

Chapter 1 : West Fertilizer Company explosion - Wikipedia

*What really occurred outside Waco on April 19, ? Is the U.S. government responsible for the deaths of more than 70 men, women and children at the Branch Davidian compound?*

Nearly 80 people were killed. There the Branch Davidians lived a simple life, preparing for the imminent return of Jesus. However, in the mids the group became embroiled in a power struggle, and by the end of the decade Vernon Howell later called David Koresh had become head of the Mt. Believing that the group was illegally stockpiling weapons, the U. On February 28, , more than 70 ATF agents raided the complex. Gunfire eruptedâ€”though it is uncertain who fired firstâ€”and during the two-hour battle, four federal agents were killed and more than a dozen injured. In addition, six Davidians reportedly died. Nearly law-enforcement officials subsequently descended on the compound, including FBI hostage negotiators. Partly in exchange for various suppliesâ€”including milk that was delivered in cartons with listening devicesâ€”Koresh allowed more than 30 followers to leave. However, it was thought that some remained in the compound. Soon thereafter, the Branch Davidians began firing weapons. For more than five hours armored vehicles, some of which punched holes into walls, deposited tear-gas canisters inside the compound; at Some 25 minutes later, the Branch Davidians set several fires, and at Due to safety concerns, firefighters were not allowed into the area for another 15 minutes, by which time the compound was beyond saving. While nine people managed to escape, the rest died. Investigators ultimately found 75 bodies, 25 of which belonged to children. A number of the deceased had been fatally shot, including Koresh. While some of the wounds appeared to be self-inflicted, others did not. While the government long maintained that it was not involved in starting or spreading the fire, in it was revealed that some of the tear gas used by the FBI was flammable. Later that year Reno appointed John Danforth , a lawyer and former Republican senator, to investigate the raid. His probe, which concluded in , found that the U. Regardless of such findings, some people viewed the Waco siege as governmental abuse of authority, and it spurred the growth of militias. In , on the second anniversary of the raid, Timothy McVeigh carried out the Oklahoma City bombing , which killed people. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

Chapter 2 : Waco siege - Wikipedia

*Wait-Out in Waco (Day of the Disaster) [Sue L. Hamilton, Richard Smith] on blog.quintoapp.com \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers. Chronicles the events in Waco, Texas, leading up to the fire that killed over ninety members of David Koresh's Branch Davidian cult.*

The Waco tragedy The Danforth report Sponsored link. Danforth, R-MO as special counsel to head up an independent investigation into the Waco tragedy. He is an Episcopal priest, and had been the attorney general in Missouri for eight years. The study was restricted to determining " Senator Danforth and Attorney General Reno established five principal issues to be covered by the investigation: Whether agents of the United States started or contributed to the spread of the fire that killed members of the Branch Davidian group on April 19, ; Whether agents of the United States directed gunfire at the Branch Davidian complex on April 19, ; Whether agents of the United States used any incendiary or pyrotechnic device at the Branch Davidian complex on April 19, ;6 Whether there was any illegal use of the armed forces of the United States in connection with the events leading up to the deaths occurring at the Branch Davidian complex on April 19, ; and Whether any government representative made or allowed others to make false or misleading statements, withheld evidence or information from any individual or entity entitled to receive it, or destroyed, altered or suppressed evidence or information concerning the events occurring at the Branch Davidian complex on April 19, Main conclusions of the investigation: The Office of Special Counsel interviewed exactly 1, witnesses, reviewed over 2. The government of the United States and its agents are not responsible for the April 19, , tragedy at Waco. Responsibility for the tragedy of Waco rests with certain of the Branch Davidians and their leader, Vernon Howell, also known as David Koresh, who: While the Special Counsel has concluded that the United States government is not responsible for the tragedy at Waco on April 19, , the Special Counsel states with equal certainty that an FBI agent fired three pyrotechnic tear gas rounds at 8: The pyrotechnic tear gas rounds did not start the fire that consumed the complex four hours later. The Special Counsel has also concluded that certain FBI and Department of Justice officials failed to disclose to the Attorney General, Congress, the courts, counsel for the Davidians, and the public, evidence and information about the use of pyrotechnic tear gas rounds until August This failure resulted from a combination of the inappropriate handling of evidence and the dereliction of duty by FBI and Department of Justice employees. As more fully set out below, the Special Counsel has concluded that some of these employees also obstructed the investigation. The investigators determined that " And they shall be afraid: Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: Carmel Complex, Waco Texas," at: The rules of engagement," at: You may require software to read it. Software can be obtained free from: King James Version of the Bible.

