

1: WACO Siege - Other Conspiracies - Conspiracy Theories

The Waco siege was the siege of a compound belonging to the Branch Davidians, carried out by American federal and Texas state law enforcement, as well as the U.S. military, between February 28 and April 19,

Siege[edit] ATF agents established contact with Koresh and others inside the compound after they withdrew. At first, the Davidians had telephone contact with local news media, and Koresh gave phone interviews. The FBI cut Davidian communication to the outside world. For the next 51 days, communication with those inside was by telephone by a group of 25 FBI negotiators. Koresh had fathered perhaps 14 of the children who stayed with him in the compound. Several Branch Davidians made statements in the video. This video also included a message from Koresh. His conversationsâ€™dense with Biblical imageryâ€™alienated the federal negotiators, who treated the situation as a hostage crisis. As the siege wore on, two factions developed within the FBI, [23] one believing negotiation to be the answer, the other, force. Increasingly aggressive techniques were used to try to force the Branch Davidians out for instance, sleep deprivation of the inhabitants by means of all-night broadcasts of recordings of jet planes, pop music, chanting, and the screams of rabbits being slaughtered. Armored vehicles repeatedly drove over the grave of Branch Davidian Peter Gent despite protests by the Branch Davidians and the negotiators. Two of the three water storage tanks on the roof of the main building had been damaged during the initial ATF raid. Eventually the FBI cut all power and water to the compound, forcing those inside to survive on rain water and stockpiled military MRE rations. Eleven people left and were arrested as material witnesses, with one person charged with conspiracy to murder. However, as the siege went on, the children were aware that an earlier group of children who had left with some women were immediately separated, and the women arrested. During the siege, a number of scholars who study apocalypticism in religious groups attempted to persuade the FBI that the siege tactics being used by government agents would only reinforce the impression within the Branch Davidians that they were part of a Biblical " end-of-times " confrontation that had cosmic significance. The religious scholars pointed out that the beliefs of the group may have appeared to be extreme , but to the Branch Davidians, their religious beliefs were deeply meaningful, and they were willing to die for them. He proclaimed that he was the Second Coming of Christ and had been commanded by his father in heaven to remain in the compound. Koresh had repeatedly denied any plans for mass suicide when confronted by negotiators during the standoff, and people leaving the compound had not seen any such preparation. Attorney General Janet Reno approved recommendations by the FBI Hostage Rescue Team to mount an assault, after being told that conditions were deteriorating and that children were being abused inside the compound. Reno countered that the FBI Hostage Rescue Team was tired of waiting; that the standoff was costing a million dollars per week; that the Branch Davidians could hold out longer than the CSAL; and that the chances of child sexual abuse and mass suicide were imminent. The assault took place on April 19, CEVs used explosives to puncture holes in the walls of buildings of the compound so they could pump in CS gas "tear gas" and try to flush out the Branch Davidians without harming them. The stated plan called for increasing amounts of gas to be pumped in over two days to increase pressure. Officially, no armed assault was to be made and loudspeakers were to be used to tell the Branch Davidians that there would be no armed assault and to ask them not to fire on the vehicles. FBI Hostage Rescue Team agents had been permitted to return any incoming fire, but no shots were fired by federal agents on April The government maintains the fires were deliberately started by the Branch Davidians. Many who suffocated from the fire were killed by smoke or carbon monoxide inhalation and other causes as fire engulfed the building. Chronology of events of April 19[edit] Time Event Agents say the Branch Davidian who answered the phone did not reply but instead threw the phone and phone line out of the front door. Agents claimed the holes allowed insertion of the gas as well as provided a means of escape. Agent sees shots from inside the compound directed at CEVs. Branch Davidians fire shots at CEV1. He receives permission and fires two shells. The vehicles then withdraw. He is advised over loudspeakers that if he is surrendering he should come out. At the same time, a man believed to be Schneider comes out from the remains of the front door to retrieve the phone and phone line. A third fire is detected on first floor. The building burns very quickly. Two Waco Fire Department trucks

are dispatched. Shortly after, the Bellmead Fire Department dispatches two trucks. One object hurtles into the air, bounces off the top of a bus, and lands on the grass. Around this time, there are several further explosions, and witnesses report the sound of gunfire, attributed by the FBI Hostage Rescue Team to live ammunition cooking off throughout the buildings because of the fire. The entire compound is leveled. Fatalities of April 19[edit] In all, 76 Branch Davidians died, [9] and nine survived the fire on April 19 five others had been killed in the initial ATF raid, and their bodies were buried on the grounds; one had been killed by the ATF after the raid; and 35 had left during the FBI siege. It also mentions that the structural debris from the breaching operations on the west end of the building could have blocked a possible escape route through the tunnel system. Autopsy photographs of other children locked in what appear to be spasmic death poses are consistent with cyanide poisoning , one of the results produced by burning CS gas. Department of Justice report indicated that only one body had traces of benzene , one of the components of solvent-dispersed CS gas, but that the gas insertions had finished nearly one hour before the fire started, and that it was enough time for solvents to dissipate from the bodies of the Branch Davidians that had inhaled the tear gas. Three-year-old Dayland Gent was stabbed in the chest. The medical examiner who performed the autopsies believed these deaths were mercy killings by the Branch Davidians trapped in the fire with no escape. The expert retained by the U. Office of Special Counsel concluded that many of the gunshot wounds "support self-destruction either by overt suicide, consensual execution suicide by proxy , or less likely, forced execution. Magaw made the Treasury "Blue Book" report on Waco required reading for new agents. Only a small chapel, built years after the siege, stands on the site.

