

FBI sought death row interview to resolve McVeigh questions

Associated Press

Washington

In a drama played out behind closed doors, senior FBI agents unsuccessfully sought permission in 2001 to interview Timothy McVeigh to resolve lingering questions about the case before the convicted Oklahoma City bomber was put to death, officials say.

The agents wanted to clear up uncertainties about McVeigh's whereabouts on specific dates that were left unanswered by his public statements and the evidence, essentially filling in

gaps in his timeline before the bombing, the officials told The Associated Press.

The plan was scrapped when the government couldn't resolve who would attend the interview or how it would be conducted. Officials also became distracted by the belated discovery of some 4,000 pages of documents that had not been turned over to McVeigh's defense during his trial.

That discovery prompted a one-month delay in McVeigh's execution, during which FBI and Treasury agents continued

to press unsuccessfully for access to McVeigh on death row.

The interview debate was described by several current and former officials. They said it showed the government didn't know everything it wanted about McVeigh before he was put to death.

The officials said the potential interview became a primary focus of the remaining McVeigh investigative team during the spring of 2001 and was the subject of a high-level meeting in Oklahoma City in March of that year.