepared.

The militias specified in their written and oral communications, the date April 19, 1995, as the date of the impending onslaught...

Federal officials advised us that no attack was planned, information we relayed to militia leaders... working non stop to defuse the extremely volatile situation... [I]t was inevitable that the Feds showed up on my doorstep right after the Oklahoma bombing.

It seemed that the Militias had had information that "something" was going to happen on the second

anniversary of the Waco massacre in 1995. But they had not known what, exactly. What had happened, was the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City.

John Trochmann continued, "Right as soon as that happened, we contacted John DeCamp to get a court injunction to stop the demolition of the evidence, of what was left of the building. But the harder we pushed, the faster the building came down. And McVeigh's attorney, Stephen Jones, was at the head of the class to bring it down. How would you like to have him for an attorney to defend you? A scary thought, isn't it? He went out to look at the building for half an hour and says, 'Yeah, bring it down. We don't need it as evidence.' What kind of an attorney would do that? Not one that's looking out for the defense of his client, for sure. Apparently, McVeigh had total trust in him." (In fact, Jones, who had no explosives expertise, later said that he did not agree with General Partin's analysis, but gave no explanation.)

"Just after the 'bombs' went off—that's plural—," continued Trochmann, "we ended up with an avalanche of media personnel at our doorstep because the U.S. Attorney in Oklahoma City said there were Militia ties. It was about two days later. At that time, which was a Friday, the media went right off the scale on us, and for the following three weeks we had approximately 360 different media at our doorstep. The population of Noxon, Montana, which is about 300, more than doubled. It was an absolute circus. About 300 of them were U.S. media, and 90% of them had the same questions, in the same order. I could look them in the eye and tell them what their next question would be. It was just ridiculous.

"As a result of how we were treated by much of mainstream media, and their twisted stories that they told of the interviews there, we have since banned the media from our offices. We found six bugs planted in our office. We found merchandise missing, and we just drew the line and said, 'No more. If they want to interview us, it'll have to be off the property.'

"This lasted several weeks, and we contacted John DeCamp—my nephew Randy did—and said, 'You know, it doesn't seem fair, John, that we should bear the brunt of this entire storm, and the Senate trying to pass bills against us,' meaning the Militia, 'that we not have our day before the Senate. Why don't you get us an invitation to sit down in front of Senator Specter's office on the Anti-terrorism bill?' So he acquired an invitation for us to bring the Militia to Washington on May 25th. Late the 24th, we landed in Washington, only to find that the meetings had been canceled. We broke our piggy banks, we took every last dime we could to get the airline tickets to get there. Senator Specter's reason for canceling was because Senator Dole pulled rank on him and said that there'd be no Militia hearings, that they were going to have budget hearings.

"So the 25th, we scheduled a press conference at this hotel we were staying at. Acquaintances within the CIA says, 'You might as well forget about it. You're not going to have anybody from the press show up. They're going to stay and cover the budget.' We said, 'Well you don't mind if we have the press conference, do you?' And they said, 'Well we can't really say anything about it,' and I said, 'That's right, you can't.'

"We held the press conference, and we took all the media off Capitol Hill. The place was absolutely packed, including C-SPAN, CNN, the major networks, etc. And we ran that press conference for one hour. C-SPAN aired it several times. And then, right after that, Time magazine came out with this little article about, the Militia comes to Washington, their meeting is canceled, and they're left here with time on their hands in all these federal buildings. Talk about sick yellow journalism!

"So, we visited with Senator Specter, and we told him, 'If you want us to come back to Washington, D.C., the bill will have to be on you next time. We can't afford it. You broke our bank.' So it was rescheduled for June 15, and they purchased the tickets and sent them."

As I listened to him, I was slowly coming to understand that John Trochmann, in his own way, was a visionary—a dark visionary who painted a stark present and a bleak future. I felt that, somewhere, he inhabited still an ancient northern Scandinavian landscape of trolls and orcs, under the unrelenting glare of the midnight sun, and the multi-color Northern Lights. What I had before me was a character out of Ingmar Bergman's black and white film, *The Seventh Seal*, about Sweden in the Middle Ages, grappling with the Black Plague, and why God had abandoned them.

I was certain that John had seen the face of his God. And He was a wrathful God.

On June 15, 1995, when the C-SPAN cameras zoomed in on the two panels at the Senate hearings—one, of senators, the other, of Militia leaders—John Trochmann sat there, bristly and straight as a pine tree in the northern snow.

Chapter 6

SENATE HEARINGS, PETITIONING FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES

When all forms of government, in little as in great, things, shall rely on Washington as the center of all political power, it will render useless the checks of one government provided on another, and become as venal and oppressive as the government from which we separated.

Benjamin Franklin

On the panel with John Trochmann on June 15 were four other Militiamen; in all, they represented three Militias. John was accompanied by Bob Fletcher, who had joined the Militia of Montana early on, and was the official spokesman. Represented also was the Michigan Militia, which, unlike M.O.M., emphasized military preparedness, and was generally considered to be the largest Militia in the country. By many estimates, its numbers reached into the five figures. Norman Olson, the commander, and Ken Adams, the communications officer, were present. Having heard so often in the media that the Militias were racist, I was surprised at the time, to see that the fifth person on the panel, representing the Ohio Unorganized Citizens Militia, was black—J.J. Johnson.

The hearings were chaired by Senator Arlen Specter (R-Penn.), who was the chief Senate sponsor of the Anti-terrorism bill that Clinton was pushing. Specter (known to be a staunch supporter of the ADL, which, along with the Southern Poverty Law Center, was pushing for draconian anti-Militia legislation) commenced, stating, "These hearings have been convened to inquire into a number of questions. First, to what extent, if at all, do the Militia pose a threat to public safety and the federal government? And the other side of that coin is, to what extent are Americans joining the Militia because they feel, rightly or wrongly, that the federal government poses a threat to their constitutional rights?" The senator said there were indications that there were 224 Militias operating in 39 states, and he believed it was no coincidence that Oklahoma had occurred on April 19, exactly two years

after Waco. Nevertheless, he said, "I believe that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in America today, on many lines, rightly or wrongly, and that these questions ought to be aired and ought to be ventilated."

