

LEXIS·NEXIS
Political Universe Search

Home | Personal News | Search | Custom Reports | Help

Edit Search | Save to Personal News | FOCUS | Print/Save Options | E-Mail

- Congress
- Executive Branch
- The States
- Campaign Trail
- News & Company
- Demographics
- Reference

Document List | Expanded List | KWIC™ | Full

More Like This

◀ Previous Document 63 of 80. Next ▶

Copyright 1995 Southam Inc.
The Ottawa Citizen

May 5, 1995, Friday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A12

LENGTH: 541 words

HEADLINE: Oklahoma City bombing: Lawyers shun hated suspect McVeigh

BYLINE: IAN KATZ; THE GUARDIAN

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

As authorities prepare to call off the search for victims of last month's bombing in Oklahoma City, a new hunt has begun for a lawyer willing to defend the man charged with perpetrating the worst terrorist atrocity in American history.

The question of who will defend Timothy McVeigh has provoked a heated debate about how an individual's constitutional right to legal counsel should be balanced against the reluctance of many lawyers to represent someone accused of such a heinous crime.

McVeigh's court-appointed lawyers, John Coyle and Susan Otto, asked early to be released from the case, saying they knew many victims of the bombing and did not feel they could represent the 27-year-old Gulf war veteran objectively. A federal magistrate denied their request, ruling they must defend McVeigh until another lawyer was found.

Usually such high-profile defendants can count on the services of a well-known handful of idealistic or media-hungry attorneys, but the horrific nature of the crime has deterred the most thick-skinned defence veterans. Even they fear becoming pariahs by association.

McVeigh has already been all but convicted and sentenced to death in the court of public opinion. "There is such hatred towards McVeigh that it's

really a no-win deal," said Mark Mattison, representing Coyle. "Mr Coyle has had threats, even I've had threats."

Most of the attorneys who take such unpopular cases are left-of- centre civil rights activists. Top New York lawyers like Ronald Kuby and William Kunstler have turned down the case.

Cynics suggest some lawyers are reluctant to represent McVeigh simply because they would receive only the modest fees of a public defender during a trial expected to last several months.

The death toll from the Oklahoma City blast edged up to 156 as workers pulled what could be the last body from the rubble of the federal building.

Though about 13 people are still missing, authorities were close to calling off the search Thursday night and allowing the relatives of victims to pay their last respects at the site.

After the release of two suspects Wednesday, the FBI was attempting to enhance video footage of a brown pickup truck seen pulling over when McVeigh was stopped by a state trooper an hour and a half after the bombing.

In another development certain to inflame America's right-wing fringe, the Clinton administration announced it plans to promote FBI agent Larry Potts to second-in-command. Potts is reviled by the militia movement for leading the FBI's controversial operations against David Koresh's Branch Davidian sect and the white supremacist Randy Weaver.

Update

Latest developments in the Oklahoma City bombing:

Search: Crews are close to ending the search for bodies in the bombed federal building.

Toll: Searchers found bodies of two adults and one child on Wednesday, and another body Thursday. The death toll now is 156, with about 13 missing.

Tips: Federal officials are sorting through 14,000 tips received on a special hotline since the government posted a \$ 2-million reward.

Poll: An Associated Press poll says a majority of Americans want government to try to prevent such terrorism even if it means intruding on rights and privacy.

GRAPHIC: File drawing/ HATRED: Even the most thick-skinned defence veterans fear becoming pariahs by association with Timothy McVeigh, left. Court-appointed defender John Coyle, right, was ordered to defend him until another lawyer is found.