

Videotape of Bomb Truck May Show `John Doe No. 2'

Image Recorded Just Before Oklahoma Blast

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Investigators differ over whether videotape shot by a surveillance camera April 19 shows a shadowy figure in the passenger seat of the bomb-laden Ryder truck minutes before the federal building exploded.

The indistinct footage adds to the body of evidence that a third figure -- perhaps the mysterious "John Doe No. 2" -- took part in the attack with Timothy James McVeigh and Terry Lynn Nichols, a federal law enforcement source said.

"There's a shape in there, but they can't see a face," the source said this week of the pictures taken by a camera on a nearby building.

But another federal law enforcement official maintained the images were not clear enough to tell even how many people were in the truck.

The videotape was shot about three minutes before the bomb went off in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, killing 169 people and injuring more than 500.

The government claims McVeigh drove to Oklahoma City in the truck, parked it in front of the federal building and made his getaway in a yellow Mercury Marquis. But prosecutors have given no indication that Nichols was also in Oklahoma City the day of the bombing.

A federal grand jury indicted McVeigh and Nichols on murder and conspiracy charges, while agents scoured the country for a third conspirator, known as John Doe No. 2, who was portrayed in sketches that were distributed shortly after the blast.

Authorities later said that an innocent Army private who had been at the agency where the truck was rented resembled the sketches. But the drawings were never withdrawn. The indictment accuses McVeigh and Nichols of acting with "others unknown," and agents are still hunting for other conspirators.

One of the law enforcement sources said many investigators remain convinced that John Doe No. 2 is still at large.

"No one knows who he is, it's like he walked into a wall and vanished," the source said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Steve Mullins, a spokesman for the prosecution team, did not return a phone call seeking comment Friday. Prosecutors have repeatedly refused to discuss surveillance tape or other evidence in the case.

McVeigh's lawyer, Stephen Jones, said he has not seen the tape and could not comment.

McVeigh and Nichols go on trial May 17 in Lawton, Okla., about 90 miles from the bombing site. If convicted, they could get the death penalty.