

Woman Seeks Meeting with Bomb Conspirator - She Lost 2 Grandsons in Oklahoma City Tragedy

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A woman who lost two grandsons in the Oklahoma City bombing said she would like to meet Terry Nichols after corresponding with him and becoming friends with his family.

Kathy Wilburn said she is not sure what she would say to Mr. Nichols. But at a Friday hearing related to Mr. Nichols' state murder case, Mr. Nichols appeared to be mouthing words and gesturing at Ms. Wilburn.

"He wanted to see me, and I said are you going to make the arrangement?" Ms. Wilburn said. "If the arrangements are made, I'd love to meet with him."

Ms. Wilburn said the defendant probably recognized her from his federal trial, which she attended.

"I became friends with his mother and sister during his trial," Ms. Wilburn said. "I felt awful bad for them. They were the forgotten victims. I think they have shared that with Terry. Why he has a soft spot in his heart for me, I don't know."

Mr. Nichols was convicted in his federal trial of being a conspirator in the April 19, 1995, blast at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. It killed 168 people, including Ms. Wilburn's grandsons, Chase and Colton Smith. They were in the building's day-care center on the second floor when the blast occurred.

Ms. Wilburn and her late husband, Glenn, spearheaded an initiative petition to impanel an Oklahoma County grand jury to investigate the bombing. The grand jury met for 133 days and concluded there was no evidence of a wider conspiracy or cover-up.

Ms. Wilburn said she has never met face-to-face with Mr. Nichols. She withholds her opinion of him.

"At this point, I don't want to do anything to betray Terry's trust," Ms. Wilburn said. "My relationship with Terry is my search for the truth."

At Mr. Nichols' federal trial, a jury could not decide on his punishment because they had different ideas about his level of involvement. He was ultimately sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch and avoided the death penalty that was given to convicted bomber Timothy McVeigh.

Ms. Wilburn suggested that she remains unsure about Mr. Nichols' role in the bombing.

"I think there are a lot more pieces to the puzzle," she said. "The [federal] jury had a lot more questions and almost let him go."

Caption: PHOTO(S): 1. Terry Nichols. 2. Kathy Wilburn.