HOW THE EVIDENCE WAS OVERLOOKED

The 3,135 documents the Justice Department says it failed to give to Timothy McVeigh's defense team represent only a small portion of the evidence gathered during the Oklahoma City bombing investigation. FBI officials say that 28,000 interviews were conducted and 23,290 pieces of evidence and 238,000 photos were gathered in that investigation.

This is how FBI officials say the material - results of interviews, notes and envelopes that contained physical items - was overlooked and eventually discovered:

The general process is that documents are entered into FBI computers by field offices.

Many of the documents produced during the bombing inquiry were not properly flagged or cross-referenced.

Previous searches of computer databases failed to find the improperly marked documents.

Officials, conducting a months-long search for all Oklahoma bombing investigative records for archiving purposes, compared the records with each of the FBI's 26 databases. They determined that some of the materials from various field offices were not a part of the investigative database.