

License Plate Of Mcveigh Caught On Tape Vehicle Believed Used In Suspect's Getaway

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Timothy J. McVeigh's missing Arizona license plate appears on a mystery vehicle in a videotape taken just before the Oklahoma City bombing, and authorities believe the elusive "John Doe 2" may have used that vehicle for his getaway, a source told the Associated Press on Friday.

The FBI has asked for help finding Arizona plate LZC646, which was on McVeigh's yellow 1977 Mercury Marquis five days before the bombing but was missing from the car when he was stopped by a state trooper 75 minutes after the blast.

The videotape from a security camera shows another vehicle with the plate -- not the Mercury -- and also shows the Ryder truck believed to have carried the 4,800-pound bomb, said the source, a federal law enforcement official in Washington.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, would not describe the vehicle.

A third, more detailed sketch of the second bomber may be released within the next few days, the source added, as the investigation continues into the the worst act of terrorism in U.S. history.

Late Friday, police in Santa Monica, Calif., questioned an Oklahoma man detained for investigation of auto theft. Broadcast reports citing unidentified police sources said the man resembled sketches of the fugitive. The police chief planned a news conference to discuss the arrest, but no time was immediately set, the department said.

The death toll rose to 118 Friday, including 15 children.

During a preliminary hearing Thursday for McVeigh, FBI agent John Hersley testified that the agency is racing to find the second man because of fears he may strike again. He also said that one of several witnesses spotted a yellow car carrying McVeigh and another man speeding away from a parking lot near the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building before the blast.

At that hearing, McVeigh, 27, the only person charged so far in the April 19 bombing, was being held without bail based on what a federal magistrate called "an indelible trail of evidence."

At the building, a major part of the search was held up after a slab of concrete broke loose and slid into the area that held a Social Security office and day care center, Assistant Fire Chief Jon Hansen said.

Workers spent the afternoon rigging orange safety nets on the edges of the crumbled floors to keep debris from falling on searchers.

The Oklahoma bombing occurred on the two-year anniversary of the fiery end to the siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. McVeigh, known to hold extreme right-wing views, was particularly agitated by the conduct of the federal government at Waco, an FBI affidavit said.

On Friday morning, about seven people from Waco brought three flower-covered crosses to the demolished federal building. "We all have a common bond now, and it's terrible that it had to happen like this," said Amber King, who works at the Waco Wal-Mart.

In Washington, a senior federal official said investigators believe the bomb was composed of 20 to 25 plastic 55-gallon drums of "ANFO," ammonium nitrate and fuel oil, using detonating cord as a booster and a safety fuse.

Detonating cord is a powerful explosive used as a cutting tool; a safety fuse can be lighted with a match and burns at a known rate of speed so a bomber can give himself time to get away.

Investigators also found fragments of metal high-pressure gas cylinders, which may have been filled with acetylene or hydrogen to add to the explosive power, the official said.

The official said the bomb probably would have cost at most \$5,000 to make. Investigators are focusing on Kingman, Ariz., where McVeigh formerly lived, to discover how the money was raised. McVeigh was known to attend gun shows, and one possibility was that the plotters sold replica weapons and key chains with defensive sprays attached, the official said.

A Kingman motel manager said Friday that McVeigh had stayed there from March 31 to April 12. Helmut Hofer said McVeigh stayed by himself at the Imperial Motel and received no phone calls.

Hersley testified that a witness had seen McVeigh in Oklahoma City on April 13. On April 14, McVeigh checked into a motel in Junction City, Kan., where the government contends the Ryder truck was rented.

A crumpled business card from an Antigo, Wis., military supply store that was found in the police car that carried McVeigh to jail was also providing new leads.

Investigators were looking into whether Ed Paulsen and his son David, of Melrose Park, Ill., had supplied the small explosive devices needed to set off the Oklahoma City bomb, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Ed Paulsen co-owns Paulsen's Military Supply with his wife, Linda. Sources in Antigo told the AP telephone records show McVeigh made calls to the Paulsens and their son as far back as nine months ago. The sources were unable to say how many calls were made or how recently.

Richard Jorzak, the son's lawyer, said Thursday that David Paulsen's name and phone number had been found on the card. He said all three Paulsens had been subpoenaed to testify May 2 to a federal grand jury in Oklahoma City.

"We're going down as witnesses and that is it," Mrs. Paulsen said. "We're not being accused of anything. We are not being involved in anything."

In other developments:

In Milan, Mich., a bail hearing for James Nichols, a material witness in the case who is being held without bail, was recessed until Tuesday with no change in Nichols' status. Both brothers have also been charged with conspiring with McVeigh to build and detonate homemade bombs at James Nichols' farm in Decker, Mich. Nichols' brother Terry is being held in Kansas as a material witness.

James Nichols' hearing also featured the surprise appearance of a lawyer hired without his knowledge. Robert Elsey said he was hired by a group called Sanilac Concerned Citizens for Justice, formed by some of Nichols' neighbors. Nichols was given until Tuesday to choose between being represented by Elsey or by court-appointed lawyers.

Two Texas lawyers insisted Friday they had been hired to join McVeigh's defense team. But a spokesman for McVeigh's two court-appointed lawyers said their client had met with Houston lawyers Paul C. Looney and Brent Liedtke and rejected their offer for help. Looney refused to say who had hired them.

The court-appointed lawyers, John Coyle and Susan Otto, have asked to withdraw from the case but will remain on it at least until McVeigh is indicted, said their spokesman, Mark Mattison.