Tape shows mystery car, official says

Authorities in Santa Monica are reportedly questioning an Oklahoma man who resembles sketches of a fugitive wanted in last week's bombing.

The Associated Press

Timothy 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, sources told the Associated Press on Friday.

Meanwhile, authorities in Santa Monica were questioning an Oklahoma man who resembled sketches of a fugitive wanted in last week's Oklahoma City bombing, according to broadcast reports citing unidentified police sources.

The man had been detained for investigation of auto theft.

"We have a person in custody on local charges and he's being investigated," said Santa Monica police Sgt. John Hudson.

He would not elaborate except to say, "It's the FBI's investigation."

The man being held was picked up Friday afternoon in Santa Monica, Hudson said. A news conference was expected late Friday night, but no time was set.

Broadcast reports citing unidentified police sources said the man resembled sketches of the fugitive. More than a dozen men have been detained since the bombing because they either looked like the suspect of because officials thought they were connected to the case for some other reason.

In trying to track down new leads on the vehicle used in the

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bombing, the FBI has asked for help finding Arizona plate LZC646. It 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. But investigators suspect it was used in the getaway and even now may be in the possession of the missing suspect, the source said.

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.

The death toll rose to 121 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."

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McVeigh has refused to talk to police, but when he was first jailed in Perry, Okla., before he was identified as a bombing suspect, he told other prisoners that the charge he faced involved a gun he bought in New York, a senior federal official said.

"He was trying to throw people off his Kansas connections," the official said.

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 rightwing 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.