2: The Siege at Waco: Deadly Inferno by Michael D. Cole

David Koresh, The Siege at Waco As one of the most memorable cult leaders, David Koresh was a man with arrogance and grandeur. The leader of the Branch Davidians, his followers flocked. On February 28, , the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) raided Mount Carmel.

The Waco Massacre Note regarding links: Much of the Waco information once available on the web has "disappeared" and many of the links on this page have expired a few are marked as such or no longer lead to the original page. Some pages which no longer exist on the web can still be recovered by entering the URL right mouse click on the link to get the URL into the Wayback Machine. These were law-abiding American citizens, even if they thought differently to most other folks. They trusted the U. Read this page if you believe otherwise. Or read the book Armageddon in Waco. Or see the film Waco: Already back in the US government demonstrated its contempt for the American people by carrying out a massacre in order to "demonstrate" on prime time TV its supposed "authority" a tactic favored by fascist governments. Following the usurpation of the presidency in by the psychopath George W. In both cases the murderers have so far gone unpunished. Their goal was to destroy the building and its damaging evidence, even if that meant the massacre of dozens of men, women and children, all witnesses to the brutal attack. Army took over, mounting a day siege. This included such psy-war tactics as sleep deprivation of the inhabitants of the community by means of all-night broadcasts of recordings of the screams of rabbits being slaughtered. The tanks demolished parts of the compound and created tunnels for the wind to blow through. The buildings at this point were saturated with inflammable CS gas and spilled kerosene. Around midday two U. Fire trucks were prevented by the FBI from approaching the inferno. Subsequently the burned-out ruin was razed in an attempt to remove all evidence of this premeditated murder of innocent civilians by agents of the U. Thus occurred an atrocity which many Americans believe could never happen in their country. A look at the evidence presented in the film Waco: The lawyer for one of the survivors said at one of the U. Here are links to documents on this website concerning this tragedy. What Happened at Waco After the BATF and FBI learned that the American Justice Federation had released a press release stating that the use of military troops against United States citizens violated federal law, specifically, the Posse Comitatus act, the BATF released a cover story, claiming that the tanks were "really" not Army, they were national guard, and had been brought in under the "Drug interdiction act" because they had heard there was a "methamphetamine lab" " three weeks after the FBI had already publicly announced there was never any question whatsoever of drug involvement.

3: David Koresh, The Siege at Waco

With Erik Thompson, David Koresh, Brian Blansett, Clive Doyle. Crimes of the Century examines the siege at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. When the ATF attempt to arrest Davidian leader David Koresh there is a gun fight and a day standoff that ends with the destruction of the compound and the deaths of most of the Davidians.

For years anti-government conspiracy theorists have argued that the answer was yes. Today the Waco incident is the subject of two congressional investigations, an independent counsel and a multimillion-dollar civil lawsuit against the government. Many new details about the disaster have come to light only recently. Today virtually all of the evidence from Waco, much of it paperwork from the many different government agencies involved, is stored in a secured room in Waco. The federal judge handling the civil trial ordered it collected and stockpiled, so that it could not be tampered with. That evidence may provide some new answers to what actually happened at the Branch Davidian compound outside Waco. Caddell says that the government has not accepted its share of the responsibility for those deaths. It all started nearly seven years ago with a February raid by more than 70 agents from the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms. David Koresh and his followers, the Branch Davidians, were known to have a large cache of high-powered weapons. The ATF also suspected that the group had explosives and the parts to manufacture machine guns illegally. When it arrived to search the compound, shooting started almost immediately. The Federal Bureau of Investigation moved in, and a lengthy standoff ensued. For more than seven frustrating weeks, the FBI tried to persuade the Davidians to come out. The FBI spent the next several hours shooting tear gas into the compound. Shortly after noon, the building was engulfed in flames. This is not the way to end this. And he used us to fulfill his own prophecy. Independent filmmaker Michael McNulty came upon some evidence that appeared damaging to the government. He found a shell casing from a certain type of tear gas round that could start a fire - a device the Justice Department had denied using for more than six years - publicly and to Congress. Attorney Bill Johnston, the top justice department official in Waco. He worries that someone in the Justice Department hid the truth. For several weeks Johnston wrote to his superiors warning them that the new evidence contradicted what they had been saying. But the Justice Department did not change its story until August, when Attorney General Janet Reno was forced to admit that the tear gas round had been used. Investigators have concluded that two of these devices were used. Though credible experts still overwhelmingly believe the Davidians started the fire, the damage had been done. The FBI was caught in a lie. Sage says that nothing was hidden on purpose. It was not flagged for its importance. Sage blames the FBI for not addressing accusations more seriously. Within the past six months it was forced to acknowledge that military Special Forces, believed to be the secret Delta Force, were present outside Waco. And a surveillance tape with suspicious gaps was discovered at FBI headquarters. The most serious question remaining is: Did government agents fire shots into the compound on April 19? Caddell thinks that they did. This is one of the main contentions of the suit he has brought on behalf of the victims and family members. This gunfire "either killed Davidians or pinned them down, so that they could not escape the fire. Caddell says that the proof lies in video shot by a camera aboard an FBI aircraft, a heat-detecting eye in the sky known as a "forward-looking infrared. They began late in the morning and continued until a little after noon. As evidence, Sage points to an aerial photograph that he says was taken within seconds of a flash that shows no one on the ground doing any shooting. He says the still frame enlargement of the infrared tape makes the same point. Sage is not sure what caused the flashes, he says. Because I am not one. Beavers, who used infrared imagery extensively in the British army, demonstrated what gunfire looks like on a thermal imaging camera. This is somebody shooting. Although its agents came under Davidian machine gun fire, the FBI maintains that no agent fired back at any time. The fact that these agents did not return fire is an extraordinary statement to the professionalism and the discipline that is pervasive throughout the hostage rescue team and throughout the FBI, for that matter. That loss of life - any loss of any life - is something that I think all of us would have done - would have moved heaven and earth to try to change. On Tuesday, Bill Johnston, the assistant U.

