

# Star Tribune

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NEWSPAPER OF THE TWIN CITIES

## John Doe # what?

### FBI releases Arizona transplant stopped near Bloomington hotel

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By Kevin Duchschere  
Staff Writer

■ There's a growing fraternity of men who have had the misfortune of looking like the sketch of John Doe No. 2.

■ After questioning two suspects Tuesday and concluding that they had no connection to the bombing, investigators are concentrating on traditional detective work.

■ Dozens of people who knew him have drawn a clearer picture of Timothy McVeigh.

Mike Schneider's last known address was Kingman, Ariz., the most recent address of Oklahoma City bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh, and Schneider drives a white Mustang with Arizona plates.

So when a tipster reported that he looked like John Doe No. 2, FBI agents paid attention.

What they didn't know is that Schneider, 45, really is a pleasant fellow who likes motorcycles and has a son, a fiancée, a new job in Farmington and a new house in Apple Valley.

A phalanx of federal and state officials stopped him Wednesday while he was on his way home from a daylong business meeting at a Holiday Inn in Bloomington. He shakily emerged from his car, his hands in the air, a stricken look on his face.

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# Suspect/ FBI spokeswoman says lead was 1 in thousands

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He knew it might happen. The parallels, he said Wednesday evening, were at once amusing and scary.

"At first I thought it was a traffic violation, but when I saw all the cars, I figured it was the nightmare I had been thinking about," he said.

As it turned out, Schneider became one of the thousands of potential suspects the FBI has checked nationwide since the tragic bombing April 19. "This one is just like all the others that are unfruitful, but we have to follow up," said Coleen Rowley, a spokeswoman with the FBI in Minneapolis.

FBI agents released Schneider after an hour of questioning at the Bloomington Police Department, saying that they were satisfied he had no connection to the bombing.

Schneider was transferred in late February from Arizona to Northern Natural Gas in Farmington, where he works as a control technician. Originally from Farmington, he said he had lived in Kingman for five years but took the transfer to be closer to relatives. He has been living with his brother and looked forward to moving into his house, which he closed on last week.

On Wednesday morning, a state trooper noticed his car in the motel parking lot and notified officials. They waited for him until about 5 p.m., when he left to go home.

Schneider's reaction? "I felt like I had to pee in my pants," he said.

As traffic backed up along Interstate Hwy. 494 and Cedar Av. near the Mall of America, officials handcuffed Schneider and drove him to Bloomington police headquarters. They verified through long-distance phone calls that Schneider had been visiting his fiancée and participating in a mo-



Associated Press

**State troopers detained Mike Schneider Wednesday in Bloomington after an Oklahoma City bombing tip. He was released when authorities determined that he had no connection to the blast.**

torcycle rally in Arizona and Nevada the week the federal building in Oklahoma City blew up.

Rowley said the incident was overly dramatized because it took agents a long time to confirm Schneider's identity, but she declined to say why they could not get his identification from his license plate.

In a brief news conference at the station before he drove home, Schneider said he had no hard feelings.

"I understand that they have a job to do, and I hope they catch the guy . . .

but when you know you're not guilty, you're resentful of the circumstances," he said.

He said that co-workers had joked with him about the parallels between him and the bombing suspects, and that he had even considered visiting the FBI to assure them he wasn't involved. In the back of his mind, he said, he had a nagging fear that someone might mistake him for a suspect.

That's why, when an FBI agent told him Wednesday they wanted him for questioning, he replied, "I know."

When the news conference was over,

Schneider turned to Bloomington police Sgt. Frank Heino and said, "This is the first time I've been arrested in my life."

Heino replied, "You can consider this a detaining. Technically, you've not been arrested."

Schneider, his eyes watering beneath the glare of the TV lights, smiled.

Heino watched as Schneider backed his car out of the police garage and drove away. "He was just a working guy who got caught in the middle," he said.