

# THE DAILY GAZETTE

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## Nichols' witnesses dispute time line on building of bomb

By SANDY SHORE  
The Associated Press

DENVER — Nine defense witnesses testified Thursday that they saw a Ryder truck at a Kansas lake in the week before prosecutors contend Terry Nichols and Timothy McVeigh went there to build the Oklahoma City bomb.

In an attempt by the defense to scuttle the prosecution's time line of when Nichols and McVeigh allegedly built the bomb, the witnesses placed Ryder trucks at the lake April 10 through April 13, and April 15 through April 17 in 1995.

Some said they also saw pickups

and other vehicles and as many as three people near the truck.

Through a vehicle identification number on a piece of a truck found at the bomb site, authorities determined McVeigh picked up a Ryder truck about 4:30 p.m. on April 17, 1995.

Prosecutors called two witnesses earlier in the trial who testified they saw a Ryder truck and a vehicle matching Nichols' pickup at the Geary State Fishing Lake on April 18, 1995 — the day before the bombing.

Georgia Rucker, a Herington, Kan., real estate agent, said she saw a Ryder truck parked in the same spot at Geary Lake from April 10 to April 13 in 1995. She has never seen one there again.

She also said she sold Nichols his frame house in Herington for \$25,000. He submitted a \$2,629.40 cash down payment and had monthly payments of \$263.14.

Sharon White then told jurors she saw a man she believed to be McVeigh riding in a Ryder truck as it passed her house on the afternoon of April 13, 1995.

She said she remembered his face because of the way he stared at her. "He was so sad and so solemn," Ms. White said. "He actually looked eyes with me."

Ms. White said she also saw a Ryder truck at Geary Lake earlier that day.

She said she waited a year before

contacting the FBI because "I didn't want to be caught up in the limelight."

James L. Sargent, a retiree from Herington, Kan., said he saw a Ryder truck parked at the lake from April 10 to April 12, 1995.

Also Thursday, witnesses testified a gun collector allegedly robbed by Nichols to finance the Oklahoma City bombing gave conflicting statements about the crime, including the value of the loss and whether the robber fired his weapon.

Nichols' attorneys raced through eight witnesses as they attacked collector Roger Moore's credibility and tried to convince jurors that he faked the crime as part of an insurance scam.

All of the witnesses testified that Moore gave the same basic story — he had been confronted by a masked, armed gunman, who tied him up and stole weapons, precious metals and coins on Nov. 5, 1994.

Prosecutors contend that robber was Nichols and that he sold the weapons to help pay expenses while he and McVeigh worked on bombing preparations.

On the witness stand, Larry Hetheox of Little Rock, Ark., looked at a Remington .308-caliber rifle seized from Nichols' house after the bombing and said its serial number matched the weapon he sold, Moore, in the fall of 1994.

"I recall no confusion about that serial number," said Hetheox, a Little Rock police helicopter pilot.

Also, Hetheox said Moore estimated his loss at more than \$100,000. In testimony last month, Moore put the loss at about \$60,000.

Meanwhile, Marsha Kight, whose daughter, Frankie Merrill, died in the bombing, issued a statement outside the courthouse asking Nichols to testify.

She said she was angered by the defense strategy to focus on John Doe 2, a man two body shop employees have said was with Timothy McVeigh when he rented the Ryder truck used in the bombing.