

NEWS DIGEST

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1999

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Expert: Video shows FBI fired at Waco

WASHINGTON (AP) — An expert retained by a House committee has concluded that videotape of the 1993 Waco standoff shows the FBI fired shots on the siege's final day, contrary to the bureau's insistence its agents did not fire a single round.

Separately, Waco Special Counsel John Danforth has been briefed by another expert who reached a similar conclusion that the government and Branch Davidians exchanged gunfire that day.

FBI officials on Wednesday repeated their position. "There has been no evidence developed to date to indicate that any FBI agents fired any rounds during the standoff at Waco," said FBI spokesman Tron Brekke.

Allegations of government gunfire during the 51-day standoff have circulated for years.

The issue was revived by a report Wednesday in The Washington Post, in which Carlos Ghigliotti, who has been hired by the House Government Reform Committee to review siege footage, said he determined the FBI fired shots on April 19, 1993.

"I conclude this based on the ground-view videotapes taken from several different angles simultaneously and based on the overhead thermal tape," Ghigliotti said. "The gun-

fire from the ground is there, without a doubt."

Ghigliotti said the tapes also confirm the Davidians fired repeatedly at FBI agents during the assault, which ended when flames raced through the compound. About 80 Branch Davidians died that day, some from the fire, others from gunshot wounds.

Ghigliotti, who did not return calls Wednesday from The Associated Press, did not assert that any casualties were caused by FBI gunshots.

His review was based on videotapes shot by media crews and audio from an infrared aerial surveillance tape recently released by the FBI.

Ghigliotti has not seen all of the footage compiled by the FBI nor done an official analysis for the committee, FBI and congressional officials said.

Ghigliotti, who has performed thermal imaging analysis for the FBI, is scheduled to go to the FBI on Friday to review the tapes.

The House Government Reform Committee chairman said the findings are "troubling, but we think it is premature to make any final determination."

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Ghigliotti's views coincide with those of a retired Defense Department thermal imaging analyst who, in a 1997 documentary about Waco, said infrared surveillance footage shot by an FBI plane offers definitive proof that government forces unleashed a barrage of automatic weapon fire on the compound.

The FBI has explained the light bursts on the infrared footage as reflections of sun rays on shards of glass or other debris that littered the scene, a view shared by some thermal imaging experts who reviewed Waco footage for the Post in 1997.

Edward Allard, who was a supervisor at the Army's night vision lab at

Fort Belvoir, Va., has been hired as an expert in the Davidian survivors' wrongful-death lawsuit. He said the infrared footage reflects "the government pouring machine-gun fire into the building, and the Davidians firing here and there."

In his briefing for Danforth, Allard said, he explained why he discounts FBI and Justice Department claims that the bright bursts captured by the "Nightstalker" surveillance plane represent solar flashes on shards of glass or other debris around the compound.

"It's impossible for the Waco (forward-looking infrared) to detect solar radiation because the equipment they used is simply not sensitive enough to detect it," Allard said.

Death tolls may exceed 70 in rail wreck

LONDON (AP) — Searchers working their way through a train carriage that was transformed into an inferno in a rush-hour collision reached a grim conclusion Wednesday: The death toll may exceed 70.

Twenty-eight people are known to have died when the two commuter trains collided at the height of rush hour Tuesday morning near London's Paddington Station.

They are likely to be some of the missing 70, but police have not yet identified the bodies recovered.

Authorities also have received reports from friends and relatives about another 100 people who may have boarded the trains.

Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Andy Trotter was asked at a news conference if the final death toll would be as high as 170.

"I don't think it is going to be as high as that. What I can say at the moment is that it is 70-plus," he replied.

The blaze reached temperatures estimated as high as 1,800 degrees, burning a first-class carriage so badly that emergency services have not yet finished examining it.

At least 14 of the 150 people taken to local hospitals were seriously hurt.

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott announced an urgent independent inquiry into train protection systems designed to prevent trains passing through signal lights when they are red.

The assessment of the available systems will be carried out independently of the public inquiry Prescott announced Tuesday.

Police and firemen continued Wednesday to search through the widespread, mangled and burnt wreckage of Britain's worst rail disaster in a decade.

"We are sure that no other survivors will be found," Trotter said. "It is increasingly clear that there is very little else to recover from the scene."

One passenger who escaped, 38-year-old Steve

Jones, said he got out when another man in the carriage used a table to break a hole in the window.

"It was pretty horrific. I feel incredibly lucky," said Jones, who was hospitalized with burns.

The train companies said their investigation would focus on the outbound Thames Trains service, which may have gone through a red light.

The London-bound Great Western train had a green light to proceed, according to a statement Wednesday by Great Western, Thames Trains and Railtrack, the company which operates the rail infrastructure. Signals in the vicinity were in working order, the statement said.

One of two data recorders from the Thames train was reported found, but it was believed no data recorders were on the Great Western train.

The train companies said they were studying a specific signal that the train drivers' union had complained was invisible at some points to drivers leaving Paddington.

San Francisco rated most livable big city

Money magazine rates the Golden Gate city as the best in its annual list.

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Money magazine says San Francisco is the best big city in the country to live in — but that doesn't mean it's the best city for you.

