

FBI to reopen bombing inquiry

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WASHINGTON - The FBI ordered a review of some aspects of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing investigation Friday, reopening the question of whether Timothy McVeigh may have had more accomplices, government officials said.

Reacting to an Associated Press story earlier this week, the FBI ordered agents to determine why some documents did not properly reach the bureau's Oklahoma City task force during the original investigation or get turned over to McVeigh's lawyers before he was executed in 2001, officials said.

The review also will try to determine whether FBI agents in a separate investigation of white supremacist bank robbers may have failed to alert the Oklahoma City investigation of a possible link between the robbers and McVeigh, and allowed some of that evidence to be destroyed.

AP reported Wednesday that documents never introduced at McVeigh's trial showed FBI agents destroyed evidence and failed to share other information that raised the possibility a gang of white supremacist bank robbers may have assisted McVeigh.

The evidence includes documents showing the Aryan Republican Army bank robbers possessed explosive blasting caps similar to those McVeigh stole and a driver's license with the name of a central player who was robbed in the Oklahoma City plot. The caps were destroyed.

McVeigh's former attorney and the retired head of the McVeigh investigation applauded Friday's development.

"It was the right thing to do. The FBI has to put the integrity back in the "i" of the FBI," retired agent Dan Defenbaugh said.

McVeigh attorney, Stephen Jones, said the key will be how aggressively the FBI pursues the review. "The question is how serious an investigation it will be or are they going through the motions and is this a face-saving way to close the book on this," he said.

The documents don't prove additional accomplices were involved - blasting caps are plentiful and the gang was expert in document fraud. But Defenbaugh said his team never got the chance to investigate the evidence and he called earlier this week for the probe to be reopened.

The April 19, 1995, bombing killed more than 160 people and McVeigh was put to death for it in 2001. His co-defendant, Terry Nichols, will stand trial in Oklahoma next week on state charges that could carry the death penalty.

FBI officials and Nichols' attorneys declined comment Friday night, citing a gag order.