

## Testimony at Nichols trial suggests other bombing suspects

McALESTER, Okla. (AP) — A motorist who watched as Timothy McVeigh was arrested after the Oklahoma City bombing testified that he also saw a man in a pickup truck back up near McVeigh's car.

Scott Gregory was one of nine defense witnesses who testified Friday at the murder trial of bombing conspirator Terry Nichols. Several witnesses recalled seeing McVeigh with other people in the days before the deadly federal building explosion.

McVeigh's contacts, including the enigmatic dark-skinned suspect known as John Doe No. 2, are the key to Nichols' defense. His attorneys allege that others helped McVeigh plan and execute the bombing and that Nichols was set up to take the blame.

Gregory testified he saw McVeigh being arrested along Interstate 35 north of Oklahoma City about an hour after the April 19, 1995, bombing.

At the same time, a truck driven by a man wearing a red

and white baseball cap backed up near McVeigh's 1977 Mercury Marquis, Gregory said.

"I thought that was so odd," Gregory said. "I thought, 'What an idiot. Why are you stopping to talk to that police officer when he's obviously in a high-stress situation?'"

Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper Charles Hanger stopped McVeigh because his car had no license plate. McVeigh later admitted he was carrying a loaded weapon. He was linked two days later to the bombing, which killed 168.

Nichols, 49, 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.