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Witnesses: Mystery man seen with McVeigh before bombing

McALESTER, Okla. (AP) — Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh walked into a hair salon one day before the blast with a man who resembled an FBI sketch of a suspect, witnesses said Monday at bombing conspirator Terry Nichols' trial.

McVeigh's contacts, including an enigmatic, dark-skinned man known as John Doe No. 2, are the key to Nichols' defense. His attorneys claim others helped McVeigh plan and execute the 1995 bombing and that Nichols was set up to take the blame.

Early in the investigation, the FBI released the sketch of John Doe No. 2, who was believed to have helped McVeigh rent the truck that blew up outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

The man eventually was identified as an Army private who had been in the rental shop the day after McVeigh, and was cleared of involvement in the blast that killed 168 people.

But Nichols contends John Doe No. 2, who does not resemble him, was someone else, and that his existence sheds doubt on Nichols' purported role in the bombing.

Kathy Henderson, who worked in a hair salon in Junction City, Kan., testified Monday the sketches of

McVeigh and John Doe No. 2 look "almost exactly" like the men who came into the salon together a day before the bombing.

Tonia Rumbaugh, another employee, said the unidentified man appeared to be Hispanic, with thick, dark hair that was tinged with gray.

McVeigh stood at the door while the other man asked for a haircut, but there were no open appointments, Rumbaugh said.

Among the 13 defense witnesses who testified Monday were several whose testimony was intended to cast doubt on the prosecution's timeline. They reported seeing a Ryder truck before prosecutors allege one was rented by McVeigh on April 17, two days before the bombing.

Sharen White said she saw a Ryder truck driving south on a highway that passed by her house in Lost Springs, Kan., on April 13.

"The passenger just stared at me. We just locked eyes," she said. White said she identified the passenger as McVeigh from accounts of his arrest following the bombing.

She said she did not contact authorities for a year after the bombing because she believed they had enough witnesses.