**Chapter 3 : Federal agents raid the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas - HISTORY**

*Waco and the Big Lie Books about the Branch Davidian standoff Wait-Out in Waco (Day of the Disaster) by Smith Richard, et al. 51 days by Vern Herschberger.*

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.

Chapter 4 : Chronology | Waco - The Inside Story | FRONTLINE | PBS

*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.*

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.

**Chapter 5 : WACO Siege - Other Conspiracies - Conspiracy Theories**

*Category News & Politics; Song Don't Give Up; Artist Peter Gabriel; Album So; Writers Peter Gabriel; Licensed to YouTube by itspetergabriel, UMG, Live Nation Video Network (on behalf of Real World.*

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.

**Chapter 6 : The Standoff in Waco - The Texas Observer**

*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,*

Background[ edit ] West Fertilizer Company had supplied chemicals to farmers since it was founded in As of [update] it was owned by Adair Grain, Inc. OSHA also cited the plant for violations of respiratory protection standards, but did not impose a fine. OSHA officials said the facility was not on their "National Emphasis Plan" for inspections, because it was not a manufacturer, had no record of a major accident, and the Environmental Protection Agency did not consider it a major risk. A permit was issued once the operators brought the facility into accord with agency regulations and recommendations. The facility lacked burglar alarms, or even a fenced perimeter. It installed a surveillance system in after law enforcement recommended they do so. The tanks were still intact following the fire and explosion. Explosion in West, Texas". Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board safety video about the fire and explosion at the West Fertilizer Company in West, Texas The facility caught fire on Wednesday, April 17, , and roughly 20 minutes after the fire was first reported to emergency dispatchers the site exploded. Numbers for people dead or injured varied initially. Damage[ edit ] In addition to the obliterated plant, the damaged buildings included the public West Middle School , which sits next to the facility. Many of the nursing home residents received cuts from flying glass, but emergency personnel on scene judged that most of these injuries were not life-threatening. According to official estimates from both state and company officials, this amount did not even begin to cover the cost of damages. Furthermore, according to The Dallas Morning News , Texas law allows fertilizer storage facilities to operate without any liability insurance at all, even when they store hazardous materials. George Smith, himself injured, said he believed at least two emergency responders were killed. Wilson said at a midnight news conference on April He said the blast zone was "just like the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City," comparing its effects to the Oklahoma City bombing , and that "50 to 75" homes and businesses were damaged. He said at least people had been injured, and the firefighters who were combating the initial fire were still unaccounted for. Swanton quoted local environmental officials and emergency personnel in saying there was no risk to the community from the smoke fumes rising from the facility. It was later moved to a community center due to its proximity to the still-burning facility. Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center in Waco received over 40 injured for treatment. We are monitoring developments and gathering information as details continue to emerge about this incident. We have also mobilized state resources to help local authorities. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of West, and the first responders on the scene. A tight-knit community has been shaken, and good, hard-working people have lost their lives. I want to thank the first responders who worked tirelessly through the night to contain the situation and treat the wounded. My Administration, through FEMA and other agencies, is in close contact with our state and local partners on the ground to make sure there are no unmet needs as search and rescue and response operations continue. West is a town that many Texans hold near and dear to their hearts, and as residents continue to respond to this tragedy, they will have the support of the American people. They reopened on April Waco Police indicated that they would treat the explosion site as a crime scene out of caution. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives announced on the morning of April 18 that it would send a national response teamâ€”including fire investigators, explosive experts, chemists, and canine unitsâ€”to investigate the site. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board , an independent federal agency that investigates accidents involving industrial chemicals, also dispatched a major investigation team to West to begin searching for the cause of the disaster. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, in the criminal investigation into the explosion. On April 22, , the U. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board released preliminary results of its investigation into the explosion. It found that company officials failed to safely store the chemicals in its stockpile, and that federal, state and local regulations about the handling of hazardous materials were inadequate. Rafael Moure-Eraso , stated: It should never have occurred. It resulted from the failure of a company to take the necessary steps to avert a preventable fire and explosion and from the inability of federal,

