

McVeigh blocks autopsy after execution

by Barry Bortnick
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DENVER-As per his request, Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh will not undergo an autopsy after his scheduled execution on May 16.

McVeigh and his attorneys reached an agreement with federal officials Friday that prevents medical examiners from performing a post-mortem surgical procedure on the convicted mass killer.

McVeigh took legal action to prevent the autopsy based on "religious, ethical and philosophical objections," according to court papers filed Friday in Denver's U.S. District Court.

The county coroner in Terre Haute, Ind., where McVeigh is being housed and where he will be executed, will be allowed to perform a noninvasive exam of McVeigh's body.

But there will be no surgery on the remains, according to the agreement.

McVeigh's attorney, Nathan Chambers, declined to say much about the deal.

"What is important is the end product," Chambers said.

Chambers said his client has religious and philosophical reasons for not having his body cut open after his execution.

Burial plans for McVeigh are still being worked out, said Chambers, who added that his client was "businesslike and composed," during a telephone conversation the two had Friday morning.

McVeigh, 32, is to be executed by lethal injection six years after he detonated a massive truck bomb in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people and injuring hundreds of others.

McVeigh has never admitted culpability in the bombing.

Some 250 survivors of the April 19, 1995, blast and relatives of the victims have expressed interest in witnessing the execution at the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute.

Chambers and McVeigh's other attorney, Robert Nigh Jr., will witness the execution.

McVeigh has the right to have a spiritual adviser and three friends or relatives view the event as well.

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