

## **FBI BOTCHED BOMB EVIDENCE MCVEIGH CONCLUSIONS BIASED, REPORT SAYS**

The Cincinnati Post (Cincinnati, OH)

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LOS ANGELES -- A Justice Department investigation concluded that the FBI lab that handled evidence in the Oklahoma bombing made "scientifically unsound conclusions" that were "biased in favor of the prosecution," the Los Angeles Times reported Saturday.

The final draft of the report, obtained by the Times, is expected next month, and will likely include FBI responses. The FBI has refused comment until then.

Forensic evidence is an important element of the government's case against Timothy McVeigh and Terry L. Nichols in the April 19, 1995, bombing. McVeigh is scheduled to go on trial March 31.

The investigation into the crime lab practices began in 1996 after complaints by FBI chemist and whistle-blower Frederic Whitehurst.

The inspector general's report singled out David Williams, a supervisory agent in the explosives unit, for analyses that "are scientifically unsound, are not explained in the body of the report and are biased in favor of the prosecution," the newspaper said.

Specifically, the report said that Williams' conclusions on the bomb's weight and triggering device were not necessarily based on evidence from the scene, but from additional evidence found at the defendants' property, such as receipts, thus swaying his analysis toward the prosecution, the Times said.

The report also found that several other of Williams' findings, including how the bomb was ignited, "scientifically insupportable."

For example, the Times said Williams, after viewing a videotape of the Ryder truck that shows it two minutes and 15 seconds before the blast, concluded that a three-foot burning fuse was used.

He told the inspector general he based his conclusion "on his assumption that the perpetrator had a military background," not on scientific evidence.

Williams' co-workers, including whistle-blower Whitehurst, also were criticized.

The inspector general said that not all of the concerns raised by Whitehurst could be substantiated. The FBI has accused Whitehurst of relying on rumors.