

## **McVeigh Admits Bombing in Oklahoma, Sources Say**

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OKLAHOMA CITY -- Timothy McVeigh has claimed responsibility for the Oklahoma City bombing, according to two people who have talked with him in jail since his arrest.

He has told them that the A.P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was chosen as a target because it housed so many government offices and because it was more architecturally vulnerable than other federal buildings, the two sources said.

McVeigh also said he did not know there was a day-care center in the building and was surprised when he learned from newspapers that children died in the bombing, said the two sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

McVeigh has told them he was not "directly involved" with armed civilian paramilitary groups, one source said.

In describing his life over the last year or two, he has mentioned "relationships and acquaintances with a few people who have similar views," primarily people he met at gun shows, the source said.

McVeigh is being held at the Federal Correctional Institution in El Reno, Okla., on charges of carrying out the bombing on April 19. The blast killed 168 people, including 19 children.

McVeigh's lawyer, Stephen Jones, has said he will plead not guilty.

The people who have talked with McVeigh said that although he had acknowledged responsibility for the bombing, he did not believe he had committed a crime.

Jones filed a motion Tuesday seeking to delay demolition of the federal building so investigators for the defense can search for evidence that might help McVeigh's case.

Defense attorneys, who have hired investigators and begun interviewing people in Kansas, Oklahoma and elsewhere, will try to show that the government's evidence is weak or circumstantial, said sources familiar with the defense team's strategy.

McVeigh's attorneys said they will try to show that government witness accounts are contradictory or implausible. The defense team also will attempt to discredit

testimony from witnesses who claim to have seen McVeigh at the federal building and other places before and after the explosion.

The sources who talked to McVeigh said he had indicated that planning for the bombing began at least nine months ago and that Oklahoma City was one of several cities from Denver to Kansas City and from Texas to South Dakota that had been considered.

McVeigh, who allegedly was in Oklahoma City at least once before the bombing, had examined the building but he had not gone inside, the sources said.

Federal officials have said the building particularly was vulnerable to damage from an explosion because of large glass windows, its nine floors that could collapse upon each other and the absence of any courtyard or plaza separating the building from the street, where a truck carrying a bomb could be parked.

McVeigh's statements to those who have talked with him suggest that these factors influenced the choice of the building.

The sources said he was motivated by anger at the federal government's actions in the 1993 raid on the Branch Davidian compound near Waco and the 1992 killing of the wife and son of white supremacist Randy Weaver during federal agents' siege of the Weaver home in Idaho.

They said McVeigh also was motivated by a more general hostility toward the government, a sentiment that seemed to take shape toward the end of his years in the Army. The sources said his anger may have been fueled by his inability to get a well-paying job when he left the military at the end of 1991.

"There's nothing in particular, one certain event, that happens to set off this extreme anger or resentment to the system," said one of the people who talked with the suspect. "It is a growing resentment for the people running the government."

As a result, they said, McVeigh explained that the bombing had not been directed specifically at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, some of whose agents in Oklahoma City participated in the government's siege in Waco.

Rather, the purpose of the bombing was to make targets of as many federal agencies as possible, the sources said.

McVeigh, they said, has talked in jail about the significance of the day of the bombing on April 19.

Two years ago to the day, FBI and ATF agents as well as other law enforcement officers, carried out a tear-gas assault on the Branch Davidian compound, which came to a fiery end with more than 80 people dead.

It was also the anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord, where in 1775 the first shots of the American Revolution were fired.

The people who have talked with McVeigh provided only a few details of the bombing plot.

They did not say how the plot was financed, how many people were involved or exactly how and where the bomb had been put together.

In addition, it is not clear whether McVeigh has told them these details

Caption:

Photo: Timothy McVeigh (color)