

# WHO IS ROBERT JACQUES?

Time Magazine

Monday, Mar. 17, 1997

William Maloney was watching television in May 1995 when he heard the name. For days, the news had been full of developments in the April 19 Oklahoma City bombing: first, suspect Timothy McVeigh was arrested; then his alleged accomplice Terry Nichols turned himself in. Now the FBI had picked up two men on suspicion of being associates of McVeigh's. Maloney, a real estate agent in the Ozarks, recognized the sound of one of the names—Robert Jacks. But then the drifter's face appeared on the screen. "When I saw him on TV," recalls Maloney, "I knew they had the wrong person."

In fact, after only 18 hours, the FBI released Jacks and his companion Gary Land. However, according to sources close to the Oklahoma City case, the government has been quietly looking for another "Robert Jacks." The FBI has talked with Maloney, and believes he is credible when he says that several months before the bombing, he met McVeigh, Nichols and, most important, a third man, whom the FBI would very much like to question. An investigation for *Impact*, the TV newsmagazine produced by CNN and TIME, has uncovered not only the mystery of the Oklahoma case's missing man but his sketch as well.

Maloney's close encounter occurred the year before the bombing. In the spring of 1994 he ran an ad offering to sell a piece of property in the Ozark mountains of Missouri. "In the middle of nowhere," it read, "at the end of a rough road, at the bottom of a hollow...there may be a cave." When Maloney got a phone inquiry soon after, he asked if the caller's name was spelled "M-C-V-E-Y." "That's close enough," came the answer. In the fall of the same year, three men drove up to Maloney's office in Cassville, Missouri. One, a man named Tim, mostly stayed in the car, but he came up to the office door once, enough for Maloney to notice the way he smiled. There was the glint of a tooth filling on the right side at the back of his mouth—a detail that matches McVeigh's dental records, FBI sources say. The second visitor in Cassville was apparently Nichols, who used his own name but took little part in the conversations. It was the third man who did almost all the talking. His name was Robert Jacques, pronounced Jacks. "I just go by Jacks," he told Maloney. Joe Lee Davidson, a salesman in Maloney's office who was there when the three men came by, recalls, "He seemed to be the one that was in control and in charge of what was going on."

Maloney did not take his three visitors at face value. He knew from experience that the Ozarks draw many people for reasons other than the appreciation of nature. The area along the Missouri-Arkansas line has been home to privacy seekers ranging from well-armed isolationist groups to prosperous marijuana farmers. Maloney said, "I asked them the question, Were they looking for a place to hide, and they didn't respond to that." The trio left the same day and never came back.

Contacted by Maloney, the FBI sent a sketch artist to render a portrait of Jacques. The drawing shows a muscular young man with a short haircut, full face and dark features. Maloney thinks he was "maybe Indian." Davidson agrees, adding, "maybe a little bit Hawaiian." The FBI has been looking for him for well over a year.

According to a Justice Department source, the drawing of Jacques is the only remaining unidentified sketch in the FBI's files on the case. While the government is still looking for a man who may have been with McVeigh when he allegedly rented the truck that carried the bomb, the sketches of John Doe No. 2 that accompanied the original search have been discarded. In the meantime, the bureau is not ready to classify Jacques, if that is indeed his name, as a suspect or target in its investigations. The FBI does, however, want to talk to him as part of its attempt to reconstruct the activities of McVeigh and Nichols.

So far, the FBI has not shown its sketch to the witnesses at the Ryder outlet in Junction City, Kansas, who still claim to have seen McVeigh with an unknown second man on the day the bomb truck was rented. Nor apparently has the FBI shown the Jacques sketch to folks around Nichols' home in Herington, Kansas. There, Barbara Whittenberg remembers a Ryder truck pulling up in front of her Santa Fe Trail Diner a day or so before the bombing. "There was three gentlemen that came in and sat down and ordered coffee," she says. One, she says, was Nichols, another, McVeigh. "The one question I asked was where were they going. And the third person said, 'Oklahoma.'" The three left without breakfast.

It was as if, says Whittenberg, "the young man said something he shouldn't have said." He was muscular and dark skinned, she adds. Shown Impact's version of the FBI sketch, Whittenberg said, "It looks closer to him than any of them. This is the closest picture I've seen yet." "He's out there," says Maloney, back in Cassville. "This other guy they're looking for, he's there somewhere."

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