

# **Back on the Trail of John Doe No. 2: McVeigh's Case**

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In the frantic weeks following the Oklahoma City bombing, federal agents searching for "John Doe 2" fastened onto a reclusive biochemist named Steven Garrett Colbern. The Feds suspected that Colbern, known for his staunch antigovernment views, might have been recruited by Timothy McVeigh. Agents discovered a note written by McVeigh stuck to a utility pole in Kingman, Ariz. Addressed to "SC," the note read: "I'm not looking for talkers. I'm looking for fighters." But when agents found no further evidence linking the two, the FBI lost interest.

Colbern, who denied ever knowing McVeigh, is just one of countless leads in the case pursued and abandoned by the FBI. Now McVeigh's lawyers want to sift them again in an effort to cast doubt on the government's case that McVeigh acted alone--and delay, or perhaps overturn, his June 11 execution. Mentions of Colbern in some of the documents the Feds turned over last month may aid the cause.

Prosecutors dismiss the Colbern documents as "minutiae"--and are ready to fight back. NEWSWEEK has learned that they will cite McVeigh's prison letters and media interviews, in which he ridiculed the idea he had help in carrying out the crime. McVeigh's lawyers are seeking a new chance to argue their client doesn't deserve death. McVeigh's own words could make that a tough sell.