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# McVeigh's motel guest was heard

## Owner testifies in Nichols' trial of a deep-voiced man

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Scripps Howard News Service

DENVER — Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh and a mystery man with a "velvety, deep" voice held a midnight meeting in Kansas less than 36 hours before the blast, a motel owner testified Tuesday.

Lea McGown, owner of the Dreamland Motel in Junction City, Kan., told her story in federal court as lawyers for Terry Nichols launched their defense of the man accused of helping McVeigh engineer the bombing that killed 168 people.

In addition to hearing McVeigh and the other man talking, McGown said a third man might have been in Room 25, where McVeigh stayed for several days before the April 19, 1995, bombing.

McGown said she never saw Nichols until his lawyers called her to the witness stand Tuesday in the same courtroom where McVeigh was convicted and sentenced to death last spring.

The defense lawyers' opening message to the jury was the same theme they have sounded since they were appointed to the case soon after the bombing: Terry Nichols wasn't in Oklahoma City when the bomb exploded.

And, based on McGown's testimony, one or two other unknown people may have been McVeigh's real accomplices in the bomb plot.

Nichols' lawyers launched their case after U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch denied their standard motion to acquit Nichols.

The defense argued that prosecutors, who ended their case earlier Tuesday, failed to prove Nichols intended for the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building to be bombed or for people to die as a result.

"The case is far from over. ...

You haven't heard it all," Matsch told the 12 Colorado jurors and six alternates.

McGown, who lives at the Dreamland, testified that she regularly patrols the motel late at night. She described walking past McVeigh's room just after midnight on April 17, 1995, and hearing conversation inside.

McVeigh was supposed to be staying in the room alone.

"I decided to walk very slowly by the door and the window, to

hear better, and I could hear several voices in the room," she testified. She said the voices weren't coming from the part of the room where the television set was.

She said she heard "two, possibly three" voices coming from inside the room. She said she recognized one voice as McVeigh's.

Another voice, she said, was "velvety, deep," and might have been the voice she heard when answering several telephone calls for McVeigh earlier in his stay.

Prosecutors fought back by noting that computer telephone records show two calls were made from McVeigh's room at the Dreamland to Nichols' home in Herington, Kan., on the mornings of April 15 and April 17.

The government ended its 19½-day case with Oklahoma City U.S. Attorney Patrick Ryan showing jurors floor plans of the bombed building's nine stories, with the names of the dead placed where their offices once were.

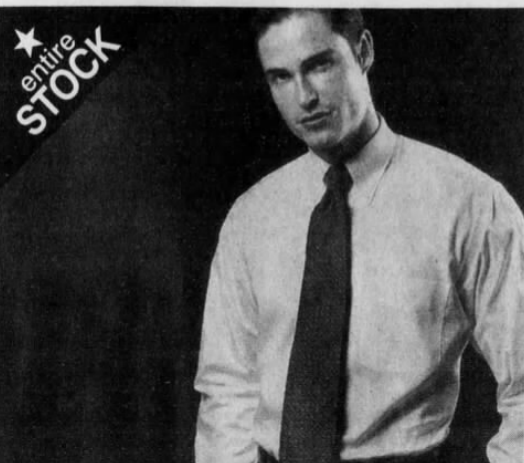


Terry Nichols

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