

Why? Will we find an answer?

By Keith White
Gannett News Service

Why Oklahoma City? And why that particular federal building?

Those questions have nagged Americans in the week since the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed in the country's bloodiest terrorist attack.

While federal investigators are not yet citing a motive, they are zeroing in on revenge — revenge for the ill-fated 1993 raid on the

Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas, and roles of the FBI and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Agents from both offices in Oklahoma City joined in the Waco raid and the aftermath, in which more than 80 people died, including small children.

In fact, Bob Ricks, now the special agent in charge of the FBI's Oklahoma City office, was the lead FBI agent at Waco.

The Branch Davidian incident

— which is a rallying cry for right-wing extremists — was a particular source of outrage for accused bomber Timothy McVeigh, according to court papers filed to support the charges against him.

But if Ricks was the bombers' prime target, they missed. The Oklahoma City office of the FBI is in another building.

And if they wanted the BATF office, they again missed. Those offices were in the Murrah building, but were high on the side of

the building opposite where the bomb went off, thereby escaping most direct effects of the blast. None of its employees were killed.

New York's Newsday reported Wednesday that Oliver Revell, who headed the FBI's Dallas office until retiring last summer, said both the FBI and BATF had received increasing threats that their Oklahoma City offices would be targeted for retaliation for the Branch Davidian raid.