Montana Senator Max Baucus (D), in his opening statement, informed the audience that in Montana the Militia was divided into three groups: the Militia of Montana, the North American Volunteer Militia and the Freemen. (His facts were wrong from the start, for the Freemen, of course, were not a Militia.) Senator Baucus said that law-enforcement officers (in Montana) believed that while there were about 25 to 30 hard-core Militia leaders, only some five hundred people in the state had casually attended Militia meetings. The leaders, he said, tended to share two beliefs: one, suspicion of the government; and two, "a deep strain of racism and anti-Semitism." (I wondered how he was able to reconcile the "racism" with J.J. Johnson's presence on the panel.)

Michigan Senator Carl Levin (D), professing to describe the Militias' internal publications and instructional materials, said they were "filled with the language of hate and paranoid conspiracy theories." In one publication, he said, it was written that "there are four massive crematoriums in the USA now complete with gas chambers and guillotines, more than 130 concentration camps already set up from Florida to Alaska, more than two million of us are already on computer lists for detention and liquidation." Levin said, "People have the right to say hateful things—and believe hateful things—about their government. But that doesn't make it right to say them, and extreme rhetoric contributes to an incendiary atmosphere in which an unstable individual will take the rhetoric seriously and light a match or a fuse."

Next, I thought, he would be advocating a law against criticizing the government. Freedom of speech notwithstanding, it was, after all, against the law to yell "fire" in a crowded theater. If the government could sell this analogy to the public, what was to keep them from passing laws against criticizing the government? (Such legislation would, in fact, be proposed the following year.)

At one point in the hearing, one of the senators held up an acid-yellow sheet of paper showing a drawing of Hitler with his right arm raised, superimposed on a target. The senator said it was an example of the racist, anti-Semitic hate literature the Militias were putting out. A Militia panel member, however, immediately identified it as a poster put out by a Jewish civil-rights organization in Milwaukee—Jews For the Preservation of Firearms Ownership (JPFO). What it said under Hitler's image was: "ALL IN FAVOR OF 'GUN CONTROL' RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND." This was an allusion to this Jewish civil rights organization's public position that the Holocaust could not have happened if the Jews in Europe had been armed. Copies of this poster could be bought in bulk, and were meant to be used for target practice.

A Bunyanesque John Trochmann, sitting before the senators looking solemn and grandfatherly, gray beard and mustache, like a village elder of yore, explained in his peculiarly-stilted manner, "The following are just a few examples as to why Americans are becoming more and more involved in the Militia-patriot organizations. The high office of the presidency has been turned into a position of dictatorial oppression through the abusive use of executive orders and directives... When the president overrules the Congress by executive order, representative government fails... When the average citizen must work for half of each year just to pay their taxes while billions of our tax dollars are forcibly sent to bail out the banking elite, when our fellow Americans are homeless, starving, and without jobs, Congress wonders why their constituents get upset. When government allows our military to be ordered and controlled by foreigners, under presidential orders, allowing foreign armies

to train on our soil, allowing our military to label caring patriots as the enemy, then turn their tanks loose on U.S. citizens to murder and destroy, or directs a sniper to shoot a mother in the face while holding her infant in her arms—you bet your constituents get upset..."

In his characteristically-dry manner, he stated, "We the people have had about all we can stand of the twisted, slanted, biased media of America, who take their signals from a few private, covert, special interest groups bent on destroying what's left of the American way... A nation can survive its fools, even the ambitious, but it cannot survive treason from within. America has nothing to fear from patriots maintaining vigilance; she should, however, fear those that would outlaw vigilance."

Ken Adams of the Michigan Militia, looking lawyerly and comfortable in his conservative dark suit and tie, explained that the Militias were not racists or anti-Semitic, though there were bound to be fringe groups and others that would "try to attach themselves to our coattails... and try to get their public attention too—but it is wrong. If they use hate, if they use violence. If they do not abide by the law, we will be the first to expose them."

Norman Olson of the Michigan Militia, wearing camouflage fatigues and cap, with several rows of "fruit salad" over his heart and a single gold star on each point of his collar, in far-more colorful manner than Trochmann or Adams, explained to the senators that the right to form Militias and keep and bear arms had existed from antiquity. "Fundamentally, it is not the state that defends the people but the people who defend the state... The Militia existed before there was a nation or government. The Militia... is the very authority out of which the United States Constitution grew." I had never thought about it that way, but it struck me that this was true. Olson was deft with words, the preacher in him shaping the emotion-laden words into vessels for a message of unmistakable rebuke.

"The federal government itself is the child of the armed citizen. We the People are the parent of the child we call government. You senators are part of the child that We the People gave life to. The increasing amount of federal encroachment into our lives indicates the need for parental corrective action... In short, the federal government needs a good spanking to make it behave."

The senators were all scowling now, and Specter, like a child pulling a cat's tail, began baiting Olson. He said, "I heard you say on national television that you could understand why someone would bomb the Oklahoma City Federal Building. How can you say that?"

"What I said was that I understand the dynamic of retribution," replied Olson. "Revenge and retribution are a natural dynamic which occurs when justice is taken out of the equation," and, "We are the people who are opposed to racism and hatred. We are people who love our government and love the Constitution... The thing that we stand against is corruption. We stand against oppression and tyranny in government." At that point, the Michigan preacher-Militia commander in fatigues, bursting with forthrightness and looking straight at the senators, said, "Many of us are coming to the conclusion that you best represent that corruption and tyranny."

Taking this personally, Senator Specter shot back angrily, "I want to have a full discussion with you, Mr. Olson, because I want your ideas fully exposed." When Olson suggested that there were other people on the panel, Senator Specter retorted petulantly, "I know, but I'm the chairman... I want to hear all your ideas because I want your ideas compared to mine." "And I want to let the American public judge whether you're right or I'm right... I don't take lightly your comment to me that I represent corruption. I don't take that lightly at all. And I want you to prove it if you're going to say

that."

Olson retorted that when the FBI director had said on April 27 that the Michigan Militia had had nothing to do with Oklahoma, and no one had picked up on that, and, "I submit to you sir, that the Central Intelligence Agency has been in the business of killing Americans around the world since 1946. I submit to you, sir, that the Central Intelligence Agency is probably the grandest conspirator behind all of this government. And I submit to you, sir, that perhaps the puppeteer's strings of the Central Intelligence Agency reach even into the senators perhaps before us..."

