

James Nichols' book shoots down blast theory



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Decker, Mich., farmer James Nichols said he will publish a book next month that will poke holes in the government's theory about the Oklahoma City bombing.

Nichols, of Dexter, Mich., and sign painter Bob Papovich pooled money with help from family and friends to publish "Freedom's End: Conspiracy in Oklahoma," which Nichols began advertising on radio programs last week.

The book, in which he will tell his side of the raid on his farmhouse two days after the April 1995 bombing, also will give reasons why his brother, Terry Nichols, and Timothy McVeigh did not blow up the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

McVeigh was convicted of 11 counts of murder and conspiracy charges in June and sentenced to die. Terry Nichols' trial is set to begin Sept. 29 on the same charges.

"The verdict on Tim has been pronounced," James Nichols said recently. "But the verdict in the bombing isn't in."

Nichols points to so-called coincidences in the probe: The Murrah building was razed the day he was released from prison, keeping him and many others from investigating; the government did not dismiss charges against him until the day indictments were announced against his brother and McVeigh, and while facing charges, James Nichols could not leave Michigan to visit the suspected bombers.

He said he believes rogue federal agents may have blown up the Murrah building from the inside and points to retired Air Force Gen. Benton Partin's theory. Partin said the damage must have come from bombs planted inside, not only from those in a rental truck parked outside and filled with ammonium nitrate and nitromethane, as the government suggests.

``I think it's going to be a very controversial book," Papovich said Sunday.

The book should sell for \$20 and be printed about the time Terry Nichols' trial begins, even though James Nichols did not plan it that way. He and Papovich have been trying to publish since October 1996, he said, but kept getting turned down.

Although he did not attend McVeigh's trial, James Nichols has received phone calls from McVeigh since his conviction. McVeigh, who called collect using the name of Joseph Hartzler, the lead government prosecutor against him, told Nichols several weeks ago he was angry with his lead attorney, Stephen Jones. But McVeigh was not bitter, Nichols said; he and McVeigh even shared a couple of jokes.

``It was Tim," James Nichols said. ``He was himself."

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NICHOLS (KRT16, 5-23, Horiz C) James Nichols

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