4: Waco (TV Mini-Series) - IMDb

The Standoff in Waco Twenty years on, the day siege at the Branch Davidian compound and the tragedy that followed still haunts those who were there.

Early history[edit] In , Victor Houteff , a Bulgarian immigrant and a Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School teacher in a local church in Southern California, claimed that he had a new message for the entire church. The ,â€”A Call for Reformation. After Lois Roden died, the authority was passed to George Roden. But less than a year later, Vernon Howell rose to power and became the leader over the group. Rise of Koresh[edit] David Koresh in Howell had an affair with the then-prophetess of the Branch Davidians, Lois Roden , while he was in his late 20s and she was in her late 60s. Howell wanted a child with her, who, according to his understanding, would be the Chosen One. When she died, her son George Roden inherited the position of prophet and leader of the commune. However, George Roden and Howell began to clash. This illegal activity gave Howell an opportunity to attempt to file charges against Roden, however he was told he needed evidence. This led to the November 3, raid on the Mount Carmel Center by Howell and 7 of his followers equipped with five. After the followers were found not guilty, Howell invited the prosecutors to Mount Carmel for ice cream. As spiritual leader[edit] Howell, having gained the role of spiritual leader from Roden, asserted his spiritual role by changing his name to David Koresh , suggesting ties to the biblical King David and to Cyrus the Great Koresh being Hebrew for Cyrus. In Koresh used this power as spiritual leader to take several "spiritual" wives as young as 12 [15] he was to create a new lineage of world rulers. Waco siege On February 28, at 9: The five Branch Davidians killed in the 9: The FBI took command after the deaths of federal agents, and managed to facilitate the release of 19 children without their parents relatively early into the negotiations. Officially, FBI agents were only permitted to return any incoming fire, not to actively assault the Branch Davidians. A federal grand jury indicted 12 of the surviving Branch Davidians charging them with aiding and abetting in murder of federal officers, and unlawful possession and use of various firearms. Eight Branch Davidians were convicted on firearms charges, 5 convicted of voluntary manslaughter , and four were acquitted of all charges. The bulk of these claims were dismissed because they were insufficient as a matter of law or because the plaintiffs could advance no material evidence in support of them. One case, Andrade v. Chojnacki made it to the Fifth Circuit , which upheld a previous ruling of "take-nothing, denied". You can help by adding to it. February One modern incarnation of the Branch Davidians exists under the leadership of Charles Pace, a follower of Ben and Lois Roden, who was a member of the Branch Davidians since the mids. The Seventh-day Adventist Church deprived both the Branch Davidians and the Davidians of their membership in the denomination, but in spite of this fact the Branch Davidians actively continued to "hunt" members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, encouraging them to leave it and join their group instead. The Seventh-day Adventist Church issued warnings about the Branch Davidian views to its members on a regular basis.

5: Remembering the Waco Siege - ABC News

Waco siege, a day standoff between Branch Davidians and federal agents that ended on April 19, , when the religious group's compound near Waco, Texas, was destroyed in a fire. Nearly 80 people were killed.