"Well," said Senator Specter, his voice lowered, "as long as you say 'perhaps,' Mr. Olson."

I had been caught off guard. Generally, it was from the left that such charges against the CIA were made, and the Militias were supposed to be right-wing. Until then, I had always thought of the "right" as Republicans who talked about "small government" but in fact supported increased police powers and a big military, also with police powers, which translated into a police state at the service of big business. I hadn't known about populist conservatives. Recently, under Clinton, the Democrats were openly supporting the same thing as the Establishment Republicans—big business and big police. (Perhaps when they were in office they always had—at least, in recent times.) To many, Olson's statements were a breath of fresh air. What was clear was that these Militiamen were refusing to play the Washington game. They were there on their own terms. It would strike me over and over, however, during the coming months that when the left made such accusations, it was called "healthy debate," but when the Militias did so, they were "anti-government."

Senator Fred Thompson (R-Tenn.), anxious to get his two cents in, after stating with more than a touch of sanctimoniousness, "We do have a democratic society," proceeded to inquire of J.J. Johnson, "What's your problem with working through the process to solve these problems?"

Johnson replied that the Militias advocated voting more than anything, but people were "getting outright economically terrorized, socially terrorized..." He said, "What this militia is now, it's a mindset. Its the civil rights movement of the nineties." This was the most memorable phrase in the hearings, and all the more poignant because Johnson was black.

J.J. said, "It's people drawing a line in the sand." He said, "Let me talk about the racist aspect now. It's getting old. I'm getting real tired of being called a Klan member. I'm getting tired of being called a member of the Aryan Nations. I spoke two weeks ago down at the Lincoln Memorial along with two other black people and Jews For the Preservation of Firearms... and the reports came out that a racist, anti-Semitic group held a rally at the Lincoln Memorial. Are these people blind, or is there an agenda afoot here?" He continued, "Good grief, almost half the people in Waco who got killed were black. This movement isn't about guns and skin color. It's about liberty. Its about freedom."

Earlier, he had begun to drive his message home when he had said, "Its only a matter of time before an armed confrontation." Johnson had stated, "We're the calm ones. We're the ones who calm people down... The animosity I see out there between the citizens, all of them, and the government, is frightening... I feel that with the increasing polarization between the tax-paying public out there... that the only thing standing between some of the current legislation being contemplated and armed conflict is time."

"You can see from the last two years of sales from the firearms producers in this country, this nation is probably one of the most heavily armed forces on earth. And I have heard more and more people

say, 'If one of these black-suited, armor-wearing, state-sponsored terrorists come kicking down my door I'm going to blow somebody away.' They don't call themselves Militia, they don't even call themselves patriots, they call themselves American citizens who are getting tired of confiscatory tax rates, heavy regulation, which, they believe, are leading them down the path to involuntary servitude." J.J.'s passionate message, in many ways, was easier for me to hear than that of the others, because he spoke a more familiar, urban language.

One of the things that would strike me during the coming months, living in a big city as I did, was how differently people outside the cities thought. While in the cities people rarely mentioned the Constitution, except as something the experts were concerned with (usually the ACLU), outside the city, people referred to the Constitution as a contemporary document, meant to be held up to the government by ordinary people as an everyday standard. Increasingly, ordinary people outside the cities felt they were being subjected to unconstitutional and arbitrary laws and law enforcement. And between the corruption in government and the prohibitive cost of lawyers' services, more and more, they were finding themselves without recourse in the courts. (It was nothing for a lawyer to talk of \$100,000- \$200,000 for an ordinary case.) I already knew that a large number of people around the country lived in fear of the government. And many of the people in rural areas, as I was soon to learn, were only a hair's breadth from forming Militia groups to defend themselves from the government.

As J. J. Johnson noted in the hearings, weapons sales were at an all-time high, with ordinary people believing that stricter gun-control laws were coming, and, eventually, the total confiscation of weapons from private citizens. (Clinton's Brady Bill, they saw as a first step to registry, then confiscation.) The right to keep and bear arms was deeply ingrained in the American psyche, and people wanted to buy guns while they could.

Besides J.J. Johnson saying that the Militias were the "Civil Rights movement of the nineties" and that it was only a matter of time before "armed confrontation," the item that caught my attention the most during the Senate hearings was Bob Fletcher's statement that the government was using "weather control" as a "weapon" against Americans. At the time, I thought this was one of the most farfetched things I had ever heard the government accused of, but Fletcher told the senators that the Militias had all the backup information to prove it, and I decided to keep my mind open. Senator Claiborne Pell, added Fletcher, had written an article on the subject in the 1970s. There was, however, no visible follow-up by the media on the subject of weather engineering.

Nevertheless, Fletcher's statement had not gone unnoticed. Whenever I touched on the subject of the Militias in conversation with friends, his statement about the government controlling the weather—over and over, usually amid snickering or gales of laughter—was brought up to show that the Militias were a bunch of crackpots. I was skeptical, myself, but I was curious to know more.

It was true, as Fletcher had pointed out, that the weather had changed significantly in recent years, and the number of natural disasters due to hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes had multiplied many times over. I recalled that it had been reported in the New York Times a few years earlier that Iran had attributed a large earthquake, that had resulted in thousands of deaths in Iran, to the CIA, and I had laughed it off as an example of how paranoid those Iranian mullahs were. But I also knew that in Russia there had been a lot of research in weather modification, and I had read that Russian weather machines were available commercially to farmers. So, I thought, who knows? I began to wonder, after all, if some of the increasing numbers of natural disasters were not due to government tampering with the environment, or the weather. I little suspected at the time that one day I would have the

opportunity to ask Bob Fletcher in person.

After the hearings, I was asked to write a short article on the Oklahoma bombing and the rise of the Militias, for a photography magazine in Venezuela. At the time, I didn't know whether the Militias had anything to do with the bombing, so I emphasized the general discontent with the economy and the government, as the background for both the bombing and the Militias. To go with the article, I chose a photograph that had appeared on the front page of the New York Times, showing a man in military fatigues at the site, who the caption said was a fireman.

