



The Truth Will Out

On the grounds of Oklahoma City's Will Rogers International Airport stands an imposing high-security prison facility known as the Federal Transfer Center (FTC). On the morning of August 21, 1995, Kenneth Michael Trentadue died there in cell A-709. The alleged cause of death was suicide by hanging.

Mr. Trentadue's family disputed the suicide verdict from the start, claiming the evidence indicated that Kenny Trentadue was murdered. In 2001 the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma awarded the family a \$1.1 million judgment against the U.S. government for intentional infliction of emotional distress. The court also issued a scathing criticism of government witnesses for "serious questions as to their truthfulness" and their obvious "lack of respect for the solemnity of sworn proceedings." However, because of destruction of evidence and repeated perjury by government witnesses, the court was unable to find that Trentadue's death was a homicide.



Now, a decade after his death, explosive new evidence in the Trentadue case has come forth that may explain why the Clinton Justice Department spent millions of dollars and went to such extraordinary lengths to cover up the death of a man who had been arrested for a minor parole violation. The new evidence comes in the form of memoranda from then-FBI Director Louis Freeh. The memos concern the biggest case of terrorism in U.S. history prior to the 9/11 attacks: the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, which occurred on April 19, 1995, four months before Kenny Trentadue's death.

When the Trentadue family began digging into the circumstances surrounding Kenny's death, they had no idea that the trail would lead them directly into the heart of the OKC bombing case. The recently revealed documents provide important confirmation for a key part of this magazine's thesis regarding that terrorist act. One of the many troubling facets of the OKC bombing case, developed by *THE NEW AMERICAN* and others, concerned the Clinton administration's strange insistence that Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were solely responsible for the attack, despite mountains of evidence to the contrary and numerous eyewitnesses who had seen McVeigh with several "John Does" immediately prior to, and at the time of, the bombing.



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on November 28, 2005

We have divided this story into two parts, the first dealing with Kenny Trentadue's death, and the second, beginning on page 14, concerning the Trentadue connection to the OKC bombing.

Murder by "Suicide"

Kenny Trentadue's family learned of his death when Acting Warden Marie Carter called Kenny's mother in California to report that he had committed suicide. "We were stunned," Jesse Trentadue, Kenny's brother, told *THE NEW AMERICAN*. "I had just talked with him shortly before [by telephone on the night of August 19] and he was not depressed. We talked about his upcoming parole hearing and his new son. He was upbeat, looking forward to being out [of prison] in a couple months, rejoining his family, resuming his life. Besides, suicide would be completely contrary to his nature. He was a survivor, a fighter."

There were other things about the call from the warden that aroused the Trentadue family's suspicions. "When the warden [Carter] called, she asked my mother for permission to cremate Kenny. This was odd for a number of reasons," says Jesse Trentadue, a trial lawyer in Salt Lake City, Utah. "First of all, it is expressly against Bureau of Prisons policy to cremate inmates," he told *THE NEW AMERICAN*. "Secondly, as my mother explained [to Carter], even if she had favored cremation (which she certainly did not), the decision was not hers to make, legally or morally. That decision would have to be made, she explained, by Kenny's wife, Carmen Trentadue. That seemed to really unnerve Carter. She said, 'What do you mean? He doesn't have a wife!' My mother responded, 'Oh yes he does, and an infant son, too! And I have another son who is a lawyer who will be contacting you, so you better not cremate Kenny.' That seemed to rattle her even more, to find out that he had a brother who is an attorney."

The family's suspicions grew when prison officials attempted to thwart their request for an autopsy. When Kenny's body finally arrived at the funeral home in California, the family was shocked, sickened, and outraged. Their worst fears were confirmed. "He was so badly bruised from head to toe, front and back, it was obvious he had been savagely beaten," says his brother, Jesse. "In fact, it was clear to me that he had been tortured." The family took detailed photographs of Kenny's body, documenting the extensive injuries. "Those images of my brother's body are burned into my memory forever," says Jesse, his voice choking with emotion that still grabs his throat a decade later. On August 30, 1995, the Trentadues hand-delivered to the Bureau of Prisons Regional Office in Dallas, Texas, a letter accusing Federal Transfer Center guards of murder. Enclosed with that letter were copies of the photographs they had taken of his brutalized body.