The government thought he was in possession of illegal firearms and explosives, as well as a criminal who physically and sexually abused several children he fathered with his followers. Koresh was hit in his side, and his father-in-law was mortally wounded. Overhead, helicopters began to spray the compound with return fire against aggressive compound members, killing four more. Later that day, agents killed another Davidian who approached the compound. Four ATF agents were killed and another 16 were wounded that day. A day standoff was in the making. He immigrated with his family to the U. By the early s, Houteff had developed Biblical views in conflict with his fellow Adventists. He became the father of a notable religious organization. Early on, the Seventh-day Adventist Church adopted a unique doctrine known as the investigative judgment of Christ. When the latter date had passed, a new date was set: Those failed predictions have continued throughout the history of the Branch Davidians, to the present day. Houteff was branded a disruptive influence on the SDA and excommunicated, in He and a handful of followers moved to Texas, near Waco. In they incorporated and took the name Davidian Seventh-day Adventist. Houteff fully expected Christ to return during his lifetime. Houteff died in , and his wife, Florence, assumed the leadership. She announced to the followers that on April 22, , a great sign would appear and then the Lord would return. The man was Benjamin Roden, a west Texas businessman, who had just returned from purchasing land in Israel. He managed to convince some of the Davidians that he was a prophet, and he became the leader of a new and separate movement. Roden called his group the Branch Davidians. Florence Houteff issued an announcement in , that the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists were disbanded. Roden kept not only the Saturday Sabbath, but also instituted the Jewish Old Testament feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, and Atonement as eight-day observances. When Roden died in , his wife, Lois, became head of the group. In a young man named Vernon Howell eventually David Koresh joined the group and quickly gained influence. He had been reared under the influence of Seventh-day Adventist theology and memorized some scripture as a child. Howell had become obsessed with the book of Revelation and Old Testament end-time prophecy. George lived up to an aggressive reputation. The conflict between Roden and Howell ended in a shoot-out in , when Howell returned with a few of his followers and plenty of ammunition. Howell emerged from the conflict as the new leader of the Branch Davidian group. The compound remained relatively quiet until February 28, His childhood was difficult; he never knew his father. He dropped out of school in the ninth grade. After making his way to Hollywood in a failed attempt to become a rock star, he joined the Branch Davidians, in He said that only he could be married, which caused several members to leave. Former followers told authorities that Koresh beat the children until they were bruised and bleeding. One defector, Marc Breault, had hired detectives to investigate, and when contacted by the ATF, he supplied a number of detailed descriptions of his former associates. He denounced Koresh, accusing him of child abuse and polygamy. Breault also described numerous minors whom Koresh had subjected to marriage and sex. The youngest was only 12 years old. State social workers investigated, but could never ascertain clear evidence of the charges. Koresh said that the Apocalypse would begin when the U. Army attacked Mount Carmel, their compound outside of Waco. According to former followers, Koresh demanded to know how far they were willing to go in defense of the true faith. The only way to serve God was to be willing to die, he insisted. He even taught the children that suicide might one day be required, and showed them how to accomplish it with cyanide or a gun. Eventually, he changed the name of Mount Carmel to Ranch Apocalypse. The day stand-off Following the February 28th shoot-out with federal agents, Koresh and his followers locked themselves inside the compound. Koresh quickly contacted the media and participated in several live interviews with CNN about how the ATF had endangered his "flock of sheep. He was planning to die for his cause. The media began to arrive in swarms. President Bill Clinton endorsed a negotiated settlement, and 10 children were released, including a baby. The day after the first gun battle, Koresh made a tape of his teachings and promised to surrender if the recording were broadcast on national

television. Agents agreed to his demands and the tape was broadcast on the Christian Broadcasting Network; however, Koresh went against his word, stating that God had told him to wait. Negotiations continued over the next several days. He continued to make rambling religious statements interspersed with threats of violence. The FBI became concerned that the Davidians would commit mass suicide. CS gas was miserably uncomfortable on contact, but it would not harm anyone unless ventilation was shut off, in which case death could result, including the 23 children that remained inside. At dawn on Monday morning, April 19, , the FBI phoned the compound to warn those inside about what was to occur. Three minutes after the initial call, two combat engineering vehicles approached the buildings, easily punched holes into the walls, and began to spray tear gas, pressurized by noncombustible carbon dioxide, through nozzles, into the compound. Davidians began to fire at the tanks, and other approaching agents, but no damage was done. Nine Bradley vehicles, an Abrams tank, and a squad of choppers were positioned nearby for additional backup. Everyone involved in the process was under orders that if children were in any way endangered, the procedure was to be aborted. Then around 12 p. An HRT agent later claimed that he had seen someone light a fire in front of the building, and several ear-splitting explosions from within erupted into a black, billowy cloud of smoke. Texas winds unleashed terror that day, and the fire quickly began to possess the compound. People were heard screaming as they ran for life out of the flames. Of the remaining followers, only nine emerged. One woman was seen running out of the compound, partially on fire, then turned back to reenter the flames. HRT agents grabbed her, and extinguished her burning clothes. Incinerated bodies, an arsenal of more than firearms and , rounds of ammunition were eventually recovered from the scene. Nineteen men, 34 women, and 23 children died that day. Many of the victims had died from gunshot wounds and one child had been stabbed to death. Because the gas was known to be flammable, allegations against the ATF were made public, and court hearings proceeded. A Texas jury found the blame of the incident to rest solely on Koresh and his followers.

6: The Waco Massacre

After two gun battles between the Branch Davidians and ATF left four agents and at least two cult members dead on Feb. 28, a day siege of the compound near.