The point I was making was the militarization of civil society in the U.S. Earlier, there would have been a picture of a traditional fireman dressed in black rubber coat with yellow stripes and a red fireman's hat, not someone in jungle camouflage. The soldier was pulling a damaged American flag out of the rubble, which I thought was an apt metaphor for what was happening in the country: the military, a new symbol of government, or the "new order," camouflaged, carrying the damaged symbol of the nation of a country in economic and moral ruins. I didn't know yet how apt it was, for the flag also had yellow fringe on it, which, I was to learn later, for the Militias, had an extra, damning significance.

As the months drew on, it surprised me that there was no objective coverage of the Militias whatsoever, even in the alternative media. As it turned out later, the reason was, I was plugged into the wrong alternative media—that of the left, which, as I knew already, could be as elitist and narrow-minded as any amount of right-wing bigots. I didn't yet know there was another, alternative-populist media. The media of the right, I had never thought of as anything but propaganda for certain special-interest groups—big business or anti-abortionists—which I believed was the unwritten agenda for the entire right. As I was to learn, however, this was the same that Militia and patriot groups thought about the liberal media, which for all their talk of sharing the concerns of ordinary working people, were also an elite. The liberals, I figured, disdained the Militias because they were not their own.

I kept waiting for information on the Militias to appear, that was not hysterical or bent on demonizing them. Then came the standoff with the Montana Freemen in late March of 1996. It was during the first week of the standoff, on the day before April Fool's Day, that I embarked on my own endeavor to elucidate what the Militia movement was really about. It was a Sunday morning. I was fast asleep when I received a long-distance phone call from a banker friend I had not spoken to for some time, who happened to be from Montana originally. On another occasion, he had said to me, "Everyone in Montana belongs to the Militia, although they wouldn't say so to outsiders." My friend was also a former senior vice president of Chase Manhattan Bank, which was ironic, as it turned out, given the role the Militias accorded the Rockefellers in bringing about the "New World Order," which I was yet to learn about. That morning, my Montana banker friend told me to put on the television and watch ABC. I did so, and found myself watching a Sunday morning talk show: the subject was the Montana Freemen.

On the panel were two ex-FBI directors, Judges William Webster and William Sessions (who had been ousted by Clinton in favor of Janet Reno shortly before the Waco massacre). ABC reporter Sam Donaldson was incensed that the Freemen were holding out against the government, and was practically demanding that the FBI go in and put a stop to the situation by force. I was appalled. Many people thought the government should wait it out, no matter how long, after what had happened at Ruby Ridge and Waco. Judge Sessions pointed out that in both these cases the FBI had only gotten

involved once there were dead federal agents. Moreover, he said, the Freemen were wanted for white-collar crimes, and in such cases, force was not generally used.

It was one of those puzzling reversals that had crept in during the 1980s, when the liberals, like Donaldson, had become the hawks in military and police matters, advocating tough reprisals against Iraq and Saddam Hussein, as well as against domestic undesirables. So-called conservatives, like New York City's Mayor Rudy Giuliani, likewise, that summer would defend welfare, while a Democratic President Clinton signed a bill to do away with it. What it meant was that all these self-righteous public figures stuck to their principles only when they stood to benefit.

At one point, it struck me that Sessions appeared almost to be taking the side of the Freemen when he said that this case was different, because these people saw what they were doing not as crimes but as their citizen rights. There had been reports that there were Militias surrounding the Freemen ranch to defend them from the government, so when Sessions said a debate needed to take place, something clicked, and I knew the moment was right for a book that would get inside the Militias. I began work that same day, thinking it would take only a few months. However, the subject turned out to be far more complex than I imagined. I might not have undertaken the project if I had known that it would take me the better part of five years to piece it all together.

Through a friend who had a farm in upstate New York, I was able to talk on the telephone to a Militiaman named Al Long, who was a member of the Chemung Citizens Militia, on the Pennsylvania border. He told me about a rally that was being planned for Labor Day weekend in Washington, D.C., and said it would be featuring as speakers many of the people whose ideas were popular with the Militias—the ones who wrote the books and gave the speeches. Al suggested that I contact the organizer in California, a woman named Charlena Alden, which I did. As it turned out, she headed a legal-reform organization named Citizens Against Legal Loopholes (CALL).

Charlena, or Char, as she said she wanted to be called, told me she was planning to be in New York City the following week to do some fund-raising, on her way to Washington to meet with some Congressmen. Accompanying her would be Bob Fletcher (of the Militia of Montana), who was helping her organize the rally. She put him on the phone with me, and they agreed that we would meet. But Char and Bob postponed coming to New York several times, and I began to think they were not going to make it.

Char, in the meantime, sent me a copy of a 94-page booklet she had produced as a companion piece to the Rally, titled, *Ignite the Spirit: The Plan*, which contained a formal "Petition" for a "redress of grievances" addressed to the Congress. (The "right of the people" to "petition the Government for a redress of grievances" in the First Amendment followed that of the right "peaceably to assemble"; it was a right, along with the Second Amendment, often exercised by patriots and the Militias.) Char told me that her Petition pretty much summed up the issues as seen by the Militia-patriot community, and indeed, as I was to learn, there was a plethora of grassroots petitions that all pretty much said the same things. After spending a full three days reading it, however, I still didn't understand most of it. The issues were pretty dense, and much of it sounded paranoid to me. In the coming months I would find that most patriot literature was written for the believers, assuming, as it did, a prior knowledge of the complex issues put forth. Such literature, furthermore, tended to be written in legalese or poorly-polished, grassroots style, that made it easy to discredit and hard to understand for the uninitiated. I surely wouldn't have bothered to sift through the contents of Char's booklet if I hadn't already made up my mind to do so.

In the "Introduction" was reprinted a letter that Char had written to Senator Arlen Specter. She quoted J.J. Johnson right off the bat in the subject heading: "RE: Senate Subcommittee on Militias—'ITS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE AN ARMED CONFRONTATION.'" J.J. Johnson 6/15/95."

Char began the letter quoting Senator Specter, also during the hearings on the Militias, stating that a public airing of grievances was "a very useful and healthy thing," and acknowledging the Constitutional "right of the citizenry to petition the Congress." She proceeded to inform him that CALL and many other grassroots organizations were hereby accepting his offer, and asked him to "support a petition mandating open hearings and investigations into the Department of Justice, the amended Trading with the Enemy Act, the Federal Reserve and the United Nations, and their role in the usurpation of our Constitution, and the fraud and corruption in our present judicial system."

