

Man Who Helped Spur Inquiry Rejects Findings of Grand Jury Legislator Says He Still Sees Larger Conspiracy, Cover-Up

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Outgoing state Rep. Charles Key said Wednesday that he still believes there was a larger conspiracy and a government cover-up in the Oklahoma City bombing despite a county grand jury report debunking such theories.

Mr. Key was one of two men who led the drive to impanel the grand jury 18 months ago. He has argued that the grand jury was led astray by District Judge William Burkett, the district attorney's office and others.

After reading the grand jury's report in open court Wednesday, Judge Burkett said the panel had received little relevant or useful information from most of the witnesses and evidence provided by Mr. Key and his private investigative committee.

The judge said Mr. Key's lack of legal knowledge led him to make ridiculous public accusations against the judge and others. Mr. Key is not a lawyer.

Three men have been convicted in the bombing: Timothy McVeigh, who was sentenced to death; Terry Nichols, sentenced to life in prison without parole; and Michael Fortier, sentenced to 12 years after pleading guilty to lying to federal agents and failing to warn authorities about the bomb plot. All three federal court cases are under appeal.

"We think the truth has not been told," Mr. Key said of his private committee. "In Denver [where the federal trials were held], the truth was not on trial, and it should have been. And that's one of the things that's lacking in our judicial system."

Before Wednesday's hearing, Mr. Key said his committee had studied the McVeigh and Nichols trial transcripts and had found "damning evidence of the feds' continued cover-up of this case." The government denies Mr. Key's assertion that some of its employees had advance knowledge of the bombing plot.

Mr. Key said he and his committee would continue to seek what they consider the truth about the bombing.

"I've said that we'll never get 'all' the truth, but we'll get more of it," he said. "Because of our efforts and other people's efforts, we've gotten a lot more of the truth.

"We'll learn more as time goes on."

Staff writer Arnold Hamilton and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Caption: PHOTO(S): (Associated Press) State Rep. Charles Key listens to both a whispered message from supporter Tom Hardin and a tongue-lashing from Judge William Burkett. -ID-