

SPECIAL REPORT:
OKLAHOMA CITY UPDATE

The Trail of John Doe No. 2

by William F. Jasper

In its 11-count indictment handed down on August 10, 1995, the federal grand jury in Oklahoma City charged that Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols “did knowingly, intentionally, willfully and maliciously conspire, combine and agree together and with *others unknown to the Grand Jury* to use a weapon of mass destruction — resulting in death, grievous bodily injury and the destruction of the building.” (Emphasis added.) The grand jury never heard testimony from any of the multitude of eyewitnesses who reported seeing prime suspect Timothy McVeigh — in the days before the bombing and on the morning of the explosion — in the company of a man (or men) resembling the now famous composite drawings of “John Doe No. 2.”

America’s Most Wanted

For six weeks in the spring of 1995 this shadowy figure was the most hunted fugitive in the world. His grim visage depicted in three FBI sketches was repeatedly flashed before billions of eyes in television broadcasts, newspapers, and wanted posters around the nation. A \$2 million bounty was placed on his head.

The global manhunt produced thousands of leads and look-alike sightings from eyewitnesses, but did not net the elusive prey. Since June of last year, federal prosecutors and FBI investigators have been sending signals that the now instantly recognizable composite drawings of the man known to the world as “John Doe No. 2” may have been a false lead from the start, the result of faulty witness memories.

However, if Timothy McVeigh did indeed drive the explosives-laden Ryder truck from Kansas to Oklahoma City and park it in front of the Murrah Building, as alleged in the indictment, it is reasonable to suppose that somewhere along the route other motorists, pedestrians, gas station attendants, customers at gas stations or convenience stores, etc., would have seen him — and others who may have accompanied him. That is exactly what appears to have happened. A trail of witnesses from the Ryder truck rental agency in Junction City, Kansas to the federal building in Oklahoma City provides a fairly continuous and logical time line between the two points. It also provides convincing evidence of the involvement of multiple “John Does” in this crime.

Following the Trail

There are additional witnesses and accounts besides those presented here, but the following provide a good sampling of the multiple sightings which place McVeigh, the Ryder truck, and at least one person fitting the John Doe No. 2 description along a likely route from Junction City to the Murrah Building:

- **Thursday, April 13.** A woman who is a federal employee in the A.P. Murrah Building sees a man she later identifies to the FBI as Timothy McVeigh together with a second man in the building. A source closely involved with this part of the investigation told THE NEW AMERICAN that the woman was coming down the elevator when it stopped at the second floor. When the doors opened, two men dressed in janitorial smocks were standing as if waiting to get on. She says she recognized all of the janitors and that these two were not any of the regulars. She thought it odd that the two did not get on the elevator and turned away as if they might not have wanted her to get a good look at their faces.

The janitorial supervisor informed THE NEW AMERICAN that it would not have been difficult for the suspects to take smocks from one of the janitorial closets. Interestingly, another federal employee whom THE NEW AMERICAN interviewed told an investigator that he had seen Timothy McVeigh with two other men a couple of weeks prior to the elevator incident. The men had stopped by his office in the Murrah Building to ask about job opportunities. According to the investigator, the witness told him that he had no doubt that McVeigh was one of the men because he had engaged in a fairly lengthy conversation with him. However, when we interviewed this witness and asked him to recount the incident, he became visibly frightened and said he would not talk about that matter and pleaded with us not to publish anything about it in connection with his name, citing fear for his life and the safety of his family from the bombers who are still at large.

- **Friday, April 14.** Timothy McVeigh, using his own name, checks into room 24 of the Dreamland Motel in Junction City, Kansas, 270 miles north of Oklahoma City and 26 miles north of Herington, Kansas, where Army buddy Terry Nichols lives. McVeigh is driving a 1977 Mercury Marquis which he purchased that day in Junction City. He has transferred to it an Arizona license plate from his trade-in car.

Shane Boyd, a helicopter mechanic who was also staying at the Dreamland, later told investigators and reporters that he saw a “bushy-haired man” resembling the John Doe No. 2 sketches in the parking lot near McVeigh’s room.

- **Saturday, April 15.** In Oklahoma City two witnesses, husband and wife bartenders, serve beer to Timothy McVeigh and a dark-haired stranger who fit the description of John Doe No. 2. According to these two, the stranger spoke in

broken English with a Middle Eastern accent.

• **Sunday, April 16.** Connie Hood, who lives in Junction City, stops at the Dreamland shortly after midnight, to visit a friend who is staying in room 22. As she walks toward the friend's room, a man flings open the door of room 23, eyes her quickly, and then closes the door. Mrs. Hood testified later that she was startled by the brusqueness with which he opened the door and the intensity of his stare. She described him as about 5 foot, 9-10 inches, medium build, olive complexion, with thick, wiry, dark hair. She said there was a strong resemblance to the John Doe No. 2 sketches, though the man she saw had fuller features.