Shop The Standoff in Waco Twenty years on, the day siege at the Branch Davidian compound and the tragedy that followed still haunts those who were there. Thu, Apr 18, at 8: The ATF was investigating allegations of illegal weapons hoarding. A day standoff ensued. The surrender never happened. Though a number of Davidians left the compound during the siege, dozens remained inside, and on April 19, more than 80 of them, including 17 children, perished in a fire that engulfed the complex. The television footage was beamed around the world. David Koresh left with Clive Doyle. Photo provided by Clive Doyle. The Branch Davidians sprang out of the Davidian Seventh Day Adventist church — which itself had emerged out of the Seventh-day Adventists in the s. The Davidian church was started by a Bulgarian immigrant named Victor Houteff who believed he had the gift of prophecy and wanted to reform the Seventh-day Adventist movement. Both the Davidians and Branch Davidians believe we are living in a time of final judgment, that we are about to witness the imminent Second Coming of Christ. After Roden died in , his wife Lois took over, claiming to have a message of her own — that the Holy Spirit is feminine in gender — and rebuffed an attempt by her son George to assume the leadership. On April 19, , Doyle escaped from the fire at the Mt. Carmel Center with severe burns to his hands and body; his year-old daughter, Shari, perished. Koresh urged Ofelia Santoyo, another member, to leave during the day standoff to look after her elderly mother. Byron Sage, an FBI agent, had the unenviable task of negotiating with Koresh throughout the entire siege. Four months after the fire, a federal grand jury indicted 12 of the surviving Branch Davidians for aiding and abetting the murder of federal officers and unlawful possession of firearms. Ofelia Santoyo was never charged with an offense. Charges against one of the Davidians were dropped before the trial, and four others — including Clive Doyle — were acquitted. The remaining eight Davidians were convicted of firearms-related offenses but acquitted of murder. By , all of them had been released from prison. The cause of the fire is still disputed. John Danforth to investigate the events of This failure resulted from a combination of the inappropriate handling of evidence and the dereliction of duty. Clive Doyle It was not a completely self-sufficient group. But over the years, people went to work downtown — a lot of them were sent off to California or somewhere else. The idea was with new people coming in all the time, there would be means to feed them, take care of them and so forth. I was one of the ones who went out to California: I worked for the government on the census in ; I also worked with a gardening crew at one point. The last job I had was at a company mass-producing educational videos. We used to have long, long studies. I was at Mt. Carmel with my mother, Concepcion Acuna. I used to do the cooking. I used to cook baked chicken, eggplant. Some of the people there even took the recipe back to England when they went to visit. They used to love my eggplant. Clive Many of the houses on the property needed roofs. A lot of them had busted doors and windows so we made an effort to fix them up. Finally, David realized that we were sinking a lot of money in but barely making them livable. The chapel that used to be up near the front gate was in bad shape. Its foundations were cracking so we dismantled it, and we used the lumber from that and the various houses to build a place for us all to live in , and it kind of evolved depending on the need. We built a chapel, and one time when I came back from California they had built a gymnasium on the north end of the building. So many people came that eventually David told us to subdivide the gym and convert it into dormitory rooms. In David made a general call [for followers]. He went to England and Hawaii. He went to Australia three times. He went to Israel three times. But he also traveled around the United States, meeting with people who knew him through the Seventh Day Adventist church. According to the law of Moses — God required that everybody come for three major feasts, three times a year — and David stressed that it was important that people come and hear what he had to say. Most of the people ended up staying. There were a lot of ominous things happening. We had a bulletin board in the hallway, just down near the front door, and they put a newspaper cutting up about the Randy Weaver thing. The ATF claims that was what put us on their radar: Not everyone had guns, but I saw Vernon with his gun. We were expecting them. He drove the go-carts

down the road. He went downtown quite often. Carmel] came over to ask David if he could get some help fixing up the empty house next door. A whole bunch of guys [from Mt. Carmel] went over there. But they came back saying he had a ton of things he wanted doing. So he whittled it down to just a couple of them going over and helping on a regular basis. They asked this guy why the owner was fixing it upâ€”did he want to rent it out? We thought that was kind of weird. I remember standing in the foyer at Mt. Carmel one morning talking to some people. So he told us not to go for walks down the road on our own any more. A new guy had started to visit us. His name was Robert Rodriguez. He told us he had read the Book of Revelation so he knew where we were coming from. On Saturday the 27th [the day before the raid], we had Bible study pretty much all day, and of course the newspaper was discussed because it was a real slam against us. Toward the end of that evening, Robert said he had missed so many meetings that he wished he could learn everything. David told him he was welcome to move in with us but â€” Robert made an excuse. So none of us was expecting to see him for a while but the next day he showed up with part two of the newspaper series. In the meantime, two of our guys had gone out to get a copy of the newspaper. One of them, David Jones, only got half a mile down the road when he saw this television truck parked on the side of the road. The guy told him he was trying to find Mt. He went tearing up the driveway in his car to the house across the road looking for the two agents in charge of the raid to tell them to call it off. So they ignored his warning. In the meantime, three helicopters were circling overhead around the property. He walked down the hall toward the front door and by the time he got there all hell broke loose. Byron Sage The first I heard of the Branch Davidians was when we had two congressional inquiries â€” driven by former Davidians who had reached out to [a Congressman in Waco] â€” the nature of the allegations were child abuse, involuntary servitude, civil rights violations. The first [hearing] was in ; the second ended about two weeks before the raid. We were trying to get a sense of what this group was all about. We knew that [Koresh] was a very charismatic leader, and that he had somewhere around to willing participants. The bottom line was that we came up with absolutely no substantive evidence that there was involuntary servitude, and the civil rights aspect with regards to child abuse and sexual exploitation was not within our jurisdiction unless it crossed state lines. We had confirmed some rumors that there had been some hand grenade hulls and suspicious chemicals. We got wind of that from the ATF when we brought what we knew to their attention. But we had no prior knowledge before February that the ATF was conducting a long-term investigation on this group. They soaked up what we gave them, but we got nothing in return other than silence. I offered to send a couple of my agents out during the raid and they turned that down. Ofelia I was in the church when it happened. The first thing I heard was the gunfire. And then everybody was carrying their guns. The first person I saw was David. You all go to your rooms. It was happeningâ€”exactly as he had predicted.

