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Nichols' lawyers attempt to discredit gun collector during bombing trial

Prosecutors say weapons were used to finance Oklahoma City attack

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DENVER — A gun collector allegedly robbed by Terry 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, witnesses testified Thursday.

Nichols' attorneys raced through nine witnesses as they attacked Roger Moore's credibility and tried to convince jurors that he faked the crime as part of an insurance scam. All the witnesses said Moore gave the same basic story — that 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 say that robber was Nichols and that he sold the weapons to help pay expenses while he and Timothy McVeigh worked on bombing preparations.

On the witness stand, Larry Hethcox of Little Rock, Ark., looked at a Remington .308-caliber rifle seized from Nichols' house af-

ter 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 Hethcox, a Little Rock police helicopter pilot.

Hethcox said Moore told him shortly after the robbery that the gunman came from a wooded area near his house and fired at least one shot. In previous accounts, Moore has not mentioned that a shot was fired.

Also, Hethcox said Moore estimated his loss at more than \$100,000. In Moore's testimony in the trial last month, he testified the loss was about \$60,000.

Also Thursday, a retiree testified that a Ryder truck was parked at a fishing lake in Kansas the week before prosecutors say Nichols and McVeigh built the bomb.

The testimony was part of efforts by Nichols' attorneys in his murder and conspiracy trial to scuttle the prosecution's time line for the construction of the bomb.

James L. Sargent of Herington, Kan., who retired from the Army on April 10, 1995, told jurors that he saw a truck resembling the one used in the bombing from April 10 to April 12, 1995, at Geary State Fishing Lake. Prosecutors have said McVeigh rented the truck April 17, 1995, and that he and Nichols packed it with ammonium nitrate fertilizer, fuel oil and explosives the following day at Geary Lake.