

McVeigh Incriminated Himself in Oklahoma Blast, Report Says Suspect Knew Why FBI Wanted to Interview Him

Rocky Mountain News / Reuters
September 11, 1995 | Page 2A | Section: National

In his first interrogation by federal law enforcement officials, alleged Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh blurted out what officers believe to be a strongly self-incriminating statement, according to a report published Sunday.

Asked whether he knew why agents from the FBI were visiting him in a local jail two days after the April 19 blast at the Alfred Murrah Federal Building, McVeigh replied, "Yes. That thing in Oklahoma City, I guess," according to the Los Angeles Times.

At that point, McVeigh had not been told he was a suspect, authorities claim. He was being held in a county jail in Oklahoma on minor charges, and he could not have known why FBI officers were talking to him, officials say.

Only after the FBI first indicated McVeigh was being held as a suspect in the bombing that killed 169 people did he begin to refuse to answer questions and ask to see a lawyer, the newspaper said.

Through FBI reports, search warrants, jailhouse records, witness statements and interviews, the Los Angeles Times learned McVeigh talked much more than previously reported in those first two days.

Early descriptions painted him as a tight-lipped loner who in military style offered little more than "name, rank and serial number" to law enforcement officials.

But the Times said McVeigh seemed jovial and courteous, though restless, after his arrest. When FBI officers began questioning him in the tiny Noble County Jail in El Reno, Okla., and an angry group of citizens began forming outside, McVeigh grew nervous. He told agents he feared a "Jack Ruby" might be waiting outside for him, referring to the man who shot Lee Harvey Oswald as he was led from a Dallas jail in 1963 after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.