

Report Links Man, Bomb Suspects

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DENVER — A Missouri real estate agent said he wondered if the three men were looking for a hideout when they asked about property he had advertised as "in the middle of nowhere."

Then, after the Oklahoma City bombing, he is certain he recognized two of the men on television — defendants Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols.

"Almost 100 percent," Cassville, Mo., real estate agent William Maloney told *The Oklahoman* Sunday night.

He said the other man in his office identified himself as Robert Jacques and did most of the talking.

"They was just as nice and calm ... not a bit nervous. Like they were out for a Sunday drive. ... We discussed about where they were at, where they were from," Maloney said.

He said the men said they had just come from Arizona.

Maloney's claim was first disclosed Sunday by CNN.

Prosecutors, however, do not consider the claim important enough to include in McVeigh's upcoming trial. Maloney is not listed among the potential eyewitnesses, and he said he has never

Agent Also Remembers McVeigh



Sketch of
Robert Jacques

even talked to a prosecutor.

Maloney has been interviewed repeatedly by FBI agents, and he said he helped an FBI artist draw a sketch of Jacques.

CNN broadcast a similar sketch of Jacques on Sunday, and it also was distributed by The Associated Press.

"It's not exactly the one I had done. ... It's been changed, but it's pretty close," Maloney told *The Oklahoman*.

Stephen Jones, McVeigh's attorney, told CNN that McVeigh was not in Missou-

ri at the time that Maloney said he was.

"Our information indicates Tim was somewhere other than Cassville, Mo.," Jones said.

Jones also said Maloney never told the FBI that he had asked the men if they were looking for a place to hide, as he told CNN.

FBI agents have reported the visit by the three men was Nov. 2, 1994.

Maloney had advertised a piece of property in the Ozarks in spring 1994. It read, "In the middle of nowhere, at the end of a rough road, at the bottom of a hollow ... there may be a cave."

He got a phone inquiry soon after and asked the caller's name.

"He says 'McVeigh,' and I said, 'M-C-V-E-Y' and he said, 'That's close enough,'" Maloney told CNN.

Maloney told *The Oklahoman* that he asked the men directly whether they wanted the land as a hiding place, but they did not answer.

He said a colleague, real estate agent Joe Davidson, later recalled the men had chuckled at the question.

He said McVeigh was in the office only a minute and

a half but he specifically remembered him, even recalling a filling in his tooth.

McVeigh, 28, and Nichols, 41, are accused of blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. The explosion resulted in 168 deaths.

Nichols' ex-wife, Lana Padilla, told *The Oklahoman* on Sunday that he had talked about looking for property in Missouri or Arkansas for a blueberry farm.

"He never mentioned traveling with anyone," she said from her home in Las Vegas.

"The government's asked me about it a couple of times. I never knew why. Now I do," she said.

Prosecutors Sunday would not comment specifically on Maloney's claim.

On May 2, 1995, about two weeks after the bombing, a drifter named Robert Jacks was questioned as a material witness in Carthage, Mo., along with Gary Allen Land. They were released 18 hours later after questioning.

Maloney said he called FBI agents then to tell them they had picked up the wrong man.

McVeigh is to go on trial March 31. No date has been set for Nichols' trial.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

An extensive history of the Oklahoma City bombing is available on *The Oklahoman* Online at www.oklahoman.net.