

# GRAND JURY FINDS NO CONSPIRACY OKLAHOMA PANEL WON'T RULE OUT MYSTERY ACCOMPLICE IN BOMBING

Rocky Mountain News

Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO)

December 31, 1998 | Flynn, Kevin

Byline: Kevin Flynn News Staff Writer

An 18-month grand jury investigation found no credible evidence of a broader conspiracy in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the grand jury reported Wednesday.

The panel looked into allegations from critics of the \$82 million investigation and prosecution of bombing conspirators Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols.

The Oklahoma state grand jury, sitting in Oklahoma City, said it heard no persuasive evidence of a broader conspiracy.

But the panel said it can't rule out involvement by a mysterious "John Doe 2" or other persons in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The bombing killed 168 people.

"In spite of all the evidence before us, we cannot finally put closure to the question of the existence of a John Doe 2," the report reads. "However, we have not been presented with or uncovered information sufficient to indict any additional conspirators."

McVeigh's former attorney, Stephen Jones, said the report is "obviously incomplete" because it leaves out many issues raised in the trials of his client and Nichols.

"The grand jury was led by a group of lawyers who bitterly resisted its being formed, so how could you expect anything different?" Jones said.

Two people targeted by conspiracy investigators, both associated with an eastern Oklahoma racist community called Elohim City, said Wednesday they had been confident of exoneration because they are innocent.

``It feels good," said Dennis Mahon of Tulsa, Okla., a former Ku Klux Klan leader.  
``Now we can get started on our lawsuits."

Andreas Strassmeir, a German who was living at Elohim City at the time of the bombing and who had briefly met McVeigh, said from Berlin through his attorney that it's time for conspiracy buffs to stop wasting time on him.

``He hopes it spurs whoever's behind this to stop going down rabbit trails and try to find out if anyone else was really involved with McVeigh," said attorney Kirk Lyons of Black Mountain, N.C.

``Clearing him doesn't really help him a whole lot and it's not going to satisfy any of the conspiracy freaks."

Suspicious were raised about Elohim City when phone records showed McVeigh called there two weeks before the bombing. A witness said he asked for Strassmeir but didn't reach him.

The grand jury did issue a sealed indictment against one unidentified person, unrelated to the bombing itself.

The panel also endorsed Oklahoma City District Attorney Bob Macy's decision to charge McVeigh and Nichols with the bombing in state court and hold another round of trials.

McVeigh was convicted at a federal trial in Denver in 1997 and was sentenced to death. Nichols was acquitted of the bombing and first-degree murder but was sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of conspiracy and involuntary manslaughter.

The grand jury was seated in 1997 after a citizens' petition and a court battle against the Oklahoma political establishment. The petition drive was led by state Rep. Charles Key and Glenn Wilburn, whose two grandchildren died in the bombing. Wilburn died of cancer in July 1997.