state and local regulatory agencies to identify a serious hazard and correct it. We cannot depend on voluntary compliance. The report was issued in June [65] and the study was later published as a scientific manuscript in Please update this article to reflect recent events or newly available information. March At least seven lawsuits were filed against Adair Grain Inc. On October 11, , a day before jury selection was to begin, parties reached a partial settlement in one case. Its terms have not been disclosed. The settlement includes the families of the three civilians killed in the fire and explosion.

**Chapter 7 : What Really Happened At Waco - CBS News**

*Armageddon in Waco Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict Edited by Stuart A. Wright The University of Chicago Press, On February 28, , the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) launched the largest assault in its history against a small religious community in central Texas.*

By Amanda Sawyer Text On May 11, , a destructive force tore through Waco and forever altered the face of the city. The tornado injured people, took lives, and damaged hundreds of businesses. The chaotic aftermath of this deadly storm left an indelible mark upon the Waco community. Yet life in Waco continued at its normal pace. Some Wacoans placed stock in the old Waco Indian legend that claimed that the hills and bluffs surrounding the city kept it safe from tornados. Others noted that the weather was the same as it had been for days: Few took heed of the storm warnings issued by the National Weather Service. The weather grew severe as the day progressed. Thunderstorms developed, and many downtown shoppers and businessmen rushed into buildings in order to take cover from the rain. It seemed to many as though night had fallen. As the storm worsened, some tried to contact family and loved ones, only to find the phone lines had gone dead. The F-5 tornado cut a swath nearly one-third of a mile wide with winds up to miles per hour. After tearing through downtown, it exited the city and continued northeast for several more miles. Many of the buildings in downtown Waco were not built with such a severe storm in mind. Others, such as the R. Dennis building, collapsed, killing thirty of the people within and injuring several more. The tornado destroyed buildings, and damaged hundreds of others so badly that they were later torn down. Some, such as the Dr Pepper bottling plant, withstood smaller amounts of damage which the owners later repaired. Outside of downtown, the tornado demolished nearly six hundred homes in East Waco. The aftermath of the storm was chaotic, and confusion and disorganization characterized initial rescue efforts. The destruction was massive, and the city was entirely unprepared to handle such a disaster. Survivors served as the first responders, and as personnel from James Connelly Air Force Base, local and state law enforcement, Baylor University students, and others joined the work, an organizational system developed. Members of the Red Cross, Salvation Army, National Guard, army, and air force also arrived to aid in the rescue efforts. Yet even this relief could not counter the serious blow the tornado dealt to the downtown business community. Some areas of the city never fully recovered. Although this catastrophe, recognized as the deadliest Texas tornado since , devastated downtown, it also brought the Waco community together. Countless hours of volunteer efforts poured into the recovery of the city. The aftermath of the Waco tornado also contributed to the development of an efficient tornado warning system for the entire nation, and promoted greater communication amongst relief agencies to better deal with future disasters. Media Images Monster from the Skies: No photos exist of the tornado approaching the city. He sketched the tornado from memory, and a staff artist at the Waco Tribune-Herald produced this image. This aerial photo reveals the extent of damage sustained to downtown Waco. Though the storm wreaked havoc, many Wacoans believed the recovery and rescue efforts made the city a closer, more tight-knit community. Dozens of cars downtown were destroyed by the winds and falling debris, some with people still inside. Additionally, Southwestern Bell set up temporary phone lines in order to speed rescue efforts. The tornado destroyed more than six hundred houses. Waco was entirely unprepared to handle such a disaster, and initial rescue efforts were chaotic. Survivors dug barehanded through the debris to help others who were trapped. Later, police, military, and Red Cross volunteers cooperated in order to organize the work. The day started as any other, and most Wacoans went about their usual business until the storm hit. This photo shows where R. The wooden frames of these buildings could not withstand the high winds of the storm. After this tornado, the city required all new buildings to have steel frames, such as those that kept the Amicable building standing. Many businesses could not afford to completely rebuild their buildings, and either moved elsewhere or closed for good. This aerial photo shows a portion of downtown before and after the storm. The tornado left an indelible mark upon the city. As businesses and residents moved out into the suburbs in the decades following the tornado, the downtown business district declined. Baylor University Institute for Oral Myers, June 16, , in Waco, Texas. Lewis, Gertrude Levinson, interviewed by Lois E. Myers, April 7, , in Waco,

