

New Developments in OKC Bombing

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Terry Nichols goes on trial for murder in early March. Nichols was convicted in 1997 on federal conspiracy and involuntary manslaughter charges for his role in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, but now he is being tried on state charges. Over the past few weeks, District Judge Steven Taylor has been hearing motions in advance of the trial. For example, prosecutors have sought to limit defense questioning about the FBI crime lab's mishandling of evidence in the bombing investigation.

But that seems to be the least of the government's problems. In late February, the Associated Press' John Solomon broke a big story about evidence of a broader conspiracy behind the April 19, 1995 attack that was withheld from FBI officials in charge of the investigation and defense attorneys. After examining the new evidence, Dan Defenbaugh, the FBI agent who ran the OKC bombing investigation, told Solomon that the case should be reopened. Danny Coulson, the Bureau's on-scene commander, agreed, but said that an independent investigator with subpoena and grand jury powers should run it. He was adamant that it not be run by the Bureau.

Solomon reported that the new evidence pointed to the possibility that white supremacist bank robbers may have helped McVeigh blow up the Murrah Federal Building. But the Justice Department withheld the evidence from McVeigh's 1997 trial. Stephen Jones, McVeigh's attorney, told Solomon that federal prosecutors "simply turned their backs on a group of people for which there is credible evidence suggesting they were involved in the murder of 160 people."

J.D. Cash and Roger Charles have also been covering this story for the McCurtain Daily Gazette in Idabel, Oklahoma. Their story last December mentioned an FBI memo, dated January 4, 1996, that McVeigh had more extensive contacts with white supremacists than the government had previously acknowledged, and that these radicals may have been involved in the plot.

Solomon's wire story was reprinted around the country in regional and local papers. Beyond the Los Angeles Times, however, the national media ignored the story. Of the network news programs, only the Fox News Channel considered the story newsworthy. On February 25, John Gibson interviewed Defenbaugh.

As explosive as this matter is, a new book by reporter Jayna Davis says the Oklahoma City bombing was part of an even wider conspiracy involving Islamic terrorists and a possible link to Iraq. Her book, *The Third Terrorist: The Middle Eastern Connection to the Oklahoma City Bombing*, is just being released. The media had previously reported that al Qaeda documents captured in Afghanistan

included a detailed analysis of the Oklahoma City bomb. So there could be both an al Qaeda and Iraqi connection. In the end, it could turn out that McVeigh and Nichols, supposedly the only perpetrators of the atrocity, were assisted by a group of white supremacists AND Middle Eastern terrorists. They all shared a hatred of the U.S. Government. One thing is certain: the FBI under Bill Clinton botched the investigation.