So, for its annual selection of the nation's most livable locations, released Wednesday, Money is offering a way for you to find your own Shangri-la.

Instead of ranking the nation's largest 300 metropolitan areas, as it did in past years, the magazine's editors picked a winner and a few runners-up.

Then they built into their Web site (www.money.com) an interactive method of entering your own criteria. The site measures your needs against what those 300 metro areas offer and gives you an in-order list of cities to love.

"The reason we didn't rank the 300 cities? We felt people would be better served by picking a city best suited to them," Patti Strauss, Money's public relations director, said.

"The Web has been a part of the

story for a couple of years. On the Web site, you can rank the criteria that are most important to you."

So what put San Francisco — and Rochester, Minn., in the small-city category — in first place?

"San Francisco has wonderful things to offer," Strauss said. "We know housing is very expensive, there's the threat of earthquakes — but basically you have so many things we feel far outweigh that."

The magazine says the city and environs rank in the top 5 percent for air quality, offers first-rate museums, sports and more restaurants per resident than any other city in the country.

"Finally, it's the city's wide range of recreational opportunities. Great places to swim, sail, hike and ski are easy to reach. That clinched it," Money said.

But those things aren't important to everyone. Money's searchable Web database lets you find your ideal in two ways — a short form and a lengthy search form that asks detailed questions on a wide variety of items.

You get 15 questions on weather, including your ideal temperature, rainfall, snowfall and altitude above sea level. There are five questions on economic factors, five more on housing and health, two on crime and 13

on leisure activities, among other criteria.

After you fill in all the blanks, the database will find the cities among the 300 that best meet your needs.

It wasn't hard to find officials to applaud Money's choice.

"Money Magazine confirms what we San Franciscans have known all along," Mayor Willie Brown crowed Wednesday. "This is the best city in America for one reason — its people. This is the greatest collection of people ever found in any one city. I know that after 40 years. They're compassionate, progressive and adventurous."

Money did point out the city's flaws — the threat of earthquakes, a high student-to-teacher ratio and "the extraordinary cost of living."

"It's not surprising to me that Money has selected San Francisco, but it's also ironic, because San Francisco increasingly is becoming a better and better place to live for people who have money," said Gabriel Roth, city editor of The San Francisco Bay Guardian, an alternative weekly that's highly critical of how the city is run.

Roth sees a city in which officials consciously cater to new residents "earning six figures."

World and Nation

Datelines

■ Texas

Four men arrested eight years after slaying, robbery

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Authorities in Texas and West Virginia arrested four men Wednesday in one of Texas' most sensational unsolved crimes: the slaying of four teen-age girls at an Austin yogurt shop nearly eight years ago.

On Dec. 6, 1991, the girls were shot in the head in an apparent robbery at the I Can't Believe It's Yogurt! shop where two of them worked. The store was then set on fire in a crime that horrified the community because of its random brutality and the youth of the victims.

In Charleston W.Va., police Maj. Pat Epperhart said Robert Burns Springsteen Jr., 24, was arrested.

Michael James Scott, 25, of Buda, Texas, was arrested in the Austin area. Maurice Pierce, 24, was arrested in Lewisville, north of Dallas, and Forrest Wellborn, 23, was picked up in Lockhart, southeast of Austin.

■ New York

South Pole doctor picked up by National Guard

SCOTIA, N.Y. (AP) — Two National Guard cargo planes took off for the South Pole on Wednesday to pick up a 47-year-old doctor who discovered a lump in her breast.

Dr. Jerri Nielsen, the only physician at the South Pole research station, is believed to have been treating herself with chemotherapy since mid-July.

Drugs and medical equipment were air-dropped for her in a risky emergency flight during the middle of the howling Antarctic winter.

■ Washington

Antarctic ozone depletion smaller than in past years

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Antarctic ozone "hole" is smaller than last year, NASA scientists reported Wednesday.

The hole, actually an area of depleted ozone concentration high in the atmosphere, remains very large, however, said researcher Richard McPeters.

Satellite data show the depleted area stretched 9.8 million square miles on Sept. 15. The record area of Antarctic ozone depletion of 10.5 million square miles was set on Sept. 19, 1998.

■ Oregon

Survivor of high school shooting dies in gun accident

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. (AP) — After a bullet shattered his arm in a shooting at an Oregon high school last year, Richard Peek Jr. suggested a way to prevent such tragedies: "I'd make it harder for kids to get guns."

The 19-year-old escaped the deadly rampage only to die in a hunting accident Tuesday when he was hit in the head from a bullet fired by a fellow shooting survivor, his 17-year-old brother.

Investigators said Robert Peek crouched to listen for a deer when the hammer on his cocked rifle either slipped or got caught on his clothing, firing off a round that killed his brother instantly.

The latest death stunned a community still scarred by the May 21, 1998, shooting rampage at Thurston High School when 15-year-old Kip Kinkel fatally shot his parents and two classmates.

Daily Nebraskan

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Fax number: (402) 472-1761
World Wide Web: www.dailynebraskan.com
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 20, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.
Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.
Subscriptions are \$60 for one year. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 20, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.
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