Two days later, on September 1, the Bureau of Prisons issued a press release announcing that Trentadue's death had been "ruled a suicide by asphyxiation" and further stating that "other cuts and abrasions found on ... [Trentadue's] body would indicate persistent attempts ... to cause himself serious injury or death."

Screwing Down the Lid

The Trentadue family knew they were dealing with a major coverup of Kenny's murder and would be in for a real fight. But they didn't realize how serious and deadly the fight would become. In the weeks, months, and years that followed, they would have to deal with official misconduct at the highest levels of the federal government, including destruction of evidence, altering of evidence, "loss" of evidence, obstruction of justice, lying, perjury, subornation of perjury, and threats and intimidation directed at them and their witnesses. Kenny's cellmate, Alden Gillis Baker, who swore out a deposition that he had witnessed Trentadue's murder, was found hanging in his cell before he could testify in the family's civil suit against the government: another suicide. Still another inmate, Nick Arcabusso, was told he would



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end up the same way if he told anyone about hearing a guard boast that he “killed Trentadue.”

Here is a partial list of the incredible circumstances and evidence surrounding Kenny Trentadue’s “self-inflicted” injuries and “suicide”:

- It is undisputed that when discovered, Kenny Trentadue’s body was covered in blood with head-to-toe, front-to-back trauma. Even the bottoms of his feet were bruised. His throat had been slashed, and he had suffered three massive blows to his head that ruptured his scalp to the skull.
- The Oklahoma State Medical Examiner, Dr. Fred B. Jordan, testified that in 37 years of practice he had never seen a hanging with so much trauma. Even the government’s nationally recognized pathologist, Dr. John Smialek, described Trentadue’s death as “weird” because of the extensive trauma and massive blood loss.
- Dr. Fred Jordan testified that Trentadue is the only case of an alleged hanging in which he has found a fractured hyoid bone, the small, horseshoe-shaped bone at the base of the tongue that supports the muscles of the tongue. According to Dr. Jordan, Trentadue’s fractured hyoid was “more consistent with strangulation than hanging.” Dr. Miles Jones, an independent forensic pathologist hired by the Trentadue family, stated that in his professional opinion Trentadue’s death was a homicide and that he died by strangulation. Dr. Carlos A. Mier, the physician’s assistant at the prison who first examined the body, wrote that Trentadue’s death was due to “strangulation.”
- Dr. Miles Jones stated that the bruise on Trentadue’s anal verge was most likely the result of Trentadue having been kicked. Dr. John Smialek testified that this injury to Trentadue could only have occurred as the result of an “assault.”
- Dr. William Gormley, of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, reviewed the autopsy of Trentadue’s body and stated his belief that “the deceased was assaulted.” However, because of the destruction of the crime scene, he concluded that the manner of death should be listed as “unknown.”

Oklahoma law mandates that the death scene be preserved. Federal law likewise requires that any inmate suicide be investigated and that prison authorities handle the death scene “with the same level of protection as any crime scene in which a death has occurred to insure that available evidence ... is preserved ... for subsequent investigators.” In this case, federal authorities rushed to destroy the “suicide” scene evidence. When Trentadue’s body was discovered, he was wearing blood-stained khaki pants and a blood-stained T-shirt. But when his body was turned over to the Oklahoma Medical Examiner at 7:00 a.m. that morning, he was wearing only bloodstained boxer shorts. An FBI Memorandum later revealed that FBI Agent Jeff Jenkins left the “clothing” in the trunk of his car until it putrefied and that “Jenkins took the smelly bloody clothing out of his car and now had it in the FBI office.” But the clothing disappeared and has never been seen since.

By law, a “psychological reconstruction” must be done of every inmate suicide. This psychological reconstruction is an in-depth investigation and report on the alleged suicide, including method, means, motive, etc. This was not done in Trentadue’s case.

Aware that a Psychological Reconstruction Team was on the way to examine Trentadue’s cell, prison officials ordered inmates and staff to clean the crime scene. The prison staff members later testified that they cleaned extensive blood spattering and bloody hand prints off the cell walls, floor, and other surfaces.

