

# Ex-Fugitive Held Without Bond

## Deadly Bomb Long in Works, Authorities Say

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A survivalist and chemist who tangled with federal agents Friday in the Arizona outback was being held without bond Saturday night while investigators determined his knowledge of the Oklahoma City bombing.

Federal fugitive Steven Garrett Colbern, 35, is not being called a suspect, but he was wanted for questioning.

Colbern was arrested on an unrelated federal firearms charge after a scuffle with agents who tracked him down in the small Arizona mining town of Oatman. He will appear Tuesday at a detention hearing in Phoenix on the firearms charge and two others as a result of the scuffle - resisting arrest and possession of a firearm while a fugitive.

A hearing for Colbern in Phoenix on Saturday didn't touch on any connection to the bombing, though a string of coincidence and Washington sources suggest the possibility that a link is being probed.

Colbern's roommate, Dennis Kemp Malzac, 37, also was arrested Friday in Kingman, Ariz., in connection with a mysterious Feb. 21 explosion at a Kingman home. He was being held on a \$50,000 bond on an arson charge.

Federal agents earlier looked for a connection between the Oklahoma City and Kingman blasts, but Mohave County deputy officials later said the two are unrelated.

Meanwhile, federal authorities say they believe work on the Oklahoma City bomb began months ago - with the purchase of 1 ton of fertilizer - but the destruction may have been years in the planning.

The purported motive was a simple one: a deep hatred of the federal government.

The FBI's top bomb expert, James T. Thurman, concluded the bomb was so massive it "would have been constructed over a period of time utilizing a large quantity of bomb paraphernalia." He also concluded it "would necessarily have involved the efforts of more than one person." Drifter Timothy James McVeigh, 27, and his Army buddy Terry Nichols, 40, of Herington, Kan., are the only ones charged so far.

The FBI continues to search for another suspect, "John Doe 2." Court documents unsealed last week show agents believe the first ton of fertilizer for the Oklahoma City bomb was bought as long ago as Sept. 30. Agents have linked McVeigh and Nichols to that purchase.

That's more than six months before the 4,800-pound fertilizer bomb exploded April 19 outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The blast left 168 dead.

The FBI said the ton of ammonium nitrate fertilizer was purchased Sept. 30 under an alias, "Mike Havens," then hidden in a Kansas storage shed rented under a different alias. Two weeks later, another ton of fertilizer was purchased by "Mike Havens" at the same Kansas co-op, then hidden in different storage sheds - rented under aliases, the FBI said.

The FBI found the receipt for the first fertilizer purchase in a search of Nichols' modest home in Herington. It had McVeigh's fingerprint on it. That search also turned up rental documents - with the aliases - for two of the storage sheds.

The FBI found other evidence of a long-term conspiracy in Las Vegas. Nichols' ex-wife, Lana Padilla, turned over a

letter she said Nichols wrote Nov. 22 to his friend McVeigh and given to her for safekeeping in Las Vegas.

The letter was to be given to McVeigh only if Nichols died, the FBI reported. In that case, Nichols was warning McVeigh he was now on his own and to "Go for it!! " the FBI said.

Nichols also wanted McVeigh to "clear everything out of CG 37" and to "also liquidate 40," if he died, the FBI reported. Those were references to two of the storage sheds rented under aliases.

McVeigh was charged April 21 with malicious destruction of a federal building by means of an explosive. Nichols was charged Tuesday - after being held as a material witness. Both are in custody at the federal prison near El Reno.

The death penalty is being sought.

Agents believe in the two days before the explosion, the fertilizer was removed from the Kansas storage sheds, placed in containers in a rented truck, then mixed with diesel fuel at Geary State Fishing Lake near Nichols' home.

Agents have evidence Nichols twice bought diesel fuel - on April 15 and 16.

Nichols has told the FBI he "knows how to make a bomb by blending ammonium nitrate with diesel fuel" but he denied "involvement in or knowledge of" the bombing.