7: The Standoff in Waco - The Texas Observer

The Waco Siege began in early 1993, when a government raid on a compound near Waco, Texas, led to a day standoff between federal agents and members of a millennial Christian sect called the.

A firefight ensued, in which six ATF agents and five Davidians were shot dead. The raid transformed into a tense standoff, with the FBI taking control. Instead, smoke began to billow from the building, which was quickly engulfed in flames. At least 76 group members, including 24 children, lost their lives in the conflagration. The heat was so intense that bodies melted together. The group held to a complex theology, in which the prophecies of Revelation played a key role. David Koresh, leader of the Branch Davidians. Wikipedia As the political scientist Michael Barkun and others have noted, by assaulting the group directly, the government confirmed their prophecies and reinforced their beliefs. Authorities portrayed him as a dangerous, and probably insane, individual who had perpetrated an act of mass suicide. The official enquires that followed supported this view. Recordings from the compound, featuring discussion of spreading fuel, appear to back this up. But other research has questioned these claims. The recordings are open to debate, and Davidian survivors have often stated that Koresh preached against suicide. View of the right For many on the right, the siege became a symbol of government attacks on religious and civil liberties. Today Waco remains a potent symbol that continues to motivate many within the survivalist and militia movements in the US. The events were quickly politicised in popular media. However, as religion scholar Joseph Laycock notes, a more nuanced narrative developed in line with public scepticism surrounding Waco. Rules of Engagement, have also done much to question the government narrative. Based on books by FBI negotiator Gary Noesner and former-Davidian siege survivor David Thibodeau, the series was criticised in some quarters for an overly sympathetic portrayal of Koresh, including papering over accusations of child abuse. Some positive outcomes did follow. This helped them reach a peaceful solution to the standoff with the Montana Freeman in The Davidians also survived and developed. Today, a new Branch Davidian church sits on the site of Mount Carmel. It serves as both a memorial to the events of and as a testimony to the resilience of their religious belief.

8: Waco: A Chronology of Events Before, During, and after the Deadly Siege

The Waco siege ended with the deaths of at least 84 people and inspired another notorious act of violence in the following years. The Waco, Texas compound of the Branch Davidians, a religious sect, was raided by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) on February 28, with lethal results.

Last Updated Apr 14, Now, as the 25th anniversary of the standoff nears, Peter Van Sant and "48 Hours" investigate the cult and what led to a deadly day siege. After a day standoff, the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, was destroyed after government tanks rammed the building and agents fired tear gas. More than 70 followers died, nearly two dozen were children, after the buildings erupted into a fireball. CBS News Nearly a quarter century ago, God, guns and government collided so violently in the quiet Texas town of Waco that its impact is still being felt today. But how did it come to this? David Koresh to Alright, alright uh â€¦ hello? I hear gun fire. New secrets of Waco were revealed for the very first time on "48 Hours," including the remarkable story of a deliveryman who unwittingly armed the cult. Are you haunted that somehow you may have put this in motion? I have been blamed for what happened out there. For 25 years, Gilbreath wondered if his actions led to one of the deadliest confrontations between Federal law enforcement agents and civilians in U. People are being oppressed! Koresh was talking about the end of the world happening in a giant conflict. Hancock is now a consultant for CBS News. David Koresh was the illegitimate child of a woman who gave birth to him at 14 years old. David Koresh to Nine Network Australia reporter: We got our tails womped. Koresh sought refuge with the Branch Davidians, a reclusive group of Christians living in Waco, Texas. This was the place where they were going to find eternal salvation. They were on a path to heaven. Koresh briefly took an exit off that path, heading to California to try his luck in the music business. Instead, he found his stardom in the pulpit, where his commanding preaching style began attracting followers. Koresh and I were -- were closer than brothers. We had that common bond. David said that he was the Christ. He was not just a prophet. He was the Son of God. But there was a problem: Koresh and his rival, both heavily armed, had a violent confrontation. Then, the sheriffs department came out. Actually there was one guy who was wounded in a minor way. Koresh was arrested and charged with attempted murder; his case ended in a mistrial. Koresh was now the leader of the Branch Davidian Church. A sinful messiah, who, apparently, had a favorite sin. Koresh would later father as many as 20 children with his female followers -- some as young as Sheila Martin and her husband, a Harvard Law School graduate, were true believers. He wanted us to know that we had nothing but to trust in God and to love him. Every day, he was in contact with God. By the late s, Koresh had dozens of followers sitting spellbound for hours, listening to his end-of-the world sermons of doom. Koresh would begin building an extensive arsenal of firearms and explosives to defend against the apocalyptic attack he had predicted was coming. I thought it was a little strange that religious people would be ordering guns. United Parcel Service driver Larry Gilbreath delivered packages to the compound, sometimes making several trips a week. For months, he had no idea what was in them. Then, he started noticing the labels. They were getting shipments from an arms dealer. But in Texas, receiving large shipments of weapons was not illegal. By the late s, David Koresh had proven himself to a lot of people. The rock and roll drifter with a God complex had a magnetism and message that was spreading all around the world, including Australia. And before long, dozens of people were following David Koresh. New Zealander Grace Adams told her story on American network television for the very first time. I was very excited about meeting this prophet. In , Grace, who was 29, and her younger sister, Rebecca, just 21, made the exhausting 7, mile journey, arriving at the Waco compound at about 11 p. Grace Adams says they walked into a hellish scene. David was on stage on a hospital bed. And were there children in the room? Grace Adams Yes, there were children. I knew I was supposed to be scared of him. Joann Vaega was just a toddler in , when her parents, Neil and Margarida, moved the family from Hawaii to Waco to be with David Koresh. It was me and my mom on a bunk bed. I had the top, she had the bottom. I just remember it being very peaceful. This is where we belonged. A true believer to this day, Clive Doyle was one of the longtimers in the Branch Davidians. Doyle joined in the s, long before David Koresh. It was a Spartan life. There was no â€¦ plumbing. So we would â€¦ go â€¦ to the bathroom in a bucket