Route to Oklahoma City

• **Monday, April 17.** In Junction City, McVeigh and John Doe No. 2 pick up a 20-foot Ryder truck from Elliott's Body Shop. Employees later provide descriptions of both men to FBI sketch artists for suspect sketches released on April 20th.

That afternoon Connie Hood and her husband Donald return to the Dreamland to visit their friend David King in room 22. A Ryder truck arrives at the same time, its driver strongly resembling the man Mrs. Hood had seen sticking his head out of room 23 the day before. While Mrs. Hood goes into Mr. King's room, Mr. Hood waits in the parking lot. Mr. Hood notices a man resembling John Doe No. 2 come out of the motel office and get into the driver's seat of the Ryder truck at the same time that McVeigh comes out of his room and gets into the passenger side. The men then leave together in the truck. Mr. Hood later described the John Doe as about 5 feet, 9 inches, olive complected, with dark, brown hair combed straight back.

In Herington at around 9:00 p.m., Herington resident Larry Wild observes two men resembling McVeigh and John Doe No. 2 at Cardie's Corner, a gas station and convenience store a few blocks from Terry Nichols' house. Wild later described the John Doe he saw as being dark complected, about 5 feet, 10 inches, with dark hair combed straight back. He noted that the person he saw had more prominent cheekbones than the man depicted in the FBI sketches.

In Junction City, a man answering the description of John Doe No. 2 and driving a Ryder truck checks into the Great Western Inn, about a mile up the road from the Dreamland. The night clerk told THE NEW AMERICAN that the man was very nervous and unfriendly and spoke with a heavy foreign accent, possibly Middle Eastern. She also remembered that she "asked him to spell his name because it was foreign sounding."

• **Tuesday, April 18.** Early in the morning in Herington, Kansas, Terry Nichols, Timothy McVeigh, and a third man resembling John Doe No. 2 have breakfast at the Santa Fe Trail Diner two blocks from Nichols' house. The owners of the cafe, Robert and Barbara Whittenberg, recognize Nichols because he occasionally

comes in for coffee or meals.

Mrs. Whittenberg, who is from Arizona, told THE NEW AMERICAN that she particularly noted the men because they had parked three vehicles in the parking lot and one of them, a light-colored car, had an Arizona license plate. The other two vehicles were a Ryder truck and a pickup truck. The John Doe 2 look-alike had more prominent cheekbones and a broader nose than the sketch artist rendering, said Mrs. Whittenberg.

After the bombing suspect sketches were released, customers at the Cattle Baron's Steakhouse in Perry, Oklahoma, 80 miles north of Oklahoma City, contacted the FBI to say that they saw McVeigh and a companion having a beer at the establishment. Owners of the restaurant, Terry and Judi Leonard, told the *Dallas Morning News* that they recalled a Ryder truck in their parking lot around 7:00 p.m. and two men who may have been associated with the truck, but they had not paid the men much attention.

Death Ride

• **Wednesday, April 19.** At 8:30 a.m. in Oklahoma City a mortgage banker for the Bank of Oklahoma is driving west on Main Street near Broadway (about four blocks south of the Murrah Building) following a Ryder truck and a car matching the description of Timothy McVeigh's Mercury Marquis. According to this witness account, McVeigh was driving the car and had two passengers, one in the front and one in the back.

At 8:35 a.m. Dave Snider, a warehouse worker in the Bricktown section of Oklahoma City, is waiting on the loading dock of his warehouse only a few blocks west of where the banker witnesses McVeigh and the Ryder truck. He is standing on the loading dock anxiously awaiting a truck delivery which is already several minutes overdue when he sees a Ryder truck turn the corner and slowly approach his dock. Thinking it is his delivery truck, Snider waves and points toward the address, aware that it is difficult to see and that some drivers miss it.

When the truck slowly rolled by, Snider recalled to THE NEW AMERICAN, he was very upset and angrily yelled an obscenity at the vehicle and its occupants. According to Snider, Timothy McVeigh was sitting on the passenger side of the truck (the side closest to Snider) and yelled back an obscenity at the frustrated warehouseman. Snider said he got a good, long look at both McVeigh and the driver, whom he described as being dark complected, with dark, straight hair, and a thin mustache.

At 8:40 a.m., Mike Moroz and a fellow employee at Johnny's Tire Service at 10th and Hudson (five blocks north of the Murrah Building) notice a Ryder truck pulling into the parking area in front of their business. Motorists frequently pull into Johnny's for directions and, assuming that the Ryder occupants are in need of

such assistance, Moroz walks out to meet the driver, whom he later identifies as McVeigh. McVeigh asks directions to 5th and Harvey (the northwest corner of the Murrah Building). Moroz gives directions, pointing out that they are only a few blocks away. McVeigh returns to the truck and sits inside talking with the passenger for several minutes before driving off toward the Murrah Building.

