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Utah



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Suspect Was Prepared To Shoot It Out

**BY GREG BURTON
THE SALT LAKE
TRIBUNE**

Chevie Kehoe and his wife fully expected and were prepared to die in a hail storm of bullets fired from federal agents, just like the 1992 gun battle anti-government icon Randy Weaver survived in Ruby Ridge, Idaho.

The day after Kehoe was safely in jail, his younger brother, Cheyne Kehoe, who turned himself in Monday, emerged as an unlikely benefactor to the federal government.

“He [Cheyne] was somewhat fearful that he would be stopped aggressively,” by federal officers who considered him armed and dangerous, said FBI Special Agent Thomas T. Kubic of Salt Lake City. “Cheyne also told us that his brother was prepared to shoot it out . . . same with his sister-in-law, Karen.”

The younger Kehoe's surrender in Stevens County, Wash., and subsequent conversations with federal agents about his brother's whereabouts and armaments appear to be the key to the peaceful



Chevie Kehoe is led into federal court in Salt Lake City Wednesday, a day after being arrested. (Douglas Pizac/ Associated Press)

resolution of what could have been a powder keg.

Chevie Kehoe, 24, was arrested in Cedar City on Tuesday after agents arranged for Rodney Leavitt -- who in May hired the the Kehoe brothers to do odd jobs on his Beryl farm -- to lure the federal fugitive to a farm supply store.

Karena Gumm Kehoe, packing a 9mm handgun in her back pocket, was detained about an hour later outside the Beryl travel trailer Leavitt had loaned the family, Kubic said. Neither of the Kehoe wives is expected to be charged.

Meanwhile, Pope County, Ark., Sheriff Jay Winters and an agent for the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) were in Salt Lake City to question Chevie Kehoe about the 1996 robbery and murder of a Tilly, Ark., arms dealer, his wife and step-daughter.

About a year after the Arkansas murder, the Kehoe brothers were captured on videotape exchanging gunfire with an Ohio trooper and sheriff's deputy. That exchange and a second shootout with two Ohio police officers resulted in a 16-count indictment of the brothers for attempted murder.

The brothers reportedly were in Ohio for an Aryan Nations rally in Columbus, held the day before the shootings. When police recovered the Chevrolet Suburban Chevie Kehoe used to escape the gunfire, they found six guns, 4,000 rounds of ammunition and bullet-resistant vests.

During the past three years the Kehoe brothers have left a trail of weapons from Arkansas to Washington, Ohio, Wyoming and finally Utah. Two of the weapons, a .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun and an AR-15 assault rifle, were recovered in Spokane, Wash., and subsequently linked to Arkansas gun dealer William Mueller.

In February, a federal grand jury in Spokane indicted Chevie on two counts of possessing stolen firearms, the only charges filed in connection to the murder of the Muellers, whose decaying bodies were found by a fisherman. Plastic bags sealed with duct tape were found around the victims' heads.

Kubic said the ATF would help inventory the weapons seized from the Beryl trailer, including three assault weapons, a shotgun and more than 8,000 rounds of ammunition, looking for a connection to the Arkansas robbery and murder.

"That's the nature of [the ATF agent's] investigation," Kubic said. At least one of the weapons seized in Beryl had two serial numbers, a ploy to alter its history of ownership.

Along with the two guns recovered in Spokane, a third gun stolen from Mueller was recovered in 1996 from a white supremacist who told the FBI he purchased the gun from Chevie Kehoe.

Based on Ohio warrants for unlawful flight to avoid prosecution, the Kehoe brothers are being held on separate \$1 million bonds. Proceedings to extradite the pair to Ohio are pending.

Speculation that the Kehoes came to Utah looking for compatriots among the enclave of Hurricane-area skinheads was just that, Kubic said.

But a possible link is Chevie Kehoe's belief in polygamy.

In 1992, when the brothers still were living in Colville, Wash., Chevie Kehoe wrote a letter to the editor of the weekly Statesman-Examiner predicting future conflict.

"Unfortunately, there are going to be some rude awakenings to the general peoples of the world," he wrote. "We have Yahweh and we are not afraid to die."

A year later at the Aryan Nation's fortress in Hayden Lake, Idaho,

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Chevie Kehoe married his second wife. The 18-year-old woman eventually left Kehoe and the girl's father filed a bigamy complaint against him in Idaho.

Tuesday, after the FBI arrested Chevie Kehoe outside the Cedar City store, agents recovered a handcuff key in his boot.

Kubic said Kehoe apparently hoped to use it to free himself.



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