

Okla. Bombing, Robbery Link is Less Certain

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KINGMAN, Ariz. -- The link between suspects in the Oklahoma City bombing and an armed robbery last November in Arkansas became less certain Saturday after a government witness said that none of the guns found in the home of a friend of the two main suspects in the bombing were among the weapons listed on a property report from the theft

James Rosencrans, who said Saturday that federal agents were engaging in a witch hunt, became involved in the bombing investigation after agents found that he had pawned a relatively rare Winchester Model-34 rifle that might have been taken in a robbery in Arkansas.

Rosencrans, who testified before a grand jury in Oklahoma City on Thursday, had told authorities earlier that he was given the rifle by his neighbor, Michael Fortier.

Fortier, who is known to have sold weapons at area gun shows, is an Army buddy of both Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, the main suspects in the bombing.

But these kinds of guns are difficult to track because they exist in swap meets and are seldom registered with serial numbers. Sometimes they are traded on a handshake.

Few of the weapons listed in the property report have serial numbers, and Rosencrans said that none of the guns he had seen at Fortier's house had scopes or were new and clean like those described on the theft report. Some, like an AR-15, were of different brands.

Rosencrans also undercut speculation that several other Kingman residents had bought stolen guns from Fortier, saying that he was present at the purchases and that none of the guns on the property report match those bought by his friends.

"Mike had a lot of guns," Rosencrans said. "He liked to collect them like me. But they aren't the ones on this list.

"A friend of mine bought a M-1 rifle but it's not any of these. His wouldn't even fire because the bolt had been broken and we had to work on it for days."

Rosencrans said federal officials never showed him the list of stolen property. He said they told him he had two other guns that might have been stolen in the robbery.

"They took my .357 magnum Taurus, and it's not on the list and my Ruger 10/22 didn't have a scope and wasn't near new," he said, describing further discrepancies he found after being shown the list.

The FBI had no comment Saturday on Rosencrans' comments about the property list or about his contention that federal agents were on a witch hunt.

There are fewer questions about the Winchester Model-34 rifle that first led federal agents to think there might be a connection between Fortier and the Arkansas robbery.

It is one of only about 60,000 produced and has both a customized stock and a barrel drilled for a telescopic sight.

But like most of the other guns listed on the property report, no serial number was listed. Rosencrans had already told authorities that the gun sold to him did not have a sight and had a stock slightly different from the one described as the stolen weapon.

And the owner of the A&P pawnshop who bought the gun from Rosencrans for \$300 said that after federal agents took the gun, an elderly man came into his shop and said that such a gun had been stolen from him in Kingman three years earlier

Caption:

Mug: Timothy McVeigh