Notes and Nonsense



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One of the government's main pieces of evidence supposedly indicating Trentadue's intent to commit suicide was a "suicide note" he allegedly had scrawled on the cell wall with a pencil. However, the message makes no sense and was not signed with Kenny Trentadue's name. Moreover, the government has offered two different versions of the note, neither of which could be called, unequivocally, a suicide note. According to the government's first report, the note said: "My mind is no longer its friend, love Paul." The government later claimed that that note was a suicide note written by Trentadue to his Hispanic wife, Carmen, and that it read: "My mind is no longer its friend, love Familia." (Familia is Spanish for "family.") However, Kevin Rowland, a homicide investigator for the Oklahoma Medical Examiner, says that when he saw the note on the cell wall it was signed "Tom Linx."

Perhaps more significantly, before handwriting analysts from the FBI Crime Lab could examine the note, the cell wall was painted over. This was done despite the government's contention that Trentadue's cell was a "secured scene, sealed with crime tape within the custody and control of the FBI."

What about the pencil that Kenny Trentadue supposedly used to write the note? There were no fingerprints on it. In fact, according to the government, except for Trentadue's fingerprints on his personal papers, there were no other fingerprints in the cell. According to the government's scenario, Trentadue, despite inflicting massive trauma upon himself, still had presence of mind (as well as some unexplained motive) to thoroughly clean all his fingerprints from his cell before hanging himself.

The presence of another person's blood in Trentadue's cell is another undisputed physical fact for which there has been no accounting. FBI Agent Tom Linn testified that "we found two blood types" in Trentadue's cell. According to Linn, one of the blood types was Trentadue's and the other belonged to an unknown person. When asked why no effort was made to identify the other person whose blood was found in the cell, Linn responded that "we did not have a suspect to take a sample from." No suspect? That excuse is patently ludicrous, of course. The FBI didn't need to put out an APB or troll the Oklahoma highways and byways for suspects. The obvious suspects were the very small cohort of prison staff and inmates who had access to Trentadue's cellblock during the very limited time period when he died.

Federal Perjury

In 1997, as the Trentadue case was going before a federal grand jury, officials of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and FBI determined to take serious measures to discredit Jesse Trentadue, who was serving as counsel for the Trentadue family in their civil case against the government. The government enlisted the aid of James Hauser, a prison inmate, to help them indict Jesse Trentadue. Hauser promised the Department of Justice that he would place a "yoke of silence" around Jesse Trentadue's neck by testifying that the family lawyer had paid inmates to perjure themselves. Hauser was polygraphed by the FBI. He failed that polygraph, but was nevertheless presented to the grand jury to give perjured testimony.

"It was just incredible the lengths to which they were going to stop us," Jesse Trentadue told THE NEW AMERICAN. "As we started out on this case, I was kind of naively trusting the FBI and DOJ to get to the bottom of this and help bring those responsible for my brother's murder to justice. But it got weirder and weirder as we went along. I mean, here are these government officials committing very serious crimes, the kind that can send you to prison. Why?"

Why? That was the big question that had been haunting him and other family members from the very



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beginning of this harrowing ordeal. The evidence keeps sending him back to the Oklahoma City bombing for answers to that question.

“I never intended to get involved in the OKC bombing issue and really don’t want to go there,” Jesse Trentadue told *THE NEW AMERICAN*. “I don’t have a dog in that fight. I’m just a hillbilly lawyer trying to get justice for my brother who was murdered. But it seems I don’t have any choice, because that’s where the evidence keeps pointing.”

The Trentadue case may end up being the case that finally breaks the logjam of lies behind the coverup that has suppressed the truth about that deadly terrorist attack for more than a decade. Already it has pried loose many long-hidden documents that belie some of the government’s central claims about the bombing. Over the past year, Mr. Trentadue has won key court decisions ordering the FBI and Justice Department to turn over dozens of documents he has requested. The government has repeatedly stalled and appealed the decisions. But the government is running out of stalling options, and a court decision expected in November may finally break loose documents that have been protecting the guilty for far too long.



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