

## **McVeigh Calls Bombing 'tragic' in TV Interview - He Refuses to Discuss Role in Explosion**

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As the five-year anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing approaches, convicted bomber Timothy McVeigh said there's no one moment in his life that stands out as something he would have done differently.

In an interview with CBS' 60 Minutes TV show that aired Sunday, Mr. McVeigh did not discuss his role in the explosion, as he has declined to do in news media interviews since the April 19, 1995, blast.

"I think, like everyone else, I thought it was - it was a tragic event. And that's all I really want to say," he told interviewer Ed Bradley, adding that there are things he wants to say to the victims' families. "But the timing is not right."

Mr. McVeigh was convicted and sentenced to death for the attack, which killed 168 people, including 19 children in a day-care center at the Alfred P. Murrah federal building.

Recognizing that Mr. McVeigh's lawyers made questions of his guilt or innocence out of bound, Mr. Bradley pressed Mr. McVeigh about the children who died.

"I thought it was terrible that there were children in the building," Mr. McVeigh said in the interview recorded at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind., that houses death row.

Mr. McVeigh, convicted June 2, 1997, of mass murder and conspiracy in the Oklahoma City blast, asked for a new trial last week, saying that he was sold out by his trial attorney.

An earlier appeal of his conviction and subsequent death sentence were upheld by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Dr. Paul Heath, a bombing survivor, called the interview "a carefully crafted stage play" calculated to help humanize Mr. McVeigh as his case winds through its last rounds of appeals.

"He's not doing anything without his defense lawyer telling him what to do and when to do it," Dr. Heath said. "They're dying to paint a picture of Tim McVeigh that is not the picture of the real delusional Nazi that Tim McVeigh is."

Mr. McVeigh, once a decorated Gulf War infantry sergeant, described how he went from being a gung-ho soldier to a person shaken by U.S. government actions.

He said he was taken aback by the Branch Davidian standoff near Waco, and in the showdown at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, in which white supremacist Randy Weaver's wife and young son were killed by federal sharpshooters.

"I believe I had anger welling in me, yes," he said.

Mr. McVeigh told Mr. Bradley that, by the standard of the government he fervently criticizes, violence is an acceptable tool for a citizen to express displeasure with the government.

"Well, what did we do to Sudan? What did we do to Afghanistan?" Mr. McVeigh said referring to U.S. bombings aimed at terrorist Osama bin Laden. "Belgrade? What are we doing with the death penalty? It appears they use violence as an option all the time."

Mr. Bradley asked, "So, if the government uses it, it's OK for us as citizens to use it?"

Mr. McVeigh said, "I'll let my explanation stand for itself."

The other man convicted in the bombing, Terry Nichols, was sentenced to life in prison and is facing a state trial in Oklahoma that could result in the death penalty.

Mr. McVeigh explained why he did not show more emotion during wrenching testimony about victims at his 1997 trial.

"I was raised in an environment where men don't cry," he said. "You hold it back."

Mr. McVeigh also talked about one of his cell-block neighbors at the penitentiary where he was formerly housed in Colorado, Unabomb-er Ted Kaczynski.

"We were much alike in that all we ever wanted or all we wanted out of life was the freedom to live our own lives," Mr. McVeigh said. "From my perspective, I believe that it's a problem with government. From Ted's perspective, he believes it's a problem with technology."

Mr. Bradley asked Mr. McVeigh about the difference between the possibility of death in war and the near-inevitability of it on death row.

"In truth, from my psychological perspective, it's a little easier being on death row. Because you know how you're going to die. You can narrow down where you're going to die, and you can pretty much narrow down the time."

Caption:

PHOTO(S): (Associated Press) Timothy McVeigh speaks with CBS' Ed Bradley. When asked about the 19 children who died in the building's day-care center, the convicted bomber said, "I thought it was terrible that there were children in the building."