

## McVeigh's Father Says Son Won't Apologize

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Bill McVeigh didn't expect an apology for the Oklahoma City bombing when he saw his son, Timothy, for the final time April 10. And his son didn't give him one.

"I did ask him that straight out, you know, if he was going to apologize," the father told The Daily Oklahoman in a copyright story for Sunday's editions. "When I got there, by reading the first part of the book, I knew what his answer was going to be. But I had to hear it from him."

Bill McVeigh said his son requested that he not visit him at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Ind., until the release of the book, *American Terrorist*, in which Timothy McVeigh admits to bombing the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

After reading the book, Bill McVeigh, a law-abiding, retired factory worker, had a list of questions, all of which his son answered during a 3 1/2-hour visit that included Timothy McVeigh's sister, Jennifer.

"Tim is going to tell you the way it is and that's it, you know. You ask him a question, he's going to answer it with what he thinks is right," Bill McVeigh said by telephone from his home in Pendleton, N.Y. "You know, whether you think it's right or not, that's something different. But he tells how it is, and I appreciate that."

Timothy McVeigh had requested to have no funeral or memorial service, but conceded to his father's desire to have a private memorial at Good Shepherd Church, where his son was confirmed as a Catholic.

His request for no service was part of a list that also included instructions for his cremated remains to go to his attorney, Rob Nigh of Tulsa.

"He won't tell us where they're going to dump them," Bill McVeigh said. "He don't want us to have anything to do with it."

Bill McVeigh said he hasn't made peace with his son's afterlife. He said Timothy McVeigh has at least five of his six witnesses selected, and a spiritual adviser is not among them.

"They're praying for me and for Tim. I get letters, I got two more today. I get them almost every day, I get one or two, sometimes three. The parish priest had a whole pile of them last night when I went to bingo," Bill McVeigh said.

During their last visit, Jennifer McVeigh asked her brother whether he believed in God, Bill McVeigh said.

"His first response was, a God but a different God. And then he went on to explain to Jenny, but I didn't hear any more of it," Bill McVeigh said.

He believes his son is ready for execution, but that doesn't mean Bill McVeigh is prepared to see his son go.

"I'll never be ready. I can't say, you know, it's only a month from today. I thought about that when I woke up this morning. No, I'll never be ready."

While his son won't apologize, Bill McVeigh said he was sorry that 168 people died and more than 500 were hurt.

Some of those who lost loved ones in the explosion, like Bud Welch and Kathy Wilburn, have reached out to him.

"This is a man who is going through absolute hell," said Mr. Welch, a death-penalty opponent who visited Bill McVeigh at his home in 1998.

Mr. Welch, whose daughter Julie was killed, recalled looking at Timothy McVeigh's high school picture hanging on the wall - "God, what a good-looking kid," he said then.

Mr. Welch called Bill McVeigh another victim of the tragedy.

After more than six years, Bill McVeigh continues to wonder why it happened.

"I'm still sitting here saying to myself, I don't understand how anybody, no more my son, could do something like this, and I still don't, you know," he said. "I can ask him why all day long and he can tell me his reasons, and with me they don't make no sense."

His son baffled him and his daughter, Jennifer, even more when Timothy McVeigh declined to hug them as they left.

"Jennifer says, 'Ain't we gonna get to hug?' And he says, 'You know, they asked me and told me I could and I said no,'" Bill McVeigh said.

Caption:

PHOTO(S): (FILE 1997/Associated Press) Timothy McVeigh's father, Bill, and sister, Jennifer, attended his 1997 trial.