

## **Secondary Explosion Revealed in Murrah Blast Were High Explosives Removed from Floor Above Day Care Center?**

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By Jeff Holladay and J.D. Cash

Not one but apparently two powerful blasts blew up the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City on April 19, the McCurtain Gazette has learned. Seismic records indicate a secondary blast — as powerful or even more potent than the initial blast from a bomb-filled rental truck — ripped the site just 10 to 11 seconds later.

The source of the second explosion is unknown, but there is speculation that explosive materials were stored in the building in contravention of federal safety requirements...that they plunged to a lower level after the initial explosion...and were then detonated by heat and pressure. And in fact, a box marked "High Explosives" was found shortly after the initial blast on the Murrah building's third floor and removed by a bomb squad for the Oklahoma City police, Oklahoma City's fire marshall confirmed. While there is the possibility that the second series of "spikes" on the seismic graphs could represent the actual collapse of the Murrah building, that likelihood is remote, says geophysicist Dr. Raymon T. Brown with the Oklahoma Geological Survey.

"The highest likelihood is of two separate events about 10 to 11 seconds apart," he says.

And those "events," he says, indicate two explosions from the exact same location — not one reading for the initial explosion and another indicating building collapse.

Brown says two seismic readings were taken on the day of the April 19 bomb blast in Oklahoma City — one at the Omniplex Museum, about 4.3 miles from the Murrah Building, and at the OGS' survey station north of Norman, 16.25 miles from the blast site.

Both were made on seismographs using strip-chart recorders. Typically, seismic disturbances are shown as sharp up-and-down patterns on a normally flat line. "We have tried to stay away from any final interpretation," Brown had said earlier in the interview, attempting to avoid categorical certainty and noting that the FBI had talked with OGS officials for hours after the bombing.

But his later remarks made it clear that there was no doubt in his mind what happened.

And while it is possible that the second seismic pattern could have been from the collapse of the building and a shock wave sent through the ground, Brown called that likelihood small.

"The data we have here suggest an additional, low-frequency Rayleigh Wave...completely consistent with that of a quarry blast which we regularly record on our equipment.

"In other words," Brown said, "the data suggest two distinct explosions at the federal building, occurring some 10 to 11 seconds apart."

And the "signature" pattern of the second strip-chart indicators make it clear that the readings came from the same site, he said.

The ground wave shock of the building collapsing might explain the second seismic reading at the Omniplex, just a little more than 4 miles from the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, Brown said. But the explanation doesn't work for the Oklahoma Geological Survey station near Norman, he added.

And Brown says the second batch of spikes, just 10 to 11 seconds after the first, clearly indicated "an event of equal — possibly even greater magnitude — than the first explosion."

That the first "event" on the seismographic, of course, was the wellknown- by-now mixture of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and fuel in the Ryder rental truck. It is the blast which blew a massive crater in front of the Murrah Building, ripped through the building and sent brutal shock waves for blocks around.

#### Source of Second Blast

But what caused the secondary explosion, assuming the almost unquestioned reliability of interpretations from Ray Brown about the seismic readings?

No federal officials are likely to admit to storing explosives in the federal building even if they did. It is in contravention of policy.

Said Larry Scott, a spokesman for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) of the Treasury Department, whose Oklahoma headquarters were on the 9th floor of the Murrah Building:

"It is not our normal procedure to store explosives in any federal building. We have approved bunkers at unnamed locations for that."

Scott, who was reached at the ATF's command post near the building in Oklahoma City, added: "We didn't do it." Yet, two separate events add credibility to initial eyewitness accounts of a second explosion at the Murrah Building.

One, of course, is the seismic reading at the Omniplex in Oklahoma City and at the Oklahoma Geological Survey's station near Norman.

The one at the Omniplex showed the second explosion more severe than the first — and about twice as long in duration. The other is discovery of a container, marked "High Explosives," on the third floor of the Murrah Building after the initial blasts.

Dick Miller, Oklahoma City's fire marshal, confirmed that fire department rescuers found an "intact, 2-ft. by 2-ft. container marked 'High Explosives' on the third floor of the federal building shortly after the blast."

It was this discovery that temporarily suspended all rescue efforts and caused those at the scene to flee. Miller told different stories to two different reporters.

He told John D. Cash, Battiest freelance writer, former Tulsa businessman and law school graduate in an earlier interview that the container was not a training device, as ATF officials had commented earlier, but "actual explosives" which the Oklahoma City police bomb squad recovered and later detonated. The Oklahoma City fire marshal told reporter Jeff Holladay several days later on Thursday, however, that he wasn't sure what was in the container. "It could have been an atomic bomb or it could have been firecrackers. I don't know. I'm sure in their business, the ATF confiscated all kinds of materials." Miller added that the ATF can pretty well do what it wants to do with explosive devices, since it has supervisory capacity over all such materials in federal buildings or related to federal cases.

State Fire Marshal Byron Hollander says that under state statutes he has authority over all explosive devices. But the law makes it clear that his jurisdiction is subservient to that of applicable federal law — and that the ATF is the agency in charge of anything related to explosives. It is against state and federal law to store, even temporarily, any sort of explosive devices in federal buildings, Hollander said. They are supposed to be confined to special explosives bunkers, he noted.

Miller, the Oklahoma City fire marshal, was asked if he knew of any federal lawenforcement agencies storing military-type ordnance and told Cash, "Yes, the U.S. Marshal's office here has informed me that they...maintain a magazine (arsenal) in the Oklahoma City area..."

The Oklahoma City fire marshal said he didn't know about other federal agencies. "By law\* I can't require them to allow my people to inspect their premises," he said, noting that such jurisdiction was left to the ATF.

#### A Possible Scenario...

Steve Due of Eagletown, who is a science buff and operates one of the recording stations for the Oklahoma Geological Survey, has no hesitancy about speculating on possible scenarios stemming from the wave patterns on seismological readouts.

First of all, Due said, he believes gravity rates rule out the second series of "spikes" on the seismological graph being the collapse of the building. Even for a nine-story building like the Murrah Building, 10 seconds is too long of a time span for the collapse according to gravity rates, he said.

And since no other crater was found other than the one where the rental truck had been parked in front of the Murrah Building, there has to be some other explanation, Due believes.

His candidate for an explanation is a chain-reaction detonation of explosive materials — after the explosives slid into the basement area and then ignited. Based on his experience with interpreting seismic graphic readings, "It looked to me like the second explosion was about the same amplitude as the first" — indicating the presence of explosive materials in the building that some federal agency simply doesn't want to own up to, Due said.