

Okla. Witness Places McVeigh With Others

By TIM TALLEY, Associated Press Writer | AP Online | May 7th, 2004

McALESTER, Okla. - A McDonald's manager testified Friday that Timothy McVeigh and a dark-skinned man were part of a group that piled out of a Ryder truck and entered her restaurant just days before the Oklahoma City bombing.

But the woman could not say whether the man with McViegh was John Doe No. 2, the enigmatic suspect who is the key to Terry Nichols' defense on state murder charges in the April 19, 1995, bombing. The defense contends others helped McVeigh plan and execute the blast and that Nichols was set up to take the blame.

Joan Rairden testified that the men visited the McDonald's in Junction City, Kan., shortly before midnight on April 13 or 14, 1995. She said three people came inside, including McVeigh and the man with the dark skin and slicked-back hair.

McVeigh went to the rest room, Rairden said, and the man with the slick hair placed an order. McVeigh came into the restaurant with the same group during the lunch hour a few days later, she said.

Rairden said she could not identify the other man from a sketch of John Doe No. 2 that was shown to her by FBI agents after the bombing.

"He was darker. It didn't look like exactly him," she said.

The sketch was based on a description by a worker at a nearby body shop where McVeigh leased the Ryder truck that delivered the bomb, which killed 168 people.

The drawing depicted a heavy, well-built man with brown eyes and hair who witnesses said was with McVeigh at the leasing agency.

On cross-examination, prosecutor Suzanne Lister asked Rairden why security videotapes from the restaurant show McVeigh there just once, two days before the bombing. Rairden said she had not reviewed the tapes.

The testimony came in the second day of questioning of defense witnesses.

Nichols, 49, was at home on the day of the bombing, but prosecutors allege he helped McVeigh gather bomb components and build the bomb.

He faces the death penalty if convicted on first-degree murder charges.

Nichols is serving a life prison sentence on involuntary manslaughter and conspiracy counts in the deaths of eight federal law enforcement officers in the bombing. In Oklahoma, he faces 161 counts of first-degree murder for the deaths of the other 160 victims and one victim's fetus.

McVeigh was convicted on federal murder charges and executed in 2001.