

INMATE CLAIMS NICHOLS KEPT EXPLOSIVES

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Says he didn't take part in bombing

Associated Press

DASH: -

McALESTER, Okla. --- A federal death row inmate expected to testify in the murder trial of Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols said co-conspirator Timothy McVeigh told him Nichols helped store ingredients for the explosives, but refused to take part in the bombing.

David Paul Hammer says McVeigh, who was executed in 2001 after being convicted on federal murder charges, tried unsuccessfully to recruit Nichols for the bombing.

"He did not show up to help McVeigh build the bomb," Hammer told the McAlester News-Capital & Democrat for its Sunday editions.

Hammer said his information came from conversations with McVeigh while the two were on death row together in federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind.

Hammer's testimony has been bitterly opposed by prosecutors, who have described him as "one of the least credible sources ever to serve time" in an Oklahoma prison. And McVeigh, in a letter to a former defense investigator days before his execution, wrote that he had limited his communications with Hammer.

Hammer said McVeigh told him the bomb, made of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil, was made at an Oklahoma City warehouse, not in Nichols' home state of Kansas as authorities have claimed.

Opening statements are scheduled for March 22 in Nichols' state trial in McAlester for the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, which killed 168 people.

Nichols, 48, is already serving a life sentence on federal charges for the deaths of eight law enforcement officers. The state murder charges are for the other 160 victims and one of the victims' fetus.

Nichols' attorneys plan to argue that McVeigh framed him to shield the real accomplices in the bombing. The attorneys have said Hammer will tell jurors that McVeigh revealed who else was involved in the 1995 attack, including the identity

of a second person believed to have been with McVeigh on the day of the bombing.

Hammer told the newspaper the second person was a member of the Aryan Republican Army, a gang of white supremacist bank robbers.

Hammer, awaiting a June 8 execution for the murder of a cellmate, has written about McVeigh in an upcoming book entitled "Secrets Worth Dying For."