Texas.

*Larry POTTS at FBI headquarters in Washington and JAMAR in Waco are in command. Negotiations continue, and over the course of the day, 10 children are sent out of the compound.*

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.

Chapter 9 : Waco Tornado | Waco History

*Mary Garofalo, a journalist who covered the events at Waco for the news program, "A Current Affair," said she thought it was just going to be like any other day in the past weeks of the standoff.*

It was 25 years ago, but this well-spoken biblical scholar remembers the blaze, whose victims included 24 people from Britain, like it was yesterday. Worse, Dr Arnold still believes to this day that he could have saved them. Long hot days like this one are remembered well by eyewitnesses to those events in early Charismatic cult leader David Koresh believed he was the new Christ and had attracted more than followers to join him David Koresh believed himself to be the spiritual descendant of the biblical King David, Image: Alamy Stock Photo The fire apparently started inside the compound several hours after federal agents began pumping tear gas into the headquarters of the cult led by David Koresh Image: Credible allegations from former cult members of child abuse and the stockpiling of military grade weapons prompted the authorities to act. A botched raid then led to one of the longest gunfights in American law enforcement history, with four agents and six cult members killed. A protracted siege situation followed, lasting for 51 days. On one side, David Koresh and his right-hand man Steve Schnieder. On the other, FBI negotiators. According to Dr Arnold, they could not have been further apart. In the making of the new End Of Days podcast, the BBC discovered a tape recording which we believe very few people have heard. But the requests were ignored. They all died in the siege Image: Sygma via Getty Images The bunker was all that was left standing after the blaze. Four agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms ATF died in a raid launched after they received a warrant to search the premises, suspecting the group of stockpiling weapons Image: Getty One of the questions the BBC tries to answer in the podcast is why so many people made the journey from Britain. Koresh and Schnieder persuaded students to attend off-campus Bible-study sessions. It was from here, Koresh would seduce vulnerable believers "and soon it spread nationwide. Diana Henry, who lived in Trafford, Greater Manchester was already convinced. In her 20s, she had just got a degree and was due to start studying for a Masters when she decided instead to travel to join Koresh in his growing commune outside Waco. He arrived in Waco to bring his daughter home, but Koresh tried to persuade him to join the cult. Sam returned home to Manchester without Diana. Within months, his world would fall even further apart as the rest of his family decided to follow Diana to Texas. Sam, now 82, would never see them again. As the FBI ran out of patience, Sam joined the rest of the world in watching live pictures of the assault on the Mount Carmel site. Armoured vehicles punched holes in the walls, firing in tear gas to flush out cult members and force them to surrender. At around midday, a fire broke out and quickly spread. Others, including some survivors, maintain they were accidentally or deliberately started during the assault. Vincent Cole Yet, some of those survivors still believe. Livingstone Fagan lives in Nottingham. Koresh ordered him to leave Mount Carmel during the siege and he was later charged with conspiracy to murder an agent and sentenced to 40 years in prison. He served 14 years before returning to the UK. He had a message for me and for the listeners to the podcast. He will return you know? The heavens will open and people will see David.