and take it outside and bury it. Were you well fed there? The food was very basic. While the women did the cooking, the men tended to the acre property. What did you do in your spare time? Koresh could sometimes get violent even with one of his own children, including a 4-year-old son he fathered the only time he was legally married to Rachael Jones -- a year-old girl. I remember one night we were getting ready for dinner. I heard him yell at my dad. Would he curse at him? There was a huge gate. But you were not allowed to go anywhere near that. What were you told was out there? And I remember -- one time "And he goes "you know what? You and I are in a cult! He called it "The New Light. The "New Light" -- in a nutshell -- was that all the women of the world belonged to him. But Breault was having none of it. And did he say anything to you about your wife? Was he going to hand me over to David Koresh? And for you, that was the breaking point? Yeah "I was already "planning on "leaving. But Grace Adams says there were plenty of sexual targets at the compound. As a woman, you needed to have sex with David in order to go to heaven. Peter Van Sant What kind of ages are we talking about? Any get pregnant by him? Adams says she was terrified Koresh would choose her for sex. I was so frightened "that this thing may happen that I started to flip out, I guess. I was offering myself to him. Koresh then woke everyone up and began screaming at Adams in front of the group. It was then that -- he decided that I needed to be -- isolated in a cabin. Adams says Koresh locked her in a 10 x 8-foot room under hour guard for nearly four months.

The roots of the confrontation between the federal government and the Branch Davidians went back 10 years before the Waco siege. In , a young man named Vernon Howell showed up at the Mt.

On February 28, shortly after the attempt to serve the warrant, an intense gun battle erupted, lasting nearly 2 hours. In the aftermath of this armed exchange, four agents and six Branch Davidians had been killed. The siege ended 50 days later when a second assault on the compound was made and a fire destroyed the compound. Seventy-six people 24 of them British nationals [2] died in the fire, including more than 20 children, two pregnant women, and the sect leader David Koresh. As the group gained members, the leadership moved the church to a hilltop several miles east of Waco, which they named Mount Carmel, after a mountain in Israel mentioned in Joshua A few years later, they moved again to a much larger site east of the city. In Florence Houteff widow of founder Victor Houteff announced that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ was about to take place, and members were told to gather at the center to await this event. Many built houses, others stayed in tents, trucks or buses, and most sold their possessions. Carmel fell to Benjamin Roden, and, on his death, to his wife, Lois. Lois Roden considered their son, George, unfit to assume the position of prophet. Instead, she groomed Vernon Howell, later known as David Koresh, as her chosen successor. In a meeting led to a division of the group with Howell leading one faction, calling themselves the Davidian Branch Davidians, with George Roden leading the competing faction. After this split, George Roden ran Howell and his followers off Mt. Howell and his group relocated to Palestine, Texas. George Roden had dug up the casket of Anna Hughes from the Davidian cemetery and had challenged Howell to a resurrection contest to prove who was the rightful heir to the leadership. Howell instead went to the police and claimed Roden was guilty of corpse abuse. By October 31, the county prosecutors had refused to file charges without proof and so on November 3, Howell and seven armed companions attempted to access the Mt. Carmel chapel with the goal of photographing the body in the casket. George Roden was advised of the interlopers and grabbed an Uzi in response. Sheriff Harwell got Howell on the phone and told him to stop shooting and surrender. The county prosecutors did not press the case further. Roden killed Adair with an axe. Roden was found guilty under an insanity defense and was committed to a mental hospital. Carmel owed by Roden and took legal control of the property. On August 28, , Judge Robert Martinez granted the petition. Most of the buildings had been removed or were being salvaged for construction materials to convert much of the main chapel and a tall water tank into apartments for the resident members of the group. Many of the members of the group had been involved with the Davidians for a few generations, and many had large families. Former Davidian Marc Breault claimed that Koresh had " M16 lower receiver parts" [7] combining certain M16 components with a modified AR lower receiver possibly constitutes the manufacture of a firearm that would be classified as a machine gun; [10] the Hughes amendment, attached to the Firearm Owners Protection Act of , effectively outlawed civilian ownership of any machine guns manufactured after the date of enactment [11]. Green on February 25, , the Branch Davidian gun business the "Mag Bag", Route 7, Box B, Waco, Texas, , located on Farm Road number , had purchased many legal guns and gun parts from various legal vendors such as forty-five semi-automatic AR15 lower receivers from Olympic Arms. These purchases were traced by Aguilera through the normal channels used to track legal firearms purchases from legal vendors. None of the weapons and firearms were illegally obtained nor illegally owned by the "Mag Bag"; however, Aguilera affirmed to the judge that in his experience, in the past other purchasers of such legal gun parts had modified them to make illegal firearms. The search warrant was justified not on the basis there was proof that the Davidians had purchased anything illegal, but on the basis that they could be modifying legal arms to illegal arms, and that automatic weapon fire had been reported on the compound. It began, "If you are a Branch Davidian, Christ lives on a threadbare piece of land 10 miles east of here called Mount Carmel. He has dimples, claims a ninth-grade education, married his legal wife when she was 14, enjoys a beer now and then, plays a mean guitar, reportedly packs a 9mm Glock and keeps an arsenal of military assault rifles , and willingly admits that he is a sinner without equal. Koresh was also said to advocate polygamy for himself and

