

Document Says Witnesses Saw McVeigh Leaving Blast Scene

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A recently unsealed document on the Oklahoma City bombing investigation says two witnesses saw a man believed to be Timothy J. McVeigh and another person leaving the blast scene shortly before the deadly April 19 attack.

McVeigh, 27, formerly of Pendleton, N.Y., and former Army friend Terry Nichols, 40, of Herington, Kan., are accused of blowing up the Alfred P. Murrah federal office building, killing at least 168 people and wounding hundreds.

On Friday, U.S. Magistrate Ronald Howland in Oklahoma City unsealed nine sets of documents filed by federal investigators. Several news organizations had petitioned to unseal records kept secret since the case began.

The documents included an affidavit that was part of a search warrant.

According to the warrant, two witnesses claimed to have seen McVeigh "with another person" leaving the Murrah building shortly before the blast.

McVeigh's lawyer Stephen Jones said Saturday that the witness account is not conclusive.

"Based upon hearsay affidavit, I don't treat it particularly with any significance because I know there are other people who saw only John Doe No. 2 there," Jones added.

Sketches of a man identified as "John Doe No. 2" were released shortly after the bombing. Authorities later determined the man pictured in the drawings was not involved in the attack.

Among other documents unsealed by the court was a report that McVeigh was carrying a pamphlet with a quote by 17th century philosopher John Locke when he was arrested in Perry, Okla., about 90 minutes after the explosion.

The quote attributed to Locke was: "I have no reason to suppose that he who would take away my liberty would not when he had men in his power take away everything else. And therefore is lawful for me to treat him as one who has put himself in a state of war against me and kill him if I can."

McVeigh's views on the government and his possible ties with right-wing militia have been probed since the bombing.

Asked about the pamphlet, Jones said: "I don't think yet in this country that we judge people by their political beliefs. I don't think that is incriminating."

McVeigh was reported to have had a Glock .45 semi-automatic pistol when he was arrested. Also found with him were a green wallet, ear plugs, a black baseball cap and black military boots, documents said. Hair was taken from McVeigh's head and pubic area, and scrapings from under his nails, according to investigators.

The bombing trial is set to begin May 17 in Lawton, Okla. McVeigh and Nichols could be sentenced to death if convicted of federal anti-terrorism and conspiracy charges.

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