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"Dr. Jason Leigh" crashes in Waco - big time! [news]

From: campbell@ufomind.com (Glenn Campbell, Las Vegas)
Date: Tue, 10 Mar 1998 14:42:45 -0800

"Dr. Jason Leigh," a self-promoted UFO expert associated with the Roswell Intl. UFO Museum, made big news in Waco, Texas, on Sunday by crashing his truck into a Veteran Administration building and holding police at bay for 14 hours.

The articles below are from www.accesswaco.com

Other articles:

http://kwtx.cbsnow.com/prdl/now/template.display?p_who=kwtx&p_story=25185
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MAN BEHIND STANDOFF NOT WHAT HE APPEARED TO BE

By JEN SANBURY, Waco Tribune-Herald staff writer
March 10, 1998

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Jason Leigh liked to put a Ph.D. behind his name.

But his phony doctorate fell away in court Monday as the man who held police at bay outside Waco's Veterans Affairs Regional Office for 14 hours Sunday told U.S. Magistrate Dennis Green that he's still shy of his associate's degree.

Leigh, 49, is not quite who he seems to be.

In fact, he used to be Randal Leigh Brown, born Nov. 30, 1948, in Corsicana.

During his court appearance Monday morning, he told federal officials he legally changed his name in 1980.

On his Internet web page, Leigh claims to have a "degree in electronics" and appends "Dr." or "Ph.D." to his name. But Monday he said his "electronics education" at Delgado Community College in New Orleans did not result in a degree. He said he attended several other universities.

Leigh apparently spent a good deal of time online. An Internet search of Leigh's name turns up scores of references to UFOs and the paranormal, but not a single reference to veterans' issues. Even fellow believers appear to question Leigh.

The Ufomind Paranormal Research Index web page lists Leigh among the "UFO researchers and witnesses whose educational credentials are challenged by evidence to the contrary."

On the computer bulletin boards of ParaScope, a site featuring UFO and conspiracy theory reports, he was criticized as "a person who blows a lot of hot air."

The director of the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, N.M., which gives Leigh the computer memory space for his website, said he has misrepresented himself.

"Basically, we don't have any connection to him other than that he had a UFO sighting," director Deon Crosby said. "He needed to hang his hat on someone and I understand that he has actually claimed to be a representative of this museum and he's not."

Leigh also purports online to be "absent any police record," but court records show he was convicted in 1992 for carrying a 22-caliber handgun into the Johnson County Community Credit Union. He was given a year's probation and a \$300 fine on the misdemeanor charge, said Karen Alexander, chief deputy for court services for the Johnson County clerk's office in Cleburne.

In writings found on the Internet, Leigh says he is a Vietnam Veteran who served as a military policeman and Navy SEAL.

Leigh served in the U.S. Navy from November 1966 to May 1967, according to Rick DuCharme, regional director of public affairs for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"That's not long enough to even become a SEAL," said Lt. Cmdr. Hal Pittman, director of the news desk for the Navy Office of Information in the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

In fact, in six months in the Navy, one could accomplish "pretty little," Pittman said.

Neither VA nor Naval officials could confirm Monday what Leigh's rank, specialty or assignment was in the Navy.

However, DuCharme said Leigh's assertion that the VA has lost his claim for benefits is not true. "It's present and accounted for," he said.

Officials have not discussed details about Leigh's complaints against the VA, but U.S. Attorney Bill Johnston said more information will come out Thursday during a scheduled hearing.

A federal agent close to the case said Leigh appears to have "a very active imagination."

Tribune-Herald staff writers Brian Anderson, Jodi Wetuski and Tommy Witherspoon contributed to this story.

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JUDGE ORDERS LEIGH HELD WITHOUT BOND

By BRIAN ANDERSON and TOMMY WITHERSPOON, Tribune-Herald staff writers
March 10, 1998

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A Navy veteran who said he crashed his truck into the Veterans Affairs Regional Office Sunday because he was frustrated by federal bureaucracy was ordered held without bond Monday.

U.S. Magistrate Dennis Green granted a request from federal prosecutors and ordered Jason Leigh, 49, jailed at least until after a detention hearing in Green's court on Thursday.