Speaking about the "strong 'Centralization of Power' that our Founding Fathers warned us about," she then quoted the "Williamsburg Resolve"—a statement signed by thirty Republican governors at a conference in Williamsburg, Virginia, on November 22, 1994:

Federal action has exceeded the clear bounds of its jurisdiction under the Constitution, and thus violated rights guaranteed to the people. The government of limited, delegated powers envisioned by the framers has become a government of virtually unlimited power... Our freedoms are no longer safe when they exist only at the sufferance of Federal legislators, Federal courts and Federal bureaucrats...

(Patriot literature, as I was learning, relied heavily on direct quotations to make a point.)

Char then proceeded to remind Senator Specter that he had taken an oath to uphold the Constitution, and asked him: "Will you live up to your word, and your oath, and carry out a petition and mandate from We the People for 'Open' hearings and investigations and to introduce legislation to repeal Section 5b of the Trading with the Enemy Act, as amended, and the repealing of the Federal Reserve Act? If not, please explain why you are unwilling to end this declared war against We the People by the Federal government and free our Great Nation from the unlawful and unconstitutional hands of the Money-Changers?" (The part about the Trading with the Enemy Act and the Federal Reserve, as yet, meant very little to me.)

She quoted Thomas Jefferson, saying, "To sin by silence makes a coward of men (women)," and pleaded:

This covert act of war upon We the People, and compound interest on compound interest has pounded us into the ground. There is no longer any accountability and our court system no longer follows the law. The abusive discretionary powers, 'gag orders', and sanctions by the courts is out of hand. Our Bankruptcy and Family Courts are a disgrace. Help us resurrect the voice of the people. Please help us solve our problems in a peaceful and lawful manner.

Senator Specter, you have a very angry nation on your hands. If you are unwilling to resolve these issues in a peaceful and lawful manner, Mr. James Johnson's statement to the subcommittee on Terrorism, 'Its only a matter of time before an armed confrontation,' is a very serious and likely possibility.

The complete "Petition and Mandate" appeared in the booklet, with a sheet for signatures, with instructions to return completed sheets to CALL. It began:

Under the power and authority of Article [of Amendment] 1 of the Constitution of the United States of America, We, the Sovereign undersigned, in common law, for We the People, of the union of States of the united States of America, do hereby petition the government for a redress of grievances.

WHEREAS: On November 22, 1994, our nation's sitting Republican Governors declared: "Federal action has exceeded the clear bounds of its jurisdiction under the Constitution and thus violated the rights guaranteed to the People;" and

WHEREAS: Because Federal action has exceeded its Constitutional powers and authority, the Sovereign People of the united States of America face immediate crisis and undue hardships; and

WHEREAS: We the People are being denied our unalienable God given Rights, Equal Protection, Equal Access to Justice and Due Process under the Law as guaranteed by the Constitution of the united States of America; and

WHEREAS: Senate Report 93-549 declares that "Since March the 9th, 1933, the United States has been in a declared state of emergency... For 40 years, the freedoms and governmental procedures guaranteed by the Constitution have, in varying degrees, been abridged;" and

WHEREAS: All elected officials have taken an oath of office to uphold and defend the Constitution of the united States of America.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, WE THE PEOPLE, THE

UNDERSIGNED, DEMAND:

A. THAT the Congress of the United States adopt a Resolution of Redress within thirty (30) days of receipt... to further act responsibly, and to thereupon conduct open hearings and investigations to identify the "Federal action" that has "exceeded the clear bounds of its jurisdiction under the Constitution;"

Again, at the time, this all meant very little to me. I noted, however, that in the Petition, the "united States of America," when referring to "We the People," was written with a lower-case "u," but it was only later that I learned that many patriots distinguished (with some variations) between writing the name of the country as it appeared in the Declaration of Independence—with the lower-case "u"—and in the Preamble to the Constitution, where it was written, "United States of America," to denote the "more perfect Union." Another way to write it was, "United States" (often shortened to U.S.), as it appeared in the body of the Constitution, which, patriots claimed, denoted the federal government and federal citizenry in its early, limited sense, when the states were paramount. Some believed even, that "United States," and especially "U.S.," had been usurped and were being used (for legal purposes) to designate a parallel, "corporate" government (a legal entity due to its incorporation) that had little or nothing to do with the nation, or "Republic," of the Founding Fathers.

The document continued, calling for: a "moratorium on all new laws, rules, codes, regulations," until the hearings and investigations were completed. It also called for a Congressional subcommittee to work with "an independent committee of Sovereigns and public servants," that would include state Senators Don Rogers (R-Calif.) and Charles Duke (R-Colo.), Dr. Eugene Schroder, Byron Dale, Walt Myers (the latter three were on CALL's National Advisory Board), Charlena Alden and Terry Sanders (CALL's executive director). And it called for open hearings on the Trading with the Enemy Act, the

Federal Reserve's monetary policy, the role of the United Nations and its treaties in usurping governmental functions and "Sovereign rights", and an investigation of the Department of Justice and the American Bar Association (ABA), and their role also in usurping "Constitutional Rights."

The Petition called also for hearings on the Council on Foreign Relations, which, it noted, had been declared "subversive" by the American Legion in 1962. The American Legion, it explained, had charged the CFR with "One-Worldism and United Nationism," and with putting forward proposals "that our country be disarmed unilaterally or bilaterally, that all individuals in the United States be disarmed," as per State Department Publication Number 7277, Freedom from War: The United States Program for General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World" (issued the year before the American Legion statement). (I was yet to read this Program, initiated by JFK, and it was not included in Char's booklet.) This Petition for redress of grievances ended with a call for "a plan in the plain language to restore to the States and to the People prerogatives and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution as it was envisioned by our forefathers."

In a press release included in the booklet, Char and CALL's executive director added another subject to be discussed in open Congressional hearing, in Point 6:

The restoring of allodial title and the return of all confiscated property.

While already, most of the charges just didn't make any sense to me, with the sweeping, general statements and accusations, and obscure references, this one left me even more baffled. At that time, I had no idea what "allodial title" meant, and nowhere was it explained.

Listed as a co-sponsor of the Rally was the Constitutionists Networking Center (CNC) in Arizona, whose executive director, Walt Myers, was named as part of the suggested people's committee to help with the hearings. CNC, which appeared in the booklet as the co-sponsor of CALL's proposals, it said, had been created in 1993, with the goal of bringing about "a government operating within the limits of the Constitution." I wrote to CNC, asking for more information on the organization, but never received a response.

