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Conspiracy grand jury focuses on white supremacist, elevators

By The Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — After a week of testimony, some potential witnesses wonder why they have not been called before a grand jury investigating allegations of a larger conspiracy in the Oklahoma City bombing.

Debbie Nakanashi says she saw Timothy McVeigh and another man walk into the post office near the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building two days before the April 19, 1995, bombing.

The second man, who resembled the John Doe No. 2 sketch circulated by authorities after the blast, asked for a government job application, Ms. Nakanashi told the Tulsa World for a story in Sunday's

paper. She says she directed the man to the nearby federal building.

However, evidence in McVeigh's trial put the convicted bomber in Junction City, Kan., on April 17.

Ms. Nakanashi was not among the 10 witnesses called before the grand jury last week, although three of those witnesses who did appear have said they saw McVeigh in Oklahoma City with at least one other person on the morning of the bombing.

The panel has recessed until Aug. 11.

"I would sure like to know what is going on," Ms. Nakanashi said. "I'm sure some of the people...could be succumbing to mass hysteria, but not all of them."

Reported sightings like Ms. Nakanashi's prompted state Rep. Charles Key and Glenn Wilburn, an Oklahoma City accountant who lost two grandsons in the bombing, to mount a petition drive that forced the grand jury investigation.

They believe a larger conspiracy than McVeigh and Terry Nichols plotted the bombing. And they contend that federal agents had prior knowledge of the attack before it occurred.

Wilburn died on Tuesday of pancreatic cancer. The eulogy at his funeral on Thursday re-aired his allegations.

Federal authorities doubt a larger conspiracy and vehemently deny any prior knowledge.

McVeigh was convicted of mur-

der and conspiracy last month during a trial that involved several witnesses and covered the bombing of the Oklahoma City, Okla., federal building.

Nichols' trial is set for Sept. 29 of this year.

Among the witnesses called last week was Dennis Mahon, a Tulsa white supremacist.

One of the other witnesses, David Snider, has said Mahon was the man he saw with McVeigh in Oklahoma City on April 19, the day of the bombing.

Another witness, Broken Arrow banker Kyle Hunt, has said he saw McVeigh with others that day.

But his account differs sharply from what Snider's story entailed to authorities.

Mahon, who denies any involvement in the bombing, said he took the Fifth Amendment before the grand jury and was issued another subpoena to appear before the grand jury on Aug. 15.

Mahon's ex-girlfriend, former federal informant Carol Howe, told agents after the bombing that she had overheard Mahon and German national Andreas Strassmeir discussing plans to bomb federal buildings.

Ms. Howe also faces trial in Tulsa on unrelated charges of conspiracy, willfully making a bomb threat and possessing a non-registered destructive device.

A transcript of an April 24 hearing in her case was unsealed last week.

In the transcript, Agent Angela Graham of the federal bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, says Ms. Howe told her before the bombing occurred that Strassmeir had threatened to blow up federal buildings. Ms. Graham dismissed the statement as "general militia rhetoric."

Also called before the grand jury last week was Oscar Johnson, an elevator company employee who testified that the federal building's elevators did not fall during the explosion.

Johnson's testimony appeared to contradict ATF Agent Alex McCauley, who has said he was in an elevator that dropped five floors to the bottom at the time when the bombing occurred.