

# **Informant Says James Nichols Talked of Blowing Up Oklahoma Building 7 Years Ago**

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James Douglas Nichols, whose brother is charged in the Oklahoma City federal building bombing, talked about blowing up the building with a "megabomb" seven years ago, an FBI informant said.

Nichols even drew a diagram of the nine-story building and produced a newspaper clipping that described it, according to the informant.

That account, from the FBI, was included in more than 100 pages of documents released today in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed by the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News.

Nichols, 41, is not charged in the April 19 bombing that killed 168 people in Oklahoma. Timothy James McVeigh, 27, and Nichols's 40-year-old brother, Terry Lynn Nichols, are jailed without bond and are expected to be indicted.

In an affidavit for a search warrant, the FBI said the informant visited James Nichols on his Decker, Mich., farm around Dec. 23, 1988, shortly after the terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in Lockerbie, Scotland.

Nichols laid blame for the bombing on the U.S. government and said a "megabomb capable of leveling a building could be built," the affidavit said.

He then made specific reference to a federal building in Oklahoma City and began searching for a newspaper clipping depicting the Oklahoma City federal building, the document said.

He drew a diagram of the building "similar to the construction of the {Alfred P.} Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City," according to the document.

Later, Nichols located a newspaper article containing a reference to the building and showed it to the person, the affidavit said.

Nichols was arrested during the raid on his farm on April 21 and held first as a material witness to the bombing. Later, he was indicted on unrelated explosives charges and remained in federal custody for a month.

His lawyer, Robert Elsey, could not be reached for comment, the newspapers said in Tuesday's editions. In the past, Elsey has maintained that Nichols disavows

any connection to the bombing and that any explosives made on his property were for chores.

Federal authorities had no comment today beyond releasing the records.

Little of the specific information released today was used by federal authorities in their effort two weeks ago to prevent Nichols's release, although he was described as a danger to the public.

Under terms of his release, Nichols must wear an electronic tether and follow a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew. He must also stay at the home of friends Les and Rhonda Roggenbuck, who live eight miles from his farm.

In Oklahoma City today, a federal judge gave the government until Aug. 11 to indict McVeigh, granting the prosecution's request for a nearly two-month delay because of the complexity of the case.

U.S. District Judge David Russell did not rule on a similar motion involving Terry Nichols.

Terry Nichols's lawyers had not responded to the motion by this afternoon.

McVeigh's lawyers had opposed the delay, saying the government already has enough evidence to indict the men on a terrorism charge that carries the death penalty and claiming prosecutors would use the extra time to build their case for trial.

Prosecutors do not have to turn their evidence over to the defense until after indictment.

Under the Speedy Trial Act, prosecutors have 30 days to indict after a suspect is arrested. However, the clock stops when motions are pending. On Friday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald Howland ruled that at least 19 days since Nichols's May 10 arrest were excludable, pushing the deadline in his case to at least June 26. Howland already had granted prosecutors extra time to indict McVeigh, arrested shortly after the blast.

Russell also ordered both sides to meet to resolve McVeigh's complaints about conditions at the prison in El Reno, Okla. Among other things, McVeigh has complained he is under 24-hour video surveillance.