

Judge rejects accusation witnesses told not to talk

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Timothy McVeigh's attorneys don't have enough evidence to support their accusation that federal authorities told witnesses not to talk to the defense, a judge ruled.

Chief U.S. District Judge David Russell said Monday that the claim was based on "speculation based on circumstantial evidence which has been credibly and reasonably explained."

Prosecutors said witnesses in the federal building bombing are choosing not to speak with McVeigh's defense team.

A defense investigator quoted witness Eldon Elliott as saying that an FBI agent told him not to talk, but prosecutors said Elliott told them he was refusing to talk of his own free will.

Authorities believe McVeigh rented the truck that carried the

bomb from Elliot's body shop in Junction City, Kan. McVeigh and Terry Nichols are the only two people charged in the April 19 bombing that killed 168 people and injured more than 500.

McVeigh and Nichols are being held without bail under a federal anti-terrorism statute that carries the death penalty.

Russell also denied a defense request for an order barring federal officials from leaking information to the media.

Defense attorneys maintained that the leaks were coming from the grand jury. Russell ruled that the news stories cited in the motion didn't contain information leaked from grand jury proceedings.