

White supremacist questioned in bombing says he will refuse to testify

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OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A white supremacist called today before the grand jury investigating allegations of a larger conspiracy in the Oklahoma City bombing said he would refuse to testify under the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination.

Dennis Mahon, who operates a Dial-a-Racist hot line and is a member of the White Aryan Resistance, has denied involvement in the April 19, 1995, bombing that killed 168 people.

“I'm going to plead the Fifth (Amendment),” Mahon said as he left the grand jury session held in the Oklahoma County Jail.

He refused to say anything about his roughly 40 minutes before the grand jury and would not say if he had already refused to answer questions or explain when he planned to plead the Fifth.

“I'm trying to drain a swamp and I'm surrounded by alligators, namely y'all,” Mahon told reporters.

The grand jury was called after a petition drive driven by state Rep. Charles Key and Glenn Wilburn, an accountant who lost two grandsons in the blast. Wilburn died Tuesday from pancreatic cancer.

Key and Wilburn said a larger conspiracy than Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols was responsible for the bombing, and that federal agents had prior knowledge of the plot. Federal agents say they doubt a larger conspiracy, and have vigorously denied any foreknowledge.

McVeigh was convicted and sentenced to death last month for the bombing. Nichols' trial is set to begin Sept. 29.

Mahon's ex-girlfriend, former federal informant Carol Howe, told authorities after the bombing that she had overheard Mahon and German national Andreas Strassmeir discuss bombing federal buildings in the months before the attack. Mahon dismisses Ms. Howe as a pathological liar and a drug abuser.

Attorneys for McVeigh tried to call Ms. Howe as a witness, but the judge ruled her testimony irrelevant.

Mahon was the seventh witness called before the grand jury.

V.Z. Lawton, a bombing survivor who went before the panel Tuesday, said four employees of the General Services Administration told him the day before the bombing that they had been sent from Fort Worth, Texas, to check security in the building.

“I'd like to know who sent them up here and if they did have any prior knowledge,” Lawton said.

Elevator company employee Oscar Johnson told the panel that elevators in the federal building didn't fall several floors as agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms said.

“A five-story fall would be pretty devastating to your legs,” Johnson said. Johnson also brought a photograph of the

bomb crater to support his contention that it was about 16 feet in diameter, instead of 28 feet as reported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.