In a section of the rally booklet titled, "The Plan," Char explained that during the week of November 5, 1995, a task force had gone to Washington, which had included a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, to hand-deliver notices paving the way for law suits against the President and members of Congress and the Supreme Court for "failure to uphold their oath." Notices, it said, had also gone to the Vice President, the Attorney General, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of the Treasury and many others. She called on people around the nation to do the same with state and local officials. "We will gun them down with paper," she wrote, explaining that this would not be a class action lawsuit, but rather, individual suits, which would make it difficult or impossible to enjoin them.

The collection of lawsuits, she said, would be taken from San Diego (where CALL's office was) at the finish of the Republican Convention in August, as part of "Operation Accountability," by way of a "Constitutional Caravan" to Washington, and culminate in a Labor-Day weekend "Bill of Rights Rally." The lawsuits would then be filed at the Common Law Court in the nation's capital on the first business day following the rally.

Then, if the officials who had been served with an "Actual Constructive Notice and Demand," and "evidence package," failed to carry out the demands of We the People, there would be criminal charges—among them, treason. The argument went that these officials had sworn to uphold the

Constitution, and by going along with the unconstitutional system that was in place, if they continued to do so after they were put on notice, they would be willfully failing to uphold their oaths of office, thereby committing treason.

Included in the booklet was a packet of blank services, with instructions for "We the The People" on how to deliver them to as many remaining public officials as possible before the summer. If the office holders in question failed to initiate corrective action, it said, this would be the basis for bringing lawsuits against these officials, with Grand Juries around the country bringing charges of sedition, insurrection, rebellion and treason. CALL, it said, was seeking ten million signatures around the country for Congressional hearings to be held, and investigations.

Under Grand Jury Code 22-3001, it was explained, a grand jury could be summoned by the people for an investigation whenever official action was considered deficient. This could be done with a petition to the district court bearing the signatures of a hundred plus 2% of the total number of votes cast in the preceding governor's election. A Grand Jury would consist of fifteen jurors, with a quorum of twelve. (The problems of actually doing this, however, were well-illustrated when citizens tried to impanel their own grand jury in Oklahoma, to investigate the bombing a couple of years later.)

On Labor Day weekend, the plan went, immediately after the rally, from the steps of Capitol Hill, "We the People" would proceed to the Common Law Court, carrying the mountain of lawsuits to be filed. The goal, it said, was to have two million individual lawsuits in courts all over the country by the fall. (This was my first encounter with efforts by patriots to restore the U.S. to the earlier system of Common Law, as it had existed through much of the nineteenth century, and in some form, well into the twentieth; it had been replaced with the Uniform Commercial Code, UCC, only in the mid-'60s.) This all sounded terribly ambitious and grand, and I thought Char must have tremendous resources at her disposal. Either she had a lot of money herself, or she had some rich Westerners backing her.

In the "evidence package" in the booklet, it said the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the Rockefellers were running the world, which I had heard ad nauseum from the left in the '70s and '80s, and from rebellious Nicaraguans and Salvadorans, as well as from anti-Shah Iranians. I, myself, had participated in study groups at the CFR, and I had once worked across the street from the Council at a fellow Rockefeller organization, now the Americas Society. Thus, by Char's logic, I would myself have been one of those people planning for a world police state and government.

The idea that the United Nations was to be the seat of that world government, I found especially ridiculous. For one, as I well knew—living in New York where the UN was headquartered—the UN was one of the most inept organizations in the world. And two, I knew many of the people who had held, or continued to hold, key jobs, especially in the disarmament section, which, I would find, was the agency that patriots believed was meant to preside over the dismantling of national armies, establishing a single world peacekeeping force, and enforcing universal gun control (under the JFK Program). The UN people I knew were idealists; they were good people.

What did give me pause, however, was what had been done to Iraq under the auspices of the UN during the Persian Gulf War (1990-'91) and afterwards, with the continuing, devastating sanctions. Long after the war, the UN was continuing to kill and damage Iraqi children, systematically; it was estimated that some 50,000 children a month were dying because of the sanctions. Another five

children for every one that died, were growing up with brain damage and stunted growth due to malnutrition, which, according to health experts, would take several generations to reverse.

It was being said by some that "sanctions" were the "new weapon of mass destruction"—a UN weapon.

Although I knew full well that it was the U.S. and Britain that had initiated the Iraq action, I also knew that they had done it under UN Security Council authority, using this institution to launch the war—in other words, to make it "legal." In the end, all but a handful of member states of the UN had gone along with the war, with those few states remaining officially neutral. Only Jordan had stood up to the action, publicly criticizing the war against Iraq. No matter how much UN supporters argued that the UN itself hadn't done any of this, it was clear that it couldn't have happened without the UN. Not that degree of international coordination! The U.S. and Britain, without the UN, would have been hard pressed to get anyone other than Israel to join in the attack, which they had wanted to avoid, or in the sanctions afterwards. It was highly doubtful that the Soviet Union or France, Turkey or any Arab country, would have taken part, or that Saudi Arabia would have allowed the attack to be staged on its territory, if there had not been the UN umbrella (of respectability).

There was no doubt that the United Nations, with the acquisition of this major peacekeeping capability, had become a decidedly dangerous organization, in much the same way that any weapon would be in the wrong hands. Only here, it was a global army in the wrong hands. I would learn a great deal from the Militias about the difference between the individual right to bear arms and form a Militia, and the dangers of tyranny when arms were borne only by the "collective," or government. Living in a big city, and having learned over a period of many years to associate weapons in individual hands with crime, I did not yet understand this.

The one issue, at that point, that I was willing to dig my teeth into in Char's booklet, was the matter of the Federal Reserve System. I had already learned that it was privately owned, or perhaps I would have turned away even from that. And it would have been the end of the matter. I might have decided to go about my business with little thought of the Militias, trying in my own way to understand what had gone so wrong in the country (and, for that matter, in the world), especially since the 1980s, with the rise of such things as widespread homelessness in the U.S. while the rich got richer, with the rise of outright police abuse even as crime decreased, and with the loss, for a large segment of the population, of the ability to continue to earn a decent living.

