

Ex-DEA agent testifies about elevator fall Men behind Oklahoma bomb inquiry have cited contradictions

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OKLAHOMA CITY - A retired federal agent who says the Oklahoma City bombing trapped him in a falling elevator testified Tuesday before a grand jury investigating allegations of a government cover-up in the blast.

David Schickendanz, who was a Drug Enforcement Administration officer at the time of the April 19, 1995, bombing, has said he was in an elevator with Alex McCauley, an agent of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, when the blast hit. Both men say the elevator dropped from the eighth floor of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building to the third floor.

But Oscar Johnson, a Mid-Western Elevator Co. employee who testified before the grand jury in July, said such a drop did not happen.

The men who spearheaded the empanelment of the grand jury have embraced the contradiction because they contend that the ATF had prior knowledge of the attack. The ATF has vigorously denied the allegation.

Agent Schickendanz stuck with his account as he left the grand jury Tuesday.

"I definitely disagree with them," Agent Schickendanz said of the elevator experts. "They weren't there. " He refused to discuss his testimony further, saying: "I'm sorry.

I've been admonished not to say anything. " He would not say who asked him not to talk.

Agent Schickendanz was the only witness called Tuesday.

Testimony was expected to resume Wednesday.

The grand jury was empaneled June 30 after a petition drive by state Rep. Charles Key, R-Oklahoma City, and Glenn Wilburn, an Oklahoma City accountant whose two young grandsons were killed in the blast. Mr. Wilburn died of pancreatic cancer shortly after the panel convened.

In addition to the allegations of a cover-up, the two men contended that federal prosecutors overlooked a larger conspiracy in the bombing that killed 168 people.

Timothy McVeigh was convicted June 2 on federal murder and conspiracy charges and given the death penalty. His former Army buddy, Terry Nichols, faces a Sept. 29 trial on the same charges.