Local and federal officials said Leigh, who is charged with carrying a firearm in a federal facility during the commission of a crime, was trying to focus media attention on his problems with veterans

officials and on the plight of homeless veterans nationwide.

Leigh, a Corsicana native with a Denton address and family in Cleburne, appeared intent on continuing that message Monday morning as federal authorities led him into court.

"SOS. Save our soldiers," Leigh said as he was being led past a host of television cameras. "There is no reason why millions of American soldiers should be living in the streets."

Leigh began a 14-hour standoff with police about 6:45 a.m. Sunday, using a cellular telephone to call police after he backed his 1984 Jeep Cherokee through a sliding glass door of the new VA building at 701 Clay Ave.

"It's a four-wheel-drive. It worked great. I love that truck," Leigh said. "What did you expect me to do, use my head?"

The disgruntled vet apparently left his Denton apartment about 1:30 a.m. Sunday to begin the drive to Waco, authorities said. His girlfriend called Denton police after finding three notes with suicidal overtones taped to the front door of the apartment she shared with Leigh, officials said.

Special Agent James Gunnels of the Federal Protective Service, the agency responsible for the security of federal facilities, said the notes contained "heavily veiled" threats against the VA. However, he said the notes were not specific enough to give police advance warning that the Waco Veterans Affairs Regional Office was Leigh's intended target.

Gunnels said Leigh had never been identified as a security threat before Sunday's standoff.

"We handle threats to the VA on a weekly basis, but we never had threats from this guy before. We had never heard of this guy," Gunnels said.

Armed with a .45-caliber Colt revolver, a 30-30-caliber Winchester rifle and a large black backpack he claimed contained military C-4 plastic explosives, Leigh told police negotiators he wanted money and government action to aid veterans.

According to an affidavit filed in the case by Special Agent Jeff Brzozowski of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Leigh demanded \$750,000 from the United States and said he would blow up the building if his demands were not met.

Twenty-one state, local and federal law enforcement agencies surrounded the veterans building in the hours that followed, evacuating homes and businesses within a six-block radius.

Nearby church services were canceled, and freight trains that travel through downtown near the building were stopped for the duration of the standoff.

Following his peaceful surrender about 8:45 p.m., bomb technicians X-rayed the black backpack to find only a harmless purple smoke bomb similar to those sold at fireworks stands, officials said.

Leigh reportedly detonated an identical smoke bomb inside the building shortly after nightfall Sunday, lighting the fuse with a cigarette, officials said. It was not clear why Leigh chose to ignite the smoke bomb, but no damage was reported as a result of the device.

ATF Special Agent Michael Reyes said a bomb squad robot and dogs trained to sniff out explosives were sent back into the building early Monday, but no other explosives were found. The facility was officially declared safe about noon.

"We can't have people coming into Waco, Texas, and threatening to blow up a building just to make a point," Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Johnston said following Leigh's hearing on Monday. "That kind of behavior won't be tolerated."

Judge Green appointed Waco attorney Jack Hurley to represent Leigh, and Hurley asked immediately to have access to Leigh's VA records. Hurley said he would not speculate on Leigh's competency to stand trial until after reviewing his medical records.

Hurley also asked the judge to instruct McLennan County jail officials

to provide Leigh access to pain medications for his ailing back.

Waco police negotiator Patrick Swanton said Leigh complained of back pain during the standoff, asking to stop talks with police about 11:45 a.m. so he could search the building for a wheelchair to sit in. Leigh later warned police not to be alarmed as he was walking back to his Jeep, claiming he was only fetching his walking cane.

Leigh wore an orange jail jumpsuit, was shackled with handcuffs and leg chains and had an olive-drab blanket wrapped around his shoulders as he shuffled to the courtroom Monday.

Leigh's brother, Charles Brown, attended the magistrate's hearing but declined comment about his brother.

Leigh, who is expected to be indicted today by a federal grand jury, faces a maximum five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 if convicted.

Gunnels said it would be "business as usual" at the veterans building today. The facility was to reopen this morning, though the building's west entrance that was damaged by Leigh's Jeep is not expected to be repaired for several days.

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PO Box 30303, Las Vegas, NV 89173 Glenn Campbell, Webmaster & Moderator

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