All this, while at the same time, we had seen the transformation of a relatively free press into a fully-managed media, controlled by the big corporations and a government that more and more existed to do the corporations' bidding. As a journalist, I had seen this total managing of the media (although the process had started much earlier) come about almost overnight during the Persian Gulf War and its aftermath.

It seemed to me, as I read through Char's booklet several more times, that the crux of the matter, for patriots, was in the creation, on the eve of World War I, in late 1913, of the Federal Reserve (it had been followed by the Trading with the Enemy Act once the U.S. formally entered the war, in 1917). Char sent me a few pages on the creation of the Federal Reserve and its effects, from a book that was popular with patriots, titled, *Vultures in Eagle's Clothing*, by Lynne Meredith. The author explained that in 1913, "Congress sank America into eternal debt by giving the powers to issue currency and control the American monetary system" to the Federal Reserve and its shareholders, the owner banks.

The Federal Reserve, moreover, she explained, could not really be considered a federal agency because it was owned by "a group of primarily foreign bankers."

The largest of the original shareholders, researchers agreed, had been the Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan banks. Meredith included lists from two different sources, which were similar, with other owners listed as: the Rothschild Banks of London and Berlin; Lazard Brothers of Paris; Israel Moses Sieff Banks of Italy; Warburg Bank of Hamburg and Amsterdam; and Wall Street's Kuhn Loeb & Company and Goldman Sachs.

According to Eustace Mullins, a widely-read author on the origins of the Federal Reserve (about whom I was to learn a great deal more later), who claimed to have copies of the original organization certificates of the 12 Federal Reserve Banks, the principal shareholders of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, at the outset, were: (Kuhn Loeb, Rockefeller-controlled) National City Bank, 30,000; (J.P. Morgan-controlled) First National Bank, 15,000 (National City and First National merged in 1955); Chase National Bank (which became the Rockefellers' Chase Manhattan Bank), 6,000; Marine National Bank of Buffalo (which became Marine Midland), 6,000; and National Bank of Commerce, 21,000.

Meredith said that the same original banks continued to be the owners. The best I was able to get was a list of current member banks from the New York Federal Reserve Bank—the lead bank in the Federal Reserve System—and found that, whatever the list might have included originally (if it was indeed these particular banks), it had been greatly expanded—assuming that all the shareholders were member banks. Most of the banks that Meredith and Mullins had listed, in any case, no longer figured.

Although it was impossible to get a list of the original owners from the Federal Reserve, it stood to reason that the J.P. Morgan and Rockefeller banks would have been prominent, and Meredith's point was well taken that there were foreign banks among them. Although the Federal Reserve claimed that all the member banks were American, many of the banks on the current list, such as I.B.J. Schroder, Barclay's and Safra National Bank—to mention a few of the obvious ones—were clearly foreign-owned. The way the Federal Reserve got around this was by saying they were U.S. subsidiaries. Most if not all of the so-called American banks, furthermore, such as Chase and Citicorp, had interlocking directorates with foreign banks and corporations, and they owned large chunks of each other's stock.

Although many of the original stockholders, in any event, would no longer have appeared on the list—some of them no longer existed, or had changed their names or merged with other banks—undoubtedly, many of the same banking interests did continue to hold stock in the Federal Reserve Banks, under different names. The largest current members, I found, continued to be the original-owner J.P. Morgan and Rockefeller banks, with Citibank and Chase in the lead. On the New York Federal Reserve Bank's list at the end of 1995, I found that Chase was listed as having assets worth 100,451,999, and Citibank 220,110,000, making it the largest. (Interestingly, Chase's merger with Chemical in 1997 would bring Chase's assets to 255,059,400, making Chase Manhattan Bank—the Rockefeller flagship—the largest member. In 1999, there was a new addition, the British-owned HSBC, or Hong Kong Shanghai Bank Corporation, listed as the fourth largest, after J.P. Morgan; as if to state its position, this British bank erected an enormous tower directly across the street from the New York Federal Reserve Bank.)

Stating that the foreign banking interests that owned the Federal Reserve stock were the same ones

that "have corrupted economies since the beginning of world banking history," Meredith went on to cite a famous quote of Mayer Amschel Rothschild, the original, late-18th-century scion of this Frankfurt banking family, who had once said: "Permit me to control the currency of a nation and I care not who makes its laws."

I well knew that any allegation that Jews were prominent in or controlled international banking today, as the Rothschilds and their cohorts had done openly in Europe throughout the nineteenth century, would immediately bring charges of anti-Semitism, and I supposed, reading this, that this must be the main reason the patriots and Militias had been labeled anti-Semitic. The Militias' prolific dissemination of information on the origins of the Federal Reserve, and the frequent references to the "international banking cartel," and especially the Rothschilds, had made them prime targets of the ADL, which lumped them together in its reports, with the Ku Klux Klan and the Neo-Nazis, labeling the Militias, "Hate Groups."

I asked Char about this over the phone, and she replied angrily that she herself was Jewish, and that, "Facts are facts." "Lynne Meredith," she said, "is my friend, and she is certainly not anti-Semitic. And neither are the other patriots I know. It happens to be true that many of the 'banksters' are Jewish. What is true is true." The use of the term "banksters," which I was hearing for the first time, I found, was widespread among patriots.

Meredith also quoted one of the Federal Reserve Act's most outspoken opponents in 1913, Congressman Charles Lindbergh, Sr. (the father of the famous aviator of that name). The day before the Federal Reserve Act passed, he had stated:

The money trust deliberately caused the 1907 money panic and thereby forced Congress to create a National Monetary Commission which led to the ultimate creation of the Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve Act establishes the most gigantic monetary trust on earth. When the President signs the bill, the invisible government of the Monetary Powers will be legalized. The people must make a declaration of independence to relieve themselves from the Monetary Powers by taking control of Congress!... The worst legislative crime of the ages is perpetrated by this banking bill. The caucus and the party bosses have again operated and prevented the people from getting the benefit of their own government!