declared himself married to several female residents of the small community. According to the paper, Koresh declared he was entitled to at least wives, that he was entitled to claim any of the females in the group as his, that he had fathered at least a dozen children through the harem and that some of these mothers became brides as young as 12 or 13 years old. No one willingly enters into a relationship like this. A UPS driver described a package that had broken open on delivery to the Branch Davidian residence, revealing firearms, inert grenade casings, and black powder. On June 9, , a formal investigation was opened and a week later it was classified as sensitive, [sic]"thereby calling for a high degree of oversight" from both Houston and Headquarters. Their cover was noticeably poor the "college students" were in their 30s, had new cars, were not registered at the local schools, and did not keep a schedule which would have fit any legitimate employment or classes. The affidavit of ATF investigator David Aguilera for the search warrant claimed that there were over weapons and 8, rounds of ammunition in the compound. The paperwork on the AR components cited in the affidavit showed they were in fact legal semi-automatics ; however, Aguilera told the judge: I have been involved in many cases where defendants, following a relatively simple process, convert AR semi-automatic rifles to fully automatic rifles of the nature of the M Often times templates, milling machines, lathes and instruction guides are used by the converter. Judge or Magistrate " dated 25 February 8: This provided the drug nexus necessary to obtain military assets under the "War on Drugs". Also, in meeting with Tribune-Herald personnel a week before the raid before a date had actually been set , ATF agent Cavanaugh felt the newspaper had held off publication at the request of the ATF for at least three weeks, but ATF could not give the newsmen a clear idea of what action was planned or when. The Tribune-Herald informed ATF they were publishing the series, which included an editorial calling for local authorities to act. Personnel of the Tribune-Herald found out about the imminent raid after the first installment of "Sinful Messiah" had already appeared on February Although the ATF preferred to arrest Koresh when he was outside Mount Carmel, planners received inaccurate information that Koresh rarely left it. The Davidians partly supported themselves by trading at gun shows and took care always to have the relevant paperwork to ensure their transactions were legal. The morning of the raid, Paul Fatta and son Kalani were on their way to the Austin, Texas gun show to conduct business. Any advantage of surprise was lost as a reporter, who had been tipped off about the raid asked for directions from a U. The agent made an excuse and left the compound. When asked later what the Davidians had been doing when he left the compound, Rodriguez replied, "They were praying. Despite being informed that the Davidians knew a raid was coming, the ATF commander ordered that the raid go ahead, even though their plan depended on reaching the compound without the Davidians having been armed and prepared. It is not known who fired the first shots, but each side later claimed it had been the other. A suggested reason may have been an accidental discharge of a weapon, possibly by an ATF agent, causing the ATF to respond with fire from automatic weapons. The resident asked for a ceasefire , and audiotapes record him saying "Here they come again! Agents quickly took cover and fired at the buildings while the helicopters began their diversion and swept in low over the complex, feet away from the building. One agent was killed and another one wounded. The third agent scampered over the peak of the roof and joined other agents attempting to enter the arms room. The window was smashed, a flashbang grenade thrown in and three agents entered the arms room. When another tried to follow them a hail of bullets penetrated the wall and wounded him but he was able to reach a ladder and slide to safety. An agent fired with his shotgun at Davidians who were shooting at him until he was hit in the head and killed. Inside the arms room the agents killed a Davidian gunman and discovered a cache of weapons but came under heavy fire and two were wounded. As they escaped the third agent laid down covering fire and killed a Davidian. As he made his escape, he hit his head on a wooden support beam and fell off the roof, but survived. An agent outside provided them with covering fire but was shot by a Davidian and killed instantly. Dozens of ATF agents took cover, many behind Davidian vehicles, and exchanged fire with the Davidians. The number of ATF wounded increased and an agent was killed by gunfire from the compound as agents were firing at a Davidian sniper perched on top of the water tower. The exchange of fire continued but 45 minutes into the raid the gunfire began to slow down as agents began to run low on ammunition. The shooting continued for two hours. We were running out of ammunition. The Davidians, however, had plenty. Another sixteen were wounded. The five Davidians killed in the 9: Defensive

violence is utilized by cults to defend a compound or enclave that was created specifically to eliminate most contact with the dominant culture. The clash in Waco, Texas at the Branch Davidian complex is an illustration of such defensive violence. History has shown that groups that seek to withdraw from the dominant culture seldom act on their beliefs that the endtime has come unless provoked. According to a later Treasury Department Review, the agents drove in an vehicle convoy that stretched for a mile 1. A gun battle begins.

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