The evidence of a years-long plan comes from the FBI probe of Michigan farm country - known as "The Thumb. " There, at a farm in Decker, McVeigh sometimes stayed with Terry Nichols' brother, James.

That farm was "a testing ground" for the three men's homemade explosives, Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Cares said.

James Nichols was accused Thursday in a federal grand jury indictment of experimenting with bombs in Michigan with his brother and McVeigh in 1992. Grand jurors called McVeigh and Terry Nichols "co-conspirators" but did not indict them.

James Nichols has not been charged with the Oklahoma City bombing.

The Michigan grand jury alleged James Nichols, his brother and McVeigh were experimenting with making and exploding bombs made of brake fluid and diesel fuel "in approximately 1992. " Jurors also said Terry Nichols was making homemade bombs out of diesel fuel as long ago as 1988.

A witness has told the FBI that as long as five to eight years ago, James Nichols had rambled of a "super bomb that could blow up a federal building. " The witness told the FBI he had been on the farm between 1987 and 1990 and smelled diesel fuel. The witness said James Nichols related, "My brother and an old Army buddy were over this weekend making bombs. " Later in the conversation, the witness said, James Nichols talked of a bomb disaster and "said that the technology exists for a super bomb that could blow up a federal building. And he said that this was an example of how a person could get close to a federal building with a bomb. "

The FBI has heard plenty about the defendants' hatred for the government.

A co-worker told the FBI that McVeigh was particularly angry over the government's handling of the standoff with the Branch Davidians cult near Waco, Texas, and had made a pilgrimage there.

Afterward, the co-worker told the FBI, McVeigh "advised the government should never have done what it did. " The Oklahoma City bombing was on the second anniversary of the FBI raid on the cult complex that ended when the complex burned, killing more than 80 people.

A print store manager in Kingman, Ariz., remembers seeing McVeigh become irate about the raid.

Print store manager George Boerst said McVeigh in February was in his store and read a flier on a bulletin board advertising the sale of tapes about the raid. "I could see the irateness in his eyes," Boerst said. "He was very hot about Waco. He was standing there reading it and referred to the feds as SOBs. " Boerst said McVeigh came to his shop three times from November 1994 to February to make some 25 copies of various articles in publications titled Point Blank and The Patriot.

Boerst said one of the publications described a plan to have armed militias storm the White House, arrest politicians and "try them in their own courts. " He said McVeigh said matter-of-factly the plan had been canceled.

Then McVeigh added, "But something else is in the making," Boerst said.

Terry Nichols didn't pay taxes, has associated with paramilitary groups and has renounced both his right to vote and his citizenship.

The search of his home turned up "numerous books, pamphlets, brochures dealing with Waco, tax protesting and anti-government warfare," authorities said.

In 1992, he renounced his right to vote in Michigan, writing, "There is total corruption in the entire political system from the local government on up through and including the President of the United States, George Bush. " Last year in Kansas, he renounced his citizenship, calling the federal government a "fraudulent, usurping octopus. " "He troubled me," said real estate agent Georgia Rucker, who helped Terry Nichols buy his Herington home, "because he told me that he didn't pay taxes. He said that he didn't like using banks, that everything he did would be strictly cash. " She said Terry Nichols was otherwise "a nice, polite, soft-spoken man," and she has been surprised.

"Were they so committed to their cause that it didn't matter to them the cost? That it might cost them their lives? " she said.

Terry Nichols "is an intelligent man and things they did were so stupid. " James Nichols also has renounced his U.S. citizenship.

A neighbor, Dan Stomber, told the FBI the brothers frequently made "derogatory remarks about the incident at Waco, Texas, and the federal government. " Stomber also said, "James also made comments ... that judges and President Clinton should be killed and that he blamed the FBI and ATF for killing the Branch Davidians in Waco. " Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) made the initial raid on the Branch Davidians compound.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. BIOG: NAME: The following fields overflowed: CREDIT = This story was written from reports by staff writers Diana Baldwin, Robby Trammell, Randy Ellis and Nolan Clay.