Meredith proceeded to explain in a section titled, "The Invisible Government," how the Federal Reserve Act had come into being. The chairman of the Monetary Commission, which had put together the Federal Reserve Act, she explained, had been Senator Nelson Aldrich. His daughter Abigail had married John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (of Standard Oil and Chase Manhattan Bank), and so, the Rockefellers had been among the largest beneficiaries of the Federal Reserve. Also, a member of the Monetary Commission had been Jacob Schiff of Kuhn Loeb & Company of New York, who, interestingly, had been born in the Rothschild home in Germany. Interestingly, said Meredith, he and William B. Thompson, who was none other than a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York (which set Federal Reserve policy), had helped finance the Bolshevik Revolution. Thompson had traveled to Moscow in 1917. Schiff had made a contribution of \$20 million. (Interestingly, Schiff, I learned elsewhere, had also been the chief financial strategist for the Rockefellers' Standard Oil before it had been broken up by the government in an anti-trust suit in 1911.)

The Federal Reserve Act had been passed on December 23 of 1913, Meredith related, when many in the Congress had already left for the Christmas holidays. It was immediately signed by President

Woodrow Wilson, whose campaign had been financed by the banks. Within months, individual income taxes began to be collected for the first time (the amendment on the income tax had been passed earlier in the year), to pay interest to the Federal Reserve.

In a section titled, "Money From Nothing," Meredith explained what, exactly, had been put into effect by this Act, likening the newly-created Federal Reserve's powers to a person having a printing press for producing currency, and giving it away to a banker, then agreeing to borrow all your money from him and repay it with interest. This, she explained, was what Congress had done, giving away the power to print unlimited amounts of money to a group of self-serving bankers—the shareholders of the Federal Reserve. Moreover, she pointed out, this had been in violation of the law, as was evident reading the 1935 Supreme Court ruling in *Schechter Poultry v. U.S.*, which clearly stated:

Congress may not abdicate or transfer to others its legitimate functions.

She explained in simplified form how money was created, with the process beginning with, the U.S. government, say, informing the Federal Reserve that it needed \$300 billion in credit and \$100 million in currency. At the request of the Federal Reserve, the Treasury Department would then instruct the Bureau of Printing and Engraving to print \$300 billion worth of Treasury Bonds and \$100 million of Federal Reserve notes, at a cost to the Federal Reserve of only \$20.60 per thousand notes. At the same time, the Federal Reserve would place an order to purchase Treasury Bonds in the amount of \$300,100,000,000, using the \$100 million currency (for which it had paid only some two and a half cents per note), transferring, with a simple computer entry, the remaining \$300 billion as a credit, to the U.S. Treasury.

For this loan to the U.S. Treasury, the Federal Reserve would receive continuously compounding interest, forever, which could never be repaid in its entirety. Contrary to what most people believed, the Federal Reserve assets were, not gold or silver, but these same Treasury Bonds, for which, in this case, the Federal Reserve had spent some \$26,000 only, in printing costs. And so, the Federal Reserve created money from thin air. In this way, Meredith explained, the Federal Reserve had imposed on the country a debt-based economy, where "every Federal Reserve Note... is nothing more than a debt certificate." America's greatest power, the creation of money, had been given to the Federal Reserve. She noted that the Boston Federal Reserve Bank had summed it up in a booklet for the public, saying:

When you or I write a check there must be sufficient funds in our account to cover that check, but when the Federal Reserve writes a check, it is creating money.

She quoted the House Banking and Currency Committee's 1964 publication, *Money Facts*, which explained it as follows:

The Federal Reserve Banks create... Federal Reserve Notes out of thin air to buy government bonds from the United States Treasury by lending into circulation at interest and by bookkeeping entries of checkbook credit to the United States Treasury. The Treasury writes up an interest bearing bond for one billion dollars. The Federal Reserve gives the Treasury a one billion dollar credit for the bond, it has created out of nothing. This is a one billion dollar debt which the American people are obligated to pay, in full, with interest.

In regards to the chartering of the first Bank of the United States, the country's first central bank and forerunner of the Federal Reserve System, in 1791, Thomas Jefferson had said:

I consider the foundation of the Constitution as laid on this ground that "all powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are preserved to the states or to the people... To take a single step beyond the boundaries thus specially drawn around the powers of Congress is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition. The incorporation of a bank [the first Bank of the United States], and the powers assumed by this bill, have not been delegated to the United States by the Constitution.

At the bottom of the last of the four pages that she sent me, Char had put a big exclamation mark, and brackets around Meredith's statement that: "The Congress should immediately take back the power of legislative monetary and credit creation, with safeguards, for the benefit and prosperity of the American people!"

Char's booklet contained model legislation for amending the Federal Reserve Act, titled, "The Money Reform Act"—authored by Byron Dale, a member of her advisory board—which called for returning the function of the issue of currency to the U.S. Treasury, under the control of Congress. The new currency, it stated, would be backed by silver and gold, and by labor. The proposed legislation also called for abolishing the IRS and the income tax.

The creation of the Federal Reserve, I was fast learning from patriots, was what had led to World War I, and to the "Trading with the Enemy Act" in 1917, under the "War Powers" that the Founders had meant to reside in the Congress. The Constitution, in Article I, Section 8, said:

The Congress shall have the Power... To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water.

A seemingly innocuous war measure at the time, passed by the Congress on the eve of the U.S. entry into the war (to accord the president "War Powers," enabling him to control all the assets and commercial transactions in the U.S. of the Germans and their allies), this "War Powers act"—the Trading with the Enemy Act—was often called by patriots—would lead to a continuing state of emergency in the U.S., which only the president had the power to end. (In the mainstream media, the "War Powers" act generally referred to the 1973 "War Powers Resolution," passed in connection with the Viet Nam war, requiring a formal declaration of war by the Congress 60 days after the president's deployment of troops abroad in an offensive action, with a possible extension, upon request, of another 30 days.)

Char told me over the phone that the most important person for me to interview on this subject was a man from Colorado named Eugene Schroder, who was also on her advisory board. He had researched it in depth, she said, and had written a couple of books. And indeed, it was only after I read one of his books that I understood the impact of the Trading with the Enemy Act on the current situation, and learned more about Senate Report 93-549, cited in the preamble to CALL's Petition. This Senate Report had been issued in 1976 by the Senate Special Committee on the Termination of the National Emergency, chaired by the widely-admired Senator Frank Church. If I had had any doubts about the truth of patriots' claims that the U.S., technically, had been under "War Powers," or emergency rule, ever since the Trading with the Enemy Act had been amended in 1933 to include Americans, this report confirmed that this was so