

# MYSTERIES UNTOUCHED BY VERDICT



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DENVER -- Americans learned Monday that Timothy McVeigh is guilty of bombing Oklahoma City's Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, yet they still don't know the full story.

The prosecution left many nagging questions about the worst act of domestic terrorism in U.S. history.

Restricted as much by choice as by U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch's rulings excluding certain evidence and lines of questioning, lawyers on both sides honed their presentations to the narrow question of McVeigh's guilt or innocence.

But now, a nation once captivated by the search for "John Doe 2" is left to wonder whether there ever was such a man at the heart of the conspiracy.

The clues are tantalizingly strong and, without resolution, continue to feed conspiracy theories. Here are mysteries that remain:

## Renting the truck

Two witnesses who work at the Ryder agency in Junction City, Kan., where the bomb truck was rented testified that two men came into the office that day.

Two other employees who did not testify - including the one who provided the clearest descriptions for the sketches of "John Doe 1" and "John Doe 2" - also said two men were there.

This conflicts with the prosecution theory that McVeigh walked alone 20 minutes in the rain to get the truck.

With all the witnesses sure there were two men, neither of whom was co-defendant

Terry Nichols, then who could this "John Doe 2" be?

McVeigh at Denny's

A waitress at a Junction City Denny's restaurant testified she seated McVeigh and two other men for brunch on Easter Sunday, three days before the bombing. Again, Nichols wasn't among them.

Who were those two other men having Easter brunch with McVeigh?

Dreamland Motel

Lea McGown owns the Dreamland Motel in Junction City. McVeigh stayed there for four nights before the bombing, registered in his own name.

One night, she said, she walked by his room and heard three male voices inside, one of them McVeigh's.

Who were those other people?

Ms. McGown was not called to testify at the trial by either the prosecution or defense.

The botched bomb

When McVeigh and Nichols tried to blow up a small ammonium nitrate bomb in a milk jug in October 1994 outside Kingman, Ariz., they failed miserably, Fortier testified.

But in Kansas six months later, the government claimed, McVeigh took just a few hours the day before the bombing in Oklahoma City to mix nearly 5,600 pounds of ingredients into the same type of bomb.

On April 19, 1995, the bomb exploded so efficiently that the FBI laboratory could find just a few unignited crystals of ammonium nitrate at the crime scene.

How did he go from being unable to blow up a milk jug to cleanly igniting a Ryder truck full of explosives? The government says McVeigh learned the formula from "Homemade C-4," a bomb-making book published in Boulder, Colo. But the formula for such a bomb in "Homemade C-4" reads nothing like the way prosecutors said in court the bomb was built.

Other threats

A paid federal informant infiltrated a racist compound in Oklahoma in 1994 and told

her government contact that people there were talking about bombing federal facilities and the need to take action against the federal government.

One of the men she said was talking this way was a German illegal alien named Andreas Strassmeir. He is the person McVeigh is alleged to have called from Arizona two weeks before the bombing, immediately after McVeigh called a Ryder agency in Arizona, according to phone records the government put into evidence.

Despite this information, the FBI never interviewed Strassmeir before he fled to Berlin in January 1996. Why?

The government successfully argued to Matsch that the informant, Carol Howe, should be prevented from testifying.

Why?

Eyewitnesses

Tulsa, Okla., banker Kyle Hunt is certain he saw McVeigh driving a big yellow car in downtown Oklahoma City, several blocks from the Murrah building, a half hour before the blast.

Hunt said two men were with McVeigh in the car - one with long dark hair similar to the unknown person with McVeigh in the Denny's restaurant. The men in the yellow car were tailing a big yellow Ryder truck and appeared to be lost in downtown's one-way street maze.

Hunt is only one of several people who claim to have seen McVeigh that morning in downtown Oklahoma City. All but one say they saw him with other men. None of these eyewitnesses was called to testify at the trial.

Why?

Terry Nichols' trial, expected to begin in August, might answer some of these questions.

But it's unlikely that America will ever get the full story unless Timothy McVeigh talks.