VERNON HOWELL,  
ALSO KNOWN AS (AKA)  
DAVID KORESH  
INVolUNTARY SERVITUDE AND SLAVERY  

VERNON HOWELL is the present leader and prophet of an organization known as the Branch Dividend, 7th Day Adventists, located at Mount (Mt) Carmel, near Waco, Texas. HOWELL also uses the name DAVID KORESH and is known by that name by the many individuals living at Mt. Carmel. From the mid-1950's through 1978, the group was headed by an individual by the name of BENJAMIN RHODEN and his wife, LOIS. In 1978, RHODEN died and his wife was the sole leader until 1986. In 1986, LOIS RHODEN passed away and her son, GEORGE RHODEN, and VERNON HOWELL became the co-leaders of the organization.

Shortly after GEORGE RHODEN and HOWELL were appointed as the leaders, HOWELL was accused of raping RHODEN's mother. RHODEN dismissed VERNON HOWELL and several of his followers and renamed the land the organization was living on as Rhodenville. HOWELL and several of the residents that were dismissed, attempted to reclaim their land and were involved in a shoot-out with the McLennan County Sheriff's Office. Presently, GEORGE RHODEN is incarcerated for murder and HOWELL is the sole leader at Mt. Carmel.

Allegations were received by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the Spring of 1992, that HOWELL (also known as DAVID KORESH) may have been planning a mass-suicide event at Mt. Carmel. Also, allegations were received that HOWELL may be holding members of the Sect under conditions which may constitute violations of the Federal laws pertaining to involuntary servitude and slavery.
VERNON HOWELL

On March 17, 1992, a complaint was received by the Office of the United States Representative FRED UPTON, St. Joseph, Michigan. The complaint alleged allegations similar to those previously received as well as child molestation charges regarding HOWELL. Due to the allegations made, several other agencies were advised by the FBI of the status at Mt. Carmel. These agencies included the Department of Human Services, Child Protective Services, Department of Public Safety Intelligence Division, Internal Revenue Service, McLennan County Sheriff's Office, and the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

Investigative reports were received from Child Protective Services, reporting the results of unannounced visits and interviews at the Mt. Carmel compound. Investigation continued during the time frame for which the mass suicide was to take place, during the Spring of 1992. To date, no further information has been developed by the San Antonio Division of the FBI to substantiate the accuracy of the reports concerning any potential acts of violence/self-destruction by members and/or leaders of this religious sect. Those law enforcement agencies also notified of the circumstances involving Mt. Carmel have not filed charges as of February 1993. Close liaison is maintained by the FBI with each affected agency to ensure close monitoring of this situation as it may pertain to any potential federal violations of the law.

Due to the receipt of a duplicate letter forwarded to Congressman CHET EDWARDS Office, Waco, Texas, which was previously in the possession of Congressman FRED UPTON, St. Joseph, Michigan, all appropriate local and federal law enforcement agencies have been re-notified.
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**Remarks:**
- **Call Me**
- **For Your Info**
- **See Me**
- **Record & Return**
- **Approp. Action**
- **Initial**
- **Per Inquiry**
- **Note & Return**

**From:**
- **Chief, Criminal Affairs**

**To:**
- **Dept. C**

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- Call Me
- See Me
- Approv. Action
- Initial
- Per Inquiry
- For Your Info
- Notes/Return
- Record & Return
- Special Records
- Office of Public Affairs
Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts

Subject: DAVID KORESH / BEFORE WACO

File Number: 63-0-113357X, X1, X2
April 21, 1992

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Congressional Affairs Office
10th and Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20535

Attention: [Redacted]

Dear Ms. [Redacted],

I am writing you on behalf of my constituent, [Redacted], who has contacted my office with his concerns regarding the activities of a religious cult in Texas known as the Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists. My staff assistant, [Redacted], has faxed to you a letter detailing his findings as well as a statement given by [Redacted].

Would you please give this matter your attention and consideration and provide my regional office listed below with your findings.

Thank you for your prompt assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Donald W. Riegle, Jr.

Central Regional Office
705 Washington Square Bldg.
109 West Michigan Ave.
Lansing, MI 48933

[Interim copy to Sen. Riegle]
FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

OFFICE OF UNITED STATES
SENATOR DONALD W. RIEGLE, JR.
109 WEST MICHIGAN AVENUE, SUITE 705
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48933
(517) 377

DATE: 20 April 1992

TO:

FROM:

RE: Allegation against religious cult

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): 13

COMMENTS/INSTRUCTIONS:
Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

Deletions were made pursuant to the exemptions indicated below with no segregable material available for release to you.

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Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to the subject of your request or the subject of your request is listed in the title only.

Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

Page(s) withheld inasmuch as a final release determination has not been made. You will be advised as to the disposition at a later date.

Pages were not considered for release as they are duplicative of.

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages: 63-O-113357X-1833551. Department of Human Services.

Deleted Page(s): X
No Duplication: X
for this page: X
TO: DIRECTOR, FBI
(ATTN: SS, OPA, FBIHQ)

FROM: SAC, SAN ANTONIO (163C-SA-37261) (P)

SUBJECT: BRANCH DAVIDIAN SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS
CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY
SENATOR DONALD W. RIEGEL, JR.

Miscellaneous Non-Sensitive
Re Bureau facsimile to San Antonio, S.M.

Enclosed are copies of sixteen (16) pages from San Antonio file #100-6-16869 concerning the activities of captioned organization.

