

OKC Grand Jury: Testimonies Conflict With Government Story

by William F. Jasper

The Oklahoma County Grand Jury convened on June 30th to begin its investigation of the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. State Representative Charles Key, who had led the citizens' campaign for the inquest because of suspicions of a cover-up by federal authorities, was one of the earliest witnesses to testify before the investigative body.

Representative Key outlined for the jury a preliminary lineup of proposed witnesses, some of whom claim to have seen Timothy McVeigh with others on the morning of the bombing. Many of these witnesses were interviewed by the FBI but were not called to testify before the federal grand jury which indicted McVeigh and Terry Nichols, and were not called to testify at the McVeigh trial in Denver.

The jury heard testimony for four days in July and then went into recess until August 11th while the presiding judge went on vacation. Among the ten witnesses who have testified thus far are: David Snider, a warehouse worker who claims he saw Timothy McVeigh pass his loading dock in a Ryder truck at 8:30 a.m., one hour before the blast; Kyle Hunt, a Tulsa banker who reportedly saw McVeigh driving a light-colored sedan (possibly McVeigh's Mercury Marquis) with two passengers, and following a Ryder truck, in the hour before the bombing; V.Z. Lawton, a HUD employee who survived the blast; Oscar Johnson, the general manager of Mid-Western Elevator Co.; and Dennis Mahon, the Tulsa leader of the White Aryan Resistance (WAR) and former KKK panjandrum. Although the proceedings of the grand jury are secret, the witnesses are allowed to publicly reveal their testimony. Some have done so, while others have refused to make comments to the press.

David Snider, who was one of many witnesses interviewed earlier by THE NEW AMERICAN, claims that he was waiting for a truck at his loading dock on the morning of April 19th and mistakenly thought the approaching Ryder truck was the late vehicle. According to Snider, Timothy McVeigh was sitting on the passenger side as the truck slowly passed within ten feet of where he was standing. Snider says he angrily motioned for the truck to pull in, upset that they were passing him by. McVeigh, he says, responded with a vulgar expression. According to Snider, the driver of the truck was Dennis Mahon. When interviewed over a year ago by this reporter, Snider had not specifically identified Mahon, but had described the driver as "dark-skinned -- kind of Mexican- or Indian-looking" with a thin, dark mustache and dark, straight hair. He also had a sketch based on

his description of the suspect drawn by his sister, an amateur sketch artist, which does resemble Mahon.

Snider says he first realized the driver was Mahon when he saw the infamous Tulsa racist on video. "He was wearing a pair of shades, a particular pair of shades. I have him on [video] tape wearing the same shades he had on that morning," says Snider. Mahon is noted for his boasts of being "the master of disguise," and for instructing his KKK/WAR recruits in the necessity of learning the art of changing one's identity, particularly when carrying out illegal activities. According to Mahon's adepts, it is best to masquerade as black or dark-skinned when committing crimes, not only to conceal one's own identity, but to deflect blame onto non-white races.

V.Z. Lawton testified that after the bombing, four General Services Administration workers from Fort Worth, Texas took him home. According to Lawton, they told him they had been sent to Oklahoma City the day before to conduct a security check on the Murrah Building. Lawton, who has been convinced by much other evidence that federal officials had prior knowledge about the bomb plot, says this GSA "security check" is either additional evidence of forewarning or a very big coincidence. However, the GSA regional administrator in Fort Worth, John Poulard, insists, "There was no one [from GSA] related to security in Oklahoma City at that time."

Dennis Mahon appeared before the grand jury for about an hour on July 16th, but reportedly pled the Fifth Amendment to all questions asked. In statements to the press before and after his grand jury appearance, Mahon ridiculed the charges that he had anything to do with the bombing and stated that he would only answer the jury's questions if granted immunity from prosecution.

Oscar Johnson, general manager of Mid-Western Elevator Co., presented photographs and documents to support his contention that none of the Murrah Building elevators fell due to the explosion. This sharply contradicts the story of ATF Agent Alex McCauley, who says that when the bomb went off he was in one of the building's elevators and that it went into a five-story free fall as a result of the blast. Federal elevator inspector Dude Goodun of the General Services Administration, along with other elevator inspectors, have publicly agreed with Johnson that none of the seven Murrah Building elevators fell.

After convening briefly on August 11th, the grand jury recessed again for a month without hearing any additional witnesses. Assistant District Attorney Patrick Morgan stated that the recess was called to accommodate ailing and injured jurors. Representative Key called the delay "unfortunate" and said he hoped it was not another stalling tactic. "I realize these things can happen," he said, "but we have seen such extraordinary attempts to stop or divert this grand jury effort from day one that I don't think it is paranoid to question these delays. Our legal

counsel is looking into this to see what we can do to make sure these holdups don't continue to thwart this important work."