

# FBI still has many questions, but McVeigh takes answers to grave

The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** — As the clock ticked toward Timothy McVeigh's execution, senior FBI agents pressed behind closed doors for permission to interview the convicted Oklahoma City bomber.

They did not do so, their efforts dashed by internal disagreements, officials said.

The agents wanted to resolve questions about McVeigh's whereabouts on certain dates before the bombing — essentially filling in gaps in his timeline, the officials told The Associated Press.

The plan was scrapped when the government could not resolve who would attend the interview or how it would be conducted.

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

The officials said the debate was documented in numerous FBI e-mails. They were uncertain whether those e-mails should have been turned over to lawyers for the Oklahoma state murder trial of Terry Nichols, McVeigh's co-conspirator.

Besides filling in the gaps for McVeigh's whereabouts, one senior official said agents had seen instances in the past where "death-row inmates were willing to give us some of their thought processes as their execution neared, and we hoped McVeigh might do the same."

The officials would discuss the interview debate only on condition their names not be used. The Justice Department has ordered its employees not to discuss the McVeigh case as Nichols' trial begins this week.

New information has been emerging nine years after McVeigh's bomb killed more than 160 people in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995.

Last week, AP reported FBI agents in another case developed evidence suggesting a gang of white supremacist bank robbers might have been involved in McVeigh's conspiracy, but the

agents failed to forward the information to their colleagues in the Oklahoma case. That prompted the FBI last week to reopen portions of the case, and the judge in the Nichols' trial warned he might dismiss the case if there is proof information was withheld from Nichols.

Several officials said the debate over interviewing McVeigh continued between the FBI, Justice Department and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms without resolution, ending when McVeigh was executed in June 2001.

An Oklahoma newspaper, the *Idabel McCurtain Daily Gazette*,

and a college criminology professor, Mark Hamm, have studied McVeigh's whereabouts and developed timelines showing the white supremacist bank robbery gang was in the same vicinity as McVeigh several times during gaps in the government's official version of events.

"You have to use logic here. What is the probability of these things happening?" asked Hamm, an Indiana State University professor. "If it was one time, you might chalk it up to coincidence. If it is two times, you might begin to ask some serious questions. But when it gets to three and four times, that suggests there clearly

is an ongoing conspiracy."

Hamm said he placed McVeigh and the bank robbers together in December 1994 at a gun show in Overland Park, Kan., and again in 1993 when they were in a rural Arkansas town on the same day.

Another parallel occurred in November 1994: McVeigh was in Ohio, near a bank the gang would rob a month later, on the day an Arkansas gun dealer was robbed to provide the proceeds for McVeigh's bombing.



Timothy McVeigh

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