

Ex-Friend of McVeigh Denies Fabricating Firearms Robbery

■ **Courts:** Roger Moore insists guns were stolen. Nichols defense says witness has given different versions of incident.

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DENVER—The most colorful character in the Oklahoma City bombing saga—a beefy gun collector, horse breeder and government hater known as “Bob from Arkansas”—unloaded ammunition Tuesday that could help federal prosecutors pin Terry L. Nichols to a robbery that they contend financed the explosion.

His real name is Roger Moore. A 62-year-old former gun dealer, he kept up to 90 firearms, precious stones and silver and gold coins scattered about his Arkansas farmhouse.

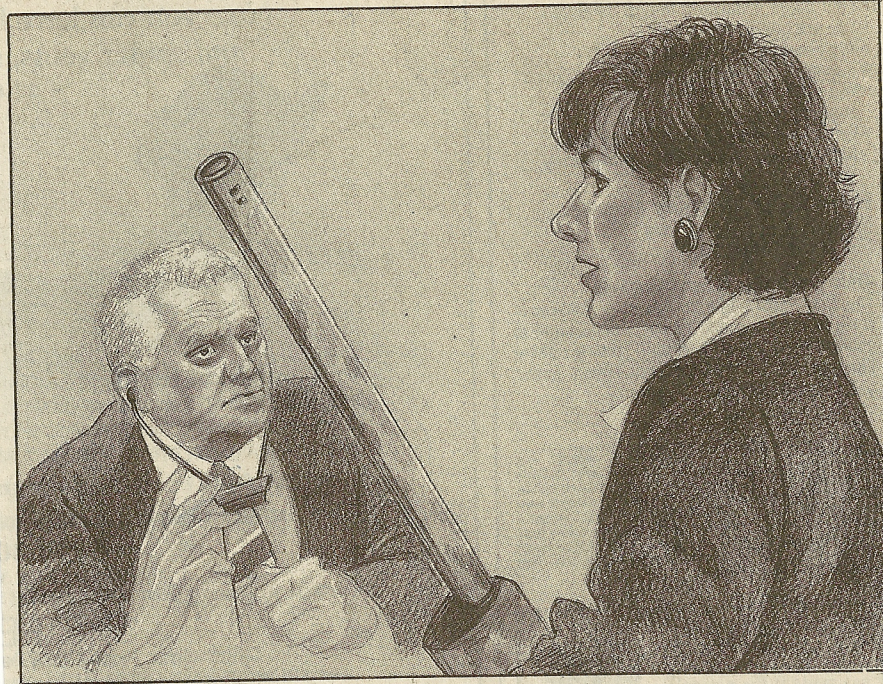
On Tuesday, he took the witness stand in an attempt to resolve the feud

between government and defense lawyers over one fact that has long haunted the bombing case:

Did Nichols truly rob him, as prosecutors maintain, with the loot later sold to finance the Oklahoma City bombing? Or did he fabricate the robbery, as the defense suggests, because—like his former friend Timothy J. McVeigh—he believed in striking out against the government?

Moore insists that he was robbed, even though his versions of the incident have varied widely in key details. Lawyers for Nichols suggest that Moore had deep connections to McVeigh and other members of the far right who were angry over the FBI's deadly raid

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PAT LOPEZ / CBS News via Associated Press

U.S. Atty. Beth Wilkinson holds gun found in Terry Nichols' home as she questions prosecution witness Roger “Bob From Arkansas” Moore.

NICHOLS: Witness Tells of Gun Robbery

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on a religious compound near Waco, Texas, in 1993.

Nichols is on trial for his life. McVeigh was convicted and sentenced to death earlier this year for the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, which killed 168 people.

Moore, who was not a witness in the McVeigh trial, testified Tuesday that he divides his time between a 10-acre farm near Royal, Ark., and a winter home on Florida's Atlantic coast. He travels the gun show circuit looking for new and exotic firearms.

He said that he deals directly in cash and that he has never owned a credit card. Even at the time of the robbery, he said, he had \$8,700 in cash sitting on a computer desk. In his travels, he carries wads of money, which he explained by saying, "There's no telling what we might buy."

He said he also does not have health insurance, but rather uses cash whenever he needs to visit a hospital or doctor. Otherwise, he said, "we would have to stand in line with the poor people, and I don't want to do that."

Born in Iowa and a member of the Air Force through much of the 1950s, Moore testified that he made a fortune building boats that were sold to the military during the Vietnam War. He said he also played the commodities market,

and was able to retire early in the 1970s.

In the early 1990s, he befriended McVeigh, the young Gulf War veteran and drifter whom he allowed to stay with him at his farm.

As Moore sat in the witness box Tuesday, wearing a dark suit and using earphones to aid his hearing, he gave his latest version of events:

On Nov. 5, 1994, Moore said, he stepped outside shortly after he awoke to feed his horses, ducks, geese, cats and a few chickens.

He was wearing old sweatpants and a faded denim jacket and—despite the \$60,000 worth of firearms in the house—was not armed. But he said he seldom carried a gun around the farm. "There's nobody out there to shoot at," he said.

That morning, he heard a man next to the carport tell him, "Lay down on the ground." Moore said he turned around and was confronted by a man wearing combat boots, camouflage pants and a black ski mask. He said that the man had black gloves and that his hands were wrapped around a pistol-grip shotgun.

Moore said he did not resist. "A lot of bad stuff can come out of a barrel of a shotgun," he said.

The assailant made him crawl back inside the house, he said, and then bound his hands and feet and taped his eyes shut with duct tape.

The man then stole the firearms and other items.

At one point, Moore said, he asked the man, "Are you a fed?"

But the man did not speak until he was leaving. "There's a guy waiting out there with a shotgun," Moore said the man told him. "Don't move. We're coming back for the rest of it. And don't worry about your guns. They're going to the gangs."

Some of the firearms and other items, including a bedspread and linens, were later found in Nichols' home in Kansas. Others were sold by McVeigh and his friend Michael Fortier, according to Fortier's testimony last week. The government suggests that the money from the sales went to reimburse Nichols and McVeigh for what they spent on the bomb ingredients.

Under cross-examination by Nichols' attorney Michael Tigar, Moore denied that he and McVeigh worked up a scheme "to get the guns out on the market" and pretend it was robbery to collect insurance.

But Tigar showed that Moore has given conflicting stories to insurance agents, police and reporters about the incident; sometimes Moore said there was one robber, sometimes two.

The defense lawyer also showed the jury a picture that Moore kept in his van of an assailant in a ski

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mask—similar to Moore's description of the robber. The drawing is from an anti-government poster that circulated among far-right groups after the Waco raid, with the headline: "I'm from the government. I'm here to help you."

During testimony, Moore related several anecdotes about his friendship with McVeigh, elicited by the

defense in its effort to show that Moore was more deeply involved with McVeigh than Nichols.

Both McVeigh and Moore have expressed unusual views about the federal government.

In a letter Moore wrote to McVeigh, he warned him to "watch out for radiation, virus sprays and all other kinds of electronic mind-altering devices. You need some

space blankets to keep out of satellite eyes."

Moore also testified that McVeigh told him the Army placed a microchip in his buttocks when he was in the Persian Gulf. "He thought there was a very good possibility that when he got inoculated in Arabia, they had implanted a tiny glass transmitter in his posterior," the witness said.