

New leads connected to license plate

Gannett News Service

FBI agents possess a videotape that shows Arizona license plate LZC646 on a car the second Oklahoma City bombing suspect — "John Doe No. 2" — could be driving.

FBI's on-site commander, Weldon Kennedy, Thursday called for public help in finding the plate, which at one point was attached to the 1977 Mercury Marquis driven by Timothy J. McVeigh when he was arrested April 19 in Perry, Okla.

McVeigh, 27, is the only person charged so far in the mega-death bombing tragedy. An Oklahoma trooper stopped him 90 minutes after the explosion because he had no plates on the yellow Mercury.

Kennedy would not say why the FBI is so interested in the plate nor where the new video came from, but sources close to the investiga-

tion say agents believe John Doe No. 2 — the dark-haired, heavysset man in the composite drawings flashed worldwide — made his getaway in another vehicle to which the Arizona plate was newly attached.

The tape is not clear enough to identify occupants of the car in question, but it shows in several frames the Ryder rental truck prosecutors say carried the two-ton bomb that blew up a federal building April 19, killing at least 118 people.

The agency's top officials still deny the second suspect's identity is known, but several sources familiar with FBI techniques dispute that.

"I'm certain they have him identified already in the bureau," former FBI agent Thomas Strentz of Manassas, Va., told GNS. "The reason they're not putting the name out is

in the hope he will go to some of his old haunts that are staked out. They have alerted people to watch them. Of course, he has to have figured that out, too."

Strentz, a forensics expert and 21-year FBI veteran, said, "I expect they'll be zeroing in on this guy soon."

Agents checked out other leads on Friday.

In Ceredo, W.Va., an Army veteran who served more than two years with McVeigh leafed through a Fort Benning yearbook of the 1st Infantry Division and picked out a soldier in the unit resembling John Doe No. 2 — heavy eyebrows, square jaw, thick lips.

Fritz Curnutte, 27, called the FBI hot line and was patched through to Washington headquarters. Curnutte refused to name his former colleague in arms but said he was an American Indian.