For the further information of the Bureau, San Antonio is currently investigating the possibility that the leader of the organization, VERNON HOWELL, a.k.a. David Orestes, may have been planning a mass suicide event. Also, allegations have been received that HOWELL has been holding members of the sect under conditions which may constitute violations of the federal law pertaining to involuntary servitude and slavery. This particular investigation is based upon a complaint originally received by the Office of United States Representative FRED UPTON, St. Joseph, Michigan. A review of the nature of the allegations contained in the letter to Congressman UPTON indicates that they are essentially identical to those contained in the correspondence received by Senator RIEGEL. To date, no further information has been developed by San Antonio to verify the accuracy of the reports concerning any potential acts of violence or destruction by members and/or leaders of the religious sect.

ENCLOSURE

2 Bureau (Encl. 16)
2-San Antonio 163C-SA-37261
BRG/brg

94026-2625

ENCLOSURE ATTACHED
163C-SA-37281
BRG: brg

Results of this investigation, under San Antonio file #163C-SA-37281 (initial allegation received from authorities in Australia), will be furnished to the Bureau upon completion.
Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

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Pages were not considered for release as they are duplicative of

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages: 23-0-113557X (Pages 235, 410)
To: Office Services Manager

Subject: Vernon W. Howell aka: David Koresh

Exact Spelling:
All References:
Main Security Case Files Only:
Security References Only:

General Indices:
Confidential Indices:
ELSUR Indices:
FOINS:
GLOBAL:

Place an "X" by the Field Office(s) to Query for Regional Searches:

Northeast
- Albany
- Bern Switzerland
- Bonn Germany
- Boston
- London England
- Mexico City Mexico
- New York City
- Newark
- Paris France
- Philadelphia
- Rome Italy
- All above

Mid-Atlantic
- Atlanta
- Baltimore
- Birmingham
- Charlotte
- Jackson
- Jacksonville
- Memphis
- Miami
- Mobile

New Orleans
- Norfolk
- Quantico
- San Juan
- Savannah
- Tampa
- Washington Field
- All above

Central
- Buffalo
- Chicago
- Cincinnati
- Cleveland
- Dallas
- Detroit
- El Paso
- Houston
- Indianapolis
- Kansas City

Little Rock
- Louisville
- Milwaukee
- Minneapolis
- Oklahoma City
- Omaha
- San Antonio
- Springfield
- St. Louis
- All above

Western
- Albuquerque
- Anchorage
- Butte
- Honolulu
- Las Vegas
- Los Angeles
- Phoenix
- Portland
- Sacramento
- Salt Lake City
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Seattle

File & Serial Number: 50Z-1-36 P.A. (2-95)
To: Office Services Manager

Subject: Branch Seventh Day Adventists

Address

Birth Date

Birth Place

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File & Serial Number

Remarks

Consolidated by

Reviewed by

1 - Identical

2 - Not Available

File Review Symbols
June 10, 1992

Honorable Donald W. Riegle, Jr.
United States Senator
705 Washington Square Building
109 West Michigan Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Senator Riegle:

This is in further response to your April 2, 1992 communication on behalf of Mr. [redacted] which has contacted you regarding the Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, a group he described as being a religious cult. We certainly appreciate Mr. [redacted] concern in furnishing you a copy of the statement of a former member of this group.

We have furnished this information to our San Antonio Office for appropriate law enforcement attention. FBI and Department of Justice policy precludes confirming or denying the existence of an investigation; therefore, we will not be able to furnish reports on what action we might take in this matter.

Thank you for your interest, and please assure Mr. [redacted] that this matter will receive appropriate attention.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Danny O. Coulson
Deputy Assistant Director
Criminal Investigative Division

1 - Detroit, Enclosures (6)
Refac 5/22/92 from PLA

1 - San Antonio (163C-SA-372817-400-0-16369) Enclosures (6)
Reurairel 5/17/92 and Bucal 6/5/92 from OPA, to PLA

1 - Mr. Coulson (Room 5214)

1 - Congressional Affairs Office

BHM:rfy (10)
Honorable Donald W. Riegle, Jr.

NOTE: Senator Riegle wrote on behalf of [redacted] had sent him a copy of a statement made by [redacted], former member of the BRANCH DAVIDIAN, SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS, recently won a child custody battle based on his former wife exposing his 11-year-old daughter to the practices of the ADVENTISTS. He stated he was concerned for the other children in the group because he had heard that the group's leader, VERNON W. HOWELL, aka DAVE KOPEL, had announced a plan for mass self-destruction. He also indicated that he had reported this to the FBI but that "they have offered no confirmation of actions." By ariel dated 5/12/92, San Antonio advised that it is currently investigating the possibility that HOWELL may be planning a mass murder-suicide event. Also, allegations have been received that HOWELL has been holding members of the sect under conditions which may constitute violations of Federal laws pertaining to involuntary servitude or slavery. San Antonio's investigation is based upon a complaint received from Congressman Fred Upton, and the allegations furnished in Senator Riegle's communication are essentially the same as those provided by Congressman Upton. Based on available information, further containing no information regarding [redacted] Detroit, indices were also searched, and only two [redacted] references were found on a VERNON W. HOWELL, however, they had been destroyed. Neither Detroit nor San Antonio has any record of having been contacted by [redacted] Interagency reply sent by CAO 4/29/92. Final reply discussed with SSA.