At 8:50 another witness is sitting in his vehicle in the parking lot of the post office on 5th and Harvey, across from the northwest corner of the Murrah Building, when a Ryder truck pulls up and parks across the street from him on 5th. An “old, dirty” car (matching the Mercury Marquis description given after the bombing) pulls up behind the truck, and the drivers of both vehicles get out and meet at the back of the truck. After a brief exchange of words and the passing of some small object from the hands of one to the other, the drivers return to their vehicles. The witness goes into the post office, and when he comes back outside approximately five minutes later, both vehicles have moved. The Ryder truck is now parked one block further down 5th street in front of the Murrah Building. McVeigh is now walking north across 5th away from the Murrah Building and toward the parking lot of the Journal Record Building.

Just before 9:00 a.m., an employee at the Journal Record Building is standing in the alley by the Journal Record parking lot when the Mercury Marquis driven by McVeigh rushes toward him from the parking lot. He moves quickly to get out of the way and does not get a good look at the passenger. The speeding vehicle bumps over a concrete parking “curb” and turns south on Robinson.

At 9:00 a.m., another witness is standing at “ground zero” *inside* the Murrah Building looking out the windows on the north side when the Ryder truck pulls into the parking spot only a few feet from her. She notices a dark-complexioned man about 5 feet 9 or 10 inches go to the back of the truck and then quickly walk up the sidewalk in the direction of Robinson.

At approximately 9:00 a.m., shortly before the explosion, a witness sees (as he testified later to the FBI) two individuals “running from the area of the federal building toward a brown Chevrolet truck prior to the explosion.” The witness later described the two men as “males, of possible Middle Eastern descent, approximately 6 feet tall, with athletic builds.” One of the men was described as approximately 25-28 years old, having dark hair and a beard. The second person was described as approximately 35-38 years old, with dark hair and a dark beard with gray in it. He was further described as wearing blue jogging pants, a black shirt, and a black jogging jacket. A third person, not further identified, was believed to be in the brown Chevrolet truck. This witness account provided the basis for the FBI’s “all points bulletin” to law enforcement nationwide shortly after the blast, an APB which was inexplicably pulled a few hours later.

At approximately 9:05 a.m., another witness who works several blocks south of the Murrah Building is walking from her parking spot at the Myriad Gardens

through the Medallion Hotel to her office when the bomb goes off, shattering glass inside the hotel. Going outside, she begins crossing Robinson and is on the median strip about to continue across the street when a brown Chevrolet truck careens around the corner at a high rate of speed and nearly runs her down. The pickup truck passes just a few feet from her and she gets a very close look at the driver. She later told THE NEWAMERICAN that she was as much startled by the driver's facial expression as by the near miss with death. As she made eye contact with him, she was struck by the fact that his face was "full of hate and anger" while everyone else on the street looked scared and confused. "I'll never forget the look on his face," she told THE NEW AMERICAN.

Iraqi Connection?

Based on the FBI's John Doe No. 2 sketch and the broadcasts of the APB on the possible Mideast males in the brown pickup truck, several residents in Oklahoma City pointed to a former Iraqi soldier who had recently arrived in the United States as a "refugee" and who was living in the area. After observing the Iraqi at his residence and place of employment and checking with eyewitnesses who had provided testimony to the FBI on suspects seen at or near the Murrah Building on the morning of the explosion, investigators for NBC's television affiliate in Oklahoma City, KFOR, felt that they might have found the phantom John Doe who had eluded the global dragnet.

In June 1995 KFOR began running a series of broadcasts featuring video clips of their surveillance of the Iraqi they described as the "possible John Doe No. 2." KFOR was careful to digitally blur the man's face and not to mention his name during the broadcasts, which included on-camera testimony from several key witnesses who connected him to McVeigh, the Ryder truck, and the brown pickup. One of the witnesses was the one mentioned above who was nearly run down by the brown pickup a few minutes after the blast. In a KFOR interview, she identified the Iraqi as the man driving the speeding vehicle. She also confirmed this in an interview with THE NEW AMERICAN.

On August 24, 1995, Oklahoma resident Al Hussaini Hussain filed a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against KFOR, charging that the news station had falsely accused him of being John Doe No. 2. After the lawsuit was filed, KFOR did not run any further stories into a possible "Iraqi connection" with the bombing. What is most incredible, though, is the lack of interest on the part of the FBI. According to our sources, the FBI, which has interviewed thousands of witnesses and suspects in this case, has never interviewed Hussain, his employer, or any of his co-workers.